

REGIS COLLEGE LIBRARY



3 1761 05810426 6

CANADIAN MESSENGER  
LIBRARY

Section

Number

252

BDO 2126

REGIS  
BIBL. MAJ  
COLLEGE



# COCHEM'S LIFE OF CHRIST

ADAPTED BY

REV. BONAVENTURE HAMMER, O.F.M.



REGIS  
BIBL. MAJ.  
COLLEGE

NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO

BENZIGER BROTHERS

PRINTERS TO THE  
HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE

PUBLISHERS OF  
BENZIGER'S MAGAZINE

1913

59213

BT  
300  
C 6  
1913

Nihil Obstat.

THOS. L. KINKEAD,  
*Censor Librorum.*

Imprimatur.

\* MICHAEL AUGUSTINE,  
*Archbishop of New York.*

New York, November 18, 1896.

Imprimi Permittitur.

FR. PETRUS BAPT. ENGLERT, O.S.F.,  
*Min. Prov.*

## PREFACE.

---

ST. BONAVENTURE, exhorting to meditation on the life of Our Lord, writes: "Impress upon your heart a true image of Our Lord Jesus Christ: how humble He was among men, how kind to His disciples, how compassionate toward the poor, to whom He likened Himself in all things, and who seemed to constitute the favorite portion of His company. Consider how, slighting no one, He did not flatter the rich; how free He was from the cares of this world, not anxiously intent upon the necessities of life. Consider how patient He was when offended, how meek in His answers, not revenging Himself by cutting replies, but desirous to conciliate His enemies by humble and gentle words; how patiently He bore trials and want, and how compassionate He was toward the oppressed; how He descended to the imperfections of others, not despising sinners; how peaceful He was in His whole demeanor. Consider how anxious He was for the salvation of souls, for whose sake He deigned to become man, suffer, and die. Consider His fervor in prayer, and how ready He was to serve others. Regard Him as your model in all your actions, when speaking and when silent, alone and in company. You will thus

enkindle your love for Him, gain His friendship and grace, and perfect yourself in every virtue. Let it be your sole desire and prayer constantly to meditate on some mystery of His life, in order to incite yourself to love and follow Him: for the more we are intent upon His virtues the nearer will we draw to Him, finally to share with Him His heavenly glory.”

Such were the sentiments that induced Father Martin von Cochem to write this book. He was born in the village of Cochem, Germany, from which he takes his name, in 1630. Joining, at an early age, the Order of Capuchins, he devoted himself, after his ordination to the priesthood, most assiduously to the salvation of souls. The Thirty Years' War, terminating in 1648, left the people deplorably demoralized, and to counteract, as much as was within his power, the evil influences of his time, he devoted himself, in addition to his pastoral duties, to the writing of pious books in a popular style. He died in 1712. His best and most popular work was the “Life and Sufferings of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His Mother Mary,” of which this volume is an abridgment and rearrangement.

The great revolutions which, during the last two hundred years, have taken place in every department of learning, have affected, more or less, the views held by the author; hence some changes were necessary. Again, it was deemed advisable to adhere mainly to the history of Our Lord as narrated in the Gospels; hence, as a rule, the exact words of the Evangelists are quoted. Such statements of the author as are not founded on Holy

Scripture, or on the unanimous tradition of the Fathers, are presented to the reader not as positive historical truth, but merely as probabilities or possibilities not inconsistent with Scripture or tradition. Though these pious legends are not articles of faith, they have been collected by devout, truthful, and intelligent writers, who bequeathed them to us for our pious consideration. Christian people for centuries have been edified by them, and have obtained from them more fervor of devotion, and even an increase of faith and religious life. Yet, conformably to a decree of Pope Urban VIII., we add the express declaration that we claim only relative credence for these narratives, in so far as they are not sustained by the authority of the Church.

To augment among men a spirit of devotion to our divine Lord was the object for which Father Martin von Cochem wrote his "Life of Christ." It is with a view to extending still further this same devotion that this abridgment of it is presented to the public—for the greater glory and honor of God and the salvation of souls.

" In that book so old and holy,  
I would read, and read again,  
How Our Lord was once so lowly,  
Yet without a spot or stain,

" How the little children found Him,  
How He loved them, and caressed,  
How He called them all around Him,  
Took them to His loving breast.

**"How His pity, never failing,  
On the sick was sure to flow;  
How the poor, the blind, the ailing  
Were His brethren here below.**

**"With rejoicing hearts and grateful,  
Let us read, and still read on,  
How He was so true and faithful,  
How He loved us, every one.**

**"How, Good Shepherd, He did cherish  
All the flock He came to save,  
Watching that not one might perish  
Of the lambs the Father gave.**

**"Let us gladly kneel, and often,  
Round His feet, Who loved us best;  
Then each stubborn heart He'll soften,  
And in Him shall all be blessed."**

# CONTENTS.

---

	PAGE
PREFACE, . . . . .	3
CHAPTER I. The Blessed Virgin Mary.—The Annunciation. —The Visitation.—Birth of St. John the Baptist, . . .	9
CHAPTER II. The Birth of Jesus.—His Circumcision.—The Holy Name of Jesus, . . . . .	19
CHAPTER III. The Three Wise Men from the East adore the Infant Saviour, . . . . .	31
CHAPTER IV. The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple.—The Purification of the Blessed Virgin, . . . . .	41
CHAPTER V. The Flight into Egypt.—The Massacre of the Innocents.—The Holy Family in Egypt.—Their Return .	46
CHAPTER VI. Jesus, at the Age of Twelve, visits the Temple. —His Hidden Life at Nazareth, . . . . .	54
CHAPTER VII. The Baptism of Jesus.—His Fast in the Desert.—His Temptation.—The Beginning of His Public Ministry, . . . . .	61
CHAPTER VIII. Jesus calls the Twelve Apostles.—The Ser- mon on the Mount, . . . . .	71
CHAPTER IX. The Parables of Jesus, . . . . .	88
CHAPTER X. The Miracles of Jesus, . . . . .	99
CHAPTER XI. Christ announces to St. Peter his Supreme Pas- toral Charge.—The Transfiguration, . . . . .	117
CHAPTER XII. The Private Life of Jesus during His Min- istry, . . . . .	122
CHAPTER XIII. The Sorrow caused to Jesus and Mary by the Persecution of the Jews, . . . . .	130

	PAGE
CHAPTER XIV. Jesus Triumphantly enters Jerusalem, . . .	137
CHAPTER XV. The Barren Fig-Tree.—Various Parables.— Prediction of the Destruction of Jerusalem, . . .	144
CHAPTER XVI. The Jews lay Plans to put Jesus to Death.— Judas Iscariot offers to deliver Him to Them.—Jesus makes known His Sufferings and Death to His Mother Mary, . . .	155
CHAPTER XVII. The Last Supper, . . . . .	165
CHAPTER XVIII. Farewell Discourse and Prayer of Jesus, . .	176
CHAPTER XIX. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemani, . . .	182
CHAPTER XX. The Treason of Judas and the Apprehension of Jesus, . . . . .	188
CHAPTER XXI. Jesus before Annas, . . . . .	196
CHAPTER XXII. Jesus before Caiphas.—Peter's Denial of Jesus, . . . . .	201
CHAPTER XXIII. Jesus before Pilate.—The Despair of Judas, . . . . .	208
CHAPTER XXIV. Jesus before Herod.—He is rejected for Barabbas.—The Scourging and Crowning with Thorns, . .	216
CHAPTER XXV. "Behold the Man!"—Jesus is condemned to Death, . . . . .	229
CHAPTER XXVI. The Way of the Cross, . . . . .	237
CHAPTER XXVII. The Crucifixion of Jesus, . . . . .	245
CHAPTER XXVIII. The Seven Last Words of Jesus, . . .	255
CHAPTER XXIX. Miraculous Events at Our Lord's Death.— On Devotion to Our Lord's Passion, . . . . .	267
CHAPTER XXX. The Side of Jesus is Pierced with a Lance, .	272
CHAPTER XXXI. Jesus is taken down from the Cross.—His Burial, . . . . .	279
CHAPTER XXXII. The Resurrection of Jesus, . . . . .	286
CHAPTER XXXIII. Jesus appears repeatedly to His Dis- ciples, . . . . .	296
CHAPTER XXXIV. The Ascension of Jesus and the Descent of the Holy Ghost, . . . . .	307

# THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

---

## CHAPTER I.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.—THE ANNUNCIATION.—THE VISITATION.—BIRTH OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

FOUR thousand years had elapsed since the fall of our first parents, and the promise of a Saviour was about to be fulfilled. And as the dawn precedes the day, so Mary, the mother of the Saviour, preceded the Sun of Justice, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and her Son.

At that time there lived at Nazareth, in Galilee, a pious married couple, Joachim and Anne. Although they passed blameless and holy lives, they had a heavy cross to bear, in the rejection by God for twenty years of their ardent supplications to be blessed with children. Who can conceive the anxiety of this holy couple, who count the tears they shed, the sighs they breathed before the throne of the Giver of all gifts? For we must remember that in their day it was considered by all to be the greatest disgrace for married people to be childless. Anne therefore humbled herself like her namesake, the mother of Samuel the prophet, who had also bewailed her barrenness before the Lord with bitter tears, and sighed for

relief from the disgrace of sterility. The memory of the mother of Samuel and of her trials had a soothing influence on both St. Joachim and St. Anne. "Let us," said the latter, "like the mother of Samuel, go up to the Temple and pray before the face of the Lord. Who knows but He will be pleased to hear our supplications."

With renewed confidence, Joachim, at the suggestion of his spouse, accompanied her to Jerusalem. But, alas! here they were to meet with a severe trial. Just as Joachim was approaching the Temple, one of the chief priests came toward him with a look of reproof and contempt, and rebuked him severely, saying: "How canst thou presume, childless and undeserving man as thou art, to offer sacrifice to God? Depart immediately, lest thy sacrifice should bring down God's wrath upon thy head." Put to shame before all the people, Joachim withdrew quietly, without a murmur of complaint, and when alone burst into a flood of tears; then, completely overpowered by grief and mortification, arose, and crossing over Mount Olivet, by way of Bethania, retired into the desert to his flocks and herds, where he remained five months in prayer and fasting. During this time Anne remained in sorrow at home, where she was compelled to listen to the aspersions of her maid-servant concerning her childlessness. But at last the sacrifice of their humble and afflicted hearts was found perfect: the Almighty was pleased to send an angel to His sorrowful servants with words of comfort, and they saw the hour when they had cause to sing of God's infinite mercy and compassion.

Whilst Joachim was in the desert near Mount Hermon, praying to God, and while Anne, at home in Nazareth, was pleading before the throne of Heaven for deliverance from her reproach, the prayers of both were heard. Suddenly an angel of the Lord stood before Anne, and addressing her said: "Your tears and prayers have been laid at the feet of the Most High, as well as the supplications of your husband Joachim, and God has sent me to comfort you. And this is the message that I bring: To-morrow, at break of day, arise and go to Jerusalem, to offer sacrifice in the Temple. There you will meet your husband, for he has received a similar message and will be in the Temple. You will see him at the golden gate, and your sacrifice will be accepted. You must understand that your sterility had been decreed by God, in order that the world might know that your child is a gift from God. For it will come to pass that you shall conceive the blessing of the promise, and will bring forth a holy child destined to be the mother of Him for whom all nations are waiting. You shall name the child as it shall be revealed to you."

A flood of inexpressible joy was thus let in upon the heart of the God-fearing woman; and raising her eyes she found that the angel had vanished, but on the wall opposite stood written in large and shining letters the word MARY.

Everything foretold by the angel came to pass. St. Anne, on reaching the golden gate of the Temple, met her husband, St. Joachim, who, in accordance with his instructions from the angel, had come to the city prepared

to offer sacrifice. How happy the meeting after such a painful separation! How full of gratitude their hearts, as they bent their steps together toward their now bright and happy home at Nazareth, discoursing about the goodness of God!

In the course of time St. Anne gave birth to a daughter, whom she called Mary, as the angel had commanded. This child, destined from all eternity to become the mother of the Son of God, was, in view of His merits, preserved from the stain of original sin from the very first instant of her conception. Thus was verified the ancient promise: "She shall crush thy head" (Gen. iii. 15), spoken by God in paradise to the devil, who appeared in the shape of a serpent, and induced our first parents to commit sin. Mary, by escaping the taint thus brought upon the whole human race, being conceived immaculate, trampled Satan and sin under foot. She crushed the devil's haughty head.

On what day did this great event—Mary's birth—occur? An ancient legend informs us that there was once a holy and aged hermit, a devout servant of the Blessed Virgin, who used to hear on a certain day of each year, on the 8th of September, the most delicious strains of music floating through the air. So thrilling and sweet were the tones that he felt they must be the voices of angels, the melodies of a heavenly choir. Having besought his guardian angel to tell him the meaning of these joyful strains, he was given to understand that on that day Mary, the glorious Queen of heaven, was born on earth; that therefore the angels and

saints united in chanting the praises of the Blessed Virgin in memory of the event; and that tones of triumphant music resounded through the spacious dome of heaven in order to render homage and honor to her who had been raised above the angels and archangels, and beyond the cherubim and seraphim.

Tradition teaches us that on the night of Mary's birth the apartment of St. Anne was illumined with a dazzling light of such power and brilliancy, that the attendants became alarmed and feared to open their eyes to look upon the favored mother and her blessed infant; whilst angel voices in joyful tones saluted the aurora of the coming King of day, the future mother of the Redeemer. When the attendants of St. Anne had recovered from their amazement, they greeted the child, and summoned the happy father, St. Joachim. Oh, what an ecstasy of delight! With trembling hands he receives his daughter, presents her first to God, then presses her to his bosom, and with tears of humble gratitude impresses a fervent kiss upon her sacred lips.

At an early age Mary was taken to the Temple, there to be educated with other young Jewish maidens. Obedient to a divine inspiration, she vowed herself there to God as a virgin. Yet, according to Jewish law and custom, she was espoused and promised to a man named Joseph, of her own tribe and family.

After her return from the Temple, when one day kneeling in prayer in her chamber, behold she saw, under a human form, Gabriel, the angel of the Lord, appear to her. The angel said to her: "Hail, full of grace! The

Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women!" When she saw him, and heard his words, she "was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father; and He shall reign in the house of Jacob forever. And of His kingdom there shall be no end." (Luke i. 29-33.)

Mary then understood that he spoke of the expected Saviour. Whatever fear she had speedily passed before the soothing words of her heavenly visitor, and she simply asked: "How shall this be done, because I know not man?" (Ibid. 34.) "And the angel answering said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Ibid. 35.) And the angel gave her a sign: "Behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren; because no word shall be impossible with God." (Ibid. 36-37.)

Mary's answer is the ideal of dignified humility and meek and reverent innocence: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." (Ibid. 38.) "And the angel departed from her."

What best to do in a position so mysterious may well

have troubled Mary's heart. The angel had told her that her relative Elizabeth had also been favored of God, and she now determined to go to her kinswoman. Elizabeth dwelt with her husband, the priest Zachary, in the mountains of Judea, in a village called Karem, now Ain-Karim. What were the thoughts of Mary in her solitary journey, with such a secret in her heart? She probably went on foot, for it was the custom of her people, and, moreover, she was poor. Her meeting with Elizabeth was naturally marked with deep emotion. It is told at length by St. Luke:

“And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb: and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. And she cried out with a loud voice, and said: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord.” (Luke i. 41-45.)

Greeted by Elizabeth as the mother of her Lord, Mary gives word to her sentiments in that inspired canticle of joy: “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Because He that is mighty hath done great things to me: and holy is His name. And His mercy is from generation unto generations, to them that fear Him. He hath showed might in His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He hath sent away empty. He hath received Israel His servant, being mindful of his mercy. He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his seed forever." (Luke i. 46-55.)

The abode of Mary at Karem, in the house of Zachary, lasted for three months. It was one long prayer, one uninterrupted confidence in and adoration of the designs of God, and the religious expectation of their fulfilment. After the quiet days with Elizabeth, a trial awaited her. The signs of her condition were evident. It was not clear how God would preserve her virginal honor before men, and in the eyes of her spouse. Although this thought must have occurred to Mary, that which would have been anguish to an ordinary soul could not trouble the serenity of her who had said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word."

Meanwhile Joseph, who had not been told the mystery of the secret which Mary kept in her reserved humility, saw her state. Appearances seemed to indicate that she was unfaithful, but respect for her virtue forbade suspicion. Unable to guess the impenetrable designs of God, he hesitated. Then he resolved on a course which seemed to him the best way out of the difficulty: he made up his mind to put her away privately. In the midst of his doubt and anguish, at the moment when he was about to do what he believed to be right, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in his sleep, saying:

“Joseph, son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.” (Matt. i. 20–22.) Joseph awoke and rose, and without hesitation obeyed the word of God. Apart from Mary and him no one suspected that their marriage was intended to prepare the cradle of the Messias, and to give Him and His mother the support of a man who should be, according to the law, the husband of the one and the father of the other. Joseph and Mary lived as brother and sister, according to the discreet but explicit expression of the gospel: “And he knew her not.” (Matt. i. 25.)

It is interesting to know how ancient tradition describes Mary. She was in all things serious and earnest, we are told, spoke little, and only that which was to the purpose; she was very gentle, and showed respect and honor to all. She was of medium height, though some say she was rather above it. She spoke to all with prudent frankness, soberly, without confusion, and always pleasantly. She had a fair complexion, blonde hair, and bright hazel eyes. Her eyebrows were arched and dark, her nose well proportioned, her lips ruddy, and full of kindness when she spoke. Her face was long rather than round, and her hands and fingers were finely shaped. She had no pride, but was simple, and wholly free from deceit. Without being prudish, she was far from forward. In her clothes, which she made herself, she was content with simple, natural colors.

Joseph understood his relation to Mary and her expected child. He felt himself the guardian of her virginity, and of the childhood of Him who should be born of her. Noble and gentle, this simple workman was to have the glory of passing among men as the father of Jesus. He was to remain a model of self-denial, devotion, and fidelity. His name was to be united forever to the two most beloved names on earth—those of Jesus and Mary.

We praise and adore Thee, O divine Providence, for the admirable wisdom with which Thou bringest about Thy designs, and leadest Thy elect to their proper destiny. Many things often appear to us as forever hidden in impenetrable mystery, and to be opposed to our intelligence, but in the lives of Thy saints we discover a guarantee that Thy fatherly kindness and divine wisdom guide to their best interests those who love Thee. Oh, let this beautiful and comforting faith become practical in our case, when Thou demandest hard and great sacrifices from us, and Thy hand doth strike us harshly in the dark hour of trial and affliction.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE BIRTH OF JESUS.—HIS CIRCUMCISION.—THE HOLY NAME OF JESUS.

**D**IVINE Providence foreordained from all eternity that the Saviour of the world should be born in Bethlehem, the city of David. It was concerning this city that, more than seven hundred years before Christ, the following prophecy was pronounced: "And thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, art a little one among the thousands of Juda: out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel, and His going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity." (Mich. v. 2.) But how was this decree of God to be accomplished? For the virgin chosen to be the mother of the world's Redeemer dwelt with her spouse at a distance of at least four days' journey from Bethlehem.

But God so ordered things that the Roman emperor, Cæsar Augustus, became an instrument in carrying out the ancient prophecy. "And it came to pass that in those days there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that the whole world should be enrolled. This enrolling was first made by Cyrinus, the governor of Syria; and all went to be enrolled, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of

Nazareth into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his espoused wife, who was with child." (Luke ii. 1-5.)

When St. Joseph received the order to go to Bethlehem, he was filled with alarm, and imparted the news to Mary with a heavy heart. But remembering the prediction of the prophet Micheas, and knowing it to be God's will that she should repair to Bethlehem, she encouraged her chaste spouse to unreserved submission to the holy will of God. The day being appointed for their departure, the holy couple provided themselves with what was most necessary for the journey, which, as they knew, lay partly through very inhospitable regions. It was at the beginning of the winter season, when the long, cold night was succeeded by the cheerless, chilly day, when the bright skies were hidden by heavy, leaden-colored clouds.

The Blessed Virgin was seated upon an humble mule, while Joseph, holding the bridle, and with staff in hand, walked by her side. Leaving Nazareth, their road led through long rows of fig and olive trees, now denuded of their foliage, into the extensive plains of Esdrelon, which stretch far away over a distance of fifty miles to the mountains of Samaria. The road now being steeper and more rugged, the labor of travelling was more painful and tedious. Sometimes the Blessed Virgin was obliged to walk, and frequently she had to rest by the road-side. Sometimes they received hospitality from kind people whose hearts were touched at the sight of the tired way-

farers; sometimes, too, they met with unkind treatment and harsh language.

Tradition tells us that as our lowly pilgrims were wending their weary way on a cold, bleak evening through a valley near Sichein, the Blessed Virgin became so exhausted that she could proceed no farther. As she reluctantly acknowledged her weariness to St. Joseph, the beast that bore her stood suddenly still beneath a large terebinth tree, which grew near a fountain. Here she decided to rest. The tree was a very old and memorable one; for in its shade Abraham had built an altar to the Lord. (Gen. xii.) Near its roots Jacob, when on his homeward journey, had buried Laban's idols. (Gen. xxxv.) Under its branches Abimelech was anointed king. (Judges ix. 6.) Here, too, Josue had set up the ark of the covenant and the tabernacle, and induced the assembled people to renounce their false gods. (Josue xxiv.) And now, under this same tree, Mary, the true ark of the covenant, rests, weary and sad, but yet contented and resigned to the will of God. Whilst St. Joseph, unable to lessen the difficulties of the journey, offers words of sympathy, she prays secretly to God for protection and strength. Suddenly the Lord is pleased to reveal to her in a miraculous ecstasy the grand mysteries which had transpired near this memorable tree, and their intimate connection with her life and with the mission of the future Saviour. Overflowing with heavenly consolation, the mother of God was wonderfully strengthened, and the flame of divine love which consumed her heart pervaded and invigorated her whole frame, so that

she became eloquent in the praises of God. Having then partaken of some food and quenched her thirst at the fountain, she continued her journey. At last, after having been nearly eight full days upon the road, the pilgrims reached Jerusalem, and a few hours later arrived at Bethlehem.

In pious contemplation and subdued prayer they approached the town from the west, where the ascent from the plain was gradual and easy. When they arrived, the place was full of people who had come for the same purpose as they. "There was no room for them in the inn." (Luke ii. 7.) In the East, the inns, or *khangs*, as they were called, were different from what we in the West understand by that name. They were rude and simple buildings, of varying size, which offered the wayfarer the protection of walls and a roof, and water, but little more. The smaller structures sometimes consisted of only a single empty room, on the floor of which the traveller might spread his blanket for sleep; the larger ones, built in a hollow square, enclosed a court for the beasts, with water in it for them and their masters. In these inns usually all strangers were received and lodged; but for Mary and Joseph there was no room. Joseph was troubled at this humiliating occurrence, principally on the Blessed Virgin's account, who was excessively fatigued. But as he had been born in the town, and had some acquaintances living there, he felt certain of being able to find shelter in some private house; and resolved, while Mary rested a little in the open air, to seek lodging among these friends and acquaintances. But they would

hardly recognize him, or else sought various pretexts for refusing his petition. Side by side with his blessed spouse did Joseph traverse the streets, going from door to door, but no heart was softened by his piteous appeals. At length they reached the opposite end of the town, and Joseph's anxiety increased at every step, for the night was approaching.

Finally, when all else had failed, Joseph remembered that there was to the east of the town a lonely cave, into which the shepherds sometimes drove their flocks in severe weather. Mary was entirely resigned to the dispensations of Providence. Passing through the gate of the town, they went to the cave. It contained nothing but a little hay and straw, forgotten by the shepherds, and a wooden manger. Such was the palace prepared by heaven's King to receive His only-begotten Son who was to redeem the world. As Mary and Joseph entered this poor and comfortless place, their hearts were filled with supernatural consolation. The Blessed Virgin fell upon her knees and thanked her heavenly Father for the shelter, while St. Joseph made some simple preparations to render the place tenable for the night. Having done this service for Mary, he retired to a small grotto at the further end of the cave.

In deep and silent prayer the Blessed Virgin knelt before the manger. Her features were resplendent with divine brightness and beauty: she seemed no longer to belong to this earth. As the hour of midnight drew near, a flood of celestial light pervaded the stable, and the mystery of mysteries is accomplished, the Son of God is

born a man. For an instant, the newly-made mother is lost in heavenly contemplation. A feeble wail recalls her from her trance. Oh, the indescribable, ravishing joy of her mother-heart, as her eye falls upon her own child, and yet her King and God! What ardent words of adoration, as she looks upon her Lord and Creator! She presses Him to her heart, she imprints ardent kisses upon His infant lips; for this God and Creator, this Lord and King, is in reality her own child, her only, first-born son.

And now St. Joseph, arising from his knees in the adjoining grotto, draws near to the divine infant. He falls down and adores, joy and reverence fill his heart, tears of gladness bedew his cheeks, words of gratitude escape his trembling lips. He takes the infant Jesus in his arms and presses Him to his heart, and his soul is unable to contain the joy which overflows it.

Mary now wrapped the child in swaddling-clothes and laid Him on some straw in the manger.

“And there were in the same country shepherds, watching and keeping the night-watches over their flock. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them, and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: Fear not, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people: for this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a

multitude of the heavenly army, praising God, and saying: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will." (Luke ii. 8-14.)

With this heavenly anthem the light faded from the hills as the angels returned to heaven, and left earth once more in the shadow of night, knowing not the great event which divine Omnipotence had wrought. Wondering at such a vision, and full of simple trust, the shepherds had but one thought—to see the mother and child for themselves. "And it came to pass, after the angels departed from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another: Let us go over to Bethlehem, and let us see this word that is come to pass, which the Lord hath showed us. And they came with haste, and they found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger." (Luke ii. 15, 16.)

No details are given: no heightening of the picture of this first act of adoration before the new-born Saviour. Nor are they needed. The lowliness of the visitors, the pure image of the virgin mother and her child are better left in their own simplicity.

Touching and significant is that old tradition which avers that the very beasts of the field, and the senseless things, showed signs of delight at the birth of their Creator. The ox and the ass of the stable fell upon their knees before Him; the lambs on the plains skipped for joy; the birds of the air, mistaking the extraordinary brilliancy of the heavens for the noon-day sun, sang their sweetest lays; the very plants and shrubs in the gardens near Bethlehem put forth their brightest blossoms. In

many places new springs burst forth from the earth; as, for example, in the city of Rome, beyond the Tiber, one burst forth, yielding, instead of water, a fragrant oil, which flowed in great abundance. In commemoration of this strange occurrence, a church was built over the spot, called St. Mary's beyond the Tiber, and termed to this day, in remembrance of this circumstance, *Fons Olei*—"Fount of Oil."

In heathen lands, and even in the empire of Satan, the new-born King proclaimed His arrival by extraordinary signs. The Roman people, being at that time desirous of paying divine honors to their emperor, Augustus, he had summoned the Sibyl of Tiber, in order to consult with her as to whether or not he should accept these tempting honors. The sibyls, among the ancient heathens, were women supposed to be gifted with a knowledge of the future. Their sayings were regarded in pagan Rome with so much reverence and faith that the heads of the nation frequently consulted them. When Augustus consulted the sibyl, it was noon, and she, looking up to heaven, saw a golden arc about the sun, and in its centre a virgin holding a lovely infant. The sibyl, showing this apparition to the emperor, said to him: "That child is mightier than thou; fall down and adore Him." The emperor knelt and adored, and afterward had erected in the Senate chamber an altar in honor of this mysterious child, with the inscription: *Ara Primogeniti Dei*—"Altar of the First-born of God." On the same place a church was afterward built in commemoration, called to this day *Ara Cæli*, that is, "Altar of Heaven."

Pious legends relate that at the time of the Nativity lightning fell from the clouds, and struck the pagan temples so violently that the idols were thrown from their pedestals and broken in fragments, or melted to shapeless masses; that many oracles through whose mouths the devil used to speak were struck dumb forever, for they felt already the power of Him who had come to destroy the rule of Satan. Thus we see that Christ's coming upon earth awoke a general commotion throughout created nature.

On the eighth day after His birth, the divine Child was circumcised according to the law which God had given to Abraham. Although not subject to this law, because paternally He was not descended from Abraham, Christ nevertheless submitted to the rite, to give us an example of humility, obedience, and patience. As to the person by whom the circumcision was performed, or where it took place, we have no certainty. St. Epiphanius says it was in the cave of the Nativity, and in presence of Mary and Joseph. This is very probable, because, according to the law, children and their mothers were not permitted to leave the house where the birth had taken place before the expiration of forty days. St. Luke describes this important, significant, and mysterious event in the few and simple words: "And after eight days were accomplished that the child should be circumcised, His name was called Jesus, which was called by the angel before He was conceived in the womb." (Luke ii. 21.)

The name Jesus signifies *Saviour*. When the angel

appeared to Joseph in his sleep, saying: "Fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost, and she shall bring forth a son," he added: "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." (Matt. i. 20, 21.) This, then, was why the Son of God, incarnate, was to be distinguished by a name so important and so glorious. "He shall save His people from their sins." This He effects in a threefold manner, in regard to all such as may be denominated "His people," that is, such as truly believe in Him. He saves them from their sins, first, by washing away those sins with His own sacred blood; secondly, by imparting to them the grace of successfully resisting sin; and, thirdly, by conducting them to the gates of bliss, whence sin is forever excluded. Observe, it is not said that He shall save us from war, famine, death, or other disaster to which we are inclined in this world, but that He shall save us from *sin*, in which signal deliverance every other blessing is included.

To know, then, whether we belong to those to whom Jesus Christ is the Saviour, we have but to examine whether we desire to be saved from sin; whether we sincerely regard it as the greatest of all evils; and whether we are determined to renounce it, as such, with all the energy of our souls. At the same time, let us remember, that unless these are our dispositions, in practice as well as in theory, we frustrate the design of the incarnation of the Son of God, since He became man only to save man from sin.

Such is the meaning of the adorable name of Jesus, a

name which God has raised above all names, to the end "that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those that are in heaven, on earth, and under the earth." (Philipp. ii. 10.) This sacred name, St. Paul asserts, no one is able to pronounce worthily but by the grace of the Holy Ghost; because to invoke as we ought the sacred name of Our Saviour we must be desirous of being saved by Him from the servitude of sin, from which He came to deliver us.

Of this most holy name the holy Fathers have written so beautifully that their words cannot be read without experiencing a holy joy. We quote St. Bernard: "Blessed name! Oil flowing softly over the whole earth! From heaven it flowed down to Judea, and from Judea it flowed over the whole earth, and from the earth even into hell, so that at the name of Jesus all knees bend in heaven, on the earth, and in hell. 'Thy name is as flowing oil.' How striking the resemblance between oil and the name of the Saviour! Oil has three qualities: it illuminates, it nourishes, it heals. It sustains the fire, it strengthens the body, it heals the wound. It furnishes light, serves as food, and acts as medicine. So, too, the name of Jesus illuminates when He preaches, nourishes when He protects, heals when He is invoked. For how else explain the sudden flash of the light of faith over the world but through the preaching of the name of Jesus? What more effectually nourishes our courage; what strengthens our virtue and maintains morality; what promotes chaste self-control; what fills the soul with such sweetness and vigor as the name of Jesus, when we

ponder on it in holy meditation? Is one of us sad or timid, in danger, perhaps in sin? Behold! as soon as the name of Jesus enters his heart and ascends to his lips, all gloom vanishes before the light, and the anxious sinner breathes a new life. Insipid is that food of the soul which is not flavored with the oil of Jesus' name. I take no pleasure in anything that may be written, except I read there the name of Jesus. No words you may address to me will excite my interest, unless I hear among them the name of Jesus. Jesus is honey in my mouth, music in my ear, and joy to my heart. Always carry this name in thy breast, as He Himself directs us: 'Put Me as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm' (Cant. viii. 6)."

Sweet and amiable infant Saviour! With Thy mother and St. Joseph, I adore Thee lying in the manger; with the shepherds I kneel at Thy feet and acknowledge Thee the Saviour of the world, and call upon Thy most holy name. Let me experience its sweetness and its power: be unto me a Saviour! How foolish I have been to deprive myself of so many consolations by neglecting to call upon Thy holy name! Blessed name of Jesus, I will henceforth remember thee in my difficulties and afflictions, I will invoke thee in the hour of temptation, I will honor thee in every word and act of mine. Then, I trust, all the power and blessing contained in that name will be infused into my soul.

## CHAPTER III

### THE THREE WISE MEN FROM THE EAST ADORE THE INFANT SAVIOUR.

**S**T. MATTHEW describes the coming of the Wise Men from the East to adore the infant Saviour as follows: "When Jesus therefore was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of King Herod, behold there came Wise Men from the East to Jerusalem, saying: Where is He that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and are come to adore Him." (Matt. ii. 1, 2.) Isaias foretold this event, saying: "Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold darkness shall cover the earth, and a mist the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall walk in thy light, and kings in the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thy eyes round about and see: all these are gathered together, they are come to thee. Thy sons shall come from afar, and thy daughters shall rise up at thy side. Then shalt thou see, and abound, and thy heart shall wonder and be enlarged, when the multitude of the sea shall be converted to thee. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Madian and Ephra:

all they from Saba shall come, bringing gold and frankincense, and showing forth praise to the Lord." (Is. lx. 1-6.)

This prophecy was fulfilled on the day of the Epiphany, when the divinity of Our Saviour was made manifest to the Gentiles, in the persons of the three Wise Men from the East. The history is as follows.

When the Israelites, on their way to the Promised Land, were about to pass through the country of Moab, King Balac summoned to his court a heathen prophet named Balaam, to curse the Hebrew people. But the Lord compelled the false prophet, against his will, to pronounce a blessing; so that looking far away into future ages, and raising his voice, he said: "A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel, and shall strike the chiefs of Moab, and shall waste all the children of Seth. And he shall possess Idumea: the inheritance of Seir shall come to their enemies, but Israel shall do manfully. Out of Jacob shall he come that shall rule, and shall destroy the remains of the city." (Num. xxiv. 17-19.)

From this remarkable prophecy the heathen nations had come to believe that among the Jews a mighty king would one day be born, who would bring the Gentiles and their whole territory under his subjection. While most people naturally, in the course of long ages, lost sight of this wonderful prophecy, some few prominent and earnest men, who were well versed in astronomy, kept its remembrance fresh in their minds. So much importance did the Gentiles attach to the prophet's words

that, as tradition tells us, certain persons were appointed to take their station on Mount Victorialis, there to observe the heavens, and to watch and pray that God would soon permit this extraordinary star to appear in the firmament. But the watchers died without seeing the star. The desire for a Saviour did not, however, die with them, but was kept alive by the transmission of the tradition from father to son through all generations. The watchmen on the mountain were replaced by others from age to age.

On Christmas night, a strange star of unusual brilliancy was discovered in that portion of the sky toward Judea. Some astronomers are of opinion that it was merely a clustering together of several of the ordinary heavenly bodies, but as these scientific men are not agreed, we prefer to abide by tradition, and the opinions of the early holy Fathers, and to believe that the Creator placed an entirely new star in the heavens in order to glorify the coming upon earth of His divine Son.

At once several of the devout people of the East set out for Judea, in order to visit the long-expected king, and to pay Him their homage. Chief among them were three estimable princes, named Melchior, Caspar, and Balthasar, who felt themselves inspired by Heaven to undertake the journey. Being well versed in the science of the stars, and acquainted with the old prophecy of Balaam, they were called Magi, or Wise Men. As these three persons, each in his own country, were engaged on the night of the Lord's birth in studying the movements of the stars, and, like their forefathers, praying and yearning for the Redeemer's coming, they

saw simultaneously this unusually large and brilliant orb appear suddenly in the firmament in the direction of Judea. At once they knew, by special revelation, that now at last the long-wished-for star of promise had arisen. It is impossible to describe their joy. They immediately resolved to set out, notwithstanding the severity of the winter season and the difficulties of a journey of more than a hundred leagues, to visit Judea and there adore the new-born King.

So the three devout and learned princes prepared to set out, each one from his own land, taking with them valuable offerings to be presented to the new-born King. Each was accompanied by several companions, attendants, servants, and a number of people of various ranks. When all was ready, the caravan moved off, and the star which they had seen at home guided them during the whole journey. On they went, over extensive countries, through vast deserts, across streams. When they passed through a town, the inhabitants would come out to gaze with wonder at the splendid equipments of the princes, their numerous attendants, and the long line of camels and dromedaries; though no one along the route, even close to Jerusalem, seemed to know anything about this new-born King for whom the travellers eagerly inquired.

At last, on the twelfth day of their journey, and after much fatigue and inconvenience, they came within sight of Jerusalem. With what unfeigned delight they hailed the appearance of this holy city, which they fondly hoped to be the end of their pilgrimage! But as they came near, the star suddenly disappeared from the heavens.

The amazed travellers did not look upon this event as presaging much good; yet they determined to enter. As they passed in long procession through the streets, on their way to the palace, an immense concourse of people came out in surprise to view this strange spectacle. King Herod received his distinguished visitors with apparent respect and friendship, and inquired the object of their coming. And they replied: "Where is He that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and are come to adore Him." But nobody could tell them. The cruel and jealous Herod was shocked at the inquiry, but concealing, as well as he could, his anxiety, he replied in apparent good faith: "Your inquiries are indeed of the greatest importance, but you must be fatigued after your long and wearisome journey, and need some repose. Take a few hours, therefore, together with all your attendants, to enjoy refreshment and rest; and, at the proper hour, I will give you the fullest information possible."

This being done, Herod assembled the chief priests, scribes, and other learned men, and demanded information concerning the birth of Christ. "But they said to him: In Bethlehem of Juda. For so it is written by the prophet: And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the cities of Juda: for out of thee shall come forth the captain that shall rule My people Israel. Then Herod privately calling the Wise Men learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them, and sending them into Bethlehem, said: Go and diligently inquire after the child, and when you

have found Him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore Him." (Matt. ii. 5-8.)

The three Wise Men bade adieu to Herod, and scarcely had they left Jerusalem when the vanished star appeared again in all its brilliancy. At this welcome and cheering sight the whole caravan burst forth into acclamations of joy. With renewed courage they hastened on to Bethlehem, and soon the city of David greeted their eyes. The entrance into the town of such an unusually large and brilliant cavalcade brought out the whole of the wondering population. But the pilgrims kept their eyes fixed on the guiding star and its movements, and followed it to the outskirts of the town, where it stood still directly above the lowly stable. The Wise Men now felt convinced that their journey was ended and their object attained. Yet they were sorely puzzled at seeing no palace, not even a cottage. Only a ruinous stable stood before them. They could not understand how He whose glory had been proclaimed by Heaven itself could dwell in this poor and gloomy abode of cattle. Yet there stood the miraculous star shedding its brightest rays upon this abandoned ruin. But as they were looking, with doubt and misgiving, into the stable, their souls were, in reward for their humility and perseverance, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, and they understood and appreciated so thoroughly the poverty and self-denial of the infant Saviour that they trembled at the thought how near they were to the King of heaven and how soon to appear in His presence.

Hastily adjusting their travel-stained garments, ar-

ranging their presents, and composing their minds, they prepared for a becoming appearance before their King. When the whole company was ready, they advanced toward the stable, and the three Wise Men, with a few favorite attendants, entered the stable. They found Mary seated, with the divine Infant in her arms, while St. Joseph stood near gazing with eyes of tender affection upon his heavenly charge. Completely overpowered at this spectacle of poverty and humility, the Wise Men, unable to utter a word, sank upon their knees before the Child in silent adoration. Long they lingered, absorbed in deep and silent prayer, while the heavenly Father filled their hearts with sentiments of adoration for Jesus, and affection and reverence for Mary and Joseph.

At last they rose from their devotions, and having reverently and fondly kissed the feet of the infant Jesus, opened their treasures, and with bowed heads and bended knees presented their offerings of gold, incense, and myrrh. And thus these three good men made practical and outward homage of their soul-felt admiration for their Saviour.

On the gifts of the three Wise Men the holy Fathers comment as follows: First, in their nature these gifts were perfectly suited to the qualities of Jesus Christ, to whom they were offered. By the gold they expressed their submission to Him as a sovereign king, gold being always considered as a tribute due to royalty; by the incense they showed that they adored Him as God, incense being generally made use of in the service of the Deity; by the myrrh they clearly evinced that they believed

Him to be mortal, since it is one of the principal ingredients used in embalming the dead. The holy Fathers also advise us that we may and ought to make like presents to Christ, in a spiritual sense, to those offered to Him by the Wise Men in the stable of Bethlehem. We must give Him our gold by charity to the poor; we must present Him our incense by fervent prayer; and we must offer Him myrrh, the nature of which is to preserve from the effects of corruption, by the virtue of self-denial, thereby destroying those seeds of perversion which sin has implanted in us.

“And having received an answer in sleep, that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their country.” (Matt. ii. 12.) The devout Magi had accomplished their desire, having seen Jesus and presented their offerings. Therefore, taking leave of the Holy Family, they prepared to return quietly to Jerusalem, in order to inform Herod of their success. But during the night preceding their departure, as they lay asleep in their tents, they had a vision of angels, one of whom said: “Arise, and hurry away to your homes, but do not pass through Jerusalem; take the route through the desert, for Herod must neither see nor hear of you again.” Without asking the meaning of this extraordinary order, they obeyed with promptness, arose, folded their tents, loaded their beasts of burden, and mounting their camels, returned home by the way pointed out by the angel in the vision.

After a long and fatiguing journey they reached their own country, and related to their eagerly inquiring

friends how they had been guided by the strange star, described their interview with Herod, and their indescribable happiness at finding the new-born King. They continued to lead good and holy lives, often recalling the pleasant incidents of their visit to Judea. An ancient writer tells us, that after the ascension of Our Lord, St. Thomas, the apostle, went to the East and baptized the three Wise Men, who from that time became stanch defenders and eloquent preachers of the faith of Christ, and afterward were made bishops, and at a good old age slept in the Lord. Later, their remains were brought to Constantinople, were removed afterward to Milan, and were finally brought by the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa to Cologne, in Germany, where they are to-day held in profound veneration.

Happy the man who, like the Magi, implicitly follows the direction of God, and engages in nothing unless by the authority of His ever-sacred orders. Ever attentive to the call of Heaven, nothing must be suffered to hinder us from following it without delay; ever submissive to its dictates, nothing must be allowed to divert us from the straight line of duty. Thus the divine light will guide us, like the three Wise Men, on our way, and lead us to that salvation which Christ revealed to them.

Holy Father in heaven! I offer Thee, at the manger of Thy divine Son, in company with the three Wise Men, and following their example, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. I offer Thee the gold of Christ's royal dignity, by virtue of which all men must bow down in submission. I offer Thee the pure and brilliant gems of His

human-divine virtues and perfections, always so beautiful in the eyes of Heaven. I offer to Thee Thine only-begotten Son Himself, together with all His graces and merits, acquired by Him for our sake and for our benefit.

I offer Thee the sweet incense of all the fervent prayers with which the holy soul of Jesus glorified Thee during His mortal life. I offer Thee the sweet spices of His humility, patience, obedience, all of which have been as fragrant incense in Thy sight.

I offer Thee the bitter myrrh of all those precious tears which, from the manger to the cross, He shed for the conversion of sinners. I offer Thee the sacred body of Thy divine Son, with all its pains and sufferings, from the moment of His birth to His expiration on the cross.

All these I bring to Thee, heavenly Father, with devout heart, entreating Thee to enrich me with grace, to pardon all sinners, and to replenish all devout followers of Jesus with divine favors, until Thou dost admit us all together to the never-ending happiness of heaven.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE PRESENTATION OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.—THE PURIFICATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

**A**FTER the birth of a son, Jewish mothers had to pass forty days in seclusion to await the day of their purification, and of their child's presentation in the Temple. The law required every mother to offer, on this occasion, a lamb one year old, or, if she were poor, a pair of turtle-doves or young pigeons.

“And after the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they carried Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord, and to offer a sacrifice according as it is written in the law of the Lord: a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.” (Luke ii. 22–24.) The holy mother of God prepared to set out with her spouse, St. Joseph, on her journey to Jerusalem. They made one last visit to the stable to take leave of the walls that had first given shelter to the Saviour. At daybreak the holy pilgrims were already on the road. Mary, with her child on her bosom, was seated on an ass led by St. Joseph, who walked at the side, occupied in silent prayer, meditation, and thoughts of gratitude to God. Slowly they descended the hill on which Bethlehem stood. Tears started from their eyes as they re-

membered the great mercy bestowed by Heaven on the city of David, and the few who recognized it. But what man in his blindness refused, the senseless creatures endeavored to make good. For, as it had happened when the pilgrims were coming from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the beast stopped under an old terebinth tree, and the tree bowed, and dipped its largest branches over the head of the Infant and its mother, as if paying homage to its Creator. Then they resumed their journey, and soon were in Jerusalem.

