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VOLUME THREE

THE GREAT COMMENTARY OF CORNELIUS À LAPIDE

THE
GREAT COMMENTARY
OF
CORNELIUS À LAPIDE

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ASSISTED BY VARIOUS SCHOLARS

פִּי־קִנְאַת בֵּיתְךָ אֲכָלָתְנִי׃

S. MATTHEW'S GOSPEL.—CHAPS. XXII TO XXVIII
S. MARK'S GOSPEL.—COMPLETE.

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ADVERTISEMENT TO THE THIRD VOLUME.

THIS third Volume of the Translation of Cornelius à Lapide on the Gospels, comprises the seven last chapters of S. Matthew, and the whole of S. Mark.

For the translation of the 26th chapter of S. Matthew from the 31st verse, and for the whole of the 27th chapter, I am indebted to the kindness of an eminent patristic Scholar and Divine, the Rev. James Bliss, so well known for his labours in connection with the *Anglo-Catholic Library*, and the *Library of the Fathers*. For the translation of the 28th of S. Matthew, I am indebted to another friend. For the remainder, I am responsible myself.

T. W. M.

THE

HOLY GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST,

ACCORDING TO S. MATTHEW.

CHAPTER XXII.

2 *The marriage of the king's son.* 11 *The wedding garment.* 15 *Of paying tribute.* 23 *Of the resurrection.*

AND Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,
2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and *my* fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready: come unto the marriage.

5 But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise:

6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*.

7 But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

9 Go ye, therefore, into the highways; and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

11 And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him

away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

14 For many are called, but few *are* chosen.

15 ¶ Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in *his* talk.

16 And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any *man;* for thou regardest not the person of men.

17 Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?

18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, *ye* hypocrites?

19 Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.

20 And he saith unto them, Whose *is* this image and superscription?

21 They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.

22 When they had heard *these words*, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

23 ¶ The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him,

24 Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

25 Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother.

26 Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh.

27 And last of all the woman died also.

28 Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,

32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

33 And when the multitude heard *this*, they were astonished at his doctrine.

34 ¶ But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

35 Then one of them, *which was* a lawyer, asked *him a question*, tempting him, and saying,

36 Master, which *is* the great commandment in the law?

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

41 ¶ While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

42 Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, *The son* of David.

43 He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord? saying,

44 The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

46 And no man was able to answer him a word; neither durst any *man* from that day forth ask him any more *questions*.

And Jesus answered, &c., refuting the incredulity of the Scribes. The meaning is: it is the same in the kingdom of Heaven, *i.e.*, in the Church militant here on earth, as if a king made a marriage for his son, &c. For in other respects the kingdom of Heaven is not directly and precisely like a king, but a kingdom. S. Gregory treats of this parable at length (*Hom.* 38, *in Evang.*).

The parable is similar to that which Luke records (xiv. 16). Maldonatus thinks it is the same with that, and that Matthew has not here observed the historical order. With more reason S. Augustine (*l.* 2, *de consens. Evang. c.* 71), S. Thomas, Jansen, and others think that this is a different parable from that in Luke; or if the same, that they were uttered upon two occasions, and in different words. It is clear on comparison that they have numerous differences. For, not to speak of other things, Luke says that the parable was spoken in the house of a Pharisee. Matthew here asserts that it was spoken publicly in the temple. This is plain from ver. 23. Again, Luke calls this marriage feast *a supper;* Matthew, *a dinner.*

And sent his servants, &c. For *marriage*, the Syriac version has throughout *feast*, meaning *marriage feast.*

The whole parable may be expounded and applied as follows:—1st. The *king* is God the Father; the *son of the king*, the *bridegroom*, is God's Incarnate Son, Jesus Christ, whose spouse is the Church, whose nuptials were begun in the Incarnation of Christ, for in it Christ espoused human nature to Himself, hypostatically, and the Church, that is, all faithful people, mystically, to be His Spouse by grace. But in Heaven these nuptials shall be consummated with glory. So Origen, SS. Hilary, Jerome, Gregory, and others. Wherefore, *tropologically*, "by *marriage*, understand," says Origen, "the union of Christ with the soul; and by *offspring*, good works."

2d. God the Father made *a marriage feast* for Christ, since in Judea, and in the whole world, He hath, through Christ, spread a table of evangelical doctrine and sacraments, especially the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

3d. To this nuptial feast the Jews were invited by God, through Moses and the prophets, as the servants of God, both before and after the incarnation of Christ, that they might believe first that it was about to take place, and then that it had taken place; that so, believing in Christ, repenting and seeking grace from Him, they might obtain justice and salvation.

4th. *Bulls and fatlings* have only the general signification of rich provision for a banquet. They denote the grandeur of the doctrines of the Gospel, says S. Jerome, and of the Sacraments.

Moreover, *fatlings* (*altilia*, Vulg.) do not mean winged creatures, birds and fowls, but bulls and calves, and other creatures which are fed up. *Altilia* is derived from *alo*, to *nourish*. The Greek is σιτιστά, *fatlings*. Wherefore the Arabic translates, *and my calves are now fed, and have been killed*, Gr. τεθυμένα, i.e., *have been immolated*. For in olden time, as now, weddings were wont to be inaugurated by a sacrifice, and marriage feasts were kept with victims slain and offered in sacrifice. So also the marriage feast of Christ, which is here parabolically described, took its beginning from the sacrifice of the Cross. *Symbolically*, by *bulls* (Vulg.) S. Gregory understands the Fathers of the Old Covenant, who, by the permission of the Law, smote their enemies with the horn of corporeal strength. But the *fatlings*, saith he, are the Fathers of the New Testament, raised by contemplation from the things of earth to things above. But Chrysostom says, "*fatlings* are Prophets; *bulls*, those who were both Prophets and Priests." As bulls are leaders of the herd, so are Priests the princes of the people. S. Hilary says, the *bulls* are martyrs, who, like victims, have been immolated. The *fatlings* are spiritual persons, filled as it were with spiritual bread. Lastly, Origen says, *the dinner* is the word of God. *Bulls* signify the strong meat of the word; *fatlings* its sweeter portions.

5th. The *field*, the *farm*, whither those who were invited went away, despising the invitation, signify temporal good things, which drew away the Jews from the faith of Christ, and from heavenly good things; and which led them to slay the servants of God, yea, even Christ Himself. Wherefore, God sent Titus, who *slew* the Jews as being *murderers, and burnt up their city*, namely, their capital, Jerusalem.

Christ in this parable has an allusion to Isa. xxv. 6, "And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined;" and Isa. xxx. 23, 24, "Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal; and bread of the increase of the earth, and it shall be fat and plenteous: in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures. The oxen likewise and the young asses that ear the ground shall eat clean provender, which hath been winnowed with the shovel and with the fan."

Learn from hence that Christ always sets before us in the Church a rich spiritual banquet of holy doctrine and grace, abundantly seasoned with sacred lections, sermons, exhortations, and with innumerable examples in every kind of virtue, of Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, Virgins, with frequent receiving of the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, which is "the corn of the elect, and the wine that maketh virgins," as Zechariah saith (ix. 17); with the Sacrifice of the Mass, with such great adornment of the sacred ministers, altars, and temples, and with the heavenly harmony of music and organs, and many other things which feed, delight, inebriate the souls of the faithful, so that Christianity is to the pious one continual banquet, according to the words in Isa. lxvi. 23, "The feast of the new moon shall be from one month to another, and from sabbath to sabbath."

Lastly, Christ Himself, Incarnate, is the perennial food and joy of the faithful. For He, through the Incarnation, really communicates to them not only all the gifts of His grace, but Himself, in all His fulness, and therefore His very Deity itself. And this He gives them to taste, to eat, to enjoy, as it is said in S. John vi. 51,

"I am the Living Bread, who came down from heaven. Whosoever shall eat of this Bread, shall live eternally." This is the reason why Isaiah, when declaring beforehand the delights and happiness which were to come to the new Church from Christ Incarnate, everywhere rejoices and exults, and invites all Christians evermore to rejoice and exult with him. See chaps. ii. vii.; chaps. xxx., xxxv., lx., lxi., lxii., &c. Let Christians therefore, and especially Priests and Religions, take care to feed in these feasts in their souls; and serve Christ in righteousness and holiness, that thus they may begin that life of beatitude with Him now, which by and by will be perfected and consummated in Heaven.

Ver. 8. *Then saith he*, &c. This is the second part of the parable of the guests. *Then*, that is to say, when these who were invited, meaning the Jews, refused to come to the nuptial table of the evangelical doctrine of Christ, because *they were not worthy* of it, because they despised it—*then* saith the *King*, that is God, to *His servants*, the Apostles—

Go ye into the highways; Vulg. *the ends of the ways;* Gr. διεξόδους ὁδῶν, *the passages, the outlets of the ways.* The meaning is, Traverse and run through all the ways, and the turnings, and corners, and bendings of the roads. Let there be no nook which you do not traverse. Do ye, O ye Apostles, travel over the whole world; go into all the countries of the nations, that ye may preach the faith of Christ to them, and invite all men to it. He also bids the Apostles to transfer the Gospel from the invited guests, that is the Jews, to all nations. Wherefore He adds—

And his servants went out, &c. The Apostles were to go and preach the Gospel in all nations unto the ends of the earth, according to the words in Ps. xix., "Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the end of the world." *Mystically:* the *servants* are angels who preside over the conversion of the Gentiles, says Origen.

Symbolically: the highways are the various and contradictory errors and sects of the Gentiles, which the Apostles destroyed. So Remigius. 2d. S. Chrysostom says, *The ways* are the various

professions of men in the world, as the profession of philosophy, arms, &c. Christ therefore bids that men of every profession shall be invited to believe. 3d. S. Hilary says, "*The way* is the time of the world. They are bidden to go out to the end, because the past is forgiven to all." 4th. S. Gregory says, *The ways* are *actions*: their terminations (*exitus*) are defects.

They gathered together all, &c. This is an ornament (*emblema*) of the parable, and only signifies that all men, without any distinction whatsoever, are invited to the faith of Christ.

And the wedding, &c. The Church has been filled with a copious multitude of all nations.

When the king came in, &c., that he might survey and examine them. This shall take place when God shall come to the general judgment at the end of the world, to judge, and reward or punish all mankind. So Origen, &c.

And he saw . . . wedding garment; Syr. a *festal garment*. *The garment for the wedding*, that is, one which is clean, precious, and splendid, is not faith, as the heretics say. For all who were at this feast of the Church, indeed, could not have entered in except by faith. Therefore this garment is charity, and holiness of life. A pure and holy life is like a clean and splendid robe, woven of virtues and good works, which are a glorious adornment of a man. So SS. Jerome, Hilary, Tertullian, and others. S. Gregory explains *the not having a wedding garment* to mean faith without works of charity, by which the Lord comes to unite the Church in marriage with Himself. But S. Augustine (*lib. 2, contra Faust. c.* 19) explains it to mean one who seeks his own, not the Lord's glory. But S. Hilary says, *the wedding garment* is the grace of the Holy Spirit, and the brightness of heavenly conversation, which being received by the good answer of confession, is preserved spotless for the celestial company. S. Jerome says, works which are fulfilled out of the Law and the Gospel, form the garment of the new man.

Many in the day of judgment who believed in Christ shall be found without this robe of charity and sanctity; yet one only

is mentioned, because this matter is spoken of, as it were, by the way. For the direct object of Christ in this parable was to declare that when the unbelieving Jews were rejected, the Gentiles were called to Christ. This one, however, denotes all who are like Him. It also signifies that not even one wicked person can lie hid in the day of judgment, or go away unpunished.

And said to him, Friend (Syr. *my comrade*), &c. The word *friend* signifies that God will speak thus to the wicked, not out of hatred, or a desire to condemn them, but in a friendly manner, from zeal of justice. S. Jerome adds, he calls him *friend*, because he was invited to the *wedding feast*. Therefore he rebukes him for his impudence, because he came in a rude manner without a wedding garment. Whence S. Gregory says, "It is marvellous how he calls him *friend*, and yet rejects him." It is as though he said plainly, "Friend, and not friend; friend *by faith*, but not friend *by works*."

But he was speechless. For, says S. Jerome, that was no place of denial; for God shall there "bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart," according to the words, "I will search Jerusalem with candles" (Zeph. i. 12).

Then said the king—to his servants, his angels, as is plain from Matt. xiii. 39. And as Daniel saith concerning them, "Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him."

Bind him, &c. This is an emblem, signifying that the damned cannot resist the sentence of God, nor from thenceforth do any good thing; altogether as if they had their hands and feet, their mouth and souls, their will and judgment bound. For as S. Augustine says (*lib.* 11, *de Trin.*), "The binding of an evil will is a chain." And S. Gregory says, "They who now are willingly in bonds to sin, shall then, against their will, be bound in punishment."

Cast him . . . teeth. These are the *teeth* which delighted in gluttony, says S. Gregory. And again the same S. Gregory says

appositely, "*The inner darkness* is the darkness of the heart; *the outer darkness* is the night of eternal damnation."

Many are called, &c. Because all who were first invited and refused to come were rejected, that is to say, all the Jews, who would not believe in Christ, to whom this parable bears special reference. Besides these, *one* was rejected, even of those who were called, and did come, who entered in, not having a wedding garment, who represents all wicked Christians. For inasmuch as Christ did not intend in this place specially to refer to these, it sufficed that by naming *one*, He should refer to that matter by the way, to signify that not all who believe in Christ shall be saved, but those only who adorn their faith with a wedding garment, that is, with love and holy works. This saying of Christ ought to raise great fear and awe. For no one knoweth whether he be elect or reprobate. Every one therefore ought to strive, by means of good works, to make his calling and election sure.

S. Gregory gives the example of his three paternal aunts. The first of these was named Tharsilla. She lived in holy virginity, and was called away to Heaven by her grandfather, who was already among the blessed, in these words, "Come, that I may receive thee into this mansion of light." Then she, looking up, beheld Jesus, and cried aloud, "Depart ye, depart ye, Jesus cometh," and so delivered up her soul to Him to be eternally blessed. The second sister, Emiliana, was called away to Heaven by Tharsilla herself on the Feast of the Epiphany; and being anxious about her third sister Gordiana, she answered, "And if I come alone, to whom shall I leave Gordiana?" Again she heard her sister's voice saying, "Come, for Gordiana hath chosen her lot with the world." For, shortly afterwards, Gordiana, forgetful of her consecration to virginity, married her bailiff.

Ver. 15. *Then went the Pharisees . . . entangle*, &c. For entangle, the Greek has παγιδεύσωσιν, i.e., *ensnare;* for παγίδες are *snares.* And so the Syriac has *prepare gins like bird-catchers.* The Pharisees put captious questions to Christ with the design that whatever way He might answer, He should incur blame; and that so they might,

as it were, entrap Him in His answer, and that He might be open to the charge of treason against either human or Divine Majesty. "They laid a plot by means of a dilemma," says S. Augustine (*l.* 1, *contra Crescen. c.* 17), that whichever He should choose of its two horns, He might be caught. If He answered that it was lawful, He would be a traitor to the people of God; but if He said it was not lawful, He would be punished as an enemy to Cæsar.

With the Herodians; Syr. *with those who were of the house of Herod.*

The Herodians were a Jewish sect, who favoured the Roman Cæsar, and the payment of tribute to him. They were named from the first Herod of Ascalon, the infanticide, who was entirely devoted to Cæsar, inasmuch as he had been made king of Judea by Augustus Cæsar and the Roman Senate. So S. Jerome, Origen, and others. S. Epiphanius (*lib.* 1, *hæres.* 20) and S. Jerome (*Dialogo cont. Luciferanos*) add that these Herodians were Jewish sectaries, or heretics, who held that Herod of Ascalon was the Messiah or Christ promised by the prophets, because they saw that in him the sceptre had failed from Judah. Herod eagerly encouraged these flatterers. And the reason why he slew the infants at Bethlehem was that he might kill Christ, that no one but himself might be accounted Christ. For the same reason, he built a most magnificent temple for the Jews, vieing with that of Solomon, as Josephus shows (*Lib. Ant.* 15, *c.* 14). Listen to S. Jerome briefly enumerating the Jewish sects, "I say nothing about the Jewish heretics, who, before the coming of Christ, made light of the law delivered to them. There was Dositheus, prince of the Samaritans, who rejected the prophets. There were the Sadducees, sprung from his root, who went on to deny the resurrection of the flesh. There were the Pharisees, divided from the rest of the Jews on account of certain superfluous observances. There were the Herodians, who took Herod for their king instead of Christ." Theophylact, Euthymius, and Philastrius say the same, with the exception, that for Herod of Ascalon, they substituted his son, Herod Antipas, who

put John the Baptist to death. But they are mistaken in their assertion that Herod Antipas was ever regarded by the Jews as Messiah.

The Pharisees, therefore, who took the opposite side, namely, that Herod was not the Messiah, and that tribute ought not to be paid to the Roman Cæsar, who put themselves forward as vindicators of the law of Moses and of Jewish liberty, suborned these Herodians to go together with their own disciples to Jesus, as to a prophet and teacher, and proposed this question to Him concerning giving tribute to Cæsar. This they did with the crafty design that if Christ should assert that tribute ought to be given to Cæsar, He would incur the hostility of the Jewish populace; if, on the other hand, He should say that it was not to be paid, He might fall under the anger of Cæsar and the Romans, who would condemn Him to death as being guilty of sedition.

Master; Heb. *Rabbi.* *Rabbi* means not only a doctor of the law, such as are the *Rabbins*, but a *potentate* and a *prince*, endowed with authority.

We know . . . the way of God, i.e., *the law of God.* For the *law* is the *way* by which we go to God, and to His grace and glory. For the law teaches what is pleasing to God, what He wills us to do, that we may be justified and blessed by Him.

And carest not, &c. Thou fearest neither the anger of Herod nor the power of Cæsar, so as to be afraid to give a true answer, and deliver your opinion in behalf of your countrymen, even though you should expose yourself to the hostility of Herod and Cæsar; even as John the Baptist, when he rebuked Herod's adultery, did not shrink from incurring his anger. For they trusted that Christ would pronounce in favour of the Jews, as being faithful against Cæsar, an unbeliever. So S. Chrysostom, "By means of flattery they hope to urge Him on to boldness, that He might say something against the existing institutions, and the existing state of things;" "that He might come into collision with Cæsar on a charge of rebellion."

For Thou regardest not the person; Syr. *the face*, &c. To look whether it be the face of a rich man and a prince, or a poor man

and a plebeian, so that Thou shouldest flatter and defend a prince, and condemn a poor man. Rather wilt Thou, as it were, shut Thine eyes, and give sentence in favour of truth and justice, and say, Cæsar is My friend, but truth is a greater friend." The Gr. πρόσωπον signifies both *person* and *face*.

Tell us therefore . . . tribute; Syr. *capitation-tax*, because each head or each person was assessed. The Jews, as God's faithful people, held aloof from the Gentiles, as idolaters. And many of them thought that it was not lawful for them to acknowledge Cæsar as their lord, and pay him tribute; because God alone was their Master, to whom they paid tithes and tribute. By Cæsar, Tiberius Cæsar, the successor of Augustus, is meant.

The occasion of this question being propounded to Christ, was as follows. About this time one Judas, of Galilee, had taught that it was not lawful for the Jews to be in subjection to the Romans, and pay them taxes. Now Christ and the Apostles were regarded as Galilæans; and the Jews professed to look upon them as upholders of this teaching of Judas the Galilæan, as being their countryman. And for this reason they frequently repudiated this error of theirs. Hear S. Jerome (*in cap.* 3, *ad Tit. ver.* 1), "I think," says he, "this precept was given by the Apostle, because at that time the teaching of Judas the Galilæan was still in vogue, and had many followers. Among their other tenets, they held it probable that, according to the law, no one ought to be called lord, except God only; and that those who paid tithes to the Temple ought not to render tribute to Cæsar. This sect increased to so great an extent as to influence a great part of the Pharisees as well as the rest of the people, so that they referred this question about the lawfulness of paying tribute to Cæsar to our Lord, who answered prudently and cautiously, *Render*, &c. S. Paul's teaching is in agreement with this answer, in that he bids believers be in subjection to princes and powers."

When Jesus knew, &c. It is as though He said, "You pretend to be friends, and to desire to maintain a good conscience, that you may know what you ought to do in this case truly and justly, according to the law of God, when all the while you are My enemies,

and are thirsting for My blood." "The prime virtue," says S. Jerome, "in one who gives an answer is to know the mind of him who asks the question."

Ver. 19. *Show Me the coin of the census.* That is, Show me the coin which Cæsar exacts as a tax from each person. The Arabic has, *Show Me the figure of the denarius. And they brought unto Him a denarius.* You will say that, according to chap. xvii. 17, it appears that the Jews paid a capitation-tax of a *didrachma*, or *a half-shekel.* But the Roman *denarius* was only worth about half a *didrachma*, or ninepence. My answer is, that the *didrachma* was, for the sake of convenience, divided into two *denarii*, and that each individual paid two *denarii*, or one *didrachma.* So Jansen and Maldonatus. Lastly, it would appear that Tiberius and the other emperors ordered a *denarius* of this value to be struck off, which coin they required to be paid by the Jews in the way of tribute. As Baronius shows from Lampridius, the Romans were in the habit of striking off coins of such weight and value as they required to be paid in the way of tribute, and of greater or less value, according to the necessity of times and requirements.

And Jesus saith . . . superscription; Gr. ἐπιγραφή; for which the Vulg. in Mark has *inscription.* For coins are wont to be stamped with the *name* and *image* of the prince who coins them. Hence the Arab. has, *Whose figure and inscription is this?*

They say unto Him, Cæsar's, i.e., Tiberius Cæsar's, who then reigned. Christ already knew this, but He put the question that He might draw from their own mouth a reply which He could turn against them and convict them. The cognomen Cæsar was first given to Julius Cæsar, from whom it passed to the succeeding emperors. Servius and Spartianus, and from them Charles Sigonius (*lib. de Nomin. Rom.*), say that Cæsar was called originally from the slaughter of an elephant. For Cæsar signifies elephant in the Punic tongue. I have seen on some silver coins, on one side an elephant, with the inscription Cæsar; on the reverse, instruments by means of which the Romans were wont to slay elephants.

Then saith He, &c. As though He said, "Since ye, O ye Jews,

are now subject to Cæsar, and use his coins, do ye not so much *give* as *render* or *restore* (*reddite*) to him the *denarius* which is due to him as tribute. But spiritual things, that is to say, worship and piety, *give ye* (*date*) to God. For this God exacts as what is rightly His due. So shall it come to pass that ye will offend neither against God nor Cæsar."

Observe: that Christ is here unwilling to enter into the question whether the Jews were justly or unjustly subjects and tributaries of the Romans. For this was a doubtful question. For *prima facie*, the negative, that they were not justly subject, would seem the more correct. For Pompey, who first reduced the Jews under the Roman yoke, was only called in by Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, the grandsons of Simon the high priest, to decide between them which of the two was to succeed to the Jewish sovereignty and high-priesthood. By what right then did Pompey pass them over, and transfer the sovereign power over Judea to the Romans? For this is Turkish justice. For when the Turk is called in to aid them by Christian princes quarrelling between themselves, he seizes upon and enslaves both. And yet, if we examine what happened more carefully, we shall perceive that the contrary proposition is the more probable, namely, that Pompey seized upon Judea by the right of a just war. For when Pompey had justly decided in favour of Hyrcanus, as being the elder, his younger brother, Aristobulus, atacked Jerusalem, and filled it with his soldiers, who fought against both Pompey and Hyrcanus. Then Pompey took Jerusalem by storm, and made it subject, with the consent of Hyrcanus, to the Roman yoke. Hyrcanus being unable to keep it by himself, delivered it to Pompey, with the consent of the elders and nobles of the Jews, who preferred to be subject to the Romans rather than to Hyrcanus and Aristobulus. For they saw that without the Romans, the Jewish state would be annihilated by schisms and seditions. See the relation in Josephus (*lib.* 24, *c.* 5, &c.).

Lastly, prescription was on the side of the Romans, for they had been in peaceful possession of Judea for about a hundred years, with at least the tacit assent of the Jewish people. And without

doubt the position of the possessor is the stronger. Wherefore, if the Pharisees wished to deprive the Romans of this possession, the *onus probandi* lay upon them of showing that they had acquired it unjustly. Since they were not able to do this, the Romans rightly retained possession. For when the accuser does not prove his charge, the accused is absolved. In this case the accusers were the Pharisees, the accused the Romans, whom the accusers wished to deprive of their possession. Christ therefore, in this place, does not choose to enter into the question whether the Roman dominion over Judea, and their imposition of tribute, was just or unjust: but He takes for granted that, as a matter of fact, that which was strengthened and confirmed by the various titles specified above was just. For the Pharisees, in propounding this question about the payment of tribute to the Romans, did not put forward the plea of *justice*, but of *religion* and *piety;* that is to say, that it was neither lawful nor becoming that they, who were the alone people of God, should pay tribute to Cæsar, a Gentile and a heathen. They do not ask, "Are we *bound* to pay tribute to Cæsar?" but, "Is it *lawful* to pay tribute to Cæsar?" And they imply that to do so was contempt of God, a disgrace to the Jews, and an injury to their religion. Christ answers, on the contrary, that it was not an injury to God and the faith, nor an indignity to a faithful nation, if the people of God were subject to Cæsar, a Gentile; and that the Jews themselves might both profitably and honourably obey both God and a Gentile prince, if they would but render to both their due; and if they would do this with prudence, so as to arouse against them neither God nor Cæsar, and so destroy their whole nation, as they did not long afterwards. For it is better to pay money than to lose life and everything.

Render therefore, &c. That is, give to Cæsar the *didrachma*, which he rightly exacts from you to sustain the burdens of the state, and especially to maintain soldiers to defend you against the attacks of enemies. But give God also the *didrachma—tithes, oblations, victims*, as S. Jerome says, such as are prescribed in Leviticus, which He, by the right of supreme dominion, demands of you as His creatures,

and as faithful to Him. "Because," says Origen, "a man renders to Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar, it is not a hindrance to him in rendering to God what belongs to God." The rights which belong to Cæsar are different from those which belong to God. Political obligations are not adverse to religion; neither is religion adverse to political duties. "Wherefore, since Tiberius Cæsar reigns over you, and you are his subjects, which clearly is the case, because he has the right of coining money, I mean the *denarius* of such a weight and value as seems good to him; and inasmuch as you yourselves, by receiving the coin of the census from Tiberius, as your prince, acknowledge that you are his subjects, and bound to pay his taxes, —therefore by this very fact you are under obligation to pay." "What Christ spoke with His mouth," says S. Bernard (*Epist.* 42), "He was careful to fulfil in act. This Creator of Cæsar delayed not to pay tribute to Cæsar." Hear Tertullian (*lib. de idololat. c.* 15), "*Render to Cæsar the things of Cæsar, and to God the things of God, i.e.*, the image of Cæsar, which is in money, to Cæsar; and the image of God, which is in man, to God; so that thou mayest give money to Cæsar, to God thyself." And S. Chrysostom, "When thou hearest that the things of Cæsar must be rendered to Cæsar, doubt not that those things only are spoken of which do no harm to piety and religion to pay them. For the tribute, or toll, which is opposed to virtue or the faith, is the tribute and revenue of the devil." And S. Hilary says, "If we have nothing in our possession which belongs to Cæsar, then we are free from the obligation of giving him that which is his." Which is as though Christ said, "If ye wish to be exempt from tribute, renounce all things, as I and the apostles have done; for where there is nothing, there Cæsar hath no right."

Politically: Christ here tacitly admonishes Cæsars and sovereigns that, being contented with what belongs to them, they must not intermeddle with the affairs of God and the Church. Wisely and piously did Constantine the Great, as Eusebius testifies (*Vita Constant.* iv. 24), say to the prelates of the Church, "You are bishops within the Church; I have been appointed by God a bishop without

the Church." And Valentinian the Elder said, "It is not lawful for me, who am a layman, to interfere in such matters as this." When his son, Valentinian the Younger, was instigated by his mother, Justina, who was an Arian, to ask for a church from S. Ambrose (as he himself relates, *Epist.* 33, *ad Marcellinam*), he heard the following reply: "Do not burden yourself, O emperor, by thinking that you have any imperial rights over things divine. Do not lift up yourself; but if you desire a long reign, be subject to God; for it is written, 'Give the things of God to God, the things of Cæsar to Cæsar.' To the emperor pertain palaces, but churches to the priest. You have authority over fortifications, not sacred buildings." And Hosius of Cordova said to the Arian emperor Constantius, "Do not intermeddle with matters ecclesiastical, neither give us orders with respect to such things, but rather learn them from us. To thee God has entrusted the imperial power, to us the things of the Church." And Theodosius the Younger said (*Epist. ad Conc. Ephesin.*), "It is wickedness for one who has not been enrolled in the catalogue of the holy bishops to thrust himself into ecclesiastical affairs and deliberations."

Tropologically: S. Hilary says, "We are bound to render unto God the things of God, our body, soul, and will; for the coin of Cæsar is in gold, in which his image is engraven; but God's coin is man, in whom is the image of God. Give your money then to Cæsar, but keep for God the consciousness of your innocence." And S. Augustine says, "To God must be given Christian love, to kings human fear." And S. Bernard, or whoever was the author of the book on the Lord's Passion, says (*cap.* 3), "Render unto Cæsar the penny which has Cæsar's image; render unto God the soul which He created after His own image and likeness, and ye shall be righteous."

Symbolically: the author of the sermon to the Brethren in the wilderness (*apud S. Augus. tom.* 10, *sum.* 7) says, "Then do we render to Cæsar the things of Cæsar, when we pay to the Saints the reverence (*dulia*) which is due to them; and we give the things of God to God, when we render unto Him that Divine worship (*latria*) which is due to Him alone."

Lastly: S. Augustine (*in Sententiis, Sent.* 15) rightly applies these words to vows, and those who make vows. "Whosoever thinks well of what he may vow to God, and what vowing pay, let him vow and render himself. This is required, and this is due. Let Cæsar's image be rendered to Cæsar, God's image to God. This is what the Psalmist commands when he says, 'Vow, and pay unto the Lord your God; all ye who are round about Him bring presents'" (*Ps.* lxxvi. 12).

Ver. 22. *And when they heard, they marvelled,* &c. They marvelled at the wisdom of Christ, who thus easily extricated Himself from the snare which to the Pharisees seemed so impossible of escape, and twisted it round their own necks, who had laid it, according to the words of the Psalm, "In their own net which they laid privily is their foot taken." And again it is said (*Prov.* xxi. 30), "There is neither wisdom, nor prudence, nor counsel against the Lord."

Ver. 23. *Then there came unto Him,* &c. The Sadducees had heard Christ teaching the Resurrection, and by means of it persuading men to repentance and a holy life. They oppose Him therefore with this question, which seemed to them unanswerable, in order that they might confute and overthrow Christ and His doctrine by the absurdities in which they thought to involve Him.

Ver. 24. *Saying, Master,* &c. *Seed,* i.e., *posterity, a son,* as the Syriac translates, who should be called after the name of the dead, that so the dead man might seem still to survive in him. This law is found in Deut. xxv. 5.

The Sadducees expected by this question to confound Christ. For if He should say the woman was the wife of one of the men, it would incite the other brothers to wrath, and envy, and perpetual strife, since there was no reason why she should be given to one more than another. For the first husband, who might seem to have had the best right to her, lost his right by death. If, on the other hand, Christ had said that she was the wife in common of all the seven, they would have accused Him as a teacher of shameful doctrine and public incest. It was as though they said, "Such

are the absurdities which follow from the doctrine of the Resurrection. Thou therefore, O Christ, ought not to assert it. And thus your silly followers imagine, in their stupidity, that you are wise." Then Christ, by a word, brushes aside their fallacy, as it were a spider's web, and shows them their ignorance, by adding what these men with their crass and carnal minds never took into consideration, namely, that in the world to come this widow would be no one's wife at all.

Know not the Scriptures, which clearly declare the Resurrection, as Job xix. 25; 2 Macc. vii. 9 et seq. and xii. 44; Isa. xxvi. 19 and lxvi. 14; Ezek. xxxvii. 1, 9; Dan. xii. 12, &c.

The power of God; Gr. δύναμις. He means, "Ye know not that God is omnipotent, and therefore can raise to life again the bodies which have been reduced to dust, even as He created them out of nothing at the beginning. For greater power is required to create a thing out of nothing than to raise it from the dead." Christ here touches upon the double root of the Sadducean error. The first was ignorance of the Scriptures, which clearly teach the Resurrection. The other was ignorance, or want of consideration, of the omnipotence of God. This caused them to interpret the Scriptures which treat of the Resurrection as referring to a mystical resurrection from vice to virtue.

In the Resurrection, i.e., in the world to come, in Heaven, and celestial bliss. *Nor are given in marriage;* for women who are good and modest do not choose husbands for themselves, but are given to husbands by their parents.

But they shall be as the angels, &c. The blessed in Heaven after the Resurrection shall be like the angels, not by nature, but, 1, by purity; 2, by spiritual life, for they live by spiritual not corporeal food; 3, by incorruption and immortality; 4, by happiness and glory, in which, like the angels, they will continue for all eternity. Wherefore there will be no need then of marriage and generation; for these things have been instituted for the perpetuation of the race and the individual, by means of children. Because the father is mortal, therefore he begets a son, that after death he may live

and continue in his son. But in Heaven there shall be no death, and they shall live for ever. Marriage, therefore, and procreation of children would be without an object there. Wherefore S. Luke adds (xx. 35), *Neither can they die any more.* Appositely says S. Augustine (*Quæst. Evang. in Luc.* xx. 35), "Marriage is for the sake of children, children for the sake of succession, succession on account of death. Where, therefore, death is not, marriage is not."

S. Luke adds, *And they are the sons of God, being the sons of the Resurrection.* Blessed are they that rise again; they shall be like God both in body and soul; for they shall be spiritual, glorious, immortal, and eternal as God is, forasmuch as they are born the sons of the Resurrection, and are born again to a blessed and endless life, wherefore they shall neither need nor delight in the procreation of children.

From this passage *Auctor Imperfecti* teaches that chastity is the most angelic of all the virtues. The angels know not by experience the meaning of lust. And S. Cyril of Jerusalem (*Cat.* 12) calls "virginity the conversation of angels and the purity of incorporeal nature." Wherefore S. Basil (*de Virginit.* 79) teaches that virginity is the seed of future incorruption; yea, that virgins anticipate here, and begin that future likeness with the angels in Heaven, and desire to be rewarded with its perfection there, by constant struggling with and victory over the flesh here. S. Basil adds that chastity makes us like not only to the angels, but to God Himself. "How great and glorious a thing," saith he, "is virginity, which makes a corruptible man most like unto God, that he should receive the similitude of God in himself, as in a most clear mirror, from God Himself, with His favours flowing unto him after the manner of a most sweet ray (of light)!"

Elegantly and piously saith S. Bernard, "What is more beautiful than chastity, which makes clean what hath been conceived unclean, which makes a servant of an enemy, and, in short, an angel of a man? For a chaste man differs from an angel only in felicity, not in virtue. Although the chastity of the one has more happiness, the chastity of the other is stronger. Chastity stands alone in

this—that in the place and time of mortality it represents the state of immortality. In the midst of marriage rites, it alone asserts the customs of that blessed country, in which they neither marry nor are given in marriage, affording here on earth some experience of that celestial converse."

Lastly, from this place S. Hilary, S. Athanasius (*Serm.* 3, *cont. Arian.*), S. Basil (*in Ps.* cxiv.), S. Jerome (*in Eph.* iv. 13), upon the words, "until we all come . . . to a perfect man," seem to assert that after the Resurrection, in Heaven, there will be no female sex, as there is none in the angels, so that all females will be changed into males, and rise again in the male sex. S. Augustine testifies that many held this opinion in his own day (*de Civit.* xxii. 19).

But S. Augustine himself teaches the contrary. So does S. Chrysostom in this passage and Tertullian (*lib. de Resurrect.*), also S. Jerome and the Scholastics, passim. The *a priori* reason is, that the female sex is not a defect (*vitium*), but a natural condition. It existed in a state of innocence in Paradise. For Eve was created by God to be "the mother of all living," as Adam was created a man. Now, in the Resurrection the same nature shall rise again altogether in every one whatsoever; and with this the difference of sex has much to do. Sex, therefore, shall then remain, lest different individuals, different men from what they were in this life, should seem to rise again. The same thing is clear from the words of Christ. *They neither marry nor are given in marriage. They neither marry*, spoken of males, *nor are given in marriage*, of females. Christ, therefore, so far from denying, presupposes that there will then be females; but in such manner that sex will not be used for the purposes of marriage and generation. And this is what is to be understood as the meaning of the Fathers above cited, who seem at first to hold a different opinion.

Vers. 31, 32. *But concerning the resurrection of the dead*, &c. Christ, not satisfied with having refuted the Sadducean objection to the Resurrection, proceeds to prove it to them by the words of God to Moses, *I am the God of Abraham*, &c. Although Christ might have cited clearer proofs of the Resurrection from Job,

Isaiah, &c., He preferred this from the Pentateuch, because it only did the Sadducees receive. They rejected the Prophets. So Origen, Bede, and others. Josephus says of the Sadducees, "They are of opinion that nothing besides the Law is to be observed." Although in that passage Josephus may be more properly taken as speaking of the Law as opposed, not to the Prophets, but to traditions (*Ant.* 18. 2), and to include the Prophets under the Law. For otherwise they would have been manifest heretics, and would have been disavowed as such by all the rest of the Jews. Wherefore a better reason for this quotation would seem to be, that the authority of Moses was of greater weight with the Jews than that of the Prophets. The highest veneration was given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as their great forefathers, whom also they regarded not as dead, but as living with God, and taking care of the Hebrews, their posterity. Whence no one would dare openly to assert that they had ceased to exist.

I am the God of Abraham. First, as though it were said, "I am God, who boast of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as of My faithful prophets and friends; and who entered into covenant with them, to give the land of Canaan to them, that is, to their descendants. And this, dwelling with Me in the *Limbus* of the Fathers, they continually ask of Me. And I should not glory in them unless they were alive, forasmuch as I am especially the living God, and the Giver of life. They therefore themselves live as to the soul, and in consequence shall live in the Resurrection as to the body also; and that too in a very short time, even as it were in a few days, when I shall rise from death. Then shall I raise them also from the dead, and shall carry them with Me in triumph to Heaven." See S. Matt. xxvii. 52.

Here observe that the Sadducees and Epicurean philosophers denied the Resurrection, because they denied the immortality of the soul. The two things are closely connected. For if the soul is immortal, since it naturally has an interpendence with that (*propendeat*) of which it is the form, it verily behoves that the body should rise again. Otherwise the soul would continue always in an

unnatural condition, and would only possess, as it were, a semi-existence.

2d. S. Chrysostom, Irenæus (*l.* 4, *c.* 11) say that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob do not signify the souls only of those Patriarchs, but the entire men. They therefore, though they be dead to men, are living unto God. They are, as it were, asleep; and God shall shortly awake them out of sleep, to a blessed and eternal life. Thus Luke adds, by way of explanation, *For all live unto Him.*

But when the Pharisees had heard, &c. They wished to humble Him, as imagining Him to be puffed up with His victory over the Sadducees, and to hurl back upon Himself the charge of ignorance of the Scriptures which He had brought against the Sadducees. But these foolish men only kicked against the pricks. For Christ is the eternal Truth and Wisdom, who reveals to all men the darkness of their ignorance.

And a certain lawyer asked Him, &c. This was one of the Pharisees, who put himself forward to propose a most difficult question to Jesus, in order to try whether or not He was skilful in the Law and in the Scriptures; not only in speculative matters, such as was the question of the Sadducees, but in practical matters likewise. The word *tempting* means the same as *trying, making proof.* For this man, although he pretended, in the presence of the Pharisees, that he wished to catch and entrap Jesus, yet in his heart desired to hear what Jesus would reply to this most difficult question, about which he himself hung in doubt. So, when he heard Jesus answer, that love of God and our neighbour is the greatest of the commandments, he immediately expressed his approval by saying, *Well, Master, Thou hast said the truth*, &c. *And Jesus said to him, Thou hast answered wisely: thou art not far from the kingdom of God.*

Master, which is the first commandment in the Law? Bede says (*in Mark c.* 12) that this was a much debated point of controversy among the Jews in the time of Christ. Many of them thought that the chief commandment of the Law was concerning sacrifices and victims to be offered to God according to the Levitical Law,

because by these God is properly worshipped as Lord above all. And this was why the Pharisees told children to say to their parents, *corban*. This, too, shows why the lawyer, when he heard Christ's answer, said accordingly, *To love* (God), *and one's neighbour as one's self, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices* (Mark xii. 33).

Ver. 37. *Jesus saith to him*, &c. Moses, in Deut. vi. 5, and from thence Mark and Luke add, *with all thy strength*. The Persian has, *with the utmost power of thy mind*. This answers to the Hebrew *meodecha* of Deuteronomy.

Observe, as against Calvin, that this precept is in every one's power as possible to keep. For the complete and highest love of God, in its utmost extent, is not that which is here spoken of, but that only which is to be understood comparatively. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and mind*, is the same thing as to say, Thou shalt love God with thy whole will, namely, 1st. *Comparatively*, that thou shalt give no portion of thy love to an idol, or to anything whatsoever that is contrary to God. 2d. *Finally*, that altogether thou shouldst wish God to be the final object of all thy thoughts, actions, and thy love; and that thou shouldst choose Him as thy chief Good and Last End, before all things whatsoever. 3d. *Appreciatively*, that thou shouldst esteem nothing as of so much worth as God, in such manner that thou shouldst apply thy whole heart, that is, thy will, to fulfil all His precepts, and to be obedient to Him in all things. What is here spoken of as *the whole heart*, is called in other passages *an entire and perfect heart*. Hence the expression so often repeated, *His heart was perfect with God*. (See 1 Kings xiv. 8, &c.) This is what S. Bernard says in his Treatise on the love of God "The measure of loving God is, to love without measure."

Ver. 38. *This is the greatest and first commandment*. For the greatest virtue, and the queen of all virtues, is charity Wherefore charity is more noble than religious worship (*religione*). For it is more noble to love God with all the heart than to offer Him sacrifices. You may add that charity, like a queen, commands

sacrifices and all other acts of religion. Lastly, love is the most noble affection and act (of the soul), and is more excellent than fear, honour, and all others.

The second is like, &c., *as thyself;* Syr. *as thy soul. Second*—not in order of legislation, but of dignity and perfection, although far below the first. For God is far more to be loved than all angels and men, and all creatures whatsoever. But after God, among creatures, our neighbour is to be loved above all things. *Like*, in love and affection, and in the duties and offices which spring from them.

Christ here omits love of ourselves. For this is innate with all, and a natural property, as it were; in such wise, that if thou hast charity towards others, thou shouldst exercise it first to thyself. "For he who is bad to himself, to whom will he be good?" Whence Christ here presupposes that love of oneself, yea, appoints it, as it were, the ideal and the measure of love to our neighbour, saying love *as thyself*. Wherefore S. Augustine says (*lib.* 1, *de Doct. Christ. c.* 27), "Love of thyself is not here omitted, for it is said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour *as thyself*."

In the first place, then, God is to be loved with the whole heart above everything. Secondly, one's own self. Thirdly, one's neighbour. In the expression, *as thyself*, the word *as* does not signify equality, but similarity of love. For we ought to love ourselves more than our neighbour; but yet the same things which we desire for ourselves we ought to desire for our neighbour. (See Lev. xix. 18, where I have expounded the law.) The Hebrew רֵעַ properly signifies *companion*. But the Vulgate translates *neighbour*, in order to give a great stimulus of love to every one; because every man, which is what is here meant, is very near, and most closely united to us, and, as it were, our brother. This is both by creation, for mankind have been created by the same God the Father; as also by re-creation, because we have been regenerated by the same Father, Christ, in baptism; and we are fed by His Body and Blood in the Eucharist.

He commands, therefore, that *God* shall be loved with the whole

heart; and *our neighbour*, not with the whole heart, but *as ourselves*. This does not mean—1st. That thou shouldst love thyself only, and neglect thy neighbour, which is what self-love, arising from a nature corrupted by sin, suggests; but that thou shouldst extend to thy neighbour the love wherewith thou lovest thyself. 2d. That as thou dost not love thyself frigidly, nor feignedly, but ardently and sincerely; so, in like manner, shouldst thou love thy neighbour. This is what Christ sanctioned when He said, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do likewise unto them." And what Tobias, when he was dying, commanded his son (*Tob.* iv. 16), "What thou hatest that another should do unto thee, take heed that thou do not to another." "For this is the law of love," says S. Augustine (*de Vera Religion. c.* 46), that the good things which a man wishes to come to himself, he should wish likewise for his neighbour. And the evils which he wishes not to happen to himself, he should be unwilling for them to happen to him." Dost thou wish that thy property, thy honour, thy wife, thy life should be taken from thyself? Do not take them from others. Dost thou wish that they should be given and preserved to thyself? Do thou likewise preserve them for others.

On these two, &c. All the precepts of the Law and the Prophets rest upon these two commandments of love. Indeed, they spring and grow out of them, just as many branches spring from one tree and one root. Wherefore in these two precepts all are contained, as in their principles and premisses. For all commandments are included in the Decalogue. And the Decalogue contains nothing else except precepts of love to God and our neighbour. The three commandments of the first Table deal with love to God. The seven commandments of the second Table deal with love to our neighbour, as S. Augustine says (*lib.* 8, *de Trin. c.* 7). Wherefore the Apostle says (*Rom.* xiii. 9), "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." For all the precepts of mercy, and

of all the other virtues, natural and supernatural, have to do with these two commandments of love to God and our neighbour, and are contained in them. The precepts of faith, hope, and charity, and of religious worship, are included in love to God. The precepts of justice, truth, fidelity, friendship, mercy, gratitude, are included in love to our neighbour. Christ, therefore, signifies that these two precepts ought to be always in every one's heart, and ought to direct their whole life.

Ver. 41. *When the Pharisees were gathered together*, &c. This was in the Temple, as appears from Mark xii. 35. Christ made use of this occasion of the Pharisees tempting Him to instruct them concerning the Person and dignity of Messiah, that He might teach how to return good for evil, and turn a temptation into an occasion of instruction. He taught them that Messiah, or the Christ, was not a mere man, as they supposed, but the God-Man. They must not wonder, therefore, that He asserted Himself to be the Son of God.

Ver. 42. *Whose Son is Christ? They say unto Him, David's.* They ought to have said, that Christ, as God, will be the Son of God; Christ, as man, will be the son of David. But as to the first, the Pharisees were either ignorant or unbelieving. Wherefore they only made the second reply. But even from it Christ draws and proves the former. When Peter was asked, whom he thought Christ to be, being inspired by God he answered, *Thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God.* But the Pharisees were devoid of the Divine inspiration, wherefore they savoured only of human things, and believed Christ to be only a man.

Observe: Luke and Mark relate these things somewhat differently; but the apparent discrepancy is to be reconciled by considering that the meaning of the two former Evangelists is, that Christ, in the first place, asked the Pharisees, "Whose son was Christ?" They replied that the Scribes, or Doctors of the Law, said, "that He was the son of David." Then Christ rejoined, "How say the Scribes that Christ is the son of David, when David calls Him his Lord?"

David in Spirit, being inspired by the Holy Ghost. For the Holy Ghost dictated the Psalms to David, endued him with their living sense. Therefore it was not so much *David in Spirit*, as *the Spirit in David*, which thus spake.

Calleth Him lord, for the son is less than his father. Wherefore the father is not wont to call the son *his lord*, but the son his father, as is common with the Italians and other nations. From this passage the modern Rabbins are confuted, who expound this 110th Psalm not of Messiah, or Christ, but of Abraham, or David, or Hezekiah. For the Scribes and Pharisees of Christ's time understood it of Christ, and regarded it as a prophecy of Him. For had they not done so, they would have replied that Christ wrongly applied the Psalm to Messiah, when it ought to be understood of Abraham or David, &c. That it does apply to Christ is evident from the 4th verse of the same Psalm, *With Thee is the beginning* (*secum principium*, Vulg.), *the headship*, which is the force of the Heb. נְדָבוֹת, *nedabot*, and the Gr. ἀρχή, *in the day of thy strength, in the splendours of the saints: from the womb, before the day-star, I have begotten Thee* (Vulg.). This can refer to no one save Christ. Lastly, Jonathan, the Chaldee, Rabbi Barachias, R. Levi, and the ancient Rabbins take it as referring only to Christ.

Ver. 44. *Saying*, *The Lord said*, &c. From this verse Christ clearly proves that the Messiah was not a mere man, as the Pharisees believed, but that He was David's God, and therefore his Lord. The meaning therefore is as if David said, "The Lord God hath said to my Lord, even Christ, Sit on My right hand, in that after the Death and Resurrection of Christ He will raise Him up, and exalt Him above all powers and principalities, and will set Him next to Himself in Heaven, that He may reign with the most perfect happiness, glory, and authority over all created things."

The Heb. for *said* is נְאֻם, *neum*, i.e., *pronounced*, *spoken prophetically*, *decreed* by the Lord concerning David's Lord, and therefore something fixed, certain, immutable. For *neum* is, by metathesis, the same as *Amen*, or *sure* and *faithful*. And the meaning is, that "God the Father from eternity hath firmly and inviolably decreed

concerning Christ His Son, not as He is God, but in that H became Incarnate and was made man (for this is the force of th Heb. אֲדֹנִי, *Adoni*), that He is, by virtue both of the Hypostati Union and of the Redemption which He accomplished on th Cross, of all men, and therefore of David, the Lord." *He hath sai* interiorly in His own mind, from all eternity. But *He said* also, i the sense that *He will say* at the time of the Ascension of Chri in triumph into Heaven, "*Come and sit on My right hand;* reig and triumph in the glory of My majesty." So S. Jerome, Theodore and others. For this 110th Psalm celebrates the most "gloriou Kingdom of Christ both in Heaven and earth—that kingdom i which Christ, after His Ascension, began from Zion and Jerusale to reign over all nations, and by His Apostles to bring them to H faith and worship, until He shall put down all His enemies, that i all the wicked, under His feet in the day of judgment."

Thy footstool. This means, reign with Me in glory, until I mak all Thine enemies subject unto Thee. Thus it is said that Sapo king of Persia, made use of the Emperor Aurelian, whom he ha taken captive in battle, to mount upon his horse, placing his foo upon the back of the emperor, as upon a kind of footstool.

The expression *until* here does not signify end or conclusion but continuation and amplification of sitting and reigning. Reig even in the time which seems contrary and opposed to Thy Kin dom, even when Thine enemies shall seem to reign rather tha Thee. Reign even in the midst of crosses, persecutions, and th tumults of Satan and his ministers.

And no one was able to answer Him a word; Syr. *to give Hi a reason;* because, as I have said, they believed Messiah to b a mere man. "They were silent," says S. Chrysostom, "bein smitten with a mortal blow." "They preferred," says S. Augus tine, "to be broken to pieces in their swelling taciturnity, rathe than to be instructed by lowly confession."

CHAPTER XXIII.

1 *The Scribes and Pharisees' good doctrine, but evil examples of life.* 34 *The destruction of Jerusalem foretold.*

THEN spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,

2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

3 All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

4 For they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers.

5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren.

9 And call no *man* your Father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

10 Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, *even* Christ.

11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

16 Woe unto you, *ye* blind guides! which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor.

17 *Ye* fools and blind! for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

19 *Ye* fools and blind! for whether *is* greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

20 Whoso, therefore, shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.

22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

24 *Ye* blind guides! which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

26 *Thou* blind Pharisee! cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness.

28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

32. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

33 *Ye* serpents, *ye* generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and *some* of them ye shall kill and crucify; and *some* of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute *them* from city to city:

35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!

38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

Then Jesus spake, &c. *Then*, that is to say, when, by His most wise answers and reasonings, He had confounded the errors of the Scribes and Pharisees, and had proved that He was the Messiah, —then, I say, He put to rebuke their persistent effrontery by this powerful and pathetic speech, by which He uncovered their feigned appearance of sanctity, and showed their lurking dishonesty, so that the people might avoid it.

Saying, &c. By *seat* we here understand the *honour*, *dignity*, and *authority* of teaching and commanding, which Moses had with the Jews, and to which the Scribes had succeeded. We gather from S. Luke iv. 16, that the Scribes not only sat, but sometimes stood when they taught. In like manner, the *chair* of S. Peter is used to signify the *power* and *authority* of teaching and ruling all the faithful throughout the world, in which the Roman Pontiffs succeed S. Peter. For otherwise no Pontiff ever sits now in that actual wooden chair in which S. Peter sat, but it is religiously preserved in his basilica, and is shown to the people every year on the Feast of S. Peter's Chair, to be venerated. Hence S. Jerome said to Damasus, "I am united in communion to your blessedness, that is, to the chair of Peter." For although as a private man the Pontiff may err, yet when he defines anything *ex cathedra*, that is, by his Pontifical authority concerning the faith, he cannot err, because he is assisted by the Holy Ghost.

Observe, many of the Scribes and Pharisees were priests or Levites, whose duty it was to teach the people (Mal. ii. 7). But Christ did not wish to name the Priests, because He would not derogate from the sacerdotal honour.

All things therefore whatsoever, &c. He means, of course, all things not contrary to Moses and the Law. For the doctrine of the Scribes, when they taught men to say *corban* to their parents, was contrary to the Law, as Christ showed (xv. 4). In like manner, it was contrary to the Law of Moses to teach, as the Scribes did, that Jesus was not the Messiah, or the Christ. For Jesus showed those very signs and miracles which Moses and the Prophets had foretold Messiah would perform. In such things, therefore, the people

must not follow the doctrine of the Scribes, nor be obedient to them; but in other things, in which their teaching was generally conformable to the Law of Moses, it was their duty to obey them. Christ therefore here teaches that all the other dogmas of the Scribes, which were not repugnant to the law, even though they were vain and foolish, and therefore not binding (for that a law should be obligatory, it must command something honest and useful, as Civilians and Theologians teach in their treatises upon laws, also D. Thomas, 1. 2, *quæst.* 95, *art.* 3), such as were the frequent washings of the hands and other parts of the body, might yet serve for the merit of blind and simple obedience, and for reverence of the sacerdotal order. So Jansen, Franc. Lucas, and others. But Maldonatus restricts the word *all* to such commands alone as are contained in the Law of Moses. Certainly these were what Christ chiefly referred to.

For they say, i.e., *command, and do not.* They teach and order well, but they live ill. They both break the law, and scandalise their subjects by their evil example, and thus incite them likewise to break the law. For as one hath said, "The whole world comports itself according to the king's example," we may add, of the Teacher's likewise. For men give more credit to deeds than they do to words. Christians ought to bear in mind these words of Christ when they see certain Bishops, Pastors, and Magistrates not living in accordance with the law of Christ.

For they bind . . . upon men's shoulders; Arab. *upon their necks;* Gr. δεσμεύουσι, i.e., *they bind and, as it were, gather them together in heaps.* This signifies both the multitude and the heavy weight of the precepts with which they burden the people.

Unbearable; Vulg. Gr. δυσβάστακτα, as English version, *difficult to be borne*, rather than *impossible.* Such were the numerous precepts, beyond what the Law required, concerning oblations, tithes, first-fruits, &c. Consider only the vigorous observance of the Sabbath, which they enjoined, so that they would not allow Christ to heal the sick on that day, nor suffer His disciples to satisfy their hunger by plucking ears of corn.

Move them; Vulg. Syr. and English Version, *touch them.* As S. Chrysostom says, "He shows that theirs was a double wickedness, both because they wish the multitude to live in the strictest possible manner, without the least indulgence, and because, indulging themselves inordinately, they assume great licence. Which things are the very opposite of what is required in a good prince. For such a one permits himself no indulgence, but is mild towards his subjects, and ready to bestow pardon."

All things that they may be seen; Gr. θεαθῆναι, i.e., *be a spectacle.* He notes their vain ostentation of sanctity in praying in the public streets, &c. Christ here touches upon the root of the incredulity of the Scribes, that they would not believe in Him, because they sought after vainglory and the applause of men. "For it is impossible," says S. Chrysostom, "that he who covets the earthly glory of men should believe in Christ preaching heavenly things."

They make large their fringes; Vulg. *They prolong the fringes of their cloaks;* Syr. They, the Jews, interpreted too literally the words of Deut. vi. 8, "Thou shalt bind them, *i.e.*, the precepts of God, for a sign upon thine hands, and they shall be moved (Vulg.) before thine eyes." They bore certain pieces of parchment about their arms and foreheads. Whence they were called armlets and frontlets. They did this that they might strike against their eyes and foreheads, and admonish them to meditate upon and keep the Divine Law. The words inscribed upon the pieces of parchment were, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength." They were called phylacteries, from φυλάττω, *to guard, to keep*, because they put them in constant remembrance of observing the law.

For a similar reason, in Num. xv. 38 and Deut. xxii. 12, the Lord commanded the Jews to wear fringes, threads depending from the lowest skirt of their garments, and that they should be of a light blue or dark blue colour, as men who professed and lived the heavenly life by keeping the law. S. Jerome adds that the more devout Jews were wont to insert very sharp thorns in these fringes,

that being pricked by them as they walked, they might be always reminded of the Divine Law. All these things the Pharisees wore larger and broader than other people, that they might appear to all to be stricter observers of the law, although they made but little of it in their minds. "Not understanding," says S. Jerome, "that these things should be carried in the heart, not in the body, for bookcases and chests have books, but have not therefore the knowledge of God." Moreover, S. Chrysostom, by *phylacteries*, understands amulets worn to preserve health, for such the Scribes esteemed the pieces of parchment described above. In the same way, some Christians wear the Gospel of S. John about their necks as a kind of charm to preserve health.

And salutations in the market-places; Vulg. *in the forum.* S. Chrysostom says, "They love the first salutations, not only as regards time, that we should salute them first, but also as regards the voice, that we should cry out, 'Hail, Rabbi;' and as regards the body, that we should bow the head to them; and as regards place, that we should salute them in public." Wisely saith R. Matthies in *Pirke Avoth*, "Always be the first to salute every one. Be the tail of lions, and not the head of foxes; that is, be the lowest among good and honourable men, not the chief among deceitful, proud, and impious ones."

Rabbi, from רב, *i.e.*, *much or great*, because a great man, such as a Rabbi, or Doctor of the Law, was equivalent to many persons, as excelling others in learning and authority. Well saith R. Benzoma in *Pirke Avoth*, "Who is a wise man? He who willingly learns of all, according to the words, 'I had more understanding than the aged, because I sought Thy commandments.' Who is the mighty man? He who rules over anger, and his own spirit, according to the saying, 'Better is the patient man than the strong, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city' (Prov. xvi. 32). Who is the rich? He that is contented with his own, as it is said (Ps. cxxviii.), 'Thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands; O well is thee, and happy shalt thou be.' Who is honoured? He that honoureth others, as it is written, 'Him that honoureth Me I

will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.'"

But be not ye called Rabbi, &c. He forbids the ambition of the Scribes and Pharisees, who desired to be honoured and called Rabbi above Christ, yea, even to the exclusion of Christ. But it is lawful to desire a doctor's degree, as a testimony of learning, that by it we may obtain authority, and preach, and have influence with the people, and by this means gain the greater fruit. Wherefore the Council of Trent (*sess.* 24, *c.* 12) orders that all dignities, and at least the half of canonries in cathedral and collegiate churches, should be conferred only upon masters and doctors, or at least licentiates in theology or canon law. Christ does not say, *do not be*, but do not *be called*, Rabbi.

Christ does not forbid the doctor's degree, but the proud ambition of the name, that by it a man should please himself and despise others, as though he had his knowledge and learning from himself, and not from Christ, which was what the Scribes did. Therefore He adds the reason, *for one is your Master, even Christ.* He means, there is one chief Rabbi over all, of whom all others are the disciples, and all are brethren, equal one to another. Therefore let none of them proudly lift himself above the rest, and wish to be called Rabbi, as though he were of himself a doctor and master of others, for this is a wrong done to Christ, who alone has all wisdom in Himself, and is the only supreme Doctor of all, who indeed makes them doctors. And in this lower sense Paul himself, as S. Jerome says, with modesty calls himself the doctor of the Gentiles.

Call no one your father upon earth, &c. He means in the sense of the prime author of life and the preserver of all things, as though ye entirely depended upon any but God. This was what the Gentiles and Atheists did, and others who trusted in men rather than in God. That this is the meaning, is plain from the reason which He subjoins, *for one is your Father*, &c. "Of whom the whole family in Heaven and earth is named" (*Eph.* iii. 15). God therefore is the only real Father of all, forasmuch as He only gives

soul and life, creates, and preserves. In comparison of Him, says S. Jerome, earthly fathers are only so in a figurative sense, and ought not therefore insolently to command their children, but ought to submit themselves together with their children to God, the chief Father of all.

Neither be ye called, i.e., *be not ambitious of being called masters;* Vulg. *magistri;* Gr. καθηγηταί, *or governors, moderators;* Syr. *rulers; for One is the Ruler and Orderer*, Gr. καθηγητής, *of your life*, that is, Christ. He Himself, in the first place, by Himself teaches us, and leads us by the way of virtue to heavenly glory. All others teach as they have been first taught by Him. Secondly, all others only teach in words that sound in the outward ears, like a tinkling cymbal; but Christ makes known their meaning inwardly to the mind. For, as S. Chrysostom says, "it is not man who gives man understanding by teaching, but exercises by means of admonition what has been ordained by God." Thirdly, all others only show what the law commands and what God requires; but Christ gives grace to the will, that we, when we hear the things which ought to be done, may indeed constantly fulfil the same.

He that is the greater of you, &c. "He teaches," says S. Chrysostom, "that the disease of vainglory must be got rid of by humility." And Origen says, "If any one ministers the divine words, knowing that it is Christ who produces fruit by His means, he by no means holds himself forth as a master, but a minister." Whence it follows, *He that is the greatest*, &c., because even Christ Himself, who is the true Master, hath professed Himself to be a minister, in that He saith, I am among you as he that ministereth; and well does He add after the whole saying, *He that exalteth himself shall be abased; but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* These words are true as applied both to God and men, says Remigius. For both God and men exalt the humble and depress the proud. "Glory follows them that flee from it, and flees from those who pursue it. God will bring down insolent pride from its lofty height, and will raise up humility to glory," says S. Hilary.

Blessed Peter Damian gives a memorable example (*Epist.* 15).

There was, he says, a certain bold and warlike clergyman, who became great by means of his pride and his arms. And he had in consequence a quarrel about certain estates with another powerful man, which he determined to decide by the fortune of war, and the troops of both were drawn up in battle array. The clergyman before the battle went into a church and heard Mass. It chanced that the words of the Gospel were read, *He that exalteth himself shall be abased.* When he heard them he said insolently, or rather blasphemously, "These words are falsified in me, for if I had humbled myself I should never have become as great as I am." By and by, in the heat of battle, his horse being very thirsty, ran, contrary to his wish, to some water that was near. He struck his horse with his shield, in order to cause it to return into the battle, when, behold, an enemy's sword transfixed that blaspheming mouth of his like a thunderbolt, and slew him, humbling his pride and casting him down to the ground, showing that the words of Christ are indeed true.

Ver. 13. *Woe unto you, Scribes*, &c. Observe that, as Christ enumerated eight beatitudes, repeating the word *blessed* eight times in S. Matt. v., so does He here bestow eight maledictions upon the impious Scribes, eight several times repeating the word *woe.* Christ the new Lawgiver imitates Moses, the ancient lawgiver, who promises many blessings to those who keep the law, and threatens with as many curses those who break it. Thus Origen.

Moreover, the word *woe* is partly prophetic of the grave punishment which should fall upon the wickedness of the Scribes, and is partly condoling and pitying in its signification. Whence Basil says, "This word *woe*, which is prefixed to intolerable pain, applies to those who were soon afterwards to be destroyed by dreadful punishments." The word *woe* therefore presupposes a deadly fault, for it threatens the punishment of hell, as Christ explains in ver. 33.

For ye shut, &c. "I indeed open to all the kingdom of Heaven; for I preach, *repent ye, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* For this kingdom has been shut for four thousand years, through Adam's sin. I, expiating that sin by My death, will now open it,

that whoso believeth in Me and followeth My life, may enter into the open kingdom. Wherefore many of the Jews, being aroused by My preaching, are striving to enter in. But you, O ye Scribes, turn them away, and shut Heaven against them by your vain and perverse traditions, which ye instil into their minds." For, as S. Chrysostom says, "The kingdom of Heaven is Holy Scripture; the door is the understanding of Scripture, or Christ; the bearers of the keys are the Scribes and Priests; the key is the word of knowledge; the opening of the door is interpretation. Ye also cause men to offend by your wickedness and evil example; and because ye calumniate and persecute Me, and draw them away from believing in Me, which is the road to Heaven. For I am the door, because by Me alone there is entrance into Heaven."

Tropologically, they shut up the kingdom of Heaven who excommunicate any one without cause.

For ye enter not in yourselves, &c. This is a grievous sin. For if, says S. Chrysostom, it is the part of a doctor to recall the erring, he who draws those who are going on safely into error is altogether a son of perdition, yea, he is a pestilence itself. Wherefore such a doctor deserves, and brings upon himself as many hells as the number of souls whom he corrupts and destroys, because he is not a teacher and promoter of salvation, but a betrayer.

Ver. 14. *Woe unto you*, &c. Because ye *devour*, that is, *exhaust*, the substance of widows, in extracting money from them by selling them under a feigned appearance of sanctity your long public prayers. This is why He adds in explanation, *making long prayers.* Gr. προφάσει μακρᾷ προσευχόμενοι, *praying at length as a pretext.*

Wherefore ye shall receive greater damnation. The Syriac translates, *ye are about to receive the extremest judgment;* both because ye rob from widows, and because, as Chrysostom says, ye paint avarice the colour of religion, that iniquity may be loved, being esteemed as piety. Ye also imbue widows with your own errors and wickednesses. Wherefore ye ought to receive the punishment of your own sin and the guilt of their ignorance, as S. Hilary says.

Woe unto you . . . hypocrites, &c. Instead of *hypocrites*, the

Syriac has here and in the verses which follow, *acceptors of persons*. *Proselyte* means the same in Greek as *advena*, or *stranger*, in Latin. A proselyte was one who was converted from heathenism to Judaism, and became attached to the Jewish Church and religion. In Hebrew *proselytes* are called *gerim*. Christians call such persons *neophytes*. The Scribes strove to turn many Gentiles to Judaism, for the sake of ambition as well as avarice, that they might augment their oblations. *Sea and land*, that is, the whole world.