Quietly and unnoticed the Holy Family passed through the streets on their way to the Temple, where they were met by the venerable priest Simeon. "And behold there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Ghost was in Him." (Luke ii. 25.) It had been revealed to this servant of God that he would not see death till he had first seen the promised Messias. Impelled by holy yearnings, this devout old man had come early this morning to the Temple, and on meeting the Holy Family near the door, he knew, by an inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that this child was the Child of Promise.

The Blessed Virgin was then conducted to that part of the Temple where the ceremony of purification usually took place. When it was over, the venerable Simeon conducted the holy mother and her Child to the altar, where the presentation and ransoming of her first-born was performed. Every requirement of the law being complied with, the holy old man, unable to restrain his

feelings, takes the divine Infant in his arms, and gives thanks to God in inspired words: "Now then dost Thou dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to Thy word, in peace: because my eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples. A light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel." (Luke ii. 29-32.) Then, turning to Mary and Joseph, the old man says a few parting words, with prophetic insight of the future of both the Child and His mother. "And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother: Behold, this Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be contradicted. And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed." (Luke ii. 34, 35.) The meaning of which is: Your Child is destined for the fall of many in Israel, for many will reject Him; but also for the rising of many, who will believe in Him and live. He is sent for a sign which will be spoken against and meet with reproach and contradiction, which will reveal the thoughts of many hearts respecting Him: a truth which sadly culminated on Calvary. That Mary's own heart was pierced with the sword of sorrow, her whole life proves.

At the same time, "there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser; she was far advanced in years, and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity. And she was a widow until fourscore and four years: who departed not from the Temple by fasting and prayers, serving night and

day. Now she at the same hour coming in, confessed to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all that looked for the redemption of Israel." (Luke ii. 36-38.) What happiness for this venerable widow to be deemed worthy, as the first of all the women of Jerusalem, to look upon the Messias, and to proclaim Him as the long-desired of nations.

As Mary and Joseph listened to the remarkable words of Simeon and Anna, they wondered that it had so soon pleased God to make known the divine mission of their Child. All four together praised the mercy of God, and then the holy parents, bidding farewell to Simeon and Anna, returned with their infant to their own home at Nazareth. "And after they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their city Nazareth." (Luke ii. 39.)

In the presentation of Jesus, and the purification of Mary, behold the humility of both. The Son of God could not be bound by a law of which He Himself was the author; the mother of God, who had conceived and brought forth her divine Child in so extraordinary a manner, might certainly have claimed exemption from the usages established for the rest of her sex. Still both of them submit and readily conform to the precepts of the law. O wonderful example! How loudly it condemns the want of submission of those who pay so little deference to the precepts of the Church, the sole design of which is to promote their salvation!

The presentation of Jesus and the purification of Mary are observed as a feast by the Church on the 2d of

February. It is called the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and is also known by the name of Candlemas Day, from the candles blessed before Mass, to remind us of Him whom Simeon was inspired to call the "Light to the revelation of the Gentiles." This feast was instituted by Pope Gelasius, A.D. 542.

O Jesus, Thou light of the world, who wast pleased on this day to be offered in the Temple, impart to me a portion of the disposition of these four holy persons who were witnesses of Thy presentation in the Temple. Give me the humility of Mary, the simplicity of Joseph, the fervor of Simeon, the self-denial of Anna, so that, like them, I may walk in the brightness of Thy glorious light, and at last be admitted into the heavenly Jerusalem, the imperishable temple of Thy eternal glory.

## CHAPTER V.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.—THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS. — THE HOLY FAMILY IN EGYPT.—THEIR RETURN.

THE sword which, according to Simeon's prophecy, was to pierce the Blessed Virgin's soul, soon made itself felt. Not long after the departure of the Wise Men, "behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise and take the Child and His mother, and fly into Egypt, and be there until I shall tell thee. For it will come to pass that Herod will seek the Child to destroy Him." (Matt. ii. 13.)

It was midnight when Joseph and Mary, carrying the divine Infant, fled from Nazareth. Tradition tells us that Joseph carefully led an ass upon which was seated Mary with the Child. All nature seemed buried in ominous repose as they slowly and cautiously descended the hill near the town into the plain below. But what course shall they now follow? The ordinary route to Egypt lay through Jerusalem and Bethlehem, and could they evade the watchfulness of Herod and pursue this way in safety? In their great fear, they turned aside from frequented roads, and journeyed over unfrequented paths through Galilee, Samaria, and Judea, often sleep-

ing under the canopy of heaven, and tormented by thirst and hunger.

At length the weary wanderers reached the city of Gaza, just beyond Herod's jurisdiction. New dangers now awaited them amid the sandy deserts of Arabia, which here extend their dismal, arid wastes over a three weeks' journey. They pressed forward amid clouds of blinding sand, reaching a spring of water only at great intervals. We may venture to accept with devout belief the pious and beautiful legends of the miraculous interposition of God in behalf of His beloved pilgrims.

Thus it is related that one day the Holy Family, having come to the foot of a gloomy and rugged mountain, were unable to discover any path by which they might ascend and cross to the valley beyond. In their perplexity they had recourse to prayer, and soon several of the beasts which infested the vicinity, at the command of God came and gathered with friendly mien around the pilgrims. These beasts, the terror of all travellers who penetrated this wilderness, proceeded quietly in advance up the mountain; Joseph followed, and soon discovered the right path leading to the valley on the other side.

Another time, having travelled far into the night without finding any refreshment or a place to rest their weary limbs, they saw a glimmering light in the distance. Following the friendly signal, they were much alarmed, on coming near, to find that they had approached a robbers' cave. The chief of the robbers came forth from his hiding-place, and regarded the timid travellers with a look foreboding evil. But suddenly his eye

fell on the beauteous infant in its mother's arms, and a ray of dazzling light seemed to dart from the divine countenance and penetrate the bandit's heart. Struck dumb with astonishment, he could only invite them by friendly signs to enter his poor abode. Here they were kindly received by the robber's wife, who furnished them with whatever her dismal home could afford. After partaking of the nourishment so much needed, Mary took advantage of the woman's kindness and of the limited accommodations of the cavern to bathe her infant. The woman then placed her own child, that had been afflicted from its birth with a repulsive skin disease, in the same water, and behold, the child's body became fair and comely. In the morning the grateful woman supplied her departing guests with some food for their journey, and the bandit himself insisted upon accompanying them a part of the way to point out the best and safest roads. As he was about to take his leave of the holy group, he looked for a moment at the divine Infant, and said reverently: "Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom." (Luke xxiii. 42.) Later, this same robber was crucified with Jesus, and, suing for mercy, used the same words.

Legend gives us many other accounts of the joy exhibited by the birds, beasts, and trees as their great Creator passed by. The barren sands of the desert were studded with flowers, which became known by the name of roses of Jericho, and even now continue to bloom in the desert, and are greatly prized by pious pilgrims. Thus the words of the prophet were literally ful-

filled: "The land that was desolate and impassable shall be glad, the wilderness shall rejoice and shall flourish like the lily. It shall bud forth and blossom, and shall rejoice with joy and praise." (Is. xxxv. 1, 2.)

Still another prophecy was fulfilled on this divinely ordained pilgrimage. "Behold the Lord will ascend, and will enter into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at His presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst thereof." (Is. xix. 1.) For hardly had the holy group emerged from the deserts of Egypt when the false gods of the country began to feel conscious of the presence of the divine Infant, and to know that their end had come. As several reliable historians of antiquity affirm, the idols in the public squares and in the temples fell to the ground, creating grief and consternation among the pagan inhabitants.

Meanwhile Herod, knowing nothing of the escape of the Holy Family, and "perceiving that he was deluded by the Wise Men, was exceeding angry, and sending, killed all the men-children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the borders thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the Wise Men." (Matt ii. 16.) Often had Herod's soul been stained with blood, and he shrank not, therefore, from this cruel slaughter of the innocents. Legend tells us, that in order to make his work surer and easier, he invited all the mothers of Bethlehem to meet in the public town-hall, and to bring their children of two years old and under, so that he might award a prize to each child. How happy the unsuspecting mothers must have

been as they arrayed themselves and their dear ones in holiday attire to make a creditable appearance before the king's representatives! How gayly and hopefully they hastened, at the appointed time, to the place of assembly!

Alas, what a horrible and cruel deception! Scarcely were all safely within the building when the doors were fastened, and Herod's executioners, rushing upon the horror-stricken mothers, tore the children from their arms, and murdered the poor innocents in a most cruel manner. They cleft their heads, cut their throats, stabbed them to the heart, and gashed their limbs. Even the mothers who defended their children were brutally wounded. At first, it might well seem to be a miserable dream. But when they saw the streams of blood, and heard the choking gasp or the piercing shriek of their dying innocents, the mothers, awaking from their stupor and realizing the extent of the dreadful calamity that a cruel prince had inflicted on them, sent up an agonizing cry of terror and despair, that well might move even the callous minions of King Herod. "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the prophet, saying: A voice in Rama was heard, lamentation and great mourning: Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." (Matt. ii. 17, 18.)

Consider the sorrow with which the divine Infant is penetrated at the death of these innocent victims persecuted for His sake. Mary, too, felt the greatest compassion for them. In a vision to St. Brigid she once remarked, that to hear of the massacre of the innocents,

killed for the sake of her divine Son, caused her great anguish.

We left the Holy Family entering the land of Egypt. Their road led them into the city of Heliopolis, that is, the City of the Sun. That city, one of the finest and largest in Egypt, contained a Jewish temple and a numerous Jewish congregation. Among these people of their own nationality Joseph and Mary hoped to find shelter and protection. But the experiences of Bethlehem were repeated here. Reliable tradition informs us that after many unsuccessful applications for admittance at inhospitable doors, the Holy Family found shelter in the ruins of an old pagan temple, where they were compelled to live for a year and a half. St. Joseph earned a scanty subsistence at his trade, and Mary, besides attending to her household duties, assisted him to add to their slender income by doing handsome embroidery for some Egyptian ladies, the knowledge of which she had acquired during her school days in the Temple at Jerusalem. By her simple, unassuming manners and her gentle friendliness, the Blessed Virgin gained the confidence of several worthy ladies. They often conversed together about the strange signs of the times, about the destruction of the idols, the falling of the temples, and the silence of the oracles. Mary seized upon these opportunities to direct the minds of these ladies to the knowledge of the one true God, and they were unaccountably and irresistibly impelled to truth and virtue. Even some pagan priests were brought, by what they heard and saw of this remarkable family, to the determination of aban-

doning their idolatrous worship and embracing the true religion.

The Holy Family did not escape persecution during their sojourn in Egypt. Many of their heathen neighbors, given up heart and soul to idolatry, were greatly incensed at the poor foreign family, denounced them as spies, magicians, restless mischief-makers; in fine, persecuted them to that degree that the Blessed Virgin came to the determination to leave Heliopolis and to seek a new home elsewhere.

Accordingly, the Holy Family went to Memphis, the ancient capital of the country. But finding no opening in the city, they pushed on to a small village called Mathæra, or Matarna. There they suffered much for want of pure and wholesome water. In her distress the Blessed Virgin had recourse to prayer, when, behold, a copious supply of water burst forth at her right hand from the dry earth, continued to flow, and flows to this day. This spring is called "Mary's Well." Even the surrounding place became a fertile region. St. Joseph exerted himself here, too, to procure a home in which they might find shelter till recalled to their own country.

In their dreary exile in Egypt the Holy Family were favored with much consolation from Heaven. Yet, in their necessary intercourse with the pagan inhabitants, their hearts grew sad as they witnessed the dismal idolatry and other cruel and disgusting vices of the Egyptians, and they yearned eagerly for a return to their own home. At last this happy day dawned. "An angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, saying: Arise, and

take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead who sought the life of the Child." (Matt. ii. 20.) Joseph having packed their few goods upon the back of their faithful ass, they set out on their wearisome but welcome journey.

At last, after many days of tedious and laborious travel, they crossed the confines of Egyptian territory, and reached Gaza, the nearest city of Palestine to the boundary line. St. Joseph now thought of going to Bethlehem, there to take up his abode with Jesus and Mary. "But hearing that Archelaus reigned in Judea in the room of Herod his father, he was afraid to go thither; and being warned in sleep, retired into the quarters of Galilee. And coming, he dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was said by the prophets: That He shall be called a Nazarite." (Matt. iii. 22, 23.) Who can describe the happiness of these poor pilgrims when they were once more permitted, after an absence of many years, to look upon their native town and home, to enter their own little dwelling, and to receive the friendly welcome of kindred and neighbors!

O Mary, Queen of heaven, I entreat thee by the sorrow which thou didst experience on being exiled from thy country, and by the joy which thou didst feel on returning to thy long-deserted home in Nazareth, to obtain for me in this earthly exile a never-failing desire to reach the home of my Father in heaven.

## CHAPTER VI.

JESUS, AT TWELVE YEARS, VISITS THE TEMPLE.—HIS HIDDEN LIFE AT NAZARETH.

THREE times a year, at Easter, Pentecost, and on the Feast of Tabernacles, the Jews were obliged to visit the Temple at Jerusalem. The parents of Jesus willingly complied with this requirement of the law. Jesus did not accompany them on these pilgrimages till He was twelve years of age, and then the journey brought them a great sorrow and filled their hearts with dreadful alarm.

“And His parents went every year to Jerusalem, at the solemn day of the pasch. And when He was twelve years old, they going up into Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast, and having fulfilled the days, when they returned the Child Jesus remained in Jerusalem, and His parents knew it not. And thinking that He was in the company, they came a day’s journey, and sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And not finding Him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking Him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions. And all that

heard Him were astonished at His wisdom and at His answers." (Luke ii. 41-47.)

It was usual for those who attended the festival of the Passover, on their return to their respective homes, to divide themselves into large parties; the men and women generally travelling in separate bands, while the children were permitted to remain with either division. Jesus, before beginning the journey, had, with the permission of His parents, joined some friends and acquaintances from Galilee, and when the pilgrims were setting out, St. Joseph supposed that He was at His mother's side in the company of the women, while the Blessed Virgin was quite confident that He had joined His foster-father, and was therefore on His way home with the men. Thus these two holy parents pursued their journey, and had but little concern and no anxiety in regard to their dear child, till, toward evening of the first day, they reached Machmas, a resting-place for caravans, about four leagues north of Jerusalem. How dreadfully alarmed must Joseph and Mary have been when, on meeting, they discovered that the Child Jesus was not in the company! They hurried from house to house, hoping to find the lost one amongst their fellow-travellers. But their search throughout Machmas proving fruitless, they lost no time in retracing their steps, unattended, in the dead hour of the night, over the dark and dreary road back to Jerusalem. Reaching the city just at daybreak, they hurried through the streets, they searched and inquired everywhere, but in vain. The day passed, and the evening found them almost distracted

with grief. The second night and second day were equally sad. The morning of the third day dawned, and the weary parents were still on their disconsolate errand.

But where was the Child Jesus during these three days? He was in the Temple at Jerusalem. There, in a special hall set apart for the teachers of the law, the Child Jesus passed most of the time during which His grief-stricken parents were looking for Him. Three long and weary days they had passed in their search, and now they enter the hall. What a strange spectacle meets their eyes! There is their own Child Jesus, sitting in the midst of the great and learned doctors, listening to them, questioning them, and even instructing them, as if He were the most eminent teacher in Israel! As soon as Jesus was apprised of His parents' presence, He hastened to meet them. Conceive and describe, if you can, the relief and delight of Mary and Joseph! "And seeing Him, they wondered. And His mother said to Him: Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing. And He said to them: How is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business? And they understood not the word that He spoke unto them." (Luke ii. 48-50.)

Is there any shadow of reproach in these words of Jesus? Not by any means, for they simply justify His own conduct, and contain a lesson. During her quiet and retired life in Nazareth the Blessed Virgin had come to regard Jesus as her child. True, she never forgot for a moment that He was also really and truly the Son of

God, but she did not clearly understand how and when He would enter upon and discharge the duties of His mission. On this occasion our divine Saviour sought to lead His blessed mother's thoughts from His human to His divine nature. The God-man must be about His Father's business, that is, He must be occupied in the service of truth, justice, and holiness, and wherever an opportunity occurs of leading separated humanity back to the end for which it was created. Hence Jesus said to His mother and foster-father: "Do you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

"And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. And His mother kept all these words in her heart." (Luke ii. 51.) Mary comprehended, though not fully and perfectly, the mystery contained in the words of her Son. She believed, trusted, loved, and adored with all the powers of her soul.

From His twelfth to His thirtieth year, Jesus dwelt with Mary and Joseph in their humble home at Nazareth, advancing "in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men." (Luke ii. 52.) These few words give us a perfect and touching picture of the Holy Family, portraying in simple colors the faithful father, the tender mother, and the obedient child: for all three cooperated faithfully to this advancement.

St. Joseph was the head of the Holy Family. Mother and son were entrusted to his care and protection. By the labor of his hands he was to clothe and feed them, guard them against want and danger, and shield them

from evil and misfortune. And how cheerfully did he devote every hour of his life to their welfare! He considered it an honor and a sacred privilege to be entrusted with this duty. While he depended on God's protection and assistance, he applied his hands industriously to his work, and gave his soul to prayer. Work and prayer, both united in love—such is the history of the every-day life in the happy home at Nazareth.

And when his work was done, and the time had arrived when Jesus was to enter upon His public mission, St. Joseph was taken away from this world. He died in the arms of Jesus and Mary.

The foster-father St. Joseph is the *head* of the Holy Family, but Mary is the *heart*. And what do we find in this heart? St. Luke tells us: "Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart." (Luke ii. 19.) But this meditation does not impede her in the discharge of her household duties, for Jesus occupies both her heart and her hands. "In that household," says the devout Louis of Granada, "we find no servants. Mary is never idle; she is either at work or at prayer. She weaves, spins, sews, cooks the frugal meal, or performs the duties of an ordinary servant. She whom the angels now serve in heaven never had any one to wait upon her while on earth. She is alone: alone in her chamber, alone in her workroom, alone in her kitchen, and serves others cheerfully and assiduously, so as to resemble as much as possible Him who said of Himself: 'The Son of man is come to serve, and not to be served.'"

"And Jesus was subject to them." The King of kings

lived eighteen years under the lowly roof of His foster-father, the Carpenter of Nazareth, and was Himself a willing and laborious helper in his work, and a thoughtful and obedient servant of His virgin mother. "As soon," writes Louis of Granada, "as the growing strength of His tender years permitted, Jesus accompanied His father to the workshop in order to help him in providing the means of their subsistence. When at home He assisted His blessed mother in her household duties, and at all times sought to anticipate every wish of His devoted parents. Yes, Jesus was obedient for eighteen years in the solitude of a cottage in a mountain village, and He has been obedient for eighteen centuries in the solitude of His tabernacle upon our altars."

From the retired life of the Holy Family at Nazareth we can and should draw the following lesson: According to the dispositions of divine Providence, the greatest proportion of mankind always remains poor, unknown, and subject to others. The greater the number of those who seek a false independence, honor, and wealth, the more frequent are strife and discontent, the more common are rebellion and war among nations. The greater the number of those who seek to make their lives like the life of the Redeemer, and their condition similar to His peaceful and contented state, the more certain and safe are peace and prosperity. It is not the astute politician, nor the successful soldier, nor the famous scholar, nor yet the daring speculator who brings happiness to the people and true greatness to a nation. It is the peaceful and industrious laborer, the busy and intelligent artisan.

who are the bone and sinew of national life and prosperity.

Let us, therefore, walk in the footsteps of Our Saviour, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Let us look not upon the example of the world, trust not its promises, follow not its maxims, for the world disappears, and its pleasures perish with it. But whosoever doth the will of God shall live for all eternity.

Inspire me, O Lord, with a true comprehension of the sublimity of Thy hidden life, and instil into my heart an ardent desire to imitate Thy example, that living hidden in and with Thee on earth, I may come to participate in Thy glory in heaven.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.—HIS FAST IN THE DESERT.—  
HIS TEMPTATION.—THE BEGINNING OF HIS PUBLIC MIN-  
ISTRY.

BEFORE introducing Himself as the Messiah, Jesus wished to present Himself as the representative of fallen man, and as the Lamb of sacrifice bearing our sins. He effected this design by humbling Himself, and like a sinner subjecting Himself to the baptism of St. John. This holy man dwelt in the desert between Jerusalem and Jericho. Locusts and wild honey were his food. Locusts are used as food by the very poor in Arabia; they are dried and then cooked or roasted on the fire or in the sun. The honey of wild bees is very bitter and unpalatable. From this poor food, and from his dress, consisting of a rough camel's skin, we may form an idea of St. John's penitential life. "And in those days cometh John the Baptist preaching in the desert of Judea, and saying: Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. . . . Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea and all the country about Jordan, and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins." (Matt. iii. 1-6.)

"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John, to be baptized by him. But John stayed Him,

saying: I ought to be baptized by Thee, and Thou comest to me? And Jesus answering, said to him: Suffer it to be so now: for so it becometh us to fulfil all justice. Then he suffered Him. And Jesus being baptized, forthwith came out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened to him; and he saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove, and coming upon Him. And behold a voice from heaven, saying: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. iii. 13-17.)

According to tradition, it was on New Year's day that our divine Redeemer, having taken leave of His beloved mother Mary, of His saintly foster-father St. Joseph, and of the humble home in Nazareth, set out to enter upon His public ministry. He arrived on the sixth day in Aenon, on the banks of the Jordan, where John was then baptizing. Overpowered with sentiments of awe, love, and adoration, the Baptist threw himself at the feet of Christ, whom, by a revelation from heaven, he recognized as the Saviour. How overwhelmed with confusion he must have been, to see Jesus humble Himself before him and asking to be baptized, like any sinner! But Jesus knew well what He was doing. In His supreme wisdom He had decreed thus to begin His great work before the world. For, in the first place, He wanted to show us that virtue and sanctity must begin with humility; in the second place, that the Sacrament of Baptism is the opening to God's kingdom on earth; in the third place, that He had really and truly assumed the guilt of man, and now began the work of atonement. By His baptism in Jordan's waters He wanted to consecrate and sanction, in a

specially marked manner, the baptism of the New Law. And, as toward the close of His life upon earth, at the Last Supper, He made use of the figure of the Old Law to establish the thing itself, that is, the paschal feast to ordain the Blessed Eucharist, so now did He wish at the beginning of His public life to practically use the figurative baptism in order to ordain the sacramental Baptism of the New Law.

The wondrous manifestation that took place at Christ's baptism is a true and striking picture of redeeming grace. He humbled Himself, and was instantly exalted. So every man who humbles himself in Christ, the same shall be in Christ exalted. The outward act of baptism was administered unto Christ, and at the same time the heavens opened above Him. So does heaven open over every man at the moment he worthily receives the outward sign of a holy sacrament, whilst an invisible and supernatural grace overflows his soul.

After His baptism Jesus withdrew to the mountainous desert, now called Quarantana, there to keep His fast. The path leading up to it is very steep, and so narrow that two persons cannot walk side by side on it. Toward the summit the rocks rise like a wall, and below yawns a chasm many hundred feet deep. Here, in a cavern in the mountain-side, our blessed Lord observed His fast.

"Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterward He was hungry. And the tempter coming said to Him: If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. Who

answered and said: It is written, Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, and set Him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him: If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down. For it is written, that He hath given His angels charge over Thee, and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest perhaps Thou dash Thy foot against a stone. Jesus said to him: It is written, again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again the devil took Him up into a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and said to Him: All these will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me. Then Jesus saith to him: Begone, Satan, for it is written: The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil left Him, and behold angels came and ministered to Him." (Matt. iv. 1-11.)

Our Lord's withdrawal into the solitude of the desert ought to teach us that we, too, when about to take any important step in life, or to assume any serious duty, should, as far as may be in our power, withdraw from the distractions of the world, and seriously prepare ourselves in silent retirement and prayer.

But why did Jesus permit the devil to approach Him and present this threefold temptation? In the first place, Our Lord, as the representative of sinful man, wished to become like ourselves, taking upon Himself all our misery, spiritual and temporal. Secondly, He wished to show us by His example that by God's grace we may

quietly, fearlessly, and resolutely, overcome the temptations and repel the assaults of the devil. Thirdly, Christ, the new Adam, wanted to compensate for the defeat of our first parents by a decisive victory over the tempter, the devil.

From the desert, Jesus returned to the river Jordan. The time now being at hand when He was to begin His public ministry, He desired that St. John the Baptist, who was held in such great esteem by the people, should give testimony of Him. Therefore, when "the next day John saw Jesus coming to him, he saith: Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who taketh away the sins of the world. This is He of whom I said: After me cometh a Man who is preferred before me, because He was before me. And I knew Him not, but that He may be made manifest in Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. . . . I saw the Spirit coming down as a dove from heaven, and He remained upon Him." (John i. 29-32.) By these words many were induced to believe in Christ, to follow Him, and to hear His doctrine. Among these were Andrew and John, who were soon joined by Simon, Philip, and Nathaniel.

With these disciples Christ went to Galilee, because it was there that He intended to begin His ministry for the salvation of souls. Soon the people flocked to hear Him, "and they were astonished at His doctrine, for His speech was with power." (Luke iv. 32.) He confirmed His teaching by miracles, and His fame went throughout all the land, and far beyond the confines of the Jewish country, so that many persons from the lands beyond the

sea came to see and hear Him. Moreover, His picture was sent to other countries, so that they who had not the privilege of seeing Him personally might have at least the satisfaction of looking on Him in effigy. Thus we read that Lentulus, a Roman senator, presented a picture of Christ to the Senate at Rome, which he accompanied with the following letter:

*“To the illustrious Senate of Rome, Lentulus sends Greeting:*

“There has appeared, and still lives in our time, a man of great virtues, whose name is Jesus Christ, and whom the pagans regard as a prophet of truth, whilst His disciples call Him the Son of God. He raises the dead to life, and heals the sick. His figure is tall, His demeanor commands respect, and His countenance inspires veneration, love, and fear. The color of His hair is that of ripe hazelnuts, and it falls smoothly over his ears; thence it curls, and falls in shining yellow curls over His shoulders. It is parted in the middle, according to the custom of Nazarites. His forehead is smooth and clear, His face without wrinkles or blemish, and moderately ruddy; the nose and mouth are regular. His full beard is, in color, similar to His hair. It is parted in the middle, and is of the customary length. The man's aspect is majestic and austere; His eyes are clear, dark, and penetrating. His rebuke is terrible, His conversation mild and amiable. His disposition is cheerful, but tempered with moderation; He was never seen laughing, but was often beheld weeping. His words are wise, modest, and dis-

creet. Never was there seen more comely a man than He."

From this letter of Lentulus we may imagine the beauty, grace, and loveliness of Christ's person, and the esteem in which He was held. He also received many messages and letters, for when the fame of His miracles spread over all the world, and, according to St. Matthew, was proclaimed also in Syria, a prince of that country, Abagarus by name, who was infected with leprosy, wrote the following letter to Christ:

*"Abagarus, Prince in Edessa, to the Saviour who appeared in the Land of Jerusalem, Greeting:*

"I received information concerning Thy extraordinary powers, and heard that Thou dost heal without the use of physic and herbs. It is said that Thou makest the blind to see, the lame to walk, and restorest lepers to health; that Thou castest out the evil spirits, healest those who have been ill a long time, and even recallest the dead to life. Now when I heard all these things of Thee, I considered that one of two things must be true, viz., either Thou art God Himself come down from heaven, or at least the Son of God, because Thou performest such extraordinary miracles. Hence I write to Thee, imploring Thee most fervently to come to me and heal me of the malady with which I am stricken. For I hear that the Jews malignantly oppose Thee, and intend to do Thee great evil. My city, it is true, is small, but it is good and beautiful, and able to provide for us both."

This letter the prince sent by one of his nobles, whom he instructed to use his utmost endeavors to induce Christ to accompany him. But if He should refuse to come, he was to have His picture painted and bring it with him. The messenger, accompanied by a portrait painter, started on his journey. Coming to Galilee, he found Our Lord preaching to a vast multitude gathered on the open plain. He approached Christ, gave Him the letter, and urgently invited Him to come with him. Having read the letter, Our Lord sent the following reply:

*"Jesus of Nazareth, to Prince Abagarus, Greeting:*

"Blessed art thou, O Abagarus, for believing in Me without having seen Me; because it is written that those who see Me shall not believe in Me, but those not having seen Me shall believe in Me and live. But what thou dost write to Me of coming to thee cannot be accomplished, because of the work which I was sent to fulfil, and which being fulfilled, I shall return to Him who has sent Me. But when I shall have ascended, I shall send you one of My disciples, who shall heal thee of thy serious illness, and give life to thee and thine."

Unable to induce Christ to accompany him, the messenger ordered the artist to paint His picture. Finding it impossible, on account of the multitude surrounding Our Lord, to approach near to Him, the painter seated himself on a neighboring eminence and applied himself to his task. But looking at Christ, he found His coun-

tenance so radiantly brilliant with a divine light, that he had to avert his eyes, and could not proceed with his work. Now Our Lord bade St. Thomas to go and bring the painter to Him. St. Thomas did so, and both the painter and the prince's messenger came to Him. To Christ's inquiry what he had been painting, the artist replied that his master had commanded him to paint a picture of the miracle-working man. Then Christ took some water, washed His sacred countenance, and dried it on a linen towel. And behold, the face of Our Lord appeared so faithfully reproduced upon the towel that it looked life-like. This picture He handed to the messenger, telling him to give it to his master, that the latter might be consoled and bear his infirmity with fortitude. The astonished messenger received the picture with profound veneration, returned to his master, and related all that had occurred. Then he gave him the letter and the sacred picture. The prince devoutly kissed the sacred image, and held it ever afterward in the greatest veneration. Often he would contemplate it, and every time he was filled with consolation, and felt relief from the pains of his malady. Some years later, after Christ's ascension, St. Thaddeus came to Edessa, preached the doctrine of Christ, and wrought many miracles. The prince, on hearing of it, called him, firmly believing that this was the man whom Our Lord had promised to send. The face of St. Thaddeus, when he entered the prince's apartment, shone like the sun, and the prince, reverently prostrate before the apostle, said: "Thou art the disciple whom Jesus, the Son of God, promised to send to me." The

apostle replied: "Because thou hast placed so great confidence in Jesus, He sent me to cure thee of thy sickness." The prince said: "O holy man of God! tell me how the Lord Jesus came into this world, and by what power He performed the miracles which I heard of Him." Then Thaddeus explained to him how Christ had been sent by His Father, how He had lived upon this earth and was cruelly murdered by the Jews. After the prince, with tearful eyes, had heard all this, he said: "If the Roman empire was not against me, I should gather a great army and punish the treacherous Jews." And the prince and his city were converted and baptized by Thaddeus, who told them that as long as they would venerate the picture which Our Lord had sent them their city would never be conquered by an enemy.

The occurrences related above, and similar other ones, though not related by the Evangelists, are nevertheless attested by ancient and truthful writers, and may therefore be accepted as credible, the more so as St. John, in his gospel, expressly declares: "But there are also many other things which Jesus did: which if they were written, every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written." (John xxi. 25.)

## CHAPTER VIII.

### JESUS CALLS THE TWELVE APOSTLES.—THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

EVERY important act in the life of Our Lord was preceded by prayer and meditation. “And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and He passed the whole night in the prayer of God. And when day was come, He called unto Him His disciples: and He chose twelve of them (whom also He named apostles). Simon, whom He surnamed Peter, and Andrew his brother, James and John, Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon who is called Zelotes, and Jude the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot who was the traitor.” (Luke vi. 12–16.)

The election of the apostles occurred toward the beginning of the second year of Christ’s ministry. By their sublime vocation, the apostles became the domestic companions and familiar friends of their blessed Lord. This gave them an opportunity of conversing more intimately with Him, and being witnesses not only of His public, but also of His private virtues. To them He manifested Himself more freely, and explained at large those points of doctrine and morality which He commu-

nicated to the people in parables. Immediately on calling them, He assembled them about Him and gave them particular instructions to prepare them for their work, to teach them how to perform it dutifully, and to encourage them to bear with fortitude the persecutions which awaited them.

Shortly after having thus initiated His chosen ones, He addressed Himself to all men, giving a summary of His whole doctrine in the sublime Sermon on the Mount. "And Jesus seeing the multitudes went up into a mountain, and when He was set down His disciples came unto Him. And opening His mouth He taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you for My sake: be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven; for so they persecuted the prophets that were before you." (Matt. v. 1-12.)

What a beautiful, heart-winning introduction to His sermon! Surely, He who thus speaks can have come into the world for no other purpose but to reunite heaven

and earth, to restore man to his long-lost happiness. Hence Christ's gospel must necessarily be directly opposed to that system of teaching which severed earth from heaven. Worldlings praise the rich, the great, the powerful; but Jesus commends the lowly, the persecuted, the tearful poor. Again, it is poverty that Christ first recommends to all: poverty in spirit, that is, that holy spirit of poverty, consisting not so much in possessing nothing, but rather in having one's heart detached from earthly treasures, and in holding one's soul free from inordinate love of worldly goods, and seeking after the imperishable wealth of grace, truth, and happiness in Christ.

Avarice, which is directly opposed to holy poverty, is the source of all passionate contentions for the things of this world; it is the origin of every evil and misfortune. Hence the dreadful language of the divine Master: "But woe to you that are rich: for you have your consolation. Woe to you that are filled: for you shall hunger. Woe to you that now laugh: for you shall mourn and weep. Woe to you when men shall bless you: for according to these things did their fathers to the false prophets." (Luke vi. 24-26.)

Jesus, now turning from the multitude, directs His words to the apostles, whom He had specially appointed to heal the moral corruption of the world, to announce the glad tidings of salvation, to dispense God's grace in the sacraments, and thus become a leaven among men. "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt lose its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing any more but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by

men. You are the light of the world. A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid; neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father, who is in heaven." (Matt. v. 13-16.)

Whilst admonishing the future prophets and teachers of the New Testament, Our Lord adverts to the ancient prophets, and to the Old Law especially. This law is not to be repealed or destroyed, but rather developed, perfected, and sanctified. "Do not think that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For amen I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall not pass of the law till all be fulfilled. He therefore that shall break one of these least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but he that shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you, that unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. v. 17-20.)

Jesus here, and in the following passages, which treat of forgiveness, of chastity, of truth in speech, of obedience, and of love of enemies, lays down the fundamental principle fully and clearly, that the law is not to be abrogated in the new dispensation, but developed, perfected, and sanctified. "You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill: and who shall kill

shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you: that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee: leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift. Be at agreement with thy adversary betimes, whilst thou art in the way with him: lest perhaps thy adversary deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Amen, I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing." (Matt. v. 21-26.)

See how Christ gives to the most important relations of daily life an entirely new and perfect character, by securing to the individual higher honor and more personal dignity than were required or secured in the Old Law. Even inward dislike, if voluntary, will be punished; and the expressions of anger, hatred, and envy will receive castigation according to their degree of intensity.

"You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say to you: that whosoever shall look on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart. And if thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee: for it is expedient for thee that one of thy members should perish, rather than thy whole body be cast into hell. And if thy right hand scandalize thee,

cut it off and cast it from thee: for it is expedient for thee that one of thy members should perish, rather than thy whole body be cast into hell. And it hath been said: Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a bill of divorce. But I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, excepting the cause of fornication, maketh her to commit adultery; and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery." (Matt. v. 27-32.)

Here our divine Saviour re-establishes and sanctifies the family in its very foundation, namely, in holy matrimony and in matrimonial fidelity. Henceforth lawful marriage is to be indissoluble. No power, whether temporal or spiritual, can ever again dissolve a properly contracted marriage. For all future time married people are to understand that they are bound under pain of grievous sin strictly to observe matrimonial fidelity, not only in act, but in word, thought, and look. They must be prepared to make heavy sacrifices, if necessary, in order to avoid the occasion of even an unbecoming thought or word. In this sense is to be taken Our Saviour's expression to pluck out an eye, etc., viz., that we should be prepared to make the most severe sacrifices in order to avoid the occasions of sin.

"Again, you have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not forswear thyself: but thou shalt perform thy oaths to the Lord. But I say to you not to swear at all, neither by heaven, for it is the throne of God; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King: neither shalt

thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech be: yea, yea; no, no: and that which is over and above these, is of evil." (Matt. v. 33-37.)

In these edifying and instructive passages of the Sermon on the Mount Our Lord elevates and sanctifies business relations between man and man, by extolling and enjoining mutual honesty and confidence between them, to such a laudable and happy extent that the words yes and no may be sufficient, and all oaths unnecessary. But, in view of human imperfection, neither the judicial oath nor any just oath is forbidden in case of necessity, and in the cause of truth.

"You have heard that it has been said: An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you not to resist evil: but if one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other; and if a man will contend with thee in judgment, and take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him. And whosoever will force thee one mile, go with him other two. Give to him that asketh of thee: and from him that would borrow of thee turn not away. You have heard that it has been said: Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thy enemy. But I say to you: Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you: that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven: who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust. For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans this? And if you salute your

brethren only, what do you more? Do not also the heathens this? Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt. v. 38-48.)

In the above words our blessed Saviour first sanctifies Christian government, or society, by elevating, purifying, and perfecting strict justice, which is its very cornerstone, and by inculcating upon His followers sometimes to forego their rights for the sake of peace, especially in affairs of minor importance, when such concession will not, to any grave extent, injure themselves or those depending upon them. Then He teaches us that our charity must comprise all men, even our enemies, if we would merit supernatural reward. If men would only adhere to the observance of these principles, how secure the individual would be, how united the family, how plain and easy every kind of business, how peaceful the commonwealth, how happy the whole human family in its every relation! All those irritating questions which divide men into hostile camps, wasting their energies in useless and pernicious strife, would be settled at once and forever.

Our divine Teacher now passes on to the three principal works of Christian charity, namely, almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. He warns us, first of all, that these three works have value before God, and merit the kingdom of heaven only when they are done, not to elicit the praise of men, but for the love of God and with the hope of divine reward. For the foundation of all real good is a disinterested motive, or purity of intention.

"Take heed that you do not your justice before men,

to be seen by them; otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father who is in heaven. Therefore, when thou dost an alms-deed, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men: Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But when thou dost alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth: that thy alms may be in secret, and thy Father, who seeth in secret, will repay thee." (Matt. vi. 1-4.)

This reward will be given not only on the last day, when, according to St. Paul, "the Lord will bring to light whatever is hidden in darkness, and lay open the secrets of our hearts, and every man will receive his reward from God." (1 Cor. iv. 5.) Even in this life the Lord will bless your almsgiving and return it a thousandfold in blessings to your soul and body. Almsgiving is an investment in the heavenly treasury, which will pay heavy interest. Give privately and secretly; although it may sometimes be advisable to perform your acts of generosity publicly, in order to stimulate the charity of others.

"And when ye pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men: Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But thou when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret; and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee. And when you are praying, speak not much, as the heathens; for they think that in their much-speaking they may be

heard. Be not therefore like to them; for your Father knoweth what is needful for you, before you ask Him. Thus, therefore, shall you pray: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our supersubstantial bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil. Amen. For if you will forgive men their offences, your heavenly Father will forgive you also your offences. But if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offences." (Matt. vi. 5-15.)

Our good and merciful Redeemer has given us a glorious prayer; a prayer of touching simplicity and deepest meaning. "Our Father," holy Creator, Redeemer, and Comforter, common Father of all men, who thus become my brethren. "Who art in heaven" with the angels and saints, whom Thou dost enlighten to a knowledge of Thy perfections, and inflamest with love for Thy infinite beauty, and fillest with ineffable happiness. "Hallowed be Thy name." May our senses and our intellects be so enlightened that we may every day learn more and more the extent of Thy goodness, the vastness of Thy promises, the splendor of Thy majesty, and the depths of Thy justice, and with this knowledge praise Thy glory. "Thy kingdom come," that Thou mayest reign, through truth and grace, in our hearts here below, and one day lead us up to Thy heavenly kingdom, where we shall see Thee face to face, love Thee with perfect love, and enjoy Thee in eternal happiness. "Thy will be done on earth as it

is in heaven;" that is, may we bow down humbly and confidently before the unfathomable decrees of Thy wisdom, thanking Thee for adversity as well as prosperity, and loving Thee with all our strength and our neighbor as ourselves. "Give us this day our supersubstantial bread:" all that may be necessary for both bodily and spiritual life and for the fulfilment of our duties. "Forgive us our debts" through Thy own mercies, and through the infinite merits of the passion and death of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the intercession of the ever-blessed Virgin Mary and the other saints, "as we forgive our debtors" who trespass against us. And as of ourselves and by our own strength we are not able fully to forgive our enemies, grant us strength to love them, to pray for them, and to do good to them, for Thy sake. "Lead us not into temptation;" enable us to recognize the enemies of our salvation, to discover their artifices, and manfully and successfully to resist them, so that neither temporal nor spiritual adversity may overtake us. "But deliver us from evil," past, present, and future sorrow and misery. "Amen." So may it be done by Thy grace, so may I persevere in faith, hope, and love.

Although our blessed Saviour advises us to recite this and other similar prayers in the privacy of our rooms, we must not therefore conclude that He does not require us to be present at and to participate in public worship. We must do the one and not neglect the other; and we must do both in a proper spirit and with true sincerity; not simply outwardly and with the lips only, but interiorly and with a vivid consciousness of God's sacred

presence. Hence Christ warns us not to depend upon a multiplication of too many words when at our devotions. It is only when animated with the spirit of holy reverence, childlike love, and unrestricted confidence that our prayers have any value.

“And when you fast, be not as hypocrites, sad; for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father who is in secret: and thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee.” The Jews chiefly sought to please the eyes of men, who judge by what they see; the followers of Christ must seek to please the eyes of God, who regards the heart.

“Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth: where the rust and moth consume, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven: where neither the rust nor moth doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also.” (Matt. vi. 19–21.) Again, Our Lord reverts to poverty in spirit, to detachment from the transitory goods of this world, to which men so tenaciously incline. He warns us earnestly of concupiscence of the eyes, that is, of the inordinate desire of possessing earthly things.

“The light of thy body is thy eye. If thy eye be single, thy whole body shall be lightsome. But if thy eye be evil, thy whole body shall be darksome. If, then, the light that is in thee be darkness, the darkness itself, how

great shall it be? No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will sustain the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat, and the body more than the raiment? Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns: and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are you not of much more value than they? And which of you, by taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit? And for raiment, why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they labor not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. And if the grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe: how much more you, O ye of little faith? Be not solicitous therefore, saying: What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice: and all these things shall be added unto you. Be not therefore solicitous for to-morrow. For the morrow will be solicitous for itself; sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." (Matt. vi. 22-34).

Not less dear to the heart of our blessed Lord than poverty of spirit and childlike dependence and confidence in God, are the virtues of humility, charity, and concord

and peace among His followers. Hence He warns us most emphatically and impressively against the loss of this spirit of charity, a loss that most frequently results from our own self-sufficiency, arrogance, and disposition to judge our fellow-men rashly and hastily.

“Judge not, that you may not be judged. For with what judgment you judge you shall be judged, and with what measure you mete it shall be measured to you again. And why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye? Or how sayest thou to thy brother: Let me cast the mote out of thy eye: and behold a beam is in thy own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thy own eye, and then shalt thou see to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye. Give not that which is holy to the dogs; neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest perhaps they trample them under their feet, and turning upon you, they tear you. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Or what man is there among you, of whom if his son shall ask bread, will he reach him a stone? Or if he shall ask him a fish, will he reach him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him? All things therefore whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them. For this is the law and the prophets. Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate and

broad the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate and strait the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it!" (Matt. vii. 1-14.)

This doctrine of the narrow gate does not suit the worldly-minded man, who affects to disbelieve the teachings of Christ concerning the difficulties of the road which leads to heaven. Such persons would fain obtain the happiness of heaven, but meanwhile wish to be at liberty to gratify, here on earth, every inclination of their corrupt hearts. Alas! what is still more to be deplored, is the fact that there are never wanting teachers who are always ready to flatter these notions: they are false prophets, whose words lead to perdition. Our Lord warns us against them, saying:

"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves: by their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit: neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them. Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. Many will say to Me in that day: Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name, and cast out devils in Thy name, and

done many miracles in Thy name? And then I will profess unto them: I never knew you: depart from Me, you that work iniquity. Every one therefore that heareth these My words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man, that built his house upon a rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not; for it was founded on a rock. And every one that heareth these My words, and doth them not, shall be like a foolish man, that built his house upon the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof." (Matt. vii. 15-27.)