Ye make him the son, that is, *guilty*, *worthy of hell*, *twofold more than yourselves;* Gr. διπλότερον ὑμῶν. For, as Euthymius says, it is the same as in nature, that scholars easily surpass their teachers in vice. "Because," as Chrysostom says, "being provoked by the evil example of their teachers, they become worse than them, especially when they are stirred up by the words and examples of their teachers." Again, many proselytes, when they see your evil doings, return to heathenism. For he who relapses commits a greater and, as it were, *a double sin*.

Ver. 16. *Woe unto you*, &c. . . . *but if he shall swear by the gold of the temple*, &c., *the gold*, that is, which he has vowed to pay. Instead of *he is a debtor*, the Arabic translates *he has sinned*, that is, *he does not pay what he has sworn*.

Observe (from the words in Matt. v. 34), that the Scribes thought from what God had commanded, that they should swear by Him alone,—an oath by any creature was not an oath, nor obligatory; but being blinded by avarice, they excepted such things as, being offered to God, filled their own coffers, as if these alone were to be accounted most sacred. Wherefore they are rightly called by Christ *blind guides*. Moreover, the Scribes were wont to say that the oblations were more holy than the Temple itself, "that they might make men more ready for offerings than for prayers," says the Gloss. He calls *the gold* which was cast into the treasury of the Temple for maintaining its ministers *the gold of the Temple*. Truly says the Gloss, "He that swears by a creature, swears by the Deity which presides over the creature."

Ye fools and blind, &c. This reasoning of Christ is clear, and

convicts the Scribes of folly. Holiness is properly interior virtue, and the grace which sanctifies the soul. But the Temple is here called *holy* by metonymy, because it is set apart for holy things, such as the offering in it of prayers and sacrifices to God. This, therefore, was only an external holiness which the temple communicated to the other things offered in it to God. Wherefore the Temple was more holy than anything offered in the Temple, and therefore an oath made by the Temple was more binding than an oath made by the gold offered in the Temple.

And whoso shall swear by the altar, &c. The same reasoning applies to the *altar* which Christ has already applied to the *Temple*.

The altar which sanctifieth, Syr. *consecrates*, *the gift*. A *gift* offered to God is not properly *sanctified*, so that it should be in itself *righteous* or *holy*, but it is said to be *sanctified* extrinsically, because it is offered to God, and thus sanctified.

Mystically: S. Augustine says (1 *Quæst. Evang.* 34), "The Temple and the Altar is Christ. The gold and the gifts are the praises and sacrifices which are offered in Him and by Him." Origen says, the altar is the heart; the gifts are prayer and fasting, which the heart makes holy.

Whoso shall swear by the temple, &c. That is, he swears by God, who has His throne in the Temple, that He may be worshipped there. For the sacred majesty and holiness of God are supposed by men to abide in the Temple. Whence, S. Nilus says, "Come to the church as to Heaven."

And he that sweareth by heaven, &c. For by the common usage and belief of men, he who swears by God, who only is infallible, and the uncreated Truth itself, calls Him to attest what he says or promises. Wherefore, he who swears by Heaven, swears by God, the King and Lord of Heaven, and calls Him to witness.

Ver. 23. *Woe unto you*, &c. Tithes were sanctioned by God in the law. Whence R. Achiva says in *Pirke Avoth*, "Tithes are the bulwark of riches," because they defend and preserve them. "Tradition is the bulwark of the law. A vow is the bulwark of abstinence; silence, of wisdom."

Mint, a herb of sweet smell, which is often put into broth. *Anise*, says Pliny, is of efficacy against flatulency and pains in the stomach.

And ye have left, &c. . . . *judgment*, *i.e.*, justice and equity, passing unjust sentences, so as to favour your own friends and those who offer you gifts. *Mercy*, because ye rigidly and cruelly exact tithes of widows and the poor. *And faith*, *i.e.*, fidelity in words and compacts. Or *faith* in God, and Christ who has been sent by Him. Therefore, ye are unbelievers, in that ye lack faith, hope, and charity, which are the things that God above all requires, according to the words in Micah vi. 8, "I will show thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

These are the things which ye ought to have done, and not to omit the others, such as *the tithing of mint*, which was either commanded or permitted by the law.

Ye blind guides which strain out, &c.; Gr. διϋλίζοντες, i.e., *straining*, *purifying*, *draining* wine, milk, or oil from gnats or other impurities or dregs, by means of a strainer of linen, or other such material. As Apuleius says of the Gymnosophists, "They know not how either to cultivate land or to strain gold." *Swallow a camel.* For *camel*, Cajetan puts wrongly *asilum*, *a gadfly*, an insect which makes a horrid noise. All the codices, Greek, Latin, Syriac, and Arabic have *camel*, which is properly opposed to *gnat*, as something very large to something very small. The sentence is proverbial, and means, "Ye have exact care of trifling things, such as tithing of herbs, lest any one should defraud you in the smallest possible degree; but you at the same time commit, without any scruple, all manner of injustice, rapine, and other wickednesses, as big, as it were, as camels, which ye may be said to swallow down." As it is said in Job xv. 16, "Who drinketh iniquity like water." "Christ derides the zeal of the Scribes," says Origen, "in being so scrupulous about very trifling things, and so free and bold in the commission of

great crimes; in being superstitious about ceremonial washings, but devoid of true religion and charity." They have those who are like them among Christians even now, who scrupulously recite the rosary, and fast in honour of the Blessed Virgin, and withal are guilty at the same time of luxury, rapine, theft, &c.

Proverbs with a similar meaning are: "To draw water from a fountain to fill the sea." "To strip one who is bare, to heap garments upon those who are clothed." "He takes a candle to add to the sunlight." "To hunt a dog with a lion, a hare with an ox."

Mystically: S. Gregory understands by *the gnat*, Barabbas; by *the camel*, Christ. This is what he says (*lib.* 1, *Moral. c.* 6), "The gnat wounds in humming, but the camel of its own accord bends to receive its burden. The Jews, therefore, *strained out the gnat*, because they asked that the seditious robber might be set free. But they *swallowed the camel*, because by their cries they strove to destroy Him, who of His own will had come down to bear the burdens of our mortality."

Ver. 25. *Woe unto you*, &c. This is another parable, in which Christ calls man *a cup* and *a plate*. The body and external goods He calls *the outside of the cup and the platter*. The soul and the conscience He calls *that which is within*. The meaning is, "You, O ye Pharisees, studiously wash and cleanse your hands, your bodies, the cups and plates and glasses out of which ye eat and drink, but ye fill your conscience with the uncleanness of rapine and every sort of wickedness. Whereas ye ought to take chief care that your conscience should be purified, for it is that alone which makes us clean in the sight of God, as it is also that from which flows all impurity of acts and deeds. It is the conscience which is the source of the goodness or wickedness of actions. Wherefore, if the conscience be clean, all other things will be clean also."

Briefly and simply we may explain thus: "Ye are zealous to cleanse the external cups and plates, out of which ye eat and

drink; ye neglect to cleanse by repentance the interior cups and dishes of the conscience, which are filthy with sin."

Full of uncleanness, Vulg. The translator had in his Greek text, ἀκαθαρσίας, where we now read ἀδικίας, or ἀκρασίας, i.e., *intemperance*. It means, "Ye think ye are defiled, if ye drink out of a dirty cup; but ye do not think ye are defiled by intemperance, when ye are drunken. But it is intemperance which defiles the soul, not a dirty cup."

Thou blind Pharisee, &c. "O thou who art a teacher of others, and art blind thyself, cleanse first thine own mind and inward conscience, then shall all outward things become clean unto thee."

Vers. 27, 28. *Woe unto you . . . full of iniquity;* Gr. ἀνομίᾳ, i.e., *perversion of the law*. "Ye simulate an outward zeal for the law, whilst inwardly ye despise and pervert it." Appositely says *Auctor Imperfecti*, "Tell me, O hypocrite, if it is good to be good, why do you not wish to be what you wish to appear? It is more base to be what it is base to appear: and what it is beautiful to appear, it is beautiful to be."

"Moreover, there are many in our days like the Pharisees," says S. Chrysostom, "who take the greatest care of cleanliness and outward adorning, but whose souls have no ornaments; yet who fill their souls with worms and gore and an inexpressible stench; who fill them, I say, with wicked and absurd lusts."

Ver. 29. *Woe unto you . . . because ye build;* Vulg. *who build, the tombs*, &c. For although this was in itself a holy and religious thing, yet in the Scribes it was vicious and wicked. S. Chrysostom gives three reasons—1st. He says Christ does not blame the work, but the intention. They did it for pomp. But as regards pomp, what does it profit them to be praised when they are not, and to be tormented when they are, in hell? 2d. Because, without reason, he honours the just, who despises justice; and the Saints cannot be the friends of those to whom God is an enemy. 3d. Because the martyrs take no pleasure in being honoured with money which has caused the poor to weep.

For the Scribes exacted money from the poor, that they might build with it magnificent monuments to the Prophets, or rather for their own glory. And a 4th, and principally, Christ here blames the Scribes for building monuments to the Prophets, because at the very time they did it, they were thinking how they might kill other and greater prophets, such as Christ Himself and His disciples. And this was why they seemed to imitate the murders and the sacrileges of their fathers, and to give an implied consent to them. As though He had said, "Ye bury the prophets who were slain by your fathers; and ye have a like desire to kill and bury Me. Rightly, therefore, do ye bury the Prophets whom your fathers slew; just as the sons of robbers bury those whom their fathers have murdered, that they may conceal the crime." So Origen, S. Jerome, and others.

By adding the word *hypocrites*, He intimates that they built the tombs of the Prophets, not from true, but merely pretended piety, that they might hide their own wickedness; and that they might appear religious defenders of the law, and that it was out of zeal for righteousness that they persecuted Christ unto the death, as though He were a breaker and an enemy of the law. And herein was a twofold wickedness. First, the compassing the death of Christ; secondly, hypocrisy, because of the pretence that they did it in order to vindicate the law. Somewhat similarly, when the Emperor Caracalla had slain his brother Geta upon his mother's bosom, being persuaded by his servants to enrol his brother among the gods, with the object of veiling the crime, cried, "Let him be a god if you please, so long as he is not alive." Thus the Scribes did not wish Christ and the Prophets to live, lest they should reprove their evil deeds. They preferred to kill them, and to cover the crime by building them magnificent sepulchres. Wherefore, *Auctor Imperfecti* says, "The Jews always held departed Saints in honour, and despised and persecuted living ones." There are persons who act in a like manner among Christians even now.

Ver. 30. *And say*, &c. They deceive themselves, and utter

falsehoods. For if they killed Christ, the Prince of the Prophets, because He reproved their wickedness, surely they would have killed the Prophets, who were wont to do the same.

Wherefore ye testify against yourselves, &c. That is, you testify that you are the sons of those who murdered the Prophets, and consequently that you have the same disposition and the same propensity to kill those who rebuke your vices, which they had. For children are like their parents. For a father is wont to transmit his inclinations, talents, and views to his children. Hence children "favour their parents." Also there is the example and training of parents, by means of which they influence their children to do the same things that they do themselves.

Ver. 32. *Fill ye up then;* Arab. *ye fill up*, &c. That is, by killing Me and the Apostles, as your fathers killed the Prophets. These words of Christ are not a command, but a prediction. It is as though He said, "I do not command, but I permit and foretell that you, O ye Scribes, by killing Me, will fill up the measure of your fathers, who slew the Prophets; and when this measure has been filled up, God will, at one and the same time, avenge both your own and your fathers' crimes, by the extreme destruction which He will bring upon Jerusalem by Titus and Vespasian."

From this and the 35th and 36th verses Theologians teach that God has decreed to kingdoms and states and individuals a certain measure of sins, before He fully and perfectly punishes them. But by and by, when they have been completed, then He punishes all at the same time most fully. Thus Christ looked for the killing of Himself and His Apostles before Jerusalem was overthrown. So, also, God said to Abraham (Gen. xv. 16), "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." *Auctor Imperfecti* says, God does not immediately punish a nation or a city when they sin, but waits for many generations, and sometimes threatens, and sometimes chastises in part, that the longer He waits the more just may be His judgment. But when God does determine to destroy that city or nation, He seems to avenge upon them the sins of all the preceding generations; as though that generation alone suffered

what all the previous ones deserved. Thus God commanded Saul to blot out the posterity of Amalek on account of the wickedness of their parents, and their perpetual hostility to Israel (1 Sam. xv. 16). The reason is, because children and descendants are counted as one with their parents; hence the merits or demerits of the parents are imputed to the children, when, indeed, children imitate the wickedness and manners of their parents. Then, indeed, when the measure of sins predetermined by God is filled up, they suffer for their own and their fathers' sins.

Observe, however, that children are not punished more grievously than their own sins deserve, but because they imitate their parents' sins, and fill up the measure of iniquity. Hence it comes to pass that the anger of God burns against them when it would not have so fiercely burned unless they had filled up that measure. And in this sense and for this reason children are said to have visited upon them the sins of their parents, because God, in punishing, looks to the offences of both, according to Deut. v. 9, "A jealous God, rendering the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me."

Ver. 33. *Ye serpents*, &c. . . . *the damnation of hell*, wherewith I will condemn you in the day of judgment as Christicides and Deicides. He calls the Scribes *serpents* and *vipers*, because of their serpentine disposition, and wish to slay Himself and His Apostles.

Ver. 34. *Therefore*, *behold*, *I send*, &c. Observe the word *therefore*, that it expresses from the preceding verse an effect, as it were, from a cause. It means, "because ye, as serpents and vipers, will kill Me, your Messiah, for which wickedness ye will be cut off and condemned to hell. I have had pity upon you, and will send to you My disciples after My death, that they may avert from you this destruction, that they may arouse you to repentance and faith in Me. But I foresee that ye will slay them also, as I have predicted in the 32d verse."

I send. Luke xi. 49 says, *The wisdom of God hath said*, that is, indeed, Christ Himself.

Prophets, and wise men, and Scribes. Luke has *Prophets and*

Apostles. S. Jerome says "This marks the various gifts of Christ's disciples: *Prophets*, who foretell things to come; *wise men*, who know when they ought to speak the word; *Scribes*, those learned in the law."

Some of them ye shall kill, as S. Stephen by stoning, James the greater by the sword; *and crucify*, as S. Simeon, Bishop of Jerusalem, successor of S. James (see Euseb. *H. E.* ii. 32); *and some of them ye shall scourge*, as Peter and the Apostles (Acts iv. and v.), *and persecute from city to city*, like Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiii. and xiv.).

Tropologically: Origen says (*hom.* 23, *in Num.*), "And I, this day, if I will not hear the words of a Prophet, if I despise his warnings, stone that Prophet, and as far as in me lies, kill him."

Ver. 35. *That upon you may come*, &c., *righteous blood.* That is, of the righteous men who have exhorted others to live justly and holily, both by word and example. Whence S. Luke has, *the blood of the Prophets*, for a *Prophet* in Scripture frequently denotes a just and holy man. S. Austin gives the reason for what Christ says in this verse, "Because the imitation of wicked men causes people to obtain not only their own deserts, but the deserts of those whom they imitate." Moreover S. Chrysostom says, "Even as the rewards which all the preceding generations deserved were bestowed upon those who received Christ, so what their wicked ancestors merited came upon the latest Jews."

Which was shed, &c. Because, although Cain, who slew his brother Abel, was not a Jew by race, yet by his wickedness in killing righteous Abel he afforded an example to the Jews, who were most prone to follow it, in killing the holy Prophets. Thus Cain the fratricide was not the natural, but the symbolical father of the Jews who slew their brethren, Christ and the Prophets. By a like analogy the devil is called the father of all the proud and the wicked.

The Jews, even though they knew the Divine vengeance which pursued Cain's fratricide, not only imitated it, but far transcended it by slaying Christ, the Son of God, and His Apostles. We may

add, that although Cain was not a direct forefather of the Jews, he was one of their collateral ancestors. He was the brother of Seth, from whom Abraham and the Jews were sprung. But the posterity of Seth married the daughters of Cain, as Abulensis saith (*Quæst.* 260) (see Gen. vi. 2). This is probable, but not certain. All that Scripture says is, that from them the giants were sprung, who were the cause of the Deluge, in which they perished. But it does not say that other children were not sprung from them.

There were persons who praised this fratricide of Cain, and for that reason were called Cainites, as S. Augustine says (*lib. de hæres. c.* 18), "The Cainites are so called because they honour Cain, saying that he was a man of the greatest virtue." They also think that the traitor Judas was something divine, and account his wickedness a benefit. They assert that he knew beforehand how great a benefit the Passion of Christ would be to the human race, and for that reason betrayed Him to the Jews to be put to death. They are also said to honour the Sodomites, and those who made a schism amongst the ancient people, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

Zacharias the son of Barachias. You will ask who was this Zacharias? There are three opinions. The first that of S. Chrysostom (*Hom. de Joan. Bapt.*), Vatablus, Arias Montanus, &c. They think that he was the Zachariah, the last but one of the twelve minor Prophets. For he was the son of Barachiah, but we nowhere read that he was slain between the Temple and the altar.

The second and more probable opinion is, that he was the Zachariah who was the son of Jehoiada, who, with base ingratitude, was slain in an awfully sacrilegious manner by King Joash in the most holy place,—that is to say, in the court of the Priests, which was between the Temple, or the holy place, and the altar of burnt-offering; for this altar was in the court of the Priests (2 *Chron.* xxiv. 21). So Abul. (*Quæst.* 215), S. Jerome, Bede, Tertullian (*Scorpiace, c.* 8), "Zachariah is slain between the Temple and the altar, marking the stones with indelible spots of blood." For although there were other Prophets slain by the Jews after Zachariah, he is the last whose murder is related in Scripture.

Add to this that Scripture makes mention only of the blood of Abel and this Zacharias as crying for vengeance. Of Abel's it is said (*Gen.* iv. 10), "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto Me from the ground." And of Zacharias (*2 Chron.* xxiv. 22), "Who, when he was dying, said, 'The Lord look upon it, and require it.'" Chrysostom says, "He makes mention of Abel to show that they would kill Christ and His Apostles out of envy, as from envy Cain slew Abel; of Zacharias, because the holy man was slain in the holy place."

You will say, this Zacharias was the son of Jehoiada, not of Barachias. S. Jerome answers that Jehoiada was also called Barachiah, perhaps because Barachiah in Hebrew signifies "the blessed of the Lord." And it is plain that Jehoiada, who was a very holy man, was such. S. Jerome adds, "In the Gospel which the Nazarenes make use of, we find, instead of *the son of Barachias, the son of Jehoiada.*"

The third opinion is, that this Zacharias was the father of John the Baptist, concerning whom there is a tradition that he was slain by the Jews because he proclaimed the advent of Christ, saying in his Canticle, "And thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways;" and because he had hidden his son John from Herod, the murderer of the innocents, who sought to kill him on account of the miracles which happened at his birth. For this Zacharias was the last of the Prophets. For John, his son, was rather an index to a present Christ than a Prophet of a future one. Again, that this Zacharias was the son of Barachias is attested by S. Hippolytus, the martyr, who is cited by Nicephorus (*H. E.* ii. 3). S. Jerome rejects this as apocryphal; but the same thing is asserted by S. Cyril, against the Anthropomorphites, Peter of Alexandria (*in regula Eccles. can.* 3), S. Epiphanius (*lib. de vit. et obit. Prophet.*), Baronius (*in apparat. Ann.*), S. Thomas (*in Catena*). Origen, Theophylact, Euthymius, and S. Basil (*Hom. de humana Christi generat.*) add that this Zacharias was slain by the Jews because, after the birth of Christ, he placed the Blessed Virgin as a virgin among the virgins

in the Temple. But this is difficult to be believed, for reasons given by Baronius and Abulensis.

Ver. 36. *Verily I say*, &c. The vengeance for these crimes of My death and the death of My Apostles and others shall come upon the Jews under Titus.

Ver. 37. *Jerusalem, Jerusalem*, &c. He repeats *Jerusalem* twice, to express the depth of His grief and compassion. It is as though He said, "O Jerusalem, city of God, chosen by Him and beloved above all other cities, which He has adorned with so many graces and benefits,—the law, the Temple, priesthood, doctrine, enriched with a kingdom, Prophets, miracles,—thou hast always been ungrateful for all these things. Thou hast slain the Prophets, and soon thou wilt kill Me and My Apostles. Wherefore thou hast become a wicked and lost city, destined by God to be destroyed and burnt by the Romans." By *city*, the inhabitants, especially the Priests and magistrates, who chiefly were guilty of the blood of the Prophets, are meant.

That killest the prophets. S. Luke says that Christ added, *it cannot be that a Prophet perish out of Jerusalem:* it was the appropriate work of Jerusalem to kill the Prophets.

How often have I wished, formerly by the Prophets, and now by Myself and the Apostles, to gather into My bosom, to bring back to the one God and the one faith, *thy sons*,—that is, thy citizens, who are scattered unto various errors, and are hurling themselves into the perils of Gehenna. For nothing disperses like sin, and nothing so gathers us to God as virtue, says Theophylact.

As a hen gathereth her chickens, wandering in different directions, *under her wings*, to cherish and warm them, and defend them from the hawk.

Christ compares Himself, and His love and solicitude to save the Jews, to a *hen* cherishing her *chickens* under her wings. First, because *hens* love their young ones above all other birds, and manifest the greatest care and protection over them, says S. Chrysostom. Thus a *hen* calls and clucks, so that even if she cannot see her *chickens*, they may recognise their mother by her

call. Whilst sparrows, swallows, storks, are only recognised by the parent birds whilst they are in their nests. Christ has loved us with supremest love, "being made Himself," says S. Hilary, "as it were, an earthly and domestic bird, being anxiously solicitous for us all through His life, teaching, sighing, and groaning, in order that He might save us."

2. Neither sparrows, nor thrushes, nor ducks, nor any other birds become so weak when they have young as the *hen* does, whose voice "becomes hoarse," says S. Augustine (*in Ps.* 59): "the whole body becomes neglected, the wings droop, the feathers become loose, and all this is the effect of maternal love. Thus Christ gathered all nations, like a *hen* her chickens, Who became weak for our sakes, receiving flesh from us, that is, from human nature, was crucified, despised, slapped with the hand, beaten, hung on the cross, wounded with a lance. Therefore this is of maternal infirmity, not loss of majesty, that inasmuch as He shared with us in our infirmity, He might release us from our sins."

3. The same Augustine says on the words in the 91st Psalm, "Thou shalt be safe under his feathers," "If a hen protects her young ones under wings, how much rather shalt thou be safe under the wings of God, against the devil and his angels, who fly round about like hawks, that they may carry off the young chickens."

4. The word in the Greek for hen is ὄρνις, which is a generic name for any bird, but the Vulg. does well to translate it by *gallina, a hen.* For, as S. Augustine says, it is wonderful what love almost all birds, but especially the hen, show in cherishing and protecting their young.

5. A *hen* with a branch of rue under her wings, says Pierias, is the hieroglyphic of security. Afranius, in the particulars which Constantine ordered to be collected about agriculture, says that hens will be safe from the cat if a little bunch of wild rue be tied under one of their wings. Democritus says further, that the same herb will protect them from foxes, and from every other hostile animal. Such security, only in a far higher degree, does Christ afford to His people.

6. A *hen* is the symbol of fruitfulness. It often lays an egg a day, and sometimes two in a day. And one egg occasionally produces two chickens. What is more fruitful than Christ?

Again, a *cock* and a *hen* are the symbol of watchfulness and guardianship. What is more watchful than Christ?

Tropologically: a *hen* is the Church and her Priests. For, as *Auctor Imperfecti* says, "As a hen that hath young ones does not cease to call them, but with assiduous clucking checks their straying away; so also ought Priests not to cease by their teaching and zeal to correct the negligence of an erring people. And as a hen that hath chickens not only warns her own young ones, but even loves as her own the young of any bird excluded from those to whom they belong; so likewise does the Church not only study to call her own Christians, but Gentiles and Jews also, if they be brought to her; she quickens them all with the warmth of her faith. She regenerates them in baptism, she nourishes them by preaching, and she loves them with maternal charity."

7. There exists the figure of a *hen* with the motto, "Where Christ has been received, there is nothing sad." Also,

8. The eggs of *hens* are said to be useful in various complaints, such as pains in the eyes and gout. So likewise is Christ the best Physician of all the infirmities of souls.

9. When a *hen* is in any peril which threatens herself alone, as from a kite, or a cat or dog, she flees. But if she fears danger for her young ones, she gathers them under her wings, and strives to protect them by every means in her power. She will often fight for them with her wings, her beak, and her whole body. So Christ fought for us against the devil and sin unto death, even the death of the cross.

And ye would not: because ye will pursue Me with hatred even unto death, and will not suffer your citizens to be converted unto Me and your God. This, as I have already observed, is especially addressed to the Scribes and rulers.

Ver. 38. *Behold your house*, &c. That is, the Temple, says S. Jerome and Theophylact; but more correctly, the city of Jerusalem

and the whole region of Judea, which, as the punishment of such black ingratitude, was to be laid waste by the Romans, under Titus. There is an allusion to Jer. xii. 7, "I have left my house, I have forsaken my inheritance." For when Jerusalem was forsaken by God, it became the synagogue of Satan, and so the prey of the Roman eagles under Titus and Vespasian, who partly slew the Jews, partly led them away captive, and partly scattered them over the whole world.

For I say unto you, &c. "I will withdraw Myself from you into Heaven; and ye shall see Me no more upon earth, until the Day of Judgment, when I will condemn your unbelief." Some take this verse to refer to Christ's solemn entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, when the Jews cried aloud to Him, *Hosanna, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.* But this is clearly an erroneous opinion, for this triumphal entry was already past, as is plain from chap. xxi. 1, &c. These words were spoken by Christ after Palm Sunday, three days before His crucifixion. So the Fathers and Commentators, *passim.*

I say then that Christ is here speaking concerning the end of the world and the Day of Judgment. This is the opinion of S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, S. Augustine (*de consens. Evang. lib. 2, cap.* 75). As though He had said, "You, O ye Scribes, who constantly contradict and calumniate Me, saying that I am not the Messiah, but that I cast out devils by Beelzebub, *shall not see Me from by and by*, that is, after the few days before My death, in which I shall be conversant among you, until the Judgment Day, when ye shall be compelled, even against your will, to acknowledge Me as Messiah, the Son of God, and your Judge as well as the Judge of all men; and to cry Hosanna, if not with your outward lips, at least in your hearts and minds, though against your will. Then shall ye see that I was, and am Blessed, I who came in the Name of the Lord, inasmuch as I was sent by God the Father to redeem and save all mankind, then, I say, when ye ought to have worshipped and adored Me."

Secondly, it is possible that this passage may be understood of

the Jews, who about the end of the world shall be converted to Christ by the preaching of Elias, and who, when He shall presently come to judgment, will acknowledge Him to be Messiah, the Blessed of the Lord. As though He said, "You, O ye Jews, do not wish to acknowledge Me as Messiah, and persecute Me as a false Christ, even unto death; but your posterity in the end of the world will acknowledge and worship Me. On them, therefore, I will bestow My grace and glory, but you I will condemn to everlasting punishment. And this will be to my praise and honour and glory, but to your shame and everlasting contempt." Thus does Christ prick the hard and unbelieving hearts of the Jews. This was prophesied by Osee iii. 4, &c., to which Christ here makes allusion.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1 *Christ foretelleth the destruction of the temple:* 3 *what and how great calamities shall be before it:* 29 *the signs of His coming to judgment.* 36 *And because that day and hour is unknown,* 42 *we ought to watch like good servants, expecting every moment our master's coming.*

AND Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

3 ¶ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you.

5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

8 All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place (whoso readeth, let him understand):

16 Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains:

17 Let him which is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house:

18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day:

21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there; believe *it* not.

24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

25 Behold, I have told you before.

26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, *he is* in the secret chambers; believe *it* not.

27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

29 ¶ Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

32 Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer *is* nigh:

33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors.

34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

36 But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

37 But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark,

39 And knew not, until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

41 Two *women shall be* grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

42 Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

43 But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

44 Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

46 Blessed *is* that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.

47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

49 And shall begin to smite *his* fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of.

51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

And Jesus went out, &c., according to His custom at eventide, to the Mount of Olives, to pass the night, and partake of food at Bethany, in the house of Martha and Mary, after He had been teaching all day without food in the Temple.

And His disciples, &c. The occasion was because Christ, at the end of the preceding chapter, had predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, and consequently of the Temple. The disciples therefore, being amazed at this desolation of so great a city, show Him the wonderful fabric of the Temple, its beauty and magnificence, which seemed worthy of lasting for ever, in order that they might move Christ to pity, and to revoke the sentence of destruction. For this Temple was the wonder of the world, as Josephus says (*de Bello Jud.* vi. 6), "Its exterior had everything for the mind and the eye to admire. The roof was entirely covered with very heavy gold plates. At sunrise it was seen from afar with such a fiery splendour as to dazzle the eyes of beholders, as though they were gazing at the sun itself." See S. Hilary, "After Christ had threatened the destruction of Jerusalem, they show Him the magnificence of its construction, as if He could be moved by the desire of it." So, too,

Origen, S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Jansen, and others. But none of this magnificence moved Christ to recall His sentence. In like manner God overthrew all the magnificence of Babylon, Nineveh, Antioch, and Rome, as well on account of the wickedness of their inhabitants, as that He might show that all such splendour is transitory, and of little worth, that so He might draw the minds of men to regard and desire the magnificence of Heaven, which is far greater, as well as eternal.

Truly and piously saith S. Augustine, "He will not be a great man who thinks it much that wood and stone should fall and mortals die." Such were the thoughts with which S. Austin was wont to comfort himself, when Hippo, the city of which he was bishop, was besieged by the Vandals, and which was taken by them and burnt after his death.

But Jesus said, &c. *One stone shall not be left upon another.* This is a hyperbole, meaning, there shall be utter and total destruction. The Romans did not spend so much time upon the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple as not to leave a stone upon a stone; but yet it was burnt by them, and destroyed in so effectual a manner, that it was razed to the ground, and a plough caused to pass over its site, as S. Jerome testifies on Zech. viii., and Josephus. And this is what Christ here indicates.

Listen to Josephus (*l.* 7, *Bell. c.* 18), "Titus bid them utterly destroy the city and the Temple. But there was left standing the three towers, Hippicus, Phaselus, and Mariamne, and that part of the wall of the city which defended it on the west. This was done for the sake of the garrison which he left. And the towers were allowed to stand, in order to be a witness to posterity how strongly fortified was the city which the valour of the Romans had captured. But the remainder of the fortifications they so completely levelled with the ground, that persons who approached would scarcely have believed that the city had ever been inhabited."

And as He sat, &c. *Disciples:* Mark speaks of four, viz., Peter, James, John, and Andrew, who were on more intimate terms with Christ, and admitted to His secrets. *Privately*, apart not only from

the multitude, but from the rest of the Apostles. The Syriac has, *between themselves and Him.* For it was a matter full of danger to prophesy, indeed even to speak about, the destruction of the Temple, on account of the Scribes and the Magistrates. It was on account of this that the Jews stoned S. Stephen. This is plain from Acts vi. 14.

Tell us: the Disciples here ask two things; the first, that Christ would tell them when Jerusalem was to be destroyed; the second, when the destruction of the world and the Day of Judgment would be, when He should come to judge all men. The Disciples thought that Jerusalem and the Temple would be destroyed at the glorious Advent and reign of Christ at the end of the world, as if He were about to destroy them in punishment and vengeance for His death. For they supposed that these three things, namely, the destruction of the city, the end of the world, and the Day of Judgment would all take place at the same time. And as they knew from the words of Christ that the destruction of the city was nigh at hand, they thought that the end of the world and the Day of Judgment was also at hand. They seemed to come to this conclusion from the words of Christ (*Matt.* xxii. 7, 8, and xxiii. 5), where He seems to join all those events together, and speak of them unitedly.

Let no man seduce you (Vulgate), *i.e.*, from faith in Me and My Gospel.

For many shall come, &c. Such were, 1. that Theudas, of whom in Acts v. 36. 2. That Egyptian impostor, of whom Josephus (*l.* 2, *Bell. cap.* 12) and Acts xxi. 38. 3. Simon Magus, of whom Acts viii. 10, who, as S. Jerome asserts, was wont to say, "I am the word of God: I am beautiful: I am the Paraclete: I am Almighty: I am all in all." For this Simon, as Irenæus testifies (*lib.* 1, c. 20), used to say that he had appeared in Judea as the Son, in Samaria as the Father, and had come down among the Gentiles as the Holy Ghost. Thus this proud Titan, as it were another Lucifer, was wont to say that he was not only Messiah, or Christ, but the whole Blessed Trinity. He it was who, by his magic spectres, so deluded Nero and the Romans, that a statue was erected to him at Rome, between

two bridges, with this inscription, *To Simon, a great god.* 4. Such were Menander, Saturninus, the Gnostics, and the rest who sprang from the family of Simon. Lastly, such will be Antichrist, who will proclaim himself to the Jews to be Christ, according to the words of the Lord in John v. 43, "If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive," which every one understands of Antichrist, as S. Augustine says (*Serm.* 45, *de Verb. Dom.*).

When ye shall hear of wars, &c. *Rumours:* Gr. ἀκοάς, *reports;* Arab. *news*, which are often more miserable than the battles themselves, and more thoroughly torment the mind with the fear of evils to come, even though they do not come. Here is another sign given by Christ, prior to the destruction of the city and the world, viz., tumults, wars, seditions, &c. Josephus shows that such took place before the destruction of Jerusalem (*lib.* 2, *de Bello, cap.* 11). As S. Chrysostom says, "He declares there shall be a twofold war, one by the seducers, the other by the enemies."

Take heed, &c. That through fear of the enemy ye do not depart from My faith, or by despairing of fruit give up preaching the Gospel; but with generous minds struggling against fear and all opposition, go forward and proclaim faith in Me and My Gospel. He adds the reason why the Apostles must not be troubled, saying,

For all those things must be. The Greek has *all*, which the Vulgate omits. *But the end is not yet*, the end of Jerusalem and the Temple, much less of the world, also of the battles and evils prior to the destruction of both. For the end of any one battle or trouble will be but the beginning of some greater one, as Josephus says happened at the siege of Jerusalem. *Be not troubled*, or lose confidence, but have greater courage, that ye may be prepared for the greater evils which shall follow, so as to sustain and overcome them. Do not hope for peace on earth, but by bearing troubles here, pass on to the eternal and happy rest of Heaven.

For nations shall rise, &c. For, as S. Jerome and Bede observe, and S. Augustine (*Epist.* 80, *ad Hesych.*), Christ answers His Apostles, who were asking in a confused manner about the destruction of the city and the world, mingling the two events together, after the

same way that they asked. This He does as far as the 15th verse. And He did it with this object, that the Apostles and the faithful might always be in suspense, and so carefully prepare and fortify themselves for both events. From the 15th verse He treats expressly of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the signs which should precede it, up to the 29th verse. After that, up to the end of the chapter, He speaks of the signs which shall precede the end of the world. Now that He is speaking both of the destruction of the city and the world in this verse, and as far as the 15th, is manifest from the signs themselves, which were to precede both. Therefore S. Hilary and S. Gregory (*Hom.* 1, *in Evang.*), and Irenæus (*l.* 5, *c.* 25), understand them of the destruction of the world. For it shall be preceded by the most dreadful tumults, battles, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, false Christs. Again S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, Theophylact, rightly understand them of the destruction of Jerusalem. This is plain from S. Luke xxi. 8, 12, "*But before all these things they shall lay their hands upon you, and persecute you, bringing you into the synagogues.*" Which happened to the Apostles before the destruction of Jerusalem, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles. Before that event, 1. "nation rose up against nation." After the Jews had captured and slaughtered the Roman garrison of Jerusalem, almost immediately the inhabitants of Ascalon, Ptolemais, Damascus, Alexandria, the Syrians, Romans, and all the neighbouring nations rose up against them. And this state of things continued until the most miserable destruction of Jerusalem. See Josephus, *Bell. Jud. passim.*

2. That Judæa was afflicted with famine before the destruction of the capital, is plain from Acts xi. 28.

3. Although Josephus says nothing about pestilences or earthquakes, yet it is certain from this prophecy of Christ that they must have happened. And both are usual concomitants of war and famine.

S. Luke adds, "*fearful sights and great signs shall there be from Heaven.*" That these shall precede the destruction of the world is plain from *Apoc.* chaps. viii. and ix. It is equally certain that they

preceded the destruction of Jerusalem. For, 1. a dreadful comet, in the shape of a sword, hung over Jerusalem a whole year before its destruction. 2. At the Passover, when the people were gathered together, three hours after midnight, a light as bright as noon-day shone for half an hour in the Temple. 3. A bullock that was about to be offered in sacrifice brought forth a lamb. 4. The eastern gate of the Temple, made of brass, and so heavy that it could be with difficulty closed by twenty men, opened of its own accord at the hour of midnight. 5. There was seen in the air the appearances of armies, chariots, and battles. 6. There was heard at Pentecost the voices of angels, saying in the Temple, "Let us depart hence." 7. An ignorant man of the lower orders, Jesus the son of Ananus, began suddenly to cry aloud, "A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the Temple, a voice against the bridegrooms and the brides, a voice against the whole people." And this he continued to cry night and day without ceasing, perambulating all the streets of the city. This he did for seven years, crying with a dreadful voice, like one astonied, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem," until at last, when the city was besieged by Titus, as he was crying upon the wall with a louder voice than usual, "Woe to Jerusalem, to the Temple, to the people, and to myself," he was struck by a stone hurled from one of the military engines of the besiegers, and killed. For all these things, see Josephus, *Bell.* 7. 12, and Eusebius, *H. E.* iii. 8.

Ver. 8. *All these . . . of sorrows;* Gr. ὠδίνων, *parturition pangs*, as S. Jerome renders in his comment. That is to say, the greatest possible pains, such as women suffer in childbirth, and from which many die. For like as it is in people about to die, disease and pain increase gradually until the time of death; so did wars, famine, pestilence increase until the final destruction of Jerusalem, as we know from Josephus. Thus also shall it be before the end of the world. Says S. Ambrose, "Because we are in the last times, diseases of the world shall go before" (*in Luc.* xxi. 9).

Ver. 9. *Then shall . . . to be afflicted . . . and shall hate you*, &c.

The Syriac puts *hate* first, because hate begets oppression. "They shall torment and afflict you with various torments. You will seem to be given up and dedicated to tribulation. All nations in all places shall persecute you as revilers of their gods, and as preachers of a new God, Christ crucified." This was fulfilled under Nero, who raised the first persecution, and slew the princes of the Apostles, S. Peter by the cross, S. Paul by the sword, and burnt alive in the circus many Christians, smearing them with grease and pitch, and setting them on fire, so that they acted the part of lamps to give light during the night. (*Tac. Ann. l.* 15.) Antichrist will do yet more horrible things before the end of the world.

Then . . . offended, i.e., *suffer stumbling-blocks, and fall.* The Syriac is, *shall impinge upon scandals.* That is, from fear of persecution and torments shall apostatize from the faith of Christ. That many did this we know from Eusebius and others.

And shall deliver one another up (Vulg.); Syr. and English, *shall betray one another.* Apostates and other heathen, to curry favour with the emperors and princes, shall betray their Christian friends and relations. This is now the case in England, Scotland, and Japan. Such are false brethren, of whom S. Paul complains, 2 Cor. xi. 26. "You see," says S. Chrysostom, "there shall be a triple war, one by enemies, a second by seducers, a third by false brethren."

And many false prophets—false teachers, heresiarchs, such as Simon Magus, Menander, Arius, Luther, and Antichrist the head of them all. *Shall seduce many* (Vulg.), not by the strength of the seducers, but by the negligence of the seduced. Thus S. Paul foretold, Acts xx. 29, 30, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

Ver. 12. *And because iniquity shall abound;* Gr. πληθυνθῆναι, i.e., *be multiplied;* Syr. *on account of the multitude of iniquity,*

that is to say, infidelity, heresy, persecution, tyranny, and every kind of impurity, *the love of many shall grow cold;* Syr. *shall languish;* Arab. *shall be diminished.* It means, that they who aforetime were warm with love to Christ and Christians, when they see so many persecutions and afflictions of Christians, will cease to be warm. Yea, they will grow cold. Their love will be turned into hatred and disgust. Christ foretells all these things that He may strengthen believers against all hardships and trials, and make them firm as an adamantine rock.

But he that shall endure, viz., in the faith and love of Christ, *unto the end:* both of tribulation, and persecution, and of life, and who is of invincible patience, so as to yield to no terrors, or blandishments, or torments, *shall be saved.* The one only remedy and triumph over all these evils is a generous constancy and perseverance in faith and charity. For he who endures all these things is he who conquers and overcomes, as appears by the Apostles, S. Laurence, S. Vincent, S. Sebastian, and the rest of the martyrs. Therefore this saying should be adopted by a believer, "Yield not to calamities, but advance boldly against them."

Ver. 14. *And this Gospel,* &c. This was fulfilled before the destruction of Jerusalem, *for a witness unto all nations.* For thereby God testified unto all nations His love towards the Jews, and their perfidy to Christ. And the calling of the Gentiles for that reason into their place, and this election of the Gentiles in place of the Jews, was just, as S. Chrysostom proves from Rom. i. 8, "Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world;" and "Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world." And from Col. i. 6, "Which (Gospel) is come unto you, and beareth fruit in you, as it doth in all the world."

But this must be understood hyperbolically, meaning, that before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, the Gospel was promulgated in the greatest number and chief countries and provinces of the world, not in every small and remote spot. Wherefore S. Jerome,

Bede, and other Fathers teach that this will clearly and fully take place before the end of the world. "*The end*" must here be taken absolutely; and before the end of the world the Gospel will be preached throughout the whole world, so that Churches will be founded among all nations, and dioceses and bishops created. This it is allowed did not take place before the destruction of Jerusalem. And all this shall be done *for a witness, or testimony to all nations.* God will thereby make known unto all nations His loving Providence, in that He hath shut out no nation, however barbarous and impious, from faith in Christ, from grace and salvation, but hath loved all, and cared for all, and hath called them at suitable times, and therefore hath omitted nothing which is needful for the salvation of all nations. And likewise, in the day of judgment, He will condemn all nations, who have refused to believe in Him, and obey Him.

From this prophecy of Christ, S. Jerome, Suarez, and others teach that this will be a sure sign of the near approach of the end of the world, namely, the preaching of the Gospel throughout the whole world in such a manner, that the Church shall be founded everywhere, and shall have everywhere Christian members, clergy, temples, Priests. And although Maldonatus and Franc. Lucas deny this as to its full extent, as being in this place certainly declared by Christ, yet it is absolutely true, thus far, that the Church shall be founded in all nations, and will for some time before the end be established amongst them. But for how long a time is uncertain, and known only to God.

Moreover, because we see that about 150 years ago, a new world, America, was discovered by the Spaniards, and that Christopher Columbus and Vespucci sailed to and opened out the West Indies, which constitute half the globe, and that the Gospel has been propagated in almost every portion of this new world, we may gather from hence that we are sensibly coming near to the end of the world. For of the rest of the globe, no part remains which has not, at some time or other, received the faith of Christ, except perhaps China. And even there Nicolas

Trigaltius shows by certain proofs (*Lib. de Fide in China propagata*) there were formerly Christians and Christian Churches. The same thing is proved by the inscription upon a stone which has lately been discovered in China, which plainly testifies that the Gospel was preached there by Apostolic men.

Ver. 15. *When therefore . . . the abomination of desolation*, i.e., *the abominable desolation;* Syr. *the unclean portent of destruction.* What this was I have explained at length on Dan. ix. 27. Some understand by it an idol placed in the Temple; others, Antichrist himself, who will desire to be worshipped in the Temple as God; others, more correctly, the Roman armies which besieged Jerusalem, and which, shortly afterwards, when it had been captured, fearfully wasted it, and made it desolate. The profanation of the Temple by the murders and other crimes which were perpetrated in it by the seditious and wicked Jews, who called themselves Zealots of the law and of liberty, may also be intended.

Thus far Christ has given His Apostles signs in common, which were to precede both the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. He now goes on to give special signs which were to precede the siege of Jerusalem by Titus. Wherefore Christ warns Jews and Christians alike, when they beheld these signs, to flee immediately to the mountains—not of Judæa, for they were occupied by Roman soldiers (Jos. *Bell. l.* 3. *c.* 12, and *l.* 4. *c.* 2), but those beyond Judæa, that they might thus escape the approaching overthrow of the city. In this way the Christians, mindful of this prediction of Christ, and warned by a Divine oracle (Eus. *H. E. l.* 3. *c.* 15), fled across the Jordan, to a city named Pella (S. Epiphan. *Hæres.* 29 and 30), and even carried their property thither, as well as the episcopal Chair of S. James. Eusebius says that this Chair was preserved down to his own time (*H. E.* 7. 15). If this Chair had remained at Jerusalem, it must have been burnt with everything else. In these events we may see the singular providence of God over Christians, and His anger against the Jews. For, when the Roman army came, the Jews and Galilæans fled in crowds to Jerusalem, as to a place

of refuge, thinking that there they would be safe. But God gathered them together there that they might be killed by the Romans.

Let him which is on the house-top—for the Jewish roofs were flat, so that they could walk and sleep upon them—*not come down*, but flee suddenly, so that he may save his life, and lose everything else. For so great and so sudden shall be this destruction of Judæa and Jerusalem by the Romans, that it were better for a man to flee away naked, than, by wishing to save his goods, to expose himself to danger. The sentence is hyperbolical, signifying how swiftly men ought to fly from the fearful impending calamity. Thus, "Let him that is on the house-top not come down gradually by means of ladders, but let him descend by one leap, or let himself down, very swiftly by a rope, that he may escape the coming destruction." For, hyperbole apart, the Jews had some little time given them to escape. In the first place, Cestius Gallus, who was sent by Nero, besieged Jerusalem, but he was routed by the Jews, and put to flight. Six months afterwards, Vespasian was sent by the same emperor, Nero. He subdued Galilee, and stormed all the other Jewish cities except Jerusalem. In this work he spent three years. When he was preparing for the siege of Jerusalem, tidings came to him of the death of Nero. Then Vespasian was proclaimed emperor by the army, and returned to Rome, to take charge of the State, committing the conclusion of the war to his son Titus, who, after half a year, besieged Jerusalem at the time of the Passover, and took it in six months, and burnt and destroyed it. This half-year, in which the Romans carried on the war less vigorously, was spent by the Jews in internecine strife. For, first, the Zealots seized the Temple, filling it with the murdered corpses of their fellow-citizens. To the Zealots succeeded Simon of Gerasa, the head of a new sedition. Being sent by the people into Jerusalem to restrain the Zealots, he turned his hand in slaughter and rapine against the citizens. There was then sufficient space after the approach of the Roman armies for the Jews to save their goods and flee; but Christ advises immediate flight, as well to signify how dreadful the calamity would

be, as well as because, when the Roman armies were once in Judæa, and spreading themselves over the land, there would be no safe place to flee unto. For the fugitives constantly fell into the hands of the Roman soldiers, by whom they were despoiled and slaughtered, as Josephus relates at length in the history of the Jewish wars.

This most dreadful destruction of Jerusalem was an express type and prelude of the end of the world, just as were Noah's deluge, the burning of Sodom, and the drowning of Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea.

Mystically: Pope Adrian I., in his Epistle to Charles, King of France, says, "He upon the house-top is he who, leaving carnal things, lives spiritually, as it were, in a free atmosphere. This man's furniture lies idle in the house, because with his mind rising above the body, by the force of his understanding being, as it were, placed upon the house-top, he enjoys through the perspicuity of his wisdom an unbroken view, as it were, of heaven."

He that is in the field . . . clothes; Gr. ἱμάτιον, *i.e.*, cloak or outer garment. For men who labour in the fields are wont to leave their upper garments at home, so as to be able to work more expeditiously. In like manner, when the destruction of Jerusalem is impending, flee away swiftly, and half-naked, if you are so at the time, that you may escape the great and terrible slaughter. The expression is hyperbolical, and similar to the one in the previous verse. Both signify that they were to leave everything, even their clothes, and flee away as swiftly as possible, for so the greatness of the calamity is intimated. The prophets make use of a similar expression under similar circumstances. Thus Jeremiah, in the slaughter of the Egyptians by the Chaldeans (xlvi. 5), "Wherefore have I seen them dismayed *and* turned away back? And their mighty ones are beaten down, and are fled apace, and look not back: *for* fear *was* round about, saith the LORD." *

Ver. 19. *But woe to them that are with child,* &c. Because the

* This quotation has only a general reference to flight.—(*Trans.*)

burden of their children would hinder their flight, so that they would be taken and slain by the savage Roman soldiers, together with their little ones. So S. Chrysostom and others. Theophylact adds that there is a further allusion to the severity of the famine, by reason of which some women were constrained to devour their infants in the siege of Jerusalem. As Josephus testifies (*Bell.* 7. 8), Christ declares the fearfulness of the vengeance and destruction of Jerusalem, that even women with child and infants would not be spared, as is customary in the siege and capture of other cities.

But pray ye, &c. *In winter:* because flight is difficult, on account of the cold, snow, rain, and tempests. For this reason flight is then impossible to the sick and aged. Or, if attempted, it ends in death. *On the Sabbath:* because then it was not lawful for the Jews to walk more than about 700 paces, as I have shown in Acts i. 12.

You will say that the Sabbath, as well as other ordinances of the Law, had been already abrogated by Christ when Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus; and even if they had not been abrogated, it would have been allowed by the law of nature that persons should go many miles to save their lives.

I answer: Christ is speaking of Jews, and Christians who still judaized, who were wont to observe the Sabbath with such over-scrupulosity, that they preferred to die rather than flee or defend themselves against the attacks of their enemies upon the Sabbath (*see* 1 *Macc.* ii. 34, &c.). And the Jews and judaizing Christians would observe the Law although it had been abrogated by Christ before the capture of Jerusalem. I may add that when the legal observances were abrogated by Christ at Pentecost, they were thenceforward *dead*, and were no longer binding; but they did not immediately become *deadly*, but it was permitted the Jews who were converted to Christ still to keep them for several years, out of reverence for Moses and the Law, until, being better instructed in evangelical liberty, they passed into perfect union with the Gentiles in the Church of Christ, as I have said in Gal. ii. So S. Chrysostom. Theophylact, Euthymius.

Christ here alludes to the capture of Jerusalem, which was to take place upon the Sabbath, as Dio Cassius asserts in his account of Nero. Indeed, one Gaspar Sanchez (*in Zach.* 14, *num.* 27) takes the words literally, as though Christ foretold that the Jews would take to flight upon the Sabbath, because Jerusalem was to be taken on that day. But Christ is here giving signs which were to precede the destruction of Jerusalem, so that men might flee away and escape, as I have already said. But in the actual siege and destruction, Titus had so completely encompassed the city by a wall, that it was impossible to flee out of it, as Josephus testifies.

Then shall be great tribulation, &c. Some, with S. Augustine (*Epist.* 80, *ad Hesych.*), confine the words, *such as was not, nor ever shall be*, to the Jews (for Christ thus far has been speaking of them), meaning that neither in the Egyptian, nor the Assyrian, nor the Babylonian, nor the Syrian distress under Antiochus Epiphanes, had they suffered such slaughter as they should suffer under Titus and the Romans; yea, that they never would suffer anything so terrible, because Titus would bring upon them the extremity of destruction and desolation which were to continue until the end of the world.

With greater latitude others think that this destruction of the Jews by Titus is to be considered as more terrible than the destruction and punishment which befell any other nation whatsoever. For the Jews were not from the beginning of the world, but took their rise from Abraham and Jacob. In this way the meaning would be, that neither the burning of Sodom, nor the drowning of Pharaoh, nor the destruction of the Canaanites by Joshua, nor the overthrow of Nineveh or Babylon, or of any other nation, however dreadful and terrible, which ever has been or shall be, was so dreadful as this destruction of Judæa, which was to take place under Titus. I have spoken of separate and individual nations, because the destruction of the whole world by the general Deluge in the time of Noah, and the general conflagration at the last day, with the common destruction of all, surpasses in horror the destruction of the single nation of the Jews. In like manner, the persecution of

Antichrist will be more horrible, forasmuch as it will be a general persecution of all Christians who in all nations believe in Christ.

Christ therefore compares the destruction of the one nation of the Jews with that of any other nation whatsoever, but not with the destruction of all nations, or of the whole world. That these things were so, is plain from the seven books which Josephus compiled (*de Bell. Jud.*). Thus he says expressly (6. 11), "To speak briefly, I am of opinion that no other city ever suffered such calamities, nor in any other nation of which there is memory among men was the wickedness of the seditious more ferocious."

S. Chrysostom assigns as the reason of this most dreadful destruction of the Jews, the awful nature of their crime, by which they crucified their own Messiah, Christ, the Son of God. Wherefore, from this destruction and unceasing desolation of the Jewish nation, you may prove to the Jews that Christ has come already, and that it is He whom they have slain. For God has never punished any other crime, either among the Jews or any other nation, so fearfully as He has punished this, their Christicide and Deicide. Whence rightly, *Auctor Imperfecti*, "Until Christ, although the Jews were sinners, yet they were accounted as sons, and as sons they were punished. But after the Lord was crucified they ceased to be sons, and were treated as enemies, and as such were rooted out, without any hope of salvation. For inasmuch as they had committed a crime, the like whereof had never been committed, nor yet would be committed again, so there came upon them such a sentence as never has been passed, nor ever will be passed upon any others." This is what S. Luke says, *Then shall be the days of vengeance*, i.e., for the death of Christ. *There shall be great affliction and wrath upon this people.* Josephus adds (*Bell.* 7. 16) that Titus recognized this vengeance of God, and attributed the capture of Jerusalem, not to his own power, but to Him. For entering into the captured city, when he saw the height and solidity of the bulwarks and towers, he exclaimed, "It is evident that God has helped us to fight. It was God Himself who cast down the Jews from those mountains. For what power of man, or what

machines, would have been able to do so?" The same Josephus (*Bell.* 6. 14) adds, that when Titus went round and saw the ditches full of the corpses of the dead, he groaned aloud, and lifting up his hands to Heaven, called God to witness that it was not his work.

Luke adds, xxi. 24, 1st. *They shall fall by the edge of the sword, i.e.*, they shall be slain by the swords of the Romans. Josephus asserts that, besides innumerable others slain in all parts of Judæa, there fell in the siege of Jerusalem alone 1,100,000 souls, who died by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence.

2d. *And they shall be carried captive among all nations.* The same writer says that 97,000 Jews were taken captive at that time. And he adds that the multitude of the Jews who flocked together at that time to the Passover out of all the world, amounted to 2,700,000 souls. Wherefore he adds, that the whole nation was as it were shut up in a prison by fate; and the city was besieged when it was crammed full of people. Therefore the number of those who fell, including those whom the Romans killed or took captive, exceeded the number who fell by any other divinely sent judgment, or destruction wrought by man. For, opening the sewers, and uncovering the sepulchres, they slew those whom they found there. In addition to these, there were found in those places 2000 who had fallen by their own hands, or by wounds received from one another.

3d. *And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled, i.e.*, until the end of the world and of all nations. For when the number of the Gentiles, according to God's decree, has been completed, all the people and the number of the Gentiles shall be finished together with the world. So Euthymius; or as Bede, until the plenitude of the Gentiles shall enter into the Church of Christ. For when this shall be accomplished, then "all Israel shall be saved," as the Apostle says (Rom. xi.), which shall be in the end of the world. For Christ has regard to the desolation of Jerusalem. This was foretold by Daniel (ix.), where it is said, "The desolation shall continue unto the consummation and the end," meaning that Jerusalem, after being razed to

the ground and laid desolate by Titus, shall be no longer the capital city of the Jews, but shall belong to the Gentiles, and after that to the Christians, and after that to the Saracens and the Turks, as it is at present. And this state of things shall continue until the end of the world, when Antichrist, the king and Messias of the Jews, shall fix the seat of his empire at Jerusalem, as is plain from Apoc. xi. 8. And then shall Enoch and Elias resist Antichrist, and convert many of the Jews to Christ. After Antichrist is slain, all the Jews shall be brought to Christ by the disciples of Enoch and Elias, and shall publicly worship Christ in Jerusalem, as may be easily gathered from Apoc. xx. 8.

Eusebius adds (*H. E.* 4. 6), that Adrian, who succeeded Trajan as emperor of Rome, made a severe edict that all Jews whatsoever should depart out of Judæa, so that it should not be lawful for any of them to see Judæa. He adds, "This was done, so that after the ruin of the Jewish nation, the inhabitants of the city being changed, the name of Jerusalem itself was changed to Elia, from the cognomen of the Emperor Ælius Adrianus." Behold, this is what Christ foretold—*Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles.*

From these words of Christ S. Cyril of Jerusalem rightly confuted the Jews, who, at the instigation of Julian the Apostate, set about rebuilding the Temple. He predicted that all their labour would be in vain, because Christ had declared out of Daniel that the desolation of Jerusalem and of the Temple would continue unto the end of the world. And he was a true seer. For fire coming down from Heaven consumed all the tools of the workmen. And a great earthquake tore up the foundation-stones and dispersed them, and destroyed the adjacent buildings. On the following night, impressions of the sign of the cross, shining like rays of the sun, appeared impressed upon the garments of the Jews, which by no efforts were they able to efface. (*So Socrates, H. E.* 3. 20.)

Ver. 22. *Except those days . . . shortened;* Gr. ἐκολοβώθησαν, *a period, or stop put to them;* i.e., *by the Lord,* as Mark adds.

The elect are twofold: those who are elected to grace, who are all the faithful and the righteous; and those who are elected to glory,

who are all those who shall be saved. Both classes may be here understood, but especially the second. For these are they who are perfectly elected. And whosoever are elected to final grace, so that they persevere in it to the end of life, are those who are also elected to glory. The sense is—unless God from eternity had decreed, and had fulfilled the same in time, that the days of the wasting of Judæa should be shorter—shorter, I mean, than the sins of the Jews and the anger of the Romans demanded, all Jews would have perished. For if the time of the siege of Jerusalem and the destruction of Judæa had lasted longer, no flesh, *i.e.*, no Jews, would have survived. For the rage of the Romans against the Jews was very great, as against a rebellious and obstinate nation; and unless the gentleness of Titus had somewhat restrained them, the Romans would have slain all the Jews. God therefore shortened this time of slaughter *for the elect's sake;* that is, partly for the sake of those Christians who had not been able or willing to flee away from Jerusalem, partly on account of the Jews who, in the great slaughter of the siege, had been converted to Christ, as well as for the sake of those who were afterwards to be sprung from them and converted to Christ. What is meant is this, "If this tribulation of the Jews had lasted longer, none of them would have continued alive, and would not, by consequence have persevered in faith and grace in this life, and so no one of them would have survived to be elect and saved. In order, therefore, that some may survive, who by the predestination of God shall be saved, those, namely, whom God foresees and foreordains, shall remain in this tribulation, and be converted to Christ, and so be saved, for this cause, I say, God will abbreviate and cut short these days of tribulation."

That such was the case appears from Josephus (*Bell.* 7. 15). He testifies that more than forty thousand Jews were saved by Titus in the destruction of Jerusalem. Where observe that God, for the sake of His elect and believing ones, saved alive many Jews who did not believe, but were obstinate and reprobate. "Therefore," says S. Chrysostom, "let not the Jews say that these things happened to them because of the preaching and worship of Christ.

He shows not only that Christians were not the cause of these evils, but that if there had been no Christians, all Jews would have perished. For if the war, by Divine permission, had been prolonged, no remnant of the Jews would have escaped. But in order that the believing Jews might not be destroyed with the unbelieving, God put a more speedy end to the war than He would have done."

Tropologically: Learn from hence how great is God's love and care for His elect. For them He spared many Jews. For the elect's sake God created, and still preserves the whole world, and all the things that are therein. Yea, for their sake He caused Christ, His own Son, to become man, and willed that He should suffer death upon the cross. Wherefore S. Paul saith (1 *Cor.* iii. 22), "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come.

Ver. 23. *Then if any man,* &c. Some think that Christ here passes from the signs of the destruction of Jerusalem to those before the end of the world. But it is better to refer them to the destruction of Jerusalem, of which He has been speaking thus far. This is the force of the word *then.*

Lo, here is Christ. The Jews knew that the advent of the Messiah was now nigh at hand, because the sceptre had been transferred from Judah to aliens, Herod and the Romans, according to Jacob's prophecy (*Gen.* xlix. 10). Wherefore, many at that time flattered Vespasian by saying that he was the Messiah, as we learn from Suetonius. Others gave Herod the same flattering title. Moreover, there were at that time in Jerusalem, as Josephus and S. Jerome testify, three factions, which had each its own leader, who boasted himself to be the Messiah, who would defend the Jews against the Romans. These chiefs were Eleazar the son of Simon, John the son of Levi, Simon the son of Goria, who all contended for supremacy amongst themselves. Such also was the impostor who, under Adrian, pretended to be Messiah, and wished to be called Barchochabas, the son of a Star, as though in him was fulfilled the prophecy of Balaam, "A star shall rise out of Jacob." Of this man Eusebius says (*H. E.* 4. 6): "Barchochabas, a wicked

and cruel man, was the leader of a Jewish army. And referring to the signification of his name, he persuaded them, as if they had been vile slaves, that he was a great star for their salvation, and that he bore the succour of light to sick mortals and those who were doomed to long darkness."

Such in our own age were David George; also John of Leyden, who seized a monastery in a city of Westphalia, where he made himself Christ, a king, and created twelve apostles, whom he sent into all the neighbouring cities, that they should bring all men to him as Christ. But being besieged by the Catholics and captured, he was hung alive in a wickerwork cage from the top of a tower, and being eaten by flies and wasps, he died A.D. 1536. There shall be many more such in the time of Antichrist. *Tropologically:* such are heresiarchs, who proclaim another Christ, in that they affirm other doctrines, which are not the doctrines of Christ, but of Antichrist. For although the word *then* properly denotes the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, yet it may be taken indefinitely, so as to denote any period whatsoever, from the fall of Jerusalem to the end of the world, as S. Chrysostom observes (*Hom.* 77). Moreover, the heretics foolishly say that by the words, *if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ*, Catholics are denoted, because they say of the Eucharist, "Lo, here is Christ." For Christ is here speaking of visible heretics and false prophets, who shall call themselves Christs, and draw away disciples after them. He is not speaking of the Eucharist, where Christ is invisible.

Ver. 24. *For there shall arise false Christs*, &c. *Signs*, wrought by art magic, by the power of the devil, whom many heresiarchs have had as a familiar spirit, as I have shown in 1 Tim. iv. 1. Such was their great prince Simon Magus, who deluded Nero and the Romans, so that they erected a statue to him at Rome; but at length he himself, flying through the air by the aid of the devil, was dashed down to the earth by the prayers of S. Peter, and falling upon a stone, broke his knees, "so that he who had attempted to fly was not able to walk; and he who had taken wings, lost his legs," as S. Maximus says (*Hom.* 5, *de SS. Petro et Paulo*).

So as to deceive—even the elect. Understand this of final falling away, in such a sense that the elect should finally fall from grace, and be lost. For there is no surer sign of reprobation than that any one should apostatize from the faith. Falsely, therefore, does Calvin infer from this passage that the elect cannot sin. They do sin, but they repent and rise again.

If it were possible. So great shall be the tribulation and the temptation of the false Christs and heretics, their power, deceit, guile, and speciousness, that, if such a thing were possible, even the elect would be seduced by them, and come over to their errors and heresies, and so fall from the faith and be damned. But this can never happen, because of God's more powerful protection, and His infallible predestination, as S. Augustine says (*de Civ.* xx. 19), and according to Christ's own words, "I give unto them eternal life, and they shall not perish eternally: and no one shall pluck them out of My Father's hand," S. John x. 28 (*Vulg.*). For it is not possible that the elect should fall away so as to become reprobate. I do not speak of any physical or absolute necessity, but of that moral foreknowledge and predestination of God, by which He so works, and so disposes it, and combines it with the issue of future events, that there is necessity in a composite sense, as Theologians say. For although the elect are free, and free to sin, to go astray, and be lost, nevertheless, inasmuch as it has been laid down that God has predestinated and foreseen that they cannot sin, go astray, and be damned, it is impossible that they should sin, go astray, and be damned. For the predestination of God is most sure, and cannot fail. These two things, therefore, cannot co-exist, that a man should be predestinated, and yet be damned; that God should foreknow that such a man will die in His grace, and be saved, and also foreknow that he will die in sin, and be damned. In a similar manner S. John speaks of the Jews (xii. 39), "Wherefore they could not believe, because Isaiah saith again, He hath blinded their eyes:" not as though Isaiah's prophecy were the cause why the Jews did not believe in Christ, but because his

prediction of the incredulity of the Jews was incompatible with their believing in Christ. And S. Paul says (1 *Tim.* ii. 19), "The foundation of God (concerning the elect) standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His."

Moreover, those Theologians who say that the elect unto glory are persons who have been elected independently of all prevision of their works, ascribe the force of this election, this necessity of their being saved, to the Divine decree; but the others, in order not to take away man's free will, must take the matter in a composite sense. They must combine the constancy and perseverance of the elect with God's decree to bestow this perseverance upon them, in such manner as not to interfere with their free will, and with His carrying this out in time, that is to say, by giving them in time grace of congruity and grace efficacious, whereby they may effectually, but of their own free will, resist heretics, and persevere in the faith and grace of God. Nor is it more wonderful that those cannot fall whom God wills not to fall (for who hath resisted His will?), than that they cannot fall whom God has foreseen will not fall. For God's prescience and His will are both infallible.

Some by *the elect* in this place understand those who are especially beloved and chosen of God, and who, on that account, are wont to suffer dreadful things from the devil and heretics and wicked men; but they bravely and constantly resist and overcome them. It is meant, that so great shall be the temptation, that even most holy men, religious and apostolic, who are especially dear to God, would fall away from the faith, if such a thing could be, and the more powerful grace and sure election of God did not prevent it.

Ver. 26. *If, therefore, they shall say*, &c. Christ here denotes Simon of Gerasa, who collected a multitude of robbers and soldiers in the deserts and mountains, on the pretext that, being Messiah, he would defend the Jews against the Romans. He was admitted into Jerusalem to be a check upon the Zealots, but he acted as tyrannically towards the citizens as the Zealots themselves. (Josh. *Bell.* 5. 7.)

In the secret chambers; that is, the innermost and secret places

of the Temple, where God is accustomed to manifest His presence and aid the Jews, that He may now protect them by means of His Messias from the Romans. Christ here signifies Eleazar and John, the leaders of the Zealots, who occupied the inner court of the Temple, on the pretext of defending the city against the Romans, but in reality that they might rule over it and despoil it. So Josephus (*de Bell.* 6. 1 and 4, and 7. 11). He relates that when the Temple was on fire, many Jews fled to the porch without the Temple, because a certain false prophet had said that those who fled to the Temple on that day would be safe under God's protection. But those all perished—either by the flames or the sword of the Romans.