This beautiful parable terminates the Sermon on the Mount. It is a parable full of meaning for each and all of us. Every one amongst us is trying to build up his fortune. But how differently men build! Some found their happiness upon sensual gratification, or on wealth, or on honor and prominence among their fellow-men. A few years pass by, violent storms arise, and behold, their temple of happiness totters, falls, and crumbles into ruins. Others, more wise, found their happiness on the word of God and the observance of His holy law. Their building goes up quietly and slowly, but surely and permanently. The storms come—the storms of sickness, old age, or misfortune, and finally of death: but a happiness built upon virtue is solid and durable, and outlasts these assaults. It is founded on a rock. "And the rock was Christ." (1 Cor. x. 4.)

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had fully ended

these words, the people were in admiration at His doctrine. For He was teaching them as one having power, and not as the scribes and pharisees." (Matt. vii. 28, 29.)

O profound, admirable Teacher! On my knees I thank Thee for Thy every word. I accept Thy doctrine with childlike faith, and will believe therein firmly in joy and sorrow, now and at the hour of my death. For Thine are the words of eternal life for all men of goodwill. Let them sink ever deeper and deeper into my heart. Let their divine power penetrate my whole being. Let them become practical by a gentle sympathy and true charity, by a valiant and steadfast self-denial, and in the innocence of my life.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE PARABLES OF JESUS.

OUR blessed Saviour chose to convey His instructions chiefly in parables and figures, according to the usage and style of Eastern countries. Amongst other parables, He proposed the following:

#### *Parable of the Sower.*

“Behold the sower went forth to sow. And whilst he soweth, some fell by the wayside, and the birds of the air came and ate them up. And other some fell upon stony ground, where they had not much earth: and they sprang up immediately, because they had no deepness of earth. And when the sun was up, they were scorched: and because they had not root, they withered away. And others fell among thorns: and the thorns grew up and choked them. And others fell upon good ground: and they brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.” (Matt. xiii. 3-9.)

In the explanation of the parable, which He gave afterward to His apostles in private, our blessed Saviour says that the seed is the word of God, and that they by the wayside are the hearers who forget the word al-

most as soon as they have heard it. For the devil comes immediately, and either by his own wicked suggestions or by his agents, as so many fowls of the air, takes away the seed of salvation from their hearts, lest it should there quicken their faith and produce fruits of eternal life. In the second part of the parable the seed is said to fall upon a rock, where, meeting with no depth of soil, it is burned up by the sun almost as soon as it begins to spring. And these are they, says Christ, who at first seem pleased with the word of God, but having no great fund of goodness, forget it in time of trial, and recoil at the approach of temptation. Such persons are very apt to deceive themselves, and their illusion is this: the pleasure which they seem to find in receiving the word of God makes them fancy that they want nothing more to produce the fruit of godliness in their souls; little thinking that a heart which is not softened by compunction, and improved by works of piety, is incapable of producing any lasting good. The third part of the parable is that in which the seed is said to have fallen among thorns: the thorns grew up and choked it. Such is the misfortune of those, says Our Lord, whose thoughts are taken up with the concerns of this world. They indeed hear the word of God; but the cares of life, their restless desires, and worldly pursuits stifle the growth of virtue in their souls and prevent its fruit. On a heart thus entangled and perplexed the sacred word of God, whether written or delivered by His ministers, has but little or no effect. The fourth and last part of the parable marks the different products of that part of the seed

which fell upon good ground. In some the increase was a hundred grains for one; in some it was sixty; in others only thirty. Such are the different degrees of goodness which the word of God produces in the hearts of the faithful, according to the disposition with which it is received.

“And His disciples came and said to Him: Why speakest Thou to them in parables? Who answered and said to them: Because to you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven: but to them it is not given.” (Matt. xiii. 10, 11.)

### *The Good Samaritan.*

“And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting Him and saying: Master, what must I do to possess eternal life? But He said to him: What is written in the law? how readest thou? He answering, said: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself. And He said to him: Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said to Jesus: And who is my neighbor? And Jesus answering, said: A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him: and having wounded him went away leaving him half dead. And it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way: and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan being on his journey, came

near him: and seeing him was moved with compassion. And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine: and setting him upon his own beast brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence and gave to the host, and said: Take care of him: and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee. Which of these three in thy opinion was neighbor to him that fell among the robbers? But he said: He that showed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him: Go, and do thou likewise." (Luke x. 25-37.)

From this parable Christ intends us to learn that true charity excludes no man in distress. No matter what his country may be, or what his profession in life, he is created according to the image of God, he is redeemed by the blood of Christ, and his present necessity claims a right to our assistance, if we are able to give it. The opportunity of doing good is never to be neglected; a work of mercy well timed is doubly acceptable both to God and man.

*The Folly of Riches.*

"And He said to them: Take heed and beware of all covetousness: for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of things which he possesseth. And He spoke a similitude to them, saying: The land of a certain rich man brought forth plenty of fruits. And he thought within himself: What shall I do, because I have no room to bestow my fruits? And he said: This will I do. I will pull down my barns, and will build greater:

and into them will I gather all things that are grown to me, and my goods. And I will say to my soul: Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer. But God said to him: Thou fool, this night do they require thy soul of thee: and whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke xii. 15-21.)

In this parable Our Saviour shows what a folly it is to place our happiness in the enjoyment of worldly wealth. Riches, that may be lost at any hour, and must be parted with in death, cannot make a Christian happy; they may flatter his senses for a while, but they cannot satiate the cravings of an immortal soul. The rich man is styled a fool by our blessed Saviour, not because he had acquired his riches by undue methods, but because he flattered himself with the thought of enjoying them for many years, little thinking that death was to snatch him from them that very night. If Christians did but oftener reflect upon the moment which sooner or later must separate them from all their worldly connections, they would learn to turn their thoughts toward Heaven, and to fix their desires on those eternal riches which nothing can take away.

*The Prodigal Son.*

"A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father: Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his substance. And not many days after, the younger

son gathering all together, went abroad into a far country, and there wasted his substance living riotously. And after he had spent all, there came a mighty famine in that country, and he began to be in want. And he went and cleaved to one of the citizens of that country. And he sent him into his farm to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him. And returning to himself, he said: How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and I perish with hunger? I will arise and will go to my father, and say to him: Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee: I am not worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And rising up he came to his father. And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and running to him fell upon his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him: Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, I am not now worthy to be called thy son. And the father said to his servants: Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry: because this my son was dead, and is come to life again; was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field, and when he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing; and he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said to him: Thy brother is come, and thy father has killed the fatted calf, because he hath re-

ceived him safe. And he was angry and would not go in. His father therefore coming out, began to entreat him. And he answering, said to his father: Behold for so many years do I serve thee, and I have never transgressed thy commandment, and yet thou hast never given me a kid to make merry with my friends. But as soon as this thy son is come, who hath devoured his substance with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. But he said to him: Son, thou art always with me, and all I have is thine: but it was fit that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead, and is come to life again: he was lost, and is found." (Luke xv. 11-32.)

The holy Fathers say that this parable is so fully expressive of the lesson it is meant to convey that nothing more can be added to it. The wretchedness that follows an abandoned sinner, and the satisfaction that accompanies a true penitent, are fully displayed. The unfortunate young man no sooner became sensible of the miserable state he was in than he resolved to quit it. He repented and returned to his father with a firm purpose never to stray from him any more. If we repent, like the prodigal son, for having left our Father's house, we shall, like him, be restored to our former state of grace and friendship with God.

#### *The Rich Glutton.*

"There was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasted sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus,

who lay at his gate, full of sores, desiring to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, and no one did give him: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. And the rich man also died: and he was buried in hell. And lifting up his eyes, when he was in torments, he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom: and he cried and said: Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. And Abraham said to him: Son, remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented; and besides all this, between us and you there is fixed a great chaos: so that they who would pass from hence to you, cannot, nor from thence come hither. And he said: Then, father, I beseech thee, that thou wouldst send him to my father's house; for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torments. And Abraham said to him: They have Moses and the prophets: let them hear them. But he said: No, Father Abraham; but if one went to them from the dead, they will do penance. And he said to him: If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe if one rise again from the dead." (Luke xvi. 19-31.)

In this parable Our Saviour points out the two opposite conditions to which a different use of God's creatures leads the different classes of mankind. By a mistaken

world, afflictions are styled the evils of life, though, to the humble Christian, they pave the way toward endless happiness; while riches are esteemed a blessing, though so dangerously connected with real misery. The sufferings of Lazarus were short; the joy that succeeded was eternal. The momentary pleasures of the rich man were but the prelude to everlasting torments. After death he found as little pity from Abraham as Lazarus in life had found from him. The time of mercy was then no more. Happy are the suffering poor if they are only careful to use the advantages which their humble station gives them for their improvement in virtue. Unhappy are the rich if they make not a Christian use of what they have received. To comfort the distressed, and to help the needy, is the privilege of being rich; and happy they who so use their wealth. The way to draw upon themselves the compassion of their heavenly Father is to show compassion to their poor brethren.

*The Pharisee and the Publican.*

“Two men went up into the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee standing prayed thus with himself: O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers: as also is this publican. I fast twice in a week: I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican standing afar off would not so much as lift his eyes toward heaven; but struck his breast saying: O God, be merciful to me, a sinner. I say to you this man went down into his house justified rather than the other,

because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (Luke xviii. 10-14.)

The lesson which Jesus inculcates by this parable is: Humility is the foundation of Christian piety. Without humility every other virtue is mere show, a glittering appearance of something good, without the reality. A prayer dictated by pride became a sin in the Pharisee; prayer united with an humble contrition of heart justified the publican.

*The Laborers in the Vineyard.*

"The kingdom of heaven is like to an householder who went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And having agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing in the market-place idle. And he said to them: Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just. And they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour: and did in like manner. But about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing, and he saith to them: Why stand you here all day idle? They say to him: Because no one hath hired us. He saith to them: Go you also into my vineyard. And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward: Call the laborers and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first. When therefore they were come that came about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

But when the first also came, they thought that they should receive more: and they also received every man a penny. And receiving it they murmured against the master of the house, saying: These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, that have borne the burden of the day and the heat. But he answering saith to one of them: Friend, I do thee no wrong; didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what is thine, and go thy way: I will also give to this last even as to thee. Or, is it not lawful for me to do what I will? Is thy eye evil, because I am good? So shall the last be first and the first last; for many are called, but few chosen." (Matt. xx. 1-16.)

From this parable the holy Fathers take occasion to exhort all Christians to shun idleness as displeasing to God, and to labor diligently in the affair of salvation. Men are born and called to labor in the service of God, each one according to his state and vocation. Let each one be diligent in performing the part of the task which is allotted him, and he will receive his due recompense; for God will give to every one according to his works. However unequally the goods of fortune may seem to be divided here, we are not to murmur against the dispositions of Providence; it is not for this world we have been created, nor is it in this world that we are to expect our reward. The reward is in the next life, and is given only when merited in this.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE MIRACLES OF JESUS.

WHO can tell the number of Christ's miracles? He wrought them in the spirit-world, in the heavenly bodies, in men, in the senseless beasts of the field. He summoned angels to wait upon Him, expelled devils, darkened the sun, stayed the storm, calmed the angry billows, changed water into wine, converted sinners, opened the grave and called the dead to life. In every department of nature and in every species of creature Jesus displayed His miraculous power.

We select a few of the miracles related in the Gospels for the edification of the pious reader.

#### *Jesus Changes Water into Wine.*

"There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the Mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited and His disciples to the marriage. And the wine failing, the Mother of Jesus saith to Him: They have no wine. And Jesus saith to her: Woman, what is to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come. His Mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye. Now there were set there six water-pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews,

containing two or three measures apiece. Jesus saith to them: Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them: Draw out now, and carry to the chief steward of the feast. And they carried it. And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, and knew not whence it was, but the waiters knew who had drawn the water: the chief steward calleth the bridegroom and saith to him: Every man at first setteth forth good wine; and when men have well drank, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee: and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him." (John ii. 1-11.)

Here we may learn the following lessons: First, that Our Saviour does not condemn innocent enjoyment, but rather that He sanctions and sanctifies it by His presence. Secondly, we are reminded that Our Lord should be invited to all our recreations; that is, all our pleasures should be referred to Him, enjoyed in His spirit, and that charity and Christian dignity should not be lost sight of in our various amusements. Thirdly, we learn that Our Lord highly honored marriage by being present at this festival and working there His first miracle. We are taught also that newly-married people should not neglect to invite our blessed Lord to their nuptials, that is, they should marry in His name according to the rules of His Church, and invoke His blessing upon their new state of life. Lastly, we discover that the Blessed Virgin is a true, powerful, and compassionate intercessor for men in their sufferings and wants, and that we should

have recourse to her, not only in times of spiritual affliction, but even in temporal needs and distress.

*The Storm Appeased.*

“And behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves, but He was asleep. And His disciples came to Him, and awaked Him, saying: Lord, save us, we perish. And Jesus saith to them: Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith? Then rising up He commanded the winds, and the sea, and there came a great calm. But the men wondered, saying: What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey Him?” (Matt. viii. 24-27.)

The ship in which Jesus was with the disciples is, according to St. Augustine, an emblem of the Church, which amid the troubles of a wicked world is, as it were, beaten by the waves of a boisterous sea. Almighty God permits such storms to rise, lest the calm enjoyment of the world might make us forget the heavenly port for which we ought always to steer. Having provided us with a bark wherein to work our passage through this stormy world, He knows how to conduct us safe into port. No shipwreck is to be apprehended by those who seek protection from God by prayer. The more violent the trial, the more earnest ought to be our prayer. If Jesus is with us, what need we fear? If God is for us, what harm can we receive? Our chief apprehension ought to be lest our diffidence in God, or our remissness in prayer, may render us less deserving of Our Saviour's goodness.

*The Demoniac Cured.*

“And they came over the strait of the sea into the country of the Gerasens. And as He went out of the ship, immediately there met Him out of the monuments a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling in the tombs, and no man could bind him even with chains: for having been often bound with fetters and chains, he had burst the chains and broken the fetters in pieces, and no one could tame him; and he was always day and night in the monuments and in the mountains, crying and cutting himself with stones. And seeing Jesus afar off, he ran and adored Him: and crying with a loud voice he said: What have I to do with Thee, Jesus the Son of the most high God? I adjure Thee by God that Thou torment me not. For He said unto him: Go out of the man, thou unclean spirit. And He asked him. What is thy name? And he saith to Him: My name is Legion, for we are many. And he besought Him much, that He would not drive him away out of the country. And there was there near the mountain a great herd of swine, feeding. And the spirits besought Him, saying: Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And Jesus immediately gave them leave. And the unclean spirits going out, entered into the swine; and the herd with great violence was carried headlong into the sea, being about two thousand, and were stifled in the sea. And they that fed them fled, and told it in the city and in the fields. And they went out to see what was done: and they come to Jesus: and they see him that

was troubled with the devil sitting clothed, and well in his wits, and they were afraid. And they that had seen it, told them in what manner he had been dealt with who had the devil, and concerning the swine. And they began to pray Him that He would depart from their coast. And when He went up into the ship, he that had been troubled with the devil, began to beseech Him that he might be with Him. And He admitted him not, but saith to him: Go into thy house to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee and hath had mercy on thee. And he went his way, and began to publish in Decapolis, how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men wondered." (Mark v. 1-20.)

The demoniac, according to the holy Fathers, exhibits a striking figure of those unhappy sinners who, by vice, depart from the fellowship of saints, strip themselves of the robe of sanctifying grace, and, in mortal sin, sit far from those heavenly mansions which Our Saviour purchased for them with His blood. Hurried away by the violence of lawless passions, they run wild in the pursuit of sensual enjoyments, forget their last end, and break every moral and religious tie that tends to restrain them in the desires of their corrupt hearts. Wallowing in the mire of animal delights, and rushing headlong into the gulf of endless perdition, they stand in need of a miracle of grace to free them from their wretched slavery, and restore them to the peace which no man can enjoy as long as he is at variance with God.

*Cure of the Centurion's Servant.*

“And the servant of a certain centurion, who was dear to him, being sick, was ready to die: and when he had heard of Jesus, he sent unto Him the ancients of the Jews, desiring Him to come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought Him earnestly, saying to Him: He is worthy that Thou shouldst do this favor for him; for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. And Jesus went with them. And when He was now not far from the house, the centurion sent his friends to Him, saying: Lord, trouble not Thyself: for I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; for which cause neither did I think myself worthy to come to Thee: but say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man subject to authority, having under me soldiers: and I say to one go, and he goeth; and to another come, and he cometh; and to my servant, do this, and he doth it. Which Jesus hearing, marvelled: and turning about to the multitude that followed Him, He said: Amen, I say to you, I have not found so great faith, not even in Israel. And they who were sent being returned to the house, found the servant whole who had been sick.” (Luke vii. 1-10.)

The charitable concern which the centurion showed for his dying servant furnishes the holy Fathers with an opportunity of putting all Christian masters in mind of the care which they are obliged to take of their servants, especially when they are sick; it is a duty which they owe them in charity: to neglect their servants either in

their spiritual or their temporal distress is, in the Apostle's language (1 Tim. v. 8), to be worse than infidels. Masters should never forget that they also have a Master in heaven, to whom the poor are as dear as the rich, and who recognizes no difference in persons. If they expect to be mercifully dealt with by God, they should remember to be kind to those whom He has placed in their care.

*The Son of the Widow of Naim.*

“And it came to pass afterward that He went into a city that is called Naim, and there went with Him His disciples and a great multitude. And when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and a great multitude of the city was with her. Whom when the Lord had seen, being moved with mercy toward her, He said to her: Weep not. And He came near, and touched the bier. (And they that carried it stood still.) And He said: Young man, I say to thee, arise. And he that was dead, sat up, and began to speak. And He gave him to his mother. And there came a fear on them: and they glorified God, saying: A great prophet is risen up among us, and God hath visited His people.” (Luke vii. 11-16.)

The holy Fathers consider the love which this mother bore for her only son as a figure of that tender love which the Church has for her children. With the warmest affection she embraces each in particular, as if he were the only one, and, in the hope of seeing them afterward

raised to eternal life, consoles herself amidst the cares and afflictions that must necessarily befall her in this vale of tears. The spiritual death of so many of them is a subject of continual sorrow to her. With a heavy heart she sees her thoughtless children snatched from her arms by unruly passions, and hurried away by a train of sins toward the fathomless abyss. She mourns their misfortune, and implores the pity of her heavenly spouse, that He may raise them again by His powerful grace.

*Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes.*

“Herod had apprehended John and bound him, and put him into prison because of Herodias, his brother’s wife. For John said to him: It is not lawful for thee to have her. And having a mind to put him to death, he feared the people: because they esteemed him as a prophet. But on Herod’s birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask of him. But being instructed before by her mother, said: Give me here in a dish the head of John the Baptist. And the king was struck sad: yet because of his oath, and for them that sat with him at table, he commanded it to be given. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a dish, and it was given to the damsel, and she brought it to her mother. And his disciples came and took the body and buried it: and came and told Jesus. Which when Jesus heard, He retired from thence by boat, into a desert place apart, and the multitudes having heard of

it, followed Him on foot out of the cities. And He coming forth saw a great multitude, and had compassion on them, and healed their sick. And when it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying: This is a desert place, and the hour is now past: send away the multitudes, that going into the towns they may buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said to them: They have no need to go: give you them to eat. They answered Him: We have not here, but five loaves and two fishes. Who said to them: Bring them hither to Me. And when He had commanded the multitudes to sit down upon the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven He blessed, and brake and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes. And they did all eat and were filled. And they took up what remained, twelve full baskets of fragments. And the number of them that did eat was five thousand men, besides women and children." (Matt. xiv. 3-21.)

The holy Fathers consider these five thousand men as a figure of those Christians who quit the world, in desire at least, to follow Christ through the desert of this life. In the company of their divine Master they attentively listen to His eternal truths; they seek no earthly comfort, but such as He may will them. They are happy in the presence of their Lord and Saviour; they continue in His service without weariness, and joyfully bear with whatever labors and difficulties they meet. They know He has numbered the hairs of their heads, not one of which falls to the ground without His permission; they remember it is He who feeds the birds of the air, and

never abandons those who are serious in their endeavors to serve Him.

*Healing of the Ten Lepers.*

“And it came to pass, as He was going to Jerusalem, He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as He entered into a certain town, there met Him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off, and lifted up their voices, saying: Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. Whom when He saw He said: Go, show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass, as they went, they were made clean. And one of them, when he saw that he was made clean, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God. And he fell upon his face before His feet, giving thanks: and this was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering, said: Were not ten made clean? and where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger. And He said to him: Arise, go thy way: for thy faith hath made thee whole.” (Luke xvii. 11-19.)

The reproach of our divine Saviour to the nine lepers for not coming to thank Him for the mercy He had shown them proves how much He is displeased with the vice of ingratitude. No favor from God, say the holy Fathers, ought to be received without the deepest sense of gratitude: gratitude in return for one favor is the surest way to receive another. The nine ungrateful lepers were undoubtedly sensible of the benefit conferred on them, and rejoiced at their cure, but they showed no gratitude: their memory is therefore branded with in-

famy, so that we may conceive a just horror of ingratitude, which renders us odious to God and man.

*The Man Born Blind.*

“And Jesus passing by, saw a man who was blind from his birth; and His disciples asked Him: Rabbi, who hath sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered: Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him that sent Me, whilst it is day: the night cometh when no man can work; as long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world. When He had said these things, He spat upon the ground, and made clay of spittle, and spread the clay upon his eyes, and said to him: Go, wash in the pool of Siloe (which is interpreted, Sent). He went, therefore, and washed, and he came seeing. The neighbors therefore, and they who had seen him before that he was a beggar, said: Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said: This is he. But others said: No, but he is like him. But he said: I am he. They said therefore to him: How were thy eyes opened? He answered: That man that is called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes, and said to me: Go to the pool of Siloe, and wash. And I went, I washed, and I see. And they said to him: Where is He? He saith: I know not. They bring him that had been blind to the Pharisees. Now it was the Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. Again, therefore, the Pharisees asked him how he had received his sight. But

he said to them: He put clay upon my eyes, and I washed, and I see. Some therefore of the Pharisees said: This man is not of God, who keepeth not the Sabbath. But others said: How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them. They say therefore to the blind man again: What sayest thou of Him that hath opened thy eyes? And he said: He is a prophet. The Jews then did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind and had received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight; and asked them, saying: Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then doth he now see? His parents answered them, and said: We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind: but how he now seeth, we know not: or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: ask himself: he is of age, let him speak for himself. These things his parents said, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had already agreed among themselves, that if any man should confess Him to be Christ he should be put out of the synagogue. Therefore did his parents say, He is of age, ask him. They therefore called the man again that had been blind, and said to him: Give glory to God: we know that this man is a sinner. He said therefore to them: If he be a sinner, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see. They said then to him: What did He to thee? How did He open thy eyes? He answered them: I have told you already, and you have heard: why would you hear it again? will you also become His disciples? They reviled him therefore and

said: Be thou His disciple: but we are the disciples of Moses. We know that God spoke to Moses: but as to this man, we know not from whence He is. The man answered and said to them: Why herein is a wonderful thing that you know not from whence He is, and He hath opened my eyes. Now we know that God doth not hear sinners: but if a man be a server of God, and doth His will, him He heareth. From the beginning of the world it hath not been heard, that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. Unless this man were of God, He could not do anything. They answered, and said to him: Thou wast wholly born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out. Jesus heard that they had cast him out: and when He had found him, He said to him: Dost thou believe in the Son of God? He answered, and said: Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him? And Jesus said to him: Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee. And he said: I believe, Lord. And falling down, he adored Him." (John ix. 1-38.)

Thrice happy, say the holy Fathers, was the man who, through his corporal blindness, discovered the true Light, which enlightens every man who cometh into this world. He became not only the worshipper, but also the defender of Jesus Christ against His enemies. Undeterred by their threats, he boldly declared the truth, and silenced their captious arguments against it. The Jews cast him out of their synagogue, but Jesus received him amongst His own.

*Lazarus Raised to Life.*

“Now there was a certain man sick, named Lazarus, of Bethania, of the town of Mary, and of Martha her sister. (And Mary was she that anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair: whose brother Lazarus was sick.) His sisters therefore sent to Him saying: Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick. And Jesus hearing it, said to them: This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister Mary, and Lazarus. When He had heard therefore that he was sick He still remained in the same place two days; then after that He said to His disciples: Let us go into Judea again. The disciples say to Him: Rabbi, the Jews but now sought to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again? Jesus answered: Are there not twelve hours of the day? If a man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world: but if he walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him. These things He said, and after that He said to them: Lazarus our friend sleepeth: but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. His disciples therefore said: Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. But Jesus spoke of his death, and they thought that He spoke of the repose of sleep. Then therefore Jesus said to them plainly: Lazarus is dead: and I am glad for your sakes, that I was not there, that you may believe; but let us go to him. Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow-disciples: Let us also go, that we

may die with Him. Jesus therefore came: and found that he had been four days already in the grave. (Now Bethania was near Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off.) And many of the Jews were come to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Martha therefore, as soon as she heard that Jesus was come, went to meet Him: but Mary sat at home. Martha therefore said to Jesus: Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died: but now also I know that whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee. Jesus saith to her: Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith to Him: I know that He shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said to her: I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live: and every one that liveth and believeth in Me shall not die forever. Believest thou this? She saith to Him: Yea, Lord, I have believed that Thou art Christ the Son of the living God, who art come into this world. And when she had said these things, she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying: The Master is come and calleth for thee. She, as soon as she heard this, riseth quickly and cometh to Him: for Jesus was not yet come into the town, but He was still in that place where Martha had met Him. The Jews, therefore, who were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up speedily and went out, followed her, saying: She goeth to the grave, to weep there. When Mary therefore was come where Jesus was, seeing Him, she fell down at His feet, and saith to Him: Lord, if Thou hadst been here

my brother had not died. Jesus therefore, when He saw her weeping, and the Jews that were come with her, weeping, groaned in the spirit, and troubled Himself and said: Where have you laid him? They say to Him: Lord, come and see. And Jesus wept. The Jews therefore said: Behold how He loved him. But some of them said: Could not He that opened the eyes of the man born blind, have caused that this man should not die? Jesus therefore again groaning to Himself, cometh to the sepulchre: now it was a cave, and a stone was laid over it. Jesus saith: Take away the stone. Martha the sister of him that was dead, saith to Him: Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he is now of four days. Jesus saith to her: Did not I say to thee, that if thou believe, thou shalt see the glory of God? They took therefore the stone away: and Jesus lifting up His eyes said: Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me; and I knew that Thou hearest Me always, but because of the people who stand about have I said it: that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me. When He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth. And presently he that had been dead came forth, bound feet and hands with winding bands, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus said to them: Loose him and let him go. Many therefore of the Jews who were come to Mary and Martha, and had seen the things that Jesus did, believed in Him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them the things that Jesus had done. The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said: What do we, for this man

doth many miracles? If we let Him alone so, all will believe in Him: and the Romans will come and take away our place and nation. But one of them named Caiphas, being the high priest that year, said to them: You know nothing. Neither do you consider that it is expedient for you that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this he spoke not of himself: but being the high priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, and not only for the nation, but to gather together in one the children of God, that were dispersed. From that day therefore they devised to put Him to death." (John xi. 1-53.)

The holy Fathers consider the resurrection of Lazarus as a figure of the spiritual resurrection of a soul from the state of sin. Jesus approaches the sinner by His holy grace; He calls upon him by His holy word; He excites him to a sincere contrition for his past sins; He animates him with a strong purpose of amendment by the infusion of His holy Spirit; He unbinds him by the power which He has given to the ministers of His Church, and bids him lead a new life. Such is the wonderful work which the Saviour of our souls produces in the order of grace. The tears, the sighs, the groans, the prayer of Jesus at the tomb of Lazarus, indicate the difficulty there is in resuscitating a soul that has been long dead through a habit of mortal sin. But however great the difficulty may be, the sinner, when he considers how powerful and good the Redeemer is, ought never to despair.

What motive had Jesus in performing these, and the other astounding miracles related in the Gospels? They "manifested His glory," and showed Him to be the Son of God. Because Jesus did these miracles before His disciples "they believed in Him." Here we have the utility of miracles, namely, to confirm in our hearts a belief in Christ. How can any unprejudiced and reasonable mind call in question the miracles of our blessed Lord? They were described in the Gospels at a time when many were still living in Judea who had personally known Jesus Christ, and who had been so hostile to Him and to His doctrine, and so ready to deny His miracles, that if their falsity could possibly be proven they would have hastened to contradict this unanimous testimony. Moreover, has not Christ perpetuated in His Church, during all ages, in holy persons, the power of working miracles, as is proved from Church history? In truth, he who doubts Christ's miracles must logically doubt every event of early centuries which profane history furnishes.

Well may we be proud, as Christians, that the doctrines of our divine Master are attested by countless undeniable miracles. O Jesus, let me live and die true to Thy comforting revelation.

## CHAPTER XI.

CHRIST ANNOUNCES TO ST. PETER HIS SUPREME PASTORAL CHARGE.—THE TRANSFIGURATION.

ONCE Jesus came with His disciples into the region of Cæsarea Philippi, a city on one of the sources of the Jordan, in a most lovely, fertile, and magnificent country. In ancient times, it had been the seat of the most atrocious idolatry: here the Jewish tribe of Dan had sacrificed to false gods; here Jeroboam had set up the golden calf. At the time of Christ there was there an altar of Pan, and a temple, erected by Herod in honor of Augustus. The great ones of the world, too, like Herod, his son Philip, his great-nephew Agrippa II., and others, loved to sojourn at Cæsarea Philippi on account of its beautiful situation. There they had statues erected to their honor, and their names sculptured in marble, as may still be seen in the remains of former glory. This city, which seemed to have been specially singled out by the "prince of this world" to unfold his pomp and splendor, was chosen by Christ as the place in which He promised to St. Peter the supreme pastoral charge, and where at the same time He declared the indefectibility and indestructibility of His kingdom, whose purpose is to destroy the kingdom of the prince of this world.

"And Jesus came into the quarters of Cæsarea Philip-

pi: and He asked His disciples, saying: Who do men say that the Son of man is? But they said: Some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. Jesus saith to them: But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answering, said to him: Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven. And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." (Matt. xvi. 13-19.)

Such are the ever-memorable words of Jesus Christ addressed to St. Peter, establishing his primacy and that of his successors in the papacy. St. Peter was to be the chief pastor of the united flocks of Jews and Gentiles, so that, in all that regards the Church, he is the visible representative of the invisible Saviour, who sits at the right hand of His Father in heaven. He was always treated as chief of the apostles, and after Christ's resurrection, at the triple profession of his love for his divine Master, Peter's precedence was confirmed. But as the Church of Christ was to outlive that generation, and is to last till the end of time, so must the office of Peter live in his lawful successors, who are, according to the unanimous testimony of all ages, the bishops of Rome.

“From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the ancients and scribes and chief priests, and be put to death, and the third day rise again. And Peter, taking Him, began to rebuke Him, saying: Lord, be it far from Thee: this shall not be unto Thee. Who turning said to Peter: Go behind Me, Satan, thou art a scandal unto Me: because thou savorest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.” (Matt. xvi. 22, 23.)

St. Peter, not having yet been enlightened by the Holy Ghost, could not understand the mystery of Christ's suffering, now mentioned for the first time. Jesus earnestly rebukes him for his worldly notions, and warns him and the other apostles that they, too, will be called upon to suffer. “Then Jesus said to His disciples: If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For he that will save his life shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for My sake shall find it. For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?” (Matt. xvi. 24-26.)

Before entering on His passion, and before His disciples should witness the humiliation and degradation of their Master, Christ wished to appear in resplendent and radiant glory on Mount Thabor. This mountain is distant from Cæsarea Philippi about twenty-two leagues, and is situated in the vicinity of Nazareth. “And after six days Jesus taketh unto Him Peter and James, and John

his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart: and He was transfigured before them. And His face did shine as the sun; and His garments became white as snow. And behold there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with Him. And Peter answering, said to Jesus: Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles—one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. And as he was yet speaking, behold a bright cloud overshadowed them. And lo, a voice out of the cloud, saying: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him. And the disciples hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said to them: Arise, and fear not. And they, lifting up their eyes, saw no one, but only Jesus. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying: Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of man be risen from the dead.” (Matt. xvii. 1–9.)

This was the most sublime and most mysterious apparition of the Redeemer during His stay on earth. The eternal Father testifies to Him, as do the Fathers of the Old Law, Moses and Elias. The Fathers of the New, the three principal apostles, receive this testimony with reverential awe. Moses, the lawgiver, and Elias, the leader of the prophets, attest to the completion and fulfilment, in Christ’s death on the cross, of all the figures, sacrifices, and prophecies of the Old Law. From the eternal Father Himself, the Son of man received the testimony that He is the Saviour in whom mankind will find their Teacher and Redeemer.

This mysterious transfiguration of Our Lord was one of the means He made use of to confirm the faith of His apostles, as St. Peter testifies: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ, but having been made eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from the Father honor and glory, this voice coming down to Him from the exultant glory: This is My beloved Son, in whom I have pleased Myself: hear ye Him. And this voice we heard brought from heaven, when we were with Him in the holy mount." (2 Pet. i. 16-18.) Jesus, by exhibiting to His favorite apostles a glorified body, was pleased to give them a foresight of that happy change which the bodies of His elect shall put on at the general resurrection, and showed them how transcendent is the glory of that supernatural happiness which shall reward the light and momentary tribulations that the just here undergo for God's sake.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE PRIVATE LIFE OF JESUS DURING HIS MINISTRY.

THE whole life of Jesus was one of humility, retirement, and silence; but when the time was come for Him to appear in public, He desired to be to the world an example of austerity and penance. He was the rich son of the richest father, yet He lived in the most abject poverty. Consider how deplorable it would be if a mighty king were to send his son into a strange country without any means whatsoever, permitting him to suffer want and privations of all kinds, and compelling him to sleep, like the poorest beggar, under the canopy of heaven, and to beg his bread from house to house. All this happened to your dear Jesus, for He often suffered from hunger, as appears from the fact that once His disciples plucked the ripe ears of corn in the field to satisfy their craving for food. If you had seen the meek Lamb of God going about poorly clad, suffering want, you would indeed have wept with compassion. His garments were of coarse wool, of the kind worn by the poor people of Galilee. He always went with bare head, in heat and in cold, in wind and in rain, and He wore neither shoes nor sandals. To provide for the necessities of life, He had to rely on alms. Such a life, hard as it is to anybody, must

have been especially so to our dear Lord. Hear Him saying plaintively: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests: but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head" (Matt. viii. 20), as if He would say: "My heavenly Father is less severe with irrational creatures than with Me, for He provides nourishment, covering, and abode for them; but to Me, His only-begotten Son, He has denied even a cubit of room, and permits Me to wander about the world a mendicant, suffering for want of all things."

True, Our Lord suffered this poverty most willingly; nevertheless, it provided the Pharisees with a pretence of making it a reproach to Him; for they would not believe that His poverty was voluntary, but regarded it as caused by His faults. Hence they despised Him before men and spoke disreputably of Him, saying: "He is a beggar, unable to buy Himself a pair of shoes; He is too lazy to work, and suffers in consequence of His sloth." Therefore many people withdrew from Him, thinking it a reproach to associate with so despised a man. These and similar reproaches Jesus had to suffer continually, yet He did not discard His poverty, but persevered in it until death.

If you ask why His Father dealt thus severely with Him, He will answer you: "Know that My Father sent Me into the world not only to atone for sin, but also to teach the children of the world by My example how perversely they act when they devote themselves exclusively to temporal concerns and neglect the affairs of eternity. By the poverty of My apparel I was to show them how grievously they sin by extravagance in dress; by My

scanty fare I was to intimate to them the perversity of luxurious living; by My humble demeanor I was to teach them the sinfulness of seeking self-exaltation and the admiration of others. Therefore be mindful of My judgment when you are tempted to disregard My example, and to live so differently from My mode of life."

Besides practising poverty, our divine Saviour continually chastised His body by fasting, watching, preaching, travelling, bearing heat and cold, and devoting Himself to penitential exercises. Consider how He continually mortified Himself in eating and drinking, curtailing His rest and sleep: and then examine your own conduct in this respect. You know, perhaps, by experience the pangs of hunger; consider, then, how our dear Lord suffered by His voluntary fast, especially when attending feasts to which He was invited, and where He never indulged His appetite. Behold your Lord thus rebuking your sensuality, and teaching you by His example not to take more nourishment than is necessary for your health. Oh, how often we offend in this respect, not only refusing to follow the example of Our Lord, but sinning by over-fastidiousness and by gluttony.

And how can we adequately describe what Our Lord suffered from thirst? We are well aware that thirst is a much greater torment than hunger, that it causes almost insupportable pain. Although the pangs of hunger which Our Saviour suffered were great, greater still were the torments He suffered from thirst. Travelling continually from place to place in the hot climate of Palestine, He was often in want of water, as appears from the incident

at Jacob's well, near Sichem, where He asked a woman for a drink. O poor Saviour, Thou art the Creator of all the springs and streams, and yet Thou dost suffer for want of water! Thou, who regalest the angels with heavenly nectar, dost suffer from thirst! Learn from Christ's example to mortify yourself in eating and drinking. Especially avoid the great sin of drunkenness, and everything that leads thereto. Remembering the sacred thirst of Our Lord Jesus, follow His example and control your appetite, denying yourself its indulgence. Imagine Him standing before you, saying: "My child, slake My thirst!" and refresh Him by an act of mortification.

If you ask why Jesus led so austere a life, He will answer you: "My child, I did this in order to show thee how to mortify thy sensuality by denying yourself in eating and drinking. One day I addressed St. Margaret of Cortona as follows: 'True Christians and servants of God cannot attain perfection in this life, except by resolutely overcoming the sin of gluttony.' If you will not mortify yourselves, but will always eat and drink according to your appetite, I fear you shall experience the woe which I have threatened, saying: 'Woe to you that are filled, for you shall hunger.'" (Matt. vi. 25.)

Again, Jesus mortified His frail body by fatiguing journeys and the labor of teaching and preaching of His ministry. The Jewish country abounds in mountains and wildernesses, and the traveller is often compelled to journey leagues through deserted places before he reaches an inhabited spot. Hence our dear Saviour had to cross many a trackless mountain and valley, pass through

many a wilderness and desert, in wind and in rain, in heat and in cold, in labor and fatigue, seeking, as the Good Shepherd, the lost sheep. He was so anxious to rescue them from the fangs of the wolf that He spared neither pains nor labor to save them.

Consider here that Our Lord, exhausted, wet with rain, scorched by the heat, shivering with cold, hungry and thirsty, often came into the cities and villages to find, perhaps, but scanty accommodations, or none at all, not even a roof to cover Him.

Consider also that Our Lord chastised His body by continual watching. The evangelists tell us that He prayed, not only a few hours, but whole nights together. This must have been a most trying task for Him, exhausted as He was; and yet He did it, not once, but very often, for St. Luke says it was His custom: "And going out He went, according to His custom, to the Mount of Olives." (Luke xxii. 39.) When He spent the night in Bethania, He seldom remained at Martha's house, but went, tired as He was, to Mount Olivet to pray.

Despite this humble and laborious life in the service of His fellow-men, Our Saviour was fiercely persecuted. The Saducees, a Jewish sect denying the immortality of the soul and judgment after death, whose members devoted themselves unreservedly to sensual indulgences, of course did not relish the strict doctrine and austere life of Christ. The high priests, too, and the Pharisees were His enemies. Their hatred was caused principally by jealousy: the people loved and praised Jesus, and left them. At this they were offended.

The hatred of the Pharisees, especially, became more intense every day, until they finally were thoroughly enraged. They sought by all means to withdraw the people from Christ, and to regain their confidence. They suspiciously watched every word and act of Jesus, to find cause to accuse Him. They began to censure the people, saying: "How can you follow so mean a man, the son of poor people, Himself only a poor carpenter, whose companions are as base, ignorant, and despicable as Himself, and who are led by His cunning words to abandon their families, to travel over the country with Him in idleness? Beware, the end will prove that our warning was opportune."

By such phrases the Pharisees tried to dissuade the people from following Christ, but with little success; for the longer He continued in His ministry the more did the people flock to Him. Finally, when His followers proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah, His enemies had recourse to the high priests and ancients in Jerusalem, saying: "This matter will result in no good: there will be a revolt; the people will no longer obey you, but will rise and make this man king. They will rouse the anger of the Romans, who will destroy you." The chiefs and high priests, themselves enemies of Jesus, lent a willing ear to these accusations, and made no pretence to conceal their hatred of Him. This hatred caused Our Saviour to feel so aggrieved that He referred to it shortly before His death, saying: "If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you." (John xv. 20.)

No doubt the secret calumnies of His enemies were a

great trial to the loving heart of Our Lord, but a still greater one was their open and undisguised resistance. Observing that their accusations did not keep the people from following Him, they openly persecuted Him by attacking His character. St. Matthew informs us that they called Him a blasphemer, a glutton, a wine-drinker, a friend of publicans and sinners; that they asked: "Is not this the carpenter's son, is not His mother called Mary: how came this man by His wisdom and miracles?" They also said: "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils." (Luke xi. 15.) They were not content with words, but proceeded to deeds, and were guilty of every conceivable indignity against Him. They interrupted His sermons in the Temple, they reproached Him publicly, and contended that He spoke falsehoods. They sought to convict Him of contradictory statements; they sent some of their number to ask Him questions, hoping to entrap Him. By such methods they succeeded in creating opposition to Him, and in drawing many, especially among the higher classes, away from Him, so that finally also the common people openly contradicted, blasphemed, and derided Him. St. John writes: "And there was much murmuring among the multitude concerning Him. For some said: He is a good man. And others said: No, but He seduceth the people." (John vii. 12.) Matters having progressed so far that the people regarded Christ as a seducer, they no longer respected or revered Him. They contradicted Him when He spoke in the Temple or in the streets; they accused Him of ignorance, saying: "How doth this

man know letters, having never learned?" (John vii. 15.) They called Him a madman; they accused Him of lying: "He gives testimony of Himself; His testimony is not true;" they even said He intended to commit suicide: "The Jews therefore said: Will He kill Himself, because He said: Whither I go, you cannot come?" (John viii. 22.) They said He was possessed by the devil: "Now we know that Thou hast a devil." (John viii. 52.)

Finally, the people became so enraged against Jesus that they sought to put Him to death. Our Lord Himself reproached them: "But now you seek to kill Me, a man having spoken the truth to you, which I have heard of God." (John viii. 40.) And the evangelist informs us: "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee, for He would not walk in Judea, because the Jews sought to kill Him." (John vii. 1.)

How intense must have been the hatred of the Jews, when they sought to take His life, who was their greatest benefactor and friend! Thus passion blinds man to his true interests, and leads him to commit the greatest crimes of injustice.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE SORROW CAUSED TO JESUS AND MARY BY THE PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS.

TO learn, in a degree, how distressed Jesus was at so many and so grievous insults, consider, first, that He was most innocent. During all His life He had never done anything to harm or to offend anybody. True, He had sometimes rebuked the Pharisees for their grievous sins, but this He did, not from hatred, but from motives of charity, that they might come to a knowledge of their faults and amend them. No one else could say that Christ even so much as looked unkindly at him; on the contrary, He went about doing good to all. He healed the sick, comforted the afflicted, converted sinners, instructed the ignorant, and dismissed no one from His presence without consolation and hope.

Now, you well know how grieved you are when you are falsely accused and unjustly punished, and when a person whom you have befriended offends you. If such conduct causes you pain, how much more must our divine Saviour have felt aggrieved, He who had never done the least evil!

Moreover, Our Lord felt the loss of His reputation. On account of His miracles He had been likened to and

taken for Elias, Jeremias, or one of the other great prophets, or even for an angel, and many regarded Him as the true Messias. His fame being so great, the ignominy of being thus despised was so much the greater. Consider how aggrieved Jesus must have felt when He, once regarded as the benefactor of His race, was now looked upon as the greatest malefactor. This grievance cannot be described in words. It was one of the greatest afflictions of Our Saviour, and the ill repute in which He was held by the people caused Him greater pain than all the strokes of His scourging, the sharp thorns, and the cruel nails.

Again, not only was Our Lord regarded as a saint by the people, but He was in truth the most holy and most sacred person in the world. He was the glorious King of heaven and Lord of the earth, not only in name, but in fact; for He was appointed Ruler of the universe not by man, but by God Himself. He was the true Messias and Redeemer, sent by God to accomplish the work of redemption. Therefore His person was so sacred that the evil spirits trembled before Him, and the angels fell prostrate and adored Him.

Jesus Christ being, then, so mighty a king and so supreme a lord, how aggrieved must He have felt at being regarded and treated by His own creatures, His own subjects, as the greatest malefactor, the most abject of men! Our Lord, in His most sacred humanity, was, moreover, not only the greatest among the rulers of men, but also the true Son of the eternal, almighty, infinite, heavenly Father, Himself eternal and infinite God.