Luke adds, *The days shall come when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and shall not see it.* That is, "The time shall come when ye shall desire my Presence which ye have now, both for your consolation in so great tribulation, and for the manifestation and confutation of the errors and heresies which shall arise."

Ver. 27. *For as the lightning*, &c. Ye must not give credit to wanderers, who shall say, Messiah, the Saviour of the Jews from the Romans, is hidden in desert places, or in secret chambers in the Temple; for when He shall come the second time to judgment to bless the saints and condemn the wicked, He will appear publicly to the whole world. The Judge of all will appear like the lightning, radiant with great glory and majesty, so as to dazzle the eyes of all, and turn them upon Himself, in such a manner that no one will be able to doubt that He is the Christ the Saviour of the world. He means, "My advent, My return to judgment, will be like the lightning, because—1st, it will be sudden; 2d, it will be unexpected; 3d, it will be manifest to all; 4th, it will be glorious; 5th, mighty, so that no one can resist it; 6th, it will not be on the earth, but in the air, like the lightning, which makes itself plain to view; not in a corner, but to the world in a moment of time." For Christ is here replying to the mind and thoughts of the Apostles. For they thought that Christ would inaugurate His glorious Kingdom

upon earth immediately after the destruction of Jerusalem. So S. Chrysostom, "For as the lightning needs no preacher nor messenger, but appears in a moment to all, so shall that advent be seen everywhere alway to shine immediately." Also *Auctor Imperfecti*, "As lightning traverses all things in the twinkling of an eye, so likewise shall the Son of God not seem to be coming, but to have come. For if the sun, which has been created for our service, possesses such splendour, that in whatsoever part of the heavens it may be, it appeareth everywhere present; how much more shall Christ, the Spiritual Sun, when He cometh, be seen by all the world, or rather, the world be seen by Him?"

This author adds, that Christ here makes mention of lightning, because lightning shall go before Him when He comes to judgment, according to the words of the Psalm, xcvii. 4, 5, "His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the LORD of the whole earth."

Wheresoever the carcase is, &c. There is an allusion to Job xxxix. 33, *And wheresoever the carcase* (Heb. *the slain*) *shall be, he will be there.* After the metaphor of lightning, he subjoins the parable of the eagle; both because, as the eagle is not struck by lightning, so the elect will not be affected by the thunderbolt of the sentence and the curse with which Christ shall condemn the wicked to hell in the Day of Judgment, as also in order that the Apostles might not suppose that the glorious Advent of Christ should, like lightning, pass away, and should ask, "What reward will accrue to us therefrom?" Christ gives the assurance that He will indeed appear like the lightning unto all, but that He will abide with His elect, and will feed them with His glory, as an eagle feeds upon a body as its prey and food.

Carcase. The Vulg. seems to have read σῶμα, as some copies still have it. But a better reading is πτῶμα, which properly signifies *ruin, fall*, and from hence comes to mean *a carcase.* Πτῶμα comes from πίπτω, as *cadaver* from *cadendo.* But by πτῶμα, Salmeron understands *prey, hunting*, either for the body of a bird,

a hare, or some such thing as eagles hunt. This is called πτῶμα, because the bodies of those creatures which eagles capture fall upon the earth. For the eagle is too noble to eat carrion, or the dead body of anything save of what it has itself captured and killed.

Aristotle, however (*lib.* 9, *Histor. Anim. c.* 32), enumerates six kinds of eagles, and amongst them the γυπάετον, or vulture-eagle, that is to say, a species which seeks out dead bodies. Hence the LXX. in Job xxxix. 27 translate by γύψ. This is the bird of which Christ here speaks, according to Aldrovandus and others. Both meanings and readings suit this passage, as I will presently show.

The words constitute an enigmatical parable, signifying that Christ cannot be hid. As though He had said, "As eagles discern the bodies upon which they prey, even from on high, and fly towards them, and as a vulture smells a carcase even when it is very far off; so in like manner shall My glorious return to judge the world not be hidden or secret, but manifest to all. Wherefore the faithful and righteous at that time, like eagles of most piercing sight, and like vultures of most acute scent, shall, by divine power, scent Me out, that is, they shall perceive Me beforehand. They shall discern Me with their eyes, and fly to Me, that they may most happily feed upon Me and upon My glory, and be refreshed and blessed for ever." And in truth there shall be no need then to search where is Christ. For His Advent shall be glorious, and visible to all the world. This is what Paul says, "We shall be snatched up into the clouds, to meet Christ in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 *Thess.* iv. 17).

Christ compares Himself to a carcase, that He may signify His death, by which He merited glory for us. He compares Himself also to a body made alive again, that He may signify His glorious Resurrection, by which He will feed and bless His elect. Wherefore S. Hilary gathers from this passage that the universal judgment of Christ will take place on that spot where He hung a corpse upon the cross, and where He was buried,—that is to say, near Jerusalem, in the valley of Jehoshaphat, as Joel teaches (iii. 2). Hear

S. Hilary, "He called the saints eagles, from the flight of the spiritual body, whose gathering together by the angels He showed would be in the place of His Passion. And rightly may His glorious Advent there be expected, where for us He procured an eternity of glory by the sufferings of the body of His humility." And S. Jerome says, "Eagles are they who take wings to fly to the Passion of Christ." It is agreeable to reason that Christ should there judge all men, where He was unjustly judged for all; and that His glory should be there seen, where His lowliness and humility were witnessed; that He should descend from Heaven in the place where He ascended into Heaven, and that so the whole work of our salvation should be completed and finished in that same spot where it was begun.

Moreover, the saints are rightly compared to eagles, because the eagle is the king of birds, as the lion is the king of beasts. So likewise are the Saints kings, not of earth, but of Heaven. Hear Origen, "He said not, where the carcase is, thither shall the vultures or the crows be gathered together, but the eagles, to signify that those who have believed in the Passion of the Lord are all great and regal."

Here also *Auctor Imperfecti*, who for *eagles* understands *vultures*, "Concerning vultures, the Scripture saith in the Book of Job, Wheresoever the carcase is, there will be found the vulture's young ones. For this is the natural property of vultures. As some say, they can scent a corpse even across the sea. But because vultures are foul birds, Christ adopted the name of eagles to the habits of vultures, that thus might be shown the gathering together of the Saints to the Advent of Christ, that in the royal eagles the regal dignity might be shown. For in this manner are the Saints like unto eagles, because as eaglets are proved by the sun, in such manner, that if without blenching they can look straight up at the sun, they are considered legitimate offspring, but if they cannot do this, they are regarded as spurious; so, also, the sons of God are proved by the justice of Christ. If they are able fully to accept the words of His justice, they are understood to be

legitimate; but if not, they are understood to be the offspring of the devil."

2. Because, as S. Ambrose says (*in S. Luke* xviii.), eagles renew themselves. So also the Saints are renewed here by grace, and hereafter by glory, according to those words of the Psalm, "They shall renew their strength like eagles."

3. Because there is something divine about the eagle. As Aristotle says (*lib.* 9, *Hist. Anim. c.* 32), "Eagles fly on high, that they may see to the farthest possible extent. Wherefore men say that the eagle is the only bird which is divine." Hence by *eagles* S. Chrysostom understands the multitude of Angels, Martyrs, Saints, who all, as it were divine spirits, shall be gathered together to Christ their God in the Day of Judgment, that they may ascend up with Him in glory to Heaven.

4. The *saints* are *eagles*, because they fly above the earth, and mount up to Heaven, that they may behold heavenly things, and look down upon earthly things as far beneath them. Whence they say with S. Paul, "Our conversation is in Heaven."

5. As *eagles* possess sharp and strong sight, so as to be able with unblenching eye to gaze at the sun; thus do the Saints assiduously, with the keen eyes of their minds, contemplate Christ, who is the Sun of justice.

Allegorically: the Body of Christ is the Church, in which are *eagles*, that is, spiritual persons of heavenly life and doctrine. So, on the contrary, heretics are like black crows and chattering daws; or like moles, wholly conversant with earth and earthly things. Hear S. Ambrose (*in Luc. c.* xvii. *last ver.*), "Do not the *eagles* seem to thee to be about the Body, when the Son of Man shall come in that Day with clouds of them that understand? When every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him? This is the Body of which it has been said, 'My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed.' Round about this Body are the true eagles, who fly with spiritual wings. There likewise fly the eagles who believe that Jesus is come in the flesh. 'For every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God.' For where there

is faith, there is the sacrament, there is the abode of sanctity. This is the Body of the Church, in which by the grace of baptism we are renewed in spirit, and the decay of age is renewed by the return of youth."

Anagogically: the Blessed, in the Day of Judgment, after the Resurrection, shall be gathered together to the Body, *i.e.*, to Christ risen and glorified, that they may fly with Him to life in Heaven. By *eagles* is denoted the swiftness of the Blessed, according to the words in Isa. xl., "They shall fly like eagles." Wherefore S. Gregory expounds thus (*S. Thom. in Catena*), "*Wheresoever the Body*," &c. As though Christ had said, "Because I, incarnate, preside in the heavenly seat, I sustain with flesh the life of My elect, I lift them up to Heaven." And S. Ambrose (*in Ps.* xlix. *sub finem*), for *body*, reading *ruin*, or *fall*, which is the meaning of the Greek πτῶμα, says, "Where the *ruin* is, there are the *eagles; i.e.*, where He fell, there He rose again." Again, the *eagle* is the symbol of the blessed eternity of the Saints. For the *eagle* is very long-lived, and when it grows old it renews its youth. Hence the proverb, "The old age of an eagle."

Symbolically: the *eagle*, because it has sharp sight, is a symbol of truth. Whence S. Ambrose, "*Where the body*," &c., *i.e.*, "Where the Body of Christ is, there is truth." Again, the eagle is a type of the angels, because of their swiftness. Therefore S. Ambrose (*lib.* 1, *de Sacram. c.* 2) understands the words of the Eucharist. For at the Eucharist, where the Body of Christ is, the *eagles*, *i.e.*, the angels, assist. So also do the Saints and Priests. The same also saith (*lib.* 4, *c.* 2), "The form of the Body is the altar; the Body of Christ is on the altar. Ye are *eagles*, renewed by being washed from sin."

Ver. 29. *But immediately after the tribulation*, &c. Christ passes from the destruction of Jerusalem to the destruction of the world, and the signs which shall precede it.

Tribulation. Understand the persecutions and temptations which shall arise from false Christs and false Prophets, of which the 23d verse speaks; or rather the tribulation which came upon the Jews

at the siege of Jerusalem by Titus. For this only did He call tribulation a little above in ver. 21. Where observe, with S. Chrysostom, Jerome, and others, that Christ, in order to keep His disciples and those who succeeded them in constant expectation of His Advent and the Day of Judgment, and to urge them to be always prepared for it, seems to favour the mistake of the Apostles, and to speak as though the end of the world would follow immediately upon the destruction of the city, but in a different way from that in which the Apostles understood it. For although 1560 years have elapsed since the destruction of Jerusalem, and many more will yet elapse before the end of the world, nevertheless all this period, long as it seems to us, whose span of life is so short, yet compared with the eternity of God, who is the true Measurer of times, is but very small, yea, only as it were a moment. Thus answers S. Peter (2 *Pet.* iii. 8), "One day is with God as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise. This is why the Prophets and Apostles call the period of Christ and of the Gospel Dispensation, *the last time* and *the last hour*, as appears from 1 John ii. 18; 1 Cor. x. 11; Jas. v. 8; Heb. x. 37. For the same reason Haggai (ii. 4) says that there shall be but a little while to the coming of Christ, and yet there were 517 years still to elapse before He came. There is also this to be considered, that the tribulation of the world shall immediately follow the tribulation of the city, in the sense that no very remarkable and exceptional tribulation of the Jews shall intervene between those two events, so that the one shall very closely succeed the other, not as regards time, but in type, similitude, and fearfulness. For a similar reason Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the rest of the Prophets, when they describe the destruction of Babylon, Tyre, Egypt, and of Judæa by the Chaldeans, pass on at once to the antitype, the destruction of the world, as though it were about to take place immediately. And they set forth how dreadful shall be the former events by the signs and horrors which shall take place at the latter event. This appears by Isa. xiii. 19; Jer. xv. 9; Amos viii. 9; Joel ii. 10.

From what has been said, it would seem that Alcazar (*in Apoc.*

vi. 12), from the expression "*thus*" in this verse of S. Matthew, gathers incorrectly that all the things which are here spoken of refer literally, not to the end of the world, but to the destruction of Jerusalem. By the darkening of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars, this writer understands literally the blindness of the Jews, their calamities, and the slaughter which was made of them by Titus. By *the shaking of the powers of the heavens*, he understands the flight of the Christians from the city, by whose holiness it was sustained. But every one can see that these meanings are mystical and symbolical.

The sun shall be darkened. Observe that this sign and those which follow are not after the General Resurrection, as SS. Jerome and Chrysostom suppose, but previous to it, as is plain from S. Luke xxi. 26, and Joel ii. 31. As to the meaning, S. Augustine (*Epist.* 80, *ad Hesych.*) says, "The sun, *i.e.*, the Church, shall be darkened, because in those tremendous temptations and tribulations which shall be in the end of the world, many who had seemed as bright and as firm as the sun and the stars shall fall from the faith." This is the allegorical sense, and is just and apposite.

You will ask, what will be the cause of this great obscuration of the sun before the Judgment Day? SS. Hilary, Jerome, Chrysostom answer, that it will be because the excessive brightness of Christ's glorious body will make the sun grow pale. But I have already observed that these signs will take place before the General Resurrection, and therefore before Christ's coming to judgment. So that I reply, the sun will be darkened because God will take away from it, not its light indeed, but its power of illuminating, by which it shall come to pass that in the sun there will be light, but upon the earth nothing but darkness. Thus was it at the Passion of Christ. Again, God will hide the sun by means of thick clouds and smoke. Perchance also there will be extraordinary and miraculous eclipses, as may be gathered from Lactantius vii. 16.

Of this darkening of the sun at the end of the world, the calamities and prodigies which took place at the destruction of Babylon, Tyre, Egypt, Idumæa, &c., were types. When, therefore, the Pro-

phets speak of them, they speak by catachresis of the horribleness of the destruction, by saying that the sun and moon and stars shall be darkened. For such dreadful calamities bring on men giddiness and blindness. Thus those overthrows were types and foreshadowings of the destruction of the world, when the heavenly luminaries will be literally darkened.

And the moon, &c. For when the sun is darkened, the moon must necessarily be so likewise, since she derives her light from him.

Symbolically: Auctor Imperfecti says, "When the master of the household dies, his whole household is troubled; his family make lamentations and rend their garments. So, in like manner, when the human race, for whom all things were made, is about to come to an end, all creation languishes, the powers of the heavens mourn, and laying aside their brightness, are clothed with robes of darkness."

And the stars, &c. 1. Because at the end of the world the stars also shall be darkened, so that they shall appear to men to have fallen from the heavens. For Holy Scripture often speaks of things not as they are in themselves, but as they appear unto men.

2. *Stars, i.e.*, comets and such like bodies, which are formed in the atmosphere, shall then fall upon the earth. This may be gathered from Joel ii. 30.

S. Chrysostom and Euthymius add, that at the end of the world *stars*, properly so called, shall fall from the heavens to the earth. But this must be understood of very small stars, and such as are invisible to us. For as to the visible stars, they are larger than our whole earth, and cannot therefore fall upon it.

And the powers of the heavens, &c. Origen, S. Chrysostom, &c., understand by these *powers* the sevenfold choirs or orders of the *angels*, which are called *powers* (Lat. *virtutes*) because they excel in strength (*virtute*). And the meaning would be, that the angels, mighty as they are, when they behold the sun and moon become dark, and the stars fall from heaven, and many other dreadful prodigies multiplied at the end of the world, will stand, as it were, astonished and stupefied at such great changes and terrible sights.

Here may be mentioned the opinion of Suarez (3 *p. qu.* 59, *art.* 6, *disp.* 56, *sect.* 3), "*The powers of the heavens*," saith he, "are the angels, who, by their surpassing strength, cause the heavens to revolve; because they, as the ministers of the Divine justice and vengeance against the wicked, shall change the accustomed order of motion of the heavens. Thus there shall be utter confusion in this lower world."

But more simply, by *the powers of the heavens*, you may understand the stars themselves and their influences. The meaning is, that at the end of the world the very great and very strong stars of heaven shall change their motions, appearances, influences, and in consequence everything upon earth shall be in perturbation, so that the world shall be shaken by unwonted movements, the sea shall overflow, and the atmosphere shall be troubled with comets, thunderbolts, meteors, whirlwinds, so that all things will seem to be utterly in confusion.

Lastly, and most plainly, *by the powers*, &c., you may understand their poles and hinges. These are δυνάμεις, Heb. *gibburoth*, the strength and props, as it were, of the heavens. It means, that at the end of the world the whole heavens shall be shaken, all plucked from their poles and hinges, so that they will seem to fall down, so as to strike terror into the wicked, and to set forth the wrath of an angry Christ. I have treated of this matter more at length in *Apoc.* vi. 14. There is an allusion to Job xxvi. 11, "The pillars of heaven shall tremble, and shall fear by reason of His rebuke;" and to Isa. xxxix. 4, "And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their hosts shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling *fig* from the fig-tree." For as Bede says (*in Luc.* xxi. 25), "As when trees are shaken to their fall, they are wont to show premonitions of the coming crash; so likewise when the end of the world draweth nigh, shall the elements nod and tremble as though they were in fear;" and the heavens burning with fire, and as it were perishing, shall rise again with the Saints, and shall be renewed in a glorious state of felicity.

Ver. 30. *And then shall appear the sign*, &c. You will ask, what is the sign of the Son of Man, that is to say, of Christ Incarnate? I answer, it is the Cross. For this is the sign, because it is the standard (*vexillum*) of Christ, and the cause of the victory of believers. And as it was beforetime the scandal of unbelievers and the impious, so will it be in the Day of Judgment their condemnation and their torment. So the Fathers, almost *passim*. Yea, the Church herself gives this meaning her sanction, when she sings in the office for Holy Cross Day, "This sign of the Cross shall be in heaven when the Lord shall come to judgment." There are three reasons why the Cross shall then appear. 1st. To signify that Christ by the Cross has merited this judicial power and glory. 2d. To show that Christ was crucified for the salvation of all men, and that therefore they are ungrateful and without excuse who have neglected so great grace and love. 3d. To show that all worshippers of Christ crucified shall be then exalted with Him to Heaven, and all who hate and despise Him cast down to hell.

From this saying of Christ it is extremely probable that the actual cross on which He was crucified shall appear in heaven at the Day of Judgment, for the consolation of the Saints, who have been saved by it, and who therefore have striven to conform themselves in their lives, by patience and self-denial, to Christ crucified; and for the condemnation of the wicked, who have despised the Cross of Christ, and who have ungratefully preferred pleasures to self-mortification. This is the opinion of S. Chrysostom (*Hom. de Cruce et Latrone*). The Sibyl predicts the same thing (*lib.* 6)—

> "Whereon God hung, O blessed Tree!
> Not earth alone, but heaven hath thee,
> When lightning-crown'd God's face we see."

S. Anselm is of a different opinion, viz., that at the Day of Judgment it will not be the actual Cross of Christ which will appear in the air, but a symbol, or image of it, formed by the angels. The expression *sign* is in favour of this.

Moreover, SS. Chrysostom and Augustine and S. Cyril teach that this standard of the Cross will be borne by the angels before the face of Christ, coming to judgment, as a trophy of victory, and a royal banner of supreme power and dignity.

Our Salmeron also says, "The doctors of the Church believe that, together with the Cross will appear the pillar, the scourge, the crown of thorns, the nails, the sponge, the spear, and the rest of the instruments of the Passion." So, too, S. Thomas (*Opusc.* ii. *cap.* 244). This is probable, but not certain, because nowhere expressly declared.

Lastly, at that time *the sign of the cross* shall appear on the foreheads of all the elect, according to what is said in *Apoc.* vii. 3, "Let us sign the servants of our God on their foreheads" (*Vulg.*); and Ezek. ix. 4, in an allegorical sense, "Sign *Tau*, *i.e.*, the sign of the Cross, upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry" (*Hebr. and Vulg.*). Hear S. Augustine (*Serm. de temp.* 130), "Hast thou considered how great is the virtue of this sign of the Cross? The sun shall be darkened, the moon shall not give her light; but the Cross shall shine and shall obscure the heavenly luminaries. When the stars shall fall, it alone shall send forth radiance, that thou mayst learn how the Cross is more luminous than the moon and more glorious than the sun. For like as when a king enters into a city, his soldiers go before him, bearing upon their shoulders the royal arms and standards, and all the pomp of military array, to proclaim the monarch's entry; so when the Lord descends from Heaven, the angel hosts shall go before Him, bearing upon their lofty shoulders that sign which is the ensign of triumph, to announce to the inhabitants of earth the approach of the King of Heaven."

And then shall all the tribes, &c. That is, many of every tribe, viz., all the reprobate and the damned, because they have neglected their salvation, to procure which Christ was crucified. But the elect will rejoice and sing, because they will see that they have been saved and blessed by the Cross. S. Augustine gives the cause of this weeping, "*All the tribes of the earth shall mourn*,

because they shall see their accuser, that is, the Cross itself; and at the sight of this reprover they shall acknowledge their sin. Too late, and in vain shall they confess their impious blindness. And dost thou marvel that when Christ cometh He will bring His Cross, since He will show His wounds also?" S. Chrysostom also, "*Then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn*, because they shall perceive that they gained nothing by His death, and that they crucified Him who ought to be adored." And S. Jerome, "Rightly doth He say, *The tribes of the earth;* for they shall mourn who have no citizenship in Heaven, but whose names are written in the earth." Again, hear S. Chrysostom on this passage (*Hom.* 77), "He brings with Him the Cross, that their sin may be condemned without accusation, as though a man who had been struck with a stone should produce the stone itself, or the blood-stained clothes as a witness of the deed."

Moreover, *they shall mourn*, because (as *Auctor Imperf.*, *Hom.* 77, says) Christ will then reprove the wicked thus, "For your sakes I became man, was bound and crucified. Where is the fruit of all My sufferings? Behold the price of My blood, which I paid for the redemption of your souls! Where is your service, which you owe Me as the price of My blood? I valued you above My own glory, when, being God, I appeared in fashion of a man; and yet ye accounted Me of less worth than any of your possessions. For ye loved every vile thing upon earth more than My justice and faith." And shortly afterwards he adds, "Deservedly shall they mourn, because then neither shall money profit the rich to do alms withal; nor righteous parents be able to intercede for their children; nor the angels themselves to say a word, as is their wont, for men, because the nature of judgment accords not with mercy, as neither the time of mercy with judgment. As saith the Prophet, 'I will sing of mercy and judgment;' of mercy in the first Advent, of judgment in the second."

Hear S. Bernard mourning, yea, trembling with horror (*Serm.* 16 *in Cant.*), "I am afraid of hell; I fear the face of the Judge, before whom the heavenly hosts themselves tremble. I tremble

at His almighty wrath, at the crash of a falling world, at the conflagration of the elements, at the horrible tempest, at the voice of the archangel, and the dreadful words. I tremble at the teeth of the infernal beast, at the belly of hell, at the lions roaring for their prey. I dread the gnawing of the worm, the fiery torrent, the smoke and vapour, the brimstone, and the spirit of tempests. I dread the outer darkness." Then he adds, "Who will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears to my eyes, that by my tears I may prevent the weeping and gnashing of teeth, the hard chains for hand and foot, the weight of the fetters that press and bind and burn without consuming? Woe is me, my mother! Wherefore hast thou brought me forth, a child of sorrow? a child of bitterness, of indignation, of weeping without end? Why did the knees prevent me, and the breasts that I sucked, that I should be born for burning and for fuel of fire?"

And they shall see the Son, &c. 1st. That the clouds may temper the exceeding brightness of the Body of Christ, which otherwise would blind the eyes of the reprobate. 2d. Because a cloud is the symbol of the hidden Deity. 3d. Because the cloud is the seat, as well as the vehicle and covert, of Christ's glory. Hence, constantly in the Old Testament, God appeared to Moses and the Prophets in a cloud. (*See Ezek.* i. 4, and *Ex.* xix. 9–18.) There is an allusion to Daniel (vii. 13), "And lo, one like unto the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven."

With power, &c. (Vulg.), *with great virtue or strength and majesty.* For as Christ at His first Advent came in great infirmity of the flesh, in poverty and contempt, so He hath thereby deserved to come in His second Advent with great strength, glory, and majesty. His *power* and *strength* shall appear in that at His command all the dead shall arise in a moment; in that all men, angels, and devils shall behold and worship Him as their God, their Lord, and their Judge; in that He shall pass sentence upon all according to their deserts, and shall execute His sentence, so that none shall dare to gainsay or resist. His *majesty* shall appear in the infinite splendour of His body, in the multitude and

brightness of all the angels surrounding Him, and in His garments of radiant clouds.

Ver. 31. *And He shall send His angels*, &c. There is an inversion of order in this passage; for Christ shall previously send His angels with a trumpet, or rather with many trumpets, throughout all the world, to wake the dead and summon them to judgment. For when this trumpet sounds very many angels shall gather together the ashes of every one of the dead, and from them form the semblance of human bodies, which God shall organize and animate. And after life has been restored to those bodies, He shall, if they be those of the holy and elect, glorify and bless them. Wherefore also the Blessed themselves shall, by the gift of swiftness, with which they shall be endowed, immediately transfer themselves in the company of the angels from all parts of the world to the Valley of Jehoshaphat to judgment. But the reprobate, because they shall lack the gift of swiftness, shall be dragged thither by the devils, or rather by the angels.

From the four winds, *i.e.*, from the four quarters of the world, from whence the four chief winds blow. Whence he adds by way of explanation, *from one end of Heaven to the other.*

The Greek is ἀπ' ἄκρων ἕως ἄκρων, i.e., *from extremity to extremity*, from one terminus of heaven and earth to their other terminus, from the east to the west. For ἄκρα signifies any *extreme limit*, whether above or below, whether to the right or to the left. Mark has (xiii. 27), *from the height of earth to the height of heaven* (Vulg.), by which is meant the same thing as in S. Matthew, from one extreme of earth to the other extremity of heaven and earth. For the earth at its extremities seems to be joined to the sky. This is at the horizon. There is no reason why *extremity of heaven* (Vulg.) in this place should not be taken literally, meaning that the angels shall gather together the elect wherever they may be, whether in heaven or earth. For the bodies of the Patriarchs, who rose again with Christ, are in Heaven. Wherefore they shall descend from Heaven to the valley of Jehoshaphat at the time of the Last Judgment.

But the former sense seems to be the best.

Learn a parable. Take a similitude from the *fig-tree.* Learn from the analogy of *the fig-tree* what I have spoken concerning the signs of the destruction of the world, when it is nigh at hand. Christ makes mention of the *fig* rather than of other trees, because the *fig-tree* only puts forth its leaves and fruit under the influence of heat, because its sap is exceedingly sweet, and therefore concocted; and for that there is need of the heat of summer. Hence Aristotle (*lib.* 9, *Histor. Animal.*) says that the fig is the food of bees, which only fly and make honey in summer. They make honey from the fig, for it is indeed a purse of honey. Again, he says that cattle grow fat upon figs. Again, the fig does not flower, but produces fruit immediately from the leaves, and brings it to maturity. Whence Pliny says (15. 18), "Wonderful is the haste of this fruit, one in all things hastening to maturity by the art of nature." Again, "the fig is the sweetest of all fruits, devoid of all acidity, and therefore most tasty and wholesome. Moreover, the fig-tree is extremely fruitful, so much so that there are fig-trees in Hyrcania, each yielding a yearly produce of 70 bushels," as Pliny affirms in the same book. He adds that Romulus and Remus were suckled by the she-wolf under a fig-tree, and therefore that the fig was worshipped at Rome in the forum.

Symbolically, therefore, Christ would intimate that His Saints and elect ought to bring forth most sweet and abundant fruits of good works, that so they may deserve to taste in the summer of the Resurrection the abundant sweetness of celestial glory.

Lastly, a fig was the cause of the destruction of Carthage. For when Cato, as Pliny tells us, was exclaiming in the Senate that Carthage must be destroyed, he brought one day into the Senate house a very ripe fig which had been grown in Africa. Showing it to the Senators, "I ask you," said he, "to guess how long ago it is since this fig was plucked from the tree." All allowed that it must have been but recently gathered. "Yes," he said, "I would have you know that it is but three days since it was plucked at Carthage; so near is the enemy to your walls." Immediately

afterwards the third Punic War, in which Carthage was destroyed, was begun.

In like manner those signs which Christ compares to a fig-tree shall be the cause of the destruction of the world.

When her branch, &c. For the reason already mentioned, inasmuch as the sap of the fig-tree is most sweet, it lies dormant during the winter in the root, but being drawn out by the heat of summer, it rises into the branches, and comes out in leaves and fruit. It is like the mulberry tree (*morus*), which does not germinate until the cold is all gone. The mulberry is called for that reason μῶρος, or "a fool," because it is anything but foolish, but the wisest of trees.

Ver. 33. *So likewise ye*, &c. *Near:* it is as though Christ, the Judge, and His glorious Kingdom, and *your redemption*, as Luke has it, that is, the resurrection and everlasting glory, were entering the earth, as it were by a door. For *redemption* signifies deliverance from all evils and miseries. This will be *the summer*. And after the winter, there shall come this most joyful *summer* to all the elect, as this parable intimates. As when the fig comes into leaf summer is nigh, which causes to be brought forth most sweet figs and other fruits; so when ye shall behold the elect to flourish with such great patience in the winter of such great tribulations as shall befall them at the end of the world, know ye that the reward of your patience is *nigh at hand*, the *summer* of a joyful resurrection, which shall heap upon you the fruit of every good gift, when Christ the Judge shall bless and glorify you.

Verily I say, &c. *This generation*, that is to say, 1. of all men, or this age, which shall last until the end of the world. So S. Jerome. As though Christ had said, "Before the end of the world all these things shall come to pass."

2. Origen, Hilary, and Chrysostom take *generation* in a more restricted sense, to mean the generation of believers of Christians, that were now sprung from Christ, to whom Christ was speaking in the person of His Apostles, according to the words in Ps. xxiv. 6, "This is the generation of them that seek the Lord." As

though the Lord had said, "The Christian religion which I have instituted shall not come to an end until Christians, who faithfully serve Me, are rewarded by Me, and crowned in the Day of Judgment."

Ver. 35. *Heaven and earth*, &c., *shall pass away*, *i.e.*, shall be changed, shall cease to be, shall perish, as regards their present state and condition, that they may pass into one which is better, and be glorified with the Saints.

Some are of opinion that at the end of the world the heavens will be changed as regards their form and substance. Of this question I have treated at length on 2 Peter iii. 13 and Isa. xxxiv. 4.

Lastly, this sentence may be understood comparatively, thus, "The heavens shall pass away and perish, sooner than My words shall come to naught."

But of that day (namely, of My glorious coming to judgment) *and hour*, &c. As if He had said, "Do not, O My apostles, ask Me when I shall come again as Judge, or what shall be the day of the general Judgment, for no one except God knoweth this: and He willeth not any other being to know it." "He held them back," says Chrysostom, "from wishing to learn that which the angels are ignorant of." As to the time when the world shall come to an end, there are various opinions.

1. Many suppose that the world will come to an end after it has existed for six thousand years, as it was created in six days, according to the saying or prophecy of Elias, "six thousand" (years?) "the world." (*Sex millia mundus*, Lat.) This opinion is probably true, as I have shown at length on Apoc. xx. 4.

2. Some think that there will be just as many years after Christ to the end of the world as there were from the Creation to Christ. They gather this idea from Hab. iii. 2, "O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years Thou shalt make it known." But this passage has a different meaning, as I have there shown.

The third opinion was one which supposed the world would

last as many jubilees after Christ as there were years in His earthly life. This calculation would place the end in A.D. 1700.

4. Druitlimarns, who flourished about A.D. 800, and who wrote upon S. Matthew, says, "Our ancestors have left in writing that the world was created, the Lord was conceived and crucified, on the 25th of March, and in like manner the world will be destroyed upon the same day; but in what year they say not." But these things have no foundation.

5. A fifth calculation was put forth by a contemporary of *à Lapide*, whose name he does not give, whom he calls a jester rather than a reckoner, which fixed on 1666 as the end of the world.

"If," says *à Lapide*, "you object to this '*joculator*' the words of Christ, 'of that day knoweth no man,' he answers, that only applied to the time when He was speaking, and that the day might be known afterwards by revelation or in some other way." But all this *à Lapide* characterises as frivolous and old wives' fables.

My Father only: because from eternity He had determined in His own mind, and appointed this day, which He keeps secret. Now by the word *only*, the Son is not excluded, neither the Holy Ghost, for They know the day and the hour of the Judgment equally with the Father, since They have all the same essence, majesty, will, mind, power, understanding, and knowledge. For it is a theological principle, that if the word "only" be added to any of the essential attributes of the Godhead, such as wisdom, and be ascribed to one of the Divine Persons, it does not exclude the other two Persons, but only creatures, which are of a different nature and essence. But in Personal Attributes, the expression "only" does exclude two of the Divine Persons, as when it is said, "The Father only begets;" "The Son only is begotten."

You will say, Mark adds (xiii. 32), *neither the Son*, for so it is in the Greek, Latin, Syriac, Arabic, Persian, Egyptian, Ethiopic. Various answers are given. The best is that which is common among the Fathers It is that the Son, both as God and as man, by infused knowledge, knows the Day of Judgment and of

the end of the world, for it pertains for Him to know this, inasmuch as He has been appointed the Judge of the world. But Christ denies that He knoweth this as man, and as He is God's messenger to us, because He did not know it so that He could reveal it to us, or because He had not been commissioned by the Father to reveal it to us. As an ambassador who was questioned concerning the secrets of his prince would reply that he did not know them, although he did know them, because he did not know them as an ambassador. For an ambassador declares only those things which he has a commission to declare.

Christ's meaning then is, "God only knows what year and day and hour the end of the world and the Judgment shall be. And although God has caused Me, Christ, as I am man, to know the same, as I am that one man who is united to the WORD; yet as I am the Father's ambassador to men, He hath not willed Me to make known that day, but to keep it secret, and to stir them up continually to prepare themselves for it." There is a like mode of expression in S. John xv. 15.

There are some who explain thus: that Christ, *qua* man, knoweth not the Day of Judgment; but that He knoweth it as He is the God-man. That is to say, Christ as man knoweth it not by virtue of His humanity, but of His divinity. So S. Athanasius (*Sermon* 4, *contra Arian.*), Nazianzen (*Orat.* 4, *de Theolog.*), Cyril (*lib.* 9, *Thesaur. c.* 4), Ambrose (*lib.* 5, *de Fide, c.* 8).

Maldonatus gives another explanation. He says that Christ, even as He is God, knoweth not the Day of Judgment in, as it were, an *ex officio* sense, because it is the office of the Father alone to predestinate, decree, and determine the Day of Judgment; and, by consequence, that He knows it, and reveals it when He wills. For providence, in which predestination is included, is a special attribute of the Father. But this explanation is somewhat too subtle and abstruse.

But as the days of Noah, &c. Like the Deluge, which suddenly and unexpectedly drowned all men, shall My Advent come upon all. This is made plain by the subsequent verse.

As in the days that were before the flood, &c.

Ver. 39. *And knew not*, &c. You may say, "From the darkness of the sun and moon, and the falling of the stars, and the other dreadful signs, men will know that the end of the world is near." As Luke saith, *Men's hearts withering with fear, and with looking for those things which are coming on the earth.* "Therefore the end of the world cannot be unexpected by them." I reply, that after the darkening of the sun and moon, and the other signs, God will give a certain space of quietness and peace; and then men will forget the signs, and will give themselves up to pleasures, to gluttony and lust, even as they did before. Then will God put an end to them and to the world, crushing them with a sudden destruction. In like manner, dying persons will seem to revive for a little while, but soon grow worse and expire. So, too, a candle when it is burnt out will flicker up with a last effort before its flame, like a breath, departs and is extinguished. Again, so great shall be the hardness and the wickedness of the multitude of the ungodly at that time, that even though they do behold the sun and moon darkened, yet will they apply themselves to the gluttony and the luxury to which they have been accustomed, and will not think of the end of the world so nigh at the doors. Thus was it with Belshazzar, when he was feasting with his lords, on the night when he was besieged and slain by Cyrus, until he beheld the fateful hand which foretold his destruction by the words, *Meni, Tekel, Phares.* Wherefore S. Augustine teaches that at the end of the world, the righteous will be sorrowful on account of these signs, but the wicked will indulge their bent, and rejoice.

Then two shall be in the field, &c. In the Day of Judgment Christ will separate companion from companion, neighbour from neighbour; as, for example, husbandman from husbandman. Him who has lived justly and piously He will take up with Himself to glory. But his companion, who has lived wickedly, He will leave in his sins, and condemn to everlasting punishment. For as S. Ambrose says (*in Luke* xvii. 35), "He who is taken is carried away to meet Christ in the air; but he who is left is condemned.

Christ says this, that no one may trust to good society merely because he lives among the righteous. He would also show how exact and searching will be that judgment, which will separate father from son, wife from husband, brother from brother."

Two women, &c. He instances the same thing in persons grinding at a mill. For formerly mills were in use which were not turned by wind or water, but by hand. These were worked by male and female slaves to grind flour (*see Ex.* xi. 5). *In mola* (Vulg.), ἐν τῷ μύλωνι, *in the place of grinding*, where was the bakehouse.

Ver. 42. *Watch therefore*, &c. That is, "think continually that death is certain, but the day of death uncertain. I say the same of the Day of Judgment, both that particular judgment which comes to every one at death, as well as the general Judgment, which shall take place at the end of the world. Wherefore prepare yourselves for both by giving heed to virtue and good works." For as S. Jerome saith (*in Joel, c.* ii.), "That which shall happen to all in the Day of Judgment is fulfilled in each at the day of death." And S. Augustine (*Epist.* 80) says, "In whatsoever state a man's last day shall find him, in the same state shall the world's last day come upon him; because as the man dies, so shall he be judged. Therefore ought every Christian to watch, lest the coming of the Lord find him unprepared. But that day shall find unprepared the man whom the last day of his life now shall seize unprepared."

Moreover, the reason why God wills that this day should be unknown to us is, that the uncertainty may be a never-failing stimulus to us in the practice of every virtue. "For," as S. Chrysostom says, "if men knew surely when they were to die, at that time only would they seek to repent."

The devil, therefore, in order that he may take away this stimulus of uncertainty, gets rid of it by degrees, and in part. He persuades every one that they have at least one year to live. When that has come to an end, he tells them they have another, and so on interminably. He causes men to believe themselves so strong and well, that they can surely live this one year. Year by year he does this, and puts such a thought into their minds as, "You are in

very good health; you will not die this year." Thus it comes to pass that being, as it were, certain of life, they neglect repentance from year to year, deferring it to the year in which they are to die. Wherefore, when that year comes to each in which it is God's decree that they shall die, they, in like manner, persuade themselves that they will not die in it. Thus it comes to pass that they are always unprepared when certain death and the last day overtake them. Wherefore this idea, instigated by the devil, must be crushed. Every one should say to himself at the beginning of each year, of each day, "It may be that thou shalt die this year or this day. Therefore so live as if thou wert to die to-day." This was the advice which S. Anthony was wont to give to his disciples, as S. Athanasius testifies, "When we awake out of sleep, let us be in doubt whether we shall see the evening. When we lay us down to rest, let us not be confident that we shall come to the light of another day. Thus we shall not offend, nor be carried away by vain desires. Neither shall we be angry, nor covet to lay up earthly treasures. But rather by the fear of departure, from day to day we shall trample upon all transitory things." Barlaam also taught the same to his Josaphat, "Think that this day thou hast begun the religious life. Think that this day also thou wilt finish it." S. Jerome says, "So live as though thou shouldst die to-day; so study as though thou wert to live always." The same Father (*Ep.* 16, *ad Principiam*) says that Marcella was wont to praise that saying of Plato, "that philosophy was a meditation upon death;" and the precept of the Satirist, "Live mindful of death: time flies." She therefore so lived as though she always believed herself at the point of death. When she put on her clothes, she remembered the grave, offering herself to God as a reasonable, living, acceptable sacrifice.

Ver. 43. *But know this*, &c. Here we must supply what is to be understood, somewhat as follows: But forasmuch as a man knows not this hour, and is not willing or able to watch at every hour, therefore the thief, as his manner is, comes at the hour in which he thinks the householder is not watching, but sleeping, and

so robs his house while he is asleep. It is clear that this is the meaning from the Greek, which has in the past tense, *If the master of the house had known in what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken through.* You must supply, "But because he did not know the hour, he did not watch, and did suffer his house to be broken into and robbed."

By the *thief*, S. Hilary understands *the devil.* "The thief," he says, "shows that the devil is very watchful to take from us our goods, and to plot against the houses of our souls, that he may dig through them whilst we are careless, and given up to the sleep of our own devices; and he would pierce through them with the darts of enticements. It behoves us, therefore, to be prepared, because ignorance of the day sharpens the intense solicitude of expectation ever suspended." But it is better to apply the words to Christ. For so He Himself explains, applying this parable of the thief to Himself in the following verse.

Be ye also ready, &c. . . . *the Son of man shall come*, to judgment, both the particular judgment of your own soul, and the general Judgment of all men at the end of the world. Christ therefore compares Himself to *a thief*, not as regards the act of stealing, but as regards silence and secrecy, in that the thief chooses the hour in which he thinks the householder will be absent or asleep, that so he may come upon him unawares, and rob his house. In like manner Christ summons those who are careless, and not waiting for Him, to death and judgment. Whence the Apocalypse warns every one saying, "Behold, I come as a thief" (xvi. 15). And S. Paul (1 *Thess.* v. 4) says, "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all children of the light, and of the day." Truly hath the wise man said, "The life of mortals is a vigil."

The truth of this sentence of Christ is seen in daily experience. For we see very many men seized by death at a time when they think themselves to be in good health, and are forming grand projects in their minds. They think death is far distant, and

promise themselves many years of life. And yet both experience and the warning of Christ should teach them to do the very opposite. When they appear to themselves to enjoy the most perfect health, they should think that death is lying hid at the very threshold of their doors, and should believe that they are then about to die when thoughts and hopes of long life are suggested to them, either by the devil or their own concupiscence. So would the day of death never come upon them unawares, nor overtake them as a thief.

Thus did the wise and holy men of whom we read in the *Lives of the Fathers* (*lib.* 5, *libello* 3, *de Compunc. n.* 2). Abbot Ammon gives this precept of salvation to a certain person, "Entertain such thoughts as evil-doers who are in prison have. For these men ask, 'Where is the judge, and when will he come?' And they weep in expectation of their punishments. After this manner ought a monk to do. He should ever be chiding his soul, and saying, 'Woe is me, who have to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, to render unto Him an account of all my deeds.' For if thou wilt always meditate thus, thou wilt be safe." And Abbot Evagrius said, "That is divine, to picture the dreadful and terrible judgment. Consider the confusion which is laid up for sinners, which they shall endure in the presence of Christ and God, before angels, and archangels, and powers, and all men. Think of the everlasting fire, the undying worm, the blackness of hell; and in addition to all these things, the gnashing of teeth the fears and torments. Consider likewise the good things which are laid up for the righteous—confidence before God the Father and Christ His Son, and before the angels. Consider the heavenly Kingdom and its gifts of joy and rest." And Abbot Elias saith, "I am afraid of three things—the first, the going forth of my soul from the body; the second, when I shall meet God; the third, when sentence shall be pronounced against me." Abp. Theophilus, of holy memory, said, when he was about to die, "Blessed art thou, O Abbot Arsenius, because thou always hadst this hour before thine eyes." In the same work we read that

a certain old man saw one laughing, and said to him, "We have to give an account of our whole life before the Lord of heaven and earth, and dost thou laugh?"

Ver. 45. *Who then is a faithful and wise servant*, &c. *Who then?* Gr. τίς ἄρα; Vulg. *Who thinkest thou?* At first sight there might seem to be a hiatus here, or a question without an answer. But it is not so. The sentence should be disposed as follows: "Who, thinkest thou, is the faithful and prudent servant, whom the Lord hath set over His family, to give them of His household food in due season?" He assuredly is faithful and prudent who performs that for which he is appointed, who does give every member of the family their food in due time. He distributes, that is, to the servants and domestics, their proper portion of victuals, as the price of their labours. For in ancient times, when money was scarce, the wages of servants were paid in rations of food.

This saying of Christ has special reference to Bishops and Pastors. For on them it is incumbent to feed the Church, which is their family, indeed Christ's family, that they should distribute the food of holy doctrine according to the capacity of every one to receive it. Wherefore it behoves them to be vigilant in this matter, prudent, and faithful. Thus, S. Hilary saith, "Although He exhorts every one of us in common to betake ourselves to unwearied watchfulness, yet He gives a special charge of solicitude to the princes of the people, that is, to the Bishops, in expectation of His Advent. For He signifies that he is a faithful servant, and a prudent overseer of His family, who is careful about the profit of the people committed to his charge; who hears the word and obeys it; who in opportunity of doctrine and truth strengthens the weak, establishes the fallen, converts the depraved, and dispenses the word of life as the eternal food for nourishing the family."

This question, *Who thinkest thou?* intimates that such servants, such Bishops and Pastors as are wholly faithful to Christ in the care of His flock, are few. Whence the saying of S. Jerome, "Priests many, Priests few." Also that of S. Boniface,

Apostle of Germany, and Martyr, "Formerly Priests of gold celebrated in chalices of wood; now Priests of wood celebrate in chalices of gold."

Blessed is that servant . . . so doing: that is, assiduously and continually until death, and the day of particular judgment, and so, by consequence, of the general Judgment, namely, that he should distribute to all the faithful of his Church such food as is suitable for each, the word and Sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist, to nourish their souls in faith and piety. Blessed therefore is the Bishop who doth this, because, not only on account of his own holiness shall he receive of Christ the crown of righteousness, but shall obtain as many crowns as there are faithful people whom he has nourished and profited, according to the words of Daniel, "They that instruct many to justice shall shine as the stars for perpetual eternities" (Vulg.).

Ver. 47. *Amen*, i.e., *Verily I say*, &c. He alludes to the servant who, because of his merit in faithfully and prudently ruling his master's household, deserves to be exalted by him and set over all his goods, so as to enjoy them as an associate and companion, and almost like an equal of his master. Such was Joseph, who was set by Pharaoh to preside over Egypt, and was virtually king of Egypt (*Gen.* xli. 10). In like manner will God bless prudent and faithful Bishops, who have ruled well their flocks, and have guided them to everlasting salvation. He will bestow upon them greater glory than He will upon private believers. He will cause them to preside, not only over them, but He will make them kings and lords of the whole universe. Thus Remigius says, "He will make the good hearers to sit down, as Luke saith: the good preachers He will set over all His goods. For as the difference of merits is great, so also is the difference in rewards." This is what is spoken of in Apoc. iv. 10, "The four and twenty Elders," *i.e.*, Bishops and Prelates, "cast their crowns before Him that sitteth on the Throne and worshipped Him that liveth for ever, saying unto the Lamb," that is, to Christ, "Thou hast made us unto God a Kingdom and Priests, and we

shall reign for ever and ever." What I have said of Bishops applies to every father of a family, for he is, as it were, a bishop of his own house; and as S. Augustine saith, every faithful soul is a bishop of himself.

In the Life of S. Amandus, who flourished about A.D. 870, and who converted Sclavonians and many other tribes to Christ, it is related, that at the very hour when he departed this life, he appeared to S. Aldegonde in glory, encompassed with a white-robed throng. And when she knew not what it meant, she heard an angel saying, "Amandus, the man of God, has passed in glory to celestial joys. The white-robed throng are they who by means of his earnest preaching have been enrolled as citizens of Heaven, and from henceforth he shall appear as a prince over them for ever." Among the more illustrious of his disciples were S. Landvald, S. Bavo, S. Amantius, S. Gertrude, S. Maurontus, and many others.

Over all His goods; Gr. *over all the things which belong to Himself.* The *good things* of God are twofold, viz., 1st. Things external and created, as Heaven and earth, and all creatures contained in them. So Origen. 2d. Things internal and uncreated—such are His infinite majesty, goodness, wisdom, power, and glory. For God is, as it were, an infinite ocean of all good things; and over them all He will appoint His faithful servant His bishop and pastor. He will make him to rule, as it were, not only over all creatures, but also over all the immense and infinite goodness which God contains in Himself, that he may enjoy them with God, and be blessed and glorified for ever. For if Jacob, wrestling with the angel of God, and overcoming Him, willing to be overcome, was called Israel, *i.e.*, "ruling God"* (*Gen.* xxxii. 28), much rather shall blessed Bishops, by their own virtue, as it were, overcoming God, be called and become Israels, that is, "rulers of God," that "they may have these eternal rewards, both because of their own life, as well as for their care

* *Dominans Deo* is the Latin of à Lapide. It might perhaps be translated "lord of God."

of their flocks," as Rabanus says. For in that they have rightly presided over the flock of God, they have therefore deserved that they should, in a certain sense, through God's wonderful condescension, be appointed over the good things of God, and even over Himself. For God makes Himself over to them, as their peculiar possession, as it is said in the 16th Psalm, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup."

But if that evil servant, i.e., such a servant as has been set by his master over his household, *shall say*, &c. It means, "If a Bishop shall think, 'The day of death and judgment is far away: wherefore I will abuse my life and my office for the purposes of luxury and ambition.'" Therefore He adds—

Ver. 49. *And shall begin to smite his fellow-servants*, &c. *To smite*, i.e., unjustly. For, as saith *Auctor Imperf.*, "He who smites for just cause, even if he smite, does not seem to smite. For as righteous anger is not anger, but diligence; so just smiting is not smiting, but correction. Thus a father and a master smite their sons and pupils for the sake of correcting them."

Christ here intimates that there are two capital vices of Prelates, from which all their other faults take their rise. They are, imperious and tyrannical audacity, and a seeking after pleasures, gluttony, and luxury. This is why S. Peter admonishes Pastors and Bishops (1 *Pet.* v. 2) thus, "Feed the flock of God, which is among you, providing for them not by constraint, but spontaneously, according to God; neither for filthy lucre's sake, but voluntarily; neither as lording it over the clergy, but as affording examples of their actions to the flock from the heart. And when the Prince of the Shepherds shall appear, ye shall receive the unwithering crown of glory."

The Lord . . . shall come . . . when he looketh not; Vulg. *non sperat, hopeth not, expecteth not.* Thus Virgil, in the First Æneid, "Hope," that is, fear, "that the gods take note of right and wrong."

And shall cut him asunder; Gr. διχοτομήσει, *cut in twain*, i.e., soul and body in death, and after death, by sending the soul to

hell and the demons, and the body to the tomb and the worms, "*He shall divide*," says S. Jerome, "not by cutting him in two with a sword, but by severing him from the company of the Saints." It means that not only shall Christ remove such a Bishop from his office, but shall separate him from the company of the Blessed, and deliver him to the devil to be tormented for ever.

With the hypocrites, i.e., *slothful servants*, who, like hypocrites, serve only the eyes of their masters. As soon as they are out of their master's sight, they indulge in sleep and drunkenness, and so shall be sent to the prison-house of hell, which is the proper place for the slothful. Thus in Proverbs, *passim*, a hypocrite signifies a wicked man, who serves God slothfully, but his own lusts fervently. There is an allusion to Job viii. 13, "The hope of the hypocrite shall perish."

Christ has shown that it is the duty of every believer to watch, that by good works he may prepare himself for the certain coming of the Lord to judgment, forasmuch as the time is uncertain, lest that day should come upon him unawares. This He showed: 1st. By the example of the Deluge, which drowned the world at unawares (*ver.* 37). 2d. By the parable of the householder, who watches that he may repel the thief, who comes by night, at a time unexpected (*ver.* 43). 3rd. By the parable of the servants, one faithful, the other unfaithful; the one of whom receives from his master an ample reward, the other severe chastisement (*ver.* 45). 4th. In the following chapter (*ver.* 1), by the parable of the virgins. 5th. By the parable of the talents, which the master distributes to his servants, and gloriously recompenses those who had traded diligently, but beats those who were idle and slothful.

CHAPTER XXV.

1 *The parable of the ten virgins,* 14 *and of the talents.* 31 *Also the description of the last judgment.*

THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

2 And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish.

3 They that *were* foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

9 But the wise answered, saying, *Not so;* lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut.

11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

14 ¶ For *the kingdom of heaven is* as a man travelling into a far country, *who* called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one: to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made *them* other five talents.

17 And likewise he that *had received* two, he also gained other two.

18 But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

21 His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them.

23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed:

25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, *there* thou hast *that is* thine.

26 His lord answered and said unto him, *Thou* wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give *it* unto him which hath ten talents.

29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

31 ¶ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats.

33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:

36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed *thee?* or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink?

38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee?*

39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

42 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink:

43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Then . . . which went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride (*Vulg.*). *And the bride* is not found in the Greek, nor in S. Chrysostom. It is the reading of the Latin and the Syriac versions, and of Origen, Hilary, and S. Augustine (*Epist.* 120).

Then: when Christ shall return unexpectedly to judgment.

The Kingdom of Heaven: that is, the Church militant, which shall then be about to triumph. The meaning is, "At that time shall it be with members of the Church as if ten virgins were preparing themselves for a marriage feast. For although the damned, as being already in hell, are no longer members of the Church, yet because they were members of it in this life, they are brought to hear the sentence of the Judge. There is no mention of unbelievers here, because, as S. John says, "He that believeth not is judged already."

Observe, that formerly, as now, youths were assigned to the bridegroom, to do him honour, and virgins to the bride; and these last were often ten in number. Moreover, they were accustomed to celebrate weddings at night. Then the bridegroom came about evening to the house of the bride. There he was honourably and joyfully received in the house of the parents of the bride. From thence he conducted his bride to his own house, or, if it proved too small, to the larger mansion of the nuptial feast: and there he kept his wedding. Both the youths and the virgins, carrying torches, most frequently made of white thorn, and five in number, went out to meet the bride and bridegroom, to do them honour. So Plutarch testifies (*in Problem.*). The Jews do not seem, anciently, to have made use of wax-lights or torches, but of oil lamps. This is why there is constant

mention in Scripture of lamps and lanterns, never of candles. Even in the candlestick in the Temple there were lamps with oil, not candles made of wax or fat.

As to the particular application of the parable, Christ is *the Bridegroom*, the Church *the Bride*, whose espousals take place in this life, but the eternal *Marriage* shall be in the future glory of the Resurrection. The *virgins* are all believers or all Christians. They are called *virgins* because they are sound in the faith.

S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, S. Augustine, and S. Gregory understood by virgins only those and all who are literally so. But this is too narrow and restricted an interpretation. Rightly, nevertheless, does the Church in the *Divine Office* apply the words to *Virgins*, because they bear a literal application to them above others. So Jansen, Maldonatus, and others. So B. Anatolia, betrothed to Aurelian, beheld an angel, who cried aloud to her, "O virginity, which shall not be overcome of death! O virginity, who art not occupied in the works of darkness, but art ever in the light! Virginity is the royal purple, which whoso putteth on, is more glorious than others. Virginity is a precious jewel. Virginity is the immense treasure of the King. For it thieves are lying in wait. Do thou watch, and guard it carefully. Forasmuch as thou knowest thou hast more, so much the more keep it, lest thou lose it." So Ado *in Martyrolog.*, Dec. 21.

Ten virgins are spoken of, because the number ten is the symbol of totality.

"They took their nuptial lamps, kindled," says Origen; "but for so great a journey to go out to meet the Bridegroom, they took no oil to keep them alight." "For when they complain," says S. Jerome, "that their lamps were going out, they show that they were partly alight."

Moreover, in Scripture, *lappidim*, *lamps*, mean torches, such as are used at weddings and for other purposes. These nuptial torches (*tædæ*) are wont to be carried at night before a bridegroom and bride, because they will stand against the wind, when lamps would be immediately extinguished. Those, however,

spoken of in the parable where *lamps*, properly so called, because mention is made of *oil*. They belonged to *virgins*, as torches to men. Thus Virgil says in the 4th Eclogue,

"Cut, O Mopsas, new torches: it is your wedding day."

And Pliny says, "The thorn, most auspicious for wedding torches, is an accompaniment of the same rites, because the shepherds, who carried off the Sabine maids, made use of them for that purpose" (*lib.* 16, *c.* 18).

Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent (Vulg.). *Foolish*, because they acted foolishly and imprudently; for when they went out to meet the Bridegroom with burning lamps, they neglected to take the necessary oil for keeping the lamps alight.

But the prudent, &c. In the first place, SS. Jerome and Hilary by the *virgins* understand all mankind; by *the foolish*, Jews and heretics; by the *prudent*, Christians.

2d. On the contrary, S. Chrysostom and others already cited consider that virgins only are to be understood; of whom *the prudent* are they who, with virginity, have the oil of charity; *the foolish*, they who are without it.

3d. Lyra says, "The *prudent virgins* are Contemplatives and Religious, who have the oil of charity and a right disposition. *The foolish* are those who lack the oil, and who hunt for the vain praise and glory of men."

4th and last. *The virgins* are all believers. The *prudent* are those who have faith together with works of mercy, charity, and other virtues: *the foolish*, who have faith alone without good works. So Origen, Hilary, *Auctor Imperfecti.*

Thus their lamps are dying out, yea, as the Syriac hath it, *they have been extinguished;* according to the words of S. James, "Faith without works is dead." The *lamp*, therefore, is the faithful mind, or faith itself. The *oil* is good works, without which faith is dead, and, as it were, extinct; but with them, alive and burning. The light, or flame of the lamps, is charity. For this is fed by zeal for good works, just as the flame of a lamp is

fed with oil. The *vessel* is conscience, or the believing soul. And this is the reason why we place a lighted candle in the hands of dying persons, denoting, or at least praying, that they may have faith with works, that like brides with burning lamps, they may worthily meet Christ the Lord, as it were their *Bridegroom.*

But while the Bridegroom tarried, &c.; Gr. χρονίζοντος. Whilst Christ the Bridegroom delays to come, is the opportunity for repentance and good works, which He grants to every one in this life. Therefore does He delay the time of death and judgment. To *slumber* is to die. To *sleep* is to be dead. The meaning is, Whilst Christ defers the Day of Judgment, meanwhile the faithful begin to die one after another, and at length all are dead. Thus S. Hilary, "The delay of the Bridegroom is the time of repentance. The sleep of them that wait is the rest of believers. And in the time of repentance is the temporal death of all men."

And at midnight, &c. The Arabic is, *It was midnight, and a voice cried out.* This was the voice of the companions of the Bridegroom, who went before him, as he was bringing his bride from her house, and drawing nigh his own. This cry denotes the archangel's trump, which awakes the dead, of which I have spoken in the previous chapter.

It was to this S. Laurence Justinian, the first patriarch of Venice, was alluding, when he said in dying, "Up till now, children, all has been jest: now it is earnest indeed. The Bridegroom is at hand; we must go to meet Him." Then lifting up his eyes to Heaven, he said, "I come to Thee, O good Jesu. This day have I ever had before mine eyes. Thou, Lord, knowest." Then, with joyful countenance, he rendered up his pure soul to God, going to meet Christ in Heaven.

From this which is here said, that this cry is made *at midnight*, SS. Chrysostom, Jerome, and Euthymius think it probable that the second Advent of Christ will take place at midnight, and come upon men sleeping and unawares. S. Jerome says that this was an Apostolic tradition, and that this was the reason why formerly at Easter the people were not allowed to depart out of

Church before midnight; because, as in the olden time, Christ came into Egypt at midnight to destroy the first-born, and deliver the Hebrews; so it was believed that Christ would come at the same time to judge all men. But this is a doubtful matter. For others, with equal, or even greater probability, think that Christ will come in the morning. For He is the Father of light, and He will execute His judgment openly in the light before the whole world, so that there shall be no place of darkness in which to take refuge. What is meant therefore by *midnight* is, that Christ the Judge shall come when men are not thinking of it, when they are, as it were, sleeping.

Ver. 7. *Then all those virgins*, &c. At the sound of the Archangel's trumpet, all Christians shall rise, and shall be anxious with what mind and conscience they shall go to the Judge. As *Auctor Imperfecti* says, "They shall examine their faith, they shall consider their works, they shall interrogate their conscience." "For," as S. Augustine says (*Serm.* 23, *de Verbis Dom.*), "they began to trim their lamps, means nothing else but to prepare to render an account of their works to God. But S. Hilary says, "The taking up the lamps is the return of the soul to the body; the light is a bright conscience of good works, which is, as it were, contained in the vessel of the body."

S. Montanus and his fellow-martyrs, disciples of S. Cyprian, received in a vision a warning from God of their martyrdom by means of lamps. "One of them, whose name was Reno, saw them, in his sleep, led out one by one. As they came forth, lamps were given to each. And no one came forth without a lamp going before him. And when we had come forth with our lamps, he awoke, and related to us the dream. Then were we glad, trusting that we should walk with Christ, who is a lantern to our feet, and the Word of God. Immediately afterwards we were dragged before the procurator." (See their *Acta* in Surias, Feb. 24.)

Ver. 8. *But the foolish*, &c. This belongs to the *emblema* of the parable. For, with reference to what is signified by it, the reprobate in the Day of Judgment will not ask for the oil of good works from

the elect; for they will know that they will neither give nor be able to give it to them. For then shall every one be judged by the works which he hath done in this life before death. This *emblema*, then, is introduced to express that the repentance of the reprobate will be too late, when, after death, they behold the dreadful judgment of God hanging over them. Too late will they grieve that they in this life neglected goodness. Too late will they wish that they had loved virtue. But it will be in vain. They will not be able to procure either the works or the help of the elect. For there will be neither time for working, nor the help and prayers of the Saints. Yea, in that terrible judgment, there will be no one who will appear to have any confidence in himself, or in good works.

Our lamps are gone out. In truth they were extinguished, because they had died in a state of mortal sin. Yet they say, *are going out* (*extinguuntur*), because in this life their souls seemed, through their common profession of the true faith, and through participation of the Sacraments, to be alive. But then, that is, in death and judgment, when all those things are vanishing away, they will see that they are extinct. S. Augustine says (*Serm.* 23, *de Verb. Domini*), "Before those virgins slept, it is not said that their lamps were being extinguished. Wherefore, then, were they alight? It was because they did not lack the praise of men. But in the presence of the Bridegroom, that is, Christ the Judge, they will be extinguished, because Christ will illuminate the hidden things of darkness, and then shall every one have praise of God (1 *Cor.* iv. 5), not of men." For to the slothful and reprobate will be confusion.

The words *are gone out* signify that charity, which is the flame of the lamps, that is, of souls, is nourished by good works, as by oil. When, therefore, they are withdrawn, it is extinguished. This is because many virtuous works are commanded by God, such as are all those which are commanded in the Decalogue. If, therefore, any one does not fulfil what God has commanded, he loses the grace and love of God. For charity, without the exercise

of good works, fades and languishes. And then, when any temptation attacks him, a man easily glides into mortal sin, by which charity is extinguished. Dost thou wish then to secure the grace of God, yea, to grow in the friendship and love of God? Be thou very earnest in all good works. For by these charity is constantly nourished and strengthened. It grows and increases.

Ver. 9. *The wise answered*, &c. The Arabic is, *we have not enough.* S. Augustine says of these words of the prudent virgins, "This is not the answer of persons giving advice, but of those who decide. For they were not wise of themselves, but the wisdom in them was that of which it is written (*Prov.* i. 24), 'Because I called, and ye refused . . . I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh, when that whereof ye were afraid cometh upon you.'" And as S. Jerome says upon this passage, "In the Day of Judgment no one's virtues will be able to give any assistance to other men's faults." And the *Interlinear Gloss* adds, "The wise say this not from covetousness, but from fear. For in that day the testimony of each shall scarcely suffice for himself, much less for himself and his neighbour also." S. Gregory adds, "The sellers of oil are flatterers. For they who, when any favour has been received, offer with their vain praises the brightness of glory, sell, as it were, oil. This is the oil of which the Psalmist says, 'Let not the oil of the sinner make fat my head'" (Vulg.).

But whilst they were going . . . with him to the marriage. Syr. *to the house of the choir*, because at weddings there were choirs of singers and dancers. This, too, is a figure of speech, signifying that in this life is the time for repentance and good works. And this time is ended by death. "For," says S. Augustine, "after judgment there is no place open for prayers or merits." And Origen says, "They who, when they ought to have learned what was profitable, neglected to do so, at the close of life, when they wish to learn, are seized by death." He adds that they who sell are Teachers; buying is receiving: the price is perseverance. Moreover, because marriage joy is, among men, the chief of all, the celestial happiness of the elect is here likened to it. Wherefore

S. Hilary says, "Marriage is the putting on of immortality, when the soul is united to the Word of God as her Bridegroom."

Hear what S. Adelinus relates of S. Opportuna, the Abbess. "When S. Opportuna was very sick, there came to her SS. Cecilia and Lucy. 'Hail, Cecilia and Lucy, my sisters,' she cried; 'what does the Virgin Mary, the Queen of all, bid her handmaid do?' 'She is awaiting,' they answer, 'your presence in Heaven, that you may be united to her Son. Therefore you must be decked with a crown of glory, and meet, with burning lamp, the Bridegroom and the Bride.' When, therefore, she beheld the Virgin coming to her, and, as it were, embracing her, she gave up her spirit into her hands, to be beatified with everlasting glory."

But, last of all, come the other virgins, &c. (Vulg.). "But what does it profit," says S. Jerome, "to invoke with your voice Him whom you deny by your works?" It means, then, that the reprobate will, at that time, be struck with the utmost anxiety and terror, and turn themselves in every direction, now with prayers imploring mercy of the Judge, now deploring the negligence of their life past, now giving up hope of salvation. As *Auctor Imperfecti* says, "There will be no profit in the confession, forced by necessity, of him who never once voluntarily confessed." Read the pathetic wailings of the reprobate, graphically depicted by the wise man (*Wisdom* v. 1, &c.).

Ver. 12. *But He answered*, &c. "I do not acknowledge you as mine. Because ye, in your day, would not acknowledge Me as your Lord and your God, neither will I, in this My day, acknowledge you as My faithful sons and servants. Ye have served the devil in pleasure, now serve him in hell." Hear S. Chrysostom: "When He shall say, 'I know you not,' nothing is left but hell and intolerable torment. Yea, verily that word is more dreadful than hell." For whom God knows not, Heaven knows not, the Angels and the Blessed know not; but the devil knows him, death knows him, hell knows him. Consider that Christ, in the Day of Judgment, will show so terrible a countenance to the reprobate that (*Apoc.* vi. 16, 17) they will say "to the mountains and rocks, Fall

on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?"

Watch ye therefore, &c. These words give the scope or aim and application of the parable, namely, that its object is to stimulate all the faithful to watchfulness and zeal for good works, by means of which they may prepare themselves for the day of death and judgment, which is at once imminent and uncertain. As S. Gregory says, "Forasmuch as ye know not the day of judgment, prepare the light of good works. For He who has guaranteed pardon to the penitent has not promised to-morrow to the sinner" (*Hom.* 12, *in Evang.*).

Wisely says R. Achabia (*in Pirke Avoth*), "Consider three things that thou mayest not sin. First, from whence thou comest. Second, whither thou goest. Third, to whom thou shalt render an account of thy life. From whence comest thou? From fetid matter. Whither goest thou? To the place of ashes and worms. To whom shalt thou render an account? To the King of kings, the Holy and the Blessed." Still more wisely says S. Augustine, "God has promised thee that in the day thou art converted, He will forget thy past sins; but He has never promised thee a to-morrow. God hath wisely made the day of death uncertain. Let every man, for his profit, think upon his last day. It is of the mercy of God that man knoweth not when he shall die. The last day lies hid, that all days may be watched." Mark well this last sentence of S. Augustine.

Ver. 14. *For as a man going into a far country*, &c. (Vulg.). Supply from what precedes, *So shall be the coming of the Son of Man to judgment.* The word *for* denotes the scope of the parable. By it Christ would prove what He said in the verse before, *Watch ye therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour.*

The object of the parable is to show how exact an account Christ will require from the slothful in the Day of Judgment; and how great will be the reward which He will give to the diligent, who have carefully used His gifts to the glory of God. The

parable is similar to that which Luke records (xix. 11), but with some differences. For they were spoken by Christ at different times, and with different objects. The parable in Luke was spoken before Palm Sunday; but this in S. Matthew after it, on the Tuesday before Good Friday. Hence S. Chrysostom, Euthymius, Jansen, and others think they are different parables, or rather, the same parable told in different ways. For instead of *talents*, Luke has *minæ*.

Now *the man* here spoken of is Christ. For Christ went a long journey when He ascended into Heaven, being about to be absent a long time from earth and His Church. So Origen, Jerome, Bede. Others think that Christ's going far off (*peregre*) means His transference of the preaching of the gospel from the Jews to the Gentiles by means of the Apostles, and His founding the kingdom of His Church amongst them. And this applies well to the relation of the parable by S. Luke, where it is introduced with reference to Zacchæus, a publican, and, as it were, a Gentile, to whose house Christ, leaving the Jews, brought salvation. But in such a case the whole parable of the servants and the talents would have to be restricted to the Jews. For the Master is here said to have distributed His talents before He went His long journey,—that is to say, to the Gentiles. Wherefore the former explanation is of wider scope, and so more true. By *the servants* all the faithful are to be understood, whether Jews or Gentiles. *Talents* are goods, either because the *Master*, like merchants and chapmen, had all His goods in money—in talents of gold and silver; or else because revenues and estates are called *talents*, which were valued, some at one talent, some at two, some at five talents. In like manner, in Latin, whatever is bought or valued for money is called money.

And to one he gave, &c. Instead of talents, Luke has *mnas*, or *minas*. *Mna* in Hebrew signifies *numbered* or *defined*, with reference to value, or weight of gold or silver. The root is *mana*, *he numbered*. It is the word used in Daniel v. 25, *mene*. The Hebrew *mna* was equal to about $2\frac{1}{2}$ pounds. A Hebrew talent was equivalent to sixty Hebrew *mnas*.

By *talents* understand all the gifts of God, without which we can do nothing. These gifts are, I say—1st. Of grace, both making grateful,* such as faith, hope, charity, virginity, and all the other virtues, as well as those of grace given *gratis*—such as the power of working miracles, the Apostolate, the Priesthood, the gift of tongues, prophecy, &c. 2d. Natural gifts, such as a keen intellect, a sound judgment, a sound constitution, prudence, industry, learning, eloquence. 3d. External goods and gifts, as honours, riches, rank, &c. So S. Chrysostom. For all these things God distributes unequally, according to His good pleasure. And with this end in view, that each should use them for God's glory, and the good of himself and others. For so He will increase them, both by Himself (for all habits grow by use and exercise) and also in merit and reward. For to that man there will be added crowns and coronets celestial, as of virginity, martyrdom. Moreover, there is no man who hath not received one, ay, several of these gifts of God, though one hath more, another less. For, as S. Gregory saith (*Hom.* 5, *in Evang.*), "There is no man who can say with truth, 'I have not received a single talent. There is nothing of which I must give an account.' For to every poor man even this shall be reckoned as a talent, that he hath received but a very little." For to many it is a greater gift of God, and more conducive to their salvation, that they have poverty rather than wealth, sickness and not health, a humble station instead of an exalted one. Let us take as instances S. Paul, S. Timothy, S. Onesimus. S. Paul received, as it were, five talents or gifts from God,—as the gift of tongues, miracles, the apostolate, zeal for souls, power in preaching. Timothy received, as it were, two,—knowledge of the Scriptures, and the bishopric of Ephesus. But Onesimus one, that is to say, zeal to minister to Paul in prison at Rome. By means of this he merited many others, as the bishopric of Colosse, the conversion of many, and martyrdom.

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* *Gratum facientis.* But for a criticism in the *Tablet*, I should have thought it unnecessary to observe that, in translating *gratum* by *grateful*, I use the word in the classical and theological sense.

You will ask, in what manner does God distribute these His gifts according to every one's ability (Gr. δύναμιν), *power, strength?* I answer, this is partly an *emblema* pertaining only to the adornment of the parable. For so among men, prudent masters are wont to entrust their goods to servants in such a manner that they trust more to him who possesses greater prudence and industry, less to him who has less. For it is certain, in opposition to the Pelagians, that primary grace is not given according to natural powers and merits, yea, that there is no natural disposition to grace.

But, in part, this pertains to the meaning of the parable. For favours and stations given *gratis*, such as magistracies, the episcopate, priesthood, &c., God often confers in accordance with natural powers, and does not raise any one to such a condition unless he be either suited to it by nature, or unless He Himself makes him fit. Men do the same when they choose any one for a shepherd, a bishop, a prelate. Indeed, when God determines to bestow any permanent gift whatsoever upon any one, He first gives him the capacity, or natural or supernatural proportional disposition or merit, by means of which he becomes suitable for the bestowment of this gift, or may make himself fitted for it. Thus God gave to Moses a zeal on behalf of his nation, that He might thereby dispose him to deliver them out of Egypt. So also He gave S. Paul a zeal for the Mosaic law, that He might make use of him when he was purified for the propagation of the Law of Christ. So He instilled into SS. Mary Magdalene and Peter an immense contrition for sin, that He might, through it, dispose them to an immense sanctity. So it is with those whom God chooses and destines to virginity, the religious life, martyrdom, mission work in India. He first infuses into them a vehement desire, by which they fit and prepare themselves for what they have to do.

Lastly, S. Thomas (1 *p. quæst.* 62, *art.* 6) teaches that God has distributed to the angels His gifts of grace and glory, according to their natural gifts. Those who are more lofty by nature are also higher in grace and glory. And he adds, that God deals in like fashion with men. For he says, "This also happens among men,

that in proportion to the fervour of their conversion to God, greater grace and glory are given them." Often, indeed, God acts in a way the reverse of this, and gives greater gifts of grace to persons of weak intellect—to the ignorant and despised—than He does to the learned, the witty, and the honourable. Thus He did to S. Francis, S. Catherine of Sienna, S. Simeon Stylites, and many others. After a like fashion God distributes His gifts of grace, freely given, in accordance with His own hidden counsels. For many are set in high station who are by no means worthy of it; many are the Priests who are unfit for the Priesthood. And yet, in no persons whatsoever are nature and natural endowments a merit, or a disposition to grace.

Wherefore it does not follow from these words of Christ that "the gifts of God are conferred upon every man, according to the measure of his merit," according to the charge which Calvin calumniously brings against the Catholics. For it is one thing to be by nature capable of receiving the gifts of God; it is another thing to merit those gifts. It is one thing to be able to possess charity; it is another thing to possess it. This is Prosper's teaching (*lib.* 2, *de Vocatione Gentium*, *c.* 2).

And straightway took his journey. Luke adds, that Christ, before He went away, after dividing the pounds, or talents, amongst His servants, said, *Make merchandise until I come.* He meant, "Increase these My talents by labouring diligently all your life long, and bring Me what you have gained when I return to judgment." By and by he adds, *But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.* The *citizens* of Christ are the Jews, who rejected Him, who would not acknowledge Him as their King and Messiah, who said, "*We have no king but Cæsar*," as they cried before Pilate when they asked that Christ might be crucified. And again, after His resurrection, they persecuted the Apostles and Christians who preached and spread the kingdom of Christ. Wherefore concerning the righteous chastisement which came upon the Jews, Luke subjoins that Christ said, "*But those mine enemies, who would*

not that I should reign, bring them hither, and slay them before me." Christ did this when He slew the Jews by the hands of Titus. He will do it yet more in the Day of Judgment, when He will punish them with death eternal.

Ver. 16. *Then he . . . five talents*, &c. To gain talents is to increase the gifts of God by using and increasing them, especially by means of good works, and helping our neighbour to increase and multiply the grace of God in ourselves and others. This parable intimates that every one ought to co-operate with the grace of God with all his might. For example, he who has, as it were, five degrees of charity, ought to exercise charity in a corresponding degree of intensity. By this means he will gain from God five degrees more. Again, by exercising charity thus increased as ten degrees, in acts of corresponding intensity, he may gain other ten degrees, and possess, as it were, twenty degrees. And so on, marvellously doubling and multiplying the gain of his talents, that is to say, the degrees of his charity. Let it be, therefore, that a man by his charity should gain few or none to Christ by preaching, yet will he have the same merit and reward of his charity and preaching as if he had converted multitudes. The conversion of others is not often in our power, but the merit of doing so is always in our power.

Moraliter: S. Gregory says (*Hom.* 9, *in Evang.*), "This passage of the Gospel admonishes us anxiously to beware lest we, who seem to have received somewhat more than others in this world, should, for that reason, be judged more severely by the Maker of the world. For in proportion as gifts are increased, so is the account to be rendered of the gifts."

And likewise he that had received two, &c. This man also, by diligently and correspondingly using his talent, that is, co-operating with grace, doubled it.

Ver. 18. *But he that had received one . . . hid his lord's money;* Arab. *buried his lord's silver.* To *bury a talent* is, through negligence and sloth, not to use or exercise the grace bestowed upon one. Here observe, that this burying of his talent is ascribed

to him who only received one talent. This is not because others, who have received more, do not often do the same, but in order that we may understand that if he, who had only misused his one talent, was thus severely punished by his master, far sharper will be the Lord's censure and punishment of those who have misused more and greater talents. Wherefore Paul says, "We exhort you, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain" (2 *Cor.* vi. 11). And again, "His grace in me was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all" (1 *Cor.* xv. 10); and, "Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel."

Let those who do not use genius, learning, prudence, or other gifts of God, for their own or others' benefits, on account of sloth, or fear of sinning, or for any similar reason, note this. For of them will Christ demand an exact account of these gifts in the Day of Judgment. Observe also, that those who have received few talents, often, through sloth, leave them idle, and, as it were, bury them; whilst those who have received more are stimulated by them, and either use them rightly and meritoriously, or else abuse them to vanity. And these last are punished not so much for letting their talents lie idle, as for misusing them! Thus we commonly see that those who have great powers of intellect, if they do not employ them for good purposes, do so for bad.

Ver. 19. *After a long time*, &c. This reckoning Christ makes with every one severally at death, and the particular judgment. He will make it publicly in the general Judgment.

Ver. 20. *And he that had received five talents came near*, &c. Hear how pathetically S. Gregory depicts this scene: "In that great examination the whole multitude of the elect and the reprobate will be led forth, and it will be shown what each hath done. Then Peter will take his stand, with Judæa converted at his side. There Paul, with, I might almost say, a converted world. There will be Andrew with Achaia, John with Asia, Thomas with India, which they will bring into the presence of the Judge. There will appear all the rams of the Lord's flock, with the souls which were given them for their hire. When, therefore, so many

shepherds with their flocks shall come before the eyes of the Eternal Pastor, what shall we, miserable ones, be able to say, if we return before the Lord empty, we who have the name of pastors, but have no sheep, which we have fed, to present?"

Ver. 21. *His lord said unto him, Well done,* &c. Luke has (xix. 19), *Be thou over five cities.* The parable is taken from the idea of a king, who is accustomed to reward his faithful servants by setting them over many cities. It signifies also that the Saints, who use diligently the grace that God gives them, will be sharers in the glory and joy of His kingdom, but in greater or less degrees according to the labour and merit of each.

Our Salmeron is of opinion that it is here intimated, and tacitly promised, that the Saints in Heaven shall be set by God to preside over the places in which they laboured while on earth, so that in those places they may heal diseases and work miracles, because they have deserved this by their labours. That thus S. James works miracles at Compostella and in Spain; S. Dionysius at Paris and in Gaul; S. Ambrose at Milan; S. Boniface in Germany.

Vers. 22, 23. *He also that had received two talents,* &c. The Arab. has, *And these are the five* talents which I have gained,* as though the servant showed them, and offered them to his master. The same thing is said as in vers. 20 and 21, save that there there were five talents, here there are two. For, as S. Jerome says, "The Lord does not regard so much the greatness of the gain, as the good-will and the desire. And it is possible that he who receives two talents, by trading diligently with them, may merit more than he who receives five, and uses them in a lukewarm manner." Thus S. Nicolas Tolentinus passed his life in constant prayer and the practice of austerities. He used to fast on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays on bread and water, in honour of the Blessed Virgin, and used to punish himself by means of an iron chain. Six months before his death he heard daily at vespers angelic songs, which invited him to the marriage

* This would seem to be a mistake for *two.*

feast of the Lamb in Heaven. Just before his death he was filled with a marvellous joy. Being asked the reason, he said, "My Lord Jesus Christ, leaning upon His mother and our father Augustine, is saying to me, Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord." Presently joining and lifting up his hands, and raising his eyes to the Cross, he said, "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit." And thus with joyful countenance he resigned his soul to God, A.D. 1306, on the 10th of September.

Vers. 24, 25. *Then he which had received the one talent,* &c. There is an emblem here which only pertains to the embellishment of the parable. For this, says Frank Lucas, is the way in which lazy servants excuse their idleness, throwing it upon the severity of their masters. As if they said, "You are not willing to lose, but always want to gain. And if gain is not brought you, you take away the property of your poor servants for any reason, or none."

It is to be observed that the reprobate in the Day of Judgment, when they behold the Saints thus rewarded by Christ and themselves sentenced to Gehenna, will, out of despair and madness, inveigh against Christ the Judge, and will shamelessly reproach Him for His too great severity, and will impiously and blasphemously throw the blame of their damnation upon Him. And thus they, in hell, being driven to madness by the severity and eternal duration of their torments, will continually blaspheme God, and Christ, and the Saints, as though they were the authors of their sufferings, directly or indirectly.

Vers. 26, 27. *His lord answered and said unto him,* &c. This likewise is an emblem, and only signifies how we ought by all means to increase the grace of God. Observe that they are called *money-changers,* who make gain by exchange, and by lending and borrowing. This gain is lawful in the way of exchange and merchandise. It is unlawful in the way of lending upon interest, and is the sin of usury. Wherefore the Lord in this place does not speak so much according to the abstract right of the matter, as parabolically, partly because of the common practice of nations (for usury was

allowed in many nations, especially among the Jews, who think that God permitted them to exact it from the Gentiles, in Deut. xxiii. 19), partly as a deduction from the words of the slothful servant, who attributed to his master the avarice of extorting money, by fair means or foul, from himself or others. This passage may, however, be accommodated to what is signified by the parable in the following manner—that God requires of us interest, as it were, for His gifts and graces, but that He will render us far greater interest of glory in Heaven. Hence the saying, "If thou wilt lend, lend unto God." Also it is said in Prov. (xix. 17), "He that hath mercy upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and what he layeth out it shall be paid him again."

Ver. 28. *Take from him the talent*, &c. This, too, is only an emblem. The Lord throws back the charge of avarice, with which the slothful servant accused him. It is as if he said, "Thou seest, O thou slothful servant, that I do not covetously seek this gain for myself, but for my servants. When I take back the talent which I gave to thee, I do not put it away in a chest for myself. I bestow it upon him who used his five talents so well, that he gained five other talents with them. He therefore deserves this talent of yours, or rather mine, as a recompense of his labour and merit."

But besides the emblematic character of these words, they are also partly applicable to the thing signified by the parable. For, in the Day of Judgment, God will actually take away His graces from the reprobate, who have misused them. He often does the same thing even in this life. Indeed, He always takes away from a man the grace which makes him pleasing in the eyes of God, when that man sins mortally, as when, for instance, he, through sloth, neglects to perform some commandment of God, which is binding under the penalty of mortal sin. But this which is added, *Give it to him that hath ten talents*, is an emblem. It tacitly intimates,—1st. That the Saints, who diligently use the grace of God, are worthy of greater grace; and that as to the grace which the unworthy and the slothful possess, it is not seldom, even in

this life, transferred from them to the former. Thus it is said in Apoc. iii. 11, "Hold fast that thou hast, that no man take thy crown." 2d. That the Saints in Heaven will rejoice, both on account of their own talents, as well as those of the reprobate. 3d. Because God, in Heaven, will bestow all gifts, all endowments and graces, even those which the reprobate have possessed in this world, upon the Blessed. For Beatitude is a state which is perfect by reason of the aggregation of all good, as Boetius says. Understand that these gifts are here spoken of, not as to their number, but as to their kind.

Ver. 29. *For unto every one that hath*, &c. The Arab. is, *Unto him that hath shall be given, and shall be added; and from him that hath not shall be taken away that which is with him.*

To every one that hath. S. Chrysostom and S. Augustine explain this to mean, all who rightly use their talents. For he, in truth, possesses a talent who rightly uses it. For the idle person, who does not make use of it, does not appear really to have it.

But he who hath not, that is to say, the gain of the talents and the grace acquired by him; or, *he who has not*, in the sense that he does not use his talent, as I have said, *even that which he seemeth to have*, that is, the talent which he has suffered to lie idle, so that he has not so much had it, as seemed to have it, *shall be taken away from him.* After a like fashion saith the comic poet, "The covetous man lacks that which he hath as much as if he had it not." He hides it in his chest, so that it is the chest which hath it, not himself. The covetous man does not so much possess his gold, as he is possessed and owned by his gold. He is its slave.

From this passage Theologians derive the maxim, that "God is never wanting to him who does his best." Nor does He refuse to add even more and more grace to him who heartily co-operates with it, even to the final gift of perseverance and glory. How this is to be understood, see Suarez, Vasquez, Bellarmine, and others in their works on *Grace.*

Ver. 31. *But when the Son of Man*, &c. . . . *upon the seat of*

His majesty, as Judge of all, sitting upon a glorious cloud. Here Christ graphically sets forth the manner and idea of the Last Judgment, that all may imprint it on their minds, and so by the constant remembrance of it, stir themselves up to purity of life and zeal for good works.

The majesty of Christ will appear. 1st. By the previous sounding of the awful trumpet of the Archangel, which will be heard throughout all the world. 2d. By the previous lightnings and thunderings, tempest and hail, according to the words in Ps. xcvii. 3. 3d. Because Christ shall appear in His glorious body, brighter than the sun, as it is said in Isaiah, "Then shall the moon be ashamed and the sun be confounded, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign," taken in the mystical sense. For there is another and literal interpretation of these words, as I have shown in commenting upon the passage. 4th. Because He shall descend from Heaven accompanied by innumerable legions of angels. 5th. Because there shall stand before Him in judgment all emperors, pontiffs, kings, prelates, princes, philosophers, orators, and all men and nations whatsoever. 6th. Because He shall judge them not as belonging to others, but as His own Servants. For all men and angels are the Servants of Christ not only as He is God, by the right of creation, but also as He is man, by virtue of the Hypostatic Union with the WORD, and by right of merit. For Christ merited this by His lowly obedience even to the death of the Cross, according to what the Apostle says (*Phil.* ii. 7, 8), "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name; that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Though men, indeed, are the servants of Christ by the peculiar right of redemption. For Christ hath redeemed them from death and hell, and bought them with the costly price of His own Blood.

And all the angels with Him. Therefore in the Day of Judgment not one angel shall remain in Heaven, but all shall descend at the same time with Christ. They shall accompany Him to do Him honour, as God, and Lord, and Saviour, that they may surround and minister to Him as He is Man. Moreover, it is probable that the angels shall then assume bodies of condensed air, and in them shall appear in glory. For otherwise this glory and power of Christ, as encompassed by the angels, would not be beheld by the wicked, on whose account chiefly it will then be manifested. Nor would that army of angels increase His outward majesty, which is what Christ is here describing. When, therefore, there shall be that innumerable multitude of angels, their many thousands of thousands will fill the higher regions of the air, far and wide, in every direction, yea, the very sky itself, affording the appearance of an infinite army.

It is also exceedingly probable that the devils also will assume bodies, and appear in them, but bodies that are foul, dreadful, and horrible.

And there shall be gathered together before Him all nations, i.e., all men sprung from Adam, from the first even unto the last, of every family and nation, however fierce and barbarous. Also little ones and infants, although the case and judgment of infants is not here properly treated of, but only that of adults, who by their good or bad works have deserved Heaven or hell. Wherefore there will be there very many millions of men, so that the valley of Josaphat could not contain them all. Wherefore God shall at that time turn the Mount of Olives and the other mountains into a plain, that there may be space to hold so many myriads of men. For all the reprobate shall stand upon the earth. But the Saints, especially the more eminent ones, such as the Apostles, shall be raised up into the air, where they shall sit as assessors with Christ.

That little children will appear in the Day of Judgment is exceedingly probable, though Durandus denies this (2, *disp.* 33,

quæst. 3). The reasons that make it probable are:—1st. Because Christ is the Judge of all men whatsoever, therefore also of infants. 2d. Because infants shall rise again as well as adults, and that "in a perfect man," as the Apostle says (*Eph.* iv. 13), that is, adult age and stature. They will see therefore and know that all men are rising with them, to stand and be judged at the tribunal of Christ. 3d. Because many infants have been made Saints and Martyrs by Baptism or martyrdom. Such were the infants who were slain by Herod. These therefore, as well as adults, shall hear from Christ the words, *Come, ye blessed of My Father.* 4th. Because the infants who have died in original sin among all nations, for so many thousands of years, will be very many. Lessius thinks that their number will be a thousand millions (*de Perfect. Divin. cap.* 22, *num.* 143). And these cannot be hid; but rising again, they will appear upon earth. And these too, being separated one from another, shall receive their sentences from Christ. They shall neither be condemned, like the adult reprobate, to the fire of hell; neither shall they be adjudged to Heaven to see God, as the adult elect.

And He shall separate them. He compares the elect to *sheep*, because of their innocence, modesty, humility, obedience, and patience; the reprobate to *goats*, because this creature has a fetid smell. It is fierce, immodest, lascivious. It walks in precipitous places. And it is quarrelsome. Such are the wicked. Wherefore under the Old Law goats were wont to be offered as sin-offerings.

There was a type of their separation in the case of those who blessed on Mount Gerizim, and those who cursed on Mount Ebal (*Deut.* xxvii.).

And He shall set the sheep, &c. For the *right hand* is the symbol of felicity, glory, and victory. The *left*, of unhappiness and disgrace.

Then shall the King say to those on the right hand, &c. "Come from darkness to light, from slavery to the liberty of the children of God, from labour to perpetual rest, from death unto life, from

the society of wicked men to the company of angels, from contest to triumph, from the billows of temptation to the light of glory, and the Heaven of eternal happiness."

In a moving manner does S. Hippolytus, the Martyr, enlarge upon these words (*Tract. de Consummat. Sæculi*), speaking of the different Orders of the Saints. "Come, ye Prophets, who were banished for My Name's sake. Come, ye Patriarchs, who were obedient unto Me before I came into the world, and who deserved My Kingdom. Come, ye Apostles, partakers of My sufferings, for the sake of the Gospel, when I lived amongst men. Come, ye Martyrs, who confessed Me before tyrants, and endured great torments and sufferings. Come, ye Priests, who offered pure sacrifices unto Me day and night, and immolated day by day My precious Body and Blood. Come, ye Saints, who practised self-denial in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth, who by continence and prayers did service to My Name. Come, ye Virgins, who chose Me for your Bridegroom, and loved not another besides Me, who by martyrdom, and the diligent practice of religion, were united to Me, your immortal and incorruptible Spouse. Come, ye who love the poor and strangers. Come, ye who kept My love, who am Love. Come, ye friends of peace, for I am peace."

Christ judges and rewards the elect before He punishes the reprobate; for it is natural to Christ to reward; it is His strange work to punish.

The King. Christ the Judge has on His thigh a name written, "King of kings and Lord of lords" (*Apoc.* xix. 16).

Blessed of My Father. Those whom My Father, whose special attributes are omnipotence, empire, and predestination, "hath blessed with all spiritual benediction in heavenly things" (*Eph.* i. 3),—that is, "whom He loved and predestinated from eternity, justified in time, and now will glorify: to whom He gave grace and perseverance in good works until the end of their lives, and therefore He has now, through Me, given them for their merits the reward of celestial glory." Come therefore, ye

Blessed, thrice and again Blessed, whom God loved and predestinated before the world, cleansed and sanctified in the world, and now will magnify after the world, as S. Augustine says in his *Soliloquy*.

Observe: the judgment of Christ will not be performed in a moment of time, as will be the case with the general Resurrection (1 *Cor.* xv. 52), but will occupy some considerable period. For there will be an examination and opening of the conscience of each person, in which Christ will lay open to every man his own and others' deeds by an inward illumination, and will pronounce His own sentence upon each, according to his deserts. And He will cause all to see that this sentence is just and right; and He will not give any opportunity for taking exception or for prevarication. "It will be," says S. Augustine (*de Civit.* xx. 14), "an effect of the Divine power, that every one will have recalled to their memory their deeds, both good and bad. And by a glance of the mind they will be perceived with a marvellous swiftness, so that this knowledge will either accuse or excuse their consciousness." All this will occupy time, though but a very short time. After this will Christ pronounce, as it seems, the general award of eternal felicity, with an audible voice, to all the Saints, when He says, "*Come, ye blessed of My Father*," &c.; and then will pass sentence upon the reprobate, saying, "*Depart, ye cursed.*"

Possess ye (Vulg.); Gr. κληρονομήσατε, *inherit* (Eng. vers.). "For if ye are sons, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (*Rom.* viii.). "O of what great glory, of what great blessedness, are those words! He does not say, Receive ye; but, Inherit ye, as though it were your own, your Father's; as though it were your very own, belonging to you from the beginning."

The Kingdom: the highest Heaven, with all its goods, such as the vision and fruition of God, the society of Saints and Angels.

From the constitution of the world; Arab. *before the constitution of*

the world. That is to say, *from eternity.* It means that the whole universe was created by God for the sake of the Blessed, that they may be eternally blessed in Him. Moreover, this glory of the Saints had been prepared and predestinated—1. *From eternity.* For God from eternity determined to create the Saints and the world, that He might bless them in it, and cause them to share in all His goods. 2. *From the creation of the world.* For God created the empyrean and the world for this end, that it might be the seat and kingdom of the Blessed. As S. Chrysostom says (*Hom.* 1, *in Epist. ad Titum*), "Herein is manifested our dignity, that not just now merely, but from of old, from the very beginning, have we been loved." And (*Hom.* 34, *in Gen.*), "Behold the excellence of the goodness of God; how great is the mercy which He hath extended to our race, that before the foundations of the world were laid, He deigned to prepare for us the fruition of the Kingdom of Heaven."

O how sweetly will this voice of Christ fall upon the ears of the elect! What thanks will they render Him! How will they exult! We cannot doubt but that with the utmost reverence they will prostrate themselves before Him, and gladly confess that it is by His Blood and merits they have been brought to such great felicity. This is plain from the Apocalypse (*chaps.* v. *and* vii.), where we may hear their doxologies and songs of victory, which in full chorus they sing to God and Christ.

Ver. 35. *For I was an hungered,* &c. . . . *a stranger, and ye collected Me* (Vulg.), *i.e.*, into your houses or other hospices. Observe here that Christ puts one sort of good works, by which the Saints will merit the eternal glory decreed to them by Christ in the judgment, instead of every kind of good works. He only speaks of works of mercy, both because they are, as it were, natural and everywhere at hand, and have to do with every one. For there are very many everywhere who are wretched. As also because the common people make most account of these works, since they themselves are less capable of giving themselves to fasting, prayers, and other lofty things. Further, no one can excuse himself from the performance of them; and, as S. Augustine says, they are most profitable for

obtaining the grace of God. Hear S. Basil (*Conc.* 4, *de Elcemosyn.*), "That bread, which thou holdest back, belongs to the hungry; the naked claims that garment which thou art keeping in thy chest. That shoe which is mouldering away at home is his who is shoeless. Thus thou art wronging just as many as thou dost not help with thy goods whilst thou mayest." "Blessed," says David, "is the man that is merciful and lendeth; he guideth his words with discretion" (*Ps.* cxii. 5); or, as S. Chrysostom reads, "he renders his accounts." As much as to say, "He will render a most excellent account of his life; he will plead successfully his cause before the Supreme Judge." "And indeed," says the same S. Chrysostom, "it must needs be that the soul which is rich in mercy can never be overwhelmed with heavy troubles of the mind." And again, "Uselessly will sins accuse him whom the poor man excuses. And he cannot be *excused* whom the poor man's hunger *accuses*. He will witness a terrible day who shall enter into the Judgment without the intercession of the poor. He who lends to a poor man makes the Judge Himself his debtor" (*S. Peter Chrysolog. Serm.* 40).

Moreover, we cannot doubt that many will be saved or condemned because of other virtues and sins of greater importance. For there are numbers who can scarcely practise works of mercy, as paupers, children, Religious, who do and practise greater things, as chastity, obedience, evangelical poverty, contemplation, conversion of others, on account of which they shall obtain greater rewards from Christ, according to His words, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven," &c.

Wherefore it does not appear that Christ will pronounce these words with an audible voice, as He will the sentence itself of salvation or condemnation; but He will reveal them to the heart of each by a sort of spiritual instinct. From this it is plain that the elect are chosen, and have Heaven awarded to them because of their good works. Therefore good works deserve Heaven and heavenly glory. Therefore this glory is given by Christ to the Saints for an inheritance, as it were, as unto sons, and at the same time as a reward, as to those who merit it and are worthy of it. For God does

not give the Kingdom to sons whether they be worthy or unworthy, as is often the case among men.

There are six principal corporal works of mercy which Christ here speaks of, viz., to feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to take in strangers, to clothe the naked, to visit the sick, to comfort and redeem captives, to which may be added a seventh, to bury the dead, which is commanded in Tobit. There are as many spiritual works of mercy, which Christ here would have us understand under the corporal works. They are as much superior to the corporal works as the soul is superior to the body. They are—to correct sinners, to teach the ignorant, to give good advice to the perplexed, to pray to God for the salvation of our neighbours, to comfort the sorrowful, to bear injuries patiently, and to forgive injuries. Concerning these, see Peter Canisius *in Opere Catechistico.*

Naked, &c. This is what Christ said (ix. 13), "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." For mercy is a covering, and, as it were, redeems the faults and miseries of the merciful. Hear S. Augustine (*Serm.* 33, *de Divers.*), "It is written, as water extinguishes fire, so doth alms extinguish sin. Surely to those whom He is about to crown will He attribute alms alone; as though He said, 'It were difficult that, if I should examine and weigh you, and most carefully scrutinise your deeds, I should not find something to condemn you; but go ye into My Kingdom, for I was hungry, and ye fed Me. Ye go into My Kingdom, not because ye have not sinned, but because ye have redeemed your sins by alms.'"

Vers. 37–39. *Then shall the righteous say*, expressing their wonder at Christ's liberality towards them, not so much with their lips as in their hearts. *When saw we.* By this word *when* is expressed at once the profound humility and the exultation of the Saints in that they hear their few and poor works made so much of by Christ, as that He should count them as done to Himself, because they were done to the poor for love of Christ.

And the King shall answer, &c. . . . *one of the least of these.* The word *these* strictly denotes the Apostles, and Religious and Apostolic men similar to them, who shall sit as assessors with Christ as Judge.

In this world they were accounted *the least* and most abject. And to themselves in their humility they seemed to be the very least of all. Inasmuch as they voluntarily embraced poverty of spirit, they gave themselves up altogether to the cross of Christ and to the preaching of the faith. But in the second place, all poor Christians who, having been born again in baptism, have been by grace made children of God, and therefore brethren of Christ, are denoted by the word *these*. Observe that infidels and the reprobate, though they may have been once brothers of Christ, are not here counted worthy of the name. Still He does not forbid giving them alms. Well says S. Cyprian in his *Treatise on Almsgiving*, "What more could Christ declare unto us? How could He do more to provoke to works of justice and mercy, than by pronouncing that whatever is done to the poor and needy is done to Himself? That he who is not moved by the consideration of his brother in the Church may be moved at least by considering Christ. And that he who does not think of his fellow-servant in labour and need, may at least think of his Master, who stands in the place of him whom he despises."

This was the reason why S. Louis, king of France, was accustomed to distribute food with his own hands to two hundred poor persons on all vigils and festivals, and to wash their feet on Saturdays. He also daily entertained at his own table three poor old men, and afterwards ate what they left. When some persons objected that this was derogatory to the majesty of a king, he made answer, "I revere Christ in the poor, Christ who said, 'What ye do unto the least of Mine, ye do unto Me.'" And he was wont to add, "The poor prepare Heaven for themselves by patience, but the rich by alms and reverence, whereby they love and venerate the poor as the members of Christ." O wise and holy king! Would that kings and princes would follow in his steps!

From these words of Christ S. Francis was wont to encourage his Friars freely to solicit alms. He himself was wont to beg upon the great Festivals. He said that the words of the Psalmist, "Man did eat angels' food," were fulfilled in holy paupers. For that, he said, was angelic food which was asked for the love of God, which, at

the suggestion of the angels, was bestowed for the love of God, and which holy poverty collected from door to door.

Ver. 41. *Then shall He say to those on the left*, &c. Note the antithesis: Christ says to the elect, "Come to Me and to My glory." But to the reprobate, "Depart from Me, to the devil and hell, because in life ye clave to the devil, and not to Me." The word *depart* denotes the pain of loss (*pœna damni*), which is the deprivation of the glory of Heaven for ever. But the word *fire* denotes the *pain of sense;* for the fire of hell burns continually, not only the bodies, but the souls of the wicked, and yet does not consume them. This punishment is very dreadful. For to be banished from God, from Christ, from Heaven, from the Saints, from everything that is good, is horrible torment. Wherefore S. Chrysostom (*Parœn.* 1, *ad Theodor. lapsum*) thinks that the deprivation of the vision of God is a greater torment to the damned than the fire of hell. Others entertain the opposite opinion. Isaiah says, "The wicked shall not behold the glory of the Lord" (xxvi. 10). *Cursed*, those whom God will curse as His enemies. *Into the fire*, therefore there is real fire in hell, and that far fiercer and of a different nature and quality from earthly fire. This is the teaching of S. Ambrose (*in cap.* 14, *S. Luc.*), S. Jerome (*in Isa. chaps.* lxv., lxvi.), Damascene (*lib.* 4, *cap. ult.*).

Moreover, this fire is fed by sulphur, which also God will preserve for ever, that it may continually burn the wicked. This is the fire with which Moses threatened the Jews in Deut. xxxii. 22, "A fire is kindled in My fury, and it shall burn unto the lowest hell." Hear what S. Chrysostom says, "They shall be thrust into the river and the sea of fire, a sea which can never be crossed, in which the waves of fire rise mountains high. Fire, I say, but not earthly fire, but far more terrible than any here, whose flames fill the great abyss, so that on every hand the fire seems ready to overwhelm, like some immense wild beast. If we cannot describe in language the most bitter torments of that fire and those flames, what shall we say of them? especially when we consider that a man placed for one moment in earthly fire would die; but there they are burnt

and suffer, and never will that which is burnt be consumed" (*Hom.* 44 *in loc.*).

Everlasting. Origen, therefore, is in error in thinking that the pains of hell shall cease, and that the wicked shall be delivered out of them on the completion of the Platonic year, that is, after several thousands of years. For the eternity of punishment in hell is here expressed. So Bede, Theophylact, and others *passim.* This will be the awful punishment, which will drive the damned to despair, fury, madness, to blaspheming God, their parents, comrades, and all creatures, because so long as Heaven shall last, so long will there be a hell. It shall last as long as God Himself and the universe shall endure. So long shall the reprobate endure, "and shall be tormented day and night for ages of ages" (*Apoc.* xx. 10). Think of this fire when lust, or ambition, or any other temptation entice thee, and say to thyself, "I will not purchase everlasting fire at the price of a little pleasure."

S. Hippolytus the Martyr enlarges upon these words of Christ in a very moving manner in his Treatise on *the End of the World.* He introduces Christ as reproaching the wicked for their abuse of His benefits, "It was I who formed you, and ye clave to another. I created the earth, the sea, and all things for your sakes, and you misused them to My dishonour. Depart from Me, ye workers of iniquity, I know you not. Ye have become the workmen of another master, even the devil. With him possess darkness, and the fire which shall not be quenched, and the worm which sleepeth not, and the gnashing of teeth." After an interval he adds, "I formed your ears that you should hear the Scriptures, and you applied them to songs of devils, to harps, and jokes. I created your eyes that ye might behold the light of My commandments, and follow them; but ye opened them for adultery, and immodesty, and all uncleanness. I ordained your mouth for the praise and glory of God, and to sing psalms and spiritual songs; but ye applied it for the utterance of revilings, perjuries, and blasphemies. I made your hands, that you should lift them up in

prayers and supplications; ye have stretched them out in thefts and murders." And thus he proceeds.

After He has pronounced this sentence, Christ will drive them from Him by means of the demons into hell. Yea, all the elements, together with the heavens, shall rise against them. For, as it is said in Wisdom (vi. 18), "He shall arm the creatures to take vengeance upon His enemies, and the whole world shall fight for Him against the foolish ones. The right aiming thunderbolts shall go forth. The water of the sea shall rage against them, and the rivers shall flow together upon them. A spirit of strength shall stand against them, and like a whirlwind shall divide them."

Prepared for the devil and his angels, that is, for *their chief prince and his armies*, Arab. From hence it is plain that the fire of hell was primarily, and *per se*, prepared by God for the demons, but as a consequence was prepared for men who imitate the disobedience of the devils. Moreover, this fire was prepared by God from everlasting, after the foreseen sin of Lucifer and the demons. For their God decreed to form it for their punishment. But it was actually made, in time, by God at the commencement of the universe, before the creation of man.

The Syr. instead of *devil* has *accuser*, which is the meaning of the Gr. διάβολος, for such is Lucifer, who accuses holy men, and even their just works, before God. Hence in the Acts of S. Montanus and his companions, martyrs, the accuser and criminator of the martyrs is called *diabolus*, because he acted his part before the tribunal of the heathen judges.

Vers. 42, 43. *For I was an hungered*, &c. The word "*for*" gives the reason why they are condemned to the fire prepared for the devil, because, that is, they imitated his mercilessness. "For," as Theophylact says, "they who are without compassion are devils." These men are condemned for the omission of the works of mercy, both because every one is bound to the performance of these works when he sees his neighbour in need, as well as because they neglected to expiate their other sins by almsdeeds, according to the saying of Daniel to Nebuchad-

nezzar, "Redeem thy sins by almsgiving, and thy iniquities by mercy to the poor" (*Dan.* iv. 24, *Vulg.*). Whence S. Augustine asserts that some men cannot be saved without almsgiving. Now, if he who is convicted of not having given alms shall suffer so great a punishment, says S. Gregory, what shall be the penalty of him who has committed murder or adultery, or who has blasphemed God and His saints?

Every word is emphatic, and reproaches the reprobate with peculiar ingratitude. *I was an hungered*, I, who am your God, your Lord, and your Redeemer, *and ye gave not unto Me*, that which I had given you, *to eat*, not partridges and capons, which ye ate yourselves, but simply bread. "Each circumstance," says S. Chrysostom, "suffices for their condemnation; as the simple nature of the request and the power to grant it: for *bread* is asked; then there is the misery of the petitioner, *poor* and a *beggar*: the greatness of the reward to be obtained, for a *kingdom* is promised: the dread of the punishment, for *hell* is threatened: the dignity of the receiver, for *God* receives, through the hands of the poor: the right which there is to bestow, for it is the highest form of *justice* to render unto God His own. Yet from all these things they were held back by covetousness."

Ver. 45. *Then He shall answer them, saying*, &c. Learn from hence how greatly to be esteemed are the mean and poor, especially Saints and Religious, whom Christ here calls His own property, as it were. Wherefore S. Francis sharply rebuked one of his Friars for finding fault with a certain beggar, and saying that, perchance, he was proud in his mind, and ordered him to ask his pardon on his knees. And he gave his reason. "My son," he said, "thou hast not sinned against the beggar so much as against Christ. Forasmuch as Christ is offered to us in the person of the poor, as it were in a glass. As often therefore as the poor and infirm meet thee, think of and humbly venerate the poverty and infirmities which Christ deigned to endure for us."

Ver. 46. *And these shall go;* Gr. *shall go away*, &c. . . . *punish*

ment, that is, of fire and burning. Whence S. Augustine reads (*Tract.* 21, *in Joan.*), *into burning*. It means, they shall be burnt in hell, but not burnt up, nor consumed, so as to be annihilated, which the lost will desire.

Everlasting, because they have most grievously offended the Eternal God. For mortal sin, because it is an injury against the Infinite God, has in it an infinite wickedness, therefore it deserves an infinite punishment. But, forasmuch as punishment infinite in intensity can neither be given nor yet endured by man, there shall be given to the reprobate a punishment of infinite duration which shall last for ever and ever.

The author of the book *on the Spirit and the Soul*, in the works of S. Augustine, forcibly depicts the dreadfulness of this punishment. He says, there is to these miserable beings death without death, end without end, consumption without being consumed. For death also shall always live, and the end shall always be beginning. Death shall destroy, and not annihilate. Pain shall torment, and not put fear to flight. The flame shall burn, but shall not disperse the darkness. For there shall be darkness in the fire, fear in the darkness, and pain in the burning. Thus shall the reprobate be tormented without hope of pardon or mercy, which is the misery of miseries. For if, after as many thousands of years as they had hairs upon their heads, they might hope for an end of their punishment, they would sustain it with far greater ease; but because they neither have nor will have any hope, they will fall into despair, and will have no strength to support their torments.

Hence S. Cyprian (*Lib. de Laud. Martyr. cap.* 5), "Paradise flourishes by the witness of God; hell embraces, the eternal fire consumes those who deny it. It is a dreadful place whose name is hell, with a great murmuring and groaning of those that wail, and with flames bursting out through the horrible night of thick darkness."

From what has been said, we may consider and imagine how bitter and how sad must be the future everlasting separation

between the lost and the saved,—when the one shall ascend up into Heaven to everlasting happiness, and the others shall go down into hell to everlasting fire. Never again, to all eternity, shall they behold the Saints—not even their friends, their brothers, or their parents. For there is a great gulf fixed between the two, as Abraham said to the rich glutton. Thou, therefore, who art wise, ascend daily into Heaven, and descend into hell, that from thence thou mayest gain incentives to flee from vice and pursue virtue. Truly does S. Chrysostom say (*Hom. 2 in Epist. 2 ad Thessal.*), "No one who has hell before his eyes will ever fall into hell. No one who despises hell will escape it." We may say with S. Diethelmus, in Ven. Bede's *History of the English*, "I have seen worse and more dreadful things in hell." By this means we shall bravely sustain and overcome all temptations, persecutions, infirmities, and tribulations through fear of the judgment and of hell.

Life eternal. By these words is meant the receiving of all health, all strength, all honour, all glory, all pleasure, all joy, and everything that is good. For these are the things which those enjoy who truly live; for to live in hunger, thirst, disease, ignominy, pain, is not so much to live as to die continually.

CHAPTER XXVI.

3 *The rulers conspire against Christ.* 14 *Judas selleth him.* 17 *Christ eateth the passover.* 47 *He is betrayed by Judas.*

AND it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,

2 Ye know that after two days is *the feast of* the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

3 ¶ Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

4 And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill *him.*

5 But they said, Not on the feast *day,* lest there be an uproar among the people.

6 ¶ Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

7 There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head as he sat *at meat.*

8 But when his disciples saw *it,* they had indignation, saying, To what purpose *is* this waste?

9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.

10 When Jesus understood *it,* he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.

11 For ye have the poor always with you; but me ye have not always.

12 For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did *it* for my burial.

13 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, *there* shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

14 ¶ Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

15 And said *unto them,* What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

17 ¶ Now the first *day* of the *feast of* unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?

18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made read the passover.

20 Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

23 And he answered and said, He that dippeth *his* hand with me in the dish the same shall betray me.

24 The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

26 And, as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed *it*, and break *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat: this is my body.

27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it:

28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.

31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

32 But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.

33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all *men* shall be offended because of thee, *yet* will I never be offended.

34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

36 ¶ Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

37 And he took with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou *wilt*.

40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What! could ye not watch with me one hour?

41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.

42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy;

44 And he left them and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

46 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

47 And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; hold him fast.

49 And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed him.

50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

51 And behold one of them which were with Jesus stretched out *his* hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest, and smote off his ear.

52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

57 And they that laid hold on Jesus led *him* away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

58 But Peter followed him afar off, unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants to see the end.

59 Now the chief priests and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;

60 But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, *yet* found they none. At the last came two false witnesses,

61 And said, This *fellow* said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

62 And the high priest arose and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against thee?

63 But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee, by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

65 Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy;

what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

66 What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.

67 Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote *him* with the palms of their hands,

68 Saying, Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?

69 ¶ Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

70 But he denied before *them* all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and said unto them that were there, This *fellow* was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

73 And after a while came *unto him* they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

74 Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

75 And Peter remembered the words of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

And it came to pass, when He had finished, or *completed*, all that He had spoken in the last chapter concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, then He girded Himself to meet His Passion, which was nigh at hand, and foretold it. He would not seem to be ignorant of the things which were shortly to come to pass, whilst He prophesied of those in the far distant future. He would not have His disciples suppose that Christ was ignorant of the things which were to befall Him, or that they happened to Him against His will; but that they might know that all was foreseen by Him. The meaning is, as S. Thomas expresses it, "When Christ had fulfilled His office as a Teacher, He began to prepare Himself for the office of a Redeemer and a Saviour."

Ye know, &c., *after two days.* He said, therefore, these things on the Tuesday evening, when, after the Hebrew custom, the fourth day of the week, or Wednesday, was about to begin. This was the reckoning employed with respect to festivals. For, as Pererius says (*on Gen.* i. 5, *on the words*, "The evening and the morning were one day"), "It is certain that the ancient Jews reckoned their days by a threefold method." First, the legal day from evening to evening. Secondly, the natural day from sunrise

to sunrise. Thirdly, the common day from midnight to midnight. Wherefore Christ saith truly, *After two days shall be the feast of the Passover*, because after two days, that is to say, Wednesday and Thursday, on the evening of Thursday, when Friday is about to begin, is the Passover.

The Passover. This means in Hebrew, *passing over*, because the angel passed over the houses of the Hebrews. For *pasach* means *to pass over.* But the Syrians write *pascha* not with *samech*, as the Hebrews, but with *tsade*, and then *pascha* signifies joy and gladness, for the feast of the Passover was a time of utmost joyfulness.

Then were gathered together, &c. *Then* means on the morning of the fourth day of the week, or Wednesday. It was on the morning of this day that Judas came to them, and sold Christ to them for the stipulated price of thirty *denarii*, according to the general opinion of the Church, and as the same may be gathered from S. Matthew's narrative. Wherefore from this council of the Jews, and selling of Jesus, the ancient Christians were accustomed to fast on Wednesday, as S. Augustine testifies (*Epist.* 86). Moreover, the Greeks, and many inhabitants of Poland and Holland, still abstain from eating flesh on Wednesday, because on that day the flesh of Christ was sold.

Observe, we gather from S. Matthew's narrative that on these two days—Wednesday and Thursday—Christ did not come into Jerusalem, as He had done on the Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, but remained at Bethany, and only returned to Jerusalem towards the evening of Thursday, that He might celebrate the Passover.

Take Jesus by subtilty—by subtilty, because they were afraid lest Christ should take Himself out of their hands, as He had done before. Again, they seek a stratagem, that they might seize Him without a tumult of the people. For they were afraid lest the people, hanging upon the words of Christ, as a very great prophet, might fight for Him, and not suffer Him to be taken. Wherefore it follows,

For they said, &c. It was not, therefore, out of regard for the festival, but from fear of the people, that they were unwilling to

take Jesus on the feast of the Passover. For at this feast a countless multitude of Jews flocked together to Jerusalem, among whom were many who had received salvation both of body and soul from Jesus, who, they feared, would defend Him. Wherefore, "They had no zeal for devotion, but for wickedness," says S. Jerome. In like manner, Herod Agrippa did not wish to put Peter to death until after the Passover (*Acts* xii.). For the Passover was to the Jews a festival of liberty and joy, because in it they celebrated their deliverance from the slavery of Egypt. Whence they were accustomed to release condemned persons at that time, as they released Barabbas. The rulers, therefore, had decreed to take Christ and put Him to death after the Passover; but in consequence of the treachery of Judas, they changed their purpose. For the counsel and purpose of God was, that Christ should die at the Passover, in order that He might show that the antitype answered to its type. For the sacrifice of a lamb, which took place at the Passover, was a type that Christ would be sacrificed at that feast. By this circumstance God signified that Christ was the very Paschal Lamb, who suffered upon the cross for the redemption of the world.

In the house of Simon the leper. Matthew repeats more circumstantially things which had already happened, in order to relate the manner in which Christ was taken. For Judas was moved to betray Christ to the Jews by the occasion of this ointment, that he might by his treachery recover the price of the ointment, and, like a thief, as he was, hide it in his coffers. This feast, when Christ was in the house of Simon, took place on the day before Palm Sunday, as is plain from S. John xii. 1, where it is said, *six days before the Passover*, which was Friday, *He came to Bethany.* And it is added, *they made Him a feast*, that is, Simon and his friends. This was on the Saturday, or the Sabbath; and the next day was Palm Sunday.

Simon the leper. Some of the Fathers are of opinion that Simon had really been a leper, and had been healed by Christ. Others think that Leper was a patronymic of the family of Simon, either because he was descended from a leper, or because of

some connection with lepers. Thus there were at Rome the families of the Claudii (*the Lame*), and the Balbi (*the Stutterers*), although there were many members of those families who were neither lame nor stutterers.

There came to Him a woman, &c. This was the same feast as that which S. John gives an account of (xii. 1), as will be seen by comparing these two Evangelists. S. Matthew relates it in order to explain the occasion of Judas' being moved to betray Christ, as I have said.

You may object that John says, *They made Him a feast, and Martha served*, which might seem to intimate that the feast was in Martha's house, not in Simon's. I reply by denying the inference. John does not say that Martha and Mary made Him a feast, but simply, *they*, that is, some persons, *made one*. The persons meant were the inhabitants of Bethany, friends of Jesus, prominent among whom was this Simon the leper. But Martha ministered at this supper, either because she was a neighbour, or because she was a friend and relative of Simon.

A woman. Mary Magdalene, as S. John says expressly (xii. 3), who, as she had two years before this repented, and washed the feet of Jesus with her tears, and anointed them with ointment, so upon this occasion likewise, six days before His death, she did the same thing, partly from devotion, and partly by an inspiration from God, as a kind of prophecy of Christ's rapidly approaching death and burial.

Alabaster. Vessels made of alabaster, or onyx stone, which Pliny says was an excellent material for preserving ointment incorrupt (*lib.* 36, *cap.* 8), were made use of for this purpose. Wherefore it is not surprising that this hollow vessel, which was as thin and brittle as glass, might easily be broken by Mary Magdalene, by striking it with a small hammer, so that she might pour the whole of the ointment upon the head of Christ. Unless you prefer to think, with Suidas, that this so-called alabaster box was a clear vessel without a handle, such as chemists have in their shops to keep unguents and drugs in.

S. Epiphanius (*lib. de Mensuris*) says, "This box was a small glass vessel of ointment, containing a pound of oil. It was called alabaster because of its brittleness."

Ointment. I have shown on Eccles. ix. 8 that the Jews followed the custom of the Arabians, Persians, Syrians, and other Eastern nations in making use of unguents at their feasts for purposes of refreshment, and as a hindrance to drunkenness. Moreover, those ointments were not unfrequently not thick, such as those which doctors make use of for blows and wounds, but in a liquid state. They were confections of odoriferous herbs, which refreshed and delighted the brain and the other parts of the body. This particular ointment was fluid spikenard, as we learn from S. John. Spikenard has a very sweet smell, and abounds in Syria. Whence Tibullus, "His temples lately moist with *Tyrian* (or better, *Syrian*) nard." It is certain that spikenard compounded with oil formed a very precious ointment, which the ancients made use of for anointing the head. (*See Plin. lib.* xiii. *caps.* 1 *and* 2.)

Precious; Gr. βαρυτίμου, *of great price;* lit. *heavy*, because money was formerly estimated according to weight, as by the ounce, the pound. The Syriac adds, *it was very sweet;* S. Mark says, *spicati* (Vulg.); S. John, *pistici.* I will explain the meaning of these words in S. John xii. 3.

Upon His head. You will say that John has, *she anointed the feet of Jesus*, &c. I answer that Mary Magdalene first anointed the feet of Christ and then poured all the contents of the vessel upon His head. To do this she broke off the narrow neck of the bottle, as we gather from S. Mark. So S. Augustine (*lib. de Consens. Evangel.* 79). John adds, *she wiped His feet*, that is, before she anointed them, to cleanse them from dust. For Jesus went about with the upper part of His feet uncovered, as I have shown, x. 10. So Toletus. But if any one shall maintain that she wiped Christ's feet after the anointing, in order to dry them, I offer no objection. John, in order to show the surpassing excellence of the ointment, adds, *And the house was filled with*

the odour. In the Magdalene, therefore, was fulfilled the words of Canticles i. 12, "When the king was on his couch my spikenard gave its odour" (Vulg.). Also, "Thy name is as oil poured forth."

Tropologically: Origen says that oil or ointment is the work of virtue, especially of mercy. If this be shown out of natural compassion, as it is by infidels, not for God's sake, God accepts it indeed, but not unto life eternal. But if it be done from love to God, it is an excellent ointment of a sweet-smelling savour. Again, if a good work be done to relieve the wants of the poor, it is an anointing of the *feet* of the Lord. For the poor in the Church are the mystical feet of the Lord. But if the work be done for the glory of God, as in the way of zeal for chastity, fasting, or prayer, it is an anointing of the Lord's head, a precious ointment, with whose odour the whole Church is filled; and this is the proper work of the perfect.

2d. The *Gloss* says, "This woman who anointed the head and feet of Christ signifies the faith of the Church, which, when it preaches and invokes the Godhead of Christ, anoints His head: when it preaches His humanity, His feet."

Lastly, he *anoints the feet*, who in an active life serves his neighbour; but he *the head*, who cleaves to God by contemplation, and becomes one spirit with Him.

When the disciples saw it, &c. You may say that S. John speaks only of Judas as murmuring. S. Augustine (*lib.* 2, *de Consens. Evang. c.* 69) says that Judas was the leader and inciter of this murmuring, who stirred up the other Apostles, in the pretence of pity for the poor, to indignation, which in their case flowed from a real affection of pity, but with him was a mere pretence, springing from avarice.

Sold for much . . . three hundred denarii, as Mark has. Judas meant to say that this ointment ought not to have been used for luxury and pleasure upon the head of Christ, but ought to have been poured into the lap of many poor, to relieve their wants. This was the opinion of Calvin, who, lest any one should make

use of the example of Mary Magdalene to approve of funereal honours, in the way of lights, incense, and other like observances, says that this action of hers must neither be approved nor imitated, but only defended, as done by a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost. But who cannot see that the spirit of Judas and Calvin are identical; and that the same Satan speaks by Calvin who erst spake by Judas, whom Christ proceeds to confute?

But Jesus knowing, &c.,—by the Divine Spirit their secret murmuring,—*said, Why trouble ye*, &c. Arab. *Why do you blame? A good work;* καλόν, i.e., *fair, honourable, worthy of highest praise.* For what can be more worthy and honourable than to anoint the feet of God? Who would not account himself happy if he might but touch and kiss the feet of Christ?

The poor ye have always, &c. The world is full of poor, to whom ye may always do good; but I, after six days, am about to die, and go away to Heaven, so that ye will not be able either to see Me or to touch Me. Suffer then this woman's act of service towards Me. In six days ye would vainly desire to do the like.

For My burial. Christ might have excused Mary because of the excellence of His Divine Person, which was anointed by her, which made it more meritorious to expend the price of the ointment upon Him than upon feeding the poor, as Theophylact teaches. And the same argument holds good in the present day with respect to the adornment of temples, altars, chalices, &c. For this is done in honour of the person of Christ, to stir up the devotion and reverence of others towards Him, when there is no special necessity calling for the relief of the poor. Or Christ might have excused her, because she performed this anointing out of gratitude, piety, reverence. But out of modesty He was unwilling to make use of these pleas. His only ground of defence is, *she did it for My burial*, that He might show that His death was at hand, and that He was willing and ready to die, yea, that He had ordained the anointing with a view to His death, and so permitted the consequent betrayal of Judas.

For Christ very greatly longed for His death, for the glory of God and the redemption of men. At the same time He, as it were, pricks Judas; as S. Chrysostom says, "I am troublesome and burdensome to you, but wait a little while, and I will depart hence. But take thou care lest, by betraying Me, thou promotest My death, lest thou bring death and hell upon thyself." The Syriac adds, *She did it as if for My burial*, because Mary did not intend to anoint Him for burial; but the Holy Ghost, knowing what was about to take place, inwardly moved her to do what she did.

Christ therefore excuses her because of her inward affection of charity, because of the peculiar circumstances and the unique occasion, and especially because the Holy Ghost guided her, although she knew not what she did. For she anointed Him as though He had been on the very point of being buried. She could not anoint Him for burial after He was dead, because she was anticipated by Joseph of Arimathea. So Mark says distinctly, *She hath done what she could; she is come aforehand to anoint My body for the burial.* S. John has, *Let her alone, that she may keep* (ut servet) *it for the day of My burial* (Vulg.). The Greek is in the past tense, *she hath kept it.* As though He had said, "Suffer her, O Judas, to obey the instinct of her devotion, that she may anoint Me yet alive, though so soon about to die, for she will not be able to do it after I am dead." So Vatablus. Otherwise Maldonatus, *That she may keep it*, "She has so bestowed this ointment in anointing Me that she cannot lose it." As if one should say that he had kept his money who had bought a field with it; for if he had hidden it in a coffer, he might have lost it. *That she may keep it*—that she may be proved to have kept it (Franc. Lucas).

Somewhat differently Nonnus Panopolitanus, who read with the Vulg. ἵνα τηρήσῃ, *that she may keep*, "Account this woman's gift free from all blame, so that she may keep and preserve the treasure of My body until the hour of My death and preparation for burial be come."

Verily I say unto you . . . for a memorial of her, i.e., of Mary Magdalene, not of Christ, as is shown by the fem. pronoun αὐτῆς. This anointing and pious devotion shall be celebrated throughout the whole world for the everlasting praise and honour of Mary, and for the infamy of Judas, who found fault with her. Victor of Antioch paraphrases as follows, "So far am I from condemning her as though she had done amiss, or blaming her as though she had not acted aright, that I will never suffer this deed of hers to be forgotten in all time to come. Yea, the whole world shall know what she did in a house and in obscurity. For she did it with a pious mind, and with fervent faith and a contrite heart. What was done was pleasing, not so much because of the money that was spent, as because of the faith which she offered together with the ointment. For this was to Me as the most fragrant of all odours."

Then went away (abiit) *one of the twelve*, &c. The word *then* refers partly to what has immediately preceded, and partly to the council of the rulers about taking Christ in the 16th verse. It means that on the Saturday before Palm Sunday, when Judas, the instigator of the murmuring, found himself rebuked by Christ, he did not repent as the other Apostles, whom he had misled, did, but *then* he made his forehead brazen, and clothed himself with the cloak of impudence, and, mad with covetousness and wickedness, he determined to sell and betray Christ to the Jews. Therefore on the following Wednesday, when the rulers were taking counsel as to the way in which they might lay hold on Christ, he came to them, and suggested a method, and stipulated to deliver Him into their hands for thirty pieces of silver.

One of the twelve. An Apostle, not one even of Christ's seventy disciples, or He might the better have borne it, but one of the twelve Apostles, and of His own most intimate friends, whom He had elevated to that lofty rank. So this was the dark ingratitude and wickedness of Judas, which pierced the heart of Christ, so that He said, "If mine enemy had spoken evil of Me, I would have borne it," &c. "But thou, the man

united to me, my guide and my familiar friend! We took sweet counsel together, and walked in the house of God by consent" (*Ps.* lv. 13, &c.). Wherefore S. Augustine (*Tract.* 61 *in Joan.*) says, "*One* by vocation, not by predestination; in number, not in merit; in body, not in spirit; in appearance, not in reality."

He went away. Satan having entered into him, as Mark has, not that Satan insinuated himself into the soul of Judas, and so inclined his will and intellect to betray Christ. For God alone is able to glide into the soul, as Didymus rightly teaches (*Tract.* 3, *de Spiritu Sancto*). Neither was it that Satan took bodily possession of Judas, in the same way that he possesses *energumens*, but that he presented reasons suited to his imagination, which induced him to betray Christ, as S. John shows, xiii. 2. The same Evangelist says in the 27th verse, that after supper, when Judas had received the morsel from Christ, Satan entered into him, in order that he might accomplish in act the treachery which he had already purposed in his mind. This expression shows also the horrible atrocity of Judas' wickedness, as though a man were not sufficient for its perpetration, but there were need of the help and instigation of the devil.

And he said unto them, What will ye give me, &c. "Unhappy Judas," says S. Jerome, "wishes to recompense himself for the loss which he deemed he had sustained by the pouring forth of the oil, by selling his Master. Nor does he even demand a certain sum, so that his treachery might at least seem profitable, but as though he were disposing of a worthless slave, he left the price to the option of the buyers."

So S. Jerome, who thinks that Judas did not stipulate for any fixed sum, but left it to be determined by the rulers, as though he had said, "Give me what you will." But others, with greater probability, say that Judas bargained with the rulers thus, "I will sell Christ to you, but for so great a person, and for one whom you hate so much, I demand a suitable price. How much will ye give me?"

Thirty pieces of silver. See the vileness of Judas in valuing

Christ, the Saviour of the world, his Master and his Lord, for such a miserable sum. This vileness afflicted Christ with great sorrow. Wherefore S. Ambrose says (*lib. de Spirit. Sanct. c.* 18), "O Judas, the traitor, thou valuest the ointment of His Passion at 300 *denarii*, and His Passion itself at thirty,—rich in valuing, cheap in crime!"

You will ask what was the weight and value of these thirty pieces of silver. Baronius (*ex Helia in Tisbi, R. David, and other more modern Rabbins*) thinks that the silver piece of Zechariah and the prophets, and consequently of this passage of S. Matthew, as is plain from xxvii. 9, is a pound of silver. This would amount to about 1000 Flemish florins. But who can believe that the covetous Jews would pay such a sum to Judas, of his own accord making the offer, not to sell, but only to betray and guide them to a man who was daily to be met with, especially since the Fathers and Zechariah marvel at the price as being so small and poor?

With greater probability, Maldonatus and others understand thirty shekels to be here intended, which would be equal in value to thirty Flemish florins. This was the price at which a slave, who had been killed, was estimated, according to the law in Exod. xxi. 32. Thus the life of Christ was valued by Judas and the Jews at the same price as that of a slave.

But since Jeremiah (xxxii. 9) distinguishes the *stater*, or the shekel, which is the Hebrew word, from the silver piece, for he says, "Weigh for it the silver, seven staters and ten silver pieces" (*Vulg. following the Heb. See also the margin of the English Version*), it would seem more probable that these silver pieces of Judas were half shekels or double *denarii*. I have been the more confirmed in this opinion from seeing in the Church of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem at Rome, together with a portion of the true Cross brought thither by S. Helena, one of those silver pieces for which Christ was sold. This is about the size of a Spanish real, but a little thicker. Hence, also, Zacharias calls the price, ironically, *due* or *fitting*; Ang. Vers. *goodly*. The shekel was equal

to a Flemish florin, so that the thirty pieces of silver would be equal to fifteen Flemish florins.

You will ask how could "the potter's field" be bought for such a sum as this? I answer, that the Heb. שָׂדֶה, *sade*, and the Syr. ܚܩܠ, *chakel*, i.e., *a field*, is put for any piece of land, however sandy, stony, or barren, such as sand-pits, which this "field" probably was. It seems to have been useless for agricultural purposes, and of very small value, like the Jewish cemeteries outside the cities of Germany. It is also possible that the rulers may have supplemented the thirty pieces of silver by a grant from the *corbana*, or treasury.

Observe: Joseph being sold by his brethren was a type of this selling of Christ. But Joseph was sold for twenty pieces of silver, for it was not fitting, says S. Jerome, that the servant should be sold for as much as his Master.

Observe secondly: Judas, according to S. Ambrose, received the tenth part of the price of the ointment with which Christ was anointed, which was valued at 300 *denarii*. But it is more probable that he received the fifth part, for the silver piece of Judas seems to have been, as has been said, a double *denarius*.

Thirdly, because Christ was sold at so vile a price, therefore He deserved to become the price of the whole world, and of all sinners.

Fourthly, because of these thirty pieces of silver, with which Judas and the Jews trafficked for Christ, God smites them with thirty curses in the 109th Psalm. The first is, "Set Thou an ungodly man to be ruler over him." The second, "Let the devil stand at his right hand." The third, "When he is judged, let him be condemned." The fourth, "Let his prayer be turned into sin." The fifth, "Let his days be few." The sixth, "His bishopric let another take," and so on. Lastly, as Hegesippus says, thirty Jews, who were taken captive by Titus, were sold for one *denarius*.

Sought opportunity—and found it the following day, being Thursday, which was the first day of unleavened bread. Hear

Origen: "Such an opportunity as he sought, Luke explains by saying, *he sought . . . in the absence of the multitude*, that is to say, when the people were not about Him; but He was in private with His disciples. This also he did, betraying Him at night after supper, in the garden of Gethsemane, whither He had retired."