And being God, He was the Creator, Ruler, and Preserver of heaven and earth, the legitimate Judge of the living and the dead. Being God, all creatures were bound to adore Him and humbly to give Him glory. To refuse Him this homage was to offend Him most grievously; and as He is infinite in all His perfections, this offence was also infinite, and caused Him infinite pain.

Another effect, infinitely painful to the loving heart of our divine Redeemer, resulted from the false accusations against Him. It was that many thousands of souls were thereby dissuaded from following Him, and therefore missed the benefits of redemption. He had come into this world that mankind might believe in Him and acknowledge Him to be the Son of God. How painful this must have been to Him, seeing that the reproach with which He was overwhelmed caused a great many to fall away and to lose faith in Him. Indeed, we may well say that as many souls as were thereby lost to faith and redemption, so many times was His sacred Heart wounded; and as many sins as resulted from the evil judgments of men, so often had He to drain the chalice of sorrow.

Consider how the ignominies heaped upon Christ affected the sorrowful heart of His Mother, causing her inexpressible grief. Indeed, it is impossible to describe adequately the sorrow of Mary, because it is beyond human conception. But we may sincerely believe that if for every word of calumny against her divine Son Mary's heart had been wounded by a sword, her pain would have been less. We may collect this from the words addressed

by an angel to St. Brigid: "As often as her Son was blasphemed, so often did the Blessed Virgin feel the sword of sorrow thrust into her soul." It is, indeed, a miracle that her maternal heart was able to bear such suffering. Listen to her own words to St. Brigid: "As often as I heard the calumnies against my Son, and the lies of the people, and witnessed how they persecuted Him, my heart was filled with such sorrow that I could scarcely bear it."

Mary was often in her Son's company. She followed Him from place to place with the pious women who ministered to Him. She was, therefore, an eye-witness of the insults with which He was overwhelmed; and the indignities she did not see were reported to her by others. And because she knew, better than any one else, that her Son was the Son of God, the sorrow and distress at seeing Him not only refused the homage due to Him as such, but treated most ignominiously, blasphemed, and persecuted, was so much the greater. All this cost Mary many a bitter tear, many a sorrowful sigh, and inexpressible anguish of heart. Indeed, if her Son had not sometimes relieved her by filling her heart with divine consolation, she would not have been able to bear her sorrows.

When the followers of Jesus became more and more numerous, the chief priests and ancients of the people, together with the scribes and Pharisees, took counsel together. "And the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that if any man knew where He was, he should tell, that they might apprehend Him." (John xi, 56.)

The great council, composed of the high priests and seventy-one members, consisted of the chiefs of the priestly classes, of the high priests whose term of office had expired, of the lawyers and scribes, and the elders or heads of tribes and families. It was the office of this council to provide for the observance of the Mosaic law and for the order of divine service. But as the admission to this council depended in a great measure on the high priest, and since the time of the Machabees on his pagan protectors, worldly interests and considerations had replaced the consecration to God's service. Hence it is not extraordinary that Christ was persecuted by the great council. The evangelists relate that several meetings were held against Our Saviour, and in one of these it was resolved that whosoever should acknowledge Him as the Messiah should be expelled from the synagogue. Christ being thus publicly proclaimed as an impostor, the whole country was aroused, and He was made the subject of many injurious remarks. His enemies triumphed, saying: "Have we not long since declared Him to be an impostor? Behold, now the great council brands Him as such." And many were scandalized at Christ, and left Him. Those who still adhered to Him had to do so in secret.

The most important meeting of the council was the one held a few days before Palm Sunday, soon after the resurrection of Lazarus. The reason was this: After Christ had performed this extraordinary miracle, the fame of it spread throughout the whole country, and all that heard of it were filled with consternation thereat.

Many who had left Jesus from fear of the Jews returned to Him and proclaimed Him the true Messias. "The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said: What do we, for this man doth many miracles? If we let Him alone, all will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away our place and nation." (John xii. 47, 48.) Indeed, a most important meeting, where the fate of the Son of God is decided! Might we not reasonably expect that they would unanimously decree: "Since this man works such extraordinary signs and wonders, He must be the Messias"? But no, when the votes were counted, the majority was against Christ, although some had spoken in His favor. Now the high priest gave his decision: Our Lord was, so to say, proscribed and declared an outlaw, as St. John declares: "The chief-priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that if any man knew where He was, he should tell, that they might apprehend Him." (John xii. 56.)

Consider what a reproach this sentence was to your Redeemer, by which He was not only branded as an impostor who had impersonated the Messias, but was adjudged guilty of death for His misdemeanors. This again resulted in the defection of many, who now regarded Him as a malefactor. Oh, how bitterly did the innocent soul of Our Lord feel this reflection on His reputation!

And how do you think His Mother was affected by this treatment of her Son? Trustworthy writers inform us that Nicodemus, immediately after that meeting of the

council, wrote to St. Magdalen, requesting her to inform the Master to leave at once, and to conceal Himself from His enemies, which He did, as the Gospel informs us, by going to Ephrem.

A few days afterward, "Jesus going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart, and said to them: Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and the scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified." (Matt. xx. 17.) Christ had often predicted His passion to His disciples, but never so explicitly as now, for the time was at hand when it was to be accomplished. He referred to it not sorrowfully, for, as St. Luke remarks, "He went before" His disciples, from which we may judge that Christ went to His death willingly, for He had a great desire to accomplish our redemption.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### JESUS TRIUMPHANTLY ENTERS JERUSALEM.

TOWARD evening, on the Friday before Palm Sunday, Jesus again went to Bethania. There a supper was prepared for Him in the house of Simon, and Lazarus was among the guests. Martha ministered to Our Lord, and Magdalen, for the second time, anointed Him with precious ointment. On Sunday morning, He started with His disciples for Jerusalem. On coming to Bethphage, a village near Mount Olivet, He sent two disciples before Him, saying: "Go into the village that is over against you, and immediately on your coming in thither, you shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her; loose them, and bring them to Me." (Matt. xxi. 2.) The disciples did as He ordered them, placed their garments on the colt, and seated Jesus on it. Thus He rode from the village of Bethphage to the city of Jerusalem, and His disciples accompanied Him.

Here consider the humility of Jesus. How simple and unpretending is His modest retinue! The King of kings comes riding, not upon a noble steed, but upon the much-despised ass, with head uncovered, with naked feet, accompanied by His poor, illiterate disciples, who constitute His sole attendance!

But why does Our Lord, in His formal entrance into

Jerusalem, ride upon an unbroken animal, an ass's colt upon which no one has ever sat? To declare to us His preference for the uncontaminated soul, and His love to take up His abode in innocent hearts which have known no other owner but Him, and have not wasted their value and strength in the service of a sinful world.

Jesus having ascended Mount Olivet, He rode to an olive-tree, and, with His own hands, broke off one of its branches. This tree is shown to pilgrims even in our time. When His disciples saw this, they also broke branches off the trees, and, waving them in their hands, cried out: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!" St. John adds: "A great multitude, that was come to the festival day, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried: Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel." (John xii. 12, 13.)

Learn the mysterious meaning of these fresh, green boughs. The olive branches remind us of the sweet and happy peace which Christ, by His atonement, obtained for redeemed and reconciled creation. The palm branches signify the glorious victory of Christ, and our victory through Him over sin, hell, and death. Such, too, is the meaning of the green branches, blessed by the Church each year, on Palm Sunday, with great solemnity, to be afterward borne in procession, and then kept in the homes of the faithful as an effective protection against the dangers of soul and body.

By this entry of Jesus into Jerusalem was fulfilled the prophecy of Zacharias: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion, shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy king will come to thee poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." (Zach. ix. 9.)

But, alas, how fickle is human nature, how changeable the human heart! To-day the people give their long-expected Messiah a triumphant reception, and after five short days these same people, who now shout hosannas in His favor, will cry out: "Crucify Him!" Our all-seeing Lord foresees this in the midst of the rejoicing, and He begins to grow sad and to weep, and says, looking at the fair city before Him: "If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee: and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation." (Luke xix. 42-44.)

Once before, Our Saviour had pronounced a similar ominous prediction about Jerusalem, and in bitter anguish of heart had said: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not! Behold, your house shall be left unto you desolate." (Matt. xxiii. 37, 38.) Now

the hour is at hand when the ill-fated city will complete its crime by laying violent hands on the greatest of all the prophets, the Son of God Himself. And whilst the triumphant hosannas of the excited crowd are ringing in His ears, the whole dreadful picture of impending treachery, of imminent ruin and death, stands out clearly before His mental vision.

After weepingly contemplating the city for a while, Jesus proceeded through the valley of Josaphat to the golden gate, called thus from the gold leaf with which it was covered. It was on Mount Moria, to the east of the Temple, and opened on the shortest way to the latter. On account of its proximity to the Temple it was considered one of its gates, rather than an approach to the city. Usually it was closed. When the people, on the occasion of Our Lord's triumphant entry, stood still before its closed portals, the latter opened spontaneously at the approach of Jesus, to admit Him into the city. Although the golden gate was next to the Temple, He did not go to the latter at once, but rode through the principal streets of the city, to be seen and honored by all the inhabitants. "And when Jesus was come into Jerusalem, the whole city was moved, saying: Who is this? And the people said: This is Jesus the prophet, from Nazareth, in Galilee." (Matt. xxi. 10, 11.)

What were the feelings of the high-priests and scribes and Pharisees at these demonstrations? Only a few months before they had published a decree, forbidding the people to call Christ the Messias, and now the whole populace went out to greet Him as such! Scarcely a week

before they had proclaimed that any one knowing the place of His abode should manifest it, so that they might take Him captive; and now He rode triumphantly before their eyes, and they were unable to do anything against Him!

“And Jesus went into the Temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the Temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the chairs of them that sold doves; and He saith to them: My house shall be called the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves.” (Matt. xxi. 12, 13.) The zeal which Our Saviour showed against the profanation of His Father’s house ought to put every Christian upon his guard against all unseemly behavior in the place of divine worship. Our churches are infinitely more holy than was the Temple of Jerusalem; they are in a special manner sanctified by the presence of God, who dwells therein. Jesus, who showed such zeal for His Father’s honor in the Temple of Jerusalem, cannot be indifferent to the dishonor that is shown Him in a Christian church by the irreverence of those whose conduct there is unbecoming the sanctity of His house; nor can we doubt that He will one day punish the offence with the severity it deserves.

After Jesus had thus purified the sacred place, “there came to Him the blind and the lame in the Temple, and He healed them. And the chief priests and scribes, seeing the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the Temple, and saying: ‘Hosanna to the Son of David,’ were moved with indignation, and said to

Him: Hearest Thou what these say? And Jesus said to them: Yea; have you never read: Out of the mouth of infants and of sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?" (Matt. xxi. 14-16.)

Meanwhile, the crowds gathered about Jesus in the Temple, and raising His eyes to heaven, He prayed, and said: "Father, glorify Thy name! A voice therefore came from heaven: I have both glorified it and will glorify it again. The multitude therefore that stood and heard, said that it thundered. Others said: An angel spoke to Him. Jesus answered and said: This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes." (John xii. 28-30.) Thus did the heavenly Father glorify His beloved Son, thereby signifying to the Jews and Gentiles that He was the promised Messiah. Do thou, too, praise and glorify Him with angels and men, joining in the chorus: "Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord!"

On Palm Sunday, our blessed Lord, in His mercy and love, made a final effort to soften the stony hearts of the Jews. In deep humility, and overflowing with sympathy and compassion for man, He had come publicly into their city, had performed miracles before their eyes in the Temple, curing the lame and the blind, had preached to them all day, and had Himself and His doctrine confirmed by a miraculous voice from heaven. And what were the fruits of this day of grace? Alas, how indescribably sad the results of His efforts! The scribes and the Pharisees were more hardened than ever in their incredulity, while the few who did believe were too cow-

ardly to avow their faith openly. Amongst this vast assembly of the great and wealthy Jerusalem, not one was found to offer shelter or food to Our Saviour when the day was over. He was therefore compelled to return to Bethania, and seek hospitality with His friend Lazarus and his devoted sisters. "And leaving them, He went out of the city into Bethania, and remained there." (John xxi. 17.)

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE BARREN FIG-TREE.—VARIOUS PARABLES.—PREDICTION OF THE DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM.

EARLY next morning—Monday—Jesus and His disciples started for Jerusalem, and the keen air made Him hungry. The little valley of Bethany was famous for its dates and figs, for the very name of Bethany means “the place for dates,” while Bethphage is “the place for the green or winter fig,” a variety which remains on the trees through the winter, ripening only after the leaves fall. It was not yet time for the fig harvest, but some of the previous year’s fruit might, no doubt, be found on some of the trees. One tree, especially, attracted the notice of Jesus. It grew by the roadside, as common property, and, even thus early, when other fig-trees had scarcely begun to turn green, was conspicuous by its young leaves. When He had come to it, however, they proved its only boast: there was no fruit of the year before, as might have been naturally expected. It was, indeed, the type of a fair profession without performance: of the hypocrisy which has only leaves and no fruit. “And He saith to it: May no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever. And immediately the fig-tree withered away.” (Matt. xxi. 19.)

The holy Fathers remark that on this occasion Christ intended to inculcate the lesson that it is not sufficient to abstain from sin, but that we must also bring forth the fruit of good works.

“And when He was come into the Temple, there came to Him as He was teaching the chief priests and ancients of the people, saying: By what authority dost Thou these things? And who hath given Thee this authority? Jesus answering said to them: I also will ask you one word, which if you tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? From heaven or from men? . . . And answering they said: We know not. He also said to them: Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.” (Matt. xxi. 23-27.) The purpose of these and similar questions was to ensnare Christ in His speech; but He was so circumspect in His answers that they were confounded, and left the Temple.

On the night between Monday and Tuesday, the hospitable home of Lazarus and his sisters afforded shelter to Our Lord, as it also did on the two previous and the two succeeding nights. On Tuesday morning, when Jesus again went to Jerusalem with His disciples, St. Peter, as they passed the fig-tree on which He had sought fruit the day before, exclaimed in wonder: “Rabbi, behold the fig-tree which Thou didst curse is withered away.” (Mark xi. 21.) This gave Our Lord an opportunity of impressing on the apostles a truth which, above all others, He had sought to fix in their hearts during His three years’ intercourse with them, namely, that, as

His apostles, commissioned to establish and spread His kingdom, they would be able, if they had unswerving faith, to overcome all difficulties. "And Jesus answering, saith to them: Have faith in God. Amen I say to you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain: Be thou removed, and be cast into the sea, and shall not stagger in his heart, but believe that whatsoever he saith shall be done, it shall be done unto him." (Mark xi. 22, 23.) By this He intended to convey to them the lesson: "Have firm trust in God. Believe Me, if you have such faith, and let neither doubt nor wavering enfeeble it, you will be able hereafter to do not only such things as you have seen done to this tree, but, to use the expression of the rabbis when they speak of overcoming the greatest difficulties or of achieving the most unlikely ends, you will be able, as it were, to bid this mountain rise and cast itself into the sea. All depends, however, on your faith being simple and undoubting, for anything less dishonors God. He who has such childlike trust in Him may confidently expect his prayer to be heard."

Then He entered the Temple, and preached to the throngs which gathered about Him. This being the last day on which He intended to teach in public, He remained all day in the Temple, and spoke on a variety of subjects, mostly in parables.

"And He began to speak to them in parables: A certain man planted a vineyard and made a hedge about it, and dug a place for the wine vat, and built a tower, and let it to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant to re-

ceive of the fruit of the vineyard. Who having laid hands on him, beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent to them another servant, and him they wounded in the head and used him reproachfully. And again he sent another, and him they killed; and many others, of whom some they beat, and others they killed. Therefore having yet one son most dear to him, he also sent him unto them last of all, saying: They will reverence my son. But the husbandmen said one to another: This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And laying hold on him, they killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. What, therefore, will the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy those husbandmen, and will give the vineyard to others." (Mark xii. 1-9.)

The chief priests thus addressed could not, in the presence of the listening crowd, refuse the only possible answer suggested by the parable, thus condemning themselves and pronouncing their own sentence.

And continuing, Jesus said: "Have you not read this scripture: The stone which the builders rejected, the same is made the head of the corner? By the Lord hath this been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes?" (Mark xii. 10, 11.) His meaning was clear: the corner-stone of the kingdom of God, of which those in His presence claimed to be the chief men, was, in their own mode of speech, only a figurative name for the Messias, on whom its existence and completion depended, as a building depends on its foundation and support. This was His own explanation of the parable: "Therefore I say to you, that

the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder." (Matt. xxi. 43, 44.) The first open attempt at violence followed this parable. "And they sought to lay hands on Him: but they feared the people. For they knew that He spoke this parable to them. And leaving Him, they went their way." (Mark xii. 12.)

Left in peace, our divine Lord once more calmly betook Himself to His task of teaching all that would hear Him. Full of holy indignation at the hypocrisy and wilful blindness of His adversaries, no less than of compassion for the multitude, He could not repress the crowding thoughts which the last hours had raised in His soul, and, as usual, they found expression in additional parables.

"The kingdom of heaven," He began, "is likened to a king who made a marriage for his son. And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage: and they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying: Tell them that were invited: Behold I have prepared my dinner, my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come ye to the marriage. But they neglected and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise, and the rest laid hands on his servants, and having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. But when the king had heard of it, he was angry: and sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he saith to his servants: The marriage is indeed

ready; but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage. And his servants going forth into the ways, gathered together all that they found, both bad and good: and the marriage was filled with guests. And the king went in to see the guests: and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen." (Matt. xxii. 1-14.)

This parable was to add force to those just addressed to the priests and chiefs, but with various additional lessons. The people of Jerusalem were again reminded that when the kingdom of the Messias should be established in its glory, God would call the heathen to a share in it, while Israel, which as a nation had rejected His repeated invitations, would no longer be the one people of God. He closed His impressive discourse with the memorable words: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather the chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not! Behold your house shall be left to you desolate." (Matt. xxiii. 37, 38.)

After the multiplied emotions of the last hours, Jesus sat down to rest, over against the treasury, where the continuous stream of persons casting in their money neces-

sarily attracted His notice. Among others came a poor widow. "And she cast in two mites, which make a farthing. And calling His disciples together, He saith to them: Amen I say to you, this poor widow hath cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want cast in all she had, even her whole living." (Mark xii. 42-44.)

Nothing in these last discourses of Jesus had seemed more strange and inexplicable to the apostles than His reference to Jerusalem. As they now passed with Him through the outer courts of the Temple, overpowered by the vast magnitude of the buildings, they called His attention thereto. "And He answering, said to them: Do you see all these things? Amen I say to you, there shall not be left a stone upon a stone that shall not be destroyed." (Matt. xxiv. 2.) Then He went with them to the Mount of Olives. Sitting down on a knoll, to enjoy the magnificent view, the apostles had Moria once more before them in its whole glory, crowned by the marble Temple, like a mountain with snow. Their thoughts still ran on the words in which He had doomed it to destruction, and they addressed Him, saying: "Tell us when these things shall be, and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the consummation of the world." (Matt. xxiv. 3.)

"And Jesus answering, said to them: Take heed that no man seduce you. For many will come in My name, saying: I am Christ: and they will seduce many. And you shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars. See that ye

be not troubled; for these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet; for nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be pestilences, and famines, and earthquakes in places: now all these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall put you to death; and you shall be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then shall many be scandalized, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall seduce many. And because iniquity hath abounded, the charity of many shall grow cold: but he that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved. And this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world, for a testimony to all nations: and then shall the consummation come. When, therefore, you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, he that readeth let him understand: then they that are in Judea, let them flee to the mountains: and he that is on the housetop, let him not come down to take anything out of his house: and he that is in the field, let him not go back to take his coat. And woe to them that are with child, and that give suck in those days. But pray that your flight be not in the winter, or on the Sabbath; for there shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, and neither shall be. And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved: but for the sake of the elect those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say to you: Lo, here is Christ, or

there: do not believe him. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect. Behold I have told it to you beforehand. If therefore they shall say to you: Behold He is in the desert, go ye not out: Behold He is in the closets, believe it not. For as lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even into the west: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together. And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be moved: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn: and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty. And He shall send His angels with a trumpet, and a great voice: and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them. And from the fig-tree learn a parable: when the branch thereof is now tender, and the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh. So you also, when you shall see all these things, know ye that it is nigh even at the doors. Amen I say to you, that this generation shall not pass till all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass, but My words shall not pass. But of that day and hour no one knoweth, no not the angels of heaven, but the Father alone." (Matt. xxiv. 4-36.)

And cautioning the apostles to watch, Jesus spoke the parable: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be like to ten virgins, who taking their lamps went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride. And five of them were foolish, and five wise. But the five foolish, having taken their lamps, did not take oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with the lamps. And the bridegroom tarrying, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made: Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him. Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise: Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. The wise answered, saying: Lest perhaps there be not enough for us and for you, go you rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. Now, whilst they went to buy the bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. But at last came also the other virgins, saying: Lord, lord, open to us. But he answering, said: Amen I say to you, I know you not. Watch ye, therefore, for you know not the day nor the hour." (Matt. xxv. 1-13.)

As the lamps of the foolish virgins went out for want of oil, so does the light of faith die in our hearts, if not nourished by good works. Let no one deceive himself by saying: I will hold fast the faith in my heart, but as for the practice of piety, mortification, moderation, mildness, and chastity, I will wait till I am older. That is deceiving ourselves. Without good works, without unceasing and earnest effort to obtain true holiness, your faith will wither, whether you wish it or not. Hence we

are warned by Our Saviour always to have the oil of good works in readiness, so that when He summons us to the judgment-seat, we may come into His presence with lamps flaming with a brilliant, God-pleasing faith. Otherwise the door will be closed against us, with the dread sentence in our ears: "Verily, I know you not."

## CHAPTER XVI.

THE JEWS LAY PLANS TO PUT JESUS TO DEATH.—JUDAS ISCARIOT OFFERS TO DELIVER HIM TO THEM.—JESUS MAKES KNOWN HIS SUFFERINGS AND DEATH TO HIS MOTHER MARY.

HAVING ended His discourse, Jesus reminded His disciples of the approaching Passover: "You know that after two days shall be the Pasch, and the Son of man shall be delivered up to be crucified." (Matt. xxvi. 2.) He had referred to His passion and death before, even more explicitly, saying: "The Son of man shall be betrayed to the chief priests and scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified" (Matt. xx. 18, 19), but at that time they did not realize the import of His words. But now they were overwhelmed with grief.

Meanwhile the chief priests were not idle. The acting high-priest, Caiphas, was the soul of the movement against Jesus: his words "that it was expedient that one man should die for the people," had first given definite expression and formal sanction to the idea of putting Him to death. But as yet no more could be done than watch, and take advantage of the course of events.

Among the twelve apostles was one, Judas Iscariot by name, whom Jesus had appointed purser, giving him the care of the funds which, to meet the expenses of each day, He accepted from His followers. The love of gain took possession of this trusted apostle's soul, and he became an embezzler. "Then went one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, to the chief priests, and said to them: What will you give me, and I will deliver Him to you? But they appointed to him thirty pieces of silver." (Matt. xxvi. 14, 15.) Only four days before making his detestable contract with the high-priests, Judas had objected to the generosity of Mary Magdalen when pouring a quantity of precious ointment on the feet of the Saviour, saying: "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and having the purse, carried the things that were put therein." (John xii. 5, 6.) The bounty of Mary Magdalen had sufficed to kindle smouldering resentment and disloyalty into a flame in the mean and sordid heart of Judas. Stealing out, therefore, from Bethany, unmoved by the divine love and purity of his Master, forgetful, in the blindness of his evil passion, of all he had seen and heard during the last three eventful years, he made his way, in the darkness of night, to the chief priests, who received his offer with joy. But they bargained with him meanly enough; for they offered him for his villainy only thirty shekels, the price of a slave. But the covetousness of the traitor was fascinated by even so paltry a sum. He sold himself as their

tool, and from that time sought a good opportunity to betray Jesus.

The heart of Jesus must have been deeply grieved at the treachery which Judas was meditating against Him, for the gloom which it cast over His soul was reflected upon His usually serene and tranquil features. You will be able to understand, in a manner, the feelings of Jesus, if you try to put yourself for a moment in your Redeemer's place. Suppose you have a friend whom you tenderly love, and for whom you have done numberless acts of kindness, which entailed much inconvenience and self-sacrifice. You have always taken his part in troubles and difficulties, defended him in danger, and befriended him in every way. There have been no secrets between you, you have been to him what a true friend ought to be—the very half of his soul. Now, if, after all your trust and affection, he were to turn upon you and betray you, what pain would this dastardly conduct give your heart! It would stun you, and deprive you of words strong enough to give vent to your feelings. If any one else had treated you a thousandfold more contumeliously, you would not have minded it; if your enemy had done so, you would not have wondered thereat: such conduct might have been expected from him. But for a friend, and such a friend, to be guilty of the like baseness, quite vanquishes you, takes away the very power to defend yourself, and makes you feel like giving vent to your grief in tears.

Think, therefore, of the unutterable anguish which the treachery of Judas caused Jesus. What friend ever loved

another as He loved that wretched man? He chose him for one of His apostles; for well-nigh three years He admitted him to His closest intimacy; day by day He spoke to him and taught him, and explained to him the mysteries of the kingdom of God. He allowed him to witness many of His most astounding miracles; He gave him power, in common with the other apostles, to perform miracles. Yet, notwithstanding all these favors, the unhappy apostle's heart conceived the design of selling that loving Master, who had done so much for him, and who loved him so tenderly.

From this we may conclude that the sins of those who have received signal favors from God cause the Sacred Heart of Jesus more acute suffering than the transgressions of men who have not experienced such exceptional bounty. If you find, upon reflection, that you are among the number of these, be ashamed of your ingratitude and heartless treachery to your Lord and Master; and if in the past you have thoughtlessly sold His love and friendship for the sake of a paltry gain or a fleeting gratification of your evil inclinations, promise that you will for the future prove yourself worthy of His love and friendship by unswerving loyalty, which will keep with scrupulous exactitude all the commands of His law.

Whilst Judas and the high-priests were clasping hands in their work of death, Jesus and His Mother were in Bethania. On the Wednesday of His passion-week, Mary sat alone in a room with her beloved Son, and after a long period of silence, she ventured with a mother's confidence to tell Him how sad and anxious her

heart was, saying: "My dearly beloved Son, though I am not worthy to speak to Thee, yet, as Thou art my Son, I shall avail myself of a mother's privilege, and ask something which I am confident Thou wilt not refuse."

"Thou art dear to My heart, Mother," replied Jesus, "and thou knowest that I always cherished a son's affection for thee. Tell Me, then, what thou wouldst ask; I shall not refuse thee."

"I know well," rejoined Mary, "that Thou hast been sent by the Father to redeem the world, and I also know, from the predictions of the prophets, that this redemption is to be accomplished only by Thy sufferings and death. But the appointed time I do not know. Yet, as I have lately heard and seen, Thy enemies are now, more than ever, exasperated against Thee, and I have not been without dreadful apprehensions lest they should tear Thee unexpectedly from me, and before I could come to console Thee."

"Kindest of mothers," Jesus said, "why fear such a thing? Thou shouldst know that I would not enter on My sufferings without giving thee notice."

"I should know that, but I was afraid that Thou didst hesitate to tell me, lest I should be too much afflicted at the dreadful information."

"Certainly, dearest Mother, I have not mentioned this sad affair sooner, because I knew that thy sufferings would be of too long duration even as it is. But now the time has come for Simeon's prophecy to be fulfilled, and thy heart, alas, to be pierced by the sharp sword of grief. I will, therefore, now tell thee all that is necessary for

thee to know, but I beseech thee not to repine or be overcome with grief."

"O my Son, although the recital rend my heart with pain, yet I beg Thee to tell me all; for I feel that it will be some consolation to know when and how Thou art to suffer."

"Best and most loving of mothers, although but little worldly happiness has fallen to our lot during life, yet all our joys will now be changed into bitter sorrow, for I can remain with thee only till to-morrow morning, when I must leave thee and go to Jerusalem. To-morrow night I shall be in the hands of my enemies. I shall be bound with cords, dragged violently from one judge to another; I shall be cruelly scourged, crowned with thorns, mocked and spit upon. My enemies will place a heavy cross upon My shoulders, and lead Me in disgrace and shame through the streets of the city out to Mount Calvary, where they will nail Me to the cross."

Alas, what a dreadful revelation this must have been to the tender heart of the Blessed Virgin! Every word pierced her soul to its deepest recesses, carrying excruciating anguish and grief to every sense; so that she stood almost lifeless before Jesus, and unable to utter one word or even to breathe a sigh.

Jesus, seeing her thus struck motionless and almost dead with grief and sorrow, said to her: "Most beloved and sorrowful Mother, why dost thou take it so much to heart? Wouldst thou that I should not drink the chalice which My Father has prepared for Me? Is My Father's will no longer thy will? Take courage, and submit thy

will to that of our Father in heaven, and prepare thyself for the dreadful struggle before us."

"O my beloved Child, how is it possible for me to repress these tears? For although I am satisfied with the will of God, and perfectly reconciled to His providence, yet am I not Thy Mother? It is impossible for a mother's heart not to bleed at the sufferings of her child. O my beloved Son Jesus, I regret that I thus, by wailings and lamentations, must add to the weight of Thy cross; yet I cannot restrain these tears, I cannot suppress these sighs. Grant me the one request that I am going to ask."

"Dearest Mother, thou knowest that I was always obedient and ready to do thy will in all things. Name thy request, and if not inconsistent with My Father's will, it shall be granted."

"Beloved Child of my heart, Thou knowest how my heart is bound up in Thee, and how utterly impossible it is for me to be separated from Thee. And yet, God's will be done! I would beseech Thee not to choose so cruel and disgraceful a death as that of being crucified. Thou knowest that only the greatest malefactors are subjected to that kind of death. How dreadfully hard it would be for Thee to be thus scourged, crowned with thorns, and nailed to the cross. And yet one single drop of Thy blood would be sufficient to atone for all the sins ever committed. I implore Thee, then, not to undergo so dreadful a martyrdom, but to choose an easier death."

"Dearly beloved Mother, divine justice requires that I should suffer the most excruciating pain and the most

disgraceful death, in order that the sin of Adam and the sins of all men may be completely washed away. For just as sinners have presumed to dishonor My heavenly Father, so must I be dishonored and disgraced to the last degree. As sinners have committed sin with all the members of their body, so must I suffer in every member. As sinners have, by their sins, justly merited eternal and painful death, so must I, in order to save them from this death, undergo a cruel and torturous death. Such is the death predicted for Me long ages ago by the prophets, as thou hast often heard and read. And in order that the prophecies concerning My death may be fulfilled, it is My Father's will that I should redeem the world, not simply by shedding one drop of blood, but by pouring out the whole of My heart's life-blood."

Consider, O Christian soul, the profound grief of the Blessed Virgin, as she listened to these words of her beloved Son. Unable to speak from her sighs and tears, burying her face in her hands, she fell upon her knees before Him. Filled with tenderest sympathy, Jesus placed His divine hand gently upon her head, and imparted to her a miraculous strength, so that she recovered enough to raise her eyes to His, and to say: "Dearest Son, adorable Lord, be it done according to Thy word."

On the following day, Jesus, having but little time to remain with His friends in Bethany, thus addressed them: "My dearest friends, the time having now arrived when I must go forth to do the will of My Father, I must take My leave of you. I thank you all sincerely for the kindness and friendship which you have ever shown to

My disciples and to Me. My heavenly Father will reward you and compensate you a hundredfold for all the kind services you have rendered us. I thank you, good and devout women, who, from your slender means, have so faithfully and generously ministered to Me and to My poor disciples. To you, especially, Lazarus, Mary, and Martha, is My gratitude due; for you have often and cheerfully given shelter and a place of rest to My weary companions, and often generously given them to eat and drink when they were hungry and thirsty."

Finally, Jesus turned toward His blessed Mother to say farewell to her, but both Mother and Son were so overpowered with emotion that for some minutes neither could utter a word. Whoever has witnessed the parting of two faithful and loving hearts when one goes forth to meet certain death, may form a slight and very imperfect conception of the harrowing grief which rent the hearts of Jesus and Mary in this trying hour. At last Our Saviour said to her: "Dearest Mother, I am grateful for all the motherly love, fidelity, and devotion which thou hast manifested to Me through a life of poverty and affliction. My heavenly Father Himself will one day be thy reward. He will repay thee for thy unswerving fidelity to Me, who am His Son and thine."

Here, devout reader, try to comprehend the solemn effect of these farewell words upon the soul of Our Lord's blessed Mother and the other personages of this little group. All were in tears as Mary said: "Beloved Son, adorable Lord, may the will of God be done." Then our blessed Lord went forth with His apostles to Jerusalem,

there to accomplish the greatest of mysteries, the atonement for man's sin.

This beautiful, simple, and graphic description of the farewell scene between Jesus and His mother must, of course, not be taken literally as having happened thus; it is a pious meditation, from which devout and childlike souls will derive much profit and salutary edification.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE LAST SUPPER.

THE Jewish Passover was a rite prescribed by the Mosaic Law in remembrance of the delivery of the Israelites from the power of Pharaoh. Each family, says the sacred text (Exod. xii.), shall take, on the tenth day of the first month, a lamb, and on the fourteenth day shall sacrifice it in the evening, and sprinkle the doors of their houses with the blood thereof; that night they shall eat the flesh roasted at the fire, with unleavened bread and wild lettuce. While they eat it they shall stand with their clothes girt up, with shoes on their feet, and staves in their hands, like travellers ready for their journey. The obedient Israelites punctually fulfilled every circumstance of the order. On the same night God sent His exterminating angel into every house in Egypt that was not sprinkled with the blood of the lamb, and slew every first-born, both of man and of beast. The consternation was universal, and Pharaoh, terror-stricken, bade the Israelites go. In commemoration of this event, the Jews were commanded to sacrifice and eat, every year, the paschal lamb, on the feast of Easter. Five days before the feast they selected the lamb, washed it, and decked it with flowers. Toward three o'clock in the af-

ternoon on Easter eve, they assembled, and the head of the household, dressed in holiday garb, killed the lamb and sprinkled the door-posts with the blood. Then the carcass was roasted whole on a spit, but the entrails were roasted by themselves. Now the members of the household put on their best shoes, girded themselves, and took staves, made expressly for this purpose, into their hands. Then the lamb was brought in on a large dish, amid great ceremonies, and those present went around it, singing the 117th Psalm, which begins with the words: "Give praise to the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever." Finally, the head of the household carved the lamb, taking great care not to break a bone, and helped all present. Adding wild lettuce and unleavened bread, they ate hastily, and were not permitted to lay aside their staves until the paschal lamb was entirely eaten. Then they seated themselves, and a regular meal was served, of which they joyfully partook, praising God. The ancient Jewish ceremonial prescribed that, before carving the paschal lamb, the head of the household should cut in two a loaf of unleavened bread, and place one-half of it beneath the tablecloth. After the meal was over, he took this latter half, and cut it up into as many pieces as there were guests at the table (and there were never to be less than ten), and gave each one a piece, saying: "This is the bread of tribulation which our fathers ate in Egypt." Then he took a cup and blessed it, saying: "Blessed art Thou, O God, for having created for us the fruit of the vine." After drinking, he gave the cup to his neighbor, saying: "This is the cup of tribulation

which our fathers drank in Egypt." And each one successively drank of the cup. Then they rose, and sang what was called the great Alleluja, viz., six psalms, beginning with the 112th and ending with the 117th Psalm. Thus did the Jews praise God and thank Him for their deliverance from Egypt.

After this manner Our Lord, too, ate the paschal lamb, and fulfilled, as the Gospel observes, all the ceremonies. "Now on the first day of the unleavened bread when they sacrifice the Pasch, the disciples say to Him: Whither wilt Thou that we go and prepare for Thee to eat the Pasch? And He sendeth two of His disciples, and saith to them: Go ye into the city; and there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water; follow him: and whithersoever he shall go in, say to the master of the house: The Master saith: Where is My refectory, where I may eat the Pasch with My disciples? And he will show you a large dining-room furnished: and there prepare ye for us. And His disciples went their way, and came into the city: and they found as He had told them, and they prepared the Pasch." (Mark xiv. 12-16.)

According to an ancient tradition, the house in which our blessed Lord celebrated the Last Supper belonged to St. Mark. It was in this same room that the apostles were assembled after their divine Master's death; and here, too, He appeared to them on the evening of His resurrection. Here He instituted the great sacraments of the Most Holy Eucharist and Penance; here, on Pentecost, the Holy Ghost descended on the apostles. This highly privileged house, in which so many mysteries of

faith were accomplished, was afterward converted into a church, and called the Chapel of Sion.

To this house, then, Our Lord came with the apostles, in the evening, when it was time to eat the paschal lamb. The master of the house came to meet Him, and greeted Him, saying: "Welcome, dear Master! I rejoice at the honor Thou dost bestow upon me by selecting my house for the feast of the Pasch." And Jesus replied: "This day is salvation come to this house, for it shall be honored throughout all times."

Then the paschal lamb, washed and decked with flowers, was brought in. The divines say that, as Christ was the Master of the apostles and the head of this family, it devolved upon Him to sacrifice the lamb. This having been done, and the blood caught in a basin, Our Lord sprinkled the door-posts, according to law. Whilst the lamb was skinned and roasted, He was reminded of the scourging He was to undergo on the morrow, and of His crucifixion.

The paschal lamb was brought in on a costly salver, fashioned out of a smaragd, and preserved to this day in the city of Genoa, in Italy. Christ then performed all the ceremonies of the ritual, and said: "With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer." (Luke xxii. 15.) Imagine the sorrow of the apostles at these words, indicating to them, as they did, that this was the last meal they were to take in His company. But Our Lord rejoiced; for He was about to suppress forever the well-nigh insupportable yoke of the old dispensation, and to replace it by the new and sweet yoke of

the law of grace. Because this was a great work, and the principal reason why He had come from heaven, and foreseeing that all Christendom would give thanks to Him for it until the end of time, therefore He now rejoiced with all His heart.

Having eaten the paschal lamb, they all set aside their staves, removed their shoes, and took off their girdles, and seated themselves at the table for the customary meal, prepared for them, no doubt, by the master of the house. St. Bonaventure says, that not only the twelve apostles, but also many of the seventy-two disciples and other friends of Christ were present, waiting at the table and serving Christ. His countenance beamed with joy, and the apostles were glad to see their Master so cheerful.

“And when the supper was done, the devil having now put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came from God and goeth to God: He riseth from supper, and layeth aside His garments, and having taken a towel, girded Himself. After that He putteth water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of the disciples, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded.” (John xiii. 2-5.)

O stupendous humility! Is this the supreme Lord of heaven and earth, to whom the Father hath given all things, and who cometh from God and goeth to God? If, then, He humbled Himself so far as to do for His creatures what many a servant would refuse to perform for his master, we ought not to shrink from a little hu-

miliation for His sake, who so deeply humbled Himself for us. But in addition to humility, there is another lesson, and perhaps a still more important one, which this act of Our Lord teaches us.

He was about to give His apostles His own body and blood. It was, therefore, necessary that they should be spotlessly pure, in order that the sanctity of God might find in them nothing defiled. This was what Our Lord desired to intimate to them by this extraordinary act. "He cometh therefore to Simon Peter; and Peter saith to Him: Lord, dost Thou wash my feet? Jesus answered, and said to him: What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith to Him: Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him: If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part in Me. Simon Peter saith to Him: Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him: He that is washed needeth not but to wash his feet, and is clean wholly." (John xiii. 6-10.)

In order to understand the answer of Our Lord, we must remember that among the Jews it was customary for all invited guests to bathe before coming to a banquet, and just before going to table to wash their feet, even in the house of their host, in order not to soil the cushions on which, according to the fashion of those days, they used to recline when at table. It is to this custom that Jesus alludes in His reply to St. Peter: "He that is washed needeth not but to wash his feet." As if He wished to say: "You have already been washed from the iniquities of your past life in the waters of regeneration,

and you need now be cleansed only from the dust on your feet, that is, from venial sins and imperfections, so as to be prepared to partake of the heavenly manna which I am about to give you."

St. Peter then sat down and permitted Jesus to wash his feet. But who can conceive the feelings of embarrassment under which he labored? He was the one to whom "not flesh and blood, but the heavenly Father had revealed" that Christ is the Son of the living God. This clear and exalted knowledge of the divinity of Christ was incomparably superior to the knowledge that we possess through ordinary faith. Hence the humble man was frightened when he saw his Lord and God kneeling before him and preparing to wash his feet. Tears streamed from his eyes and coursed rapidly down his cheeks. When Jesus, after having carefully dried Peter's feet with the towel, bent over them and kissed them with His sacred lips, St. Peter's heart was ready to burst with excessive love, and he would at that moment have shed every drop of his blood, if necessary, for the sake of his blessed Redeemer.

Having finished with St. Peter, Our Lord then proceeded to render the same service to St. John, then to St. Andrew, St. James, and so on through all to the last. By this washing these privileged men were cleansed not only in body, but also purified in soul. For then was infused into their inner being such a true and vivid knowledge of their unworthiness, and such a heartfelt contrition for their past sins, that these sentiments of contrition were enough to obtain forgiveness. He also

infused into them an inward light, by means of which they were enabled to understand clearly and appreciate fully their Saviour's infinite love and humility, as well as their own unworthiness to receive such an honor at His divine hands.

Lastly, Jesus approached the traitor Judas, and knelt humbly before him. You have good reason, Christian soul, to look upon this part of the scene with sentiments of wonder, and to be vastly astonished at the humility and self-abasement of Jesus. The devil sits enthroned in the heart of Judas, and yet Christ, the Son of the living God, is on His knees before the disloyal disciple, before His treacherous enemy, offering him, by this manifestation of tenderest love, one more chance to repent and abandon his diabolical project. Jesus places His blessed hands under the traitor's feet, kisses them, and then looks up into his evil face with a tender expression of friendship; but all in vain, the hard and flinty heart will not be softened, and the germ of malice will develop to the full in this darkened soul.

"Then, after He had washed their feet, and taken His garments, being set down again, He said to them: Know you what I have done to you? You call Me Master and Lord, and you say well, for I am. If then I, being your Lord and Master, have washed your feet: you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so do you also." (John xiii. 12-15.)

Now the hour had come for that mystery of love, without accomplishing which Jesus would not leave the

world, for "having loved His own in the world, He loved them unto the end." (John xiii. 1.)

"And whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to His disciples, and said: Take ye, and eat: This is My body. And taking the chalice, He gave thanks, and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this: for this is My blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for many unto remission of sins." (Matt. xxvi. 26-28.) After all had received the body and blood of Our Lord, Christ entrusted to them the mysterious power of consecrating His body and blood, as He had just done. For He said to them: "Do this for a commemoration of Me." (Luke xxii. 19.)

Then Christ again tried to impress the heart of the traitor. "When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and He testified and said: Amen, amen, I say to you, one of you shall betray Me." (John xiii. 21.) Consider how these words of Jesus are an expression of His sadness at the traitor's atrocious deed. He was troubled in spirit that this soul should go to perdition, therefore "He testified" that He had done His utmost to save the unhappy disciple. He said: "The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of man shall be betrayed: it were better for him if that man had not been born." (Mark xiv. 21.)

Imagine the consternation of the apostles when they heard that one of their number contemplated such treachery. "The disciples therefore looked upon one another, doubting of whom He spoke. Now there was leaning

upon Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, and said to him: Who is it of whom He speaketh? He therefore leaning on the breast of Jesus saith to Him: Lord, who is it? Jesus answered: He it is to whom I shall reach bread dipped. And when He had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the morsel, Satan entered into him. And Jesus said to him: That which thou dost, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew to what purpose He said this unto him. For some thought, because Judas had the purse, that Jesus had said to him: Buy those things which we have need of for the festival day, or that he should give something to the poor. He therefore having received the morsel, went out immediately. And it was night." (John xiii. 22-30.)

Yes, it was night, a dark and gloomy night in the soul of the unfortunate, evil-minded Judas. The light of faith had gone out, the last spark of love was extinguished, and a dark, impenetrable night of spiritual blindness and obstinacy had settled down upon the soul of the most unhappy of men.

When Judas was gone, Our Lord said: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." (John xiii. 31.) By these words He intended to say: "Now the traitor who shall deliver Me to death is gone, and divine justice and mercy, and My love toward mankind shall be made manifest." Therefore He began to address them in words of kindness, saying: "Little children, yet a while I am with you. You shall seek Me;

and as I said to the Jews: Whither I go, you cannot come; so I say to you now. A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another." (John xiii. 33-35.)

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### FAREWELL DISCOURSE AND PRAYER OF JESUS.

**A**FTER the Last Supper Our Lord addressed to His apostles a most touching discourse, in words the most pathetic and expressive of His love. "Let not your heart be troubled," He said, "because I go to the Father, and will prepare a place for you: for in My Father's house there are many mansions. You believe in God; believe also in Me. I will not leave you orphans; I will come again, and will take you to Myself, that where I am, you may also be. If you love Me, keep My commandments: he who loveth Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him. Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that I will do. Peace I leave with you: My peace I give unto you. I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who shall abide with you, and teach you all things." (John xiv.)

The sublime parting words of Our Saviour abound in profound mysteries. Dearest Saviour, Thou art going to Thy Father, Thou art going by the way of the cross to Thy triumph, a way full of grace and good fortune to us. For by treading this way of the cross and going thus to Thy Father, Thou hast earned and secured for us the

saving influence and interposition of the comforting Spirit, the Paraclete. By the perfection of the work of atonement, Thou hast rendered us competent to receive His sevenfold supernatural graces.

Observe here, Christian soul, with what tenderness and delicacy Our Saviour prepares His apostles for the sad news that the hour of separation has at last come. He has already foretold to them the coming of the Holy Ghost, with His manifold graces and effects, the triumph of God's kingdom on earth, and their own admission into the realms of heaven. And now He uses less sorrowful words to communicate the painful information.

“A little while, and now you shall not see Me: and again a little while, and you shall see Me, because I go to the Father. Then some of His disciples said one to another: What is this that He saith to us: A little while and you shall not see Me, and again a little while and you shall see Me, and, because I go to the Father? They said therefore: What is this that He saith, A little while? We know not what He speaketh. And Jesus knew that they had a mind to ask Him, and He said to them: Of this do you inquire among yourselves, because I said: A little while, and you shall not see Me, and again a little while, and you shall see Me. Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice; and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labor, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is

born into the world. So also now indeed you have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you. And in that day you shall not ask Me anything. Amen, amen, I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in My name: Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full. These things I have spoken to you in proverbs. The hour cometh when I will speak no more to you in proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father. In that day you shall ask in My name, and I say not to you that I will ask the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and I go to the Father. His disciples say to Him: Behold, now Thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now we know that Thou knowest all things, and Thou needest not that any man should ask Thee. By this we believe that Thou comest forth from God. Jesus answered them: Do you now believe?" (John xvi. 16-31.)

"Do you now believe?" Christian soul, do you thoroughly understand the import of this sorrowful question of the Saviour? In a few hours it will become painfully evident that the faith of the apostles was not a living faith, not a faith to withstand trials and temptation. It has yet to be made such a faith, and will be made so by the coming of the Holy Ghost.

Now that our beloved Redeemer, like a dying father,

had instructed His children, the apostles, in what was to take place after His death, He began the recital of that beautiful prayer, given to us by the holy evangelist St. John:

“These things Jesus spoke: and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said: Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee: As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He may give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him. Now this is eternal life: That they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent. I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do: and now glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with Thee. I have manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou hast given Me out of the world: Thine they were, and to Me Thou gavest them: and they have kept Thy word. Now they have known that all things which Thou hast given Me are from Thee: because the words which Thou gavest Me, I have given to them: and they have received them, and have known in very deed that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me: because they are Thine: and all My things are Thine, and Thine are Mine: and I am glorified in them. And now I am not in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, whom Thou hast given Me: that they may be one, as We also are. While I was with them, I kept

them in Thy name. Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept: and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture may be fulfilled. And now I come to Thee: and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy filled in themselves. I have given them Thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, as I also am not of the world. Sanctify them in truth. Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for them do I sanctify Myself: that they also may be sanctified in truth. And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me: that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them: that they may be one, as We also are one. I in them, and Thou in Me: that they may be made perfect in one: and the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast also loved Me. Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me: that they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world. Just Father, the world hath not known Thee; but I have known Thee: and these have known that Thou hast sent Me. And I have made known Thy name to them, and will make it known: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." (John xvii.)

Many wise and learned men have endeavored to explain this prayer. But how could they expect to succeed? It is a pure ray of heaven's glory, a strain of celestial sweetness: a truly spiritual soul may relish, a pure imagination may form some conception of it, but no mortal mind can fully explain it. It is a sublime mystery; the believing heart may fathom its depth of meaning, but no created intellect can comprehend it. Therefore, fall humbly upon your knees, sign yourself reverently with the sign of the cross, and then, with deepest reverence, give yourself to its contemplation.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### JESUS IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANI.

THE time had now arrived when the first act of the great tragedy of the Passion of Our Lord was to begin. "When Jesus had said these things, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where there was a garden, into which He entered with His disciples." (John xviii. 1.) "Then Jesus came with them to a country place which is called Gethsemani, and He said to His disciples: Sit you here, till I go yonder and pray. And taking with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad. Then He saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death: stay you here, and watch with Me. And going a little further, He fell upon His face, praying, and saying: My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." (Matt. xxvi. 36-39.)

This sadness was produced by the foreboding of that fearful storm of suffering and of cruel indignities that was about to burst upon Him. He experienced all that sinking of heart, that nervous, agonizing dread, that shuddering repugnance that men feel when they antici-

pate some great calamity that is impending over them. His sorrow was so great that the agony of it made Him exclaim: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death." There was before Him an awful night of indignities and outrages, to be followed by a day of suffering so intense, that we shudder even now at the bare recital of it. He knew every incident that would happen; He heard every taunt and gibe that would be spoken, and felt every blow that would be struck. He saw the mock trial, the blood-stained pillar, the ignominious cross, and the three hours of lingering agony. He endured beforehand every torture of His bitter passion.

Consider, Christian soul, that in this mental agony of Our Lord, as well as in all His other sufferings, each of us had a hand. The sins we have committed hovered around Him in the gloom of the olive-trees and glared upon Him like savage spectres. He saw them all. He knew that they were the creations of our wicked hearts, and prayed His Father to forgive us.

The three apostles were well aware that Christ was overcome with sorrow, not only for His own sake, but on their account also. As He Himself revealed to a saintly soul, the blessed Baptista Varani, He felt compassion for their present and future fate. "It was another sorrow," He said to her in a vision, "which deeply afflicted My soul, when I foresaw that My poor disciples would be dispersed, and that for My sake they would be subjected to all kinds of torture. I then saw how for the sake of My name one would be crucified, another scourged, a third beheaded. Thou mayst in part know what a pain

this caused Me when thou dost reflect how thou shouldst feel afflicted if a person whom thou lovest with holy affection were to suffer intensely, and withal innocently, for thy sake. Now, as I was the cause of My disciples' suffering, I cannot describe to thee the pains I suffered on their account."

The place where Our Lord suffered His agony was a grotto, which served, probably, as an oil-press. It is still shown. A small, iron door in the west side leads into it. Its key is in the possession of the Franciscan Fathers. Eight steps lead down into a sort of cave of irregular shape, which has been transformed into a chapel. Three pillars cut out of the rock sustain the ceiling, in which is an opening, covered by a wooden grating, which admits some light. The main altar is in the east, and on its right and left are side-altars, all three of marble, but of simple design. Beneath the table of the central altar are kept burning a number of costly lamps, which throw their light on a rosette bearing the inscription in Latin: "Here His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground." Mass is celebrated in the chapel every day.

Let us now consider Our Lord's petition. St. Mark says: "He fell flat on the ground: and He prayed that if it might be, the hour might pass from Him." (Mark xiv. 35.) Why does Christ pray that this hour might pass? Christian soul, if you would find the reason, just contemplate the appearance of your Redeemer. There He lies prostrate on the rough and cold ground. The burden of the sins of the whole world lies upon Him like

a mountain, and oppresses His heart so as nearly to break it. The agony brings a cold sweat out of Him, and the fear of His bitter suffering almost kills Him. Should Christ, then, not pray that the hour might pass? Never, during all His life had He passed an hour like the three hours in this grotto; for He suffered there in His soul what He suffered later in His body, and this so intensely that all men together could not sustain this pain. Might He, then, not pray that this hour pass?

“And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him.” (Luke xxii. 43.) O miracle of humility and love! The only-begotten Son of the eternal Father humbles Himself so deeply and so thoroughly as to accept the assistance of one of His creatures in His agony. This surely is a great and incomprehensible condescension. By it He wished to impress us with the excellence and efficacy of prayer. Abandoned by all men, even by His chosen apostles, who, thoughtless and unsympathetic, have dropped to sleep, He turns to His heavenly Father for assistance. Encouraged by His example, the zealous Christian turns, in the time of trial and temptation, to prayer. It is his best and only comfort; it is taught him by word and example by Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemani.

Let us now contemplate how Jesus awakened His sleeping apostles. “And He cometh, and findeth them sleeping.” (Mark xiv. 37.) He finds them asleep, unconscious, and apparently careless of the pain He is enduring. An hour before they were full of fervor, and had promised great things; and lo, they could not watch

one hour with Him! Jesus Himself seems to be surprised at this, and addressing Peter, who had been loudest in his protestations of devotion, said to him in a tone of reproachful astonishment: "Simon, sleepest thou? Couldst thou not watch one hour?" (Mark xiv. 37.) Then, with another word of warning to be vigilant and prayerful, He left them, to continue His struggle against the repugnance of His human will to assume the crimes of a sinful world and to suffer for them.

Each one of us was of those who forced from the sacred body of Jesus that agonizing sweat of blood. As He lay prostrate upon the earth in the bitterness of His anguish, He saw *you*, too. He felt all the sins which you have committed, knowing well all their circumstances and all their malice. He bore the guilt of every evil thought you have formed, of every evil word you have spoken, of every evil desire you have cherished, and of every evil deed you have done. If you yourself are filled with confusion at their recollection, think of the agony they caused to your Redeemer in Gethsemani. Cast yourself, therefore, upon your knees in the presence of God, and humbly implore Him to pardon you the share you had in His sweat of blood. Pray that the precious drops which fell from Him that awful night may blot out your offences, and promise Him never to sin again. Beg of Him that, when you have to struggle against the seductive whisperings of corrupt nature, He will call to your mind the sharp contest which covered His sacred body with that crimson sweat, and the memory of it will enable you to overcome your evil inclinations.

O Jesus, I adore Thee in the sorrowful mystery of Thy agony. Accept, merciful Saviour, my sincerest gratitude for the anguish undergone for my sake, for the prayer which Thou didst offer for me, for all the precious drops of Thy bloody sweat poured out for love of me. O Lord Jesus Christ, be merciful to me, help me in my last agony, and let my end be commended to Thee.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE TREASON OF JUDAS, AND THE APPREHENSION OF JESUS.

JUDAS had not been idle during the interval which elapsed since the time he left the company of the apostles. "And Judas also, who betrayed Him, knew the place: because Jesus had often resorted thither, together with His disciples. Judas, therefore, having received a band of soldiers and servants from the chief priests and the Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth and said to them: Whom seek ye? They answered Him: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith to them: I am He. And Judas also, who betrayed Him, stood with them." (John xviii. 2-5.) "And he that betrayed Him, gave them a sign, saying: Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He; hold Him fast. And forthwith coming to Jesus, he said: Hail, Rabbi. And he kissed Him. And Jesus said to him: Friend, whereto art thou come?" (Matt. xxvi. 48-50.) "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of man with a kiss?" (Luke xxii. 48.)

The treason of Judas is one of those startling manifestations of human frailty which occur at times even

among those who seem to be the pillars of God's Church. They rouse us from our dream of security, reminding us of the solemn warning: "Wherefore he that thinketh himself to stand, let him take care lest he fall." (1 Cor. x. 12.) Surely, if we might look for stability anywhere, it would be among those whom Jesus Himself elected to be His representatives among men. He saw the hearts and the dispositions of those whom He gathered round Him for this purpose; and, therefore, Judas must have been a man who, if he had persevered in the way in which he was called to walk, would at last have laid down his life for his Master, like the rest of the apostles, and sealed a glorious career with a still more glorious death. Yet, though he was an apostle, and privileged as few men have been either before or since, he fell away most miserably from the service of Jesus Christ, and was lost. Since that time, very many have imitated his treason, and sold their Lord and Master for as paltry a sum as the blood-money which he received from the iniquitous high-priests. Heretics and unbelievers use them as examples wherewith to illustrate their arguments against our holy religion, and many of the simple faithful find them a rock of scandal and a stone of offence. But, instead of doing us any harm, the fall of such men may be turned into a signal benefit, if we learn to regard their prevarication as a warning of what may befall ourselves. We are all weak and liable to stray from the path of duty; therefore, when we see those who are more perfect than ourselves turning traitors to their God, let us remember to stand in fear, not to be

censorious, but humbly to ask God to guide our steps in His paths, and not to suffer our feet to wander from the narrow way into the broad road which leads to perdition.

Alas, the kiss of Judas is being constantly repeated. When some teacher of error, himself unworthy of divine grace, through his lust of flesh or pride of intellect, rises up against the discipline or teachings of His Church, and under the flimsy pretext of saving bishops and popes from error, and hypocritically prating about his love for the Church, betrays the spotless spouse of Christ to her enemies, is not such a profession of love the kiss of Judas? Alas, how often has the kiss of Judas been offered to the Saviour from the beginning of heresy and schism even to the latest years? And when a would-be enlightened individual, pretending to preach a so-called liberal policy for the Church, or a more advanced and modern Christianity, brings forward opinions subversive of faith and morals; when a Christian, though living in mortal sin, mingles among the faithful brethren, and, although unprepared and unrepentant, even approaches the altar to receive his Lord, is not such action similar to the treacherous kiss of Judas in the Garden of Olives?

“As soon, therefore, as He had said to them: I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground.” (John xviii. 6.) St. Augustine here remarks: “Behold the power of a single word from the lips of Jesus! Although He raises no sword, the well-armed, boastful, and presumptuous gang fall helpless at His feet. If He who was about to be dragged to judgment had such power then, what shall He not be able to accomplish

when He shall come in, a cloud of power and majesty to be Himself the judge? If at the point of death He is so mighty, what will He be when in His glory?"

"Again, therefore, He asked them: Whom seek ye? And they said: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered: I have told you that I am He: if therefore you seek Me, let these go their way. That the word might be fulfilled which He said: Of them whom Thou hast given Me, I have not lost any one." (John xviii. 7-9.) "Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and struck the servant of the high-priest, and cut off his right ear. And the name of the servant was Malchus." (John xviii. 10.) "But Jesus answering, said: Suffer ye thus far. And when He had touched his ear, He healed him." (Luke xxii. 51.) "Jesus therefore said to Peter: Put up thy sword into the scabbard. The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?" (John xviii. 11, 12.) "And Jesus said to the chief priests, and magistrates of the temple, and the ancients that were come unto Him: Are you come out, as it were against a thief, with swords and clubs? When I was daily with you in the temple, you did not stretch forth your hands against Me; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness." (Luke xxii. 52, 53.) "Now all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then the disciples all leaving Him, fled." (Matt. xxvi. 56.)

It would seem from the gospel narrative that though Judas gave the preconcerted signal which pointed out to the soldiers the person of Our Lord, they did not at once rush on and seize Him. Either their eyes were blinded,

so that they could not see, or the traitor had been so precipitate in performing his villainous part that they had not noticed his salutation. As they stood irresolute, Jesus advanced toward them. All signs of weakness and of fear had vanished from Him. With unfaltering step He came toward them, and asked, in a voice in which there was not the slightest tremor of apprehension: "Whom seek ye?" They answered: "Jesus of Nazareth." Then He uttered these few simple words: "I am He," with such majestic dignity of mien and quiet intrepidity of tone that His would-be captors reeled backward and fell to the ground. Amazement and fear held them spellbound; they dared not lay a finger upon Him. Again, therefore, Jesus said to them: "Whom seek ye?" and again received the same answer. "I have told you," replied Jesus, "that I am He. If therefore you seek Me, let these go." By these words He gave them permission to seize upon Him; for the soldiers at once advanced, and with them the servants of the high-priest. St. Peter now drew forth his sword, and aiming a blow at the most forward, cut off his right ear. Jesus somewhat sternly bade him put back his weapon into its scabbard, as the use which he had made of it seemed to imply a want of faith in the power of God, who, on a word from His beloved Son, would have sent to His assistance legions of angelic spirits. Then, with compassionate tenderness, He healed the wound inflicted by His over-zealous apostle, and gave Himself into the hands of His enemies.

Reflect, now, in what way you may make the contemplation of this incident in Our Lord's passion bear upon

your daily life. There are seasons of trial and difficulty, when all things seem to be turning against you, and when, in addition to the trouble which hampers you on every side, there is added the enticement of the devil to abandon the service of God and to give yourself up to the pleasures of the world. When you are on the point of sinning, when your will is hesitating, trembling, as it were, in the balance, Jesus Himself comes before you, and says: "Wherefore art thou come? Is it to betray Me? Is it to hand Me over into the power of My enemies?" He speaks to you with a gentle voice, half-sorrowful, half-reproachful: "My child, it is I. Do not, I beseech thee, do this thing! It is I whom thou art about to outrage. I have loved thee tenderly, with more than a mother's love. I have watched over thee, and seen thy struggles and thy trials, and borne thee up in the wearying heat of the conflict. I have given thee all that I have: more I could not give thee, for I gave thee Myself. I have shed the last drop of blood to redeem thee. What, therefore, art thou about to do?" Reflect upon it, and let the horror which the magnitude of so great a crime will flash into your soul bring you to your knees in humble supplication for pardon, for mercy, for strength.

But there is another aspect under which we may look at the words of Jesus. There are some who, like the soldiers and the Jews that apprehended Jesus, are not impressed by the words which Christ addresses to them. They are deaf to the gentle pleading of His loving Heart; all that He has done for them, all that He prom-

ises to do for them, is forgotten. The allurements of sin flaunt so glaringly before their view that they see not the tearful eyes and the blood-stained face of their Redeemer. His outstretched hands are unheeded by them. They fling Him aside; they thrust Him into the clutches of His enemies, and grasp their heart's desire. There is no hand raised to smite them for their impiety, because it is their hour, and the hour of darkness. But that hour will pass away, and then it will be God's day—a day of calamity and of misery, a day of vengeance and retribution. For the sinner is not suffered to go on in his sin forever. The measure of his iniquities is filled up, and then the hour of doom strikes the knell of condemnation for him. He shall be snatched from the midst of his sins and hurried into the presence of his Judge. Then he shall hear these words of Jesus thundered into his ear: "It is I, Jesus of Nazareth. It is I whose words you have despised, whose counsels you have set at naught, at whose threats you have laughed. It is I whose laws you have transgressed, whose sufferings you have made unavailing, whom you have despised and ill-treated. And now the day of vengeance has arrived. Thou mayest call the mountains to fall upon thee and to cover thee, but they cannot hide thee from My wrath. Begone, accursed one, into everlasting fire!"

Dearest Jesus! I beg of Thee, through the merits of Thy cruel fetters, that Thou wouldst deliver me from the manacles of sin, of the world, and of the devil. Bind me to Thyself so fast with the fetters of love that I may ever remain Thy willing captive. Bind my heart to Thy

heart, my mind to Thy mind, my soul to Thy soul, so that, by virtue of these triple bonds of love we may be so united that the power of the world, the flesh, and the devil may never be able to separate us.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### JESUS BEFORE ANNAS.

NOW the impious mob led Our Lord away. Who can describe, or even imagine, the diabolical joy and low insolence of the soldiers and servants of the chief priests, as they dragged Jesus out of the garden and across the valley of Josaphat, over the brook Cedron, to Jerusalem, and into the high-priest's palace? The distance from the Garden of Gethsemani, at the foot of Mount Olivet, where Our Saviour was apprehended, to the house of Annas, was fully a mile and a half. Over this distance, by a rough and stony road, Jesus was hurried along, leaving the ground stained with His bleeding feet. The servants carrying torches went ahead; behind them followed Jesus, tightly manacled, derided by the servants of the priests and Pharisees, and beaten and jostled by the soldiers; the meek and silent Saviour of man, bowed down with sadness and pain, is led like an innocent lamb amid a pack of bloodthirsty wolves. He was so tightly bound and so rudely jostled that He fell seven different times. Especially at the bridge over the brook Cedron He suffered a cruel fall; for His hands being tied behind Him, His sacred brow came violently against the ground, where He lay, bleeding and helpless,

till His enemies, amid shouts of laughter mingled with curses, lifted Him to His feet. Then they drove Him with clubs and swords up the steep mountain path of Sion, and into the city. Alas, there was no compassionate soul abroad that night to meet the suffering Saviour with a look of sympathy!

It must have been close on midnight when Jesus with His captors reached Jerusalem. Yet so eager were the priests to be rid of Him that they did not wait until morning, but had Him ushered into their presence at once, that the preliminary trial might take place, and the way be prepared for His condemnation and death on the following day. The soldiers therefore led Him straight to the house of Annas, the father-in-law of Caiphas, the high-priest. This Annas presided over a tribunal of seventy-two ancients, before whom all cases of false doctrine were tried. More than twenty years before he had been high-priest, but had been deposed by the Roman Procurator, and was now an aged man, whose heart had not grown tender with his years, but rather harder and more unfeeling with avarice and pride. It has been suggested that the furious hatred displayed both by him and by all the priests and elders against Our Lord arose from the fact that Jesus had so publicly, and with such zeal, driven the buyers and sellers from the Temple courts, and thus cut them off from a great source of pecuniary gain. We may, therefore, picture to ourselves the glare of fiendish triumph which shot from his eye as Jesus stood before him, bound like a common felon. He began at once to question Him about His doctrine, but

the time for answering these inquiries had passed, even had they been asked for information, and not merely to entrap Him. Jesus, therefore, mildly referred him for information upon these points to those who had listened to Him.

“Jesus answered him: I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in the synagogue and in the Temple, whither all the Jews resort; and in secret I have spoken nothing. Why askest thou Me? Ask them who have heard what I have spoken unto them: behold they know what things I have said. And when He had said these things, one of the servants standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying: Answerest thou the high-priest so? Jesus answered him: If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil: but if well, why strikest thou Me?” (John xviii. 20-23.)

At the present day men dare to cite Jesus before their tribunals, in something of the same spirit as that which animated the infamous high-priest so many centuries ago, and for reasons almost similar. The doctrine of Jesus is a curb upon human nature. It restrains the fiery impulses of its fierce passions, and nature, feeling the check, kicks against it and strives to be rid of it. His teaching keeps within due bounds the reason of man, as well as his untamed nature. Consequently, all those who do not wish to be curbed by the law of the Lord hate Him for imposing it upon them, and do what lies in their power to destroy Him. Hence it is that we find men calling in question the very existence of Jesus, looking upon the whole gospel narrative as a tissue of fables,

and upon the divine law as a code invented by priests to subject the credulous to their sway. They summon Jesus before the tribunal of reason. He appears there, always prejudged, with hands tied, and, if possible, His mouth gagged. They question His doctrine in a sneering, captious, half-critical, half-bantering sort of way, as if they hardly deemed it rational. If an answer is given, they fly into a fury and allow the speaker to be struck on the mouth, contrary to the dictates of law and justice. Beware of this. It is the outcome of a spirit of irreverence, which is born of rebellion against the law of God. No one calls into question the existence of God, and of the right of moral law to man's obedience, except such as have first revolted against the moral law, and persevered so long in their revolt that it is their interest to deny the existence of a guardian of the law, who will sharply avenge every infringement of it. Let them, then, first heal the wounds of their hearts, and they will soon see that reason will find nothing illogical in the scheme of divine government which has been revealed to us. Let them conscientiously observe all the precepts of God's law, and they will never desire to call Jesus Christ to the tribunal of their reason to show cause why He should dare to claim, and still more to exact, from them dutiful allegiance.

Another lesson may be learned from an incident of this unjust trial, from the blow which Jesus received upon the mouth. It is with the mouth that men very often most grievously offend almighty God; for with it they give utterance to all the wickedness that is generated in their corrupt hearts. Look, therefore, to yourself, and see what

you make of it. How do you speak of your superiors? You cite them before your tribunal, and pass in review their conduct, their persons, their abilities. Then you venture to judge them, to criticise them, and to condemn whatever seems displeasing to you. Your neighbors are next criticised. Perhaps, out of spite, you have invented and spread groundless accusations against them detrimental to their good name and character. How often is your mouth sullied by lies? Of some sins of the tongue, God grant you may never be guilty! But though your offences in point of speech be not grievous, yet remember that it was to atone for them that Jesus received so patiently that brutal blow upon His sacred mouth. Therefore often pray to Him, through the pain and confusion He then endured, to teach you to set a gate of prudence before your lips, so that no unseemly word, or sharp or bitter saying, which might wound your neighbor and soil your conscience, may ever escape your mouth. And when you feel tempted to say anything that would leave ever so slight a stain upon your soul, think of the blow given to your Lord, and keep silence for His sake.

O beloved and grievously insulted Lord and Master! in deep humility and loving reverence I throw myself before Thee on my knees. I honor and praise Thee with all the powers of my mind and soul, endeavoring by my poor homage to render Thee some reparation for the awful indignity inflicted upon Thee by a wicked menial. O lacerated, blood-stained countenance of my Saviour! I adore thee and salute thee with heart-felt love. Pardon me: for, alas, I am a sinner who has often insulted thee!

## CHAPTER XXII.

JESUS BEFORE CAIPHAS.—PETER'S DENIAL OF JESUS.

ANNAS and his associates deemed the case of Jesus to be one which came within the province of the Sanhedrim, or great court, and Our Lord was accordingly sent by them to Caiphas. The attendants, therefore, led Him straightway across the courtyard to the hall, where the infamous high-priest was waiting with his colleagues to proceed with their nefarious trial. "And the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put Him to death. And they found not, whereas many false witnesses had come in. And last of all there came two false witnesses, and they said: This man said: I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and after three days to rebuild it. And the high-priest rising up, said to Him: Answerest Thou nothing to the things which these witness against Thee? But Jesus held His peace. And the high-priest said to Him: I adjure Thee, by the living God, that Thou tell us if Thou be Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith to Him: Thou hast said it; nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high-priest rent his garments, saying:

He hath blasphemed; what further need have we of witnesses? Behold, now you have heard the blasphemy: what think you? But they answering, said: He is guilty of death. Then they spit in His face, and buffeted Him, and others struck His face with the palms of their hands, saying: Prophecy unto us, O Christ, who is he that struck Thee." (Matt. xxvi. 59-68.)

During the whole of this accusation, Jesus was standing in the presence of the high-priest, His hands tied behind His back, His eyes modestly cast down. No shadow of displeasure passed across His features as perjury after perjury was uttered against Him. His dignified silence disconcerted the judges, and filled them with confusion and rage. If He would only speak, they might vent their pent-up fury against Him. His silence was intolerable. It filled Caiphas with such passion that, starting to his feet, he exclaimed: "Answerest Thou nothing to the things that these witness against Thee?" His face was distorted with anger; his wicked eyes, sparkling with hate, peered into the countenance of Jesus, as he waited amid breathless silence for an answer to his question. But not a word passed the lips of Our Lord. Then, lifting up his voice, Caiphas uttered that solemn adjuration, which his crafty soul knew full well would extort an answer from his prisoner, and, at the same time, give him something upon which to fasten an accusation: "I adjure Thee," he said, "by the living God, that Thou tell us if Thou be Christ, the Son of God." Amid the deep silence which followed so solemn an appeal, there issued from the hitherto sealed lips of

Jesus the startling response: "I am: and you shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming with the clouds of heaven." (Mark xiv. 62.) Caiphas, unappalled by this thrilling announcement, seized upon these words as the most damning evidence of guilt; and crying out with well-assumed horror: "He hath blasphemed," rent his garments, and, appealing to his associates, received from them the long-expected answer: "He is guilty of death."

By the loud acclaim of the whole assembly, Jesus had been judged guilty of death. It is very likely that Caiphas, on hearing the unanimous sentence of his colleagues, rose up with them and left the hall. If he did not do so, but remained behind and looked on approvingly while Jesus was subjected to the treatment which the evangelists describe, this fact will be another brand of infamy upon his deeply stained character, marking him as a vile wretch, who to his many evil qualities added the degrading vice of malignant cruelty. For the wretches who stood around immediately began to maltreat Jesus, who stood defenceless in the midst of them. These were the soldiers, the menials, the hangers-on of the palace of the high-priest, into whose souls the devil seems to have entered and filled them with diabolical rage and cruelty against Our Lord. Some of them spat in His adorable face; others plucked at His hair and beard; others, clenching their fists, dealt Him blows on the face which stunned and staggered Him; with derisive shouts and laughter others struck Him with the palms of their hands, and, in allusion to His prophetic character,

asked Him to tell them "who it was that struck Him." This treatment they continued the whole of that dreadful night. The evangelists have drawn a veil over the secrets which its darkness conceals, and have contented themselves with saying: "And blaspheming, many other things they said against Him." (Luke xxii. 65.)

Here is a subject for study and meditation, ye proud and sensitive children of men. O all ye who think of little else and seek little else than your own personal advantage, who crave and covet the admiration of your fellow-beings, who lust for distinction, who demand the homage of the world, who vainly and foolishly labor to attract the eyes of others by your personal appearance, by gaudy dress, by affected and pompous demeanor, who cannot bear an insult, even though imaginary: in this spectacle you may discover and realize the wickedness of your personal vanity. For it is in atonement to His heavenly Father for such vanity that Our Saviour underwent such atrocious treatment.

Whilst Jesus was enduring in silence and meekness these unparalleled indignities, insults, and tortures from the hands of His enemies, still another disgrace was added, wounding still more deeply His sorrowful heart. Peter, His chosen apostle, denied Him. After Our Lord's apprehension, he fled, like the other apostles; but shame for his cowardice, as well as his love for Jesus, induced him to turn back and follow Him "afar off," even to the house of the high-priest. The evangelists describe his denial of Christ as follows:

"Now when Peter was in the court below, a portress,

one of the maid-servants of the high-priest, came, and when she had seen Peter sitting by the fire, warming himself, and had looked at him, she said: Art thou not also one of this man's disciples? Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied before them all, saying: I am not one of His disciples. Woman, I know Him not. I neither know nor understand what thou sayest. And he went forth before the court, and the cock crew. As he went out of the gate, another maid saw him, and she saith to them that were there: This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. They said therefore to him: Art not thou also one of His disciples? And after a little while another seeing him, said: Thou also art one of them. But Peter denied again with an oath, and said: I am not; I do not know the man. After the space, as it were, of another hour, another man affirmed it, saying: Of a truth this man was also with Him, for he is a Galilean. And they that stood by came and said to Peter: Surely, thou also art one of them. Thou art a Galilean, for even thy speech doth discover thee. One of the servants of the high-priest, a kinsman to him whose ear Peter cut off, said to him: Did I not see thee in the garden with Him? Again therefore Peter denied, and began to curse and swear: Man, I know not what thou sayest. I know not this man of whom you speak. And immediately, as he was yet speaking, the cock crew again. And the Lord, turning, looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, as He had said: Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And going out, he wept bitterly." (*Matt. xxvi., Mark xiv., Luke xxii., John xviii.*)

In truth, Peter had good cause to shed bitter tears of remorse and contrition. For, as the gospel so impressively states it, he had denied Jesus before all; he had denied his Lord by dissimulation, denied Him by a lie, by repeated lies, and by a solemnly sworn assertion of falsehood. Lay it well to heart, devout reader, even an apostle it was who fell so low and so meanly, because he heeded not the warning of his Master; because he depended too confidently on his own strength; because, instead of preparing by prayer for the hour of temptation, he went to sleep; finally, because he went into danger unguarded.

Learn from the downfall of St. Peter not to be presumptive, but to stand in humility and fear. It may be that at this present moment you are leading a pure and holy life. You delight in prayer, pious reading, and in the devout reception of the sacraments. Vice is hateful to you, and in the strength of your present fervor you imagine that nothing in the world can separate you from the love of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless be on your guard; stand in fear. There have been many as good, as virtuous, and as fully determined to remain so, as you are at this moment; and we have seen them fall away and make shipwreck, not only of their virtue, but of their faith. They trusted too much in their own strength.

“Peter went out”—that is, he left the occasion of sin, fled from further temptation and from the scene of his fall—“and wept bitterly.” His penance was a lasting one; for during the rest of his life he never ceased to bewail his unfaithfulness. A pious legend relates that St.

Peter was never again seen to laugh, and at every sound of the cock-crow his tears gushed forth afresh. His repentance was perfect, so that he could afterward say with truth: "Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee." And his love was an humble, strong, and enduring love, a love till death. After pursuing a long, zealous, and laborious career in the service of the Church, his last request was that, as a final atonement and reparation for his denial of his Lord, he might be crucified head downward. His penance was crowned with its reward. Here below he was chosen to be the prince of the apostles and appointed head of the Church, and in heaven he was adorned with a martyr's crown. And all this reward came from that look of Jesus, a look full of grace, and from Peter's faithful and persevering co-operation with the grace of that look.

O merciful Jesus! turn another such look of grace and pity upon me, that, like Peter, I may be strengthened to love Thee, and to serve Thee faithfully till the hour of my death.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### JESUS BEFORE PILATE.—THE DESPAIR OF JUDAS.

**A**FTER a long night of the most outrageous treatment, Jesus was summoned, very early in the morning, before a full assembly of the Jewish high court, where sentence of death was passed upon Him. But as the Jews no longer possessed the power to inflict capital punishment, it was necessary that Jesus should be handed over to the Romans. "And the whole multitude of them rising up, led Him to Pilate. And they began to accuse Him, saying: We have found this man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, and saying that He is Christ the king. And Pilate asked Him, saying: Art Thou the King of the Jews? But He answering, said: Thou sayest it. And Pilate said to the chief priests and to the multitudes: I find no cause in this man." (Luke xxiii. 1-4.)

Behold Our Lord, the almighty and all-holy, dragged through the streets of Jerusalem to the palace of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. As He went along, the people and strangers who had come for the feast of the Passover were told that this man, whose fame had gone throughout Judea, had been discovered at last to be nothing better than a cunning impostor who had gained for

Himself the reputation of a prophet and worker of miracles. He was therefore insulted, derided, and reviled as He passed along the crowded streets. On arriving at the governor's palace, Jesus was sent into the hall, probably with some soldiers or Temple guards; for the priests feared to incur ceremonial uncleanness by entering the house of a gentile. Pilate, in order not to offend the prejudices of this fanatical people, came down to them as they stood without. The accusations brought by these hypocrites against Jesus were "that He was a man of seditious character, whose aim was to overthrow the Roman power; that He persuaded the people not to pay tribute to Cæsar, and set Himself up as King of the Jews." The clear-headed Roman saw at a glance how matters stood. He had heard enough to know that the charges of these vindictive priests against Christ were the outcome of their jealousy and wounded pride; and he was convinced that if the accusations had been true, these men would have been the first to join any one who opposed the Roman dominion. After listening to their story with ill-concealed scorn, he left the accusers to question the accused.

Endeavor to learn something for your own edification from the sin of the Jewish priests. They were incited to murder Jesus through envy; for His holy, austere, and laborious life was a reproach to their effeminate indolence; the light of His wisdom threw all their knowledge into the shade, and His miraculous power gained Him the credit and the reverence of the people. Hence their continuous opposition to His teaching, and their rage

when He silenced and humbled them in presence of those before whom they wished to pass as the guides and teachers of Israel. Now, as envy led them into the frightful crime of seeking the death of the Son of God, it may likewise cause you to commit many grievous sins. Carefully guard your heart against this detestable vice, and instead of inflicting injury upon your own soul by grieving at the success of others, share in all their good works by rejoicing with them and giving God thanks for their success.

After hearing the accusers of Jesus, Pilate left them, and, entering the hall, stood face to face with Our Lord. Looking upon Him standing there pale and weary, with the marks of the preceding night's ill-treatment still on Him, he began with the chief accusation against Him, and asked: "Art Thou the king of the Jews?" His tone, half pity, half of incredulous surprise, made Jesus answer: "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now My kingdom is not from hence. Pilate therefore said to Him: Art Thou a king? Jesus answered: Thou sayest that I am a king. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth: every one that is of the truth heareth My voice. Pilate saith to Him: What is truth? And when he said this, he went out again to the Jews and saith to them: I find no cause in Him." (John xviii. 36-38.)

From this conversation Pilate judged Our Lord to be a harmless visionary; and going forth to the eagerly ex-

pectant multitude, told them very plainly that he found no cause for condemnation in Him. This announcement was received with loud clamors, and fresh accusations and wilder cries for His blood rose from the people, as the priests went about industriously among them instigating them to clamor for His death. Had Pilate been a man of firm decision, he would have ordered out a company of soldiers and cleared the place of these shrieking fanatics; but, fearing to offend them whose accusations at Rome might rouse the susceptibilities of his imperial master, he hesitated and took refuge in a temporizing policy, which only staves off a difficulty for a time, but does not remove it.

Observe, too, the question of Pilate: "What is truth?" As if, unbelieving heathen that he was, he would have said: "Why trouble yourself to find out the truth? Why bring upon yourself so many perils, so much hatred and opposition, in endeavoring to make known the truth to men? What is truth? Where is it to be found? No-where on earth, for here below all is doubt, error, and fiction. The truly wise man is he who does not bother himself about truth, who enjoys life, who gives himself up without restraint to the gratification of every momentary pleasure." What a sad and miserable avowal! Paganism makes use of Pilate's lips to acknowledge its own impotency to learn or to hold the truth. It confesses that all the efforts of its greatest, wisest, and most learned philosophers have led mankind to nothing but falsehood. It acknowledges itself unable to solve the awfully important problem concerning the soul of man. "What is

truth?" Observe, too, that paganism makes this declaration of its own inefficiency and insufficiency on the very day on which mankind is to be restored to the truth and renewed in grace by the atoning sacrifice of the cross.

Form for yourself a habit of mind different from that which guided the conduct of Pilate. Accustom yourself, on all occasions when there is question of right or wrong, first of all to discover, if possible, what is right, and then to follow it, cost what it may. In this way you will accustom yourself to fear nobody but God, and to dread nothing but evil. This will make you a good, honest man, faithful to your conscience and loyal to your God, and you will never condemn Jesus Christ in order to win the favor of His enemies.

After the apprehension of Jesus, the traitor Judas probably mingled with the crowd, in order to escape observation. Curiosity impelled him to follow the concourse to the city, to see how matters would end. He heard, from the remarks of those who had been present at the preliminary trial, of the vile treatment to which his Master had been subjected by His captors, and also that the general impression was that He would most certainly be put to death. He had, in all probability, never calculated upon this; but thought that Jesus would find means to escape from their hands unharmed, as He had escaped oftentimes before. But now that He seemed to be wholly in their power, Judas knew full well how little hope of escape there was for Him. The wretched traitor began to see, in all its appalling magnitude, the atrocity of the

crime of which he had been guilty. Remorse tore his heart. The calm, pale, sorrowful face of Jesus, whom he had given over to death, haunted him like a spectre. All the numberless acts of love He had shown to him, in trying to soften and change his heart, now rose up before his mind like so many avenging furies. In order not to interrupt, later, the history of Our Lord's sufferings, we mention the fate of the traitor Judas here.

"Then Judas, who betrayed Him, seeing that He was condemned, repenting himself, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and ancients, saying: I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. But they said: What is that to us? Look thou to it. And casting down the pieces of silver in the Temple, he departed, and hanged himself with an halter. But the chief priests having taken the pieces of silver, said: It is not lawful to put them into the corbona: because it is the price of blood. And after they had consulted together, they bought with them the potter's field, to be a burying-place for strangers." (Matt. xxvii. 3-7.)

Peter and Judas both sinned against their Lord and Master, but their subsequent conduct and fate were as far different as heaven from earth. Peter turns his eyes to his Redeemer, and encounters a compassionate look of forgiveness. Judas bends his steps to the enemies of Christ, the high-priests, and meets with heartless indifference. Peter recognizes the enormity of his crime, but, as his faith is still alive, he understands, to his consolation, that the mercy of his Redeemer is infinitely greater. Judas, on the contrary, is confirmed in his wickedness; he

turns away from repentance; he settles down to dark despair, and, going out, hangs himself.

When Judas first presented himself before the high-priests to make that vile compact which ended in the betrayal of Our Lord, they received him eagerly, and showed him marked attention. They encouraged him to do what he proposed; they employed him as a tool to serve their wicked purpose. When they had accomplished this, they withdrew from him in disdain. He had betrayed innocent blood! They thought nothing of it. They laughed at his misery, and sneeringly told him that it mattered not to them what might happen to him. "Look you to it."

So it is also with those who would lead you to sin. Before and while they are tempting you, they pretend the greatest friendship and love for you; but afterward they hate and despise you. There can be no true esteem, no true friendship, no real love, which is cemented by sin. You can expect no lasting regard from any one who urges you to sin. It is himself he loves, not you. And when such wretches have gained their end, they laugh heartlessly at the misery they have created.

Another lesson which the sad end of Judas teaches us is this: Sin, even in the present life, is always followed by punishment; if not by temporal chastisements, by that inner torment of soul which is called remorse. It is the voice of conscience upbraiding men with their wickedness, and neither dissipation, nor pleasures, nor whirl of excitement is able to effectually stifle it. Once the evil deed is done, the tempter transforms himself into a

judge, who proclaims to your remorseful heart: "There is no longer any mercy for you; the measure of grace allotted to you has been exhausted. All penance will be in vain; your sentence is pronounced; you are already lost for all eternity." Christian soul, if you would escape misery such as this, resist, in its first inception, the attempt of the devil to induce you to be faithless to your Saviour, to your Church, to your duty.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

JESUS BEFORE HEROD.—HE IS REJECTED FOR BARABBAS.

—THE SCOURGING AND CROWNING WITH THORNS.

PILATE, in his perplexity and fear, was ready for any excuse to rid himself of this most embarrassing trial. As soon, therefore, as he heard, among other accusations, that "He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place," he remembered that Herod, who was then present in the city, held jurisdiction over that province, and ought, consequently, to try the case which had been brought before him. "And when he understood that He was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him away to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem in those days." (Luke xxiii. 7.) This was not the Herod who had caused the murder of the Innocents, but his son, the same who had ordered the execution of St. John the Baptist. Moreover, he was not king of the whole Jewish country, but only of Galilee. For after their father's death, his three sons, Archelaus, Philip, and Herod, had divided the kingdom amongst themselves, and the latter obtained Galilee. He lived at Cæsarea, not in Jerusalem; but at Easter he came to the latter city to fulfil the law, and then dwelt in the beautiful marble palace erected by his father. To this adulter-

ous and cruel king the King of heaven and earth was now sent for trial.

Jesus was therefore again dragged through the streets, and amid imprecations, insults, and blows, conducted to Herod. Seated amidst his licentious courtiers, Herod received Our Lord with joy. Like other men, he had heard much of Jesus, and of the wondrous works wrought by Him: how He had opened the eyes of the blind, made the lame to walk, cured lepers, and raised the dead from their graves. He expected Him to satisfy his vulgar curiosity by performing one of those astounding miracles which had made all Judea ring with His praises. "And Herod seeing Jesus, was very glad; for he was desirous of a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things of Him, and he hoped to see some sign wrought by Him. And he questioned Him in many words. But He answered him nothing." (Luke xxiii. 8, 9.) His questions drew no response from the poor, despised Saviour, who stood before him a prisoner. An angry flush mounted to the face of Herod, as he felt he was set at naught by Jesus; and though the Jews stood by earnestly accusing Him, He did not deem their clamors worthy of notice. "And Herod with his army set Him at naught, and mocked Him, putting on Him a white garment, and sent Him back to Pilate." (Luke xxiii. 11.)

What were the reasons which induced Our Lord to remain silent in the presence of Herod? There is one very obvious reason, which will strike even the most thoughtless. The inquiries of Herod were made simply to satisfy an idle curiosity, and his desire to see Our Lord was

prompted by nothing higher than the craving for some new excitement. No fruit could be hoped for from one so disposed. Moreover, the holy Fathers see other reasons for this silence of Our Lord, which will not be without a warning lesson for us all. They observe that by Herod's adulterous marriage with his brother's wife he had been cut off from the communion of the Jewish religion, of which he made a nominal profession. His life was most licentious, and though warned by St. John the Baptist, he had rejected grace, and, in order to heal the wounded vanity of a wicked woman, had basely ordered the precursor of Christ to be murdered in his prison. Jesus, therefore, could find in a heart so corrupt no healthy spot wherein to cast the seed of His life-giving word.

As Jesus was silent with Herod, so is He also silent with those who, like him, live in uncleanness and in the habitual abuse of divine grace. At first He speaks to them both by His inspirations and by the voice of His ministers; but when, by oft-repeated sin, every particle of good soil has been burned up in their hearts, He desists from such fruitless labor. Oh, sad indeed the fate of him unto whose questioning Jesus will answer never a word!