Ver. 17. *On the first day of unleavened bread*, &c. The Passover was to be eaten with *unleavened*, that is, pure unfermented bread, according to the Law. This abstinence from leaven lasted seven days, and the first day of unleavened bread was the first day of the Passover. The Pasch or Passover was celebrated on the 14th day of the first month, at even; that is to say, on the full moon of the month called Nisan, which was that in which fell the full moon of the vernal equinox. Wherefore, Nisan answers partly to our March and partly to April.

The following is the chronology of the last eight days of the life of Christ. On the Friday, which was the 8th day of Nisan, He came from Ephrem to Bethany. The next day, being the Sabbath, He sups in the house of Simon the leper. The day following was the 10th of Nisan, and Palm Sunday. On the 11th of Nisan, He taught in the Temple, and cursed the barren fig-tree. On the 12th, He foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, and spake the parables recorded in S. Matthew xxiv. and xxv. On the 13th of Nisan, or Wednesday, the rulers held their council, when Judas sold Him to them. On the 14th of Nisan, He instituted the Eucharist. On the 15th, He was crucified. The 16th of Nisan was Saturday, when He lay in the tomb. The 17th of Nisan was Easter Sunday.

On the first day of unleavened bread, that is, the 14th day of Nisan, or the full moon, Christ about mid-day sent two of His disciples from Bethany to Jerusalem to prepare and roast the paschal lamb, that He might eat it with them in the evening. Here observe, that the first day of unleavened bread is sometimes called the 14th of Nisan and sometimes the 15th. For that evening in which the Jews celebrated the Pasch, with which the days

and the eating of unleavened bread commenced, according to the natural computation of time, pertained to the fourteenth day, but according to the computation observed with respect to festivals, it pertained to the following day, or the 15th of Nisan.

You will ask, What was the precise day on which Christ ate the Passover and instituted the Eucharist? Was it the same day on which the Jews kept the Pasch, or was it another? I take it for granted that, according to the belief of the whole Church, Christ was crucified on Friday, and therefore that He ate the paschal lamb at supper the day before, or on Thursday evening.

1st. Euthymius and the Greeks say that Christ celebrated the Pasch on the 13th of Nisan; that He anticipated the time fixed by the Law for the Passover, on account of His Passion, which was about to be on the next day, on which the Jews celebrated the Passover. And because the use of azyms, or unleavened bread, began with the Passover on the following day, they think that Christ instituted the Eucharist before the azyms, and in leavened bread. Therefore they celebrate in leavened bread; and they say that this is a command. Whence they condemn the Latins for celebrating in unleavened bread, and call them Azymites and heretics. And they wash their altars before they will celebrate upon them, as deeming them polluted with unleavened bread. They cite in favour of their view S. John xiii. 1, 2, who says, *before the feast of the Passover* (that is, before the fourteenth day of the moon, when they began to eat unleavened bread) Christ made His supper.

2d. Rupertus, Jansen, Maldonatus, and Salmeron, who enters at length into the subject (*tract.* 9, *tom.* 4), say that Christ celebrated the Pasch according to the Law on the 14th of Nisan, but that the Jews deferred it until the 15th, an opinion thought to be supported by S. John. For there was a tradition, says Burgensis (*ex Seder Olam*), that if the Passover fell on the Friday, or the preparation for the Sabbath, it was transferred to the following day, which was the Sabbath, or Saturday, lest two solemn festivals, the Passover

and the Sabbath, should concur.* But this tradition is later than the time of Christ, as may be proved from the Talmud and Aben Ezra.

With these I say that both Christ and the Jews celebrated the Passover on the same day prescribed by the Law, namely, on the 14th day of Nisan, in the evening. That this was so, appears from Matthew, Mark, and Luke, who say that Christ celebrated the Passover on the first day of unleavened bread, *on which the Passover must* (by the Law) *be killed.* And *on which day they* (*i.e.*, the Jews) *killed the Passover.* Had it been otherwise, the Jews would have proved and condemned Christ to be a transgressor of the Law.

You may object, 1st. If Christ celebrated the Passover on the 14th of Nisan, why do Matthew, Mark, and Luke say that He celebrated it on the first day of unleavened bread, which fell upon the fifteenth day? The answer is, as I have already said, that the first day of the azyms was partly the 14th and partly the 15th of Nisan. For that evening on which the Jews celebrated the Passover, with which began the days and the use of unleavened bread, pertained, according to the natural reckoning of time, to the day which preceded the evening, that is, to the 14th of Nisan. But the same evening pertained, according to the festal reckoning, to the day following, which was the 15th of Nisan. And in this sense John says that Christ supped upon the paschal lamb *before the feast of* the Passover, which was the 15th of Nisan, according to the festal reckoning.

You will object, 2d. That it is said, John xviii. 28, that the Jews did not enter the *prætorium lest they should be defiled, but that they*, being pure, *might eat* a pure Pasch. I answer, Passover, in that place, does not signify the paschal lamb, for that had been

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* *Ne concurrent* is the Latin. In order to understand *à Lapide*, it must be borne in mind that according to the Jewish *festival* computation of time, our Lord in keeping the Passover on Thursday evening was really keeping it on the 15th of Nisan, or the Friday, according to the *natural* reckoning of time.—(*Trans.*)

already sacrificed and eaten the evening before, but the other paschal victims, which they were wont to immolate on the seven following days, but especially on the first day of the azyms, that is, on the morning of the 15th day of Nisan, according to the Law.

You will object, 3d. John (xix. 21) calls the 15th of Nisan, on which Christ celebrated the paschal supper, the preparation of the Passover. I answer yes, *of the Passover*, that is, *of the Paschal Sabbath*, or the Sabbath which fell within the octave of the Paschal Feast, which was for that reason more thought of than other Sabbaths. As S. John adds by way of explanation, *for that Sabbath-day was a high day*. This appears also from Mark xv. 32, who calls this preparation day *the day before the Sabbath*. For on the preparation day, that is, the Friday, they prepared food and other necessaries for the following day, which was the Sabbath. For on this Sabbath, as being most holy, they abstained from every kind of work, even from preparing food, which was allowable on other festivals.

You will object, 4th. That the rulers say in Matt. xxvi. 5, Let us put Christ to death, *but not on the feast day*. I reply that, after the treachery of Judas, they changed their counsel; and they did put Him to death on the feast day.

The disciples came,—two, says S. Mark; *Peter and John*, S. Luke. *Where?*—this is not to ask the city or town, but the house. They were certain from the Law (Deut. xvi. 5–7) that the Passover could not be offered anywhere save at Jerusalem. The paschal lamb, however, was not immolated in the temple by the priests, but at home, by each master of a household, who for this purpose retained the ancient right of the priesthood, which was originally given to each first-born son of a family. Philo shows this at length (*lib. de Decalogo, sub finem*): "Every one ordinarily sacrifices the Passover without waiting for the priest; for they in this case, by the permission of the Law, discharge the office of the priest." For the sacrifice of the paschal lamb consisted rather in the eating thereof, than in the immolation. Whence the disciples say, *eat the Passover*.

Hence, also, it might be slain, immolated, flayed, and roasted, not indeed by common butchers, but either by a priest, or by that member of a family whom its head should appoint. Thus Peter and John, who were here sent by Christ, killed and made ready the lamb, and prepared the unleavened bread, and the wild herbs with which the lamb was to be eaten. The lamb was wont to be slain at the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon, as Josephus says (*lib.* 7, *de Bell. c.* 17).

Go into the city: Jerusalem. From this it is plain that Christ said these things in Bethany. *To such a one, and say. Such a one;* this is the Hebrew idiom, when any one is intended whose name is not mentioned. However, He indicates him by certain marks, as S. Mark signifies: "And He sendeth forth two of His disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the good man of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with My disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished *and* prepared: there make ready for us. And His disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as He had said unto them; and they made ready the Passover."

Where observe, that it is plain from S. Mark's words that this water-carrier, who guided them to the house, was not the master of the house. This latter appears to have been a wealthy man, who possessed a spacious mansion, and who was probably a friend and disciple of Christ. The tradition is, that this house belonged to John, whose surname was Mark, the companion of Paul and Barnabas. This was the house in which the Apostles lay concealed after the death of Christ. In it Christ appeared to them in the evening of the day of His resurrection. And in the same house they received the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. Wherefore also Peter, when he was delivered by the angel out of the prison into which he had been cast by Herod, betook himself to the believers who were gathered together in this same house (*see Acts* xii. 12). Wherefore, this house was converted into a church. For in it was

Sion builded up, which is the greatest and the holiest of all churches. Alexander shows all these things in his *Life of the Apostle S. Barnabas.* He is followed by Baronius and many others. For *where My refreshment is*, as the Vulgate of S. Matt. (*ver.* 14) translates, the Greek has καταλυμα, *inn* or *lodging.* The Greek for *chamber* is ἀνώγεων, an *upper floor*, or *chamber*, or *flat*, such as are inhabited at Rome by wealthy people. Wherefore it is a type of the Church, which is tending from earth to Heaven.

My time, i.e., the time of My death, and of finishing the work which My Father sent Me to do.

Ver. 19. *And the disciples*, viz., Peter and John, *did as Jesus had appointed them:* they killed and roasted the paschal lamb. Now the lamb, prepared for roasting, set forth the image of Christ crucified. For as S. Justin (*contr. Tryph.*) teaches, the body of the lamb was pierced through with the spit. The hind-feet, as well as the fore-feet, which stood in the place of hands, were distended, and held apart by little sticks inserted in the hollows of the feet. As if the spit signified the longitudinal portion of the cross, and the little stakes the transverse bars, together with the nails driven into the hands and feet of the Divine Lamb. For the fire of His affliction was no less than the fire by which the paschal lamb was roasted. "Why," asks Franc. Lucas, "do lambs always bear the marks of wounds in the hollow of their feet, in a manner not unlike to those which our Saviour retained from the piercing of the nails upon the cross?" Christ then, when He came to the house, and beheld the roasted lamb, beheld in it a lively image of His own crucifixion. Wherefore He offered this lamb, as it were a type of Himself, or rather He offered up Himself, a whole burnt-offering, and as it were a Victim for the sins of the whole world, with a great and burning ardour unto God the Father.

When the evening was come, &c. For in the evening, according to the Law, the lamb was to be eaten, and by the eaters standing, that the Hebrews might thereby show that they were prepared for the journey, that is to say, out of Egypt to the land of

promise. But Jesus is said to have lain down (*discubuisse*) with His disciples, because the ancients were accustomed at supper to recline upon couches; that is to say, with the lower portion of the body they were in a recumbent position, but with their arms they leant upon supports, as though they were sitting at table. Mark (xiv. 17) has, *when it was evening He came with the twelve*. Speaking precisely, there were ten, since two had been previously sent to prepare the Passover, and were already on the spot.

You will ask, Was Judas the traitor present at the celebration of the Passover and the Eucharist? And did he partake of it? S. Hilary and Theophylact (*in loc.*) say, No. So do Clemens Romanus (*lib.* 5, *Constit. c.* 16), Innocent III. (*lib. de Myster. Euchar. c.* 13), and Rupertus (*lib.* 10, *in Matth.*). S. Dionysius (*de Eccles. Hierar.*) is thought by some to favour the same opinion; but other writers, as S. Thomas, take S. Dionysius to incline to the opposite view. Theophylact also may be taken both ways. The reason why the above writers think that Judas did not partake is, because a traitor was unworthy of so great Mysteries, and one who must be forbidden to assist at them.

But that Judas *was* present at the Passover and the Eucharist, and that he did communicate with the rest of the Apostles, is the common opinion of all other Fathers and Doctors, namely, Origen, Cyril, Chrysostom, Ambrose, SS. Leo, Cyprian, Austin, Bede, Rabanus, S. Thomas, and others, whom Suarez cites and follows (3 *part. quæst.* 73, *art.* 5, *disp.* 41, *sect.* 3), where he maintains that S. Dionysius also held the same opinion. For Dionysius says thus, "And the Author Himself (Christ) of the Creeds most justly separates him, who not as He Himself, nor in like manner, with sacred simplicity, had supped with Him." Which means, Christ separates Judas from the company of Himself and His Apostles, saying to him, "What thou doest, do quickly," because he had supped and taken the Eucharist unworthily with Him. For presently, after his unworthy communicating, Satan entered into him, and compelled him to

accomplish his betrayal of Christ, as SS. Chrysostom, Cyril, and Austin teach.

This opinion is proved—1st. Because Matthew here says that Christ sat down to the Supper of the lamb and the Eucharist with the twelve Apostles—therefore with Judas. Whence in the 21st verse it follows, *And when they were eating, He said unto them, Verily I say unto you that one of you shall betray Me.* 2d. Because Mark (xiv. 23) says concerning the Eucharistic Chalice, *And they all drank of it.* 3d. Because Luke says that, after the consecration of the Chalice, Christ immediately added, *Nevertheless the hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table.* 4th. Because John (chap. xiii.), when he relates that Christ, before the Eucharistic Feast, washed the Apostles' feet, signifies that He washed the feet of Judas, for He says, *Ye are clean, but not all, for He knew who would betray Him.* If, then, Christ washed the feet of Judas, He also gave him the Eucharist; for this washing was preparatory to the Eucharistic Feast. 5th. Because Christ, after the Eucharistic Supper, said that one of them who were reclining with Him at the table, meaning Judas, was His betrayer. And when John asked, Who was this betrayer? Christ answered (xiii. 26), *It is he to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it. And when He had dipped the piece of bread* (Vulg.), *He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.*

The *a priori* reason is, that although Christ might properly have made known to the Apostles the hidden treachery of Judas, for the manifestation of His Divinity and His love, both because He was the lord of the character (*famæ*) of Judas, as well as because the treason of Judas was already known to others, that is, to the princes and elders, and was very shortly to become known to the Apostles themselves by the course of events, yet was He unwilling to do this, that He might give an example of perfect charity, and that He might by this means draw Judas to repentance. Lastly, He would show that secret sinners must not be publicly traduced nor prohibited from coming to the celebration of Holy Communion. Wherefore, when Christ, in

instituting the Eucharist, made the Apostles priests and bishops when he said, *Do this in commemoration of Me*, it follows that He created Judas also, who was present, a priest and a bishop. Wherefore it is said concerning him in the 109th Psalm, "And his bishopric let another take." For S. Peter interprets this of Judas in the 1st chapter of the Acts. For although the Hebrew of the passage in the Psalm is *pecuddato*, i.e., *prefecture*, meaning his *Apostleship*, yet there is no reason why it should not be properly understood of *Bishopric*, as Suarez takes it. Lastly, it is plain that none others, except the twelve Apostles, were present at the Supper and the Eucharist. For these twelve only are mentioned. This against Euthymius, who thinks that others were present.

And whilst they were eating, &c. Matthew says that Christ spake this before the institution of the Eucharist, but Luke (xxii. 22) says *after it*. And this seems more probable. For Christ would be unwilling to trouble the minds of His disciples with such dreadful news before the Eucharist. Rather would He have them wholly intent upon, and devoted to the consideration of so great a Sacrament. Wherefore S. Matthew speaks by way of anticipation. Although S. Austin thinks (*lib.* 3, *de Consens. Evang. c.* 1) that Christ spake thus twice, both before and after the Eucharist.

About to betray (Vulg.), *i.e.*, in a few hours *to deliver up*. Christ spoke thus, as well to show that He was conscious of the treachery, as that, not against His will, but voluntarily, He suffered. Wherefore He did not flee away, but offered Himself to His betrayer. He did it also to prick the conscience of Judas and arouse him to repentance. So S. Jerome says, "He casts the accusation generally, that the conscience of the guilty one might lead him to repentance." Christ did not name Judas for three reasons. 1st. For the sake of his good name, and to teach us to act in like manner. 2d. Lest Peter and the Apostles should rise up against Judas, and tear him to pieces. 3d. That by this gentleness and charity He might provoke Judas to repentance. Wherefore S. Leo says (*Serm.* 7, *de Passione*), "He

made it plain to the traitor that his inmost heart was known to Him, not confounding the impious one by a rough or open rebuke, but convicting him by a gentle and quiet admonition, that He might the more easily correct, by bringing to repentance, him whom no charge had robbed of his good name."

And they were exceeding sorry, &c. Syr. *They were vehemently troubled. Lord, is it I?* Syr. *Mori*, i.e., *My Lord, is it I?* For very greatly did they grieve that Christ their Lord, their Parent and their Master, upon whom they wholly depended, was to be torn from them, and to die, and that through treachery, which was to be perpetrated by one of their own college, which would be the greatest injury, and occasion the utmost infamy to the entire college. Wherefore these words of Christ transfixed their hearts as with a sword, and, says S. Chrysostom, "they became half dead."

One by one: therefore Judas lest if he alone kept silence should betray himself, or render himself suspected to the rest of the Apostles. For, as Origen says, "I think that at first he thought he might lie hid as a man. But when afterwards he saw that his heart was known to Christ, he embraced the opportunity of concealment offered by Christ's words." His first action was one of unbelief, his second of impudence. Now the other Apostles all said, *Is it I?* because, although their conscience did not accuse them of such a crime, yet, as S. Chrysostom says, they believed the words of Christ rather than their own conscience. Because, as S. Austin says in another place, "There is no sin which a man has done, which a man may not do, if the Ruler, by whom man was made, be absent from him."

He that dippeth his hand, &c. *Dippeth;* Gr. ὁ ἐμβαψάς, aorist, *who dipped*, or *who is accustomed to dip*. It appears that Judas, in order the better to conceal his treachery, and show himself a friend to Christ, the more frequently dipped bread, or flesh, into the vessel of broth, or vinegar, or condiment. But inasmuch as the other Apostles were wont to do the same thing to some extent, they could not know that Judas was certainly

designated as the traitor by these words of Christ. Whence they strove to get at the fact by means of other questions addressed to Him.

Here take notice, for the harmony of the Evangelists, who relate diversely the pointing out of Judas the traitor, that the following is the historical order which harmonises all the Gospels with one another. First, Christ before the Eucharist foretold that He should be betrayed by one of the Apostles. But this He did in a general manner, without naming or indicating any individual. This is plain from Matthew and Mark. Afterwards, when the Apostles asked one by one, *Lord, is it I?* Christ answered, that "he was the traitor, who dipped his hand with Him in the dish." For the ancients were wont to recline at table on couches by threes and fours, as I have shown on Esther i. 6. Each three or four, therefore, had a common dish, in such a way, that those who reclined on opposite couches might have the same dish. Therefore, because several of the Apostles had the same dish, Christ did not by those words indicate precisely who was the traitor. After this Christ instituted the Eucharist. And when this was finished, He again said that the traitor was with Him at the table, as S. Luke relates at length; on which I have said more on S. John xiii. 21. Whereupon Peter made signs to John, who was reclining upon the bosom of Christ, to ask Him definitely, and by name, who was the traitor. John then asked, and to him Christ answered, "that it was he to whom He was about to give a morsel," which presently He gives to Judas. Judas having received it, and feeling that he was designated both by his own consciousness of his guilt and by the sign which Christ gave, impudently asks, *Rabbi, is it I?* Christ answered, *Thou hast said*, that is, *thou art he.* Wherefore he seemed to himself altogether detected, goes forth, as it were, in madness and rage to accomplish the betrayal of Christ, and goes to the house of Caiaphas, to ask for servants and officers to take Christ.

Ver. 24. *The Son of Man indeed goeth*, &c. *Good were it for*

that man if he had not been born. For "far better is it not to exist at all, than to exist in evil. The punishment is foretold, that him whom shame had not conquered, the denunciation of punishment might correct," says S. Jerome. He threatens him with the woe of damnation. For far better is it not to be, than to exist only to be endlessly miserable, as I have shown on Eccles. iv. 2, 3. Wisely does S. Jerome say (*Epist. ad Furiam*), "It is not their beginning which is inquired about in Christians, but their ending. Paul began badly but ended well. Judas' beginning was commended, but his end was to be condemned as a traitor."

Goeth. "By this word," says Victor of Antioch, "Christ showeth that His death is like rather to a departure or passing away, than to real death. He signifies, likewise, by it that He went voluntarily to death." Moreover, the betrayal of Judas was an act of infinite sacrilege, perpetrated directly against the very Person of Christ and God. Thus it was true *deicide.* Wherefore it is exceedingly probable that Judas abides in the deepest pit of Gehenna, near to Lucifer, and is there grievously tormented. And this seems to be indicated by the word *woe*, which Christ here pronounces upon him above the rest of the reprobates. Blessed Francis Borgia was wont, in meditation, in the depth of his humility, to place himself at the feet of Judas, that is to say, in the lowest pit of hell, exclaiming that there was no other place fit for him, neither in Heaven, nor in earth, nor under the earth, as the due reward of his sins.

Ver. 25. *Judas answered . . . Is it I?* Franc. Lucas thinks, with probability, that Judas asked this question after Christ had given him the morsel of bread.

Now Judas asked this question out of impudence, to cover his wickedness; and, as Jerome says, "by boldness to lay a lying claim to a good conscience." For he thought that Christ, out of gentleness, would not name His betrayer. As though he had said, "Surely it is not I, O Christ, who am Thy betrayer? I who have faithfully served Thee all these years? Who have fed Thy family, and executed all Thy business?"

Thou hast said. This is the modest Hebrew method of answering, by which they confirm what is asked. As though Christ said, "It is not that I say it, and call thee traitor. It is thou thyself who in reality dost call thyself so because thou art, in truth, a traitor." Whence S. Chrysostom extols the meekness of Christ, who, in just anger, did not say, "Thou wicked and sacrilegious wretch! thou ungrateful traitor!" but gently, *Thou hast said.* "Thus has He fixed for us the bounds and rules of forbearance and forgetfulness of injuries."

Ver. 26. *Whilst they were at supper*, &c. *This is My Body.* Thus the Syriac, Arabic, and Persian. But the Ethiopic more significantly renders, *This is My very Flesh.* The Egyptian adds *for: For this is My Body.* The rest, indeed, understand *for.* For that the word must here be supplied is sufficiently plain from the account of the consecration of the wine in ver. 28, *For this is My Blood.* The word *for* gives the reason *why* they must eat and drink, namely, because it is the Body and Blood of Christ which are offered to them by Him to be eaten and drunken. For who would not most eagerly receive such Divine and precious meat and drink?

At supper, i.e., *after the supper*, as Luke and Paul have it, of the paschal lamb, but whilst they were still reclining at the table as it was spread for the feast. Therefore Matthew says, *whilst they were at supper.* Here take notice that this supper of Christ was threefold. First, that of the paschal lamb, which Christ and His Apostles celebrated standing, according to the law in Exod. xii. Secondly, a common supper of other food after the lamb, which they ate reclining upon couches. For all the members of a family, especially if it were a numerous one, would not have sufficient food in the lamb alone. Thirdly, Christ added a most sacred, yea, a Divine Supper, that is to say, the institution of the Eucharist. For Christ before the Eucharist partook of the lamb and the ordinary supper, since it was fitting that the type of the lamb should precede the Eucharistic Verity; and that the Eucharist should be the final memorial of Him who was

about to die, as it were the highest pledge of love. So Jansen, Maldonatus, and others. Suarez, however, in speaking of this passage, thinks that the Eucharist was instituted between the paschal and the ordinary supper. At present, indeed, for the sake of reverence of so great a Sacrament, it is, says S. Augustine (*Epist.* 128), an Apostolic tradition that the Eucharist should only be taken by those who are fasting. Wherefore the heretics falsely and deceitfully call the Eucharist "the Supper," although it be true the first Christians for some time celebrated the Eucharist at supper, after the example of Christ, as we gather from 1 Cor. xi. 25. Moreover, in the place of the second and ordinary supper, which Paul calls *the Lord's Supper*, there succeeded in ancient times, among Christians, the *Agape*, that is, a feast common to all, as a sign and incentive of charity, but taken after the reception of the Eucharist. Lastly, Christ, after the supper upon the lamb and the ordinary supper, but before the institution of the Eucharist, washed the disciples' feet. He did this to signify with what purity we ought to approach so great Mysteries. This is plain from John xiii. 4. After the washing, He took and consecrated bread and wine, which were still upon the table, and converted them into the Eucharist, that is, into His own Body and Blood.

From all this it is gathered that Christ instituted the Eucharist about the first or second hour of the night. For after taking the Eucharist, Judas went out to summon the servants of the rulers, that they might seize Christ. Christ in the meanwhile delivered His prolonged discourse, of which John gives an account, chaps. xiv.–xvii. When this was ended, He went out to the Mount of Olives, and there continued a long time in prayer. Then He was taken by the Jews and dragged back from Gethsemane to Jerusalem. Then He was taken to Annas, and after that to Caiaphas. Still there was a great part of the night left, during which He was beaten by the hands of the servants of the priests, was spat upon and mocked by them, whilst they were waiting for the day, that they might take Him to Pilate

to be condemned. From all this it appears that Christ instituted the Eucharist about the beginning of Thursday night.

Lastly, listen to the Council of Trent (*Sess.* 22, *c.* 1): "After Christ had celebrated the ancient Passover, which the multitude of the sons of Israel sacrificed in memory of their going out of Egypt, He instituted a new Passover, that He Himself should be immolated by the Church (*ab ecclesia*), by means of (*per*) the priests, under (*sub*) visible signs, in memory of His passage from this world to the Father, when He redeemed us by the shedding of His Blood, and delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us to His Kingdom."

Jesus took bread. Observe here five actions of Christ. 1st. He took bread. 2d. He gave thanks to the Father. 3d. He blessed bread. 4th. He brake bread. 5th. He extended it, and as He was extending it to them He said, *Take and eat; this is My Body.* For these are the words by which He offered it to them as well as by which He consecrated it. This annihilates Calvin's argument, who says, all these words, namely, *took*, *blessed*, *brake*, *gave*, have respect only unto *bread.* Therefore the Apostles received and ate *bread*, not *the Body of Christ.* I reply to the major premiss: These words refer to bread, not as it remained bread, but as it was in the act of being bestowed (*inter dandum*), changed by virtue of the words and consecration of Christ into the Body of Christ. For thus might Christ have said at Cana of Galilee, "Take and drink, for this is wine," if He had wished by these words to turn water into wine. For so we say in ordinary speech, "Herod shut up S. John in prison, killed and buried him, or permitted him to be buried." And yet it was not the same that he shut up in prison whom he buried. For he imprisoned a man, he buried a corpse. After a similar and common way of speaking is what the Evangelists and S. Paul say of the Eucharist.

Observe, secondly, from what Christ said, *Take ye, for this is*, &c., it would seem that Christ took one loaf, and during the act of consecration broke it into twelve parts, and gave one of

these parts to each of the Apostles, which they appear to have received in their hands. Wherefore also, for a long time in the Church, the Eucharist was given to the faithful in their hands, as is plain from Tertullian (*lib. de Spectac.*), and from S. Cryil of Jerusalem (*Catechesi Mystagog.* 5), and from S. Austin (*Serm.* 244). Afterwards, however, from fear of desecration, and through reverence, it was given in the mouth.

Lastly, the Apostles were not troubled at this unaccustomed action of Christ, and this new and wonderful Sacrament, for two reasons. First, because they had been already instructed and premonished (*John* vi.), as S. Chrysostom teaches (*Hom.* 83, *in Matth.*). The other, because the same Christ who delivered the Mysteries, illuminated their minds by faith, that they might simply believe. For they had heard and believed many other more marvellous things without being troubled; as, chiefly that that Man, whom they saw eat, drink, sleep, be weary, was true God. Yea, that He was in Heaven at the very same time that He was speaking with them on earth, when He said (*John* iii. 13), "And no man hath ascended up to Heaven, but He that came down from Heaven, *even* the Son of Man, which is in Heaven.

Blessed. Observe, Christ before consecration, 1st. gave thanks to God the Father, as Luke and Paul say; and that, after His manner, with His eyes lifted up to Heaven, as it is in the Canon of the Mass and the Liturgy of S. James. Whence this Sacrament is called the Eucharist, *i.e.*, Giving of Thanks, because it is itself the greatest and chief Thanksgiving.

2d. Christ blessed, not the Father, as the heretics choose to say, but the bread and wine, as S. Paul says expressly, *the cup of blessing which we bless*, &c. (1 Cor. x.). Now Christ blessed the bread and the chalice, that is to say, He invoked the blessing and almighty power of God upon the bread and wine, that it might be then at that time, and in all future consecrations, converted, the bread into the Body, and the wine of the chalice into the Blood of Christ, whensoever the words of consecration

are rightly and duly (*legitime*) pronounced. Similar was the blessing of the loaves (*Luke* ix. 16). Not, therefore, was this benediction the same as consecration, though S. Thomas thinks otherwise (*see Council of Trent, Sess.* 13, *cap.* 1). Whence in the Liturgies of S. James and S. Basil, and in our Canon, we pray, after Christ's example, that God would bless these gifts, that the Divine power may descend upon the bread and the chalice, to perfect the consecration. Hence it is called *the chalice of benediction, i.e.*, blessed by Christ. Whence also S. Paul says (1 Cor. x. 16), "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communication of the Blood of Christ?"

Lastly, it seems that Christ blessed the bread by making over it the sign of the cross, and in blessing, invoked the power of God, that it might become consecrated and transubstantiated. For, according to the practice of the Church, priests in consecration bless the bread and the wine with the sign of the cross. This they do after the example of Christ.

This is My Body. From hence it is plain that the Eucharist is not the figure of the Body of Christ, as the Innovators perversely say, but the true and proper Body of Christ, which was born of the Virgin Mary, and crucified on Calvary, as the Church has believed in all ages, and defined in many Councils. This I have shown on 1 Cor. xi. 24. There Paul, in the same words, repeats and relates the institution of the Eucharist. We must add, that some have been torn away from this faith, because they are not able to comprehend how the Body of Christ, so lofty and so great, can be contained whole in (*sub*) a very little host. But these persons ought to remember that God is Almighty; and that as He constituted nature, so also He often works, as He wills, contrary to nature, in a supernatural manner, that He may show Himself to be the Lord and God of nature and of all things. Wherefore, whatsoever there is peculiar in nature may be inverted and altogether changed (*everti*). Consequently, God is able to effect that a great quantity may be contained in a little space, yea, in a point. This is the theological reason. But in

order to give full satisfaction to some weak minds, I will subjoin two evidential arguments for this mystery to show that it is possible—arguments which derive their force from analogy. Take, therefore, the following demonstration, drawn from a physical analogy—from the eye and a mirror. For both a looking-glass and a small eye receive into themselves the whole quantity of the very greatest things, not only men, but houses, temples, trees, mountains, &c., and clearly reproduce and represent them whole. Why then should not a small host, by God's power, set forth (*exhibeat*) whole Christ? You will say that in the eye and in the mirror what takes place is done in a spiritual manner, by means of optical or visual appearances. I reply, in like manner the Body of Christ in the Eucharist assumes a spiritual mode of existence, so that, as a spirit, it should be spiritually in the very small portion of the host.* Let us add this, that the objective appearances themselves are not spiritual in such a sense as that they are not really natural and physical, yes, corporeal, entities. For they are inseparable from corporeal entities, such as the atmosphere. And of these things we see that very many, and as it were an infinite number, are received and comprehended in a mirror and in the eye. If all this constantly takes place in a natural manner, with respect to the appearances received by the eye, much more can the omnipotence of God do the same thing supernaturally in respect to the Body of Christ, miraculously in the Eucharist.

(Here follows in the original what the Author calls an analogical mathematical demonstration. This is omitted, both because it would involve the printing of two intricate mathematical diagrams, as also because such a species of argument seems less likely to convince now than it did when *à Lapide* wrote.)

You may add here a third proof drawn from condensation and rarefaction, which I have brought forward on 1 Cor. xi. 25. Water in a vessel, made dense by means of cold, occupies only

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* *Lat.* ut quasi spiritus spiritualiter sit in puncto hostiæ.

half of the vessel, but when it is made hot and rarefied by means of fire, it bubbles up and fills the whole vessel. And yet the water continues the same as regards matter, volume (*molem*), and, as many celebrated philosophers are of opinion, as regards intrinsic bulk; for nothing is added to the water by rarefaction except extension in space. If, then, this takes place according to natural laws, why should God be unable to do the same thing supernaturally, as respects the body of Christ?

Luke adds (xxii. 19), *This is My Body which is given for you*, i.e., *which is about to be given.* S. Paul (1 *Cor.* xi.) has, *which shall be delivered* (Vulg.); Gr. κλώμενον, *broken.*

Luke also adds, *This do ye for a commemoration of Me.* By these words Christ gave to the Apostles, and to the Priests who were to be ordained by them, power, as well as commandments, to consecrate and transubstantiate bread into His Body, and wine into His Blood. Wherefore by these words Christ constituted and ordained His Apostles Priests and Bishops, as the Council of Trent teaches (*Sess.* 22, *cap.* 1). For by these words He commanded His Apostles, as Bishops, to ordain Priests to celebrate as well the Sacrament as the Sacrifice of the Eucharist, continuously and perpetually throughout all ages. And this He did both for the perpetual praise and worship of God, and also for the spiritual nourishment of the faithful, that they might, by this means, ask and obtain of God every grace for the Church. And this is the doctrine and faith of the whole Church. *This do*, therefore, is as though He said, "Do what I do, *i.e.*, consecrate, sacrifice, transubstantiate bread and wine, and eat them, as I have consecrated, sacrificed, transubstantiated, eaten the same. Moreover, also, ordain Priests and Bishops, who, by a perpetual succession, may do the same, even unto the end of the world."

For a commemoration of Me. "That, namely, by the consecration and receiving of the Eucharist, ye may commemorate, and, as S. Paul says (1 *Cor.* xi. 26), may announce (Vulg.), My death." For consecrating Priests are here bidden not only to remember the Death of Christ, but to recall the same to memory

with Christian people, that they may be always mindful of so great a benefit, and of Christ's great condescension and redemption, and thankful for it, and so by it ask and obtain all grace from God.

Ver. 27. *And taking the chalice*, &c. Bellarmine (*lib.* iv. *de Eucharist. c.* 27) is of opinion that Christ did not consecrate the chalice immediately after the consecration of the bread, but that many actions and words of His intervened. He endeavours to prove this from the fact that S. Matthew says, *whilst they were at supper;* but Luke and Paul say concerning the chalice, *likewise also the cup after supper.*

But it is far more probable that Christ, after the consecration of the bread, proceeded immediately with the consecration of the chalice. For Matthew, Mark, and Luke so relate. Moreover, the *rationale* of the Sacrament and the Eucharistic Sacrifice so required that there should not be any division or interruption, but that the whole matter should be accomplished at one and the same time. And we know that to the *rationale* of the Sacrifice pertains the consecration of the wine as well as the bread. For Christ instituted this Sacrifice after the manner of a feast, for which wine is required for drink, as well as bread for food. Thus likewise in the Old Testament, in the sacrifice of the *mincha*, that is, of fine flour, equally as in the sacrifice of animals, there was added a *drink-offering*, *i.e.*, a pouring forth of wine and oil. For sacrifice is offered to God that it should be a refection of God. But for a refection, drink is required as well as food, that is to say, both wine and bread.

Drink ye all of this. Christ said this before the consecration of the chalice. Wherefore, in Mark xiv. 23 there is an hysterologia when it is said, *and they all drank of it.* And presently he relates that Christ consecrated it, saying, *This is My Blood of the New Testament.* But it is certain from Matthew and Luke that Christ first consecrated the chalice, and then gave it to His Apostles to drink. For otherwise they would have drunk mere wine, and not the Blood of Christ.

Observe, that Christ divided the bread into thirteen parts, one of which He took first Himself, and then gave the remaining parts to the Apostles, one by one. But with the contents of the chalice, being liquid, He could not do this. Wherefore, after it was consecrated, Christ first drank of it Himself, and then gave it to his next neighbour, whether John or Peter, bidding him pass it to his nearest neighbour, and thus the chalice passed round the company, and all the Apostles drank of it. Wherefore it does not follow, as the Hussites and Luther say, that the chalice ought to be given to the laity, and that they ought to communicate in both kinds, because Christ and the Apostles communicated in both kinds, and that the same is Christ's command. For this precept of drinking, where He said, *Drink ye all of this* (as the Church has always understood), pertained only to the Apostles, who alone were then present. For Christ at that time was consecrating them Priests, and He bade them consecrate the Sacrament and Sacrifice of the Eucharist under both kinds, and bade them receive both kinds, that they might complete a perfect Sacrifice. But He did not command this to the laity, to whom, inasmuch as they do not sacrifice, but only receive the Eucharist as a Sacrament, it is sufficient that they take it under one kind, because in one kind they receive the whole effect and fruit of the Sacrament. And it is especially to be considered that in so great a number of lay people communicating, the chalice might easily be overturned, and the Blood of Christ contained in it spilt upon the ground, which would be an act of great irreverence. Similarly the command of Christ, *This do ye for a commemoration of Me*, in what refers to consecration, pertains only to Priests; but to the laity pertains only the receiving of the consecrated Bread, as is plain. For when several precepts are mingled together, their variety may be limited and distributed, according to the condition of the persons intended, and the intention of the legislator, who in this place is Christ, and His interpreter the Church.

S. Cyprian, or whoever is the author of the treatise (*de Cœna*

Dom.), observes that formerly it was forbidden to the Hebrews to drink the blood of animals, as is plain from Heb. ix. 22, Lev. iv. 6, &c., but that now the Blood of Christ is drunk by His Priests. First, because the Blood of Christ is life-giving. 2nd. Because by It we have been redeemed. 3rd. Because by It, being made spiritual, we shudder at the sins of a carnal life, as at impure blood.

For this is My Blood of the New Testament. Syr. *Covenant*, &c. The Ethiopic has, *This is My very Blood.* He means, "in this chalice, by this My consecration, wine is turned into My Blood. Wherefore, after this consecration, there is no longer wine there, but My Blood, by which the new Covenant and Testament are confirmed and rectified, by means of My mediation between God and man." For Christ by His Blood, shortly to be shed, merited and confirmed for us the hope and the right of eternal inheritance in Heaven, which was the chief and the last will of Christ the Testator. And the Sacraments afford this right to us, especially the Eucharist, in the same way that a testament consigns in writing to the heir a right to the testator's goods.

Observe: Matthew and Mark have, *My Blood of the New Testament.* But Luke and Paul have, *This chalice is the New Testament in My Blood.* The meaning in both is the same, but Christ would seem to have actually uttered what Matthew and Mark relate. For this is an expression of clearer meaning. Christ, by instituting the Eucharist at His last supper, rather than upon the Cross, ratified His testament and covenant with the Church. For all the Apostles were here present. And they personified and represented the Church.

Observe, secondly: In the form of consecrating the chalice which we now use in the Sacrifice of the Mass, there are added these words, *The eternal testament, the mystery of the faith.* Tradition says they have been handed down from S. Peter, who is the author of our Liturgy. So teach Leo IX. (*Epist. ad. Michael. imp. c.* 9) and S. Thomas (3 *p. q.* 78, *art.* 2, *ad.* 4). For although they do not concern the essence of the form (and yet S. Thomas

in 1 Cor. xi. seems to say they do), wherefore they are not found in the Liturgies of S. James, S. Basil, S. Chrysostom, and S. Clement, yet they pertain to its complete integrity. And this is the common opinion of the whole Latin Church, which, in the form of consecrating the chalice in the Mass, writes and pronounces these words as spoken by Christ, and enjoined by the Apostles, equally with the rest.

Where observe: *The mystery of the faith* signifies—1st. That the Blood of Christ veiled beneath the species is a hidden (*arcanam*) thing, which can be recognised and believed by faith alone. 2nd. That the very Blood of Christ, as it was shed in His Passion, is the object of faith whereby we are justified. For we believe that we are justified and cleansed from our sins by the merits of the Passion and Death of Christ.

For many, i.e., for all men, who are very many.

Shall be shed (Vulg.). But the Greek of Matthew, Mark, and Luke has ἐκχυνόμενον, *is shed*, in the present, *i.e.*, is offered in this Sacrifice of the Eucharist under the species of wine, and which shall be presently shed upon the Cross in its own species and natural form of blood. For the blood of the victim was wont to be shed in the sacrifice itself, and so was a libation made to God. Whence the shedding itself is called a libation, a drink-offering. Wherefore this chalice of the Blood of Christ, as it was the drink-offering of the Sacrifice of Christ, was poured into the mouth of Christ and His Apostles, and for this reason the reception of the species, both of bread and wine, pertains to the object and the perfection of the Sacrifice.

Hence, then, it is plain that the Eucharist is not only a Sacrament, but a Sacrifice, in truth, the only Sacrifice of the New Law, which has succeeded to all the ancient sacrifices, and which contains them all in their completeness in Itself. Therefore Christ is called "a Priest after the order of Melchizedek," not of Aaron. For Aaron offered sheep, but Melchizedek bread and wine, even as Christ did, and transubstantiated them into

His Body and Blood (see *Ps.* cx. 4 and *Heb.* v. 6, 7). The Eucharist is, therefore—1st. A burnt-offering; 2nd. A sin-offering; 3rd. A peace-offering; 4th. A *mincha*, or meat-offering (*Lev.* i., &c.).

That this is so is plain—1st. Because Christ did not say of His Blood, "*which is poured upon many*," as a Sacrament, but "*which is shed for many*," as a sacrifice and drink-offering.

2nd. Because the Greek of all three Evangelists is ἐκχυνόμενον, *which is shed*, in the present tense, that is to say, now, in this Supper and consecration of the Eucharist. Therefore He speaks of the present Sacrifice of the Eucharist, and not only of that which was about to take place upon the Cross. And so S. Ambrose understands (in *Ps.* 38). But the Vulgate translates, *shall be shed*, because it has respect to the Sacrifice of the Cross, which was just about to take place, in which the Blood of Christ was most evidently and most perfectly shed for the salvation of sinners, of which this sacramental shedding of His Blood in the Eucharist was a type and figure, and therefore was, typically, one and the same with It.

3rd. Because Luke and Paul, to the words of consecration, *This is My Body*, add, *which is given*, that is, is offered, *for you* in sacrifice. Paul has, *which is broken for you*, that is to say, under the species of bread in the Eucharist, and actually by the nails and lance upon the Cross. Wherefore Paul calls the Eucharist; *the bread which we break*, viz., in the Sacrament, because we break and eat the species of bread, as offering this in sacrifice to God, by receiving and consuming them, none of which things were done upon the cross. Therefore *to break bread* signifies, the Sacrifice, not of the Cross, but of the Eucharist.

4th. Because Luke has expressly, τοῦτο τὸ ποτήριον ἡ καινὴ διαθήκη ἐν τῷ αἵματί μου, τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐκχυνόμενον, i.e., *this cup is the New Testament in My Blood, which, i.e.*, the cup, *shall be poured forth for you.* For the word *which* must be referred to *the cup*, not to *the Blood;* since αἵματι is in the *dative* case, τό in the *nom.* Therefore the chalice of the Blood of Christ

is poured out for us; but it is poured out in the Eucharist, not on the Cross, for then there was no chalice. Therefore the pouring out of the Blood is a drink-offering and a sacrifice.

The Sacrifice of the Eucharist, then, is a whole burnt-offering, because in consecrating and eating we offer whole Christ to God. The same is a peace-offering, because by It we ask and obtain peace, that is, all good things from God. The same also is a sin-offering, because it is offered to God, and obtains from Him remission of venial sins and temporal punishments. But It obtains remission of mortal sins indirectly, because It obtains from God prevenient grace and contrition, by which they are blotted out. (*See Council of Trent, Sess.* 22. *q.* 2. *See also S. Thomas and the Scholastics on the Eucharistic Sacrifice.*)

Lastly, to the Blood of Christ rather than to His Body is ascribed remission of sins, although it pertains to both. The reason is, that in the Old Testament expiation is attributed to blood, and in the sin-offering the victim's blood was poured out. Also by the shedding of His Blood the Death of Christ is signified, which was the all-worthy price, expiation and satisfaction for our sins.

The first reason, then, which moved Christ to institute the Eucharist, was to ordain a most excellent and Divine Sacrament in the New Law, by means of which He might feed the faithful with Divine Food. And that the Church might worthily, by It, as well unceasingly honour and worship God. For the victim which is offered to God in the Eucharistic Sacrifice is of infinite value. It is commensurate and co-equal with God Himself. For the victim is Christ Himself, who is both God and man. God Himself therefore is offered to God. Wherefore, since all our other worship, inasmuch as it is but that of creatures, is poor and worthless, therefore Christ made Himself to be the Victim in the Eucharist, that by It, as being God's equal, we might render due and equal worship to God, even such as He of right requires. Moreover, this Sacrifice chiefly consists in the consecration. For by it Christ is mystically slain, when His Body

and His Blood are severally apportioned (*seorsim allocantur*) under the species of bread and wine, as Suarez and Lessius (*lib.* 12, *de Perfect. Div. c.* 13, *n.* 94) teach from SS. Gregory, Irenæus, Nyssen, &c. By the word "severally" (*seorsim*), "by themselves," understand only as regards the effect (*vis*) of consecration. For by concomitance, where there is the Body of Christ, there also is His Blood, and *vice versâ*.

The second reason was, that He might leave unto us a perpetual exhibition (*ideam*) of His Life and Passion, to continually stir up in every one the memory of so great a redemption. For in the Eucharist the Blood is consecrated by Itself, and the Body of Christ is consecrated by Itself, that His Passion may thereby be set forth, in which His Blood was shed, and separated from His Body. The *species* therefore of wine shows forth (*representat*) the Blood of Christ shed. The *species* of bread exhibits the lifeless Body of Christ. This is what He said, *Do this*, &c. And S. Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 26, says, *As oft as ye shall eat*, &c., *ye shall announce the Lord's Death until He come.*

The third reason was, the greatness of the love of Christ towards His faithful people, by which, as He united our flesh, hypostatically, in the Incarnation, to His Deity, so in the Eucharist, sacramentally, He unites the same together with His Godhead, to each faithful communicant, and as it were incorporates them, that each may become Divine, and in a certain sense a Christ and God. For this is what S. John says of Christ when He was about to institute the Eucharist, before He washed the Disciples' feet. John xiii. 1: *Jesus, knowing that His hour was come, and that He was about to pass out of this world to the Father, having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them to the end.*

To the end, to the extremity both of life and love. That is, He loved them with extremest and highest love, when He left Himself to them in the Eucharist, that they might always have Him present with them, that they might associate and converse with Him, consult Him, open to Him all their difficulties,

troubles, and temptations, ask and obtain His assistance. For as He Himself says in Prov. (viii. 31), "My delights are with the sons of men."

Hence, as the Church sings, with S. Thomas:

> "Himself as born for brotherhood,
> Feasting He gives His brethren food:
> Their price He gives Himself to die,
> Their guerdon when they reign on high."

That by this extremity of love He may entice, yea, compel us, ardently to love Him back. For a "magnet is the love of love." It was this love which, as a sharp goad, drove S. Laurence to the flames, S. Vincent to the "wooden horse," S. Sebastian to the arrows, S. Ignatius to the lions, and all the other martyrs bravely to endure and overcome all manner of pains and torments, that they might pay back love for love, life for life death for Christ's death. This was why they were ambitious of martyrdom, and rejoiced and triumphed in it. And these things were the effect of the Eucharist. This supplied them with strength and gladness in all temptations and sufferings. Wherefore, of old time, the Christians in days of persecution used to communicate daily, that they might strengthen themselves for martyrdom. Indeed, they took the Eucharist home with them, and received It with their own hands (as Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, when she was kept captive in England, and had no Priest with her). Christ before His Passion instituted the Eucharist, that by means of It He might arm the Apostles to meet temptation.

A fourth reason was, that in the Eucharist Christ might give us the opportunity of exercising every virtue. For in it our *faith* is exercised, when we believe that He who is true God and man is invisibly, but really and truly, contained in a small host. Hope is exercised, because when we believe that Christ giveth Himself unto us, we hope that He will give us all other things, which are far less than Himself. Charity is exercised, because the Eucharist is a furnace of love, which Christ exhales, and breathes upon us,

that we may love Him again. Religion is exercised, because we worship and invoke God with the highest form of worship, and sacrifice to Him Christ Himself. Humility is exercised, because we ignore our eyes and senses and natural judgment, which suggests to us that there is only bread and wine in the Eucharist, and humbly submit ourselves to the words of Christ, who says, *This is My Body: This is My Blood.* Gratitude is exercised, because by it we render highest thanks to God for all His benefits, which is why it is called *Eucharist.* Abstinence is exercised, because it is not right to communicate otherwise than fasting. Patience and mortification are exercised, because it is a lively mirror of Christ's sufferings and crucifixion, and so on.

The *tropological* reason is, that by feeding us with His Divine Flesh, He may call us away from earthly flesh, and its pleasures and concupiscences, that we may live a life that is not carnal, but spiritual and divine, and may say with S. Paul, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." A Christian ought therefore so to live, speak, work, as though it were not he himself, but Christ who is living, speaking, working in him. Let him live, therefore, like an angel, "For man did eat angels' food." And S. Cyril of Jerusalem says (*Cateches.* 4, *Myst.*), "In the Eucharist we are made concorporate, and of the same blood with Christ."

Moreover, S. Chrysostom says (*Hom.* 36, *in* 1 *Cor.*), "Where Christ is eucharistically, there is not wanting the frequent presence of angels. Where there is such a King and such a Prince, there is the celestial palace, yea, there is Heaven itself." Wherefore we read concerning S. Ammon in the *Lives of the Fathers*, that when he was celebrating, an angel was seen to stand at the altar, sign the communicants with the sign of the cross, and write their names in a book. And S. Chrysostom (*lib.* 3, *de Sacerdotio*) relates that choirs of angels have been seen round about the altar, who, with bowed heads, showed deepest reverence to Christ their King, and uttered awe-inspiring voices. When, therefore, we communicate, or say or hear Mass, let us think that we are sitting by the side of Christ at the Last Supper. Let us think that Christ is speaking by

the mouth of the Priest, is celebrating, is transubstantiating bread and wine into His Body and Blood, and is feeding us therewith. For it is Christ who is the chief Agent, and works the Eucharistic miracle, as the Council of Trent teaches (*Sess.* 22). Wherefore S. Ambrose (*lib.* 8, *in Luc.*) says, "It is this Body of which it is said, My Flesh is meat indeed. About this Body are the true eagles, which fly round about It with spiritual wings." And (*lib.* 4 *de Sac.*) "well may the eagles be about the altar where the Body is." Wherefore S. Francis says, in his epistle to Priests, "It is a great misery, and a miserable infirmity, when you have Him Himself present, and care for anything else in the world."

The *anagogical* reason is, that Christ, in the Eucharist, gave us a pledge, a prelibation and a foretaste of the celestial inheritance. Wherefore the Church sings, with S. Thomas, in the Office of the Adorable Sacrament, "O sacred Feast, in which Christ is received, in which the memory of His Passion is recalled, the soul is filled with grace, and to us is given a pledge of future glory."

S. Thomas says, "In the Eucharist spiritual sweetness is tasted at the very fountain." This was what S. Francis, S. Monica, S. Catherine of Sienna, and many others were wont to feel at the Holy Eucharist, who were inebriated with heavenly delights, and kept jubilee, exulted, and were rapt in ecstasy, saying with the Psalmist, "My heart and my flesh exult in the living God. For whom have I in Heaven but Thee, and who is there upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee? God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

"My Jesus, my Love, my God, and my all."

Again, the Eucharist is the Food of immortality, because by virtue of It our bodies rise to the life immortal, according to that saying of Christ (*John* vi.), "Whoso eateth of this Bread shall live for ever." The Eucharist therefore stamps upon our bodies a certain force, not physical, but moral, which is the seed of immortality, that by means of it we may rise again. Whence S. Chrysostom rightly concludes (*Hom.* 83, *in Matth.*), "How, then,

does it not behove that he should be purer who enjoys such a sacrifice? Should not the hand which divides this Flesh be more resplendent than a solar ray? Should not the mouth be filled with spiritual fire; and the tongue, which is ruddy, with that tremendous Blood?"

And our Thomas, taught of God, says in the *4th Book of the Imitation, chap.* 2, "It ought to seem as great, as new, and as pleasant to thee, when thou celebratest or hearest Mass, as though Christ on that self-same day descended into the Virgin's womb, and became man; or was hanging upon the Cross, suffering and dying for man's salvation." Whence he gathers (*chap.* v.), "that when a Priest celebrates devoutly, he honours God, makes glad the angels, builds up the Church, assists the living, affords rest to the departed, and makes himself to have a share in all these good things." "For what is His goodness, and what is His beauty, unless it be the wheat of the elect, and the wine that bringeth forth virgins?" (*Zech.* ix. 17) Vulgate.

Ver. 29. *I say unto you . . . fruit of the vine;* Arab., *juice of the vine*, &c. S. Austin (*lib. de Consens. Evang.* iii. 1), and from him Jansen and others, are of opinion that Matthew intimates that Christ spake these words *after* the Eucharistic Supper. Let us here consider the following objection. "*The fruit of the vine* is wine produced from it, pressed from its grapes; therefore in the Eucharistic Chalice there is not the Blood of Christ, but only wine sprung from a vine." I answer, the pronoun *this* in *this fruit*, &c., does not signify exactly that wine which was in the consecrated Chalice, but in general the wine upon the table, from which the cup was filled, which was used both at the Passover and at the consecration of the Eucharist. Secondly, the Blood of Christ may be called *wine*, as the Body of Christ is called *bread* by S. Paul, on account, indeed, of the substance of bread and wine, as it was *before* consecration, and because of the *species* of bread and wine which remain *after* consecration. In truth, the *species* themselves, or the accidents of the wine, are rightly called *the fruit of the vine*, because they are produced by the vine. Thirdly, as all kinds of

food, both by Scriptural and common usage, are often called *bread*, because it is the staple of all food, so in like manner is any kind of drink called wine, especially by the Italians, Syrians, and others.

But it is far more probable that Christ spake these words *before* the institution of the Eucharist, concerning the supper and the chalice of the paschal lamb. For at that supper a cup of wine was carried round, which the father of the family tasted first, and then sent round about to all who partook of the lamb, as the Jewish tradition is. This second view is proved, because Luke expressly asserts as much. He distinctly gives an account of the two suppers of Christ,—that upon the lamb, and the Eucharistic Supper,—which Matthew, for the sake of brevity, condensed into one. And he says that these words concerning the chalice were spoken before the Eucharist at the paschal supper. We may see that the same conclusion must be drawn from what Christ said previously concerning the eating of the lamb (*Luke* xxii. 15, 16). "And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." Then immediately afterwards He subjoins what is said concerning the cup of the paschal lamb, "And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." Then, immediately afterwards, he relates the institution of the Eucharist, and of the Eucharistic cup, which Christ consecrated, saying, "Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." Where there is no mention made of *the fruit of the vine*, nor of *drinking new wine in the kingdom of God.*

Christ intended, therefore, by these words only to signify that He, from henceforth, would not sup with His disciples after the accustomed manner; but that this was His *last* supper, after which He was about to be taken and put to death. Wherefore here, as proceeding to die, He bids the Apostles His last farewell. Wherefore these words do not refer to the Eucharistic Chalice, which

does not contain *the fruit of the vine*, in the sense of *wine*, but the Blood of Christ, into which it has been changed by consecration. This is the opinion of Jerome, Bede, and many others.

When I will drink it new with you, &c. *New, i.e.*, of a new and different kind. For in Heaven the Blessed drink no earthly wine, but heavenly, even the wine and nectar of everlasting glory and joy; according to the words of Psalm xxxvi. 9, "They shall be inebriated with the fatness of Thy house: Thou shalt give them to drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure." So Origen on this passage, and Nazianzen (*Orat. de Pascha.*). For Scripture is wont to express the spiritual joys of the Blessed by means of corporeal pleasures, such as food and drink.

You will say that Christ after His Resurrection, in order to prove it to His Apostles, ate with them, and, as it would appear, also drank wine with them. How, then, does He here say that He will no more drink wine with them? I answer, that Christ did indeed both eat and drink with His Apostles after the Resurrection, but only by the way as it were, and to prove to them that He had risen, but not to satisfy the requirements of nature, as He had done before His death. Wherefore, speaking after the manner of men, that reception of food after the Resurrection cannot be counted eating.

And when they had sung an hymn, &c. Vulg. *said an hymn*, but meaning *sung*. Greek ὑμνήσαντες, i.e., *said* or *sung a hymn*, by way of giving thanks and praise to God. The Arabic has, *they gave praise*. Some think from the books of the Hebrew ritual that this was the hymn customarily sung by the Jews at the Passover, to give thanks after eating the lamb. But indeed, as Paul Burgensis observes, and from him Franc. Lucas, Baronius, and others, this hymn consisted of seven psalms of Hallelujah, beginning with the 113th, "*When Israel came out of Egypt*," and ending with the 119th, "*Blessed are the undefiled in the way.*" From hence S. Chrysostom concludes that no one ought to depart from Mass before the thanksgivings, which are contained in the collects after communion. You may gather the same principle from an ordinary

dinner or supper, from which people ought not to depart before returning thanks to God. Hence, also, the Fourth Council of Toledo asserts that this hymn of Christ's affords us an example of singing hymns. Hence, also, the practice of singing at Mass is of the highest antiquity, as is plain from the ancient Liturgies.

This, then, was the custom of the ancient Hebrews, to sing hymns at the Paschal Supper, which the Christians afterwards followed, in that after the Eucharist and the Agape, a common feast of charity for all the faithful, they sung hymns and psalms by way of giving thanks to God. This is gathered from S. Paul (*Eph.* v. 19), and Tertullian eloquently shows the same (*Apol. c.* 39), and S. Cyprian (*Epist. ad Donat.*).

The ancient heathen had a similar practice at their feasts, in honour of their gods.

Lastly, S. Augustine (*Epist.* 253) says that this hymn of Christ was in circulation in his time, but he himself regarded it as spurious, and intimates that it was forged by the Priscillianists.

They went out to the Mount of Olives. Christ was wont, especially in these last days of His life, to go daily to Jerusalem, and teach in the Temple; and then about evening to return to Bethany, and there sup, and soon after supper return to the Mount of Olives, and there spend the night in prayer, as Luke intimates (xxi. 37). But upon this occasion He did not go to Bethany, as He had supped in Jerusalem. He went, therefore, direct to the Mount of Olives, as it were to a wrestling-ground, that there He might offer Himself to be seized by Judas and the Jews. Thus Victor of Antioch asks, "Why did He go out to the mountain? why does He despise a lurking-place, and manifest Himself to those who came to apprehend Him? He made haste to occupy the spot where aforetime He was wont to pray, the spot which His betrayer knew so well" (*John* xviii. 2).

Ver. 31. *Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of Me this night; for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered.* Be offended and fall into sin, first the sin of weakness and cowardice in forsaking Me,

your Master and Lord, in My Passion. "The terror of the disciples," says S. Leo, "was then excusable, nor did their sorrow sink into distrust." And further on, speaking of S. Peter's denial, "The Lord saw not in thee a feigned faith, nor estranged love, but shaken resolution." It was thus that Marcellinus and many others, when asked whether they were Christians, and denied it through fear of tortures, sinned not directly against the faith, but merely against its open profession, in not daring openly to confess it.

But the Apostles seem to have stumbled in the faith, because, when they saw Christ seized by the Jews without defending Himself, they thought He was suffering either unwillingly or by compulsion, and as He could not deliver Himself and them, He consequently was not God, and that as He would die and never rise again, they had nothing further to hope for from Him. They consequently forgot and disbelieved all His promises and predictions. The Church accordingly seems to think that the Blessed Virgin alone remained then steadfast in the faith. For in the Office for Good Friday the Church puts out all the lights one by one, leaving only one burning; though others confine this more strictly to faith in the resurrection, as if she alone believed that He would rise again from the dead. This is clear, too, from the Apostles, who hardly believed Christ when He appeared to them after His resurrection, and said that He was alive. Christ accordingly reproved their unbelief (Mark xvi. 14). And so S. Hilary explains it, "Ye shall be troubled with fear and want of faith." And Euthymius, "The faith ye now have in Me will be driven out of you, because ye will believe that I can no longer help you." Indeed our Lord foretold this. See John xvi. 31, 32, "The hour cometh when ye shall be scattered, every one to his own, and shall leave Me alone. Ye believe in Me now, but very soon ye will not believe, when ye see Me a captive and suffering." For not only "did they forsake Him hastily, but" (says S. Augustine, *Tract.* ciii.) "in their hearts forsook the faith. For they were reduced to as great despair, and extinction (as it were) of their faith, as appeared in Cleopas when he said he trusted that

He would have redeemed Israel. But see how they forsook Him, in abandoning the very faith wherewith they believed in Him." Many commentators follow S. Augustine in considering that the Apostles fell away from the faith. And S. Ambrose also maintains that S. Peter lost his faith, and Turrecremata also (*de Eccl.* i. 30 and iii. 61). But many theologians teach at the present day that he did not lose his faith, but merely sinned in not openly professing it. This, they urge, is all that the Evangelists say; why invent a heavier charge, and urge it against him? S. Augustine says (in *John, Tract.* cxiii.) he merely denied that he was a Christian, as people did in Japan, though still retaining the faith in their hearts. S. Cyril (*lib.* xi. 41, in *John*) maintains that he denied Christ not through fear, but through love; for that if he confessed himself His disciple he could not have remained by Him, as he wished to do. S. Ambrose (in *Luc.* xxii.) says that he did not deny God, but man. "I know not the man, because I know Him to be God." And when he says (*Serm.* xlvii.) that Peter gave up the faith, he means the profession of the faith. So, too, S. Hilary (cap. xxxii. in Matt.) and S. Leo (as above), "His tears abounded where his love failed not, and the fount of charity washed away the words of fear." Peter then sinned mortally against the profession of the faith, and consequently lost charity, though not faith. Maldonatus, Toletus (in John xviii.), Bellarmine (*de Eccl.* iii. 17) distinctly maintain this; Suarez (*de Fide Disp.* ix. *sect.* 6) thinks it was probably the case with all the Apostles that they fled through fear, and not as denying Christ.

God allowed this for various reasons. 1. To suggest to Christ further grounds for patience, and to exercise Him in every kind of suffering. For the defection of the Apostles was a great affliction to Christ; not merely on their own account, but because He saw that all the fruit of His preaching had been lost upon them. 2. To humble the Apostles with a sense of their own weakness, when they saw that all their courage and resolution had melted away. "Like lions before the battle, like deer when in it." 3. To show the power of persecution and fear which bereft them of their

faith, their memory, and senses; and that consequently this fear could not be overcome by their natural reason or strength, but only by Divine grace, which they should constantly implore. "We learn thence," says S. Chrysostom, "a great lesson, that the will of man is powerless unless strengthened by help from above." And S. Victor of Antioch, "Man's promptitude is worthless for withstanding graver temptations, if heavenly aid be wanting."

I will smite. The Heb. and Sept. read "smite" in the imperative. The meaning is, however, the same. The Prophets frequently use the imperative for the future by way of apostrophe. "Smite, O sword," that is, "I God will smite Christ, will suffer Him," *i.e.*, to be smitten. Comp. Isa. vi. 10 with S. Paul, Acts xxviii. 26.

The shepherd. Christ the Shepherd and the Bishop of our souls (1 Pet. ii. 25).

And the sheep shall be scattered, i.e., the Apostles. But God soon brought them together again, that Christ might find them joined in one body, and restore them their faith and courage. For having no homes of their own, they naturally betook themselves to the upper chamber, where they had kept the Passover, that He the master of that house might be again their host and friend, and where, in fact, He soon after appeared to them, and restored their faith. This was Christ's special favour. He bestowed it on Peter after his threefold denial, when by a look He made him weep bitterly; and on S. John, whom He brought back and placed by His mother near the cross, and commended him to His mother as her son. There can then be no question that they both returned into favour with Christ and were sanctified. Christ foretold this to show that He was God, and that He suffered for man's redemption, not compulsorily, but willingly; and that when suffering thus "they might not despair," says S. Hilary, "but might exercise repentance and be saved."

Ver. 32. *But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee*, "where I will meet you," says Euthymius. "He mentioned Galilee," says S. Chrysostom, "to deliver them from fear

of the Jews, and induce them the more readily to listen to Him." It was to keep them from despair.

Ver. 33. *Peter answered and said unto Him, Though all should be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended.* This was from his vehement love for Christ. "For faith is the ardent affection towards God," says S. Jerome, "which makes him speak thus." "For he thinks" (says S. Augustine, *de Grat. de lib. Arb. cap.* xvii.) "that he can really do that which he feels he wishes." And yet his sin was threefold—first, in boldly and vehemently contradicting Christ; next, in arrogantly preferring himself to others; thirdly, in too great presumption and reliance on his own strength. He ought to have said, "I believe it can be, nay, that from my weakness it will be so. But do Thou, O Lord, strengthen my weakness by Thy grace; support and sustain me, that I fall not into sin." And our experience is the same. We think that we are strong in faith, in chastity, in patience; but when tribulation assails us we stumble, we are afraid, and speedily fall. The remedy for temptation is the acknowledgment of our own weakness and the imploring Divine strength.

Ver. 34. *Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice.* In Greek ἀπαρνήσῃ, abjure Me. Thou wilt do much worse than the others. Thy presumption deserves it. They only fled, thou shalt abjure Me.—The cock crows more loudly in the morning than at midnight. This time, then, is properly the cock-crowing. It was before this cock-crowing that Peter thrice denied Christ. As S. Mark says, "Before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny Me thrice." Thou who art now so eager to confess Me, wilt be more frequent and eager in thy denials this very night than the cock in his crowing. And yet the cock awakes the sleepers to praise God, whilst thou, by thy denial, wilt excite others to revile Me.

Peter, says S. Jerome, made professions from the warmth of his faith, and the Saviour foretold, as God, what would be. And He gives the cock-crowing as a sign to Peter, in order that whenever he hears it he may remember Christ's prophecy, may penitently

acknowledge his sin of denial and presumption, and seek for pardon; as indeed he did. "As God" (so Bede observes), "He foretells the mode, time, moment, and extent of his denial."

Ver. 35. *Peter saith unto Him, Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee. Likewise also said they all.* To testify their faith, affection, and love towards Him; but in their presumption they sinned in a twofold manner. Thou wilt say, The Apostles believed Christ to be the Son of God, why then did they not believe (nay, clamoured against) Him when He predicted their fall? Why, because they did not attend to Christ's prediction, but looked rather to their then purpose of heart, which they felt to be so strong that it would be impossible for them to fall away. And consequently regarding Christ's words not so much a prediction as a test and trial of their purpose and love, they thought that in this time of trial their affection towards Him should be boldly and resolutely manifested. "Peter," says S. Hilary, "was so carried forward by his affection and love for Christ, as to take no account of his own natural weakness, nor the belief he should have in the Lord's words." But even though they believed Christ's prediction, yet they were free to deny Him, because neither did the prediction itself nor their belief in it take away their liberty, but rather presupposed it. For Christ predicted their defection because they would certainly forsake Him; but they did not forsake Him because He foretold they would do so. Objectively their future defection was prior to Christ's foreknowledge and prediction, for Christ only foresaw that which they would do as free agents, and accordingly imposed not on them any necessity of denying Him, since His prediction was objectively subsequent.