Receiving no answer from Jesus, Herod vents his spite against Him by inciting his soldiers to mock Him. A long white garment, such as was usually worn in Eastern lands by poor idiots, was brought out and placed upon Christ. Herod, by this proceeding, wished to intimate to Pilate: "You see this fool, who plotted to make Himself king, and who, because His ignorant and thoughtless

followers and the common people ran after Him, imagined Himself to be of vast importance. But before educated people, such as myself and the chief priests, His wisdom is blown to the winds, His power is nowhere, and He is unable to answer a word. There He stands, silent and confused, like a stupid idiot." And has not this mockery of Jesus continued for eighteen hundred years? Unbelief, sensuality, neglect, and pride have been heaped ignominiously on Christ in His Church, by rejecting her principles, thwarting her progress, ridiculing her practices, and subjecting her ministers to the scoffs and jeers of the ungodly.

From the court of Herod Jesus was once more led back through the streets of the city, dressed in the garment of a fool, and greeted on every side by the derision of the fickle crowd, who but a few days before had welcomed Him as the long-expected Messias. How He must have been harassed by this dragging from one place to another—from the Garden of Olives to Jerusalem, through the streets to the house of Annas, from Annas to Caiphas, from Caiphas to the morning session of the high-council, from the high-council to Pilate, from Pilate to Herod, and from Herod back again to Pilate. Who can describe or even estimate the fatigue and bodily pain, and, above all, the mental anguish, the agony of soul endured by Jesus, exhausted as He was by the cruel treatment of the night? And yet He obeyed His tormentors without uttering one word or showing one sign of reluctance, complaint, or reprimand.

"And Herod and Pilate were made friends that same

day: for before they were enemies one to another." (Luke xxiii. 12.) Disastrous friendship, formed by the rejection of Jesus! The pagan governor, having often offended the Jewish king by rashly intruding on his jurisdiction, avails himself of this opportunity to soothe the angry Herod, by flattering his vanity, pride, and curiosity, in turning Jesus over to him; and he now returns the compliment by sending Him back. And now, behold Him once more in the presence of Pilate. With unalterable meekness He awaits the sentence which the chief priests were urging the rabble to extort from the vacillating governor. Pilate dared not condemn a prisoner so manifestly free from guilt; but rather than take the straight path, and pursue it in spite of the insane clamors of a fanatical people, he again temporized. He recollected that it was a custom on the paschal solemnity to release, at the request of the people, some criminal for whom they might choose to petition. There happened at that time to be in custody a malefactor of the most vicious type, a man who was at once a robber, a rebel, and a murderer. Pilate, therefore, eagerly grasped at this last opportunity of saving the life of Our Lord. Coming forward and standing upon the platform above the heads of the surging throng, he put this question to them: "Whom will you that I release to you: Barabbas, or Jesus that is called Christ?" (Matt. xxvii. 17.) At once there rose up a unanimous shout: "Not this man, but Barabbas!" (John xviii. 40.) Pilate was astonished at their injustice and vindictive cruelty. He said to them: "Why, what evil hath this man done?" (Luke xxiii. 22.)

He was answered by still more furious shouts for the release of the robber and murderer. "Pilate saith to them: What shall I do then with Jesus that is called Christ? They all say: Let Him be crucified. The governor said to them: Why, what evil hath He done? But they cried out the more, saying: Let Him be crucified." (Matt. xxvii. 22, 23.) Maddened into a very paroxysm of fury by the delay Pilate had made in satisfying their thirst for blood, the Jews cried out: "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend; for whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar." (John xix. 12.)

How awful was the insult offered to Jesus in being thus compared to a robber and a murderer! But what must have been the anguish of His heart when, on being compared with Barabbas, the deliberate preference was given to this outcast, this human beast of prey? Think of the agony of suffering Jesus endured, and learn from Him that sweet humility which keeps the rebellious heart quiet, and restrains an angry tongue, and holds back the storm of wrathful words by which you otherwise would resent injuries.

Examine also into the secrets of your heart, and see whether you have dared, like Pilate, to propose to your soul the choice between Jesus and mortal sin. See whether you have not, like the Jews, taken to yourself a Barabbas, and rejected Christ. If you preferred sin, you were guilty of as great an insult to Jesus Christ as the wretches who in their savage frenzy chose the robber and murderer in preference to the adorable Son of God.

Though Pilate saw that his efforts to save Jesus had

thus far been unavailing, he did not give up all hope of ultimately delivering Him from the hands of His enemies. As soon, therefore, as he had released Barabbas to the Jews, he did not directly condemn Our Lord to death, but, having once again declared that he found no crime in Him worthy of death, he nevertheless proclaimed that he was so far willing to enter into their views with respect to Him, as first to give Him a most severe correction, and then to set Him at liberty. Upon this, Jesus was led away from the presence of the Roman governor into the pretorium. There the soldiers stripped Him of His garments, and, having bound Him to a pillar, grasped in their cruel hands the scourge, in this case a whip of leathern thongs, each one of which was tipped with lead or iron. To be struck with it was looked upon as the lowest degradation, and none but the worst criminals were ever punished in this way. Jesus, tied fast to the pillar, the whole of the upper portion of His sacred person exposed to the cruel gaze of the mob, and so unmercifully lashed by scourges in the hands of six or eight soldiers, that His precious blood flows in warm streams to the earth, and skin and flesh become one undistinguishable mass, is the dread picture now before our thoughts. Forty stripes save one were all that the law sanctioned; but the revelations of the saints tell us that the soldiers struck till their hands grew weary. Then, and not till then, did they desist; and Jesus was left quivering with agony, fainting from the loss of blood, a spectacle at which the stoniest heart would have melted with pity. As we think of this scourging, our flesh creeps

with horror, and the blood curdles in our veins. They struck Him with all the might which fury lends to a powerful arm; they struck Him till they tore His flesh from His bones; they struck Him so long and so heavily, that had He not been supported by His divine nature, He would have died. Yet no cry of pain escaped from the lips of that unresisting victim. Like the sheep which is led to slaughter, He opened not His mouth. What a spectacle for us to look upon! Torn, mangled, disfigured, quivering with the agonizing smart of the cruel thongs, He stands there, well-nigh fainting with the keenness of punishment such as mortal flesh has never felt before. Truly, "He was wounded for our iniquities, bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed." (Is. lv. 5.)

O grievous wounds of the adorable person of my Redeemer! with reverence and loving sympathy I salute ye, and would fain bathe ye with my tears. O once beautiful features of my Saviour, how disfigured by the lash of the scourge! Eyes full of compassion for sinners, how swollen, how hidden in the blood that has poured from Thy temples! O truthful lips, how torn and deformed! O Father in heaven, look down upon Thy lacerated Son, see His writhing frame, and come to His relief! Remember that He is undergoing this dreadful scourging for no other purpose than that of making full atonement for my countless sins, especially my sins of the flesh, and to perform the penalties which I have so richly deserved. Therefore, O heavenly Father, I offer up to Thee this cruel scourging of Thy Son and my Sav-

iour, together with all His anguish of mind and torture of body, and cry out to Thee with a breaking heart: Divine Father, accept this infinitely valuable sacrifice, and thus save my soul from eternal perdition!

Yes, it was for our sins that God suffered wicked men to strike the sinless flesh of His only-begotten Son till He became like unto a leper, disfigured with bloody wheals and gaping wounds, as the leper is with the loathsome corruption of his foul disease. Sin is a leprosy with which men disfigure their souls, and to atone for it our Lord and God thus suffered pain, shame, and degradation. He was publicly stripped of His clothing before a crowd of vile wretches, to atone for the immodesties that are committed in the world. He was publicly whipped like the worst criminal, in order to satisfy, by the agony of His lacerated flesh, for all those sinful delights whereby men defile their hearts, and change them from the temple of the living God into the abode of the devil.

Let it, therefore, be your aim, after reflecting on the torture Our Lord endured in His cruel scourging, to obtain, by means of humble, earnest, persevering prayer, a great love for modesty, a deeper and more determined resolution to preserve yourself from the stain of uncleanness. It was to wash away this stain, and to provide a healing balsam for our gaping wounds, that He suffered His sacred flesh to be torn open and His sacred blood to gush forth. But at the same time He wished us to bear Him company in His sufferings, and to share in them by mortifying our sinful flesh. If we have not the courage to smite ourselves with those scourges wherewith the love

of God has armed the saints, we may at least strike ourselves with the whip of self-denial. If we cannot resist unto blood, we may at least endure the pain of turning away from what flesh and blood covet so eagerly, and sacrifice for the sake of Jesus some little of that ease which we do not deserve to enjoy, by reason of our many and oft-repeated transgressions.

The cruelty of the brutal soldiers who tortured Jesus suggested to them another means whereby they might add insult to the degrading injuries which they had already heaped upon Him. True, the executioners who did the scourging are quite exhausted, but who can count the numbers of those who are panting to supply their places, and to rival each other in venting their diabolical hatred against Jesus? Calling to mind that one of the accusations against Him was that He styled Himself King of the Jews, they said to one another: "If He is a king, He must be crowned."

In the vicinity of Jerusalem there grows a species of thorny shrub, whose thorns are hard, sharp, and about two inches in length. They are called to this day *Spina Christi*—"Christ's thorn." Of these the inhuman creatures platted a crown, and pressed it forcibly upon the head, brow, and temples of Jesus, striking it down with clubs, so that the sharp thorns penetrated to the bone of His skull. What an unheard-of cruelty! Never had the like of it been done, never been known in the history of inhumanity until that hour. Then they brought forth an old, tattered, purple cloak, and threw it over His bruised and bleeding shoulders, put a reed into His hands for a

sceptre, and the derisive coronation was complete. Now began that scene of insult and mockery which was so full of diabolical cruelty that, were it not recorded in the Sacred Scripture, we should deem it the invention of fancy rather than the sober statement of truth.

“And the soldiers led Him away into the court of the palace, and they call together the whole band: and they clothe Him with purple, and plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon Him. And they began to salute Him: Hail, king of the Jews. And they struck His head with a reed, and they spit upon Him, and bowing their knees, they adored Him.” (Mark xv. 16-19.) Each insult was received with shouts of laughter, and every clumsy joke made at His expense, and every piece of coarse buffoonery played upon Him, excited still more their rude hilarity, and their cruel desire to plague and ridicule Him. Oh, how hard must have been the hearts of those men who could look into the face of that unresisting victim, and thus smite and flout Him! His eyes were filled with blood, His face pale with the intense agony of the thorny crown, His whole body seamed and torn with the thongs of the scourges; yet, in spite of this, they ceased not to add to His sufferings and to insult Him with vile words and vulgar jests, till they wearied of their sport.

And why was this new species of suffering undergone by Our Lord? The prediction of the Canticle had to be verified: “Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see King Solomon in the diadem, wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of his espousals.” (Cant. iii. 11.) For Christ is the real Solomon, divine Wisdom itself. On

the day when He signed and sealed His eternal covenant with the human race His faithless mother, the Jewish synagogue, crowned Him with a crown of thorns. And again, why this strange manner of suffering? Alas, for the sins of the intellect! The head is supposed to be the seat of reason and of the other intellectual faculties. There it is that the soul brings to life and indulges in all those thoughts and imaginings whereby God is so often and so grievously offended. The eternal Father therefore deemed it fitting to lay upon the Redeemer's head all their crushing weight. As the sharp points of the thorns pierced through His flesh, rending and tearing His sacred temples, He thought of those who, being filled with immoderate self-esteem, look down upon and condemn others. He thought of the countless millions who revel in pride, and rob God of the glory which is His due. He thought of those who pine away with envy and jealousy of their neighbor's good. He thought of those who brood over some petty wrong or fancied slight, hatching thoughts of revenge. But most of all He thought, with shuddering horror, of those who admit into their heads and cherish in their hearts wicked thoughts, thus turning the temple of God into an abode of the devil. Ah, look at Him as He sits there, exposed to the insults and rude laughter of these pitiless, cruel executioners, so gentle, so patient, so uncomplaining, and then reflect upon the share you have had in these atrocities. Through the mist of blood which is darkening His eyes, He gazes wistfully at you and asks for compassion, or at least for one tear of sorrow for your share in striking

down upon His head that crown which so cruelly pierces His brow. Think upon the thoughts of your soul, and if they have ever been such as to torture your Lord, weep over them. Kneel before Jesus, not to deride, not to mock, not to strike nor spurn Him, but to tell Him the sorrow of your heart, and your determination not to offend Him again.

O thorn-crowned brow of my King and Master! I bow down before Thee, down to the very earth, and adore Thee. Woe to me if I should be an unworthy, wavering, self-seeking member of the body whose Head has thus cruelly suffered! Honored crown of thorns, more precious than all the crowns of kings and emperors of the world, favored instrument in the atoning for my pride and my many wicked thoughts—I revere thee, I embrace thee, I press thee to my brow, while I implore the Lord who wore thee upon His head for grace so patiently to wear my own thorny crown of tribulation here below, as to be worthy, in the life to come, of a crown of everlasting bliss. Thee, too, O purple robe, dyed with the blood of Jesus, I venerate and love. He chose to be mocked, not only in the white garment of derision, but also in the purple robe of a king, in order to teach us that not only the robe of innocence, but also the vesture of repentance and satisfaction can render us pleasing in His eyes. O Jesus, I beseech Thee, by the merciful love which Thou didst exhibit in permitting Thyself to be clad in a purple garment and thus to be ridiculed by a brutal soldiery, permit not that I should dishonor, by slavery to sin and passion, the sacred and kingly dignity to which Thou wast pleased to exalt me in the Sacrament of Baptism!

## CHAPTER XXV.

“BEHOLD THE MAN!”—JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH.

WHEN the soldiers conducted the lacerated, bleeding, and thorn-crowned Saviour into Pilate's presence, he was shocked and frightened at the result of his orders, and thinking it would not be possible for the Jews to remain unmoved at the deplorable appearance of their victim, he accompanied Jesus to the balcony, and showed Him to the crowd. “Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith to them: Behold I bring Him forth unto you, that you may know that I find no cause in Him. (Jesus therefore came forth, bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment.) And he saith to them, Behold the Man.” (John xix. 4, 5.)

“Behold the Man!” These words, few and simple as they seem, have in them a depth of meaning which we must try to fathom. Coming from the lips of the Roman governor, they were meant to convey to the people some such ideas as these: “Here is the Man who called Himself your king; who made Himself equal to God; who threatened to overthrow your temple and in three days to build it up again. For these offences, frivolous as I deem them to be, I have punished Him with the utmost rigor in order to satisfy you. Look at Him! Behold

the Man! He is clothed in His royal purple; His body is torn with numberless wounds; His face is swollen with blows and defiled with spittle; His eyes are full of blood, His head is crowned with thorns; He is bound like a criminal; He has been degraded and punished severely. Be satisfied, therefore, with the punishment I have inflicted upon Him; for He has suffered enough to atone for His folly and His offences."

"Behold the Man!" My soul, look attentively at Him as He stands before thee, His hands manacled, His whole body lacerated, gashed, and streaming with blood, disfigured, helpless, friendless. Oh, turn not aside thy eyes—look at Him, behold the Man, and remember that it was thou—yes, thou thyself—who by thy sins didst reduce thy Saviour to this suffering and degradation, as it is written in the Book of Isaias the prophet: "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins." (Is. iii. 5.) Look well upon Him, and examine every line, every expression of His sacred countenance; look long and carefully, so that this image may become indelibly imprinted on thy mind; for on the judgment-day thou shalt see Him again. On that day angels will cry out to every quarter of the globe: "Behold the Man who loved thee so tenderly and truly, who surrendered Himself to the most dreadful pain for thy sake. Behold the Man who in the height of His torture sighed only for thee, wept only for thee, and for thee poured forth His precious blood in torrents from His gaping wounds." O careless soul, how will it fare with thee then, if thou hast despised such mercy and turned a deaf ear to the call of

thy loving Lord! "Behold the Man!" Now, while thou hast time and opportunity, enter into judgment against thyself. Throw thyself into the bleeding arms of thy Saviour, and by penance and amendment of life turn to a good account for thyself His passion and death.

The pitiful spectacle of the thorn-crowned Jesus moved not the stony hearts of the cruel Jews. The words of the governor were received with one long and piercing cry for His life. "When the chief priests therefore and the servants had seen Him, they cried out, saying: Crucify Him, crucify Him. Pilate saith to them: Take Him you and crucify Him: for I find no cause in Him. The Jews answered him: We have a law, and according to the law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." (John xix. 4-7.) "And Pilate saith to them: Why, what evil hath He done? But they cried out the more: Crucify Him. And so Pilate, being willing to satisfy the people, released to them Barabbas, and delivered up Jesus." (Mark xv. 14, 15.)

The Roman governor at length began to see that all his efforts to deliver Jesus were in vain. He was startled by the wild rage of the populace, and fearful of the consequences if he attempted to resist their wishes any longer. Though he had repeatedly pronounced Jesus free from all guilt, he nevertheless weakly gives way before the clamor of an excited mob, and delivers Him up to their pleasure. "And Pilate seeing that he prevailed nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, taking water, washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just Man: look you to it. And

the whole people answered: Let His blood be upon us and upon our children." (Matt. xxviii. 24, 25.)

And now the judicial sentence has been pronounced, and Jesus is sentenced to death like a common malefactor. O ever-memorable sentence, in which the most hideous depths of human malice and the loftiest mysteries of divine mercy meet and mingle, and are made manifest! The inconstancy of the Jewish people, the avarice of the traitor Judas, the craft of the Pharisees, the blind incredulity of the scribes, the bloodthirsty hatred of the chief priests, and the cowardly selfishness and political cunning of the pagan governor—all these culminated in the judicial sentence of Pilate. But, inconceivable miracle! at the same moment eternal mercy speaks by the tongue of this same Pilate. For the Lord had placed on His well-beloved Son all our iniquities. Now, in order that the sentence of everlasting death under which mankind had fallen by the sin of their first father, Adam, might be repealed and annulled, the second Adam, and the first father of a spiritual humanity, permits the awful sentence of Pilate to come upon His divine head.

Pilate would rather not have pronounced this sentence, and was anxious to set Jesus at liberty. With this view he had publicly and solemnly declared that he could discover no guilt in the prisoner accused. With the same intent, too, he had placed the criminal Barabbas side by side with Jesus, hoping that in choosing between two such different persons the Jewish people would certainly decide in favor of the innocent man. With the same view he had presented Jesus to them immediately after

the dreadful scourging, and endeavored to excite their sympathy by calling their attention to the lacerated person of their victim. With the same object in view, he had, by washing his hands publicly, expressed his disapprobation of the proceeding. But all these feeble and indecisive efforts do not exculpate him, or even mitigate the iniquity of his sentence. And though his sin, as Our Lord Himself declared, was less than the crime of the chief priests who had delivered Him up, yet the name of Pontius Pilate, like that of Caiphas and of Judas, will stand branded with execration during all ages.

Pilate was fully convinced of Christ's innocence, and as he had full power as the representative of the Roman emperor to liberate Him, he was strongly inclined through his hatred of the Pharisees to save the life of Jesus. But, nevertheless, with cunning political adroitness, he sends this just Man to Herod, delivers Him up to the cruel scourging, and finally yields to the sanguinary demands of the chief priests, and permits Him to be crucified. Alas, Pilate is one of those unhappy beings who, under pretence of honesty, of philanthropy, and rational compliance, sacrifice to their own selfish ends the noblest and holiest principles. How many warnings he had received! The wonderful majesty of Christ's presence filled him with involuntary reverence. His own conscience told him that this was a just man. His wife, Claudia Procula, warned him not to pronounce the unjust sentence, basing her admonition on a dream she had, to which circumstance the pagan Romans paid the greatest attention, considering such dreams to be the expression of a divine

oracle. Even the very charge made by the chief priests, that Christ made Himself the Son of God, awoke a momentary warning in his heart. Yet the unhappy governor rejected all these salutary admonitions, and for no other motive than the fear of losing the good-will of the emperor. Strange and unheard-of spectacle! Here is a judge who repeatedly declares before the assembled multitude that the prisoner on trial is a man whose conduct has ever been free from blame. He knows full well that the accusers are actuated by malice. The witnesses, too, are lamentably at variance with each other, and give contradictory evidence. Yet he has not manhood enough to stem the tide of public prejudice and to pronounce in favor of justice. He weakly yields; and while proclaiming Jesus to be innocent, basely condemns Him to death. Nevertheless, he would save his conscience by an empty ceremony; he would wash away the murderous stain from his hands with a little water!

Pilate is the type of a great many Christians. They know perfectly well the justice and goodness of God's ordinances. They have for them even a sort of admiration, as for something which, in the abstract, is good and beautiful. But when they are forced to confront their fierce, tumultuous passions, they shrink from the labor and difficulty of subduing them; and rather than undertake so arduous a task, they trample under foot all the sacred claims of truth and justice.

If we imitate this wretched example, that curse will fall upon us which fell both upon the Jewish people and upon him who weakly yielded to their fanatical rage.

The blood of Jesus will be upon us for our destruction, and its crimson stain will mark us for punishment. But let us not incur so wretched a fate. Let us strive rather to make the blood of Jesus fall upon us for our eternal welfare. That precious stream has flowed upon us and over us in the holy sacraments. Let us bear in mind that God sealed us with it in Baptism; that we swore allegiance to Him and became His soldiers in Confirmation; that with it He feeds us in the Holy Eucharist; with it washes us from the filth of our sins in Penance; that by it He procures teachers and ministers for us in Holy Orders; and in the Sacrament of Matrimony infuses with that same blood strength to those that receive it to be faithful to each other and to fulfil the obligations of their state of life.

To the Jews, their cry, "His blood be upon us and upon our children," brought a horrible inheritance, a lasting curse. To us, that same blood has brought inestimable blessings. May it continue to fall upon our hearts like a fertilizing rain, cleansing and purifying them, and making them bring forth fruit unto everlasting life.

O my beloved Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who wast clothed in derision with the purple garment, and crowned with a wreath of thorns, grant that the sacred purple robe of charity may clothe my soul,—that I, while on earth, may by wearing willingly the thorny crown of penance and mortification prepare for myself a share in the crown of Thy glory.

O beloved Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who so pa-

tiently didst bear in Thy right hand, instead of the royal sceptre, the reed of mockery, extend that blessed right hand of Thine to me in my helplessness; grant that it may plant in my soul the kingdom of truth and grace.

O beloved Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who didst submit to mocking reverence, and didst suffer Thyself to be derisively termed king, grant that I may at all times adore Thee in spirit and in truth, and acknowledge Thee to be the only true King of heaven and earth.

O beloved Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who wast sentenced to the death of the cross by the unjust judge Pilate, grant that I may judge myself according to the holiness of Thy law, and bear with humility and docility the judgments of my fellow-men.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE WAY OF THE CROSS.

WHEN the fatal words of condemnation had passed the lips of Pilate, great haste was made to carry the sentence into execution. "And after they had mocked Him, they took off the purple from Him, and put His own garments on Him: and they led Him out to crucify Him." (Mark xv. 20.) "And bearing His own cross He went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha." (John xix. 17.) The executioners took off the purple garment which Jesus had worn since His crowning with thorns. His tunic, which was woven, was of one piece, and had only an opening for the head; hence, before it could be put on Him, it was necessary to take off the crown of thorns. As the soldiers handled Our Lord very roughly, there is no doubt that many of the thorns broke off and remained fast in the wounds they had caused. What pain this must have been! Christian soul, have compassion on your divine Saviour, who suffered so much for you.

After they had replaced His garments, they again put the crown of thorns on His head. As the thorns caused fresh wounds, we can imagine what intense pain Our Lord suffered; indeed, only His omnipotence and His

desire to suffer for us sustained Him, so that He did not die of this cruel treatment.

Then the executioners bound Him tightly with ropes and chains, for it was customary so to lead criminals condemned to death to the place of execution. Thereby His garments were pressed fast into the wounds with which His body was covered, which were thus irritated by every movement.

A rude cross which had been hastily constructed was now brought to the place where Jesus stood. When our blessed Lord's eyes first fell upon the cross, His human nature shuddered for an instant. But remembering that it was to be the instrument of salvation, His soul was gladdened, and with deep emotion He clasped it in His arms and kissed it. Then it was laid upon His shoulder; the centurion in command of the soldiers gave the word to advance, and Jesus set forth upon the last weary journey of His mortal life. Everywhere the streets were thronged with a multitude of people, eager to see Him pass to His death. Yelling men, curious women, thoughtless children, exulting enemies, jealous priests, jeering Pharisees, coarse soldiers, and in the midst Our Saviour, tottering under the weight of His cross. There were some who exulted over Him, either because He had not feared to denounce their wicked lives, or because His heavenly wisdom had brought confusion upon them when they attempted to contradict His teaching or to gainsay His word. Others were indignant that they had been carried away and deceived by a man upon whom they were now taught to look as an impostor. Some few pit-

ied Him, and they were laughed at and despised for their weakness and sympathy. Thus, in the midst of His enemies, with their gibes and scoffs and bitter taunts ringing in His ears and piercing His heart with sorrow, our Redeemer staggers slowly along under the weight of the heavy cross. A strong man would have found its burden as much as his strength could bear; but Our Lord, in His pitiable condition, after so many hours of bodily and mental torture, and after so much loss of blood, must have been well-nigh crushed beneath its weight. Behold Him, as His weary eyes look sorrowfully around, searching for one friendly, compassionate glance. The perspiration is trickling down His face in great beads; it is purpled with the blood which flows from its many wounds. His hands are trembling, He is panting with fatigue; the whole scene swims around Him, and He falls under His burden, not once only, but again and again. Is there no one present to pity Him? None! He is lifted up and pushed forward. There is no more rest for Him in this world, for He is bearing the heavy load of our sins.

Fix your eyes well upon Jesus as He totters under the weight of the cross. That spectacle will give you courage to bear your own petty crosses; it will give you strength to follow in the footsteps of Our Lord. And should you ever grow weary and be well-nigh fainting under your burden, look at Jesus and persevere. Say to yourself: "Can I not bear this light and easy weight for the love of Him who, beneath the crushing weight of the cross, looks at me with weary eyes, and asks me to keep

Him company?" Surely, after all that He has suffered for you, you will not refuse Him this little consolation.

"And there followed Him a great multitude of people, and of women, who bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning to them, said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold the days shall come wherein they will say: Blessed are the barren and the wombs that have not borne, and the paps that have not given suck. Then they shall begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us; and to the hills: Cover us. For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke xxiii. 27-31.) These words of Our Lord to the weeping women teach us that the grief excited by the contemplation of His sufferings must not be a grief of mere sentiment: if it be of that nature, it will be fruitless. Our sorrow must be made to spring from grief at the cause of Our Lord's sufferings. It must be a sorrow for our sins and for our unmortified passions. To shed tears for Our Lord from any other motive is to indulge a morbid sensibility; solid piety is rarely generated by it. It is for the most part a mere matter of nerves, and does not affect the will so as to move it to action.

"And as they led Him away they laid hold of one Simon of Cyrene coming from the country: and they laid the cross on him to carry after Jesus." (Luke xxiii. 26.) Jesus had probably stumbled under His heavy burden, and fallen, and His executioners, fearing lest He should die before reaching the appointed spot, seized upon Simon, and compelled him to carry the instrument of tor-

ture after Our Lord. Simon of Cyrene, we are told, made a virtue of necessity, and carried Our Lord's cross willingly, so that he thereby changed what was a disgraceful imposition into a source of merit and salvation. Let the example of Simon furnish you with an additional reason for patiently enduring the little trials and contradictions of life. Like him, you will be thereby made to share in the suffering of your Redeemer. You will be bearing the cross with your Lord, and atoning for your sins. Think of this when the burden of daily routine presses heavily upon you. Look up: Jesus is before you—faint, weary, panting with exhaustion. Take up your burden cheerfully: it is the cross which you are helping your Saviour to carry.

Tradition tells us that the Mother of Jesus, led and protected by the beloved disciple, stood by the wayside to catch a glimpse of her beloved Son as He went to death. Who can conceive her agony on seeing her tenderly cherished Child, her adorable Lord and God, thus dishonored and abused? Legend relates that, immediately after the capture of Jesus in the garden, several of the apostles, particularly St. John, hastened to Bethania to break the news to the Blessed Virgin and other friends. The holy Mother, who had anticipated this affliction, besought St. John to accompany her to Jerusalem, that she might see her deserted, desolate, and suffering Son, be near Him, and perhaps find an opportunity to offer Him some little relief, or, at least, some words of sympathy and encouragement. What must have been their thoughts and feelings as they hurried, side by side,

from Bethania, over the brook Cedron, and up the steep hill to Jerusalem! And when, after traversing in breathless haste the intervening streets, they reached the palace of Caiphas, what a dreadful state of mind was that of the grief-stricken and frightened Mary, as she heard within the palace the wild laughter and the cruel mockeries with which the soldiers and servants taunted the innocent Jesus! Although repeatedly pushed violently back by the officers, Mary succeeded in keeping near her dear Son, whom she accompanied on His painful journey from the high-priest's dwelling to the house of Pilate and to Herod's court, and thus became a witness of His ill-treatment and horrible indignities.

As Jesus staggered along under the weight of the cross, and came nigh to the place where His Mother was, He raised His weary head and looked into her face. Their eyes met, and the sword of sorrow, foretold by Simeon, entered into her soul. There was her Child and her God! He had ever been so loving, so obedient, so gentle to her; and now she saw Him disgraced, reviled, and insulted. She heard the bitter reproaches of the priests and scribes; she saw the savage blows, and the merciless soldiers goading on the unresisting Victim. As Jesus looked into her white and agonized face, and saw the speechless woe stamped upon her features, He trembled in every limb, His little remaining strength forsook Him, and He fell prostrate to the ground. Who can doubt that the Mother was in an instant by the side of her Son, and imprinted upon His brow the parting kiss? Neither priest, nor scribe, nor soldier, hardened

and brutal as they might be, would dare interfere or lay a hand upon her in that last act of maternal affection.

Alas, dearest Mother, how thy heart must have throbbed with anguish, and terror, and indignation, at the appalling sight before thee! O heroic and dauntless Virgin! Mother of sorrows! I implore thee, by all the tears which thou didst shed when beholding thy Son staggering under the weight of the cross, to obtain for me the grace to follow in His and thy footsteps.

From our holy Mother Mary we may learn never to be ashamed of Our Lord. At the moment when she met Him, He was branded a public malefactor. The people were told that He was no prophet, that He was not a just man, that He was not the expected Messias. The priests, it was said, had unmasked Him, and found Him to be nothing more than a clever impostor, whose cunning had failed to serve Him just as He was on the point of carrying away with Him the minds and hearts of all. She was pointed at as the Mother of this notorious criminal, whom the Roman governor had just condemned to death. It was looked upon as a disgrace to have known Him, or to have been in His company. What must it have been to be His Mother? But that loving Mother acknowledged Him in the presence of them all. She followed in His footsteps; she stood by Him faithfully to the end. Learn from her never to be ashamed of Jesus before men, that He may never have cause to disown you before the face of heaven and earth, on the great accounting day.

Among the tender-hearted women who pushed their way

through the crowd to be near Jesus, and to offer Him their sympathy, was one in particular, named Veronica, of whom reliable tradition relates a very touching incident. She was a lady of wealth and position, whose name was Seraphia, and who lived in a house on a street through which Jesus was to pass on His way to Calvary. Seeing Him, as He drew near, weak and suffering, covered with perspiration and blood, her heart was touched with compassion. She hastened into the street, forced her way through the wild crowd, and, undismayed by the threats of the officers, came before Jesus, and, falling on her knees, offered Him a handkerchief, saying: "Be pleased, O Lord, to wipe Thy suffering face with the handkerchief of Thy unworthy handmaid." Jesus, full of gratitude, looked benignantly at the tender-hearted woman, took the cloth and applied it to His face, and, much refreshed, handed it back to Seraphia. He passed on, and she re-entered her dwelling, when, lo! a miracle. On looking at the handkerchief, she saw imprinted upon it the likeness of the divine countenance. Thus did Our Lord repay the kindness of His servant. Seraphia became a Christian, taking the name of Veronica. The miraculous impression of the face of Jesus passed into the hands of Pope Clement, and has since remained one of the most cherished relics of the Church.

Merciful Jesus, we beseech Thee that all who contritely venerate the image of Thy holy face, disfigured as it appears by the sufferings caused by our sins, may be made worthy, through the merits of Thy bitter passion, to behold Thy divine countenance forever in the glory of heaven.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS.

JESUS at length reached the spot where He was to suffer the worst punishment His enemies could inflict. In order to degrade Him in the eyes of His nation, they caused Him to be led thither in company with two malefactors, who were about to receive the just reward of their crimes. "And there were also two others, malefactors, led with Him, to be put to death." (Luke xxiii. 32.) By this additional ignominy, however, the enemies of Jesus unconsciously fulfilled the prophecy of Isaias, who said of Our Lord: "He was reputed with the wicked." (Is. liii. 12.) As He stood upon the brow of Calvary, meekly awaiting the completion of the arrangements for His death, there was offered to Him, according to custom, a draught of wine mingled with myrrh. "And they gave Him to drink wine mingled with myrrh, but He took it not." (Mark xv. 23.) Our Lord just put His lips to the cup that He might taste of its bitterness, and then refused the draught, that He might be able to drain the chalice of suffering to the very dregs; for this wine was given to criminals who were about to die, for the purpose of deadening their senses to the agony of their torments. He was then stripped of His garments.

This inflicted upon Him a twofold torment: one of physical pain, by re-opening once more all the wounds He had received in His cruel scourging; the other of moral torture, by exposing Him naked to the gaze of the multitude. Being thus made ready for the sacrifice, He was thrown upon the cross, and the revolting scene of His crucifixion began.

A huge nail was fixed upon the palm of one hand, and the point driven home by the blows of a hammer, through the quivering flesh and muscles, into the wood of the transverse beam. Then seizing the other arm, which had shrunk in the agony of this cruel torture, the executioners stretched and pulled it till the hand reached the spot marked in the wood for the nail. Again the blows were struck, and again the nail was driven into the wood of the cross. The sacred feet of the unresisting Saviour were then drawn down and fastened into the place marked for them. How fearful must this spectacle have been! We cannot bear to look upon a trivial surgical operation; how could we have stood by while Jesus suffered this terrible agony for us? There He lay, crushed beneath the weight of the world's iniquity, silent and uncomplaining. After a few moments the soldiers came, and, raising the cross aloft, carried it to the hole which had been made in the ground to receive it. There it was finally secured, and the disfigured, scourge-torn, bleeding form of Our Lord appeared high above the heads of all, a spectacle unto angels and men.

Look at your Lord and Master as He hangs upon the cross, and learn from Him a lesson of patience and

resignation. No word of repining, no murmur of complaint will ever break from the lips of him who fixes his eyes upon that torn and bleeding Victim. It matters not how sorely he may be tried, either by anguish of mind or pain of body, his sum of woe cannot even be compared with that ocean of sorrow which deluged the heart of Jesus. "O all ye that pass the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to My sorrow." (Lament. i. 12.)

You may be tempted severely by the devil; he may give you no rest day or night, but fill your mind with foul images, whisper filthy suggestions into your ear, and affright you with his illusions. This is a sore trial, but it cannot equal the cross. Your heart may be oppressed with despondency; your spirit may faint within you, and all hope seemingly die out of your soul; yet, dark and God-forsaken as your life may appear, it cannot equal the gloom and abandonment of the cross. Even when all you undertake fails miserably, and a blight falls upon the plans which ought to succeed, reflect that your life cannot possibly be a greater failure than seemed the life of Our Lord, which closed amid the horrors of a public execution.

If corporal infirmities, such as sickness, should attack you, look at the cross, and you will bear the pain with patience. In the loss of all that is dear to you, when parents die, when children are called away, when property is lost, or friends prove unfaithful, look at the cross: Jesus is there, stripped of all He possessed, deprived of His good name, abandoned by His disciples, without a spot on which to rest His dying head, or a friendly hand

to wipe away the gathering sweat of death. There is no one nigh to Him but His loving Mother, whose presence does not assuage but rather augments His pain; and as for the few friends who with her have not feared to stand by the cross, their grief only serves to cut Him to the heart. Verily, then, does Jesus hang before us a Man of sorrows.

We must not, however, contemplate Jesus hanging on the cross merely for the purpose of making our own misfortunes bearable. We must meditate upon His sufferings in order to obtain from Him, through their merits, that courage which will enable us to support the ills of life with that holy resignation which He displayed in the midst of His bitter passion. In times of temptation, when the weary and harassed soul begins to sigh for rest, and to think that, perhaps, it would be better to yield, the sight of Jesus hanging on the cross will inspire us with a willingness to bear that which, after all, is a mere nothing compared with the misery of sin. It will tell us to be brave and generous, and not to fling down our arms under the very eyes of our Chief, who has borne the brunt of the fight, and broken for us the might of our adversary's arm. In times of dejection it will bid us hope on, and wait confidently for the moment when God shall visit us again. Did not the dark pall of disgrace and of death hang gloomily enough over the crucified form of Our Lord on Calvary? Yet there was in store for Him the glorious day of His resurrection. So, also, will it be with us. We are in darkness and in sorrow now, but let us wait patiently for the Lord, and He will

give us the desire of our hearts. And if our projects do fail, even so we must not lose courage. The recollection of Our Lord's perseverance in a career which, to the eyes of men, seemed to be an utter failure, ought to enable us to go on hopefully and perseveringly, till we win our crown. In sickness and in pain, a glance at the cross will remind us that it was for our sins that God struck His only Son; and we shall be comforted and strengthened to bear patiently our illness, by the thought that we are making some little atonement for our sins, and helping Our Lord to carry their heavy weight. And should death take away those who are dear to us, or should false friends desert us in the days when fortune smiles not upon us, still when we look at the cross we feel assured that there is One, at least, who will stand by us to the last, to soothe and to comfort us, because we have ever turned to Him to learn how to bear our sorrows and our trials, and have made them bearable by seeing that none of them can be compared to His.

O adorable crucified hands of my Saviour, so bountiful in dispensing blessings and goods of every kind to Thy creatures, but now so frightfully lacerated on account of my sins! I salute ye, and kiss ye, and press ye to my heart. O beloved sacred feet of my Saviour, although ye have always trodden the path of virtue, and hurried about eager to carry blessings to all, ye are now torn with harsh and jagged nails for my sins! I would wash away your blood with my tears. O precious blood of my Saviour, flowing from the wounds in hands and feet—cleanse me, heal the wounds that sin has made in my soul!

“And they that passed blasphemed Him, wagging their heads, and saying: Vah, Thou that destroyest the Temple of God, and in three days buildest it up again: save Thyself, coming down from the cross. In like manner also the chief priests, mocking, said with the scribes one to another: He saved others, Himself He cannot save. Let Christ, the king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with Him reviled Him.” (Mark xv. 29-32.) What a spectacle was this! Men, the chiefs and leaders of the people, so far forget both themselves and the sanctity of their office as to mingle with a crowd of scoffers, cursing and reviling their now helpless Victim. They put the word of scorn, of bitter taunt, into the mouths of those who had not wit enough to frame it for themselves, and so led the chorus of hate and malignity which struck upon the ears of Christ dying upon the cross.

How deeply must these insults have wounded the heart of Our Lord! The priests and scribes jeered at Him for four things in which He took the greatest glory. In the first place, they derided His power. If He was, as He pretended to be, the Son of God, where was that omnipotence which must have been His in consequence of His divine nature? He had not been able to frustrate the treacherous design of a false disciple, nor to escape from His captors. He could not ward off the blows showered down upon Him, nor avoid the sentence of death, nor loose Himself from the cross. “He saved others, Himself He cannot save.” Therefore all His miraculous

works were nothing better than cunning impostures, contrived and executed by the aid of the devil.

In the next place, they sneered at His royalty. "If He be the king of Israel, let Him come down from the cross. There He hangs, this so-called king! A king without subjects, crowned with thorns, with a reed for His sceptre and a gibbet for His throne!" They forgot that He had said: "My kingdom is not of this world;" that the day was coming when they should see Him seated upon the throne of His majesty. Their shouts of rage had drowned all this.

Furthermore, they dared to jeer at Him even for the confidence which He placed in God. They cried: "Where is that boasted trust of His in God? If such a man as He ever had any trust in God, let God now show that such was the case. Let Him prove that this criminal is innocent, by coming to deliver Him; for if He is His Son, God will surely claim His own."

Finally, to crown all their profane and blasphemous injuries, they insult Him for saying that He is the Son of God. At His trial they charged Him with blasphemy for having uttered the words, and shrieked out that He was worthy of death for daring to usurp such a title; and now they taunt Him with it. Jesus, on His cross, could dimly see them through the mist of blood and the shadows of death which were falling over His eyes. He was dying to save them, and they were looking up at Him, jeering at Him, wagging their heads in mockery, and gloating over Him in the bitter agony of His death. All the time the crimson drops were falling one by one

upon the earth; He generously gave all His blood to save them, but they would not have it; they trampled it under their feet in the dust.

Do not imagine that the mockers of Jesus have ceased to exist. The impiety of those who dared to insult Him in His death has been imitated, and is still imitated at the present day. Some, like the Roman soldiers, deride Him by their unbelief; others, like the Jewish people, by their wicked lives. And, again, there are others, like the priests and ancients, who turn the special gifts and favors bestowed upon them by God into so many instruments with which to offend Him. Take a glance at your past and present, and see whether you ought to count yourself among those who reviled and jeered at Our Lord. If the past has upon its records many a dark account scored up against you, let us hope that tears of repentance have long since cancelled your debt. But look well to the present, and see whether you are not hurried away with the crowd, and mixed up with those who jeer at Christ, by trampling under foot His holy law.

“And Pilate wrote a title also, and he put it on the cross. And the writing was: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. This title, therefore, many of the Jews did read: because the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate: Write not, the King of the Jews, but that He said, I am the King of the Jews. Pilate answered: What I have written, I have written.” (John xix. 19-22.) Admirable dispensation of Providence! The

decree of the eternal Father guides the very hand of the unjust judge to write in the inscription no other charge and no other cause of condemnation, but that Jesus was really and truly the Messias foretold by the prophets, a Nazarene, and king of the Jews. Of this inscription we are reminded by the four letters I. N. R. I., which we see at the top of every crucifix, and which are the initials of the Latin words, *Jesus Nazarenus Rex Judæorum*—"Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews." We may, moreover, be reminded also of another inscription, or handwriting, alluded to by St. Paul, saying: "Blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us, and He hath taken the same away, fastening it to the cross." (Col. ii. 14.) What is the meaning of this handwriting? It is nothing more or less than the sin-record of man, blotted out by the Redeemer. Rejoice, O sinful mankind! This bill of indictment has been nailed to the cross, and cancelled by the saving blood of Jesus Christ. Henceforth no man shall perish on account of his sins; for if he perish, it will be only because he failed to apply this saving blood to his soul, by faith, hope, charity, and obedience.

PRAYER TO BE SAID BEFORE A CRUCIFIX.

Look down upon me, good and gentle Jesus, while before Thy face I humbly kneel and with burning soul pray and beseech Thee to fix deep in my heart lively sentiments of faith, hope, and charity, true contrition for my sins, and a firm purpose of amendment; the while I con-

template with great love and tender pity Thy five wounds, pondering over them within me, whilst I call to mind the words which David, Thy prophet, said of Thee, my Jesus: "They pierced My hands and feet; they numbered all My bones." (Ps. xxi. 17, 18.)

NOTE.—For the above prayer Pope Pius IX., July 31st, 1858, granted a plenary indulgence, when it is said contritely and with devotion, after confession and communion, before an image or picture of our crucified Redeemer, and praying, at the same time, for the Sovereign Pontiff.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE SEVEN LAST WORDS OF JESUS.

NO insult, no sneers, no taunt, however bitter, had been able thus far to exhaust the patience of Jesus as He hung upon the cross. He made no retort, He uttered not a syllable in answer to the outrageous conduct of the Jews. It was their hour, the hour of darkness, and they might consequently do and say to Him what they pleased. But, being mindful of us, He wished to teach us a lesson by word, as well as by example, and therefore uttered some few words from the cross, which show the sentiments wherewith His heart was animated in that supreme moment. They were not words of indignation, nor a cry for vengeance: He was the Saviour, and therefore His heart was full of mercy and forgiveness, which found expression in the utterances of His last hour. Listen eagerly and attentively, Christian reader, to these parting words of your dying Saviour; treasure them up carefully in your heart; reflect and meditate seriously on them.

1. "*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*" (Luke xxiii. 34.)

What a prayer at such a moment! Utterly forgetful of Himself, Jesus was thinking only of His tormentors. He prays for them, and thus literally fulfils His own grand

precept of charity. They were cursing and reviling Him, and He blessed them. Racked and tortured, both in body and mind, to a degree beyond all conception, He has more compassion and more solicitude for His unrelenting persecutors than for Himself. His soul is more pained at the thought of the eternal condemnation awaiting these blinded creatures than by all the insulting reproaches which they continue to heap upon Him in this hour of His extreme anguish. He prays for these His merciless enemies, who in their persistent, culpable, and passionate blindness will not recognize and acknowledge His divinity.