But thou wilt maintain, If Peter, believing Christ's words, had persuaded himself that he would certainly deny Christ that very night, he could not have but done it; because this persuasion and belief would have determined his mind, and bound him to do so. For no one can effectually strive against that which he knows will certainly happen by his own agency. The attempt would be vain.

He regards and shrinks from it as impossible; for he knows that this and nothing else would happen, whatever his efforts. But, I reply, this persuasion would have inclined and in some measure have determined Peter to deny Christ, but yet only in a general way, that he would deny Him some time in the night, but not at that particular moment or occasion, or before such and such people. All his particular acts then would have been free. And in like manner that knowledge, that we cannot avoid all venial sins, obliges us to fall into them at some time or another. But yet only generally, and in a confused way. For as often as we commit this or that venial sin, we sin of free choice. Theologians, and Suarez in his treatise on Hope, teach us that if a man's damnation were revealed to him, he could not possibly effectually hope for eternal life, as already apprehending it to be impossible (for no one can attempt what he thinks impossible). But yet he both ought and can observe God's commands, and that as often as he transgresses he would do so freely and sinfully, even though he is generally aware that he would fall into, and die in, some mortal sin. This fall of Peter and the rest made them more humble and cautious. See John xxi. 15, 21, 22.

Ver. 36. *Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane*, &c. Gethsemane is the valley of oil or fatness, or more precisely, the oil-press, for pressing the oil from the olives which grew on Mount Olivet. It was somewhat more than half an (Italian) mile from the *cænaculum* (upper chamber). Christ withdrew there—(1) for retirement and prayer, and to be free from distraction; (2) to show that He did not fly from death, but rather sought for it, for the place was well known to the traitor; and (3) to show that He suffered out of pure love and compassion for men. For oil is the type of compassion; and as oil was in that spot pressed from the olives, so in His agony was the Blood of Christ pressed forth, with which we are refreshed as with oil, are anointed and are fed. See Cant. i. 3.

Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. That is, in the garden, about a stone's throw distant. See John xviii. 1; Luke xxii. 41.

Adrichomius describes the hut of S. Pelagia the penitent and the tomb of the Blessed Virgin as close by, and above it Mount Olivet, the place of the ascension; humility and exaltation being fitly associated together, as is oft the case with God's elect. To speak accurately, Christ neither prayed nor suffered His agony in Gethsemane, but in the garden close by; and He began His Passion in a garden as expiating the sin of Adam, which was committed in a garden. For he ruined therein himself and all his descendants, and subjected them to sin, death, and hell. And all these did Christ expiate in a garden by the agony He there endured. As in the Canticle, "I raised thee up under the apple tree: there was thy mother defiled: there was she violated that bare thee" (Cant. viii. 5). Christ therefore in the garden restored us to Paradise, from which we had been expelled by Adam, and planted there the garden of His Church, verdant with the anguish of mortification, the saffron of charity, the spikenard of humility, the lilies of virgins, the roses of martyrs, the chaplets of doctors; for "a garden enclosed is my sister, a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed. Thy sendings forth (shoots) are of Paradise" (Cant. iv. 12, 13).

Ver. 37. *And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee*, &c. He took only these three to be witnesses of His sorrow and agony, lest the other Apostles should be troubled and scandalised thereby. Moreover, Christ most relied on these three as His special intimates, and also because it was but fitting that they who had seen the glory of His transfiguration should contemplate His agony, and learn that the way to glory is through agony and suffering, and that the way of Calvary and the Cross leads to the Mount and glory of Tabor.

And began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Of His own free will, and not by compulsion. He began to be so sore distressed as to be almost lifeless and beside Himself. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful," He says, "even unto death." S. Luke calls it "an agony," like those who are at the last struggle with death. Vulg. in Mark reads "*fœdet*," for sorrow makes a man weary of

life. S. Mark adds, to be stupefied (ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι), for excessive fear has this effect, as a lion stupefies other animals with its roar. Note, first, that Christ had true sorrow. For though from the moment of His conception He enjoyed the vision of God, as hypostatically united to Him, and thus enjoyed the highest happiness, He was yet supremely sorrowful, God supernaturally enlarging the capacity of His soul, that it might experience the highest joy and the deepest sorrow at the same time. This is the general opinion of theologians, though Melchior Canus (*de Locis* xii. 14) says that the joy naturally arising from the sight of God was suspended while He was but a sojourner, in order that He might feel sorrow. (See *S. Thomas*, *p.* iii. *q.* 46, *art.* 8, and *Suarez*, *p.* 111, *q.* 18, *Disp.* 38, *sect.* 8.) Christ was both on His journey and had reached the end (*viator et comprehensor*). In the one character He was full of sorrow, in the other full of joy. But even when on the way He had both the greatest joy and the greatest sorrow in His Passion. He was sorrowful in His lower nature, since it was painful; He rejoiced in His higher nature, since it was the will of God, and ordained for man's salvation.

2. This sorrow was not only in His feelings, but also in His will (at least in its lower part), which naturally regards that which is for itself good as life and death, and hates the contrary. This is clear from His own prayer, "Father, not what I will, but what Thou wilt." He naturally wished to be saved from death. As in Luke, "Not my will, but Thine be done."

3. The primary cause of His sorrow was not the flight of His Apostles, which He foresaw, but the vivid apprehension of His approaching Passion and death, as is plain from His prayer, "Let this cup pass from Me." For Christ foresaw all the torments, one by one, which the Jews would inflict on Him, and fully entered into and weighed the magnitude and bitterness of His several sorrows, so as to seem to be already suffering them, even to the shedding of His blood. For Christ doubtless wished to atone by His sorrow for the pleasure which Adam had in eating the forbidden fruit, and which sinners now experience in their sins.

There were, moreover, other grounds of sorrow, which He experienced in the highest degree from the very moment of His conception to His death. First, the sins of all men, which He undertook to atone for, and thus make satisfaction for the injury done to His Father. For the soul of Christ saw them all in God, and manifested for them the greatest sorrow and compunction, as though they had been His own. For He saw how great was their gravity, how the majesty of God was offended, and consequently what wrong had been done to Him. All which elicited condign and commensurate sorrow. So He says Ps. xxii. 1.

2. The second was His foreseeing all the pains which martyrs, confessors, virgins, married people also would suffer in their several ways. Prelates too and pastors in governing the faithful; the faithful in withstanding the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. All which sorrows Christ generally and severally mentally took upon Him, that by His sorrow He might obtain for them from God the Father grace and strength to bear and overcome them all. For He loves His children as Himself, and feels for their affliction. See Matt. xxv. 35, 40.

3. The third was the ingratitude of men. For He foresaw that His Passion would be of use to but very few, and that the many would be lost through their own negligence and ingratitude. As the poet sings,—

> " 'Tis not my grief, 'tis love; my only pain
> Is that to thousands 'twill be all in vain."

4. The fourth was the affliction of His mother; for the sorrows of the Son pierced, as a sword, the soul of the mother, and from her were reflected on Christ. For His greatest sorrow was that His mother suffered so grievously on His account. All other sorrows Christ suppressed and overcame, manifesting this only to His disciples. Now, observe this sorrow of Christ was not by compulsion, or involuntary, so as to prevent the exercise of reason, but was freely undergone by Christ. Whence theologians say that in Christ were not passions, but their first

suggestions (*propassiones*);* for all His affections resulted from the ordering of His reason and His own free choice. For to this all the inferior powers were perfectly subjected, both in Adam and in Christ. For original righteousness, which was in Christ as in Adam before his fall, required this. See S. Augustine, *de Civ.* xiv. 9, and Damascene (*de Fid.* iii. 23). Nothing was compulsory in Christ, for of His own will He hungered, was fearful, and was sad.

5. S. Luke adds, that He sweated blood, and was comforted by an angel; while Isaiah (liii. 3) calls Him a man of sorrows.

But the final and moral grounds of this were manifold. S. Chrysostom gives as the 1st: "To show that He took on Himself true flesh, He endures human sufferings." So Jerome and Origen; and S. Leo (*Serm.* vii. *de Pass.*) says, "He was despised in our humility, made sad with our sadness, and crucified with our pain." 2nd. S. Gregory (*Mor.* xxiv. 17), "As His death was approaching, He set forth in His own person our struggles of mind, for we fear greatly the approach of death." The 3rd. S. Ambrose sets forth (in Luke xxii. 44), "In no point do I more admire the tenderness and majesty of Christ than in this, which most men dread. He would have done much less for me had He not taken on Himself my feelings; He took on Him my sorrow, that He might now give me joy. I confidently make mention of His sorrow, for I preach the Cross. He was obliged to endure pain, that He might conquer. Insensibility wins not the praise of fortitude. But He wished to instruct us to overcome the sorrow of coming death, and perhaps He was sad because, after the fall of Adam, death was a necessity, and again because He knew that His persecutors would have to pay the penalty of their monstrous sacrilege." And again, "Thou smartest not for Thine own wounds, but for ours; not for Thine own death, but for our infirmity." S. Athanasius (*de Cruce*) writes thus elegantly, "Christ descended to win for us our ascension; was born that

* [The word is taken from S. Jerome (in Matt. xxvi.). See Aquin. p. iii. quest. xv. art. 4, and Suarez *in loc.* Disp. xxxiv. sect. i.]

we might be reconciled to the unborn Father; was made weak for our sakes, that we might be raised up by His strength, and say with S. Paul, I can do all things through Jesus Christ that strengtheneth me. He assumed a corruptible body, that the corruptible might put on incorruption; a mortal body, that mortality might put on immortality. Lastly, He became man, and died, that we men might by dying become gods, and no longer have death reigning over us." 4th. The fourth was to mitigate the dread of death, which was inflicted as a punishment for Adam's sin, and turn it into joy and the hope of attaining a better life. Christ then obtained for the martyrs exemption from pain and fear in their grievous torments, and caused them to undergo them willingly, and even to rejoice in them. "Christ came," says S. Chrysostom, "to bear our infirmities, and to give us His strength. And again, Christ by His agony enabled His faithful ones not to fear death, but patiently and even joyfully to meet it from their hope in the resurrection, saying with Hosea and S. Paul, as triumphing over death, 'Death is swallowed up in victory'" (1 Cor. xv. 55).

5th. The fifth was to cure by His sorrow our sloth, weakness, fear, &c. As Isaiah (liii. 4) says, "Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." And accordingly our best remedy in all these trials is to look at Christ in His agony, that by the pattern and merits of the agony He endured in the garden He may heal our sorrow. As S. Leo (*Serm.* iv. *de Pass.*) says, "He healed our weaknesses by partaking them, and drove away the fear of suffering punishment by undergoing it Himself: our Lord trembled with our fear, that He might take on Himself our weakness, and robe our weakness with His strength." It was, again, to remove the dread of difficulty, which occurs in every virtuous act. For this dread keeps many back from virtue and holiness. Whenever, therefore, any difficulty or temptation assails, let us strengthen ourselves by meditating on the agony of Christ; for if He overcame His by the struggle and bloody sweat, we ought also to overcome ours by manly resistance. See Heb. xii. 1.

Christ then taught us to fight against our passions with reason

and judgment, especially our sloth, sadness, and anxiety. Calvin and Beza here impiously and unlearnedly accuse Christ of timidity, inconstancy, and vacillation, as being indeed more cowardly than the martyrs; rather He not only willingly underwent these sufferings, but brought them of His own accord on Himself, that He might by His bold struggle overcome them in Himself, and subdue them also in us. For, as S. Augustine says, "Christ was troubled when exercising His power, and not in His weakness" [John xi. 33].

Ver. 38. *Then saith He unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with Me.* I am as sorrowful from the lively apprehension of My sufferings and death, as if I were now dying; I seem to be lifeless with sorrow and dread. My pain well-nigh takes away My life and breath. It is not My flesh, but My soul, which is so very sad, for sorrow penetrates the inmost parts of My soul, and cuts it in sunder as a sword. "The waters have come in even to My soul," Ps. lxix. 1. I am but the smallest point removed from death, so that the slightest addition to My sorrow would crush Me, and take away My life. Consider with what feeling of sorrow and love Christ spake these words,—His pathos, His look, His voice, His countenance,—*Tarry ye here.* Wait and behold Me here, deeply sorrowing and praying in the agony of death, both as witnesses of My sorrow, and to learn from Me in every tribulation to betake yourselves to prayer; so that thus watching ye may be some solace to Me in My affliction. But it is not so; for sorrow hath overwhelmed you, and forces you to sleep. Whence Christ complains (Ps. lxix. 21), "I waited for some to have pity on Me, but there was no man, neither found I any to comfort Me." Christ from the vehemence of His love wished to pass through His unmitigated and wondrous Passion without any consolation or consoler. He wished to drain the chalice of gall and bitterness unmixed with the sweetness of honey, both in order that His redemption should be plenteous, and for an example of heroic virtue. For Christ manifested in His Passion the most perfect

acts of heroic virtue. And He Himself was therein a prodigy of humanity; for though "He was in the form of God . . . He became obedient as far as unto death, even the death of the Cross," Phil. ii. 8. He was also therein a prodigy of patience, fortitude, and of charity; for "greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John xv. 13). But Christ laid down His for His enemies (Rom. v. 8).

Ver. 39. *And He went a little farther, and fell on His face.* For a few steps, that He might pray in secret, and yet be seen and heard by them. By this prostration He manifested His extreme suffering, gave a striking example of humility, and the highest reverence to God the Father. Again, to set forth the heavy burden of our sins, which He had taken upon Him, and present Himself to the Father in our stead as though guilty and penitent, and submit Himself entirely to chastisement, I surrender Myself, He says, to Thee, O Father, as guilty, in the place of men. I give up Myself entirely to Thee, and present to Thee the punishment due to them. I offer My back to the scourger, My head to the crown of thorns, My hands and feet to the nails, and My entire body to the cross. Wound and crucify Me, that man may be spared and received back into Thy favour.

And prayed, saying. For as man He in a true and proper sense prayed to the Father, yea, even to Himself as God. On the spot where He prayed a church was erected, and the marks of His footsteps were said by Baronius to be still there.

O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me. Absolutely this was possible, but it was impossible according to God's decree that man was to be redeemed by Christ's death. Christ knew this, and therefore did not wish for it absolutely, and asks for nothing contrary to His own and the Father's will. But He merely expresses His natural shrinking from death, His ineffectual and conditionated will, and yet freely submitted Himself to the contrary will of God, that He should die.

Let this cup pass from Me. Calvin here accuses our Lord of hastiness, forgetfulness, ignorance, darkness of mind, inconstancy,

and opposition to the Divine will—in fact, ascribing to Him sin. But, as I before observed, Christ took all this upon Him voluntarily, yet in accordance with the will of God. His first act was subordinated to the latter act, and was therefore regulated and ordered by right reason; for nothing in Christ could be disordered and out of place. Reason, then, and the higher nature were justly unwilling that His inferior nature should feel sorrow and horror of death, as stated above. 2. S. Jerome understands by the "cup," the sin of the Jews. I pray, O Father, that I may not suffer at the hand of the Jews, my kinsmen. For in killing Me they commit a most awful crime, and will be punished most severely in hell. But this is too restricted a meaning.

3. The full and adequate meaning is, that this cup of suffering should pass away, even though Thou hast decreed that I should drink it to the dregs; and thus (as Origen says) it should pass away from Himself, and the whole race of mankind.

4. S. Catharine of Sienna offered two other explanations, which she said were revealed to her by Christ. The first, that Christ most eagerly thirsted for this cup, to manifest His love to the Father, and to effect our redemption. He wished to die and suffer immediately. His love admitted not any delay. I wish the cup to pass away, and that I may return at once to Thee. This was the prayer of His spirit, though in His flesh He dreaded death. The two meanings are compatible. But why did He not effect His wish? It was (1) in order to give the martyrs an example of longing for the Cross; (2) Because so many would be unthankful for His Passion, and would die in their sins; and as this was His greatest sorrow, He prays that this "cup" might be taken away, and that all might be saved. But yet He chose to conform Himself to His Father's will, "Not My will," &c. So S. Catharine, not taking it literally, but expressing the holy and ardent affection of Christ.

Symbolically: S. Hilary says, "Christ took all our infirmities and nailed them to the Cross, and therefore that cup could not pass away from Him without His drinking it, for we cannot

suffer except through His Passion." May that cup, O Father, pass over to My own followers, that when enduring My sufferings they may experience also through My gift My strength and power to endure.

S. Bernard (*Serm.* x. *in Cant.*) piously and wisely remarks, "The cup Thou didst drink, the mark of our redemption, makes Thee above all things lovely. It is this which readily claims our entire love. It both more tenderly attracts our devotion, more justly demands it, binds us to Thee the more firmly, and affects us the more vehemently. For great was the Saviour's labour, greater than in the work of creation. For He spake and it was done. But here He had those who contradicted His words, watched His actions, jested at Him in His torments, and reproached Him in His death. Behold how He loved! Learn thou, O Christian, from Christ Himself, how to love Him. Learn to love Him sweetly, wisely, and firmly: sweetly, that we may not be allured away; wisely, that we be not deceived; and firmly, that we may not by force be drawn away from the love of the Lord," &c.

Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt. Here it is plain, as against the Monothelites, that there are two wills in Christ: not only the Divine, to supply the place of the human will, as they said, but the will He had as man, by which He obtained our redemption. The Sixth Synod (Acts 4 and 10) proves that there were in Him two wills, and that the human was by obedience subject to the Divine; and this on the authority of SS. Athanasius, Augustine, Ambrose, and Leo. Nay, rather, though the human will was in itself one, yet in its power and action it was twofold, the one natural, with which it shrank from death; the other rational and free, with which He subjected Himself to the will of God. "Nevertheless, not what I will" naturally, "but what Thou wilt." By My reasonable will I subject My natural will to Thee, O Father, and only will what Thou willest. And, accordingly, the natural will of Christ was conditional and of no avail, because it wished to escape death only under the condition that it pleased God. But His rational will was absolute and effectual, because He embraced

death for the same reason that God willed it, that is, for man's redemption. But the natural will of Christ seemed materially contrary to the Divine will. But by the rule of subordination it was conformable to it, as suffering itself to be guided by the rational will, and thus by the Divine will; and, on the other hand, the will of God, as well as the rational will of Christ, wishes on deliberate and just ground that His natural will should express this natural fear of death. In both aspects, therefore, was the will of Christ in all respects conformable to the Divine. Christ here teaches us, as a moral duty, that our sole remedy in affliction is submission to the Divine will, and that in every temptation we must betake ourselves to the aid of God, who alone can free us from them or strengthen us under them if we submit ourselves humbly, reverently, and lovingly to His will. "This voice of the Head," says S. Leo, " is the salvation of the whole body. It taught the faithful, it inspired confessors, it crowned the martyrs. For who could overcome the hatred of the world, the whirlwinds of temptations, the terrors of persecution, had not Christ in all and for all said in submission to His Father, Thy will be done?"

Ver. 40. *And He cometh to His disciples and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with Me one hour?* To gain some consolation, little though it were, and also as having care for His people; thus teaching bishops and pastors to do the like, and to break off prayer in order to visit them. They were sleeping for sorrow, and He speaks to Peter as the head of the rest, and as having so boldly professed his allegiance to Christ.

But observe how gently and tenderly He reproves them. He does not reproach them with their grand promises; but He merely says, "Could ye not?" Ye wished indeed to watch, but I attribute your sleep not to your will, but to your weakness: arouse yourselves, overcome your infirmity, shake off sleep.

Mystically: "He signified," says S. Irenæus, "that His Passion is the awakening of sleepers."

Ver. 41. *Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.* Of denying and forsaking Me for fear of the Jews. If My dangers move

you not, may your own do so. There hangs over you the great temptation of denying Me; watch and pray to overcome it. "The more spiritual a man is," says Origen, "the more anxious should he be lest his great goodness should have a great fall." Watchfulness and prayer are the great means of foreseeing and overcoming the arts of devils and men.

Enter into temptation. Be not ensnared, as birds in a net and fishes with a hook. Not to be tempted is often not in our own power, nor is it God's will for us. He wills we should be tempted, to try our faith, to increase our virtue, and to crown our deserts. But we must not enter into temptation, so that it should occupy, possess, and rule over us. So Theophylact and S. Jerome.

The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. I know your readiness in spirit, but your weakness in the flesh. By the flesh is meant our natural feelings, which shrink from suffering and death. Pray, therefore, that your weak flesh may not enfeeble your spirit and compel it to deny Me; but may God by His grace so strengthen both your spirit and your flesh, that ye may not only be ready, but strong to overcome all adversities, so that for My sake ye may eagerly wish for death, and bravely endure it. "The more, therefore," says S. Jerome, "we trust to the warmth of our feelings, the more let us fear for the weakness of the flesh." Some understand (less suitably) by "spirit" the devil, by the "flesh" man. That is, the devil is powerful to tempt, man is feeble to resist. Origen, moreover, observes "the flesh of all is weak, but it is only the spirit of the saints which is ready to mortify the deeds of the flesh." S. Mark adds, "And they knew not what to answer, for they were struck down by their grief, and oppressed with sleep, and had neither sense nor understanding.

Ver. 42. *He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if this cup may not pass away unless I drink it, Thy will be done.* S. Mark says that He used the same words as before. But S. Matthew omitted the first part of the prayer as without efficacy or meaning, and in order to insist on the latter part, in which the whole force of the passage consists, and set it

forth for our imitation. For Christ absolutely wished and prayed to drink the cup of His Passion, which was decreed and destined for Him by the will of God. For He plainly and expressly asked that the will of God might be fulfilled in Him in and through all things.

Ver. 43. *And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy.* With sorrow and watching, and afterwards with sleep. "For," says S. Chrysostom, "it was a wild night," adding that "Christ did not reprove them, since their weakness was great."

Ver. 44. *And He left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, using the same words.* 1st. To show the intensity of His sorrow; for, as S. Luke says, He sweated blood, and an angel comforted Him. But this was only when He prayed the third time, and not the first and second time, as Jansen maintains. 2nd. To teach us that if God hears us not in our first prayer, we should pray more frequently and fervently, till He hears us, and we obtain our request. Perseverance crowns the work, in prayer especially. And if Christ was not heard in His first and second prayer, what wonder if we are not heard at once? Let us persevere, and we shall gain the fruit of our prayer, strengthening, calming of sorrow, and power of mind to withstand and overcome our trials.

Symbolically: 1. Remigius says, "He prays thrice for the Apostles, and especially for Peter, who was about to deny Him thrice." 2. Rabanus says "that He prayed thrice, in order that we should ask pardon for past sins, protection in present, and caution in future perils; that we should direct all our prayers to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and that our body, soul, and spirit should be preserved blameless." 3. S. Augustine (*Quæst. Evang. in loc.*) says, "It is not unreasonable to conclude that our Lord prayed thrice, in consequence of our temptation being threefold. For as the temptation of desire is threefold, so also is the temptation of fear. The fear of death is opposed to the desire of curiosity. For as in the one there is the desire of knowledge, so in the other is the fear of losing it. But to the desire for honour

or praise there is opposed the fear of disgrace and contumely, and to the desire of pleasure there is opposed the fear of pain."

Ver. 45. *Then cometh He to His disciples, and saith unto them.* Being after His third prayer strengthened by an angel, He resumed His former courage and spirit, and nobly composed Himself to meet His Passion (see on Luke xxii. 41).

Sleep on now, and take your rest. S. Chrysostom and others suppose that this was said ironically. This is no time for sleeping in our moment of extreme peril; rouse yourselves now, if ever.

But S. Augustine (*de Cons. Evan.* iii. 4), and Bede after him, suppose that Christ spoke seriously, and in compassion for them granted them a little longer rest. "Sleep on for the short time that remains till Judas arrives."

Behold, the hour has arrived. Fixed from eternity by the Father, and decreed for My Passion and death.

And the Son of Man is betrayed, i.e., is about to be betrayed into the hands of sinners—sinners in a special manner, such as Judas and the Jews who were raging against Him. For there was no nation more wicked at that time, and therefore Christ had resolved to be born and die at that very time, in order that He might suffer more atrocious cruelties from such a people. His supreme goodness resolved to do battle with their consummate malice, in order that He might crush in them, as its head, the malice of all men, subject it to Himself, and convert it into goodness. The divine clemency and power of Christ were equally manifested in converting to Himself and making saints of those self-same wicked Jews, by Peter and the other apostles.

Ver. 46. *Rise, let us be going: behold, he hath come who will betray Me.* He bids them rise, not in order to fly with Him, but to go forth to meet Judas. It is hence clear that Christ was heard in His last prayer; that, comforted of God by the angel, He had thrown off His sadness and sorrow, and went forth to meet Judas and the death of the cross with great and noble resolution. "For," as Origen says, "He saw in the spirit Judas the traitor drawing nigh, though he was not yet seen by the disciples." "He therefore

in every way teaches His disciples," says S. Chrysostom, "that this was not a matter of necessity or of weakness, but of a certain incomprehensible dispensation, for He foresaw that they were coming, and so far from flying, He went forth to meet them."

Christ in thus going forth, as indeed in the whole of His Passion, left three points most worthy of notice. 1st. His innocence in boldly going forth to meet His enemies. 2nd: His majesty, forethought, and power, wherewith as God He orders and foretells the approach of His enemies, and so moderates their fury that they could do no more than He permitted and foreordained. 3rd. The readiness with which He voluntarily met Judas, to show that it was not from weakness or unwillingness, but with the highest dignity, condescension, and generous love that He suffered and died for us. "Rise, let us be going," to meet Judas; and, as S. Jerome says, "let us go of our own accord to death."

Morally: Christ here teaches us to arouse ourselves, and go forth to meet our sufferings. It is the act of an heroic mind to weaken by its own resolution the force of any imminent evil, and by voluntarily embracing it to overcome and subdue it. Great evils are more easily overcome by a great mind than minor evils by a small one. As says the poet, "Yield not to trials; boldly go to meet them, as a lion shuts its eyes when rushing on its foes" (Plin. *N. H.* viii. 16). The cross therefore pursues those who fly from it, and flies those who seek for it. As is said of honour.

Ver. 47. *And while He yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came,* &c. This is more fully set forth, John xviii. 2. The truth of His prediction and foreordaining was thus made good. He so interwove Judas' sin and His Passion, that the whole action appeared to be partly permitted and partly ordained by Him.

Lo, Judas, one of the twelve. Lo is an expression of wonder. An unheard-of portent, a stupendous crime, that one of the Apostles was not only a thief and robber, but the traitor, and the leader of those who killed Christ! "He went before them," says S. Luke.

A great multitude: of Roman soldiers, high priests' servants, &c.

Staves: tipped with iron, as spears, &c., or not so tipped, as clubs. Observe here the folly and madness of Judas and the Jews. He knew that He was a very great prophet, nay, the Son of God, who could not be overcome by force, as the Jews well knew, and yet, maddened with avarice and fury, they bring armed men to use violence towards Him, to seize and bind Him. Dost thou wish, O Judas, to bind God, to seize the Almighty, to fight, O petty men, against your Creator, and compel Him to give Himself into your hands? "It was avarice," says S. Chrysostom, "which inspired him with this madness, avarice which makes all its slaves cruel and fierce; for if the covetous man neglect his own salvation, what will he care for another?

Ver. 48. *Now he that betrayed Him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He: hold him fast.* Lest He escape, as He did at other times. "And lead Him away carefully," adds S. Mark. For Judas was afraid lest Christ should escape by changing His shape, and that He should thus lose the thirty pieces of silver, which were not as yet given, but only promised.

Gave them a sign. That the Roman soldiers might know him. For it was night. And perhaps, as some moderns suggest, from His likeness to S. James the Less, His kinsman.

I shall kiss. Origen mentions a tradition that Christ had two countenances, one natural, the other assumed at will, as at His transfiguration, and that Judas gave this sign for fear Christ should alter His appearance, so as not to be recognised. But this is a gratuitous assumption, and not to the point, for Judas was not present at the Transfiguration; and even had he been there, he might reasonably fear that Christ might render Himself invisible, as He knew He had done at other times. The true reason is as given above.

Ver. 49. *And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed Him.* Judas knew from Christ's words at the Last Supper that he and his treachery were known to Christ; but

yet, in order to hide it from the other Apostles, he pretends to give Christ the usual mark of friendship and reverence. It was the ancient mode of salutation. The Apostles probably saluted Christ in this manner, when returning back to Him from some other place. The early Christians also used to salute each other in the same way (see Tert. *de Orat.*, and 1 *Cor.* xvi. 20). But Judas most wickedly misused this token of friendship for the purpose of betrayal, being persuaded (says S. Chrysostom) that Christ in His gentleness would not reject his kiss, and that if He rejected it, the sign would yet have been given. S. Victor of Antioch says, "The unhappy man gave the kiss of peace to Him against whom he was laying deadly snares." "Giving," says pseudo-Jerome, "the sign of the kiss with the poison of deceit." Moreover, though Christ felt deeply, and was much pained at His betrayal by Judas, yet He refused not his kiss, and gave him a loving kiss in return. 1. "That He might not seem to shrink from treachery" (S. Ambrose in Luke xxi. 45), but willingly to embrace it, and even greater indignities, for our sake. 2. To soften and pierce the heart of Judas (S. Ambrose, *ibid.*); and 3. To teach us to love our enemies and those whom we know would rage against us (S. Hilary). For Christ hated not, but loved the traitor, and grieved more at his sin than at His own betrayal, and accordingly strove to lead him to repentance. Just as the spark of fire is elicited from the steel, so was Christ's latent love elicited by His blows and sufferings. His love was pre-eminent through the whole of His Passion.

Ver. 50. *And Jesus said unto Him, Friend, wherefore art thou come?* If thou comest to betray Me, why givest thou Me this friendly kiss? But if thou comest as a friend, why bringest thou so many enemies against Me? "Thou kissest Me," says S. Augustine, "and layest snares for Me. Thou pretendest to be a friend, though thou art a traitor." Hence Luke adds that Christ said, "Judas, why betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?" And such words, full of majesty and love, ought to have wounded his stony heart, unless he had hardened it like iron.

It was a wondrous instance of Christ's gentleness and patience, that He tolerated Judas for three years, and deprived him not of his Apostolate, or disclosed to any one his sin. Teaching us to overcome our wrongs by love.

The Saints in this matter imitated Christ, S. Martin especially in his treatment of Brice, one of his clerks, who was constantly calumniating him. And when blamed for it, he said, "Christ bore with Judas the traitor, and should not I bear with Brice my calumniator?" By this gentleness he so won upon him, that he amended his ways, became a Saint, and succeeded S. Martin as Bishop, as S. Martin had foretold (*Sulp. in Vit. S. Martin*).

The passage, John xviii. 4, should here come in, in the regular course of the narrative.

To harmonise S. John with the other Evangelists the order of the history is as follows:—Judas preceded the crowd by a few steps, so as not to seem to be one of them; and then, when he had kissed Christ, he drew back into the crowd again, and when Jesus boldly confronted the crowd, Judas was standing with them. Jesus thus boldly asked them, "Whom seek ye?" and on Jesus saying that He was Jesus of Nazareth whom they were seeking, they were thunderstruck, and fell to the ground; not on their faces, but backward, so as to make it clear that they were struck down by His power. He allowed them, however, to rise up again, and on their saying again that they were seeking Christ, He replied, "I told you that I am He; if, therefore, ye seek Me, let these go their way," showing that He cared more for them than for Himself.

Observe (with S. Chrysostom and S. Cyril) that the eyes of the soldiers were miraculously blinded, so that they could not discern, and much less lay hold on Christ. (S. Augustine thinks otherwise.) They gather this from the reply, "We seek Jesus of Nazareth," as though they knew not it was He. S. Chrysostom and others suppose that even Judas did not recognise Him. But he seems to have withdrawn rather from horror at his crime. For Christ cut him off from the Apostolic band, "Begone, O traitor;

thou art not worthy of the companionship of Me and Mine," and then struck him and the whole band to the earth. This was the first miracle which Christ wrought when He was seized, to manifest His Divine majesty and omnipotence, and that the Jews might learn that they would have come in vain against Him with the armed band, had not He given Himself gracefully and willingly into their hands. The Sodomites were struck with a like blindness (Gen. xix. 11). "Seest thou His surprising power, that though standing in their midst He struck them blind?" says S. Chrysostom and S. Cyril. "The divine power of Christ shone forth in that, though He presented Himself to those who sought Him, He was not recognised." Symbolically S. Augustine in John xviii. The eternal day was so hid by human form,* as to be sought for with lanterns and torches, in order to be slain by the darkness.

2. His second miracle was His striking them to the ground by the single word, "I am He." "That word, 'I am He,' struck them down like a thunderbolt," says S. Leo. "Where was their cruel conspiracy? where their glowing anger? where their array of weapons? The Lord saith, I am He, and at His voice the multitude of the ungodly falls prostrate. What will His Majesty do hereafter in judgment, when His humility, though about to be judged, had such power?"

Though "I am He" means only "He whom ye seek," yet Rupertus explains it, "I am that I am" (Exod. iii.). And S. Jerome (*Ep.* cxl. *ad Principium*) thinks that Christ struck down these guards with the heavenly splendour of His countenance, for otherwise the Apostles would not have followed Him, nor would those who came to lay hold on Him have fallen to the earth.

Allegorically: This fall of Judas and his followers signified the comparable fall of the Jews, who would be obstinate in their unbelief, and well-nigh incapable of salvation. "Their fall is an image of all those who oppose Christ." *S. Cyr. Alex.* in *John* xviii. and *S. Augustine in loc.* "Where is now the

* *Membris* in S. Augustine, not *tenebris*, as in Cornelius à Lapide.

band of soldiers, the terror and defence of weapons? A single word, without a weapon, struck down, smote, laid prostrate that crowd, fierce in hatred and terrible in arms. For God was veiled in flesh. What will He do when He comes in judgment, who wrought this when He came to be judged?"

Tropologically: Here is represented the fall of the reprobate, for they fall on their back so that they cannot arise; but when the elect sin, they fall on their face, because they are soon touched by God, and rise up in penitence. "We fall on our face," says S. Gregory (*Hom.* viii. *in Ez.*), "because we blush for our sins, which we remember to have committed." And also (*Mor.* xiii. 10), "To fall on the face is for every one to acknowledge his own faults in this life, and to bewail them with penitence. But to fall on the back, where we cannot see, is to depart suddenly out of life, and to know not to what punishment we are brought."

Again, "The righteous fall on their face, as looking on those things that are before; but sinners fall on their back, as seeking for those things which are behind and pass away, and are soon gone." "For everything which passes away," says S. Gregory (*Mor.* xxxiii. 23), "is behind, while everything which is coming and is permanent is before."

3. The third miracle, as S. Chrysostom and S. Augustine remark, was that which He wrought by His all-powerful providence and the efficacy of His word. "Let these go their way," that the Jews laid hands on none of the disciples. He offered Himself alone to death, as a good shepherd laying down His life for the sheep.

4. The fourth, the instantaneous healing of Malchus' ear. But how great was their blindness and malice, who, after they had seen so many miracles, dared to lay hands on Him!

Then came they and laid hands on Jesus, and took Him. The order is here inverted, for before they could take Him Peter smote off Malchus' ear, and it was only when Jesus had healed it that He gave Himself up to be taken and bound.

Ver. 51. *And behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched*

forth his hand, and struck the servant of the high priest. Peter, that is, who was more fervent and resolute than the others. S. Luke adds that he first asked permission from Christ, "Shall we smite with the sword?" but waited not for His answer, and in his zeal for Christ in His imminent danger drew his sword.

A question is raised, what was this sword? merely a knife (*culter*), or a military sword (*ensis*), or an ordinary sword (*gladius*)? The Fathers are in favour of *ensis.** S. Hilary says that the sword was ordered to be sheathed, because He was about to destroy them with no human sword, but with the word of His mouth (Rev. i. 16, xix. 15). S. Ambrose explains the two swords (Luke xxii. 38) mystically, as the Old and New Testaments, with which we are armed against the wiles of the devil.

But writers on all sides explain these two swords allegorically as the twofold power of the Church, temporal and spiritual (see *Extrav.* "*Unam sanctam*" *De Majoritate et obedientia*). And again by the sword is denoted excommunication, which cuts off a man from the Church.

Many think that Peter intended to kill Malchus, but that God guided the blow so that he merely cut off his ear.

Tropologically: S. Ambrose by this sword understands martyrdom. "There is," saith he, "the sword of suffering, by which thou canst cast off the body, and purchase for thyself the crown of a martyr by putting off the slough of the body." Cornelius urges many reasons why it should be a sword, and not merely a knife which S. Peter used, adding that the sword of Peter is still preserved, and exposed to the veneration of the faithful.

A servant of the high priest, named Malchus (John xviii. 10). S. Peter seems to have attacked him, as being the most bold and forward in assailing Christ.

Cut off his ear. His right ear, say S. John and S. Luke, signifying, as Origen says, that the Jews in reading and hearing

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* S. Jerome says that S. Peter used the fiery sword which was at the gate of Paradise, and the sword of the Spirit (Eph. vi. 17).

Scriptures had lost their right ear, the true understanding of heavenly things.

S. Augustine (*contr. Faust.* xxii. 70) remarks that Moses, after he had smitten the Egyptian, was made the head of the Synagogue. S. Peter, after mutilating Malchus, was made the head of the Church. Both of them went beyond bounds, not from hateful cruelty, but from blameless impetuosity. For Peter sinned through rashness, for it was without the knowledge, rather* against the will of Christ that he drew his sword, his sole means of defending Christ against so many armed men, and in cutting off Malchus' ear he provoked them the rather against Christ. But he showed his ardour and zeal for Christ, blameable as it was; and when this fault had been corrected at Pentecost, he obtained through Him to be the Pastor and Prince of the Church.

Christ by blaming and restraining S. Peter, and by healing Malchus' ear, manifested most strikingly His power and clemency. Especially since it is a theological dogma (as *Paulus de Palatio* adds) that when the Lord heals, He heals perfectly. If Christ healed Malchus both in body and mind, what greater proof could there be of charity, what stronger evidence of an undisturbed mind? It is clear from Acts ii. 37 that many of these persecutors of Christ were converted. And what marvel if Malchus were, who had experienced so striking an evidence of Christ's goodness and power? Christ thus acted that He might furnish no ground for the charge that He had opposed the public ministers of justice, and also to exhibit a pattern of forbearance and gentleness, as He did when He converted Saul into Paul. Mystically, the Gloss says that the wounding and healing Malchus' ear is the restoration of hearing, when the old man is taken away, for slavery is the old estate, healing is liberty.

Ver. 52. *Then Jesus saith to him, Put up again thy sword into his place.* Christ here reproves Peter's rashness in drawing his

* Imo.

sword against His wish. Peter's sin, then, was twofold: first in striking against Christ's wish, and next, because this was an act not so much of defence as of revenge, which did not help to deliver Christ from the soldiers, but rather excited them the more against Him. But Peter, says S. Chrysostom, was hurried on by his eagerness to protect Christ, and did not think of this, but remembered rather His words, that Christ had ordered them to take two swords, inferring that it was for His defence. And accordingly he thought that in striking the servant he was acting according to the mind of Christ, "Let revenge cease, let patience be exhibited," says the *Interlinear Gloss.*

For all they that take the sword (without proper authority). To strike, *i.e.*, and wound others. To take the sword by public authority to punish the guilty, or in a just war, is lawful and honest.

Shall perish with the sword. Deserve thus to perish (Gen. ix. 6) (see Aug. *Quæst.* V. and N. T., *cap.* civ.). Homicides, moreover, and gladiators very often die violent deaths in war or by casualties (see *Act.* xxviii. 4).

And Christ here insinuates that the Jews would perish by the swords of the Romans. S. Luke adds that Christ said, "Suffer ye thus far." "Cease to draw your swords, ye have contended sufficiently," just as we part two combatants. But Cajetan explains otherwise, "Suffer the Jews to rage against Me, while their hour lasts, and the power of darkness." Hence Maldonatus and others infer that the other Apostles, when they saw S. Peter's zeal, wished to fight for Him also, but were forbidden by Christ. For, says S. Ambrose (in Luke xxii.), He who wished to save all by His own wounds, wished not to be saved by the wounding of His persecutors. Whence the motto, "Health by wounds," which is specially applicable to Christ, by whose stripes we are healed (1 Pet. ii. 24).

Ver. 53. *Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He will give Me more than twelve legions of angels?* A second reason for our Lord forbidding Peter to defend Him. I need not thy aid, since I have at My command all the armies

of angels, one of whom slew the host of the Assyrians (2 Kings xix. 35). "If one angel," says S. Chrysostom, "slew so many thousands of armed men, what would twelve legions of them do against one thousand?" He accommodated His discourse to their wish, for they were already half dead with fear. "For Christ Himself as God needed not their aid," as Origen remarked; "they much rather needed His," to whom thousands of thousands ministered (see Dan. vii. 10).

Christ is within bounds in speaking as He does. For angels are countless, exceeding the number of all men, past, present, and future (see *S. Dion. de Cel. Hier. S. Thom. part* 1, *quæst.* 2, *art.* 3).

Christ here teaches us in every danger to invoke our guardian angels, as most wise, powerful, and full of love for us, as knowing that God orders this to be so. Conf. Ps. xci. 11, xxxiv. 7; Gen. xxxii. 1, &c.

Ver. 54. *But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?* And if Scripture foretells My sufferings, "Why do ye oppose it?" says S. Chrysostom. This, then, is the third reason why Christ prohibits His defence by arms. "Though He might have these legions, He was unwilling to have them, in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, that it was fitting He should thus suffer." For we owe that reverence to the word of God, as not to oppose, but to assent to it and make it good. But thou wilt say, "The Jews then did no sin in killing Christ, because they merely fulfilled the Scriptures." S. Athanasius (*de Cruce*) denies the inference. "For they did sin thus boldly against Christ, as fulfilling the words of prophecy, but merely of their own accord, so that the Prophet was not the cause of their acts, but their own free will. Or rather, they themselves caused the Prophets to predict such things of them." The Jews then perpetrated this sacrilegious murder from their own wickedness and hatred of Christ, and the Prophets only foresaw and foretold it. They did not approve, or order the Jews to do it. But God ordered Christ to bear it all, and thus atone for the sins of men.

"Pleasing the suffering, though the deed displeased." Hence S. Leo (*Serm.* i. *de Pass.*) says, "We have nothing to thank you for, O ye Jews; we owe nought to thee, O Judas. For your wickedness promoted our salvation without your will, and that was wrought by you which the hand and counsel of God decreed to be done. That death thus sets us free, but is a charge against you. Ye only justly lose that which ye wished all to lose." See on Acts ii. 23. 4. The fourth reason is given by S. John (xviii. 11). "The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it? God ordained this cup of the Passion from all eternity, and now gives it Me to drink. Shall I not eagerly take it from His hand, and gladly drain it out?" Observe, He had before deprecated it as a very bitter cup of gall, but now, on knowing the Father's will, He embraces it, as full of honeyed sweetness. For what is sweeter than for Him to obey God, to offer Himself as a holocaust to God, to make Himself a sacrifice to God for the salvation of men? "How sweetly," says S. Bernard (*Serm.* ii. *in Pent.*), "didst Thou hold converse with men How abundantly didst Thou bestow on them many and great blessings! How boldly didst Thou suffer such indignities and cruelties for men, so as to draw honey from the rock, and oil from the hardest stone!" (Deut. xxxii. 13). Which was hard set against Thy words, harder still at Thy wounds, most hard at the horrors of the Cross; for in all these sufferings He was as a lamb before His shearers, and opened not His mouth (Isa. liii. 7).

Ver. 55. *In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves for to take Me? I sat daily with you teaching in the Temple, and ye laid no hold on Me.* He had before reproved Peter and the Apostles when they drew their swords; He now reproves still more severely Judas and the Jews who wished to take Him; exhibiting in this way wonderful loftiness, freedom, and calmness of mind. For He said this when He was still free. It was just after He had healed Malchus' ear. Shame on you, He would say, to come and seize Me by night, as a thief! I am no thief, but publicly taught the

Jews in the Temple. Why did ye not seize Me then? I know why you seek to take Me, but I know also that ye were afraid to take Me in the Temple on account of the people. Deal with Me now as you please; I surrender Myself willingly; bind Me, scourge Me at your will, &c. *This is your hour, and the power of darkness.* And ye therefore fittingly come to seize Me by night, because I am the light of the world, and have openly taught the light of truth in the light of day. But ye as children of darkness shun the light and love darkness, and therefore do ye seize Me in the darkness. So say Bede and Theophylact, and S. Leo (*Serm.* viii. *de Pass.*), "The sons of darkness rushed against the true Light, and though using torches and lanterns, yet escaped not the darkness of unbelief, because they knew not the Author of light," &c.

It is clear from S. Luke that it was after these words that the Jews laid hands on Jesus. The order of events (see ver. 50) is here transposed by S. Matthew, who wished to bring together at one time all that related to the seizure of Christ without regard to the order of time.

Lastly, how cruel and insulting was this seizure of Christ! First, as being seized as a malefactor, though most innocent, and in Himself, as God, boundless and uncreated sanctity. Secondly, in being seized by the vilest of men, and His greatest enemies. Thirdly, in being forsaken by the Apostles. Fourthly, because by these His bonds He wished to loose the most grievous and hard bonds of our sins (see Lam. iv. 20). Fifthly, because He wished in this way to animate Christians and martyrs especially to bear boldly their imprisonment and bonds, as S. Paul did, Eph. iii. 1, and S. Chrysostom *in loc.* The bonds of many martyrs were cruel, but those of Christ were more cruel still.

This crowd consisted of a thousand soldiers, and also of many attendants and servants of the high priest. See John xviii. 12.

Ver. 56. *But all this was done that the Scriptures of the Prophets might be fulfilled.* These are the words of the Evangelist, not of Christ. All these indignities were foreordained in the eternal

counsel of God, who willed that Christ should take them all on Himself, and suffer for the salvation of man. And He willed also that the Prophets should foretell them.

Then all the disciples forsook Him, and fled. As He foretold (ver. 31), they fled because they saw no hope of assisting Him, and were afraid lest they themselves should be seized and evil entreated by the Jews. "They were more ready," says Bede (in Mark xiv. 49), "to take safety in flight, than to suffer boldly with Christ." For, as Origen says, "the Spirit was not yet given" (John vii. 39). Was this flight of the Apostles allowable? Some say there was little blame in it, because they inwardly and in their minds clave to Christ, though in outward act they fled, as being no longer able to help Him. They were therefore wise in flying, to avoid the risk of either denying Christ or of suffering hardship. But when they had received at Pentecost the gift of the Holy Spirit, they boldly exposed themselves to every trial. This flight of theirs was defective, as arising from fear and failing in resolution, but not unlawful and wicked.

But others regard it as unlawful, as springing from distrust in Christ, and despairing of His aid, by which act they tacitly denied Christ. The first opinion I said (ver. 31) was the most probable. They sinned therefore venially, as struck down by sudden and excessive fear, and without His command or assent. For having experienced so often Christ's aid in danger, they ought to have still trusted in it, especially after His recent displays of power. They ought to have sought for His aid, and to have prayed, Lord, help us! what wouldst Thou have us to do? And Christ no doubt would have told them. S. Mark here speaks of the young man who left his linen cloak and fled away naked. Who he was, and why he did so, we shall read in S. Mark.

Ver. 57. *But they that had laid hold on Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the High Priest, where the scribes and elders were assembled.* S. John mentions that they led Him first to Annas, the father-in-law to Caiaphas. This was out of respect to Annas as the elder, or because he especially wished that Christ should

be taken. Whence S. Cyril and F. Lucas think that the price of Judas' betrayal was paid him there, or because the house of Annas was on the road (see on S. John xviii. 13). For it was in the house of Caiaphas that Christ was first examined, smitten, and denied by S. Peter, as is clear from S. Matthew, S. Mark, and S. Luke; and S. John (xviii. 19) also insinuates the same when he says "that the High Priest questioned Jesus." For when he says (ver. 24) that Annas sent Him bound to Caiaphas, it must be considered an analepsis. For John merely goes back to what he had omitted, for fear any one should conclude from his previous statement that Christ had been examined by Annas and not by Caiaphas. Some transpose ver. 24 and put it in after ver. 13, as S. Cyril does. So Origen, S. Augustine (*de Cons. Evang.* cap. vi.), Jansen, &c.

Were assembled. He says not "were called together," for this had been done when Judas requested Caiaphas' soldiers to take Christ. For it was then that Caiaphas summoned the Scribes and Elders to judge and condemn Him as soon as Judas brought Him before them. For they had conceived a deadly hatred against Christ, and thirsted for His death. "They sat watching all the night in Caiaphas' house," says S. Chrysostom.

Ver. 58. *But Peter followed Him afar off.* Peter alone gathered courage, and partly from curiosity, but more from love of Jesus, followed Him; but yet it was "afar off," for fear he should be seized by the soldiers, both as a disciple of Jesus, and also as having cut off Malchus' ear. His flight was a token of fear, his return a token of love overmastering his fear. "Peter," says S. Ambrose in Luke xxii., "is deserving our highest admiration for not forsaking the Lord even when afraid; his fear was natural, his care for Him was from affection; his fear alien to his nature, his not flying natural; his following Him was from devotion, his denial from surprise." In Peter, therefore, fear and love struggled together; in the first case love overcame fear, but soon afterwards under heavy temptation fear overcame love, when through fear of the attendants he denied Christ.

Unto the High Priest's house. That is, Caiaphas'. This is more fully stated John xviii. 15. The disciple there mentioned was S. John, according to S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius. So Jerome (in *Epit. Marc.*), and Lyranus, who says that John was known to the High Priest from selling him fishes, or because one of his kindred was a servant of the High Priest, or because he had sold his inheritance to the High Priest (*Niceph.* i. 28). But it is more likely that it was not one of the Apostles, because they were not known to the High Priest. And, moreover, both Christ and his Apostles were hated by the High Priest, and would not have been admitted into his palace by the servants; more likely would have been taken prisoners. Most probably it was one of His secret disciples, according to the Syriac version.

And went in, and sat with the servants. Not into the house where Jesus was to be examined, but into the court. "He approached not the place where Jesus was," says S. Jerome, "lest he should be suspected, but sat with the servants and warmed himself at the fire," as the other Evangelists state. Peter erred from imprudence and rashness, for thrusting himself among the servants, and thus exposing himself to the risk of either joining with them in reviling Him, or else of suffering imprisonment and scourging. He therefore shortly afterwards denied Christ. "He that loveth danger shall perish therein" (Ecclus. iii. 26).

To see the end. Whether Christ would be condemned or not, or set Himself free from His peril. If condemned, Peter would have taken refuge in flight; if acquitted, he would have dutifully returned to Him.

Ver. 59. *But the Chief Priests and all the Council sought false witness against Jesus, to put Him to death.* Here comes in S. John's narrative (xviii. 19).

The High Priest "asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine," as is there said, because, says Euthymius, "he wished to convict Him of introducing strange doctrines, and of stirring up sedition." For it was the duty of the High Priest to inquire into heresies and new sects. But Jesus firmly and prudently

replied that He had taught openly, and that those who heard His teaching were there present, and though His enemies, could speak to it. Let him ask them what He had taught them. For there is no surer evidence of innocence and sound teaching than that which comes from unfriendly hearers. For had Christ stated His own doctrine, they might have urged that through fear of condemnation He had said one thing in the Council and another in public. "He replied not arrogantly," says S. Chrysostom, "but as confident in the truth." Whence He says, "Why askest thou Me?" Why dost thou insidiously and captiously ask Me, thou crafty High Priest, to catch something out of My mouth wherewith to accuse and condemn Me? Thou canst easily learn from the common opinion of the people what I taught them. If thou knowest it not, thou hast not done thy duty as High Priest. And if thou wishest to know it now, ask the bystanders, My enemies, who have often heard Me. Let them produce, if they can, a single untrue or unsound word of Mine. For I know they cannot do so in truth.

But when S. John says "that one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand," S. Cyril thinks that he was struck with His teaching, and wished to remove this impression by striking Him.

He struck Him on the cheek, as vindicating the honour of the High Priest. Such a blow, inflicted with a mailed hand, was both severe and disgraceful, as appears from the "sacred countenance" which is religiously preserved at S. Peter's, and exhibited to the people in Passion Week. "What more audacious act?" says S. Chrysostom. "Let the Heaven be horrified, let the earth tremble at the patience of Christ and the insolence of His servants." "Methinks," says S. Cyril, "the whole universe would have shuddered had it known what it meant: for the Lord of Glory was smitten by the impious hand of a man." It is a marvel that this hand was not at once shrivelled up, nay, that the earth had not swallowed the man up alive. But the gentleness and love of Christ prevented this, who called him and many of his fellows to

repentance (Acts ii. 37). Just as Jeremiah foretold in sorrow, or rather in astonishment, "He will give His cheek to him that smiteth Him. He will be filled full of reproach" (Lam. iii. 30).

Now comes in S. Matthew's narrative. Finding they could find nothing against Him from those who were there, "they sought false witnesses," as despairing of finding true testimony, because Christ's wisdom, truthfulness, and sanctity were fully known to all the people.

That they might deliver Him to death. This was the great end for which they sought for false witnesses as a necessary means, though the sole end of justice is to condemn only on true evidence, and to inflict on false witnesses a correspondent punishment. For they wished for their own credit not to appear men of violence, but impartial judges, and consequently to be proceeding judicially against Him, though they were at the same time both judges and accusers, against every rule of justice and equity. "They craftily devise," says S. Chrysostom, "the outward form and appearance of justice, disguising their craft under the veil of a trial" (*Vict. Ant. on Mark* xiv.). Again, they wished Him to be condemned by Pilate, but they knew he would not condemn Him unless the crime were proved by witnesses to be deserving of death. The Chief Priests therefore seek false witnesses against Jesus, the Author of life and Saviour of the world, because, though they knew it not, God had decreed to give us, by His death, life both here and hereafter.

Ver. 60. *But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none.* "The wicked men found no semblance of blame in him," says Origen, "though they were many, astute, and ingenious, so pure and blameless was the life of Jesus." For the evidence of these witnesses was either false or contradictory, or not to the point, so that He could not be proceeded against as worthy of death.

At last came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to rebuild it in three days.

Christ, indeed, had said this (John ii. 19), in answer to their request for a sign that He was sent from God. But they were false witnesses, because, though they spake the truth in part, yet they perverted His words and meaning. For, first, He did not say "I am able to destroy," but "destroy ye," *i.e.*, "*if ye* destroy it." Next, S. Mark says they added the words "made without hands," though S. John has nothing of the kind. Next, Christ said not, "I will build it again," but "I will raise it up." In like manner they distorted its meaning, for He spake of the temple of His Body, in which the fulness of the Godhead dwelt as in a temple, as S. John added. For when the Jews asked for a sign, Christ gave them the sign of His resurrection. Christ might have plainly said, "I will rise again from the dead." But He chose rather to make use of the figure of the temple, because in the presence of cavillers He was obliged to speak covertly and symbolically, and also by speaking thus obscurely to furnish occasion for His Passion; for He knew that the Jews, from misunderstanding this obscure saying, would prosecute Him as guilty of death. S. Mark here adds, "But neither so did their testimony agree together." For however boastful these words of Christ seemed to be, yet they injured no one, and a capital charge could not be founded on them.

Ver. 62. *And the High Priest arose and said, Answerest Thou nothing to those things which they witness against Thee?* He arose, as being indignant that He was silent, and slighted this accusation as futile, and confuted it by His silence. Again, he rose up to show the heinousness and gravity of the crime brought against Christ, as though Christ, in speaking thus, had made light of the magnificence and holiness of the temple.

But Jesus held His peace. 1. Because the charge contained nothing worthy of death, and needed not an answer. 2. Because He knew that anything He might answer would be turned into a charge against Him. 3. Because He was fully preparing Himself for the death decreed for Him of the Father, and wished not to escape it by self-excuse. 4. The silence of Christ atoned for Adam's

excuses (*Com. on Mark* xiv. *apud S. Jer.*). Christ was silent, in order by His silence to make satisfaction for Adam's foolish talking.

Ver. 63. *And the High Priest said to Him, I adjure Thee by the Living God that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God.* I, the High Priest, am the Vicar of God on earth, and therefore by the authority of God committed to me, I call God to witness, and conjure Thee to answer. Caiaphas here touches the essence of the whole matter. Jesus said that He was the Christ, sent with supreme power for the salvation of men. The Chief Priests pertinaciously denied it. He therefore asks the question not for information, but in order to condemn Him. For if He said He were, they condemned Him to death as a blasphemer; but if He said He were not, he would have replied, Why then didst Thou pass Thyself off with the people as Christ the Son of God? and would consequently have condemned Him as a false Prophet, in having made Himself equal with God, as the Jews urged against Him (John v. 19). For the whole ground of their hatred against Him was that He, a man, as it seemed, of low birth, said He was Christ and Son of God, preached accordingly without their sanction, despised their foolish traditions, and publicly and sharply reproved their vices and crimes.

Ver. 64. *Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said.* Meaning thereby, I am. Christ candidly and clearly replied that He was Christ, both to show reverence to the Divine Name by which He was adjured, and to bestow due honour and obedience to the authority of the High Priest who adjured Him. Says S. Chrysostom, "to take away from them every excuse," that they might not be able to excuse themselves with men, nor before God in the day of judgment, by saying, We asked Jesus judicially in the Council, but He was either silent or answered ambiguously, wherefore we were not obliged to accept and believe in Him as Christ!

Nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power. After this time, *i.e.*, in the day of judgment. Ye shall see Me then, who now seem to be only the Son of Man, to be truly the very Son of God, when I am seated at

the right hand of God, and to be His equal in dignity, majesty, and glory. He alludes to Ps. cx. 1. I am He of whom David sang of old, "The Lord said unto my Lord," &c. Christ, moreover, not only as God, but as man too, sitteth on the right hand of God, as explained in Col. iii. 1.

The Chief Priests will not strictly and exactly see this in the day of judgment, as being reprobates, and not to be blessed with the sight of God, but to be cursed with the sight of the devil. But indirectly and in effect they will see it. For they will see such great majesty, glory, and splendour, and such a train of angels attending Him, that they will not doubt that He is near to God, nay, God himself, and the Son of God. For they will then experience His omnipotence in glorifying the godly and condemning the ungodly, who here have condemned Him as weak and feeble.

And coming in the clouds of Heaven. Alluding to Dan. vii. 13. Behold here, and wonder at His greatness of mind, who though standing in the midst of His enemies, yet threatens them with His coming to judgment. As though He said, Ye now unjustly condemn Me as a false prophet and false Christ, but that day will come when I, who stand at your tribunal, shall be seated as judge. Ye condemn Me now to the death of the Cross; but I, in this very same place (for Christ will sit in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which is nigh Jerusalem, Joel iii. 2), will condemn you to the eternal torture of hell-fire, because ye committed on My person this awful sacrilege, because ye were the murderers of Christ and of God. And surely it will thus be.

Ver. 65. *Then the High Priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard His blasphemy.* The garments of the Jews could easily be rent, for they were open at the neck, so as to be readily taken on and off. They could therefore easily take hold of both sides of the opening, and tear them down to the waist (but no farther), in token of grief and indignation. This was usual among the heathen, but especially among the Jews, in

grief or when they heard blasphemy against God. (See 2 Kings xix. 1.)

But Caiaphas, being High Priest, tore his garments unlawfully; for "he shall not uncover his head, nor rend his clothes," Lev. xxi. 10: the reasons for which I have there given. But Caiaphas rent his garment to arouse their ill-will against Jesus, and to expose Him as a blasphemer to general execration. But by this very act he signified symbolically that the old law with its priesthood was rent away by the death of Christ, and that he also was deprived of his Priesthood by Him. So S. Leo (*Serm.* vi. *de Pass.*) says, "He did this to increase their anger at what they had heard. But not knowing the meaning of his mad act, he deprived himself of the honour of the Priesthood in forgetfulness of the precept, 'He shall not take off his head-dress, nor rend his clothes.'" And Origen says, "He rent his garments, displaying his filthiness and the nakedness of his soul, and showing forth in mystery that the old Priesthood was to be rent away, and its school of Priests, and its training, which was according to the letter." And Jerome, "He rent his garments to show that the Jews had lost the glory of the Priesthood, and that the seats of the High Priests were empty." So, too, S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius, Jansen, Barradius, and others.

He hath spoken blasphemy, in saying He was the Messiah and Son of God. The High Priest, for fear any one should be influenced by the words of Christ, anticipates it by fastening on Him the charge of blasphemy, to keep any one from speaking in His behalf, and to compel them all to condemn Him as a blasphemer.

What need we any further witness? Caiaphas here displays his wickedness, in not acting as a judge, but as a prosecutor and accuser of Christ. (See S. Chrysostom.)

What think ye? Here again he acts the part of a prosecutor and not of a judge, makes the very enemies of Christ His judges, and by his pontifical authority, and his sentence already decided on, drives them, as it were, to condemn Him as a malefactor. "The

same persons," says S. Chrysostom, "bring the charge, discuss it, and pass sentence."

But they answered and said, He is guilty of death. Blasphemers were stoned (Lev. xxiv. 16), as S. Stephen was stoned. But they cried out that He was guilty, not of stoning, but of death. For they had already decided to crucify Him. Origen touchingly sets forth the indignity of this most iniquitous sentence. "How great an error was it to declare the Prince of Life Himself guilty of death, and not, on the testimony of so many who had risen, to look on Him as the Fount of Life, from whom life flowed forth on all living! For as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself." What greater indignity than that the Son of God, the source of all life to angels, men, and all living things, should be condemned by the whole Council as guilty of death for having, when asked and adjured by the High Priest, confessed that He was the Son of God?

He had restored sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, life to the dead, and is therefore condemned to death by the envious priests. But they said in ignorance (but in another sense), that though Christ was in Himself most innocent and holy, yet He had taken on Himself to atone for our sins. And on that account He was guilty of death. For Christ took on Himself the sentence passed on Adam and his posterity, "In the day thou eatest thereof," &c. (Gen. ii. 17). For He wished to atone for our death, that by His death He might restore us to the eternal life of grace and glory. And accordingly He took on Himself this most undeserved sentence with the greatest calmness, equanimity, and patience, and surrendered Himself to God the Father as a victim for our sins (see Isa. liii.), to teach us to bear contentedly (after His example, and for love of Him) the unjust judgments, the reproaches and censures of men, in order to make the best return to Him we can; while in His service we are treated as guilty of death, just as He was, by the whole Council, judged and proclaimed guilty of death for our sakes.

Tropologically: a Christian who sins condemns our Redeemer a second time to death, kills Him (as it were), and crucifies

Him (see Heb. vi. 6). Whence S. Bridget (Rev. i. 37) tells us that the Blessed Virgin said to her, "I complain that my Son is crucified more cruelly by His enemies in the world now, than He was by the Jews. For the sins with which they spiritually crucify my Son are more abominable and grievous than the sins of those who crucified Him in the body." Some suppose that this Council was held early the next day, and that everything here recorded by S. Matthew from ver. 59 is spoken by anticipation, and ought to come after the first verse of the next chapter (see *S. Aug. de Cons. Evan.* iii. 7, &c.). Others maintain, more correctly, that these events were recorded by S. Matthew in due order, and that they took place immediately after midnight. For there were two Councils held, one at night, the one here mentioned, the second next morning (Luke xxii. 66). For as all the Council were not present at night, Caiaphas summoned a general assembly in the morning, to which he convened them all. In this Christ was condemned unanimously as guilty of treason, not only against Divine law in calling Himself the Son of God, but against human law also, in asserting that He was a King, and was given up to Pilate to sentence Him to crucifixion. The great Council (the Sanhedrim) was held in the morning.

Ver. 67. *Then they spat on His face.* Great and brutal was the barbarity of the servants, as also of the Chief Priests and the Councillors who permitted it. But they considered they did rightly, in vindicating their law and the honour of God, since Christ had been already condemned to death as a blasphemer. Those who held Him, and the other bystanders as well, and some, too, of the Council (as S. Mark implies), spat upon Him.

On that Divine face, worthy of reverence and adoration from all creatures, on which the angels desire to look. This was an atrocious insult inflicted by the vilest men on Christ the Son of God, who here exhibited stupendous gentleness, humility, and patience, and fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah (ii. 6), "I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that pluck off the hair." Whence Forerius says that the plucking of

the beard was a great pain and insult, like spitting in the face. Whence S. Clement Alex. (*Pæd.* iii. 3) says "it is a monstrous thing to pluck off the hair, which is man's natural beauty."

Whence Euthymius says, "Shudder, ye heavens and earth, and all creation; for what face was it on which they inflicted such insults?" And so S. Chrysostom, and Titus Bostrensis after him, "They spat on that face which the waves of the sea feared, on seeing which on the Cross the sun hid his rays; they smote it, fully satisfying their anger, inflicting the most insulting wounds, thrusting their hands into His face, &c. But why did they beat Him when they were about to kill Him? What need was there for such insults? But their cruelty was manifest in all they did, like hunters who vent their rage on the prey they have at length found, counting it a pleasure and festive sport, and showing how eager they were for cruelty."

S. Anselm (*de Pass. Dom.*) introduces the Blessed Virgin as thus saying, "After a little while my Son appeared covered with spittle as with leprosy;" and speaking of His scourging says, "My Son was so benumbed and disfigured, that He appeared as though struck with leprosy."

They buffeted Him. A buffet (*colaphus*) is a blow struck with the fist on the neck or head; a blow (*alapa*) is given with the flat of the hand on the cheek, inflicting greater insult, but less pain than the blow (*colaphus*).

But others struck Him in the face with their hands. Some translate ῥαπίς as a rod or a slipper. But here, by a misuse of words, it means "a blow." Christ is therefore here accused as impious,—struck with the hand, as impudent; speaks as the Lord, is silent as innocent; is condemned as sacrilegious; is smitten with fists, "though He measures out the waters with the hollow of His hand" (Isa. xl.). His countenance, the brightness of His Father's glory, is disfigured with blows. His eyes are veiled who lays bare the secrets of the hearts and looks into all thoughts. He is insulted, beaten, and assailed with scoffs, and has His hair torn out.

Ver. 68. *Prophesy unto us, thou Christ, Who is he that smote Thee?* They jest at Him for saying He was a Prophet. If Thou art a Prophet, prophesy to us. They seem to have said this insultingly, after they had covered His face. If Thou art the Christ, Thou canst not be ignorant of what is hid from Thee. Tell us who smote Thee? They jested at Him as a pretended soothsayer. "The King of Prophets," says Theophylact gravely, "is jested at as a false Prophet." "They insultingly covered His face, so as to make mock of Him, and next that they might not be deterred from beating Him by His Divine countenance," says Jansen. "For His majesty beamed forth in His countenance," says S. Jerome.

Mystically: Christ when veiled signified that He hid His face from the Jews, who were deprived of faith and the knowledge of God. Just as Moses, a type of Christ, when he veiled his eyes on coming down from the Mount, signified the same thing (2 Cor. iii. 13). In his own words, "I will hide my face from them" (Deut. xxxii. 20).

Tropologically: it signifies that He atoned for Adam and Eve's sin, for they sinned both with their eyes and their mouths, in looking at and then eating the forbidden fruit. Christ therefore, to expiate this sin, suffered His mouth and eyes to be covered. For, as S. Augustine says, "Christ suffered in all the members in which man has sinned, that He might expiate all."

Christ, moreover, endured all these sufferings with steadfast patience. "As He," says S. Chrysostom, "omitted no act of gentleness, so did they omit no act of insult or impiety, but sought to glut their rage both in word and deed."

The Delphic Sibyl thus foretold—

> "Then impious Israel
> Will buffet Him, and from their sinful lips
> Will pour their poisonous spittle,
> And will give, for food the gall, and vinegar to drink," &c.

And the Erythræan Sibyl (*Lact.* iv. 18)—

> "The innocent will give His back to blows," &c.

The reason for these insults was — First, That Christ should

thus expiate the infinite sins with which men (so far as they can) inflict the greatest injuries on God. For the sinner, so far as he can, spits upon God, buffets and beats Him, because he despises Him, and esteems Him less than the creature which he loves. So Origen, "He suffered all these indignities to save us who deserved them all." "His reproaches took away our reproach," Pseudo-Jerome on S. Mark. "It was not Christ that suffered, but we suffered in Him," says S. Athanasius. Christ wished to endure all these dire sufferings in order to honour God the more, and to make the greater satisfaction for the wrong done Him. His Passion therefore honoured God more than Adam's sin dishonoured Him. Add to this, that wicked men insult God, and invent fresh ways of insulting Him. Christ therefore willed to be insulted, and to expiate their newly-devised sins by His newly-devised insults.

Secondly, to set forth the highest pattern of patience and virtue. If any one, therefore, desires a specimen of the greatest humility, gentleness, obedience, patience, constancy, charity, let him look on Christ suffering and crucified, and imitate Him as far as he can. "According to the pattern I showed to thee in the Mount" of Calvary (Exod. xxv. 40). "Wondrous is Thy Passion, O Lord Jesus," says S. Bernard (Wednesday in Holy Week), "which hath driven away all our sufferings, makes propitiation for all our iniquities, and is never found ineffectual in all our diseases. For what is so deadly as not to be healed by Thy death? In this Passion, then, three things we must specially look at: the act, the mode, the cause; for in the act, patience; in the mode, humility; in the cause, charity,—is specially commended to us."

Thirdly, to animate the martyr to endure every kind of torment, and the faithful to bear any injuries, by whomsoever imposed. "He endured them all with great courage, teaching us to bear injuries," says Euthymius, deriving from Christ adamantine hardness; as Isaiah (l. 7) says, "I have set my face as a flint, and I know that I shall not be confounded. He is near that

justifieth me; who will contend with me?" For as iron is hardened the more it is struck with the hammers, and is so far from being broken by them that it breaks them itself; so let us, the more we are afflicted, exhibit the greater courage, and thus by our patience overcome the hatred of our adversaries (see Ezek. iii. 9). Again, as iron breaks iron, so do the patient overcome the obstinate wickedness of the ungodly, of whom Zecharias says (vii. 12), "They made their hearts as adamant, lest they should hear the law." "For nothing is so hard as not to be surpassed by something harder," says S. Bernard. Moreover, S. Athanasius says (*de Cruce*), "Just as when a man strikes a stone with his hand, he does not break the stone, but hurts his hand; so they who strove against the Lord, as contending against incorruption, were corrupted, and as plotting against the Immortal, themselves perished."

And so the Jews, for these insults offered to Christ, were rejected by God, and exposed to universal reprobation. "They received," says Origen, "a lasting blow, and lost all their Prophets; whereas God exalted Jesus, who humbled Himself even unto death, and gave Him a name which is above every name."

After Caiaphas had with the whole Council proclaimed Christ to be guilty of death, the servants of the High Priest and some of the Council insulted Him for three whole hours, while the others lay down to rest, to be ready to proceed with the case in the morning.

Indeed, He was subjected all the night through to cruel injuries, and bore them all with sweetness and fortitude.

S. Bernard (*Serm.* xliii. *in Cant.* i. 12), on the words, "My beloved is as a bundle of myrrh,' wisely and piously observes, "He made up this bundle from the reproaches and insults of these attendants," and adds, "This healthful posy is preserved for me; no one shall take it from me. It shall lie between my breasts. These I said meditated wisdom; in these I established the perfections of my righteousness, in these the fulness of wisdom, in these the riches of salvation, in these abundance of

merits. From these there came to me one while the heathful draught of bitterness, at another the sweet ointment of consolation. They sustain me in adversity, those check me in prosperity; and amidst the joys and sorrows of this present life they afford me safe guidance on either side as I walk along the royal road, and ward off imminent dangers on both sides."

Ver. 69. *Now Peter sat without in the hall: and a damsel came unto Him, saying, And thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.* S. Matthew here goes back to the history of S. Peter, whom he speaks of (ver. 58) as having followed Jesus into the hall; and he here brings together in one S. Peter's three denials, though they took place at different times. He sat at the fire warming himself. S. John says he stood; but this with the Jews merely meant that he was present, not any particular attitude. He stood, it may be, at one time, and sat at another.

But if he stood without, how was it that he was within the house? He was within, as being in the outer court, but without with respect to the inner court. Whence S. Ambrose says (Luke xxii.), "Where was it that Peter denied Christ? In the prætorium of the Jews, in the company of the wicked." And Bede, too, on Mark xiv., "How hurtful is converse with the wicked! Peter amongst the servants of the High Priest said he knew not the man, though among the disciples he had confessed Him to be God."

A damsel. One of inferior degree, "a doorkeeper," says S. John. Hence we see more clearly the weakness and fear of Peter, who was staggered by the question of a humble damsel, and denied Christ; though afterwards, when he had received the Spirit, feared not Caiaphas, or the whole Council, when he said, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts iv.). Learn from this how weak is man when over-confident in himself and forsaken of God; and, on the other hand, how bold, if he distrusts himself and trusts in God. "Peter without the Spirit was overcome by the words of the damsel, but with the Spirit he yielded neither to rulers nor kings" (*Com. on S. Mark, apud S. Jerome*).

But how did this damsel recognise Peter before all the men who had seen him in the garden with Christ? Because, as the doorkeeper, she carefully noticed those who went in and out. And she observed that Peter was not one of the servants, but a stranger, and with an agitated look, and hence conjectured he was a follower of Jesus. For sagacious doorkeepers are quick in detecting, for it is difficult to conceal the feelings, and not to betray them by the look. Perhaps, also, she had seen Peter with the other Apostles, and had carefully noted his appearance.

Of Galilee. For Jesus was of Nazareth in Galilee, and he calls him a Galilean, both as despised by the Jews, who thought that no Prophets came from thence (John vii. 62), and also as a seditious person, a follower of Judas of Galilee (Acts v. 37).

Ver. 70. *But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.* Fearing he would be seized, and to obtain belief for his denial, he said that her question was so strange that he knew not what it meant. "I am so far from knowing who Jesus is, that I know not what it is you ask. For I know not whether He has disciples, or who and what they are." It was a lie; just as when a person, if asked by Pagans whether he is a Christian, says he is not. This is a sin against the profession of the faith, of which Peter had heard Christ's warnings and threatenings (Matt. x. 33). "But Peter," says Victor of Antioch, "was in such consternation and agitation of mind as entirely to forget the Lord's threatening." And hence S. Augustine (on John xviii. 65), commiserating his fall, exclaims, "Behold this most firm pillar tumbled at one single breath of air! Where is now that boldness of promising, that over-confidence in himself? Where are his words, 'If I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee'? But what marvel if God's prediction proved true, and man's presumption false?"

Denied. How many times? Dionys. Carthus. says six times, thrice in the house of Annas. S. John implies, thrice in the

house of Caiaphas, as the other Evangelists expressly state (see *S. Aug. de Cons. Evang.* iii. 6). Cajetan (on John xviii.) says seven times, thrice when addressed by women, and four times by men.

But the common opinion is that he denied only thrice. See S. Cyril on John xviii.; S. Ambrose (Luke xxii.), and others. And this is clear from S. Matthew's narrative, who sets forth the history succinctly, and in the best order.

The Evangelists relate his threefold denials in different ways. But in order to reconcile them, observe that Peter first simply denied in the hall, when asked by the first damsel, next with an oath, when asked by the second, and thirdly, with cursing and swearing.

Here observe that S. Hilary on this passage, and S. Ambrose on Luke xxii., seem to say that Peter in denying Christ did not lie, but spoke ambiguously. For he said he knew not the man, because he knew Him to be God. "I was not with Him whom ye call a man, but I withdrew not from the Son of God," says S. Ambrose. I know not what thou sayest,—that is, I understand not your profanity. But S. Jerome tacitly refutes them, as Christ does also by saying, "Thou shalt thrice deny Me." But SS. Hilary and Ambrose can both be excused, because they merely meant to say that Peter's words were so measured that a sound meaning could be elicited from them, that he spoke so ambiguously that his words of denial could be turned into a good meaning.

1. It is certain, therefore, that Peter sinned mortally. So S. Chrysostom here, and S. Augustine (*Tract.* cxiii. on John). He therefore lost by his denial the grace and love of God. But whether he lost his faith is doubtful. But if any one of the Apostles retained his faith it was Peter (see above, ver. 31), especially as he soon afterwards repented, and wept bitterly for his sin of denial. He therefore mentally retained his faith, which moved him to repentance and tears. 2. He was to fall thus gravely for three reasons. First (which is the source of all), from over-confidence; next, because, though conscious of his weakness, he threw himself

into the company of the wicked men who had seized Jesus; and lastly, that he, the future head of the Church, might learn to have compassion for the fallen, and set a pattern of true penitence to all sinners. So S. Chrysostom, S. Leo (*Serm.* ix. *de Pass.*), S. Gregory (*Hom.* xxi.), and others.

The first denial took place just after midnight. He went away for fear the damsel should question him again.

And the cock crew. This first cock-crowing did not rouse Peter from his fall, nor keep him from falling again.

Ver. 71. *But as he was going out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said to them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.* "It is clear," says S. Augustine (*de Cons. Evang.* iii. 6), "by comparing the testimony of all the Evangelists, that Peter did not deny in front of the gate, but within it, in the hall by the fire. S. Matthew and S. Mark mention his going, but for brevity's sake do not mention his return."

Ver. 72. *And immediately he denied with an oath, I know not the man.* It appears from S. Luke and S. John that several others put the same question, and pressed him hard. On which Peter, finding that a stronger answer was required, added an oath, *i.e.*, committed perjury; for, as S. Gregory says, "a sin which is not blotted out by repentance, by its very weight quickly draws on to another," both because it weighs down, depresses, and weakens the conscience, and also because the sinner thinks that as he has sinned, it is of little moment if he falls again into the like sin. Some Christians when they have once fallen into fornication or gluttony repeat the sin, as thinking, "We have already fallen, let us fall again, and then by the same confession we shall blot out all our sins together." But they are wrong; for a second is a new offence against God, and inflicts on the soul a new wound more deadly than the first; for repentance is more difficult after repeated sin than after the first fall. "Perseverance in sin causes increase of guilt," says Rabanus. His intercourse with the ungodly, which he ought to have given up after his first fall, drove Peter to this, though, assuredly, he never should have done it,

as having experienced its noxiousness and his weakness in their company.

Ver. 73. *And after a while came unto him they that stood by and said unto him, Surely thou art one of them, for thy speech bewrayeth thee.*

Ver. 74. *Then began he to curse and swear, saying, I know not the man.* The servants who were watching the trial at the door after a while returned to the fire, and turning to Peter, tempted him again, and forced him to his third denial. They gave their reason, "Thy speech bewrayeth thee;" from his Galilean dialect. S. John adds (xviii. 26) a further charge, for a kinsman of Malchus said, "Did I not see thee in the garden with Him?" Peter, therefore, finding himself driven to extremities, "began to curse and swear" that he knew not the man, saying, after the Hebrew manner, May God do these things to me if I know Him. May the earth open, may the lightning blast me, if I know Him. The Greek word is καταναθεματίζειν, to anathematise vehemently, to call curses down on oneself. "The more they urge and insist upon it, the more vehemently does he swear, the more obstinately does he act," says Victor of Antioch on Mark xiv. "Consider here," says S. Cyril (*Lib.* xii. on John), "what the Apostles were before the coming of the Holy Spirit, and what they were made afterwards, when endued with power from on high."

And immediately the cock crew. To remind Peter of Christ's prediction, and to move him to repentance. S. Luke adds, "And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter," &c. This look, then, as S. Ambrose teaches, caused Peter, who had not noticed the first cock-crowing, to notice this, to call to mind his warning, and to begin to repent and weep. "Christ looked on Peter," says S. Leo, "and then raised him up." He looked on him also with the eyes of His mind, putting before him the baseness of his denial, and urging him on to repentance (S. Augustine, Bede, Ambrose, and others). And with His bodily eyes also, because Christ, after being pronounced guilty of death, seems to have been brought

down to the outer hall, which was below, and where Peter was; and there turning to him, and smiting him with His gracious look, He reminded him of his fall, and recalled him to himself. Christ seems to have been brought down to this hall that, while the Priests were taking a little rest, He might be handed over to the custody and insolence of their attendants. Or Christ certainly from the inner hall saw Peter standing in the outer one, Christ's overruling providence so ordering everything, that a fit opportunity was afforded for looking on Peter.

Here admire alike the loftiness and the charity of Christ. For though already condemned to death, and in the midst of His insults and blows, He seemed as it were to forget Himself, and to care for Peter, to bring him back as a lost sheep into the path of safety, and teach us to do the like. It was so with S. Chrysostom, who, when driven into exile, and even to death, seemed to forget himself, and wrote most affectionate letters to his friends; and exhorts Constantius, his presbyter, not to be downcast at his persecution, but to rouse himself, and send apostolic men to convert Phœnicia, and write him an account of their proceedings. For the energy and courage of the helmsman is exhibited in the storm, as that of a soldier in fight, a general in the field, a physician in the paroxysm of a disease. S. Leo (*Serm.* iii. *de Pass.*) observes, "The Lord looked on Peter, and though exposed to the revilings of the Priests, the falsehoods of the witnesses, and the insults of those who smote and spat upon Him, He met His troubled disciple with those eyes wherewith He foresaw he would be troubled. And the glance of truth was turned on him in whom amendment of heart was to be wrought, as though the voice of the Lord sounded within him, and said, What doest thou, Peter? Why dost thou withdraw into thine own conscience? Turn to Me, trust in Me, follow Me; this is the time of My passion, the hour of thy punishment has not yet arrived. Why fearest thou that which thou also wilt overcome? Let not the weakness I have taken upon Me perplex thee; I was trembling for thy fate, be not thou anxious for Mine." And therefore "it was impossible," says

S. Jerome, "that he should remain in the darkness of denial, since the Light of the World had looked upon him."

Ver. 75. *And Peter remembered the word of Jesus which He said, Before the cock crow twice* (S. Mark adds), *thou shalt deny Me thrice. And he went out and wept bitterly.* "After the herald of day cried to him," says Origen, "he remembered." And Victor of Antioch on Mark xiv. says, "He was admonished by the cock crowing, and, as if aroused from deep sleep and brought back again to himself, he remembered that he had fallen into that very sin and disgrace which the Lord had foretold."

Symbolically: a cock. Our own conscience is given to us by God, which cries out against us as oft as we sin, and says, Why committest thou this great sin? Why dost thou offend God? Why dost thou hurt thyself, and expose thyself to the peril of hell? This cry wounds the conscience, and stimulates it to repentance; and whoso hears and regards it feels true compunction with S. Peter, and does away his sin by penitence. So *Laur. Justin de Christi agone, cap.* ix. So, too, S. Gregory (*Mor.* xxx. 4), explaining Job xxxviii. 36 (Vulg.), "Who hath given the cock understanding?"

And he went out. Because he could not weep before the Jews, lest he should betray himself; and because the very sight of them was the cause of his denying Christ. As he was penitent, this ground for falling away had to be removed. He goes forth, therefore, and gives full vent to his tears. "For he could not," says S. Jerome, "manifest his repentance when sitting in the hall of Caiaphas; he therefore goes away from the council of the wicked to wash away the filth of his cowardly denial with the tears of love."

Calvin objects, that this was but a halting repentance, because he did not confess his sin before the Jews, in whose presence he had denied Christ, and thus do away with the scandal he had caused them. I reply, that he had not given them any scandal so as to strengthen them in their hatred of Christ, for they were already most determined in their hatred of Him. And if he had retracted his denial in their presence, it would have been without any

benefit, nay, with hurt both to himself and them. For he would have exposed himself to the risk of relapse, and them to the peril of feeling greater indignation against Christ; and they would then have punished more severely both himself and Christ.

Wept bitterly. He wept with bitter tears (in the Arabic), as though his great sorrow had embittered his heart, so as to shed bitter tears in satisfaction for his sin. "For" (as S. Bernard says) "the tears of penitents are the wine of angels"—nay, of God and Christ. Hear S. Ambrose (in Luc. xxii.), "Why wept he? Because his sin came into his mind. Peter grieved and wept because he had erred as a man. To fall is a common thing, to repent is of faith. But why did he not pray rather than weep?" He answers, "Tears wash away the sin which the voice is ashamed to confess. Tears do not ask for pardon, they merit it. I know why Peter kept silence. It was because an earlier request for pardon would have added to his offence. We must weep first, and then pray." And shortly after he says, "Teach us, O Peter, what did thy tears profit thee! Thou hast taught us already. For thou didst fall before thou wept. But after thy tears thou wast raised up to rule others, though before thou couldest not rule thyself."

Thou wilt say that S. Ambrose remarks in the same passage, "I read of the tears of Peter, but not of his satisfaction." These words the Calvinists pervert, as doing away with works of satisfaction, and destroying their efficacy. But ignorantly and foolishly. For S. Ambrose means by "satisfaction" excuses for sin, as appears from what follows. "I read that Peter lamented his sin, and did not excuse it, as guilty men are wont to do." But Peter confessed his sin with loving tears. And there is no question among the orthodox that such works are satisfactory.

S. Clement, the disciple and successor of S. Peter, records that Peter was so penitent, as his whole life afterwards to fall on his knees when he heard the cock crow, shed bitter tears, and ask pardon again of God and Christ for his sin, long since forgiven. His eyes also gave evidence of this, being bloodshot from constant

weeping (*Niceph.* ii. 37). And lastly, Peter compensated for his fall by living to his death an austere life, feeding on lupins (S. Gregory Naz. *de Amore pauperum*), and also by his unwearied labours as an apostle, his persecutions, his sorrows, and, finally, his death on the cross, which he most resolutely and joyfully underwent for Christ's sake.

S. Bridget records (*Rev.* iii. 5) that S. Peter appeared to her, and stated that the cause of his fall was his forgetfulness of his own resolution and the promise he made to Christ. And he thence suggests this remedy for temptation, "Rise up by humility to the Lord of Memory, and seek for memory from Him."

CHAPTER XXVII.

1 *Christ is delivered bound to Pilate.* 3 *Judas hangeth himself.* 19 *Pilate, admonished of his wife,* 24 *washeth his hands:* 26 *and looseth Barabbas.* 29 *Christ is crowned with thorns,* 34 *crucified,* 40 *reviled,* 50 *dieth, and is buried:* 66 *his sepulchre is sealed, and watched.*

WHEN the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death:

2 And when they had bound him, they led *him* away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

3 ¶ Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What *is that* to us? see thou *to that.*

5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

8 Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.

9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;

10 And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

11 And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.

12 And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

13 Then said Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?

14 And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

15 Now at *that* feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.

16 And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.

17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?

18 For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

19 ¶ When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

20 But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

21 The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

22 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? *They* all say unto him, Let him be crucified.

23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

24 ¶ When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye *to it.*

25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood *be* on us, and on our children.

26 ¶ Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered *him* to be crucified.

27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of *soldiers.*

28 And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

29 ¶ And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put *it* upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!

30 And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify *him.*

32 And as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.

33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,

34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted *thereof,* he would not drink.

35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

36 And sitting down they watched him there;

37 And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

39 ¶ And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking *him,* with the scribes and elders, said,

42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.

44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, This *man* calleth for Elias.

48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled *it* with vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink.

49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

50 ¶ Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

55 And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee ministering unto him.

56 Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

57 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathæa, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple;

58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary sitting over against the sepulchre.

62 ¶ Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make *it* as sure as ye can.

66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

Ver. 1. *But when the morning was come* (Syr. *when it was dawn*), *all the chief priests*, &c. "See here," says S. Jerome, "the eagerness of the Priests for evil," *their feet were swift to shed blood* (Ps. xiv. 6). They were urged on by their bitter hatred of Christ, and by Satan's instigation. It was the morning of Friday, only a few hours before His crucifixion, when Caiaphas, who had already tried and condemned Him the night before, summoned thus early the great Council of the Sanhedrim. It was to obtain His condemnation by the whole Body, which would ensure the subsequent condemnation by Pilate. S. Matthew omits the proceedings of this Council, as being a mere repetition of what he had already recorded (chap. xxvi. 59 *seq.*). But the narrative is supplied by S. Luke (xxii. 26 *seq.*), as explained above (see ver. 59).

S. Leo says strikingly, "This morning, O Jews, destroyed your Temple and altars, took away from you the Law and the Prophets, deprived you of your kingdom and priesthood, and turned all your feasts into unending woe" (*Serm.* iii. *de Pass.*).

To put Him to death. That is, how they could do it without hindrance or tumult, and also by what kind of death, as, *e.g.*, that of the Cross, the most ignominious of all. Some members of the Council were probably Christ's followers and friends; and these most likely absented themselves, or were not summoned, or sent away elsewhere, for fear they should defend Him. But if any of them were present, they either gave sentence in His favour, or were forced by the clamour of the rest to remain silent; as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa (Luke xxiii. 51). Here notice, this wicked Council erred not only in fact, but in faith. For it gave sentence that Jesus was not the Christ nor the Son of God, but that He was guilty of death, as having falsely claimed to be both: all which statements are erroneous and heretical. This, however, was only a small and particular, not an Œcumenical Council. These latter, as representing the whole Church, have the gift of inerrancy by the power of the Holy Ghost and by Christ's own promise. But you will say the whole Jewish Church at that time fell away from the faith. It was not so, for many of Christ's converts

in Judæa remained steadfast, and there were true believers among the Jews who were converted at the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.).

Ver. 2. *And when they had bound Him, they led Him away, and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor.* "For," as S. Jerome says, "it was the Jewish custom to bind and deliver to the judge those they had condemned to death." Here then was Samson bound by Delilah, Christ by the Synagogue. Origen says truly, "They bound Jesus who looseth from bonds; who saith to them that are in bonds, 'Go forth' (Isa. xlix. 9); who looseth the fetters, and saith, 'Let us break their bands asunder.'" For Jesus was bound that He might set us free by taking on Himself the bonds and the punishment of our sins.

They brought. Caiaphas, *i.e.*, and all the other members of the Council, to crush by the weight of their authority both Jesus and Pilate alike. For if Pilate refused to ratify their sentence, they would be able to accuse him of aiming at the sovereignty of Judæa, and being thus an enemy of Cæsar, and so force him in this way, even against his will, to condemn Him to death.

Delivered to Pontius Pilate. Why? Some think from what is said in the Talmud that the Jews were forbidden to put any one to death. But see Deut. xxi. 23; Num. xxv. 4; Josh. xiii. 29; 2 Sam. xxi. 6 and 9.

But the fact was that the Romans had taken away from the Jews the power of life and death (John xviii. 31). Ananus was deposed from the High-Priesthood for killing James the Lord's brother and others, without the consent of the Roman governor. The stoning of S. Stephen was only an outbreak of popular fury.

There were also other reasons. 1. To remove from themselves the discredit of His death, as though it had arisen merely from envy. 2. To dishonour Him as much as they could, by getting Him condemned by Pilate to the ignominious death of crucifixion, the punishment of rebels. They themselves had condemned Him of blasphemy, which was punished by stoning (Lev. xxiv. 16). 3. To dishonour Him the more by causing Him to be put to death as a profane person, by one, too, who was himself profaning the

holy feast of the Passover (see S. Chrysostom, *Hom.* lxxxvi. in Matt.; S. Augustine, *Tract.* cxiv. in John; and S. Cyril, *Lib.* xii. in Joan. *cap.* 6).

But a retaliatory punishment was inflicted on the Jews; for as they delivered up Christ to Pilate, so were they in turn delivered up to be destroyed by Titus and Vespasian (S. Cyril on John, cap. xviii.; Theophylact, and Victorinus on Mark xiv.).

Vers. 3, 4. *Then Judas, which had betrayed Him, when he saw that He was condemned*, &c. Judas, when he sold Christ, did not expect that He would be killed, but merely seized, and either render them some satisfaction, or in some way escape, as before, out of their hands. But on finding Him condemned to death, he felt the gravity of his sin. And repenting, when too late, of what he had done, he was self-condemned, and hanged himself. "The devil is so crafty," says S. Chrysostom, "that he allows not a man (unless very watchful) to see beforehand the greatness of his sin, lest he should repent and shrink from it. But as soon as a sin is fully completed, he allows him to see it, and thus overwhelms him with sorrow and drives him to despair. Judas was unmoved by Christ's many warnings; but when the deed had been wrought, he was brought to useless and unavailing repentance."

That He was condemned. By Caiaphas, *i.e.*, and the whole Council, and that he would shortly be condemned by Pilate on their authority, and by their urgent importunity.

Repented himself. Not with true and genuine repentance, for this includes the hope of pardon, which Judas had not; but with a forced, torturing, and despairing repentance, the fruit of an evil and remorseful conscience, like the torments of the lost. In Gr. μεταμεληθείς.

Brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the Chief Priests. To rescind his bargain. As if he had said, "I give back the money; do ye, on your part, restore Jesus to liberty." So S. Ambrose (in Luc. xxii.), "In pecuniary causes, when the money is paid back, justice is satisfied." And S. Hilary, "Judas gave back the money that he might expose the dishonesty of the purchasers." And S.

Ambrose, "Though the traitor was not absolved himself, yet was the impudence of the Jews exposed; for though put to shame by the confession of the traitor, they insisted wickedly on the fulfilment of the bargain."

I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent Blood; Gr. ἀθῷον; for what more innocent than the immaculate Lamb? what purer than the purity of Jesus Christ?

But they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. Carry out what thou hast begun. Bear the punishment of the guilt thou ownest. We own no fault in ourselves. But He is guilty of death as a false Christ, and therefore we insist on it. Now, as they refused to take back the money, Judas cast it down in the Temple, and hung himself, despairing of the life of Jesus and of his own salvation. For assuredly he would not have thus acted had the Chief Priests taken the money back and set Jesus free. Up to a certain point, then, his repentance was right, but when it drove him to despair it was wrong. "See how unwilling they were," says S. Chrysostom, "to see the audacity of their conduct, which greatly aggravated their fault. For it was a clear proof that they were hurried away by audacious injustice, and would not desist from their evil designs, foolishly hiding themselves the while under a cloak of pretended ignorance."

And he cast down the pieces of silver in the Temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself. He first took them to the house of Caiaphas, or certainly to that of Pilate, where the Chief Priests were prosecuting their case; and afterwards, on their refusing to take them, threw them down in the Temple for the Priests to pick up. Some of the Chief Priests were probably there, but anyhow by throwing them down in the Temple he devoted them, as the price of the Most Holy Blood, to sacred and pious uses, if the Priests refused to take them back.

And he went and hanged himself. The Greek writers are mistaken in thinking that he did not die in this way, but was afterwards crushed to death (see on Acts i. 18). Judas then added to his former sin the further sin of despair. It was not a more

heinous sin, but one more fatal to himself, as thrusting him down to the very depths of hell. He might, on his repentance, have asked (and surely have obtained) pardon of Christ. But, like Cain, he despaired of forgiveness, and hung himself on the self-same day, just before the death of Christ. For he could not bear the heavy remorse of an accusing conscience. So S. Leo (*Serm. de Pass.* iii.; S. Augustine, *Quæst.* v., and *N. Test.* xciv.). David had prophesied respecting him, "Let a sudden destruction," &c. (Ps. xxxv. 8). Thus S. Leo, "O Judas, thou wast the most wicked and miserable of men, for repentance recalled thee not to the Lord, but despair drew thee on to thy ruin!" And again, "Why dost thou distrust the goodness of Him who repelled thee not from the communion of His Body and Blood, and refused thee not the kiss of peace when thou camest to apprehend Him? But thou wast past conversion (a spirit that goeth and returneth not); and with Satan at thy right hand, thou followedst the mad desire of thy own heart, and madest the sin which thou hadst sinned against the King of Saints to recoil on thine own head; that thus, as thy crime was too great for ordinary punishment, thou mightest pronounce, and also execute, the sentence on thyself.

Some say that Judas hung himself from a fig-tree, the forbidden tree of Hebrew tradition, and one of ill-omen. Hence Juvencus—

> "Even as his own wild punishment he sought,
> He hung with deadly noose on fig-tree's height."

Now it was avarice that drove Judas to this fate. "Hear ye this," says S. Chrysostom; "hear it, I say, ye covetous. Ponder it in your mind what he suffered. For he both lost his money, and committed a crime, and lost his soul. Such was the hard tyranny of covetousness. He enjoyed not his money, nor this present life, nor that which is to come. He lost them all at once, and having forfeited the goodwill even of those to whom he betrayed Him, he ended by hanging himself."

This confession of Judas, then (not in word, but in deed), was a

clear proof of Christ's innocence, and it assuredly ought to have kept the Jews from killing Him, if they had only had the smallest amount of shame. But their obstinate malice could not be restrained even by this strange portent.

Symbolically: Bede remarks (in Acts i.), "His punishment was a befitting one. The throat which had uttered the word of betrayal was throttled by the noose. He who had betrayed the Lord of men and angels hung in mid-air, abhorred by Heaven and earth, and the bowels which had conceived the crafty treachery burst asunder and fell out." S. Bernard, too (*Serm.* viii. *in Ps.* xc. [xci.]), says, "Judas, that colleague of the powers of the air, burst asunder in the air, as though neither the Heaven would receive nor the earth endure the betrayer of Him who was true God and man, and who came to work salvation in the midst of the earth" (Ps. lxxxiii. 12, Vulg.). Again, S. Augustine (*Lib. Hom.* l., *Hom.* xxvii.), "That which he wrought on his own body, this was also wrought on his soul. For as they who throttle themselves cause death, because the air passes not within them, so do they who despair of the forgiveness of God choke themselves by their very despair, that the Holy Spirit cannot reach them."

But the chief priests said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury. Corban is the same as offering. It here signifies the treasury into which the offerings were cast. In Arab. the house of offerings (see Joseph. *de B. J.*, i. 8).

Because it is the price of blood. What hypocrisy! They suffer not the price of Christ's blood to be paid into the treasury, whereas they had taken money out of it to procure His betrayal and death.

Ver. 7. *And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.* "They saw," says Origen, "that it was most fitting that, as the price of blood, it should be expended on the dead and their place of burial."

Strangers: for the inhabitants had their own burial-places. And God so ordered it that this field should be a standing witness both of Judas' repentance and of Christ's innocence. "The name,"

says S. Chrysostom, "proclaims their bloody deed with trumpet tongue, for had they cast it into the treasury, the circumstances would not have been made so clearly known to future generations."

Symbolically: It was thus signified that the price of Christ's Blood would benefit not Jews only, but strangers, the Gentiles, *i.e.*, who would hereafter believe on Him. So Hilary, "It belongs not to Israel, but is solely for the use of strangers."

Ver. 8. *Wherefore that field was called Aceldama.* A Chaldee word. The Ethiopic and Persian versions agree as to its meaning. Adrichomius (*Descr. Jerus. Num.* 216) describes the spot, and a peculiar property of the soil, that it destroys within a few hours the dead bodies which are placed in it, a property which it preserves even when taken elsewhere. Some of it the Empress Helena is said to have taken to Rome, where it forms the Campo Santo. "It still retains," says Cornelius, "the same property."

Tropologically: "The field bought for strangers with Christ's Blood is the Church (S. Chrysostom *in loc.*; S. Augustine, *Serm.* cxiv. *de Temp.*), and particularly the state of 'Religious,' who count themselves strangers upon earth, and citizens of Heaven, and of the household of God," &c. See also 1 Pet. ii. 11, where S. Chrysostom says, "Nothing is more blessed than this burial, over which all rejoice, both angels and men, and the Lord of angels. For if this life is not our life, but our life is hidden, we ought to live here as though we were dead." So S. Paul, Col. iii. 3. It was perhaps for this symbolical reason that this soil possessed the remarkable property mentioned above. See Comment. on Acts i. 18, 19.

Vers. 9, 10. *Then was fulfilled*, &c. See on Zech. xi. 12, 13.

The price of Him that was valued; Gr. τὴν τιμὴν τοῦ τετιμημένου. Christ, who is beyond all price (Theophyl.), Whom the Chief Priests bought of the sons of Israel, of Judas, *i.e.*, who was one of them. (So Titelman and Barradeus.) This is stated to add to the ignominy of the transaction, viz., that He was sold not by a Gentile, but by an Israelite, and one, too, who was called after the Patriarch's eldest son. The plural is here put for the singular. Theophylact explains it otherwise, that Christ was valued, or

bought, by the Chief Priests for the thirty pieces. Euthymius and others, that this price was put on Christ by those who were of the sons of Israel, *i.e.*, Israelites.

The Syriac version has the first person, agreeing with Zechariah, "*And I* took," &c. (Zech. xi. 13).

As the Lord appointed me. These words can be taken: 1. As the words of Christ speaking by the Prophet, and signifying that God would suffer nothing which concerned Him to come to nought, so that even the field purchased with the price of His Blood should not be unoccupied, but serve for the burial of strangers. 2. As the words of the Prophet, "God ordained that I should by my own act, as well as by my word, prophesy and foretell this, and even the goodly price," as he says in irony, "at which Christ should be valued."

Ver. 11. But *Jesus stood before the Governor.* S. Matthew having recorded the fate of Judas, now returns to the main narrative, omitting, however, several incidents, which are to be found in John xviii. 19. It appears from S. Luke xxiii. 2 that the Jews brought three definite charges against Jesus—that He was perverting the people, that He forbade them to give tribute to Cæsar, and maintained that He was Himself a King. Pilate, it would seem, put aside the first two as false and malicious, and dwelt only on the third. He simply asked Him whether he were the King of the Jews, as being of royal descent, or as the promised Messiah, or on any other ground. Jesus asked him in reply, "Sayest thou this of thyself?" (John xviii. 34). He knew very well the nature of the charge. But he wished to mortify Pilate by suggesting that this must be a mere calumny of His enemies, since he who was bound to maintain the authority of the Emperor, and had hitherto been most vigilant in the matter, had heard nothing of the kind. Pilate was irritated, and replied, "Am I a Jew, so as to know or care anything about Thy family or descent, or aught else relating to Thyself, who art a Jew born? Thine own nation and the Chief Priests have delivered Thee to me. What hast Thou done?" This was the very answer which Jesus wished to obtain from him,

and He clearly and directly replied, "My kingdom is not of this world," &c. (John xviii. 36).

He explained that it was not to be supported by human agency or force of arms (so that Tiberius need not fear that he would lose the kingdom of Judæa, but that it was heavenly, spiritual, and transcendental,—a kingdom wherein He would reign in the hearts of the faithful by grace, and bring them to His kingdom in Heaven. S. Matthew, omitting all other points for the sake of brevity, assigns this last as the true cause of Christ's death, merely saying, *The Governor asked Him, saying, Art Thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.* He meant by this, I am Messiah the King. He might have said truly, I am not the King of the Jews, I am no temporal King, nor do I aim at being one. But the Jews understood the title King of the Jews to mean the Messiah, and as He could not deny His Messiahship, He confessed that He was the King of the Jews, the promised Messiah.

It will be asked, What is the nature of Christ's kingdom, and its manifold relations? Christ, then, as man had a twofold kingdom even when on earth. 1. A spiritual kingdom, *i.e.*, His Church, which He instituted as a commonwealth of the faithful, and founded with certain laws, ordinances, and sacraments. He rules it by S. Peter and his successors, as His Vicars, and makes it spread through all nations. This kingdom David and the Prophets foretold would be given to Christ (S. Aug. *Tract.* cxvii. *in John*). 2. As S. Thomas (*Lib.* i. *de Reg. Princ. cap.* xii.) and others rightly teach, in opposition to Abulensis [Tostatus] *on Matth.* xxi., it is physical and of this world. For Christ, from His very conception, had properly and directly dominion over the world, so as to depose and appoint kings, though as a fact He did not exercise such power on earth.

Here observe there is a threefold dominion and sovereignty. 1. The highest of all, which God exercises over all creatures, being peculiarly His own. 2. The human authority, which earthly kings and princes exercise. 3. Between these two is the

authority of Christ as man, which far surpasses all kingly power: 1. In its origin, for God gave it to Christ. 2. In its stability, for it cannot be overcome, and abides for ever. 3. In its object, as extending to all created beings, even to angels (see Rev. xix. 16, i. 5; Matt. xxviii. 18). This was His, as man, by reason of His hypostatic union with the Word or Son of God. And accordingly this sovereignty is peculiar to Christ as man, nor has He communicated it to any one, not even to S. Peter and the Pontiffs his successors.

It will be asked whether Christ as man had a human claim to the Jewish kingdom? And I say, He had; for He was the son, the successor, and heir of David. He did not, it is true, enter on His kingdom, nor was He inaugurated as King. But yet He furnished an instance of what He was by His triumph and entry into Jerusalem. He did not actually enter on His kingdom, both because the family of David had long ceased to reign, and the kingdom had by common consent passed into other hands.

Ver. 12. *And when He was accused of the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing.* 1. Because all the charges against Him were false, and deserved not an answer. So S. Augustine (*Serm.* cxviii. *de Temp.*), "The Lord by keeping silence does not confirm the charge, but makes light of it. For far better is that cause which is undefended, and yet is successful; that justice is most complete which is not supported by words but is based on truth. The Saviour, who is Wisdom itself, knew how to conquer by silence, to overcome by not replying." 2. Jesus knew that any answer would be useless, and would only make the Jews more eager for His death. 3. For fear He should excuse His crime, and obtain His deliverance, and so the benefit of His death be deferred, says S. Jerome, "for He wished to be condemned through keeping silence, and to die for the salvation of men." So S. Ambrose (*in Luc.* xxii.), "He rightly keeps silence who needs not a defence. Let those who fear defeat be eager for defence. But why should He fear who wished not to escape?

He sacrificed His own single life for the salvation of all." 4. To atone thus for all faults of the tongue, and teach men to keep their tongues from all evil words.

Ver. 13. *Then saith Pilate unto Him, Hearest Thou not how many things they witness against Thee?* For Pilate had brought Him forth from his house to hear the accusations of the Chief Priests, as they would not enter the hall, lest they should be defiled (see John xviii. 28).

Ver. 14. *And He answered him to never a word, insomuch that the Governor marvelled greatly.* Pilate marvelled at His silence in this His extreme peril, when assailed by vehement accusations and clamour. He marvelled at His gentleness, calmness, and contempt of death, and, recognising more fully His innocence and holiness, he laboured the more earnestly to deliver Him. [Pseudo-]Athan. *de Cruce*, says, "It was a marvellous thing that our Saviour was so effectual in His persuasion by keeping silence, and not by answering, that the judge acknowledged of His own accord that it was a mere conspiracy against Him." And thus do the Saints often in like manner refute the false charges against them.

Ver. 15. *Now at that feast the Governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner whom they would.* There comes in before this verse Luke xxii. 5, which records Jesus being sent to Herod, Pilate and Herod being reconciled, and His coming back again in a gorgeous or white robe. This was the dress of candidates for an office, of royal persons, and also of buffoons: Herod mocking in this way at the supposed ambition of Jesus in affecting to be a king.

Symbolically: The white garment represented the innocence, victory, immortality, glory, &c., of Christ, which He purchased by His sufferings and insults. "Let thy garments be always white" (Eccles. ix. 8). And so S. Ambrose, "He is arrayed in white, in evidence of His immaculate Passion," and that as the spotless Lamb of God He took on Himself the sins of the world. Pilate then saw what was Herod's object in sending Him back, and

said to the Chief Priests (Luke xxiii. 14), "Ye have brought this man unto me as one that perverteth the people . . . I will therefore correct Him, and let Him go," that is, chastise and punish Him, not for His offence (for He is guiltless), but to satiate your rage against Him. Shortly afterwards he proposed another plan for His deliverance, viz., by releasing some one to them at the Passover, having little doubt, if the choice were given them, whom they would prefer. This Paschal custom was introduced in memory of the deliverance from Egypt. But did Pilate really wish to release Christ? Rupertus thinks it was mere pretence, for that he had secretly agreed with the Jews to put Him to death, having given Him up to their will. But S. Augustine and the rest suppose, more correctly, that Pilate was sincere (see Luke xxiii. 20 and Acts iii. 13). This is clear also from the many occasions on which he laboured to save Him (see John xviii. 31, 38; Luke xxiii. 7, 15).

Ver. 16. *For he had then a notable prisoner called Barabbas.* Notorious, that is, for his crimes. S. John terms him "a robber." S. Mark and S. Luke, "one who had committed murder in the insurrection." "Notorious," says S. Chrysostom, "for his bold bearing, and stained with many murders." Now to be thus compared with Barabbas, and counted his inferior, was a great dishonour and pain to Christ. And His patience under this wrong is a fitting pattern to all Christians when slights are put on them.

Barabbas. In Hebrew "the Son of a father, of Adam, *i.e.*, the first father of all sinners." And Christ was made lower than Adam when He took on Himself to atone for his disobedience and sin.

S. Jerome explains it less correctly as Barabbas, the son of a Master.

Ver. 17. *When therefore they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus?* "That if the Chief Priests wished through envy to destroy Him, the people, who had experienced His manifold benefits, might ask for His life," saith Druthmar; or if, as S.

Chrysostom says, "they did not wish to pronounce Him innocent, they might release Him, though guilty, in consideration of the feast."

Which is called Christ. Pilate was in earnest, wishing the Jews to demand His deliverance, as being their promised Messiah.

Ver. 18. *For he knew that for envy they had delivered Him.* From their general bearing and demeanour, and also from his own knowledge of His holiness, and teaching, and boldness in reproof.

Ver. 19. *When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day (this night) in a dream because of Him.* This act of Pilate's wife is a fresh effort to deliver Him. Her dreams were full of threats against her husband and herself, if he condemned Christ. Some suppose them to have been the work of an evil angel, wishing to prevent His death, lest sinners should be saved by Him. (*See the Sermon on the Passion, apud S. Cyprian; S. Bernard, Serm.* i. *in Pasch.; Lyranus, Dionys. Carthus., Rabanus, and others.*)

Origen, S. Hilary, S. Chrysostom, S. Augustine, S. Ambrose, and others more correctly suppose that it was the work of a holy angel, and that the dream was sent to Pilate's wife (not himself): 1. That both sexes (as well as all the elements afterwards) might witness to Christ's innocence. 2. That she might make it publicly known by telling her husband. 3. Because she appears to have been a noble, tender-hearted, and holy woman. Origen, S. Chrysostom, and others consider that she was in this way brought to a true belief in Christ. S. Augustine (*in Aurea Catena*) says, "that both husband and wife bore witness to Christ;" "thus presaging," says S. Jerome, "the faith of the Gentiles." And S. Augustine (*Serm.* cxxi. *de Temp.*), "In the beginning of the world the wife leads the husband to death, in the Passion she leads him on to salvation." Joanna, too, the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward, was one of those who ministered to Christ of their substance.

The Greek Menology terms her Procula; some suggest that she was Claudia (2 Tim. iv. 21), as she probably remained at Rome when he was banished. S. Augustine implies that she converted him (*Serm.* iii. *de Epiph.*). "The Magi came from the East, Pilate from the West. They accordingly witnessed to Him at His birth, he at His death, that they might sit down with Abraham, &c., not as their descendants in the flesh, but as grafted into them by faith." Tertullian, too (*Apol. cap.* xxi.), speaks of Pilate as a Christian.

But all this is at variance with what others say of his banishment and his self-inflicted death.

When Pilate then is termed a Christian, it must mean a favourer and protector of His innocence. He yielded, it is true, at last to the threats of the Jews; and so it was that by the just retribution of God he was himself the victim of the like false charge from the Jews, who caused him to be exiled.

Ver. 20. *But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.* The Chief Priests used the time which Pilate had given the people for consideration in persuading them to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus, as the most dangerous person of the two.

Notice here the effect of anger and malice, and the false and perverted judgments of the world. Jesus, the author of salvation, was to suffer ; but Barabbas, the murderer, was to be spared. But God undoubtedly so ordered it that the Innocent should suffer, and thus atone for the guilt of sinners, whom Barabbas represented.

Ver. 21. *But the Governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.* That is, after he had given them time for consideration, he again asked them, and demanded an answer.

Bede (on Mark xv. 9) strikingly remarks, "The demand they made still cleaves to them. For as they preferred a robber to Jesus, a murderer to the Saviour, the destroyer to the Giver of Life, they deservedly lost both their property and their life. They

were reduced, indeed, so low by violence and sedition as to forfeit the independence of their country, which they had preferred to Christ, and cared not to recover the liberty of body and soul which they had bartered away."

Allegorically: "Their choice of Barabbas foreshadowed," says S. Jerome, "that robber Antichrist, whom they would hereafter choose in the end of the world." And S. Ambrose (in Luke xxii.), "Barabbas means the son of a father. They, therefore, to whom it was said, 'Ye are of your father the devil,' are set forth as those who would afterwards prefer Antichrist, the son of his father, to the true Son of God."

Ver. 22. *Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let Him be crucified.* "Pilate," says S. Chrysostom, "places the matter in their hands, that all might be ascribed to their clemency, thus to charm and soften them down by his obsequiousness. But all in vain. For the Chief Priests had already resolved to insist on His crucifixion, as being not only the most cruel, but also the most ignominious of deaths, the death of robbers and other evil-doers. For they hoped in this way to destroy all His former credit and reputation." So says S. Chrysostom, "Fearing that His memory should be kept in mind, they chose this disgraceful death, not knowing that the truth when hindered is more fully manifested."

Ver. 23. *The Governor said, Why, what evil hath He done? But they cried out the more* (vehemently, περισσῶς), *saying, Let Him be crucified.* The more Pilate insisted on His innocence, the more did they clamour for His crucifixion, "not laying aside their anger, hatred, and blasphemy, but even adding to them" (Origen). They thus fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah (xii. 11), "Mine heritage (the synagogue) is made unto Me as a lion in the forest; they have uttered their voice against Me;" and David's (Ps. xxii. 13), "They opened their mouth upon Me, as a ravening and a roaring lion;" and Isaiah's (v. 7), "I looked for judgment, and behold iniquity; and for righteousness, and behold a cry." (So S. Jerome.)

Ver. 24. *When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude.* ἀπενίψατο, washed away. "He adopted," says Origen, "the Jewish custom, and wished to calm them down, not by words only, but also by deed." He washed his hands, but not his conscience. But this took place after the scourging and crowning of Christ. (See S. John.) Here is a transposition.

Saying, I am innocent. I condemn Him against my will. Ye are the offenders. Ye are guilty of His death. How foolish was this timid, heartless, and slothful Governor in speaking thus! Why opposest thou not the injustice of the people? "Seek not to be judge, if thou canst not by thy power break through iniquities" (Eccles. vii. 6). At another time thou didst let loose the soldiers on the riotous mob (Joseph. *B. J.*, xviii. 4). Why dost thou not act thus firmly now? If thou canst not, through the fury of the Jews, set Him free now, at least delay thy sentence till their fury subsides.

S. Chrysostom (in Luke xxiii. 22) says, "Though he washed his hands, and said he was innocent, yet his permitting it was a sign of weakness and cowardice. For he ought never to have yielded Him up, but rather rescued Him, as the Centurion S. Paul" (Acts xxi. 33). S. Augustine more forcibly (*Serm.* cxviii. *de Temp.*), "Though Pilate washed his hands, yet he washed not away his guilt; for though he thought he was washing away the Blood of that Just One from his limbs, yet was his mind still stained with it. It was he, in fact, who slew Christ by giving Him up to be slain. For a firm and good judge should not condemn innocent blood, either through fear or the risk of being unpopular." And S. Leo (*Serm.* viii. *de Pass.*) said, "Pilate did not escape guilt, for by siding with the turbulent mob he became partner of others' guilt."

Ver. 25. *Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.* Let the guilt thou fearest be transferred from thee to us. If there be any guilt, may we and our posterity atone for it. But we do not acknowledge any guilt, and con-

sequently, as not fearing any punishment, we boldly call it down on ourselves. And thus have they subjected not only themselves, but their very latest descendants, to God's displeasure. They feel it indeed even to this day in its full force, in being scattered over all the world, without a city, or temple, or sacrifice, or priest, or prince, and being a subject race in all countries. It was, too, in punishment for Christ's crucifixion that Titus ordered five hundred Jews to be crucified every day at the siege of Jerusalem, as they crowded out of the city in search of food, "so that at last there was no room for the crosses, and no crosses for the bodies" (Joseph. *B. J.*, vi. 12). "This curse," says Jerome, "rests on them even to this day, and the blood of the Lord is not taken away from them," as Daniel foretold (ix. 27).

Strange stories are told by Cardinal Hugo of special diseases which attacked the Jews, in periodical loss of blood, etc., though Salmeron and Abulensis [Tostatus] attribute them to natural causes.

Ver. 26. *Then* (when the Jews had taken on themselves the guilt of Christ's death) *released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.* S. Matthew, as usual, slightly touches on the scourging; S. Mark and S. Luke speak of it more fully, and reckon this as Pilate's fifth appeal to the compassion of the Jews, to induce them to ask for His life.

Observe—1. Scourging among the Romans was the punishment of slaves. (See Ff. *de Pœnis* l. "Servorum," and the *Lex Sempronia.*) S. Paul, as a Roman citizen, protested against being scourged (Acts xvi.). Martyrs were scourged by way of disgrace, of which many instances are given. 2. Free persons also were scourged after they had been condemned to death, as though they had thus become slaves. Hence the fasces had rods for scourging, and the axe for executions. 3. This scourging of Christ was before His condemnation, and He was thus spared the usual scourging afterwards. For one scourging only is spoken of in the Gospels. 4. S. Jerome (*Epitaph. Paulæ*), S. Paulinus (*Ep.*

xxxiv.), Prudentius, and others (see Gretser, *de Cruce, Lib.* i.), say that Christ was fastened to a column to be scourged, and that this column was afterwards placed in the Church of S. Praxedes at Rome. But the column which is there is very small, and is consequently supposed to be only a part of the large column mentioned by S. Jerome. Bosius maintains that it is the whole of the column, and that S. Jerome is speaking of the column at which Christ was first scourged. S. Chrysostom considered that there were two scourgings. But most probably it was only part of the column S. Jerome mentions, or one of those to which He was bound in the house of Caiaphas, and the larger one that at which He was scourged in the house of the Governor.

But in what respects was this scourging so cruel and savage?

1. Christ being bound to this short column, and standing with the whole height of His body above it, was quite at the mercy of those who scourged Him. Again, the mere exposure of His most pure and virgin body to these filthy mockers was a sore affliction to Him. But He was twice, or as some say thrice, stripped; first, at His scourging; secondly, when crowned with thorns. This stripping was attended with the greatest pain; for as His garment stuck to His wounds, they were forcibly reopened as it was torn away.

The forty martyrs were animated by this example, when they boldly stripped themselves and plunged into the freezing water. (See S. Basil's *Homily.*)

2. Pilate wished to excite the compassion of the Jews by saying, "Behold the man." Behold Him who has no longer the appearance of a man, but of some slaughtered animal, so besmeared was He with blood and marred in His form.

3. The soldiers had of their own wanton cruelty crowned Him with thorns, and perhaps had been bribed by the Jews to scourge Him with greater severity. The blessed Magdalene of Pazzi, a nun of Florence, saw in a trance Christ scourged by thirty pairs of men, one after the other. Some say that He had 5000 blows inflicted on Him. S. Bridget is said to have had the exact

number (5475) revealed to her. From such a scourging as this He would have died naturally again and again, had not His Godhead specially sustained Him.

4. His bodily frame was most delicate, and acutely sensitive to pain, as fashioned by the Holy Spirit, and He consequently felt the scourging more severely than we should have done.

5. The prophets, and also Christ Himself, foretold that this scourging would be most heavy and severe. See S. Matt. xx. 19, and Job xvi. 14, "He brake Me with wound upon wound." They added, *i.e.*, blows to blows, wounds to wounds, so that the whole body seemed one continuous wound. Conf. Ps. lxxiii. 14, "All the day long have I been scourged;" and Ps. cxxix. 3, "The sinners wrought upon my back as smiths on an anvil;" but the Hebrew [and A.V.], "The ploughers ploughed upon My back," they made furrows on My back with scourges. So, too, Aquila and Theodot. This is also indicated by Jacob's words (Gen. xlix. 11), "He shall wash His garments in wine, and His clothes in the blood of the grape," meaning by His garments and clothes His flesh, and by the wine His blood.

6. Christ was scourged, as slaves were, with small ropes or thongs. Some suppose that He was scourged: 1. with rods of thorns; 2. with cords and iron goads; 3. with chains made of hooks. Antonius Gallus (*de Cruciatu Martyrum*) describes the various kinds of scourges which were used.

S. Bridget says that the Blessed Virgin was present at the scourging, and that her pain and sorrow added wondrously to His. She describes also the mode and the barbarity of His scourging (S. Bridget, Rev. i. 10).

Now Christ wished in this way to atone for our evil lusts and manifold sins. And in doing this (says S. Thom., par. iii. sec. 46, art. 6, ad. 6), He considered not only the great virtue of His sufferings from the union of His Godhead with His human nature, but also how much it would avail even in that nature for making satisfaction. Moreover, He wished to obtain power and strength for all martyrs, in order to their enduring every kind of

scourging. Conf. Isa. liii. 5. In all this Christ manifested most marvellous patience. He uttered not a groan, gave no indication of pain, stood firm as a rock. Nay, He lorded it over all sufferings, as being above them. Such a temper obtained heathen admiration. S. Cyprian (*de Bono Patient.* cap. iii.), among the proofs of His Divine Majesty, speaks of "His continuous endurance, in which He exhibited the patience of His Father." Tertullian, too (*de Pat.* cap. iii.), "He who had proposed to hide Himself in man's form, exhibited nought of man's impatience. And in this ye Pharisees ought to have specially recognised the Lord." S. Ambrose, too (*Serm.* xvii. in Ps. cxviii.) [cxix.], speaks of His "triumphant silence under calumny." The Jews ought to have gathered from this the conclusion of the Centurion, "Truly this was the Son of God." All this was caused by His love of God and man. Love triumphed over pain, and made His pains as nothing. And hence He was willing to suffer in all points, and in all His members and senses. S. Thomas (par iii. qu. 46, art. 5) thus writes, "He suffered in the desertion of His friends, in His credit, in His honour, in the spoiling of His goods, in His soul by sorrow, in His body by His wounds. He suffered too in all parts of His body, and in every sense." But His sufferings of mind were by far the greatest. For He was specially wounded by the sins of each single man. He grieved also for the multitude of the lost. He had sympathy for the martyrs and others who had to endure sufferings. But His boundless love urged Him on to endure all this. For love is the measure of pain, and we cannot live in love without pain. Hence it is said of Christ, "Sculptured, thou seest His love in every limb."

Delivered Him to be crucified. After His scourging and crowning with thorns, which comes next, as I have said (ver. 24). This is therefore a transposition. S. Matthew here relates many things briefly, which S. John (xix. 1–16) records more fully. Pilate then delivered Jesus to the Jews, after he had condemned Him. Adrichomius (p. 163) gives Pilate's supposed sentence, which states that the charges had been proved; making these charges, which

he knew to be false, a cloak for his own sloth and injustice; the Chief Priests gave no proof, but merely made false and calumnious assertions.

Pilate in his rescript to Tiberius says that he had condemned Jesus through the importunity of the Jews, though He was in other respects a holy and divine man. Orosius (*Hist.* vii. 4) speaks of his testimony to Christ's virtues; and Eusebius (in *Chron. ad an.* 38), that he spoke in favour of Christians to Tiberius, who proposed that Christianity should be recognised among other religions. (Conf. Tert. *Apol.* cap. 5 and 21; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 2, and others.)

Christ, then, was on Pilate's own testimony most unjustly condemned by him; for envy accused, hatred witnessed against Him; His crime was innocence; fear perverted judgment, ambition condemned, cruelty punished.

Ver. 27. *Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall.* "Then" refers not to the preceding words, "delivered Him to be crucified," but to the scourging. The soldiers scourged Jesus, and crowned Him at the same time with thorns.

Gathered unto Him the whole band, to adorn Him, by way of insult, with the royal insignia, as pretending to be King of the Jews. "For soldiers are a cruel race," says S. Chrysostom, "and take pleasure in insulting." It was the Prætorian Band, quartered in the castle of Antonia.

Ver. 28. *And they stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet robe.* "Making jest of Him," says Origen. This stripping can be referred either to His scourging or to His crowning with thorns. It is consequently uncertain whether He resumed His garments after He had been scourged, and was stripped of them again and arrayed in the scarlet robe, or whether the scarlet robe was put upon His naked body immediately after His scourging.

Symbolically: "In the scarlet robe," says S. Jerome, "the Lord bears the blood-stained works of the Gentiles." "He bare," says S. Athanasius, "in the scarlet garment a resemblance to the blood

wherewith the earth had been polluted." And Origen, "The Lord, by taking on Him the scarlet robe, took on Himself the blood, that is, the sins of the world, which are bloody and red as scarlet; for the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Anagogically: S. Gregory, "For what is purple save blood, and the endurance of sufferings, manifested for love of the Kingdom?" And again, "The Lord made His empurpled ascent in a triumphal litter, because we attain to the Kingdom that is within through tribulation and blood."

S. Mark and S. John call this a purple garment (not scarlet). S. Ambrose says they were two different garments, and that He was arrayed in both. Gretser (*Lib.* 1, *de Cruce*) gives authorities for there being only one garment, called indifferently purple or scarlet. Perhaps the garment had been twice dyed,—with the murex and the coccus; and garments thus dyed are of a more lasting colour. Now this was a kingly dress, and thus did they make Christ a King in mockery. This robe or chlamys was shorter and tighter than the pallium, and soldiers wore it over their armour. The one then used seems to have been the worn out dress of some Roman soldier, but being purple, was of the imperial colour.

Symbolically: S. Cyril (in John xii. 15) says, "By the purple garment is signified the sovereignty over the whole world, which Christ was about to receive." So, too, Origen, S. Augustine, and others. But this He obtained for Himself by fighting and shedding His blood. African and other soldiers anciently wore red garments. See, too, Nahum ii. 3.

Ver. 29. *And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head.* This was done both for insult and for torture. It was done, too, by Jewish insolence, and not by Pilate's order, though he permitted it (see above on ver. 25). These thorns were those of the sea-rush or of the blackthorn; perhaps the two sorts were twisted together. S. Helena brought two of them to Rome and placed them in the Church of Santa Croce. S. Bridget (Rev. i. 10) says that the crown was placed a second time on His head when on the Cross; that it came down to the middle of His

forehead, and that such streams of blood flowed from the wounds as to run down to His eyes and ears, and even to His beard; that He seemed one mass of blood. He could not indeed see His Mother till the blood had been squeezed out of His eyelids. All pictures represent Him as crucified with the crown of thorns, as Origen and Tertullian distinctly assert He was. The torture of all this was very great, for the thorns were very sharp, and also driven into the head and brain. The literal object of this was to insult and torture Christ for pretending to be King of the Jews.

But Origen gives its mystical meaning, "In this crown the Lord took on Himself the thorns of our sins woven together on His head." For S. Hilary says "the sting of sin is in the thorns of which Christ's victorious crown is woven." "Let me ask you," says Tertullian (*de Con. Milit. ad fin.*), "what crown did Jesus wear for both sexes? Of thorns, methinks, and briars, as a figure of those sins which the earth of our flesh hath brought forth unto us, but which the virtue of the Cross hath taken away, crushing (as it did) all the stings of death by the sufferings of the head of the Lord. For besides the figurative meaning there is assuredly the contumely, disgrace, and dishonour, and, blended with them, the cruelty, which thus both defiled and wounded His brows."

Tropologically: The thorns teach us to wound and subdue the flesh with fastings, haircloths, and disciplines. "For it is not fitting that the members of a thorn-crowned Head should be delicate," says S. Bernard. And Tertullian (*ut supra*) teaches us that Christians, out of reverence for Christ's crown of thorns, did not wear crowns of flowers, as the heathen did. Christ offered S. Catharine of Sienna two crowns,—one of jewels, the other of thorns,—on condition that if she chose one of them in this life she should wear the other in the next. She seized at once the crown of thorns from His hand, and fixed it so firmly on her head that she felt pain for many days, and therefore she received a jewelled crown in heaven. S. Agapitus, a youth of only fifteen, when live coals were put on his head, said exultingly, "It is a small matter that that head which is to be crowned in heaven should be burned

on earth," &c. Think, then, when enduring any kind of pain, that Christ is giving thee one of the thorns from His crown.

Anagogically: S. Ambrose (in Luke xxii.) says, "This crown placed on His head shows that triumphant glory should be won for God from sinners of this world, as if from the thorns of this life."

Symbolically: S. Bernard (*de Pass. Dom. cap.* xix.) says, "Though they crown Him in derision, yet in their ignorant mockery they confess Him to be a crowned King. Therefore is He proved to be a King by those who knew Him not." And S. Augustine (*Tract.* cxvi. *in John*) says, "Thus did the Kingdom which was not of this world overcome the proud world, not with fierce fighting, but lowly suffering. [Jesus comes forth] wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, not resplendent in power, but overwhelmed with reproach." "Purple," again says Elias Cratensis, "exhorts good rulers to be ready to shed their blood for the benefit of their subjects." Hence the purple is given to Cardinals to remind them that they should shed their blood for the Church; and S. Germanus, Patriarch of C. P. (*Orat. in Sepult. Christi*), says that the purple robe and the crown of thorns which was placed on Him before His crucifixion assured the victory to Him who said, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

[Pseudo-]Athanasius (*de Cruce*) strikingly says, "When the Lord was arrayed in the purple, there was raised invisibly a trophy over the devil. It was a strange and incredible marvel, and doubtless a token of great victory, that they placed the ornaments of triumph on Him whom they had struck in mockery and derision. He went forth to death in this array, to show that the victory was won expressly for our salvation." He points out also that Christ was crowned with thorns to restore to us the tree of life, and to heal our worldly cares and anxieties by taking them on Himself.

Godfrey of Bouillon refused on this ground to be crowned king of Jerusalem, since it ill became a Christian king to wear a crown of gold in the very city in which Christ had worn one of thorns.

The tonsure of priests and monks represents this "crown of

thorns," and is a token of their humility and contempt of the world (Bede, *Hist. Angl.* v. 22, and S. Germanus, C. P., in *Theor. rer. Eccles.*).

Anagogically: Tertullian (*de Cor. Mil. cap.* xiv.) says, Put on Christ's crown of thorns, "that so thou mayest rival that crown which afterwards was His, for it was after the gall that He tasted the honey; nor was He saluted as King by the heavenly hosts till He had been written up upon the Cross as the King of the Jews. Being made by the Father a little lower than the angels, He was afterwards crowned with glory and honour." "Christ," says S. Jerome, "was crowned with thorns that He might win for us a royal diadem."

And a reed in His right hand. This, which represented His sceptre as King of the Jews, was a fragile, worthless, mean, and ridiculous thing. It is described as a smooth cane with a woolly top, &c.

Symbolically: S. Jerome and [Pseudo-]Athanasius say, as the reed drives away and kills serpents, so does Christ venomous lusts. Hear S. Jerome: "As Caiaphas knew not what He said (John xi. 50 *seq.*), so they too, though acting with another intent, yet furnished us believers with mysteries (*sacramenta*). In the scarlet robe He bears on Him the blood-stained deeds of the Gentiles; in the crown of thorns He does away with the ancient curse; with the reed He destroys poisonous animals, or (in another sense) He holds in His hand the reed to record the sacrilege of the Jews." S. Ambrose too (in Luke xxii.) says, "The reed is held in Christ's hand that human weakness should no more be moved as a reed with the wind, but be strengthened and made firm by the works of Christ; or, as S. Mark says, it strikes His head that our nature, strengthened by contact with His Godhead, should waver no more." This reed and other relics of the Passion are said to have been carefully preserved (Bede, *de Con. Sanctis, cap.* xx.; and Greg. Turon. *de Gloria Martyrum, cap.* vii.).

And they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! Notice here all that was done in jest.

Bringing together the whole band as an attendant army. His throne a stone or seat, raised up like a tribunal. His crown was of thorns, His robe a scarlet chlamys, His sceptre a reed; in the place of the people's applause were the mockings of the soldiers; there were the spittings, the blows, and the stripes. All these did Christ bear with divine humility and patience, and thus deserved "that at the name," &c. (Phil. ii. 10).

Tropologically: Christ here wished to set forth the vain estate and the sufferings of all kings and rulers; to turn all insults into weapons of victory, and specially to overcome the pride of Satan by His humility; to teach that worldly kingdoms consisted in pomp and display, His in contempt of honour, pleasures, and self. See Theophylact, Jansenius [Gaudno], Pseudo-Athanasius, and Tertullian, *ut supra.*

It is to be noted that Agrippa was shortly afterwards insulted at Alexandria exactly in the same way. See Philo, *in Flaccum.*

Ver. 30. *And they spit upon Him, and took the reed, and smote Him on the head.* As having foolishly aspired to be King of Judea; to drive also the crown of thorns more firmly into His head. These grossest insults and most cruel pains were devised by devils rather than men, says Origen. "Not one member only, but the whole body suffered these atrocious injuries," &c., says S. Chrysostom. Here comes in John xix. 1–16. Pilate's presenting Christ to the people to excite their compassion; their vehement demand that He should be crucified, as making Himself the Son of God. Pilate on hearing this was startled, and asked Him who He was, as if He might have been the son of some heathen god who might avenge His death. When He gave no answer, Pilate added that He had power to put Him to death, which brought out our Lord's reply, that he had no power over Him, "unless it were given him from above." For Pilate, notwithstanding his paramount authority over other Jews, had but a permissive authority over Christ, who, as the Son of God, was not subject to any human power. Pilate then, in judging and condemning Christ, sinned in a threefold way: by usurping an authority over Him which He really had not;

by yielding to the clamour of the Jews; and by condemning an innocent man.