2. "*This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.*" (Luke xxiii. 43.)

To render the death of Our Lord more ignominious, there were crucified with Him two thieves, the one on His right hand, the other on the left. "And one of those robbers who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying: If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying: Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under the same condemnation. And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done no evil. And he said to Jesus: Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said to him: Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in paradise." (Luke xxiii. 39-43.) Who was this highly favored man, whose privilege it was to be the first to reap the fruits of Christ's suffering, and to hear these words of consolation? Holy Scripture furnishes neither his name nor his

previous history, designating him only, together with his companion in suffering, as a public robber. Legend, however, has transmitted the name of this penitent thief, telling us that he was called Dismas, and that he was the same highwayman who, years before, had shown kindness and hospitality to the Holy Family when on their flight into Egypt.

It is terrible for us to reflect that by the side of Jesus dying upon the cross, and pouring out His blood for the salvation of men, there hung two human beings, one of whom was saved, the other lost. It is but natural that we should ask ourselves how this came to pass, since we believe that God wills all men to be saved, and gives unto all grace sufficient to accomplish that object? We can account for it by this simple reason: one of these men put no obstacle in the way of grace, and the other did. One of them, as soon as he heard the whisperings of God's Holy Spirit to his heart, listened to them, and allowed them to sink deep into his soul, and to stir up his better nature, and turn it to God. The other did not do so. When that gentle voice first made itself heard, and bade him look at the evident signs of a divine nature which shone through the torn and bleeding figure hanging so near him, he thrust back the thoughts which began to throng upon him. He would not believe, and, with that strange, irrational, and unaccountable rage which not unfrequently takes possession of the wicked at the sight of the just, he opened his mouth to curse and to revile. And so he died impenitent, within reach of the source of grace, and yet not touched by it.

The penitent thief, on the other hand, follows the impulse of grace. He recognizes his guilt, contritely confesses it before the whole world, and is willing to suffer the temporal punishment incurred. "We suffer justly, for we receive the due rewards of our evil deeds." Oh, that every sinner would understand what such an humble self-accusation accomplishes in the eyes of our divine Judge! In heartfelt sympathy and with generous charity, the penitent thief defends the friendless Jesus, and, testifying to His innocence, says: "This Man hath done no evil." At a moment when all were hurling jeers, insults, and blasphemies at the dying Jesus, this criminal fearlessly acknowledges the innocence of the Redeemer. Whence came this courage, and the strength to make this open profession of faith? From supernatural love, which is mightier than death itself. Turning his head, he looks imploringly at his dying Saviour, and says: "Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy kingdom." What a living faith! He discovers, in the dying culprit at his side, the Lord, the King, to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs, that God who possesses both power and grace sufficient to forgive all sin. And though he had wasted and lost his whole life in wrong-doing, he turns with confidence to his divine Master and King, and sues for pardon. What a confiding hope! And thus it is that the man who only a few hours before climbed up the heights of Calvary a sinner has become a saint. "This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise." In what paradise? In the midst of those just souls in Limbo, to whom the soul of Christ, after His death, descended, in

order to announce to them the accomplishment of salvation, and by His presence to transform this place of waiting and desire into an abode of heavenly delights, whence they were to be transferred, at His ascension, into everlasting glory.

3. "*Woman, behold thy son. . . . Behold thy mother!*" (John xix. 26, 27.)

"Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His Mother, and His Mother's sister, Mary Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen. When Jesus therefore had seen His Mother and the disciple standing whom He loved, He said to His Mother: Woman, behold thy son. After that He saith to the disciple: Behold thy mother." (John xix. 25-27.) In the midst of His agony, Jesus sees at the foot of His cross, accompanied by three faithful, deeply sympathizing friends, Mary, His Mother. His dying eyes are fixed upon her, and no doubt the memory of His childhood, and of her loving embraces, came back upon Him, flooding His soul with anguish unutterable. Ah, how tenderly she had loved Him all through life: how many cares she had borne; how many trials and privations suffered in silence! Compassion for her added one other ingredient of bitterness to the gall of His chalice. At length He opens His parched lips and addresses her: "Woman, behold thy son." By these words He intimated that He willed her henceforth to be a mother to His beloved disciple, and to transfer to him all the wealth of affection which she had hitherto lavished upon Him as her Son. "How great," exclaims St. Bernard, "was the exchange here made! She received the disciple in-

stead of the Master, the servant instead of the Lord, the son of Zebedee instead of the Son of God." In very truth, the sword had now entered into her soul. Then Jesus, slowly turning His dying eyes, and fixing one last parting look of love upon His disciple, said to him: "Behold thy mother!" He gave to him her who was dearest to His heart; He gave him His own Mother, to be to him what she had been unto Himself. And by that same act He made us the children of this holy Mother; for St. John is generally looked upon, by the holy Fathers, as representing, on Mount Calvary, all Christians; and they argue, that by saying to him: "Behold thy mother," Jesus addressed Himself also to each of us.

Since, then, Jesus has willed that the Blessed Virgin should be the mother of those whom He disdained not to call his brethren, it is also His will that we should love and honor her as such. To love and honor means to be obedient to her wishes. Her will is that all men should ever be obedient to the holy law of God. By endeavoring to observe that law, we shall render an obedience to our mother's wishes, which will please her beyond measure. Therefore, let us strive to be pure in heart and mind; to be humble in our thoughts and in our bearing toward others; to have charity for all, even for those who show none toward us; and thus we shall be loving, honoring, and obeying her whom Christ gave us to be our mother.

4. "*My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*"  
(Matt. xxvii. 46.)

It was midday when the crowning sin of the Jews was

consummated, and Jesus hung dying on the cross. His enemies had at length gained their wish, and were now rejoicing over Him in the agonies of His ignominious death. But, behold, as the last moments of the Saviour are approaching, nature mourns her Creator: "Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole earth, until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: *Eli, Eli, lamma sabac-thani?* That is: My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Matt. xxvii. 45, 46.) Extreme anguish alone could have wrung such a complaint from Him; and these words give us a glimpse of the utter desolation of His soul. This cry of agony proves to us that the material wounds of His body could not be compared to the anguish wherewith He was tortured by the withdrawal of those heavenly consolations from which He had shut Himself off by a heroic act of His own will. Hence He became like one abandoned by God to spiritual darkness and despair. His soul was without consolation, as He had foretold by the mouth of His prophet, beseeching God to pity Him in the day of His trial: "Save Me, O God, for the waters are come in even unto My soul." (Ps. lxviii. 2.)

The unnatural and untimely darkness at the time of Christ's death, which the evangelists mention, was so marked and general, that the heathen nations were much terrified, and made a record of it in their public documents. This last fact we learn from a letter written A.D. 164 by Tertullian, and addressed to the dignitaries of the Roman empire. In this letter he speaks of this

remarkable event at the death of Christ, and reminds them that they had a record of it in the city of Rome, saying: "You yourselves have this occurrence recorded in your official annals." This darkness was not the effect of a natural eclipse, caused by the moon passing between the sun and the earth; for it being the time of the Easter full moon, such an eclipse was simply impossible. It was really a miracle wrought by divine Omnipotence, who commanded the great luminary of day to withhold its light during the hours that Our Saviour hung upon the cross. It was awfully and strikingly significant of that black pall of iniquity with which the Jewish people had shrouded themselves and their future generations till the end of time.

5. "*I thirst.*" (John xix. 28.)

What must the sufferings of Our Lord have been, after His many and grievous wounds! No drink had passed His lips since the preceding night. The thirst engendered by His cruel suffering and loss of blood must have been intense. "Afterward Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst. Now there was a vessel set there full of vinegar. And they, putting a sponge full of vinegar about hyssop, put it to His mouth." (John xix. 28, 29.)

This thirst was so notable a feature in Christ's bitter passion that the royal prophet mentioned it: "My tongue hath cleaved to My jaws, and Thou hast brought Me down into the dust of death." (Ps. xxi. 16.) In order, therefore, to fulfil another prediction of this same

prophet, where he says: "In My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink" (Ps. lxxviii. 22), Our Lord made known the anguish He was suffering, by saying: "I thirst." Hearing this, one of the soldiers ran to a vessel filled with vinegar, and dipping a sponge into it, fastened it upon a stalk of hyssop, and raised it to His mouth. Our Lord tasted the vinegar, but He would not drink it. His Mother stood by, and saw this. She knew what torture her dying Son endured, and she was utterly unable to give Him any relief. Gladly would she have forced her way through the dense crowd to get some water to quench His thirst; but she knew that Jesus did not wish for it—He spoke merely to let us know what He suffered.

To atone for your gluttony, the Son of God suffers thirst. Woe to you, if you can hear these words of Jesus, "I thirst," and yet refuse to abandon, at once and forever, the odious habits of the glutton and the drunkard.

Moreover, Our Saviour experienced another kind of thirst, besides the mere natural thirst of tongue and palate. He thirsted for the salvation of immortal souls. This spiritual thirst of Our Lord was even more keen and intense, if possible, than His bodily thirst. At every moment He beheld in spirit the countless myriads of men who, although marked with the blood of redemption, would nevertheless be lost by their forgetfulness of the Redeemer Himself. For such unhappy souls He thirsted with the extreme ardor of love.

6. "*It is consummated.*" (John xix. 30.)

The night with its darkness was fast passing away;

the dawn was at hand, when the Sun of justice, bursting through the clouds which had obscured His splendor, would triumph forever over death, sin, and hell. "Jesus, therefore, when He had taken the vinegar, said: It is consummated." (John xix. 30.) These words, coming from the lips of our dying Redeemer, are full of deep meaning. From them we learn that before breathing His last He cast one rapid glance back upon the life He had spent upon earth. Looking into every circumstance of His earthly career, He could say: "All that My Father had ordained for Me I have accomplished: 'It is consummated.'" He came to expiate the disobedience of Adam: He had done so, for He was obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross. He came to open the gates of heaven, and to teach us the road thither, both by word and example. He accomplished it. Finally, He saw that all figures whereby He had been typified had in His person received their fulfilment. Therefore He announced all these things to the world, by saying: "It is consummated."

For each one of us, also, a moment will come when, standing upon the confines of eternity, we shall cast a glance backward over the course we have run. Our works, our plans, the thoughts of our mind, the desires of our heart, the evil and the good—all will start up and appear before us. We shall look upon them all and say: "It is consummated." What will it profit us, then, to have lived in sinful pleasures? They have vanished like smoke, and have left behind only the burden of guilt and the sting of remorse. Live so that you may be able

to look back then on a life well spent, on a race bravely run, on work faithfully accomplished.

7. "*Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.*" (Luke xxiii. 46.)

Jesus, having faithfully accomplished the work appointed for Him by His heavenly Father, now gathered up all His remaining strength to utter a last farewell. "And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said: Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit. And saying this, He gave up the ghost." (Luke xxiii. 46.) Solemn and terrible moment! Since the dawn of creation the world has never witnessed such a moment of horror; it will never see such again. On the heights of Calvary a sullen silence has now settled down. Not a sound is heard, save the suppressed groans of the beloved disciple, the stifled sobs of the sorrowing Mother of the dead Jesus. But in the heights of heaven the scene is different. The choirs of angels burst forth into a chant of praise and thanksgiving, saying: "The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and benediction." (Apoc. v. 12.)

The last lesson which Jesus preached from the cross was an instruction to us, to recommend, in death, our departing soul into the hands of our Creator, and to accept death with an entire conformity and resignation to the divine will.

Eternal Father, look upon Thy beloved Son, hanging on the cross, dead. For His sake forgive us our sins. Receive His sufferings in satisfaction for our past trans-

gressions, and preserve us from offending Thee hereafter.

Precious body of my Saviour! inseparably united with the Divinity, Thou art as sacred and as worthy of worship on the cross or in the tomb as Thou wast in the manger or on Thabor during life. Receive the sacrifice of my homage and gratitude. Accept my ardent, fervent prayer. How calm and sweet the expression of Thy pallid features! How full of encouragement and hope for sinners! How mercifully Thy arms are still stretched out to embrace all Thy creatures! Even Thy wounds, a moment since to Thee so dreadful, to me are now so many sources of happiness, for they can pain Thee no longer, while to me they have become a sheltering, saving refuge in my distress of body and mind. Accept, then, in these remarkable, mysterious moments, even though Thy soul is absent, the fervent, heartfelt prayer of a poor offender. Let my death be like unto Thine, O Jesus! Thou hast yielded up Thy departing soul into the hands of Thy heavenly Father; grant that my last prayer may be like Thine: "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Thou wast pleased, too, to have Thy blessed Mother near Thee in the hour of death; grant that she may be near me in my last hour. Let me die when and where Thou please, but let me not die unprepared; let me not die without the presence of Thy Mother and mine, Mary.

We adore Thee, O Christ, and praise Thee: for by Thy holy cross and passion Thou hast redeemed the world.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### MIRACULOUS EVENTS AT OUR LORD'S DEATH.—ON DEVOTION TO OUR LORD'S PASSION.

**A**N event so extraordinary as the death of a God-Man was necessarily accompanied by portentous signs, whereby God intended to glorify His Son, to manifest His anger against those who had crucified Him, and to express, in a material way, the spiritual effects which were to follow His death. These events are described by the evangelists as follows:

“And behold the veil of the Temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were rent. And the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints, that had slept, arose, and coming out of the tombs after His resurrection, came into the holy city, and appeared to many. Now the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake and the things that were done, were sore afraid, saying: Indeed, this was the Son of God.” (Matt. xxvii. 51-54.)

In the Temple, between the sanctuary and the space reserved for the people, there hung a veil, to conceal the Holy of Holies; and only once a year, on the day of the great atonement, the high-priest, and he only, was per-

mitted to enter behind this veil, when he went to immolate the sacrifice of expiation. According to Jewish accounts, this curtain was forty yards long and twenty wide, heavily embroidered with golden and purple threads, and so artistically wrought that it required a whole year's work at the hands of several thousand young girls to finish it. And now, at the very instant when the veritable High-Priest on Golgotha is entering, with His own sacrificial blood, into the Sanctuary, this veil of the Temple is rent in twain from top to bottom. This was a sign that admission to the Most High—that is to say, reconciliation in and through Christ—was now granted to all men; that the ancient figurative sacrificial worship of the Old Law had been abolished, and that the Jewish Temple had lost its use and meaning for evermore.

The next miraculous event was the terrible earthquake during the agony of Jesus. Reliable annalists assure us that mountains and valleys were agitated fearfully, not only in Palestine, but throughout Asia Minor, and as far to the west as Spain. On Calvary the very rocks were rent. Thus did inanimate, irrational nature manifest its horror at the death of its Creator. A thrill of terror and protest ran through its inmost recesses of existence when it witnessed the crime perpetrated against their God and Lord by rational human beings.

A miraculous event, too, was the resurrection from their graves of many dead persons, who glided about the dark streets, appeared in the holy place, and filled with terror the awe-stricken people. A pious and learned author, Vincent Bellovacensis, writes that amongst those

who appeared were two sons of the pious high-priest Simeon the Just, an ancestor of Simeon who prophesied at the presentation of Jesus in the Temple. They denounced the murder of the prophets, declared that the sacrifice was now at an end, and exhorted all to believe in Jesus Christ. At the altar Jeremias appeared, issuing threats and declaring that the sacrifice of the Old Law now gave way to that of the new dispensation. A voice in the Temple was heard, saying, "Let us go hence!" and the angels left the Temple. The altar of incense trembled, and a censer fell; the case containing the Scriptures was overturned, and the sacred books were tumbled out. The time of day was forgotten in the confusion. Here and there lay dead bodies; other dead walked about among the people and spoke threats.

Lastly, a miraculous occurrence was the spiritual resurrection, or conversion, of many of those persons who were present at the death of Christ. They witnessed the preternatural disturbances in the heavens and on the earth at the death of Jesus, and were touched to the heart. Their eyes were opened to the truth, and contritely they struck their breasts, saying: "Indeed, this was the Son of God!"

How inscrutable are the decrees of God, how mysterious and hidden the ways of divine justice and mercy! The Jewish priesthood, in blindness and perversity, rushed forward to dark destruction, while the pagan centurion discovered the light, followed it, and believed.

Strike your breast, like the centurion and the affrighted soldiers, and, grieving over the share you had in the

sufferings and death of Jesus, resolve, once for all, to break with sin, and never again to incur that frightful guilt, to remove which Our Lord suffered so cruel a death.

The devotion to the sacred passion of Our Lord possesses a wonderful power to enkindle our love, strengthen our patience, and inflame our zeal for the attainment of virtue. Hence St. Bonaventure remarks: "If you desire to make progress in virtue, and to lead a perfect life, meditate every day on the sufferings of Christ; for there is nothing that so excites the soul to holy fervor as this." And St. Augustine says: "There is nothing so bitter that it may not be made sweet by the death of Christ. All my hope is built on the death of my Lord."

After the resurrection and ascension of Our Lord, the Christians who resided in Jerusalem had a great veneration for the places sanctified by the sufferings of Our Saviour. From that time, also, as we learn from St. Jerome, it was a frequent and most touching practice of Christians in other countries to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land of Palestine, and there visit the spots made sacred by the presence of Christ, and especially those known as the stations of His passion and death, and honor these holy places by prayer and penance. Afterward, when the Holy Land had fallen into the hands of the infidels, the pious exercise of the Way of the Cross was substituted, in the middle of the fourteenth century, by the Franciscans. This excellent devotion has met with repeated approvals of the Church, being, moreover, enriched with numerous indulgences. All, however, who

wish to gain these indulgences must bear in mind that the stations must be erected by those who have the faculty to do so; that it is required of them to meditate, according to their ability, on the sufferings of Jesus, and to go from one station to another, so far as the number of persons engaged in the devotion, and the space where the stations are erected, will admit. No special form of prayer is prescribed for this holy exercise, the text of the prayers being left to the devotion of each person; but it ought to refer to the scene represented by the station.

My beloved Saviour, who hast redeemed the world by Thy sufferings and Thy death upon the cross, grant me that, daily venerating Thy holy wounds, I may, by Thy precious blood, be delivered from a sudden and eternal death.

Almighty and eternal God, merciful Father! who hast given to the human race Thy beloved Son as an example of humility, obedience, and patience, to precede us on the way of life, bearing the cross: graciously grant that we, inflamed by His infinite love, take up the sweet yoke of His Gospel, together with the mortification of the cross, following Him as His true disciples, so that we shall one day gloriously rise with Him, and joyfully hear the final sentence: "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," where Thou reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, and where we hope to reign with Thee throughout all eternity. Amen.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE SIDE OF JESUS PIERCED WITH A LANCE.

THE Jews feared much lest Pilate should leave the bodies of the three crucified men on their crosses all the next day, which was the Sabbath, and the most solemn day of the great paschal festival. To prevent so great a profanation, they sent a deputation to the governor, beseeching him to remove them as speedily as possible. An order to this effect was immediately granted, and the soldiers proceeded at once to execute upon the crucified the extreme penalty of the law. "The soldiers therefore came, and they broke the legs of the first and of the other that was crucified with Him. But after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers with a spear opened His side, and immediately there came out blood and water." (John xix. 32~34.) Jesus, now beyond the reach of pain, made no movement as this last outrage was inflicted upon Him; the body hung there still and lifeless. But there stood beside the blood-stained cross one whose heart felt the pang which was intended for Him. The virginal heart

of His most holy Mother was then in very deed transfixed with that sword of sorrow of which Simeon had prophesied many years before. The bright steel which pierced His flesh entered into her soul. Like her divine Son, Mary could say with truth: "It is consummated. I have stood here and seen all the prophecies which related to my Son accomplished to the full, and now they have in wanton cruelty opened wide His sacred heart; but in so doing they have fulfilled another prophecy, which said: 'And they shall look upon Me, whom they have pierced.'" (Zach. xii. 10.)

Let us now examine into some of the reasons why God allowed this last outrage to be perpetrated upon His Son. One of these was, doubtless, to anticipate and refute an objection which would be urged against the divinity of Our Lord. Some unbelievers have maintained that Our Lord did not really die upon the cross, but only swooned away through loss of blood, and was afterward restored by careful treatment. They tried in this clumsy way to account for the resurrection, which Christ always appealed to as the proof of His divine nature and mission. Their blasphemous assertion is, however, rendered not only untenable, but absolutely absurd, by the Roman soldier whose lance pierced the side of Christ, penetrated into His heart, and drew forth that blood and water which make the fact of death indubitable. But although this reason may serve to strengthen our faith, we will pass it over, to dwell more particularly on another, which will appeal more directly to our hearts, and be more productive of spiritual advantage to our souls.

Jesus wished to be stricken and punished, not only externally, but even in the very source of life, in order that He might atone by the rending of His heart for all the evil which proceeds from the heart of man. It is the heart, the carnal nature of man, which is the source of the greater part of our sins and errors. By it Holy Scripture understands all those sensible faculties of the soul which men gratify by the criminal indulgence of their flesh. From it, as from a well-spring, there issues forth that stream of iniquity, whose fatal waters Christ spoke of when He said to His apostles: "From the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies" (Matt. xv. 19)—in a word, those things which defile a soul. By suffering His heart to be opened He caused to flow thence a healthful stream, of which we may drink in order to purify that source of evil which we carry about within our own breasts. Go frequently to that fountain of life in the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. Drink deeply of its saving waters, and they will fertilize your barren heart, and make it bring forth virtues which God will crown with glory in heaven.

Another reason why Jesus allowed this wound to be inflicted upon His side, and upon His sacred heart, was to give us a last proof of the boundless generosity of His love. When the soldier's spear had pierced His lifeless body, the eternal Father could call upon us to look at that cross whereon Jesus was hanging, and tell Him if there was anything more He could do to prove to us how much He loved us. There was His only-begotten Son, con-

substantial with Himself, eternal, almighty. He had given His blood, and lest we should say that He had made a reserve of it, He was pleased that its very source should be drained. All that He asks in return is, that we should love Him with our poor, weak, human hearts, and give Him, as a proof of that love, our obedience to His divine Son. He does not ask much, and He gives us strength to do even the little He does ask. He nerves us to encounter self-denial, by the sight of His crucified body; and when we are hard pressed by our enemies, we shall ever find a sure refuge and place of rest in the wound of His sacred side. When sorrow wrings our hearts, we can look upon Him, and we shall see that our sorrow is not equal to His. When the world turns against us, and men despise us, or treat us harshly and unjustly, we may look up with confidence to Him on the cross. We can see the gaping wound in His side—there is our sanctuary; there our harbor of rest; for over it is written that loving invitation to all the down-trodden, weary wayfarers on earth: "Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you." (Matt. xi. 8.)

In bringing before us the Sacred Heart of Jesus as an object of devotion, the Church really calls our attention to His immense love, of which this Heart is the seat, and wishes us to think upon what it did for us, in order to rekindle in our hearts that love for Jesus which, in so many, has become cold. Can we pretend to value the passion of our most loving Redeemer, and not love His Sacred Heart, that Heart which is so inflamed with love for men?

And what are the lessons we are to learn from it? *Love* is the first lesson. It is the direct and immediate return that is demanded of us. The Sacred Heart tells us of the love of Jesus, and on this account it appeals for the offering of the love of our own hearts. Love always demands a return, and if it gain not that return, it is unsatisfied, and a source of pain to us rather than joy and comfort. The heart is wounded, and it feels the pain of the wound. So the Sacred Heart of Our Lord is always represented as wounded, not only because the spear pierced it, but because the coldness of man pierced it yet more. St. John, who learned the love of our dear Saviour at its very source, argues with us, and says: "Let us, therefore, love God, because God first loved us." (John iv. 19.) The Sacred Heart may certainly use this argument, and surely we cannot allow the appeal to go unanswered.

*Generosity* and a *spirit of sacrifice* are to be added to our love: for so the Sacred Heart teaches us. The love of that Heart was certainly not an inactive one; it was not a limited and sentimental love. This Sacred Heart always was, and always continues to be, a holocaust, a whole burnt-offering to the eternal Father, which He accepts from His well-beloved Son. Well may our generous Lord ask us what more He could do for us than He has done through the immensity of His love. Can we dare to ask the same question of Him? We have done so little; we are so ungenerous and timid in His service. We shrink from every sacrifice, and fear to make an effort which costs us the least pain or self-denial. Devotion to

the Sacred Heart is a great cure for tepidity. This is a chief cause why the Church wishes to propagate it, because she had already learned from happy experience that they who practise it are roused from indolence and excited to fervor.

*Humility and meekness* are also taught by this devotion. These were the special lessons our blessed Lord taught us through His Sacred Heart when He said: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart." (Matt. xi. 29.) Do our hearts bear any resemblance whatever to His who forgave His enemies, who suffered and died for them, and who gave us an example that we should do for others what His Heart moved Him to do for us? Pride and a want of forbearance with others are the source of that want of brotherly love which prevails so much in the world, and which even in those who pretend to be devout, practical Christians is not unfrequently found to exist.

*Zeal for souls* is another lesson of the Sacred Heart. Why did that Heart suffer so much? Not for itself, but for the souls of men. And if we have no sympathy whatever for the spiritual good of others, no desire for the conversion of sinners; if we are unwilling to do anything to bring others to share in the spiritual blessings of which, through the immense mercy of God, we are partakers—where are our faith and our love? If we hate sin, because of the injury it offers to God, how can we quietly witness its influence over souls, and do nothing to diminish that influence, and to shield the glory of God?

One more lesson we learn from this fertile source of instruction—*fervor in prayer*. How fervent and persevering was the Sacred Heart's prayer in the garden and on the cross—and how cold, how short, and how easily interrupted are our prayers! And why so? Because our hearts are so little in our work, and our treasure is elsewhere. The ejaculation especially addressed to the Sacred Heart, tells us what is the immediate blessing we should ask from it:

O Sacred Heart of Jesus, I implore  
That I may ever love Thee more and more !

The Church invites us on the Feast of the Sacred Heart: "All ye who seek a secure refuge from your trials and afflictions, all ye who are harassed with remorse of conscience, and crushed to the earth with apprehensions of well-merited punishment, come to the gentle Heart of Jesus. Listen attentively to His gentle invitation: 'All ye who labor and are heavily burdened, come to Me, and I will refresh you.'"

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS.—HIS BURIAL.

SINCE Jesus had now fully accomplished the end for which He came into the world, the hands of His enemies could never be laid on Him again. "Joseph of Arimathea, a noble counsellor, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, came and went in boldly to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. But Pilate wondered that He should be already dead. And sending for the centurion, he asked him if He were already dead. And when he understood it by the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph." (Mark xv. 43-45.) "And Nicodemus also came, he who at the first came to Jesus by night, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. They took therefore the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury." (John xix. 39, 40.)

The solemn ceremony of taking down from the cross the sacred body of Jesus was carried out with a reverence indescribably touching, and amid a sad and sorrowful silence. Those engaged in the sacred duty moved slowly and gently and carefully, as though they dreaded

to renew again the sufferings of the inanimate body, for their hearts were overpowered with love and reverence toward the precious remains of Our Lord. They drew forth the nails from the hands and feet, disengaged the thorny crown from the tangled hair, and tenderly laid the sacred body in the arms of His Mother.

Let us now draw nigh to that broken-hearted Mother, as she sits at the foot of the cross, on her knees the inanimate, lacerated body of Jesus. There He lies, lifeless, motionless, His eyes closed, His limbs rigid, His flesh gashed, torn, and rent with cruel wounds. There is now no beauty or comeliness in Him. From the crown of His head to the sole of His feet there is no soundness. He is like a leper, and one stricken by God, and afflicted. Truly He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows, and because it hath pleased Him to take our guilt upon Himself, the Almighty exacted from Him the great debt of justice which we were unable to pay.

What are the thoughts suggested to you by the contemplation of Jesus lying thus in the arms of His most holy Mother? Are they not bitter recollections of the share you had in making Him what He is? Have not your thoughts, at times, stricken down the thorny crown into the sacred head and temples of Our Lord? Have not your deeds filled His eyes with tears of blood? Your sinful acts have been unto His flesh as the thongs of the biting scourge, as the nails which pierced His hands and feet, or the keen point of the lance which drank the last drop of His heart's blood.

Looking upon the work of our hands, can we gaze un-

moved on the lifeless form which appeals to us with such mute eloquence? Oh, let not our hearts be harder than the very rocks which were rent asunder at His death! Let us look upon the lifeless form of Our Saviour, and resolve to atone for the past, to blot it out by true contrition and repentance.

But thou, O sorrowful Mother Mary! what were thy sentiments and feelings in that solemn hour? How lovingly didst thou press thy Son's disfigured form to thy breast! O valiant Mother of sorrows! allow one spark of that flaming love, which was enkindled in thy heart at the touch of the Saviour's precious remains, to pass into my cold heart, that it may be aroused from its lethargic indifference, and converted to a holy life. O Mary, Mother of sorrows, permit me to weep with thee, to love with thee, to adore with thee!

"Now there was in the place where He was crucified a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein no man had yet been laid. There, therefore, because of the Parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus, because the sepulchre was nigh at hand." (John xix. 42.) "And the women that were come with Him from Galilee, following after, saw the sepulchre, and how His body was laid." (Luke xxiii. 55.) "And he rolled a great stone to the door of the monument, and went his way." (Matt. xxvii. 60.)

Before consigning the body of Our Lord to the tomb, Joseph and Nicodemus, assisted by the holy women, performed for it all those offices of piety which their faith and love prompted. Having first cleansed it from the

foul stains which the rage and brutality of the Jews and soldiers had left upon it, they next, with the most profound respect, anointed the gaping wounds. Sweet-smelling spices were poured into them, and the entire body was covered with myrrh. The lifeless form was then wrapped in fine linen, and nothing remained to be done except to bear the precious burden to the grave, which Joseph had caused to be hewn out of the rock as a resting-place for himself. No one had as yet been buried there, so that it was spotlessly pure.

Before the grave closes over the body of her Son, Mary kneels once more by the shrouded form. Her face is bent over the features of her Son, once so beautiful, now so cruelly disfigured by the savagery of the Jews. Again she presses to her bosom the sacred head; the tears break forth from her eyes; she imprints one farewell kiss upon the brow, and feels in that supreme moment all the agony of a broken heart. By her side kneels the beloved disciple of her Son, St. John, whom Jesus had given to her as a son instead of Himself. His tears fall fast as he tries in vain to comfort her. Magdalen, deeming herself unworthy of aught else, stations herself at the feet of her Lord, and performs for them in death that office of love which she had not feared to perform in life, when He sat in the midst of jealous and ever-watchful foes. With unspeakable tenderness and gentleness, Joseph, Nicodemus, and John now place the body of Jesus in the tomb. They lay it upon the ledge of rock prepared for its resting-place, and having closed the entrance of the sepulchre with a great slab of rock, all withdrew.

Now that we have left the sacred body of Our Lord in the tomb, let us cast a parting glance at the lessons of His life and death. Christ was God, and became man for love of us; He lived upon this earth of ours, and felt all our miseries, becoming like to us in all, sin alone excepted. He toiled like a common laborer, and thereby invested labor with a dignity which has made it forever honorable. He came forth from His obscurity, and taught a heavenly doctrine, one pointing from earth to heaven. He bade us look upon this world as a place of exile, this life as a pilgrimage. To solace our misery and to strengthen our weakness, He gave us Himself to be our food during the days of our banishment. To blot out the handwriting which was against us, the eternal Father had decreed that He should die. He submitted to His Father's will. The time for the fulfilment of that divine decree arrived, and Christ entered upon His bitter passion. Over His whole being there crept a dread of death, so intense that it filled His soul with mortal agony, and caused Him to sweat blood. He was basely betrayed by one of His apostles, judged by a pagan, condemned to death, and handed over to the ungovernable fury of an angry mob. His people rejected Him, and chose in His stead a robber, a murderer. They scourged Him like a malefactor, nailed Him cruelly to the disgraceful cross, and there, between two thieves, amid the cruel jeers of the priests and people, He died a lingering death of the most acute pain.

Reflecting on all this, each one of us can say: "Christ died for *me*, and delivered Himself up for *me*." Surely,

“greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John xv. 13.) Therefore let us not be behindhand in generosity to love Him. Let us give Him all we have—our hearts, our souls, our faculties, our powers. Let us be determined to serve Him alone. But as we cannot do this without His assistance, let us ask Him for it, and He will give it to us. Let us ask Him to bestow His grace so abundantly on us that neither in life nor in death anything may ever be able to separate us from Him.

Alas, O my God, the servant's debt is paid by the Master, the penalty incurred by man is paid by God! To what excess, O Lord, has Thy love led Thee? It was I who acted perversely, and Thou hast suffered the punishment. I have sinned, and Thou dost suffer; I was proud, and Thou wast humbled; I was puffed up, and Thou wast calumniated; I was disobedient, and Thy obedience cancelled my disobedience; I was intemperate, and Thou didst suffer the pangs of hunger and thirst. I am the traitor who betrayed Thee; I struck Thy sacred countenance; I am Thy false accuser; I am Peter denying, Herod mocking Thee; I have scourged Thee and crowned Thee with thorns; I am Pilate, condemning Thee to death; I laid the heavy cross upon Thy shoulders; I despoiled Thee of Thy garments, nailed Thee to the cross, gave Thee gall and vinegar to drink, caused Thy sacred blood to flow in the garden and on the cross. My envy betrayed, my avarice sold Thee. I have denied Thee, by transgressing Thy commandments, for fear of displeasing men. My anger has struck Thee, my hy-

pocrisy mocked Thee, my immodesty scourged Thee, my pride crowned Thee with thorns. My sins condemned Thee to death; my sloth laid the heavy burden of the cross upon Thy shoulders; my lust despoiled Thee of Thy garments; my revengefulness nailed Thee to the cross; my intemperance made Thee drink gall and vinegar; my vanity caused Thy garments to be divided among the soldiers. It is I, O God, I who took Thy life. O Sovereign Good, I have sinned. I am sorry from all my heart for having offended Thee, Who art of Thyself the Supreme Being, worthy of all love.

“Sweet Jesus, by Thy death on the cross, by the mystery of Thy repose in the tomb, I implore Thee to grant me a happy death, and a peaceful, blissful eternity.”  
(St. Bonaventure.)

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

THE chief priests and Pharisees were not content, though they saw Jesus in the tomb. They remembered what He had said about rising again on the third day; and although they did not believe the prediction themselves, yet they were afraid it might make some impression upon others. They pretended to suspect some design in the disciples of stealing away their Master's body, and of spreading a report of His being risen from the dead. "And the next day, which followed the day of preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying: Sir, we have remembered that that seducer said, while He was yet alive: After three days I shall rise again. Command therefore the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day; lest perhaps His disciples come, and steal Him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the dead: and the last error shall be worse than the first. Pilate said to them: You have a guard: go, guard it as you know. And they departing, made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting guards." (Matt. xxviii. 62-65.)

The soul of the crucified Saviour, having, from the

time it left His body, remained in Limbo among the souls of the just, returned soon after midnight to its sacred body resting in the tomb. The interpreters of Scripture tell us that Christ brought with Him the souls of these holy persons to witness His resurrection. The angels, too, who were in the train of the redeemed spirits, took up their anthems of joy, and sang with sympathizing gladness: "Alleluia! Let us rejoice and be glad, for this is the day the Lord hath made. Alleluia!"

"And in the end of the Sabbath, when it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalen, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. And behold, there was a great earthquake. For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and coming, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. And his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow. And for fear of him, the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men. And the angel answering, said to the women: Fear not you: for I know that you seek Jesus crucified. He is not here: for He is risen, as He said." (Matt. xxviii. 1-6.)

Although the evangelists do not tell us that Our Lord, after His resurrection, appeared first to His beloved Mother, yet reason would teach us, and the devout and learned doctors of the Church inform us, and revelations from heaven to favored souls on earth assure us, that Christ's first visit, after His triumph over sin and death, was to the Blessed Virgin Mary. An old tradition has it that the sorrowing Mother of Jesus, having passed the whole Easter night in meditation and prayer, was in a

state of tranquil expectation of the resurrection of her divine Son, when suddenly the archangel Gabriel, attended by legions of heavenly spirits, stood before her and repeated the familiar salutation: "Hail, full of grace!" He then added: "Queen of heaven, rejoice: for He whom thou didst deserve to bear is risen from the dead. Alleluia!" Hardly were these glad tidings delivered, when the Virgin's humble apartment was illuminated by a flood of brilliant light, and her own beloved Son Himself appeared before her, and in gladsome accents addressed her: "Rejoice and be comforted, Mother of sorrows; I return to thee in triumph and honor." The pure soul of our blessed Mother was so overpowered with joy that she sank into an ecstasy. Then, in silent reverence and ardent love, she kneels before the Lord, and kisses His sacred feet. Jesus, bending down, raises her venerable form, presses it to His glorified bosom, and speaks words of cheer and filial affection.

"And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought sweet spices, that coming they might anoint Jesus. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen. And they said one to another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And looking, they saw the stone rolled back. For it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe: and they were astonished. Who saith to them: Be not affrighted: you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is

risen, He is not here. Behold the place where they laid Him. But go, tell His disciples, and Peter, that He goeth before you into Galilee: there you shall see Him, as He told you." (Mark xvi. 1-7.)

If it appears strange to you that Christ made known His resurrection to women, even before revealing it to His apostles, remember that these devoted women had merited this preference by their fervent and heroic love. While the apostles, in gloomy fear and sad despondency, were in concealment, these women hastened to the grave of Jesus, resolved, if no longer able to salute their living Redeemer, at least to show their respect to His lifeless remains. St. Gregory the Great alleges a second and very cogent reason why Our Saviour revealed the mystery of His resurrection first to women, and commissioned them to announce it to His apostles. He says: "In the beginning of the old dispensation, in paradise, it was woman who, by giving the forbidden fruit to man, brought the message of death into the world. So, in the opening of the new dispensation, it was right and proper for woman to be the bearer to man of regained life, for the same sex who had thrown him into despair by the deceiving words of the serpent now to raise him up with the true and inspiring words of the angel."

"Peter therefore went out, and that other disciple, and they came to the sepulchre. And they both ran together, and that other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre. And when he stooped down, he saw the linen cloths lying, but yet he went not in. Then cometh Simon Peter, following him, and went into the

sepulchre and saw the linen cloths lying. And the napkin, that had been about His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but apart, wrapt up into one place. Then that other disciple also went in, who came first to the sepulchre: and he saw and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture, that He must rise again from the dead. The disciples therefore departed again to their home. But Mary stood at the sepulchre without, weeping. Now as she was weeping, she stooped down and looked into the sepulchre. And she saw two angels in white, sitting, one at the head, and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been laid. They say to her: Woman, why weepest thou? She says to them: Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him. When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing: and she knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith to her: Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, thinking that it was the gardener, saith to Him: Sir, if thou hast taken Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him: and I will take Him away. Jesus saith to her: Mary. She turning, saith to Him: Rabboni (which is to say, Master). Jesus saith to her: Do not touch Me, for I am not yet ascended to My Father: but go to My brethren, and say to them: I ascend to My Father and to your Father, to My God and to your God. Mary Magdalen cometh and telleth the disciples: I have seen the Lord, and these things He hath said to me.” (John xx. 3-18.)

We can derive much comfort from the fact that our risen Lord, next to His beloved Mother, chose a penitent

soul as the first living witness of His resurrection. Penance and contrition are precious in the sight of Him who came into the world for the sake of sinners.

Our Lord, having gladdened the heart of Mary Magdalen by His apparition, vanished from her sight. She hastened to follow the other women, who were already on their way back to Jerusalem, to tell them the happy tidings. "And behold Jesus met them, saying: All hail! But they came up and took hold of His feet, and adored Him. Then Jesus said to them: Fear not. Go, tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, there they shall see Me." (Matt. xxviii. 9, 10.) "And it was Mary Magdalen, and Joanna, and Mary of James, and the other women that were with them, who told these things to the apostles. And these words seemed to them as idle tales: and they did not believe them." (Luke xxiv. 10, 11.)

It seems incomprehensible that the apostles should be so difficult to convince, so slow to believe the resurrection of Jesus. But after considering the four reasons assigned by the holy Fathers in explanation of this circumstance, we shall be inclined to judge the apostles less severely. In the first place, they were mostly very simple and illiterate persons, men of very limited comprehension, of little experience, and hardly able to rise from the perceptions of the senses to supernatural revelations. In the second place, the apparent helplessness with which Christ had surrendered to the enemy in the Garden of Gethsemani, and the harrowing account given to them by St. John of the disgraceful death of Christ on the

cross, of His agony and desolation, and of His burial, had made so deep and painful an impression on their souls that they became impervious to any sentiment of comfort. In the third place, in their agitated condition of mind they supposed that little or no credit could be given to the words of credulous and excitable women, especially as Christ, if He were really risen from the dead, would doubtless have shown Himself immediately in the midst of the apostles, instead of giving the preference to women. Finally, Our Lord permitted this uncertainty to exist in the minds of the apostles in order that by afterward allaying their doubts and confirming their faith in His resurrection, He would more indubitably prove to all mankind that He had really and truly risen from the dead.

When the women "were departed, behold some of the guards came into the city, and told the chief priests all things that had been done. And they being assembled together with the ancients, taking counsel, gave a great sum of money to the soldiers, saying: Say you, His disciples came by night, and stole Him away when we were asleep. And if the governor shall hear of this, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they, taking the money, did as they were taught; and this word was spread among them even to this day." (Matt. xxviii. 11-15.)

It is thus that passion always renders men blind, stupid, and unscrupulous. Did not these chief priests and elders know that it was absurd to talk of sleeping witnesses, and that even the most credulous persons could

not believe such a paltry excuse on the part of drowsy sentinels? Did not these Jewish priests perceive that these very sentinels, when mocked by their companions, or questioned by their superior officers regarding this disgraceful neglect of duty, namely, of falling asleep on their posts, would, sooner or later, in order to save themselves and their reputation, reveal the whole truth, and that thus the plotters would be unmasked and exposed to the ridicule of the whole world? Did they not see that this very Christ, of whose wonderful resurrection they had been so positively informed and assured by the sentinels, must be powerful enough to convict them of falsehood, by appearing before the whole world as the risen and immortal Messias? Puny and pitiable subterfuge!

There cannot be the least doubt of the truth of the resurrection of Christ. Nature proclaimed it in the midst of an earthquake; heaven declared it by the voice of the angels; heathen sentinels and the action of the Jewish priests testified to it; faith confirmed it in Peter and his companions; unbelieving doubt recognized it in Thomas; and, finally, the apostles and countless disciples substantiated it by their sufferings and death.

Indeed, the Church has a clear and well-grounded right to sing on Easter Day: "This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad. Alleluia!" Even nature seems busy putting on her gayest attire to do honor to the resurrection of her Lord and Master. The sympathy shown by inanimate creation for the gladness of man and the glory of Christ on the morning of the resurrection is thus described: The sun, that had

been so gloomy and dull on Good Friday, arose in glorious brightness and cast a warmer and more genial glow upon the earth. The thin, light clouds floated gracefully; the air was sweet and balmy. The little birds flitted with nimbler wing from tree to tree, and filled the air with sweeter melody. The wild animals of the forest, as well as the cattle in the field and farm-yard, leaped and frisked with new life and gladness. Grass and shrub, tree and vine, garden and field, whose verdant vesture seemed to have blanched in death, arrayed themselves in cheerful garb of vivid hues, and burdened the bright, fresh morning air with fragrant incense. Brook and rivulet, torrent and river, so long locked up in icy bondage, had thrown away their fetters, and went bounding forth in noisy, prattling glee over the shining landscape. The fishes in the sparkling waters seemed to wriggle with delight, and darted hither and thither in the very height of joyousness. In short, all the elements, heaven and earth, were full of life and beauty and gladness. Every created thing bounded, and sprang, and leapt aloft, and sang and laughed on this joyous and happy day of Easter. And it is to this universal gladness that the Church alludes, when she sings: "In Thy triumphant resurrection, O Lord, heaven and earth rejoice. Alleluia!"

On this glorious festival every Christian should unite with the Church in her glorious triumph. Let us rejoice, and from the bottom of our hearts be thankful to that divine Saviour who has deprived death of its sting and victory, and stripped the grave of its terrors. Mind-

ful of the words of St. Paul: "If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God" (Coloss. iii. 1), let us forsake sin, die to ourselves, and pass through the world regardless of its sinful attractions.

O my divine and adorable Lord, my sins were the cause of Thy bitter sufferings and death. But Thou hast triumphed over sin, death, and hell. Thy glorious resurrection proclaims Thy divinity and announces Thee to be truly the Son of God. Let me now also arise from the sepulchre of sin, and lead a new life of grace, purging out the old leaven.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### JESUS APPEARS REPEATEDLY TO HIS DISCIPLES.

REPOSE and quiet reigned in the streets of Jerusalem. The dread cry of insatiate wrath against the Anointed of the Lord, which but three days before resounded through the city, was now hushed, and the disciples of Jesus timidly ventured to show themselves abroad.

“And behold, two of them went the same day to a town which was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, named Emmaus. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that while they talked and reasoned with themselves, Jesus Himself also drawing near went with them; but their eyes were held that they should not know Him. And He said to them: What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleophas, answering, said to Him: Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days? To whom He said: What things? And they said: Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty in work and word before God and all the people:

and how our chief priests and princes delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him; but we hoped that it was He that should have redeemed Israel: and now besides all this to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company affrighted us, who before it was light were at the sepulchre; and not finding His body, came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels, who say that He is alive. And some of our people went to the sepulchre, and found it was so as the women had said, but Him they found not. Then He said to them: O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all things which the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning Him. And they drew nigh to the town whither they were going: and He made as though He would go farther. But they constrained Him, saying: Stay with us, because it is toward evening and the day is now far spent. And He went in with them. And it came to pass, whilst He was at table with them, He took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him, and He vanished out of their sight. And they said one to the other: Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He spoke in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures? And rising up the same hour, they went back to Jerusalem: and they found the eleven gathered together, and those that were with them, saying: The Lord is risen indeed, and hath

appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way: and how they knew Him in the breaking of the bread." (Luke xxiv. 13-35.)

These two disciples obtained an extraordinary favor from Jesus in return for their humble attention to His teachings and for their friendly hospitality to a stranger. He condescended to sit at table with them, and, as the holy Fathers remark, to dispense to them that same divine sacrament which He had administered to the apostles at the Last Supper. It was by virtue of this token of His unbounded love that they recognized Him. It is chiefly in holy communion that we recognize Jesus, and learn to appreciate His love for man. In our worthy communions, too, Jesus recognizes us as His disciples, for those who eat His flesh and drink His blood abide in Him, and He in them.

It appears from the above account of the Evangelist that the risen Christ had already appeared to Simon Peter, even before He manifested Himself to the disciples going to Emmaus. An ancient legend thus describes this apparition: When Mary Magdalen and the other devout women came back from the sepulchre, and told the apostles, "We have seen the Lord," Peter became sad and troubled, thinking to himself, and saying: "Although I was at the tomb as well as these women, the Lord did not deign to appear to me. Alas, He must be angry with me, because I denied Him so shamefully. Miserable, weak man that I am: what have I done! Overwhelmed with feelings of shame and remorse, he left the apostles, and went out of the city to a grotto to

which he had been accustomed to retire for prayer and meditation. Here, falling on his knees, he redoubled his self-reproaches, and shed tears in such abundance that they fell in streams to the ground. Suddenly his divine Master, in a glow of beauty and majesty, stood before the penitent apostle, and greeted him kindly, saying: "Be of good heart, My son. Thy sins are forgiven thee." He then presented to Peter the marks of His wounds to kiss, and bade him be comforted.

On the morning of Easter Jesus appeared to the penitent Magdalen; about noon, to the penitent Peter; and in the evening He instituted the Sacrament of Penance, during the apparition described in the gospel as follows: "Now when it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you. And when He said this, He showed them His hands, and His side. The disciples therefore were glad, when they saw the Lord. He said therefore to them again: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. When He had said this He breathed on them, and He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." (John xx. 19-23.)

By virtue of these highly important and expressive words, Jesus solemnly and formally conferred upon the apostles and their successors the divine right of remitting sins. The Church has always firmly held and

plainly taught this divine commission, that is, the priestly plenitude of power to forgive sins, as may be proved from the writings of the Fathers. If we ask, why our blessed Saviour was pleased to employ human agents in the remission of sins, especially as it lay in His power to cleanse the repentant sinner from offences directly and by a purely spiritual and interior process, the Fathers of the Church give two reasons: namely, the wholesome humiliation of the sinner, and his peace of mind. For from the fact of the sinner being required to approach with his burden of crime the apostles and their successors, to beg from them the remission of his sins, he must necessarily be much humbled. Now there is no other road to a reinstatement of grace, and to a restoration to our rights as children of God, but the road of self-abasement. Hence St. Augustine writes: "God exacts an acknowledgment of our sins, and delivers the confessing penitent from his sins because he humbles himself; on the contrary, He rejects him who will not acknowledge his sins, for he is proud.

Secondly. It contributes much to the tranquillity of the sinner, and to his certainty of pardon and reconciliation with God, if he receives the sentence of absolution from a man divinely endowed with plenitude of power, and whom he can see and hear. Certainly, the acknowledgment of all and every sin, which must necessarily precede the priestly absolution, must be a great humiliation for the sinner; but he knows that Christ has so ordained, and ordained for his good, and this thought satisfies him.

Christ conferred upon the apostles the twofold power of loosing and binding. Who are those that may be loosed by them, and who those who are kept bound? This can be known to the priest only through the self-accusation, or confession, of the penitent. Hence it is clear that Christ the Lord desired and ordered this confession. St. Augustine gives a beautiful admonition on this point: "Let no man say to himself, nor to others: 'I do penance before God alone, for He knows and sees what penance I have in my heart.' For then the words of Christ would have been uttered in vain: 'Whatsoever you loose upon earth will be loosed in heaven.' In vain would the keys of the kingdom of heaven have been entrusted to the keeping of the Church."

At the time when our blessed Lord conferred upon the apostles the fulness of power to forgive sins, one of them was absent. Hence it is the opinion of the holy Fathers that Jesus must afterward have bestowed it upon them singly and individually. This absent apostle was Thomas. "Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." (John xx. 24, 25.) This was certainly very exacting on the part of Thomas; but it was permitted, that through him the doubters in all ages might be convinced. For: "After eight days, again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus

cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then He saith to Thomas: Put in thy finger hither, and see My hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing. Thomas answered and said to Him: My Lord and my God! Jesus saith to him: Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed." (John xx. 26-29.)

Christ hesitates not, on this occasion, to permit His apostle to touch His person, thereby to afford him the evidence he so peremptorily required. The gospel does not inform us whether Thomas made use or not of the privilege which Jesus so graciously allowed him. But whether he did or not, his doubts were immediately dispelled; and suddenly moved by the impulse of grace, he exclaimed: "My Lord and my God!" However perfect the faith of the apostle now was, it had one defect, because it depended too much on the evidence of the senses. For which reason Our Lord gently reproves Thomas, saying: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed." This is the faith that should animate us. From the doubting apostle's incredulity Christ mercifully drew the strongest evidence of His resurrection for the confirmation of our faith beyond all cavil or contradiction. Hence St. Gregory the Great says: "By this doubting of Thomas we are more confirmed in our belief than by the faith of the other apostles."

"After this Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias. And He showed Himself

after this manner: There were together Simon Peter and Thomas who is called Didymus, and Nathanael who was of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of His disciples. Simon Peter saith to them: I go a-fishing. They say to him: We also will come with thee. And they went forth and entered into the ship: and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore: yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus therefore said to them: Children, have you any meat? They answered Him: No. He saith to them: Cast the net on the right hand of the ship, and you shall find. They cast therefore: and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. That disciple therefore whom Jesus loved said to Peter: It is the Lord. Simon Peter, when he heard that it was the Lord, girt his coat about him (for he was naked) and cast himself into the sea. But the other disciples came in the ship (for they were not far from the land, but as it were two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fishes. As soon, then, as they came to land, they saw hot coals lying, and a fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus said to them: Bring hither of the fishes which you have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to the land, full of great fishes, one hundred and fifty-three. And although there were so many, the net was not broken. Jesus saith to them: Come and dine. And none of them who were at meat durst ask Him: Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord. And Jesus cometh and taketh bread and gives them, and fish in like manner. This is now the third

time that Jesus was manifested to His disciples after He was risen from the dead." (John xxi. 1-14).

This apparition of Christ is specially important, for it was on this occasion that the primacy of St. Peter, or his office as visible head of the Church, was formally established.

"When therefore they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. He saith to him again: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? He saith to Him: Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith to him: Feed My lambs. He said to him the third time: Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved, because he had said to him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said to Him: Lord, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee. He said to him: Feed My sheep." (John xxi. 15-17.)

Why does our blessed Redeemer exact from St. Peter this thrice-repeated and solemn avowal of his love for his Master? He is about to entrust to Peter's care His flock, both lambs and sheep, laity and clergy. To feed, in the language of Holy Scripture, is to guide, rule, and govern, as St. Ambrose observes; and to feed the lambs and the sheep of Christ is undoubtedly to have the supreme spiritual power of governing and directing the whole flock of Christ in all matters belonging to faith and morals. Three times had St. Peter denied his Lord: the triple denial is now atoned for by a thrice-repeated

act of love, a threefold avowal of future fidelity. At the same time Jesus tells him to feed His flock in three different ways: namely as teacher of truth, as high-priest of grace and mercy, and as king, through precept and wise regulations.

The gospels mention but two appearances of Our Saviour in Galilee after His resurrection. Of the first, which took place on the shore of the sea of Galilee, or Tiberias, we have just heard. The second is described by St. Matthew (xxviii. 16, 17) as follows: "The eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And seeing Him they adored: but some doubted." According to the statement made by St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 6), "He was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once: of whom many remain until the present, and some are asleep." Those that doubted, as the evangelist mentions, were among these five hundred.

St. John concludes his gospel with the words: "There are many other things which Jesus did: which if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written." (John xxi. 25.) Here we have an argument in favor of tradition: a plain assertion that the Scriptures cannot be the sole rule of faith. Hence, while we know that all Catholic teaching is founded on the word of God, yet we ought not to expect to find everything in the Bible.

O my God! I firmly believe whatever Thy holy Church teaches. I know for certain that Thou hast revealed it, because the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church

was instituted by Thy divine Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, for the purpose of teaching it to me, and therefore, guided by the infallible successor of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles and visible head of the Church, cannot err in matters of faith and morals. I beseech Thee through the precious blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and through the merits of the apostles, to confirm me and all men in this faith, for which I profess to be ready, with Thy grace, to shed my blood.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### THE ASCENSION OF JESUS, AND THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY GHOST.

AFTER His resurrection, our blessed Lord remained forty days here on earth, appearing, as we have seen, sometimes to all apostles, and sometimes only to some, that He might thereby fully convince them of His being risen, and to accustom them by degrees to miss His corporal presence. During that time He instructed them in the nature and the use of those spiritual powers which He had imparted to them for the good of mankind. What these instructions were in particular, the evangelists do not mention. St. Luke (xxiv. 45) says in general, that He “opened their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures;” St. Matthew (xxviii. 18) and St. Mark (xvi. 15) finish their evangelical history with the divine command to the apostles: “Going, therefore, teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world. He that

believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned."

Jesus Christ had now finished the work for which He came down from heaven and dwelt amongst us. He had enlightened the world by His doctrine, and redeemed it by His death; He had confirmed the truth of His revealed religion; He had established His Church, which He commands all to hear; He had promised to assist His Church with the Spirit of truth to the end of ages; He had appointed St. Peter and his successors as the universal pastor to preside over the Church, to feed the lambs and the sheep of His flock in His name: nothing more remained but to take possession of that seat of bliss which He had merited for His own sacred humanity, and for us.

Therefore, on the fortieth day after His resurrection, He assembled His apostles. "And He led them out as far as Bethania, and lifting up His hands, He blessed them. And it came to pass, whilst He blessed them, He departed from them, and was carried up to heaven." (John xxiv. 50, 51.) The ascension of Christ took place from Mount Olivet. This mountain having been the scene of His agony and humiliation, was chosen by Him to be the scene of His final glorification. "And when He had said these things, while they looked on, He was raised up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they were beholding Him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments, who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into

heaven shall so come as you have seen Him going into heaven. Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount that is called Olivet, which is nigh Jerusalem within a Sabbath day's journey." (Acts i. 9-11.)

Jesus ascended as man, both body and soul; for as God He was never absent from heaven, His divinity being always everywhere present at the same time, and filling all places with its immensity. He ascended by His own almighty power, and not by the help of another. He ascended in a bright cloud, accompanied by the souls of the holy patriarchs, prophets, and saints of the Old Testament, whom He released from their captivity and led in triumph to heaven. "Oh, with what rapturous joy," exclaims St. Jerome, "did all the angelic powers come forth to meet and welcome the Son of God on the day of His glorious entry into heaven!" The angels were surprised, the archangels were astonished, to behold our human nature exalted thus by Him; the cherubim and seraphim were in ecstasies to see their King, after gaining a complete victory over sin, death, and hell, taking possession of the realms of everlasting bliss in an immortal and glorified body that outshone the brightness of a thousand suns.

Blessed Mother Mary, we congratulate thee on thy Son's triumph! Holy angels, we sympathize with you in your welcome to your King! But first, and above all, we greet Thee, Jesus, our God, our Lord, our Saviour, and our All! Behold, we have tried to follow Thee faithfully in prayer, study, and meditation, through Thy life, sufferings, and death, to Thy present hour of triumph.

Grant that we may one day follow Thee in reality to the kingdom of heaven!

Before His ascension, our blessed Lord had commanded the apostles not to leave Jerusalem until they should have received the Holy Ghost, whom He promised to send them. "He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but should wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard (saith He) by My mouth." (Acts i. 4.) In obedience to that order, they returned from Mount Olivet to Jerusalem, where they retired, it is believed, into the room of the Last Supper, and persevered unanimously in prayer with the women, and Mary, the Mother of Jesus. During that interval St. Peter began to exercise his apostolical supremacy: he informed his brethren that, according to the Holy Scriptures, they must fill the place of Judas Iscariot, who, by his treacherous prevarication, had fallen from the apostleship, and must therefore choose some one of them who had followed Jesus from the time of His baptism to the day of His ascension, and had been witness of His resurrection. Two were nominated in preference to all others, Matthias and Joseph surnamed the Just. To determine who was to be chosen, they had recourse to lots, devoutly praying to God that He would be pleased to manifest His will to them. The lot fell upon Matthias, and he was consequently associated with the other eleven apostles.

"And when the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they

were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak. Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men out of every nation under heaven. And when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue. And they were all amazed, and wondered, saying: Behold, are not all these that speak Galileans, and how have we heard every man our own tongue wherein we were born? Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews also and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians: we have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all astonished, and wondered, saying one to another: What meaneth this? But others mocking said: These men are full of new wine. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spoke to them: Ye men of Judea, and all you that dwell in Jerusalem, be this known to you and with your ears receive my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day: but this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass, in the last days (saith the Lord) I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young

men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And upon My servants indeed, and upon My handmaids will I pour out in those days of My Spirit, and they shall prophesy: and I will show wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath, blood and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and manifest day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as you also know: this same being delivered up, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain. . . . This Jesus hath God raised again, whereof all we are witnesses. Being exalted therefore by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath poured forth this which you see and hear." (Acts ii. 1-33.)

On that day of Pentecost Christ planted His Church as an everlasting monument of His victory. To the latest posterity this monument shall stand, and defy every effort that either man or devils can make against it. The Spirit of truth shall abide with the Church, and teach her all truth to the end of the world. Thus Christ fulfils His farewell promise to His apostles: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." (Matt. xxviii. 20.)

Christ continues to live in His Church, as the Redeemer and High-Priest, in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, in the sacraments, and other means of grace.

Christ lives in His Church as a Teacher of truth and heavenly wisdom, by guiding her councils through the Holy Ghost, and by saving the Popes, as heads of the Church, from error in their definitions of faith and morals.

Christ lives in His Church as King, by clothing His representatives, the priests, according to their various ranks, with divine authority, and by maintaining through their instrumentality God's kingdom on earth in discipline, peace, and tranquillity.

Christ lives in His Church by leading individuals to extraordinary holiness, and creating, in the monastic life and other religious associations, schools of the highest virtue and perfection for those whom He calls to the observance of the evangelical counsels.

Christ lives in His Church despised and crucified, inasmuch as His doctrines have been misrepresented, denied, and rejected by misguided men in all ages, as in His own lifetime; and inasmuch as His faithful followers individually, and His holy Church in general, have been, in private and in public, violently attacked and persecuted, wronged and misrepresented by declared enemies and treacherous friends.

Christ lives in His Church as the glorious Conqueror. For the Church, even in the midst of her greatest trials and under severest oppression, has won victory after victory, triumph after triumph. "And the rain fell, and the

floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock.” (Matt. vii. 25.)

“*Now to the King of ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.*” (1 Tim. i. 17.)

# STANDARD CATHOLIC BOOKS

PUBLISHED BY

**BENZIGER BROTHERS**

CINCINNATI:  
343 MAIN ST.

NEW YORK:  
36-38 BARCLAY ST.

CHICAGO:  
214-216 W. MONROE ST.

Books marked *net* are such where ten per cent. must be added for postage. Thus a book advertised as *net*, \$1.00, will be sent postpaid on receipt of \$1.10. Books not marked *net* will be sent postpaid on receipt of advertised price.

## MISCELLANEOUS BOOKS

ABANDONMENT TO DIVINE PROVIDENCE. CAUSSADE.	<i>net</i> , 0 50
ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT. TESNIÈRE.	<i>net</i> , 1 25
ANECDOTES AND EXAMPLES ILLUSTRATING THE CATHOLIC CATECHISM. SPIRAGO.	<i>net</i> , 1 50
ANGELS OF THE SANCTUARY. MUSSER.	0 20
ANNOUNCEMENT BOOK FOR SUNDAY MASSES.	<i>net</i> , 1 25
ART OF PROFITING BY OUR FAULTS. TISSOT.	<i>net</i> , 0 50
ASSERTIO SEPTEM SACRAMENTORUM OR DEFENCE OF THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS, BY HENRY VIII. O'DONOVAN.	<i>net</i> , 2 00
AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ST. IGNATIUS. O'CONOR.	<i>net</i> , 1 25
BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY, THE. SHAHAN.	<i>net</i> , 2 00
BENEDICENDA. SCHULTE.	<i>net</i> , 1 50
BLESSED SACRAMENT BOOK. LASANCE. Cloth, 1.50; Leather,	2 00
BLOSSOMS OF THE CROSS. GIEHL.	1 25
BOOK OF THE PROFESSED. Vols. I, II, III. Each,	<i>net</i> , 0 75
BOY-SAVER'S GUIDE. QUIN.	<i>net</i> , 1 35
BUDS AND BLOSSOMS. COLTON.	<i>net</i> , 1 25
CASES OF CONSCIENCE. SLATER. 2 vols.	<i>net</i> , 3 50
CATECHISM EXPLAINED. SPIRAGO.	<i>net</i> , 2 50
CATHOLIC BELIEF. FAA DI BRUNO. Paper, <i>net</i> , 0.10; Cloth,	<i>net</i> , 0 35
CATHOLIC CEREMONIES. DURAND. Paper, 0.20; Cloth,	0 50
CATHOLIC GIRL'S GUIDE. LASANCE.	1 25
CATHOLIC HOME ANNUAL.	0 25
CATHOLIC PRACTICE AT CHURCH AND AT HOME. KLAUDER. Paper, 0.25; Cloth,	0 60
CEREMONIAL FOR ALTAR BOYS. BRITT.	<i>net</i> , 0 35
CHARACTERISTICS OF TRUE DEVOTION. GROU.	<i>net</i> , 0 75
CHILD PREPARED FOR FIRST COMMUNION. ZULUETA. Per 100,	<i>net</i> , 3 00
CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS. DEVIVIER.	<i>net</i> , 2 00
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION. O'CONNELL.	<i>net</i> , 0 60
CHRISTIAN FATHER. CRAMER. Paper, 0.15; Cloth,	0 35
CHRISTIAN MOTHER. CRAMER. Paper, 0.15; Cloth,	0 35
CHRISTIAN MYSTERIES. 4 vols. BONOMELLI-BYRNE.	<i>net</i> , 5 00
CHRIST IN TYPE AND PROPHECY. MAAS. Vols. I and II. Each,	<i>net</i> , 2 00
CHRIST'S TEACHING CONCERNING DIVORCE. GIGOT.	<i>net</i> , 1 50
CHURCH TREASURER'S PEW COLLECTION AND RECEIPT BOOK.	<i>net</i> , 1 00
CLERGYMAN'S HANDBOOK OF LAW. SCANLAN.	<i>net</i> , 1 35
COME, LET US ADORE. HAMMER.	0 75
COMMANDMENTS AND SACRAMENTS, INSTRUCTIONS ON THE. LIGUORI. Paper, 0.15; Cloth,	0 35
COMPENDIUM JURIS CANONICI. SMITH.	<i>net</i> , 2 00
COMPENDIUM SACRÆ LITURGÆ. WAPELHORST.	<i>net</i> , 2 50
COMPENDIUM JURIS REGULARIUM. BACHOFEN.	<i>net</i> , 2 50
CONCORDANCE OF HOLY SCRIPTURES. WILLIAMS.	<i>net</i> , 3 50
CONFESSIONAL, THE. WIRTH.	<i>net</i> , 1 00

CONSECRANDA. SCHULTE.	net, 1 50
CORRECT THING FOR CATHOLICS. BUGG.	net, 0 75
COUNSELS OF ST. ANGELA.	net, 0 25
DATA OF MODERN ETHICS EXAMINED. MING.	net, 2 00
DEVOTIONS TO THE SACRED HEART FOR THE FIRST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH. HUGUET.	net, 0 40
DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS, THE. NOLDIN.	net, 1 25
DIGNITY AND DUTIES OF THE PRIEST. LIGUORI.	net, 1 50
DIVINE GRACE. WIRTH.	net, 1 60
DIVINE OFFICE. LIGUORI.	net, 1 50
DOGMATIC THEOLOGY, OUTLINES OF. HUNTER. Vol. I, II, III. Each,	net, 1 50
ECCLESIASTICAL DICTIONARY. THEIN.	net, 5 00
EDUCATION OF OUR GIRLS. SHIELDS.	net, 1 00
ELEMENTS OF ECCLES. LAW. Vols. I, II, III. SMITH. Each,	net, 2 50
ENCYCLICAL LETTERS OF POPE LEO XIII, THE GREAT.	net, 2 25
EUCCHARISTIC CHRIST, THE. TESNIÈRE.	net, 1 25
EUCCHARISTIC LILIES. MAERY.	net, 1 00
EXPLANATION OF BIBLE HISTORY. NASH.	net, 1 60
EXPLANATION OF THE COMMANDMENTS. ROLFUS.	net, 1 00
EXPLANATION OF THE CREED.	net, 1 00
EXPLANATION OF THE GOSPELS AND CATHOLIC WOR- SHIP. LAMBERT. Paper, 0.20; Cloth,	0 50
EXPLANATION OF THE HOLY SACRAMENTS. ROLFUS.	net, 1 00
EXPLANATION OF THE MASS. COCHEM.	net, 1 25
EXPLANATION OF THE OUR FATHER AND THE HAIL MARY.	net, 0 75
EXPLANATION OF THE PRAYERS AND CEREMONIES OF THE MASS. LANSLOTS.	net, 1 25
EXPLANATION OF THE SALVE REGINA. LIGUORI.	net, 0 75
EXTREME UNCTION.	0 10
FLOWERS OF THE PASSION.	0 50
FOR FREQUENT COMMUNICANTS. Per 100,	3 00
FOUR LAST THINGS. COCHEM.	net, 0 75
GENERAL CONFESSION MADE EASY. KONINGS.	0 15
GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. GIGOT.	net, 2 50
GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. Abridged. GIGOT.	net, 1 50
GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE. VERHEYEN.	net, 0 30
GENTLEMAN, A. EGAN.	net, 0 75
GIFT OF THE KING, THE.	0 60
GLORIES OF DIVINE GRACE. SCHEEBEN.	net, 1 60
GLORIES OF MARY. Vols. I and II. LIGUORI. Each,	net, 1 50
GLORIES AND TRIUMPHS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, THE.	2 00
GOD, CHRIST AND THE CHURCH. HAMMER.	2 00
GOFFINE'S DEVOUT INSTRUCTIONS.	1 00
GOLDEN SANDS. 3 vols. Each,	net, 0 50
GREAT MEANS OF SALVATION. LIGUORI.	net, 1 50
GREAT SUPPER, THE. COUBÉ.	net, 1 25
GREETINGS TO THE CHRIST CHILD.	0 60
GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES. BURNS.	net, 1 75
GUIDE FOR SACRISTANS.	net, 0 85
HARMONY OF THE RELIGIOUS LIFE. HEUSER.	net, 1 25
HELPS TO A SPIRITUAL LIFE. SCHNEIDER.	net, 1 25
HIDDEN TREASURE. BLESSED LEONARD. Paper, 0.15; Cloth,	0 35
HISTORY OF AMERICAN COLLEGE. BRANN.	net, 2 00
HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. ALZOG. 3 vols.	net, 8 00
HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. BRUECK. 2 vols.	net, 3 00
HISTORY OF ECONOMICS. DEWE.	net, 1 50
HISTORY OF THE MASS. O'BRIEN.	net, 1 25
HISTORY OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION. COBBET.	net, 0 75
HOLY EUCHARIST AND FREQUENT AND DAILY COM- MUNION. O'CONNELL.	net, 0 60
HOLY EUCHARIST. LIGUORI.	net, 1 50
HOLY HOUR. KEILEY.	0 10
HOLY MASS. LIGUORI.	net, 1 50
HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS WORTHILY CELEBRATED, THE.	net, 1 50

HOLY VIATICUM OF LIFE AS OF DEATH. DEVER.	net, 0 75
HOMILIES FOR THE WHOLE YEAR. 6 vols. BONOMELLI-BYRNE.	net, 7 50
HOW TO COMFORT THE SICK. KREBS.	net, 1 25
HOW TO MAKE THE MISSION.	0 10
INCARNATION, BIRTH, AND INFANCY OF CHRIST. LIGUORI.	net, 1 50
INDEX TO LIGUORI WORKS.	net, 0 10
IN HEAVEN WE KNOW OUR OWN.	net, 0 60
INSTRUCTIONS FOR FIRST COMMUNICANTS. SCHMITT.	net, 0 60
INSTRUCTIONS ON MARRIAGE, POPULAR. GIRARDEY. Paper, 0.15; Cloth,	0 35
INSTRUCTIONS TO PARENTS, POPULAR. GIRARDEY. Paper, 0.15; Cloth,	0 35
INSTRUCTIONS ON PRAYER, POPULAR. GIRARDEY. Paper, 0.15; Cloth,	0 35
INTERIOR OF JESUS AND MARY. GROU. 2 vols.	net, 2 00
JESUS LIVING IN THE PRIEST. MILLER-BYRNE.	net, 2 00
LADY, A. BUGG.	net, 0 75
LAWS OF THE SAVIOUR.	0 60
LESSONS OF THE SAVIOUR.	0 60
LETTERS OF ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI. 5 vols. Each,	net, 1 50
LIFE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN. ROHNER-BRENNAN.	net, 1 25
LIFE OF CHRIST. BUSINGER-BRENNAN.	net, 10 00
LIFE OF CHRIST. COCHEM-HAMMER.	net, 1 25
LIFE OF POPE PIUS X.	2 00
LIFE OF ST. CATHARINE OF SIENNA.	1 00
LIFE OF SISTER ANNE KATHARINE EMMERICH. MCGOWAN.	net, 1 75
LIFE OF VEN. CRESCENTIA HOSS.	net, 1 25
LIGHT FOR NEW TIMES. FLETCHER.	net, 0 60
LIVES OF THE SAINTS FOR CHILDREN. BERTHOLD.	0 60
LIVES OF THE SAINTS, PICTORIAL. SHEA.	3 00
LIVES OF THE SAINTS, SHORT. DONNELLY.	0 60
LIVES OF THE SAINTS, LITTLE PICTORIAL.	1 25
LOVER OF SOULS, THE. BRINKMEYER.	net, 1 00
LOURDES. CLARKE.	net, 1 00
MANUAL OF MORAL THEOLOGY. SLATER. Vols. I and II. Each,	net, 2 75
MANUAL OF THEOLOGY FOR THE LAITY, A. GEIERMANN. Paper. 0.25; Cloth,	0 60
MARRIAGE DELEGATION BLANKS IN BOOK FORM.	net, 0 50
MARRIAGE NOTIFICATION BLANKS IN BOOK FORM.	net, 0 50
MARY THE QUEEN. RELIGIOUS OF THE SOCIETY OF THE HOLY CHILD JESUS.	0 60
MARY, HELP OF CHRISTIANS. HAMMER.	2 00
MEANS OF GRACE. ROLFUS-BRANDLE.	3 00
MEDITATIONS FOR EVERY DAY. BAXTER.	net, 1 50
MEDITATIONS FOR EVERY DAY. HAMON. 5 vols.	net, 5 00
MEDITATIONS FOR EVERY DAY. VERCUYSSÉ. 2 vols.	net, 3 50
MEDITATIONS FOR EVERY DAY OF MONTH. NEPVEU-RYAN.	net, 0 75
MEDITATIONS FOR MONTHLY RETREATS.	net, 1 00
MEDITATIONS FOR RETREATS. ST. FR. DE SALES.	net, 0 75
MEDITATIONS FOR THE USE OF THE SECULAR CLERGY. 2 vols. CHAIGNON.	net, 4 50
MEDITATIONS ON THE LIFE, THE TEACHINGS, AND THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST. ILG. 2 vols.	net, 3 50
MEDITATIONS ON THE MONTH OF OUR LADY. FERRAN.	net, 0 75
MEDITATIONS ON THE PASSION.	0 50
MEDITATIONS ON THE LAST WORDS OF OUR LORD ON THE CROSS. PERRAUD.	net, 0 50
MEDITATIONS ON THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS CHRIST. PERINALDO.	net, 0 75
MIDDLE AGES. SHAHAN.	net, 2 00
MISCELLANY. LIGUORI.	net, 1 50
MOMENTS BEFORE THE TABERNACLE. RUSSELL.	net, 0 50
MONTH, LITTLE, OF THE SOULS IN PURGATORY.	net, 0 25
MONTH OF MAY, LITTLE.	net, 0 25
MONTH, NEW, OF THE HOLY ANGELS.	net, 0 25
MORAL BRIEFS. STAPLETON.	net, 1 25
MORE SPIRITUAL READINGS. MADAME CECILIA.	net, 1 25
MORES CATHOLICI; OR, AGES OF FAITH. H. KENELM DIGBY. 4 vols.	net, 25 00
MORAL PRINCIPLES AND MEDICAL PRACTICE. COPPENS.	net, 1 00
MY FIRST COMMUNION. BUCHMANN.	net, 0 75

MY PRAYER-BOOK: HAPPINESS IN GOODNESS. LASANCE.	
Cloth, 1.25; Leather,	1 75
NEW TESTAMENT. 24mo. Flexible cloth, net, 0.18; Leather,	net, 0 50
NEW TESTAMENT. Illustrated.	net, 0 60
NEW TESTAMENT. (India Paper.)	net, 0 75
NEW TESTAMENT. 12mo. Cloth, net, 0.75; Leather,	net, 1 50
OFF TO JERUSALEM. BENZIGER.	net, 0 50
OUR OWN WILL. ALLEN.	net, 0 85
OUTLINES OF NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY. GIGOT.	net, 1 50
OUTLINES OF SERMONS FOR YOUNG MEN AND YOUNG WOMEN. SCHUEN.	net, 2 00
PARADISE ON EARTH. NATALE.	net, 0 40
PARISH CENSUS BOOK.	net, 3 50
PARISH COMBINATION RECORDS FOR SMALL PARISHES.	net, 3 75
PARISH PRIEST ON DUTY, THE. HEUSER.	net, 0 60
PASSION AND DEATH OF JESUS CHRIST. LIGUORI.	net, 1 50
PASTORAL THEOLOGY. STANG.	net, 1 50
PATRON SAINTS. Vols. I, II, III. MANNIX. Each,	0 60
PATRON SAINTS. MANNIX. Each,	0 10
St. Agnes, St. Aloysius, St. Anne, St. Anthony, St. Blase, St. Bernard, St. Bridget, St. Catherine, St. Cecilia, St. Charles, St. Clare, St. Elizabeth, St. Francis Xavier, St. Helena, St. Joseph, St. Louis, St. Margaret, St. Martin of Tours, St. Michael, St. Monica, St. Patrick, St. Philip Neri, St. Rose of Lima, St. Teresa.	
PEARLS FROM FABER. BRUNOWE.	net, 0 50
PERFECT RELIGIOUS. D'ORLEANS DE LA MOTTE.	net, 1 00
PEW COLLECTION AND RECEIPT BOOK.	net, 1 00
PHILOSOPHIA MORALI, DE. RUSSO.	net, 2 00
POLITICAL AND MORAL ESSAYS. RICKABY.	net, 1 75
PRACTICAL CATHOLIC. PALAU-RYAN.	0 60
PRAXIS SYNODALIS.	net, 0 75
PREACHING. LIGUORI.	net, 1 50
PREPARATION FOR DEATH. LIGUORI.	net, 1 50
PRIEST IN THE PULPIT. SCHUECH.	net, 1 75
PRINCIPLES, ORIGIN AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM IN THE U. S. BURNS.	net, 1 75
PRIVATE RETREAT FOR RELIGIOUS. GEIERMANN.	net, 1 50
PULPIT SKETCHES. LAMBERT.	net, 1 25
RIGHTS OF OUR LITTLE ONES. CONWAY.	0 10
QUEEN'S FESTIVALS, THE.	0 60
REASONABLENESS OF CATHOLIC CEREMONIES AND PRACTICES. BURKE. Paper, 0.15; Cloth,	0 35
REGISTRUM BAPTISMORUM.	net, 3 50
REGISTRUM CONFIRMATORUM.	net, 2 50
REGISTRUM DEFENDORUM.	net, 2 50
REGISTRUM MATRIMONIUM.	net, 3 50
REGISTRUM NEO-COMMUNICANTIUM.	net, 2 50
REGISTRUM, SEU LIBER STATUS ANIMARUM. Large edition,	net, 3 50
Pocket edition,	net, 0 25
RELIGIOUS STATE, THE. LIGUORI.	net, 0 50
RETREATS FOR SISTERS, TWO. WIRTH.	net, 1 00
RITUALE COMPENDIOSUM.	net, 0 90
ROSARY, THE. GARESCHÉ.	net, 0 50
ROSARY, THE CROWN OF MARY, THE.	0 10
RULES OF LIFE FOR THE PASTOR OF SOULS. SLATER-RAUCH.	net, 1 25
SACRAMENTALS. LAMBING. Paper, 0.20; Cloth,	0 50
SACRED HEART BOOK. LASANCE.	0 75
SACRED HEART STUDIED IN THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.	
SAINTRAIN.	net, 2 00
ST. ANTHONY. ANECDOTES AND EXAMPLES. KELLER.	net, 0 75
ST. ANTHONY, THE SAINT OF THE WHOLE WORLD. WARD.	net, 0 75
SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI: SOCIAL REFORMER. DUBOIS.	net, 1 00
SANCTUARY BOYS' ILLUSTRATED MANUAL. MCCALLEN.	net, 0 50
SECRET OF SANCTITY. CRASSET.	net, 1 00
SERMONS FOR CHILDREN OF MARY. CALLERIO.	net, 1 50
SERMONS FOR CHILDREN'S MASSES. FRASSINETTI.	net, 1 50
SERMONS FOR SUNDAYS. LIGUORI.	net, 1 50
SERMONS FOR THE SUNDAYS AND CHIEF FESTIVALS OF THE ECCLES. YEAR. 2 vols. POTTGEISSER.	net, 3 00
SERMONS FROM THE LATINS. BAXTER.	net, 2 00
SERMONS, FUNERAL. WIRTH. Vols. I and II. Each,	net, 1 00

SERMONS. HUNOLT. Complete Edition. 12 vols. Each,	2 50
SERMONS, LENTEN. WIRTH.	net, 2 00
SERMONS, NEW AND OLD. WIRTH. 8 vols. Each,	net, 2 00
SERMONS ON THE BLESSED SACRAMENT. SCHEURER-LASANCE.	net, 1 50
SERMONS ON THE DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART. Six. BIERBAUM.	net, 0 75
SERMONS, SHORT, FOR LOW MASSES. SCHOUPE.	net, 1 25
SERMONS, SHORT. HUNOLT. 5 vols. (WIRTH.) Each,	net, 2 00
SHORT HISTORY OF MORAL THEOLOGY. SLATER.	net, 0 50
SHORT STORIES ON CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.	net, 1 00
SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONS FOR FIRST COMMUNION. Per 100,	net, 3 00
SOCIALISM AND CHRISTIANITY. STANG.	net, 1 00
SOCIALISM: ITS THEORETICAL BASIS AND PRACTICAL APPLICATION. CATHREIN.	net, 1 50
SOCIALISM, RELIGION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF. MING.	net, 1 50
SOCIALISM, MORALITY OF MODERN. MING.	net, 1 50
SPECIAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. Part I. Gigot.	net, 1 50
SPECIAL INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT. Part II. Gigot.	net, 2 00
SPIRAGO'S METHOD OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE. MESSMER.	net, 1 50
SPIRITUAL CONSIDERATIONS. BUCKLER.	net, 1 25
SPIRITUAL DESPONDENCY AND TEMPTATIONS. MICHEL.	net, 1 25
SPIRITUAL EXERCISES FOR A TEN DAYS' RETREAT. SMETANA.	net, 1 00
SPIRITUAL PEPPER AND SALT. STANG. Paper, 0.25; Cloth,	0 60
SPIRIT OF SACRIFICE AND THE LIFE OF SACRIFICE IN THE RELIGIOUS STATE. GIRAUD-THURSTON.	net, 2 00
SPOILING THE DIVINE FEAST. ZULUETA. Per 100,	3 00
STORIES FOR FIRST COMMUNICANTS. KELLER.	net, 0 50
STORY OF THE DIVINE CHILD. LINGS.	0 60
STORIES OF THE MIRACLES OF OUR LORD, THE.	0 60
STRIVING AFTER PERFECTION. BAYMA.	net, 1 00
SUNDAY-SCHOOL DIRECTOR'S GUIDE. SLOAN.	net, 0 50
SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER'S GUIDE. SLOAN.	net, 0 50
SURE WAY TO A HAPPY MARRIAGE. Paper, 0.15; Cloth,	0 35
TALKS WITH THE LITTLE ONE ABOUT THE APOSTLES' CREED.	0 60
THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THE CONFESSIONAL. SCHIELER- HEUSER.	net, 3 50
THOUGHTS AND AFFECTIONS ON THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR. BERGAMO.	net, 2 00
THOUGHTS AND COUNSELS FOR CATHOLIC YOUNG MEN. WIRTH.	net, 1 25
TRAINING OF CHILDREN. MADAME CECILIA.	net, 0 75
TRUE POLITENESS, LETTERS ON. DEMORE.	net, 0 75
TRUE SPOUSE OF CHRIST. LIGUORI.	net, 1 25
TRUE SPOUSE OF CHRIST. Vols. I and II. LIGUORI. Each,	net, 1 50
VENERATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN. ROHNER-BRENNAN.	net, 1 25
VICTORIES OF THE MARTYRS. LIGUORI.	net, 1 50
VISIT TO EUROPE AND THE HOLY LAND. FAIRBANKS.	1 50
VOCATIONS EXPLAINED.	0 10
WAY OF THE CROSS. Paper,	0 05
WAY OF THE CROSS. EUCHARISTIC METHOD.	0 10
WAY OF THE CROSS. METHOD OF ST. FRANCIS ASSISI.	0 10
WAY OF THE CROSS. METHOD JESUIT FATHER.	0 10
WAY OF THE CROSS. METHOD ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI.	0 10
WAY OF SALVATION AND PERFECTION. LIGUORI.	net, 1 50
WAY OF INTERIOR PEACE. BRUCKER.	net, 1 50
WHAT CATHOLICS HAVE DONE FOR SCIENCE. BRENNAN.	net, 1 25
WHAT THE CHURCH TEACHES. DRURY. Paper, 0.25; Cloth,	0 60
WHAT TIMES! WHAT MORALS! SEMPLE. Paper,	net, 0 15
WITH CHRIST, MY FRIEND. SLOAN.	net, 0 75
WITH GOD. LASANCE. Cloth, 1.25; Leather,	1 75
YOUNG MAN'S GUIDE. LASANCE. Cloth, 0.75; Leather,	1 25

## NOVELS

AGATHA'S HARD SAYING. ROSA MULHOLLAND.	1 25
BACK TO THE WORLD. CHAMPOL.	net, 1 35

BIT OF OLD IVORY. A.		net,	0 5
BLACK BROTHERHOOD. GARROLD.		net,	1 3
BOND AND FREE. CONNOR.		net,	0 7
BUT THY LOVE AND THY GRACE. FINN.			1 0
CARROLL DARE. WAGGAMAN.			1 2
CIRCUS RIDER'S DAUGHTER. BRACKEL.			1 2
CONNOR D'ARCY'S STRUGGLES. BERTHOLDS.			1 2
CORINNE'S VOW. WAGGAMAN.			1 2
DAUGHTER OF KINGS. HINKSON.			1 2
DION AND THE SYBILS. M. KEON.		net,	0 6
DOUBLE KNOT.			0
FABIOLA. WISEMAN. 12mo. Illustrated edition, 0.75; Non-illustrated edition			0
FABIOLA'S SISTERS. CLARKE.			1 2
FATAL BEACON. BRACKEL.			1 2
FAUSTULA. AYSKOUGH.		net,	1 3
FORGIVE AND FORGET. LINGEN.			1 5
FRIENDLY LITTLE HOUSE.		net,	0 5
HEARTS OF GOLD. EDHOR.			1 2
HEIRESS OF CRONENSTEIN. HAHN-HAHN.			1 2
HER BLIND FOLLY. HOLT.			1 2
HER FATHER'S DAUGHTER. HINKSON.			1 2
IDOLS. NAVERY.			1 2
IN THE DAYS OF KING HAL. TAGGART.			1 2
IN GOD'S GOOD TIME. ROSS.		net,	0 7
"KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS." HARRISON.			1 2
LADY OF THE TOWER.		net,	0 5
LET NO MAN PUT ASUNDER. MARIE.			1 0
LIGHT OF HIS COUNTENANCE. HARTE.		net,	0 7
LITTLE CARDINAL. PARR.			1 2
LINKED LIVES. DOUGLAS.			1 5
MARCELLA GRACE. ROSA MULHOLLAND.			1 2
MARIAE COROLLA. HILL.		net,	1 2
MELCHIOR OF BOSTON. EARLS.			1 0
MIGHTY FRIEND. L'ERMITTE.		net,	1 5
MIRROR OF SHALOTT. BENSON.			1 5
MISS ERIN. FRANCIS.			1 2
MONK'S PARDON. NAVERY.			1 2
MR. BILLY BUTTONS. LECKY.			1 2
MY LADY BEATRICE. COOKE.		net,	0 7
NOT A JUDGMENT. KEON.			1 2
ONE AFTERNOON AND OTHER STORIES.		net,	0 6
OTHER MISS LISLE. MARTIN.		net,	0 7
OUT OF BONDAGE. HOLT.			1 2
OUTLAW OF CAMARGUE. DE LAMOTHE.			1 2
PASSING SHADOWS. YORKE.			1 2
PASSION FLOWERS. HILL.		net,	1 2
PÈRE MONNIER'S WARD. LECKY.			1 2
PILKINGTON HEIR. SADLIER.			1 2
PRISONER'S YEARS. CLARKE.		net,	1 3
PRODIGAL'S DAUGHTER. BUGG.			1 0
RED INN AT ST. LYPHAR. SADLIER.			1 2
ROAD BEYOND THE TOWN. EARLS.			1 2
ROMANCE OF A PLAYWRIGHT. BORNIER.			1 0
ROSE OF THE WORLD. MARTIN.		net,	0 7
ROUND TABLE OF GERMAN CATHOLIC NOVELISTS.			1 5
ROUND TABLE OF FRENCH CATHOLIC NOVELISTS.			1 5
ROUND TABLE OF AMERICAN CATHOLIC NOVELISTS.			1 5
ROUND TABLE OF IRISH AND ENGLISH CATHOLIC NOVELISTS			1 0
ROUND THE WORLD SERIES. Vol. I.			1 0
ROUND THE WORLD SERIES. Vol. II.			1 0
ROUND THE WORLD SERIES. Vol. III.			1 0
ROUND THE WORLD SERIES. Vol. IV.			1 0
ROUND THE WORLD SERIES. Vol. V.			1 0
ROUND THE WORLD SERIES. Vol. VI.			1 0
ROUND THE WORLD SERIES. Vol. VII.			1 0
ROUND THE WORLD SERIES. Vol. VIII.			1 0
ROUND THE WORLD SERIES. Vol. IX.			1 0
ROUND THE WORLD SERIES. Vol. X.			1 2
RULER OF THE KINGDOM. KEON.		net,	0 7
SECRET OF THE GREEN VASE. COOKE.		net,	0 6
SENIOR LIEUTENANT'S WAGER.			





59213