Ver. 31. *And after that they had mocked Him they took the robe off from Him.* "After they had fully satiated themselves with their insults," Victor of Antioch on Mark xv. "But they left on Him (says Origen) the crown of thorns." "He is stripped," says [Pseudo-]Athanasius, "by His executioners of the coats of skins which we had put on in Adam, that for these we might put on Christ."

And put His own raiment on Him. That they who crucified Him might claim it as their own, and also that He might thus be recognised and be insulted the more.

And led Him away to crucify Him. Preceded, it would seem, by a trumpeter, who summoned the people to the execution (Gretser, *de Cruce*, I. 16). Now Christ was worn out by having been constantly on foot both through the night and on the morning. (Adrichomius calculated the exact distances.) Accordingly,

Ver. 32. *As they came out* (either from Pilate's house, so S. Jerome—or from the city, so Fr. Lucas and others) *they found a man of Cyrene.* Either Cyrene in Libya, or in Syria, or in Cyprus, from whence he came to Judea. He was a Gentile (S. Hilary, S. Ambrose, S. Leo, Bede, and others), though Maldonatus and Fr. Lucas consider he was a Jew, having probably become a proselyte on coming to Judea. This signified that the Gentiles would believe in Christ, and that the Jews would be eventually converted by their means.

Simon by name. Pererius mentions the tradition that he and his afterwards became Christians. S. Mark adds that he was the father of Alexander and Rufus, who, it seems, were well known in his day as Christians. (Rufus was first Bishop of Thebes and afterwards of Tortosa. He is mentioned by Polycarp (*ad Philipp. chap.* ix.). Alexander was martyred at Carthagena, March 11.) Some suppose Simon or Niger (Acts xiii. 1) to be the same person.

Him they compelled. See above, chap. v. 41. It was a great

injury and insult which they put on Simon as a stranger. But he bore it all with patience, and therefore was enlightened by Christ, and became, as I have said, a Christian. He was a sharer in His Cross first, and afterwards a partaker of His joy.

Symbolically: S. Gregory (*Mor.* viii. 44), "To bear the Cross by compulsion is to submit to affliction and abstinence from some other motive than the proper one. Does not He bear the Cross by compulsion who subdues his flesh, as if at Christ's command, but yet loves not the spiritual country? So, too, Simon bears the Cross, and yet dies not under it, since every hypocrite chastens, indeed, his body by abstinence, and yet through love of glory lives to the world."

To bear the cross. Christ at first bare His own Cross, fifteen feet high (as is said) and eight feet across. And that, too, when covered all over with blood, wearied, and broken down. He supported one end on His shoulder, and dragged the other along the ground. He thus constantly struck against the stones, and so reopened His wounds, causing continual pain. S. John says, "He went forth bearing His cross" (xix. 17), as was customary with criminals (see Lipsius and Gretser). But when the soldiers saw that He was sinking under it, they placed it on Simon, to keep Jesus alive, and reserve Him for greater sufferings. They wished, too, to get quickly over their work, and then go home to their meal, for it was now mid-day.

It does not appear that Simon carried the Cross with Jesus in front and himself behind, but that he bare it alone. (See Luke xxiii. 26.) The Fathers here discern various mysteries.

[Pseudo-]Athanasius, "The Lord both bear His own Cross, and again Simon bare it also. He bare it first as a trophy against the devil, and of His own will, for He went without any compulsion to His death. But afterwards the man Simon bare it, to make it known to all that the Lord died not as His own due, but as that of all mankind." S. Ambrose (in Luke xxiii.), "He first lifted up the trophy of His Cross, and afterwards handed it to His martyrs to do the like. For it was meet that He should first lift

up His own trophy as victor, and that afterwards Christ should bear it in man, and man in Christ."

Origen, "It was not only meet that He should take up His Cross Himself, but that we also should bear it, and thus perform a compulsory but salutary service" (see Matt. x. 38). It was the heresy of Basilides and Marcion, that Christ, having dazzled the eyes of the Jews, disappeared from their sight and left Simon behind, who was crucified in His stead. This, too, is the error of the Mahometans.

Here comes in, from Luke xxiii. 31, our Lord's meeting the women on His way to Calvary, and telling them not to weep for Him; "for if they do these things in the green tree," &c. For He Himself was a green tree, ever flourishing with the branches and fruits of grace, and thus unsuited for the fire of God's vengeance. But the Jews were a dry tree, void of grace and barren of good works, and thus most fitted for the fire of His wrath. One of these women, Berenice or Veronica, offered Christ a napkin to wipe His face, and received it back from Him with His features marked on it (see Marianus, Scotus, Baronius, and others). The napkin is said to be preserved at Rome.

Ver. 33. *And they came unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull.* "Calvary" is the bare skull of a man; Golgotha means the same; so called from its roundness; from the root "gal" or "gabal," to roll about. Some suppose that S. Matthew wrote in Greek and himself explained the Hebrew; others that the explanation was given by the Greek translator of the original Hebrew.

But why was the place so called? Some say because Adam was there buried, and redeemed, too, by Christ on the same spot by the Blood of the Cross, and restored to the life of grace. See note on Eph. v. 14, and the Fathers there quoted. For there was a tradition that Noah took the bones of Adam into the ark, and after the deluge gave the skull, and Judæa with it, to Shem, his favourite son. Such respect did the ancients pay to their dead from believing in the immortality of the soul. "Christ," says

S. Ambrose (in Luke xxiii.), "was crucified in Golgotha because it was fitting that the first-fruits of our life should rest in the very spot from which our death had come." Others give a more literal and obvious reason, that it was because criminals were there beheaded. Baronius and others reject this view, on the ground that beheading was not a Jewish practice. But it is certain that after the Roman conquest criminals were beheaded, as John the Baptist by Herod Antipas and S. James by Herod Agrippa. Besides this, there were lying about on that spot the skulls of those who had died in various other ways.

Mystically: Gretser says, "It was prophetically called Golgotha, because Christ our Lord, our true Head, there died."

It was Christ's own will to be crucified in a dishonourable place like this, in order to expiate our infamous and execrable sins. He thus converted it into one of honour and adoration, for Christians in Calvary reverence and adore Christ crucified. For Christ, as Sedulius says,—

> "With glory all our sufferings hath arrayed,
> And sanctified the torments He endured."

So, too, Seneca (*Cons. ad Helvidiam*) says that Socrates entered the prison to take away the ignominy from the place.

Bede (*de Locis Sanctis, cap.* ii.) observes, from S. Jerome and S. Augustine (*Serm.* lxxi. *de temp.*), that Abraham offered up his son on this very mountain. For Mount Moriah and Calvary are close together, and they look like one mountain parted into two ridges or hills.

The Apostle (Heb. xiii. 11 *seq.*) gives four reasons for Christ being crucified outside Jerusalem, and thence concludes, "Let us go forth to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." It was chiefly to signify that the virtues of His Cross were to be transferred from the Jews to all nations, that "the Cross of Christ might be the altar, not of the temple, but of the world" (S. Leo, *Serm.* ix. *de Pass.*).

Ver. 34. *And they gave Him wine* (Arab. and A. V., vinegar)

to drink mingled with gall. This was while the Cross was being made ready, and Christ was resting for a while. Wine used to be given to condemned criminals to quench their thirst, and to strengthen them also to endure their sufferings, as it is said (Prov. xxxi. 6), "Give strong drink unto those that are ready to perish, and wine to those in bitterness of heart." But the Jews, with untold barbarity, made this wine bitter with gall, partly to insult and partly to give Him pain. Whence Christ complains, "They gave Me gall to eat" (Tertullian, *Lib.* x. *contra Judæos,* reads "to drink"); for the gall was Christ's food, the wine His drink. Euthymius thinks that bits of dried gall were steeped in vinegar, so that the vinegar was in the place of wine, and the bits of gall instead of the morsel of bread which is thrown into the wine, that those who are faint might drink first and eat afterwards.

This was different from the draught given to Christ on the Cross, this being of wine, the latter of vinegar. The Greek writers here mention "vinegar," but it was probably only a sour kind of wine. On the first occasion Christ says, "They gave Me gall to eat;" on the second, "They gave Me vinegar to drink." S. Mark terms it "wine mingled with myrrh," myrrh and gall having been mixed together, or because the myrrh, from being bitter, was called gall. So say all the Fathers and commentators, except Baronius, who considered that the wine was flavoured with myrrh and other spices. But the Jews would not have allowed this to be given to Christ. Baronius seems afterwards (*vol.* x. *ad fin.*) to have changed his opinion.

And when He had tasted thereof, He would not drink. Either as offended at the Jews for offering so nauseous a draught, or as wishing to suffer greater thirst on the Cross, and thus set us an example of self-mortification.

Palamon is said to have refused to taste some wild herbs which his disciple Pachomius had, for his Easter repast, flavoured with oil, saying, "My Lord had vinegar to drink, and shall I taste oil?"

Ver. 35. *But after they had crucified Him* (see Vulg.). S.

Matthew here studies brevity (as usual), and partly shrinks with horror from the crucifixion, not speaking of it as an actual occurrence, but only by the way. It is a doctrine of the faith that Christ was nailed, not merely tied, to the Cross. (See John xx. 25, and Ps. xxii. 16.) But it is possible that ropes were used as well, so says S. Hilary (*Lib.* x. *de Trin.*). The ropes are to be seen in the Church of Santa Croce at Rome. Nonnus, in his paraphrase of S. John, says that Christ's hands were fastened to the Cross with an iron band as well as by nails. The Cross, he says, was first raised up, and then a huge nail driven through both feet, laid one over the other. Some writers speak of a support for the feet to rest on, or a space hollowed out for the heels; and questions, too, are raised as to the number of the nails, whether three or four (or, as S. Bernard suggests, six), and the direction in which they were driven so as to cause the greatest torture.

The anguish of the crucifixion was very great; because the tenderest parts of the body were pierced by the nails, and the whole weight hung from the hands. The pain was lasting, Christ hanging on the Cross for three hours. Mystically, the words spoken of Jerusalem (Lam. i. 12) are applicable to Christ. Very great pain, too, was caused by the racking and stretching out of His limbs. S. Catharine of Sienna said she had practically experienced this when she had been made by Christ a partaker of all His sufferings. His bones were able to be counted when He was thus stretched out. It is in the Hebrew, "I will tell all My bones," that is, I am able to do so. But the Vulgate has it, "they counted," since Christ, while suffering such torture, was not able to count them Himself.

He was crucified with the crown of thorns, and between two robbers, as though He were the chief of them; and naked too, after the Roman custom. Some suppose that He was entirely naked, though others consider that this would have been too unseemly before a crowd of both sexes. This, then, was the greatest shame and pain to One who was so pre-eminently modest and chaste. S. Ambrose (in Luke xxiii.) says, "Naked He

ascends the Cross. I behold Him naked. Let him who is preparing to conquer the world ascend in like manner, not seeking worldly supports. Adam, who sought to get clothing, was a conquered person. But He who laid aside His garments, and went up on the Cross just as nature had made Him, was a conqueror." "Adam," said Tauler (*Excerc. Vit. Christi, cap.* xxxiii.), "hasted to clothe himself because he had lost his innocence, but Christ was stripped naked because He had preserved His innocence, and needed no other covering." S. Francis, wishing to follow Christ's example, threw himself, when dying, naked on the ground. See notes on S. Matt. v. 3.

S. Flavia, a noble virgin and martyr, when she was exposed naked at the command of the tyrant Manucha, to make her deny Christ, said, "I am ready to endure not merely the stripping of my body, but also the fire and the sword, for Him who was willing to suffer all this for me" (see *Acta S. Placidi, art.* 5).

It is generally thought that Christ was nailed to the Cross when lying on the ground, as was the case with those who carried their own cross. S. Anselm, S. Laur. Justiniani, and others hold this view; S. Bonaventura, Lipsius, and others, the contrary, which is supported by the text (Cant. vii. 8), "I will go up to the palm-tree," on which passage see the notes. But it is quite an open question.

But why was Christ crucified rather than put to death in any other way? The obvious reason was, that the Jews wished to inflict on Him a most ignominious death, and thus bring discredit on His name and followers. They wished Him also to bear the punishment which was due to Barabbas, whom they preferred before Him. But on God's part the reason was to save by the foolishness of the Cross those that believed (see 1 Cor. ii. 23).

Besides which, victims of old time were lifted up as offerings, and afterwards burnt. And so, too, Christ, who offered Himself as a burnt-offering for our sins, was raised up on the Cross, and burnt and consumed there, not so much with pain as with love

for men; just as the paschal lamb was stretched on the spit in the form of a cross, and then roasted.

There were various moral causes on the part of Christ and of men. 1st. That as Adam and Eve sinned by stretching forth their hands to the forbidden tree, so Christ might atone for their sin by stretching forth His hands to the wood of the Cross (so Augustine in *Append. Serm. de Diversis* iv.). Whence the Church sings, "By a tree we were made slaves, and by the holy cross have we been set free" (in the Office for Sept. 14); and "that life might spring from that from which death arose, and that he who conquered by the tree might be conquered by the tree." And S. Greg. Naz. (*in Orat. de Seipso*), "We are by the tree of disgrace brought back to the tree of life which we had lost." And S. Ambrose (in Luke iv.), "Death by the tree, life by the cross." Nay, Christ Himself says, "I raised thee up under the apple-tree; there was thy mother defiled, there was she defiled that bare thee." The Cross, again, is the remedy and expiation of the concupiscence which came from Adam's sin, itself the fount and origin of all sins. Christ therefore teaches us by the pattern of His Cross continually to crucify and mortify our evil affections, if we wish to avoid sin and save our souls (S. Ath. *de Incarn. Verbi*).

2d. That by hanging between Heaven and earth He might reconcile those in Heaven and those on earth. So S. Ambrose (in *Luc.* xxiii.), "That He might conquer not for Himself only, but for all, He extended His arms on the Cross to draw all things to Himself, to free from the bands of death, raise aloft by the balances of faith, and associate with things in Heaven the things that before were earthly." So too [Arnoldus apud] Cyprian, "I see Thee victorious over sufferings, with uplifted hands triumphing over Amalek, bearing up into the heavens the standard of Thy victory, and raising up for those below a ladder of ascent to the Father."

Hence S. Jerome teaches that Christ on the Cross embraces the four quarters of the world with its four arms. In its very shape does it not resemble the four quarters? The east shines from the top, at the right is the north, the south on the left, the west

firmly planted beneath His feet. Whence the Apostle says, "that we may know the height and breadth, and length and depth." Birds fly in the form of a cross; we swim or pray in the same form. The yards of a ship resemble a cross. And S. Greg. Naz. says (*Carm. de Virg.*),—

> "For stretching forth to earth's remotest bounds
> His sacred limbs, He brought the human race
> From every clime, and gathering them in one,
> He placed them in the very arms of God."

As Christ said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth," &c.

S. Athanasius (*de Incarn. Verbi*) says, "If He came to bear our sins and curse, how could He have done so but by taking on Himself an execrable death? But the Cross is that very death, as it is written, 'Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree'" (Deut. xxi. 25; Gal. iii. 13).

Besides this, all kinds of suffering concur in the Cross, and Christ embraced them all in His own, to set the martyrs an example of every kind of endurance. For the Cross wounds the hands and feet as a sword, it stretches out the body as a rack, lacerates it as a hoof, mangles it as a beast, burns and tortures it as a flame, and kills the whole man, as it were, with a slow fire. He experienced, then, the torments of all the Martyrs, and brought them before Himself, and was evil-entreated for their sakes, that He might obtain for all of them the power of overcoming them. As the blessed Laurence Justiniani says (*de Triumph. Christi Agone, cap.* xix.), "He was stoned in S. Stephen, burnt in S. Laurence, and bore the special sufferings of each several Martyr."

S. Augustine says further (*Serm.* lxix. *de Diversis*), "He refused to be stoned, or smitten with the sword, because we cannot always carry about stones or swords to defend ourselves. But He chose the Cross, which is made with a slight motion of the hand, and we are protected thereby against the craft of the enemy." As S. Paul says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse," &c. (Gal. iii. 13).

S. Anselm (in Phil. ii.) says, "He chose the worst kind of death, that He might overcome all death." As S. Augustine says (in Ps. cxl.), "That His disciples should not only not fear death itself, but not even this kind of death." And (*de Ag. Christi, cap.* xi.), "Fear not insults, and crosses, and death, for if they really were hurtful to men, the man whom the Son of God took upon Him would not have suffered them" (see S. Thomas, *par.* iii. *Quæst.* 48, *art.* 4).

S. Athanasius (*de Incarn. Verb.*) says, "The Lord came to cast down the devil, to purify the air, and to make for us a way to Heaven." It was therefore requisite for Him to be crucified in the air (see S. Chrysost. *de Cruce*). S. Thomas (*par.* iii. *Quæst.* 46, *art.* 4) gives many other reasons. Lastly, S. Basil (*Hom. de Humil.*) says, "The devil was crucified in Him whom he hoped to crucify, and was put to death in Him whom he had hoped to destroy." And S. Leo (*Serm.* x. *de Pass.*), "The nails of Christ pierced the devil with continuous wounds, and the suffering of His holy limbs was the destruction of the powers of the enemy."

Moreover, in the Cross that ancient reading of Ps. xcvi. was made good, "God hath reigned from the tree;" for, as S. Ambrose says (in Luke xxiii.), "though He was on the Cross, yet He shone above the cross with royal majesty." And as S. Augustine says, "He subdued the world not by the sword, but by the tree" (*Serm.* 21, *Ben.*). The Cross was the triumphal car of Christ, in which He triumphed over the devil, sin, death, and hell. S. Ambrose accordingly calls it "the chariot of the Conqueror, and the triumphal Cross."

The Cross is said to have been made of the cypress, cedar, palm, and olive:—

> "Cedar the trunk, tall cypress holds His frame,
> Palm clasps His hands, and olive boasts His name."
> (Dr. LITTLEDALE'S Version in *Cant.* vii. 8.)

For Christ was on the Cross exalted as a cedar, beauteous as the leafy cypress, poured forth the oil of grace as the olive, triumphed

over death as the victorious palm. So says [Arnold. apud] S. Cyprian, "Thou hast gone up unto the palm tree, because the wood of thy Cross foretold Thy triumph over the devil, Thy victory over principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickednesses," &c.

In short, God willed the Cross to be the price of our redemption, a book of heavenly wisdom, a mirror of every virtue and perfection. The book, I say, of the wisdom of God; for in the sufferings of the Cross Christ set forth His supreme love for man, for whom He was so cruelly and ignominously crucified; the heinousness of mortal sin, which could not be atoned for in any other way; the awfulness of hell-torments (for if God punished so heavily the sins of others in Christ His Son, how will He not punish in hell-fire the personal guilt of sinners themselves?); the value of each single soul, for which so great a price has been paid; the care which should be had for the salvation of souls, lest the Blood of Christ should be shed for them in vain; the great happiness in store for the blessed, as having been purchased by Christ on the Cross. Rightly, therefore, S. Augustine says (*Tract.* cxix. *in S. John*), "The tree on which were fastened the limbs of the sufferer was the seat also of the Master and Teacher."

It is also the mirror of all virtue and perfection, for Christ on the Cross exhibited humility, poverty, patience, fortitude, constancy, mortification, charity, and all other virtues in their highest perfection. Look on Him, therefore, O Christian, and live "according to the pattern showed thee in the Mount" (Exod. xxv. 40). This, too, is the teaching of the Apostle (Eph. iii. 17), "That ye being rooted and grounded in love," &c. And accordingly the Martyrs strengthened themselves to bear all their sufferings by meditating on the Cross of Christ. As, *e.g.*, S. Felicitas, S. Ignatius (whose saying it was, "Jesus, My Love, is crucified"), the Brothers Marcus and Marcellinus (who said that "they were never so glad at a feast as in enduring this for Christ's sake; we have now begun to be fixed in the love of the Cross, may He permit us to suffer as long as we are clothed in this

corruptible body"): and, among others, the Martyrs of Japan. S. Francis, too, counted himself happy in receiving the Stigmata, and being thus conformed to Christ crucified. Those in "religion" should also rejoice, as having been crucified with Christ by their three vows, which are, as it were, three nails they have taken to bear for Christ's sake (see *Pinutius apud Cassian, lib.* iv. *de Instit. Renunc. cap.* 34, &c.). In a word, how holy, tender, and true was that couplet of S. Francis de Sales—

> "Or love or madness slew Thee, Saviour mine:
> Ours was the madness, Lord; the love was Thine!"

But, next, on what day was Christ crucified? I answer, on March 25, the day of His conception, on which day S. Dismas, the penitent thief, is commemorated. So say, too, S. Augustine (*de Civ. lib.* xviii. *ad fin.*), S. Chrysostom, Tertullian, S. Thomas, and others, whom Suarez follows (*par.* iii. *disp.* xl. *sect.* 5, *ad fin.*). This was the completion of His thirty-fourth year, the day too of the sacrifice of Isaac, and the passage of the Red Sea (both eminent types of Christ on the Cross), and of the victory of Michael the Archangel. Hence it is inferred that the world and the angels were created on the same day, and that they began from the very first to war with each other.

The hour was mid-day. "The sixth hour," says S. John (xix. 14), *i.e.*, from sunrise. S. Mark says "the third hour" (xv. 25), meaning the end of the third and the beginning of the sixth; for these hours with the Jews and Romans contained three of ours. S. Mark clearly means this when he says (ver. 33), "And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land." Theophylact speaks of the fitness of this: "Man was created on the sixth day, and on the sixth hour he ate of the tree. At the same hour that the Lord created man, did He heal him after his fall. On the sixth day, and on the sixth hour, was Christ nailed to the Cross." Bede, among the Latins, takes the same view. "At the very hour when Adam brought death into the world did the second Adam by His dying destroy death."

Many suppose that Adam was created on the same day of the year, and ate the forbidden fruit at the same hour, when Christ expiated his sin on the Cross. Tertullian (*lib.* i. *contra Marcion*) gives it in verse—

> "'Twas on the day and place where Adam fell,
> As years rolled on the mighty athlete came
> And battle gave, where stood th' accursed tree;
> Stretched forth His hands, sought pain, despising praise,
> And triumphed over death."

Procopius says (in Gen. iii.), "It was at the same hour in which Adam ate of the tree."

But, observe, He was crucified with His back to Jerusalem, as though He were its enemy, and unworthy to look on it; but in truth, as being about to reject the Jews, and choose the Gentiles. He thus looked on the west (Rome and Italy). Christians accordingly, by Apostolic usage, pray towards the east, as if looking at Christ crucified; and as the Crucifix in a Church looks westward, so must they who look towards and adore it necessarily look eastward. (See S. J. Damasc. *de Fide*, iv. 13; S. Jerome, &c.) Jeremiah prophesied this (xviii. 17), "I will show them the back," &c.; and David (Ps. lxvi. 7), "His eyes look upon the Gentiles."

S. Bridget speaks of the details of the Crucifixion as revealed to her by Christ (Rev. vii. 15) and by the Blessed Virgin (Rev. i. 10).

To conclude, Lactantius (iv. 26) says, "Since he who is hung upon a cross is raised high above all about him, the Cross was chosen to signify that He would be raised so high that all nations would flock together to acknowledge and adore Him," &c. He, therefore, stretched forth His hands, and compassed the world, to show that from the rising to the setting sun a mighty people from all languages and tribes would come under His wings, and receive on their brows that noblest of all signs. On other points relating to the Cross, its various forms, its oracular answers, &c., see Gretser, i. 29 *seq.*; S. Thomas, *par.* iii. Q. 46; and Suarez

in loc. On the Moral Cross, *i.e.*, the patient, resolute, and firm endurance of all tribulations, see Gretser, *lib.* iv. *de Cruce.*

Tropologically: S. Chrysostom (*Hom. de Cruce*) thus recounts its praises: "It is the hope of Christians, the resurrection of the dead, the leader of the blind, the way to those in despair. It is the staff of the lame, the consolation of the poor, the restrainer of the rich, the destruction of the proud. It is the punishment of evil-livers, the triumph over evil spirits, the victory over the devil. It is the guide of the young, the support of the destitute, the pilot to those at sea, the harbour of those in peril, the bulwark of the besieged, the father of orphans, the defender of widows, the counsellor of the righteous, the rest of the troubled, the guardian of the young, the head of men, the closing act of the old." And so on at great length. See, too, S. Ephr. *de Cruce;* and S. J. Damasc. iv. 12.

Seven holy affections (especially) should be excited by meditating on Christ crucified,—compassion, compunction, gratitude, imitation, hope, admiration, love and charity.

Here comes in from S. Luke xxiii. 34 our Lord's first word on the Cross, "Father, forgive them," &c. He forgets entirely the pains and injuries He had received, and, kindled with the glow of charity, prayed for their forgiveness. And He was "heard for His reverence" (Heb. v. 7). For many repented at S. Peter's preaching, and were converted to Christ at Pentecost. He Himself taught us to pray for our persecutors, to do good to those who do us wrong, and to overcome evil with good. S. Stephen, too, imitated His example (Acts vii. 59): "They know not what they do." They know not I am the Christ the Son of God, for else they would not dare to commit this monstrous sacrilege, the murder of God. They know not that I am the Saviour of the world, and that I am dying for their salvation. "So does the gentleness and tenderness of Christ triumph over the cruelty and malice of the Jews" (*de Passione apud S. Cyprian*).

The flint is the emblem of the love of our enemies, and has this motto, "Fire comes from flint, but not without a blow." The

flint is popularly called a "living stone" from the living fire within. The flint, then, here is Christ, the corner-stone. For He poured forth on the Cross the latent fire of His Godhead and His boundless charity. But yet not without a blow, for it was while smitten by His persecutors that He prayed for them so ardently. He had Himself said before, "I came to send fire upon the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?" (Luke xii. 49). Let the Christian, then, imitate Christ, and make himself a flint, which is full of fire itself, and ignites others; and when he is wrongfully smitten, let him shoot forth sparks of Divine love, as Christ did against His smiters.

They parted His garments, casting lots. S. John relates this more fully (xix. 23). S. Cyril observes on this, "They claim the garments as being theirs by the law of inheritance, as the reward for their services." S. Chrysostom says also, "This was generally done in the case of mean and utterly destitute criminals." And again, "They part those garments wherewith miracles were wrought. But at that time they wrought none since Christ did not display His unspeakable power." It was a great affront and distress to Christ to see His garments insolently torn by the soldiers before His very eyes, and divided by casting lots. But He doubtless wished to die and suffer for us in the utmost poverty, in nakedness and disgrace, and to lay aside not merely His garments, but also His body and His life; that so His ignominy might clothe and hide the ignominy both of our and Adam's nakedness, and restore to us thereby the garments of immortality; "that He might clothe us with immortality and life" ([Pseudo-] Athanasius, *de Cruce*).

Tropologically: He would teach us to strip off the superfluities of this world.

Now, here observe Christ had a coat without seam. It was a kind of under-garment, worn next to the body, says Euthymius. And he adds, approvingly, that it was woven for Him (as ancient writers held) when a child by the Blessed Virgin. If so, it appears to have grown with His growth, like the garments of the

Hebrews in the wilderness. It is religiously preserved, and is to be seen at Treves.

Symbolically: [Pseudo-]Athanasius says, This coat was without seam, "that the Jews might believe who and whence He was who ware it; that He was the Word, who came not from earth but from Heaven; that He was the inseparable Word of the Father; and that when made man He had a body fashioned of the Virgin alone by the grace of the Spirit." And again, "This was not their doing, but that of the Saviour as He hung on the Cross. He spoiled principalities, and led the devil captive, and terrified the soldiers so that they rent not the coat, but that as long as it remained it might be a standing testimony against the Jews. For the veil was rent, but not the coat, no not even by the soldiers, but remained entire. For the Gospel ever remains entire when the shadows pass away." The soldiers rent Christ's other garments, and divided them into four parts for the four soldiers who crucified Him, and they again cast lots what each should take. It is supposed He had three garments, the seamless coat, another one over it like a *soutane*, and the upper coat, which covered the whole body.

Symbolically: [Pseudo-]Athanasius says, "They divided His garments into four parts, because He wore them for the sins of the four quarters of the world. And when the Baptist saw Him clothed therein, he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.'"

Ver. 36. *And sitting down they watched Him there.* They watched Him lest His disciples should take Him away, or lest He should miraculously descend. But in the Divine counsels it was for another purpose, which they knew not. For, as S. Jerome says, "The watchfulness of the soldiers and of the priests was for our benefit, as manifesting more fully the power of His resurrection." For they saw Him dying on the Cross, and after He had been seen again alive, would be obliged to confess that He had risen by Divine power.

Ver. 37. *And set up over His head His case* (causam) *written*

(Syr. the occasion of His death), *This is the King of the Jews.* They put up a board inscribed with the reason of His crucifixion, that He had set up to be a King. And, consequently, the chief priests suggested that Pilate should not write, "The King of the Jews, but that He said, I am the King of the Jews" (John xix. 21). Pilate refused, for he and the Jews meant the same thing. But God guided his hand, and he wrote, in another and truer sense, "This is the King of the Jews," *i.e.*, the Messiah or Christ. This inscription, then, conferred on Christ the highest honour, for it set forth not only His innocence, but also His dignity, that He was indeed the very Christ, the Redeemer of the world. It therefore convicts and condemns the Jews as His murderers, since it was they who compelled Pilate to crucify Him. Pilate, then, by this very title reproaches them with it, avenges himself on them for their obstinate importunity, and holds them up to general infamy. For he knew well that Jesus was the Messiah, the desire and expectation of all people. Hence Origen says, "This title adorns the head of Jesus as a crown." And Bede, dwelling on the words "over His head," says, "Though He was in the weakness of a man suffering for us on the Cross, yet did He shine forth with regal majesty above the Cross." For it was made known that He was even now beginning to "reign from the tree." Pilate accordingly refused to alter the title. And by this is signified, mystically, that while the Jews remained in their obstinate unbelief, Gentiles, such as Pilate, would acknowledge and worship Him as their King and Saviour.

Observe, 1. A title, declaring the cause of their death, used to be placed over the head of malefactors. It is hence inferred that the cross was not T-shaped, but with an upper limb to carry the title.

2. No one Evangelist fully sets out the title; but on comparing them all, it is concluded to have been, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

This title still exists in the Church of S. Croce at Rome, though much mutilated. Bosius (*de Cruce Triumph.* i. 11) gives an exact copy of it as it was when he wrote.

Ver. 38. *Then were there crucified* (with the like spikes and nails, says Nonnus, on John xix. 19) *two thieves, one on the right hand and another on the left.* The cross was the punishment of such criminals, and Christ, as placed between them, seemed to be their chief and leader, exactly as the Jews wished, in order to dishonour Him. But God overthrew and turned back on them all their artifices. For, as S. Chrysostom says, "The devil wished to hide the matter, but could not." For though three were crucified, Jesus only was the distinguished one, to show that all proceeded from His power; for the miracles which took place were attributed to no one but Jesus. Thus were the devices of the devil frustrated, and recoiled on his own head; for even of these two one was saved. Thus, then, so far from marring the glory of the Cross, he greatly increased it. For it was as great a matter for the thief to be converted on the Cross, and to enter Paradise, as for the rocks to be rent.

Symbolically: Christ between the thieves represents the last judgment, with the elect on his right hand and the wicked on His left. So S. Ambrose (in Luke xxiii.); and S. Augustine (*Tract.* xxxi. *in S. John*) says, "The Cross, mark it well, was a judgment-seat, for the Judge, being between them, he who believed was set free, the other was condemned, signifying the judgment of the quick and dead."

Ver. 39. *And they that passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads.* All their revilings and insults were blasphemies, as being against the Son of God. "They blasphemed the Holy One of Israel," Isa. i. 4, and Ps. xxii. 8. This was a greater torment even than the crucifixion. Whence it is said (Ecclus. vii. 11), "Laugh not at a man in the bitterness of his soul." And Christ complains (Ps. lxix. 26), "They persecute Him whom Thou hast smitten, and added to the pain of My wounds;" and (Ps. xxii. 13), "They gaped upon Me," &c., so great was their cruelty.

Ver. 40. *And saying, Ah! Thou that destroyest the temple of God.* The word "Ah!" is a term of reproach. Shame on Thee for boasting! Thou canst destroy the temple of God and build

it up in three days! Show that Thou canst do it by setting Thyself free from the cross. If Thou canst not do this small matter, how canst Thou do that greater work on the temple, that vast building?

Ver. 41. *Likewise also the chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said.* These were more fierce than the people against Christ, for they jest at His miracles, as though wrought not by the power of God, but by Beelzebub; or certainly as not real, but imaginary. For had they been wrought by God, He would certainly have delivered Him from the Cross. But His not doing it was a sign that He was an impostor. "For they wished Him to die as a boastful and arrogant deceiver," says S. Chrysostom, "and to be reviled in the sight of all men," that they might thus utterly stamp out His name and sect, so that no one might afterwards follow his teaching, or reverence and preach Him as the Messiah.

If Thou be the King of Israel. The King of the Jews, that is, the Messiah. "What is the connection here?" says S. Bernard (*Serm.* i. *in Pasch.*); "that He should descend from the Cross, if He be the King of Israel, and not rather go up on it? Hast thou, then, so entirely forgotten, O Jew, that 'the Lord hath reigned from the tree,' as to say, 'He is not King, because He remains on it.' Nay, rather, because He is the King of Israel let Him not abandon the royal title, let Him not lay down the rod of empire, for His government is upon His shoulder. If Pilate hath written what he hath written, shall not Christ complete that which He hath begun?" He goes on to say, "This is clearly the craft of the serpent, the invention of spiritual wickedness. The evil one knew His zeal for the salvation of that people, and therefore most maliciously did he teach these blasphemers to say, 'Let Him descend, and we will believe,' as though there were now no obstacle to His descending, since He so earnestly desired that they should believe. But He, as knowing all hearts, is not moved by their worthless profession. For their malicious suggestion tended not only to their un-

belief, but to our own utter loss of faith in Him. For if we read, 'Perfect are all the works of God' (Deut. xxxii. 14), how could we even believe in Him as God if He had left the work of salvation unfinished?" He adds a further reason, "To give him no opportunity of stealing from us our perseverance, which alone is crowned; and that preachers should not be silenced when they exhort the feeble-minded not to abandon their post. For this would be the sure result if they were able to reply that Christ had abandoned His.

Let Him come down from the cross. Christ, though able to do so, was unwilling to descend when thus taunted, because it was the Father's command that He should die on the Cross for our redemption. He despised, therefore, their reproaches, to teach us to do the same. So Theophylact (on Mark xv.) observes, "Had He been willing to descend, He would not have ascended at all. But knowing that men were to be saved by this means, He submitted to be crucified." "He wished not," said Origen, "to do any unworthy act, because He was jested at, or to do their bidding against reason and due order." And S. Augustine (*Tract.* xxxvii. *on S. John*), "Because He was teaching patience, He deferred a display of His power. For had He descended, it would seem as though He had given way to their cutting reproaches." And again, "He deferred the exercise of His power, because He wished not to descend from the Cross, though able to rise from the grave. But yet He manifested His compassion, for while hanging on the Cross He said, 'Father, forgive them,' &c."

Lastly, S. Gregory (*Hom.* xxi. *in Evang.*) says, "Had He then come down from the Cross, as yielding to their insults, He would not have exhibited the virtue of patience. But He waited awhile, He endured their reproaches and derision, He maintained His patience, He deferred their astonishment, and though He had refused to descend from the Cross, yet He rose from the tomb. And this, indeed, was a much greater matter; greater, indeed, to destroy death by rising again, than to save life by descending from the Cross."

And we will believe Him to be the Messiah. They spake falsely, for they who believed Him not when He raised others, would assuredly not have believed Him had He freed Himself from death. They would have said that He had descended in appearance only. S. Jerome calls this promise of theirs a "fraudulent one; for which is greater, to descend when alive from the Cross, or to rise again from the grave? He rose again, and ye believed not, and were He even to descend from the Cross, ye would, in like manner, believe not." Just as heretics now say, We would believe the saints if they wrought miracles; but when their miracles are adduced, they cavil at them as pretended or imaginary.

Ver. 43. *He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him, if He will have Him* (Arab., if He loved Him), *for He said, I am the Son of God.* They used the very words of David (Ps. xxii. 8), thus testifying that they were the very persons who were foretold, and that Jesus was the true Messiah, for the whole Psalm speaks of Him. When a man is in the agony of death, all human hope is gone. Confidence in God alone remains, and of this, His last stay, they try to deprive Him. Thou hast vainly put Thy trust in God. Thou hast said falsely that Thou art the Son of God. If He loved Thee, He would set Thee free. But as He will not, Thou art clearly not His Son, but an odious impostor. Thus do they revile and seek to drive Him to despair, as the devil who assails men in their last agony. But how fallacious was their argument! For God, as specially loving Christ, wished Him to die on the Cross, that He might afterwards glorify Him in His resurrection, and by Him save many souls. Now Christ knew all this. He heeded not their revilings, but fixed all His hope on God, and thereby gained from Him both of these great ends. He poured forth accordingly, after all these insults, fresh acts of confidence in God, teaching us to do the like. "Thou art He that took Me out of My mother's womb," &c. (Ps. xxii. 10). And so, too, the Martyrs used to say that God would not deliver them, in

order that He might give them a better life, and the crown of martyrdom.

The Wise Man, speaking in their person, foretold all these insults (Wisd. ii. 13), and then added, "Such thoughts had they, and were in error," &c.

Tropologically: Sinners utter reproaches against Christ when they dishonour Him by their sins. S. Bernard (*Rhythm on Passion*) makes Him thus tenderly appeal to them:

> "'Tis I who die for thee, to thee who cry,
> Thee I exhort on Cross uplifted high;
> 'Tis I who bare for thee, and open wide
> The cruel spear-wound in My sacred side;
> My inward and My outward pains are great,
> But sadder far to find thee thus ingrate."

Zechariah (xiii. 6) speaks of His being wounded in the house of His friends.

Ver. 44. *The thieves also which were crucified with Him uttered against Him the like reproach.* The Greek Fathers, and S. Hilary among the Latins, think it probable that both the thieves blasphemed Christ at first, but that one of them afterwards repented. But the Latin Fathers consider that the plural is here, by synecdoche, put for the singular. "Thieves," *i.e.*, "one of the thieves" (as Luke xxiii. 36, "the soldiers," meaning one of them); S. Matthew wishing by the word thieves to point out not so much the persons of the thieves, as the condition of those who insulted Christ; all vying in insulting Him, even the thief at His side. S. Luke (xxiii. 40) gives the story of the other thief (see Comment. *in loc.*).

Here comes in the third word on the Cross, "Woman, behold thy Son," &c. (see John xix. 26, and the notes thereon).

Ver. 45. *But from the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole earth unto the ninth hour.* From mid-day, *i.e.*, till 3 P.M., which is usually the brightest part of the day. This darkness was supernatural; as though the sun and the whole heavens were veiled in black, as bewailing the ignominious death of Christ

their Lord. So S. Jerome and S. Cyprian (*de Bono Patient.*); and S. Chrysostom (*in Catena*), "The creature could not bear the wrong done to its Creator, and the sun withdrew his rays, that he might not see the evil doings of the wicked."

Again, it took place at full moon. It lasted much longer than an ordinary eclipse; it was total, the light of the moon as well as of the sun being withdrawn, the stars being seen, and so on.

Over the whole earth. Of Judæa, say Origen and Maldonatus. Others, more correctly (as S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and others), over the whole world. Dionysius, the Areopagite, is said to have exclaimed at the time, "Either the God of Nature (or, as otherwise quoted, 'an Unknown God') is suffering, or the fabric of the world is being dissolved." He was afterwards converted by S. Paul's preaching Christ at Athens as the Unknown God. This, then, was a token of Christ's Godhead; for when the sun, the eye of the world, was obscured and dying out, it signified that Christ, its God and Lord, the Sun of Righteousness, was dying on the Cross, and that sun and moon and all the elements were bewailing Him in His agony.

Symbolically: This darkness signified the blinding of the Jews. So S. Chrysostom (*de Cruce*), Darkness is to this very day upon them; but with us night is turned into day. For it is the property of godliness to shine in the darkness; but ungodliness, though in the light, is in darkness still. Night is for believers turned into day, but for unbelievers their very light is darkness. It is said of believers, "Their darkness is no darkness, and their night shall be clear as the day" (Ps. cxxxix. 11); but for unbelievers even the day is turned into night, for "they shall grope for the wall as the blind" (Isa. lx. 10), "they will walk in midday as in the night" (Job v. 14).

Ver. 46. *And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* quoting Ps. xxii. 1. "Sabachthani" is Syriac, not Hebrew.

He was indeed continually praying on the Cross, and offering

Himself wholly to God for man's salvation. But as his death was drawing near He recited this Psalm, which throughout speaks of His Passion, to show that He was the very person there spoken of, and that the Jews might thus learn the reason why He refused to descend from the Cross, viz., because the Father had decreed that He should die for the salvation of men; as David had there foretold.

Calvin says impiously that these were the words of Christ in despair, for that He was obliged to experience the full wrath of God which our sins deserve, and even the sufferings of the lost, of which despair is one. But this blasphemy refutes itself. For if he despaired on the Cross, He sinned most grievously. He therefore did not satisfy, but rather enflamed, the wrath of God. And how can it be said that Christ ever despaired, when He said shortly afterwards, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit"? Christ therefore does not cry out as being forsaken by the Godhead and hypostatic union of the Word, nor even by the grace and love of God, but only because the Father did not rescue Him from instant death, nor soothe in any way His cruel sufferings, but permitted Him to endure unmitigated tortures. And all this was to show how bitter was His death on the Cross, the rending asunder of His soul and body with such intense pain as to lead Him to pray in His agony and bloody sweat, "Father, if it be possible," &c. So S. Jerome, S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, and other Fathers; nor do S. Hilary and S. Ambrose mean anything else in saying, "The man cried aloud when dying at being separated from the Godhead." For they mean not a severing of essence and of the hypostatical union, but of support and consolation. For the faith teaches us that though the soul of Christ was separated from His body, yet the Godhead remained as before, hypostatically united both to His soul and His body. Besides this, Christ complained of His desertion, because the Godhead withheld Its succour, solely to keep Him still suffering, and to prolong His life for greater endurances; nay, rather to augment His pain when He saw Himself, though in union with Godhead,

enduring such atrocious indignities (see S. L. Justiniani, *de Triumph. Agone Christi, cap.* viii.).

Symbolically: Christ here inquires why He was thus forsaken. What have I done that I should die on this Cross? I am most innocent, the Saint of Saints. He gives His own answer. "Far off from My salvation are the words of My sins" (Ps. xxii. 1), meaning thereby, "The sins of men, whose expiation the Father hath put on Me, these are they which take away My life, and bring Me to the death of the Cross." But some (see Theophylact) consider that He is here speaking not of His own desertion, but of that of the Jewish people.

Origen thinks He is complaining of the fewness of those who will be saved, and the multitude of the lost, in whom the fruit of His Passion comes to nought. Why forsakest Thou My kinsmen in the flesh, for whom I am dying? Why savest Thou the few and rejectest the many? For in so doing Thou forsakest Myself; for thou makest the fruit of My suffering to perish.

Tropologically: [Arnold apud] Cyprian (*de Passione*) thinks He spoke thus in order that we should inquire why He was forsaken. "He was forsaken," he says, "that we should not be forsaken; that we should be set free from our sins and eternal death; to manifest His love to us; to display His righteousness and compassion; to draw our love towards Him; lastly, to set before us an example of patience." The way to Heaven is open, but it is arduous and difficult. He wished to precede us with His wondrous example, that the way might not terrify us, but that the stupendous example of God in suffering might urge us on to say exultingly with S. Paul, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

This, then, His fourth word on the Cross, is a consolation to all who are desolate and afflicted. He consoled in this way S. Peter Martyr when falsely accused. The Saint complained to Christ (he was kneeling before the crucifix) that he had kept silence, and not defended him. Christ replied, "What wrong had I done to be crucified for thee on this Cross? Learn patience from Me, for all thy sufferings cannot equal Mine." The Saint on this was

so strengthened that he wished to endure still further suffering. And therefore Christ at length established his innocence, and turned all his disgrace into glory (see *Surius*, April 29).

Ver. 47. *Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias.* According to S. Jerome and others, these were the Roman soldiers, who also gave Him vinegar (Luke xxiii. 36). But not understanding Hebrew, they thought He called for Elias, of whose return at Christ's coming they had heard from the Jews.

Ver. 48. *And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink.* All these were ready at hand, for the drink used to be given to those who were crucified. They did this as soon as Jesus had cried, "I thirst" (John xix. 28), His fifth word on the Cross. The sponge was for Christ to suck out the vinegar, as they could not lift a cup to His lips. The sponge is preserved in St. John's Lateran. Wine was usually given to those who were crucified, to quench their thirst, and strengthen them to bear their tortures. But the Jews (and the soldiers to gratify the Jews' hatred to Christ) offered Him vinegar instead (Ps. lxix. 22). De Lyra says (quoting Prov. xxxi. 6) that devout women used to prepare wine flavoured with spices, but that the Jews on this occasion took it away, and put in its stead vinegar mingled with gall.

Now they gave it Him in mockery, to give Him pain by the bitterness of the draught; to increase and not to quench His thirst, this being the property of vinegar. Baronius thinks it was given to keep Him alive, and thus prolong His suffering; Theophylact, Caietan, and others, that it was to hasten His death. "For vinegar has malignant properties," says Theophylact, "which penetrates into wounds." Thus—

Symbolically: It signifies the malignity which the Jews, and all sinners, exhibit to Christ. So S. Augustine (in John xix. 29), "Give that which ye are yourselves." For the Jews were as vinegar, in degenerating from the wine of the Patriarchs and

Prophets; having a heart full of iniquity, as a vessel full of vinegar; and full of fraud, like a sponge, with its winding and hollow hiding-places.

But Christ by drinking the vinegar converted it for us into wine, and by so doing gained power to turn our vices into virtues, our weaknesses into glory. "The wine," says S. Hilary, "which turned acid in Adam was the glory or might of immortality. But He drank it, and thus transfused into Himself, and into union with immortality, that which in us was vitiated." And so Remigius, "Vinegar means the Jews who had degenerated from their fathers; the sponge, their hearts full of fraud; the reed, Holy Scripture, which was thus fulfilled."

And put it on a reed. That is, the stalk of some plant. S. John (xix. 29) says it was the stalk of the hyssop. For the Cross was not high, so that by stretching out the arms the sponge on a short stalk would easily reach Christ's mouth. In Palestine the garden hyssop grows higher than in Europe, though on walls it grows low (1 Kings iv. 33). Sometimes it runs to 18 inches.

Some suspect that for ὑσσώπῳ is to be read ὑσσῷ, a spear; a mere conjecture. Others think, with S. Augustine, that a sponge full of vinegar was placed on the hyssop, and then both of them on the reed. Others, that a sponge full of hyssop juice and vinegar was placed on the reed. Anyhow, the sponge was placed on the hyssop, whether it was itself the stalk or merely fastened to it.

Hyssop was given, because it is frequently used with wine and vinegar (see Columella, *de Re Rust.* xii. 35; and Pliny, *N. H.* xiv. 16). It has reviving, and strengthening, and other medicinal properties.

Now the soldiers tied the hyssop round the sponge, that the vinegar should not escape, and that Christ, taking the vinegar and the hyssop, might revive.

It was used for cleansing lepers (Lev. xiv. 49), also in the sin-offering and in the sprinkling of the water of purification

(Num. xix. 2 *seq.*); and was therefore a type of Christ's Blood, in its purifying, refreshing, and strengthening power. "It is a lowly herb," says S. Augustine on John xix., "cleansing the chest, and signifies the humility of Christ, whereby we are cleansed."

Ver. 49. *But the rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save Him.* The word "let be" is here in the singular, in S. Mark in the plural. In the plural it would mean, keep quiet, attend solely to Jesus, see whether Elias will come to save Him; for they doubted whether He were really the Messiah, whose precursor Elias was to be.

S. Mark says that only one soldier spoke thus, addressing the rest. It is supposed by S. Augustine (*de Cons. Evang.* iii. 17) and others that the word was used both by the one soldier and by the whole body; secondly, that the soldiers said to him that offered the vinegar, Wait a while, do not give it, for fear He should die too soon, for vinegar hastens death; let us see whether Elias will come. And that he replied, Let me give it, lest He should die of thirst. Just let Him drink it, and keep alive; so shall we see whether Elias will come (so Jansenius). Or, again, that the soldiers said to him who offered the vinegar, Leave Him alone, do not annoy Him. For they thought that Elias would come if He were left alone, but not if others were about Him. And that he replied, Cease your clamour, lest ye drive Elias away; or otherwise, Leave Him lest ye hasten His death (Barradi). Or, again, Suffer me to mock Him in this way, for the more He is molested, the more will Elias come if he wishes to help Him. What I am doing will not delay but rather hasten his coming. Or, it may be, Let me give Him the vinegar, for I shall thus kill Him, and keep Elias from saving Him. For all this (as S. Luke says) was done in jest and mockery.

Ver. 50. *But Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.* "Again" refers to the former words on the Cross. He first cried out, and then expired. S. Luke gives the

exact words, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." In the Greek, "I will lay down My life; I will consign it into Thy hands as a deposit, to take it back when I am raised up on the third day." Hence the faithful use this verse when dying, as David first used it when in suffering (Ps. xxxi. 5).

It was by a miracle that Christ cried with a loud voice, for the dying lose their voice, so that they can hardly speak. For though S. Thomas says (*par.* iii. *q.* 47) that Christ preserved the vigour and strength of His body to the last; yet others suppose, more correctly, that His strength had so failed by what He had gone through, that He could not cry out naturally, but only by a miracle, for otherwise He would not have died through the violence of His sufferings, but merely by His own voluntary severing of His soul and body, and thus would not have been slain, or have made satisfaction to His Father by His death of violence.

He cried out, then, by the supernatural powers which His Godhead furnished. And that to signify, 1st, that He, as God, died not by compulsion or necessity, but of His own free will. As He said, "I have power to lay down My life," &c. (John x. 18); and that His sacrifice of Himself might clearly be voluntary. "He had His whole life and death," says S. Victor of Antioch, "entirely in His own power." 2nd. To show that He was more than man, and was God, as the Centurion exclaimed. 3rd. To set forth His vehement love of God, His reverence, His obedience, and earnest desire for man's salvation (see Heb. v. 7, and notes thereon). 4th. To indicate His sure and certain hope of His glorious resurrection on the third day (so Origen).

Yielded up the ghost. Voluntarily. "For that which is sent forth (*emittitur*) is voluntary, that which is lost (*amittitur*) is of necessity," S. Ambrose (*in Luc.* xxiii.); and S. Augustine (*de Trin.* iv. 13), "The spirit of the Mediator left not His body against His will, but because of it, when He willed, and as He willed it; for man was blended into union with the Word of God. Hence He says, 'I have power,'" &c. (John x. 18).

So, too, S. Jerome, Bede, and others. Whence, also, "He bowed His head" (John xix. 30). "As the Lord of death," says Theophylact; "for other men when dying first breathe their last, and then bow the head, which thus droops by its own weight." S. Chrysostom says this was "to show that He died not of necessity, but voluntarily. He lived as long as He willed; when He willed He gave up the ghost." A spurious work attributed to S. Athanasius is also quoted to the same effect. For though His human nature sank beneath the violence of His pains, and He ought to have died, yet His Godhead was able to give it strength, and to prolong His life. That nature, therefore, could not die, except by permission of His Godhead. He therefore freely died, whether as God or man; for His human nature could have asked, and would have obtained, this strength from His Godhead.

Observe, He died at the ninth hour, the very hour when Adam sinned, and to expiate his sin. The same hour also when the Paschal Lamb was slain, and the Jews offered the daily sacrifice. And this to show that He thus fulfilled all these types in His death. Whence the ninth hour is the Christian's hour of prayer.

Symbolically and Morally: He bowed His head, as bearing the burden of all men's sins, sin being the heaviest of all burdens; to mark His obedience, thus teaching "religious" persons, and those under authority, to obey those over them (conf. Phil. ii. 8); to humble Himself before the Father, to do Him reverence, and to submit His own will to His, even to the death of the Cross; to bid farewell to the world, especially to Italy and the West, for His head, as we have said, was turned towards Italy, which He wished to make illustrious by His faith, and by the Pontificate and martyrdom of SS. Peter and Paul; to bid farewell to His Mother; to mark the spot where the spear was to pierce Him; to show that He and His Father were by His Passion reconciled to men. So S. Augustine (*de Virg.*) says, "Behold His wounds when hanging, His Blood when dying, His value when dying, His scars when

rising, His head bent down to kiss, His heart opened to love, His arms extended to embrace, His whole body exposed to redeem," &c. It was, again, to show that His soul would descend below, and set the Patriarchs' free; to manifest His compassion. "He made His head to melt," says Laur. Justiniani (*de Triumph. Agone, cap.* xx.), "to show compassion; He bent down to display His grace; He bowed it to show forgiveness;" again, to manifest His love for S. John, the Magdalen, and others like them who were standing by, and to turn away from those who shrank from the Cross; to look away (again) from the title on the Cross, as declining, and teaching us to decline, all worldly sovereignty and pomp; to show that His death, as He was to rise on the third day, was rather sleep than death; for they who sleep bow the head, "I will lay me down in peace," &c. (Ps. iv. 8). Lastly, having fulfilled His mission, He asks, as it were, His Father's blessing and permission to depart from the world. He seems to say, I have finished My course, I have done and suffered for man's salvation all Thou commandest. Permit Me to die, and return to Thee. And I ask, too, according to Thy promise (Ps. ii. 8), that all nations may be converted and saved by My Passion and death. I have done Thy bidding, fulfil Thou Thy word. "Religious" persons and Priests, in like manner, when their mission is done, return to their Superiors, bow the head, and ask their blessing, and their former rank and position. S. Bernard pointedly says, in a moral sense, "What avails it to follow Christ if Thou canst not come up with Him? For S. Paul said, 'So run that ye may attain.' Fix the limits of thy course where Christ fixed His. 'He became obedient even unto death.' However far thou hast run, if thou hast not gone as far as unto death, thou wilt not win the prize."

Ver. 51. *And behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.* At the death of Christ the Creator the whole Creation was agitated with indignation. S. Augustine (*de Cons. Evang.* iii. 19) observes that the veil was rent immediately on His death, to show that it was on account of it. S.

Luke, therefore, who connects it with the darkness which took place before His death, speaks by anticipation. Now there were two veils, one before the Holy of Holies, the other before the Holy Place, which the priests entered every day. But the Holy of Holies the Chief Priest alone entered, and once only in the year. Some consider that the outer veil was rent (S. Jerome, *Ep.* cl. *ad Hedibiam*). But it was clearly the inner one. (See S. Leo, *Serm.* x. *de Pass.*; S. Cyril, *in John* xix.; Euthymius and others.) But why was it rent? S. Cyril, Theophylact, and Euthymius say to show that the temple was indignant that the Priests, who should have been the first to acknowledge Christ, had denied and slain Him. And that it thus foretold, and threatened, as it were, that they were to be deprived of their Priesthood (S. Leo, *Serm.* x. *de Pass.*).

Mystically: Theophylact says it was to signify that the temple was to be profaned, and done away with, and set aside, with all its rites and sacrifices (nay, more, says S. Chrysostom, "to be laid waste"). God in this way made it manifest," says Theophylact, "that the grace of the Holy Spirit was flying away from the temple, and that the Holy of Holies (before inaccessible) was brought within view of all." "For then," says S. Cyril (xii. 27 on John), "Israel fell utterly away from the grace of God when it so madly and impiously slew its Saviour." And S. Hilary, "The glory of the veil was taken away, and the protection of the guardian angel." Hence S. Ephr. (*Serm. de Pass.*) records that when it was rent asunder, a dove, the type of the Holy Spirit, flew out of the temple.

Allegorically: To signify that the veil of legal ceremonies was thrown open, as fulfilled in Christ, so that henceforth both Jews and Gentiles should clearly know God, and Christ, and His Mysteries, which the Jews figuratively shadowed forth in so many ways; nay, more, that the service and Church of God should be transferred from Jerusalem, and the temple to the Gentiles and to Rome. So Origen, S. Jerome, S. Ambrose, and others. S. Leo says (*Serm.* xvii. *de Pass.*), "There was then so clear a change

made from the Law to the Gospel, from the Synagogue to the Church, from the many sacrifices to the One Victim, God Himself, that when our Lord gave up the ghost the veil was violently and suddenly rent asunder." And S. Jerome, "The veil of the temple was rent, and all the mysteries of the Law, which before were kept secret, were then laid open, and handed over to the Gentiles."

Anagogically: S. Paul says (Heb. ix.) that the way to Heaven, was then opened; for the Holy of Holies was a type of Heaven, and the veil signified that it was closed till Christ burst through it by His death. S. Jerome mentions that the huge lintel of the temple was then broken (*Epist.* cl.). But Josephus says that it was at the destruction of Jerusalem.

And the earth did quake. 1. That is, the whole earth, as the darkness (ver. 45) was universal. Many authorities are quoted for this. Didymus (*in Catena*) says it was prophesied by Job (ix. 6). Both Pliny and Suetonius speak of a great earthquake in Asia at this time. By this earthquake was indicated the Godhead of Christ, for He it was who shook the earth, earthquakes being frequently ascribed to divine power, *e.g.*, 1 Kings xix. 11; Ex. xix.; Ps. xviii. 7; Nahum iii. 6. In the Passion, then, of Christ is fulfilled the prophecy of Hag. ii. 6.

2. It signified the natural indignation of the earth at the awful crime committed against its Lord.

Mystically: It signified the new heavens and earth (Isa. lxv. 17), for the old earth seemed to be passing away.

Tropologically: It signified that the earthly and stony hearts of men would be moved to repentance by the death of Christ, since the earth, the sea, the sun, and the heavens, the darkened air, and the riven rocks, proclaimed their indignation at the death of their Creator. But see here how Christ, in His lowliest estate, manifested His supreme majesty and power, that He might not seem to be compelled to die, and that men, learning who and how mighty He was, who was suffering for them such vile indignities with such great dignity, might be astounded and awe-struck. For,

as S. Ambrose says (*de Fide*, v. 2), "Jesus was wearied by His journey, that He might refresh the wearied; He asks for drink, though about to give spiritual drink to those who thirsted for it; He is hungry, though about to give the food of life to the hungry; He dies, though about to quicken; He is buried, though about to rise again; He hangs on the trembling tree, though about to strengthen the trembling; He covers the heaven with darkness, that He may illuminate it; He shakes the earth, in order to make it firm; He lifteth up the sea, that He may calm it; He unbars the tombs of the dead, to show that they are the abodes of the living; He is fashioned of a Virgin, that He may be believed to be the Son of God; He assumes ignorance, that He may instruct the ignorant; He is said to worship as a Jew, to the end that He may be worshipped as indeed the Son of God."

And the rocks rent. First in Golgotha. Whence S. Cyril Hieros. says (*Catech.* xiii.), "Up to this day Golgotha bears its witness, where on Christ's account the rocks were rent." And S. Lucian, too, giving a reason for His faith to the Governor, says, "With these, too, agree the very spot at Jerusalem, and the rock of Golgotha, which was burst asunder by the weight of the Cross." Adrichomius (*Descr. Jerus. num.* 252) speaks more fully: "There can be seen even now the fissure which was made at Christ's death, and also the stain of His Blood," and then describes at length its size, &c. But in many other places besides, says Baronius (*ad An.* 34, *num.* 107), the rocks were rent, as at Mount Alverno, where it was revealed to S. Francis that this took place at the crucifixion. He had accordingly a great devotion to the place, and he there received the Stigmata. S. Ambrose therefore justly exclaims, "O breasts of the Jews! harder than rocks, for the rocks were rent, but their hearts were hardened," &c.

Allegorically: S. Jerome (*ad Hedib. q.* 8), "The rocks were rent, that is, the hard hearts or rocks of the Gentiles; the universal predictions, too, of the Prophets (who, as well as the Apostles, were termed rocks, by the Rock which is Christ), that whatever was concealed in them by the hard covering of the Law might

be rent open and revealed to the Gentiles. The tombs also (of whom it was written that they were as whited sepulchres) were rent, that they who were dead in unbelief might come forth; might live with Christ who had risen; might enter the Heavenly Jerusalem, and have their citizenship no longer on earth, but in Heaven; might die with the earthly, to reign with the Heavenly Adam." Eusebius mentions that at Paxos a voice was heard, "Great Pan is dead," which he explains of Lucifer, whom Christ destroyed by His own death. Others say that Pan was Christ, being "our God and all," and that the devils bewailed His death, because they were thereby despoiled of their dominion over the world.

Ver. 52. *And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose.* This was immediately on Christ's death (as S. Matthew implies), to signify that it was wrought by the power of His Passion, and consequently that by the same power death was overcome, and life restored to mankind. So Bede, Theophylact, and S. Jerome, who says, "The graves were opened in token of the future resurrection." So, too, S. Ambrose (*cap.* x. *on Luke*). And S. Hilary says, "Illumining the darkness of death, and lighting up the gloom of the pit, He robbed death of its spoils, in order to the resurrection of the dead who are now asleep." But yet they came not forth from their graves till after Christ's resurrection (see ver. 53). For S. Paul terms Christ "the first-born from the dead" (Col. i. 18), and "the first-fruits of them that rise again" (1 Cor. xv. 20). For Christ by His death procured resurrection both for Himself and for us. It was therefore but right that, when He had overcome death, He should be the first to rise as its conqueror, and others after Him. (So Origen, S. Jerome, and Bede.)

They rose, then, that Christ might confirm the truth of His resurrection, by those His companions who announced it; and, again, that in and through them Christ might manifest the power of His Passion; that just as the souls of the Patriarchs were freed by it from the pit, so, mystically, would men's souls, which were

dead in sin, be now quickened by His grace, and themselves rise gloriously at last to a blessed and eternal life.

Did, then, these saints die again after their resurrection, or continue in life and glory? Some think they did die, and are to rise again at the last day, and this from S. Paul's words, "That they without us should not be made perfect." (See S. Augustine, *Epist.* xcix. *ad Evodium.*) Others suppose, and more correctly, that they died no more, but were raised up to life immortal. Because it was but fitting that Christ should manifest at once in their resurrection the power of His own. It was also meet that happy souls like these should be united only to glorious and immortal bodies. But their happiness would have been but brief, and their misery greater, if they had died again so speedily. It would have been better, indeed, if they had not risen at all. It was also but fitting that they should adorn Christ's triumphant ascension, as captives redeemed by Him, and the spoils He had won from death; and, lastly, that He should have them with Him in Heaven, and that His human nature, enjoying their presence and society, might never be solitary and void of human consolation. So Origen, S. Jerome, S. Clemens Alex. (*Strom. lib.* vi.), and others. The words "without us" do not refer to the day of judgment, but to the resurrection of Christ and Christians. (See notes on Heb. xi. 40.)

But it is not clear who these saints were. Probably those, in the first place, who were specially connected with Christ, either by kindred, or promise, or type and figure, or by faith and hope, or else by chastity and holiness; as Adam, Abraham, Isaac, Melchisedek, David, who wished to be buried in the promised land, and thus be partakers of Christ's resurrection. Job, also, and Jonah, as types of the resurrection; Moses, Joshua, Samuel, Isaiah, and the other Prophets. Daniel, also, and his three companions (though their bodies are at Rome). Eve, also (some suppose), as well as Adam, though Lorinus considers that the Blessed Virgin was the first woman raised from the grave, as Christ Himself was the first-fruits among men. Those, also, who died but recently; as Zacharias, Simeon, S. John the Baptist

(though his head is shown at Rome and Amiens, his finger at Florence). Raymundus also (*lib. de Bono Latrone, cap.* xiii.) mentions the penitent thief, though S. Augustine (*contr. Felician, cap.* xv.) says, but only by the way, that he was reserved for the future resurrection. There were also many more (especially those mentioned in Heb. xi.) outside Judæa, for "many bodies of the saints arose." For it was indeed quite in harmony with the profuse magnificence of Christ that a crowded procession of the saints who then arose should dignify His resurrection and ascension.

Tropologically: This, says S. Jerome, "is a type of believers, who once, like the graves of the dead, have forsaken their sins, and whose hard hearts have been softened to acknowledge their Creator, and who have risen through penitence to a life of grace."

Went into the Holy City. Jerusalem, so called because of the temple worship, of the many saints who had been there, and of the institution of the Church therein by Christ the King of Saints.

And appeared unto many. To the Apostles, and disciples, and also to the Jews, to persuade them to believe in the resurrection. "That by their resurrection," says Euthymius, "others might be the more assured, by considering that He who had raised them had much more surely raised Himself."

Now when the centurion, &c. Baronius and others suppose that this was Longinus, to whose keeping Pilate had consigned Christ. He was converted by the miracles he had seen, and became a witness and preacher of the resurrection. He is said to have retired to Cappadocia, and there to have been martyred by the Jews (see *Surius*, March 15). Lucius Dexter, a writer of small authority, considers it was C. Oppius, a Spaniard, afterwards the third Bishop of Milan (see Cornelius, *Procem. in Acta ad fin.*).

Saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God. God enlightened him to acknowledge from what he had seen that Jesus was more than man, and God indeed. He had heard that He had been condemned for calling Himself the King of the Jews. But when

he saw that God had borne witness to Him by these many miracles, he acknowledged that He had spoken truly. It was thus God's will that the Centurion should bear unquestionable witness to Christ (S. Hilary). S. Augustine thinks that he confessed Him to be the Son of God not in a natural, but only in a spiritual sense, as a righteous and holy man (Luke xxiii. 47). But others, more correctly, that he confessed Him to be the Son of God by nature. So S. Jerome, "Consider that the Centurion in the very scandal of the Passion confessed Him to be truly the Son of God, and that Arius proclaims Him a creature;" and adds, "But now the last are first; the Gentile people confess, the Jews in their blindness deny, that their last error may be worse than their first." And Theophylact, "The order of things is reversed, while the Jews kill, the disciples fly, and a Gentile confesses. Now do the Lord's words (John xii. 32) receive their fulfilment, for lifted up on the Cross He drew to Himself the robber and the Centurion." Bede too, "The faith of the Church is very fitly designated by the Centurion, for when the Synagogue is mute, it affirms Him to be the Son of God." Lastly, S. Bernard (*Serm.* ii. *de Epiph.*), "How keen-sighted is faith! It recognises the Son of God when at the breast, when hanging on the Cross. If the thief recognised Him on the Cross, so did the Magi in the stable. The thief proclaims Him King, but the Centurion the Son of God, and man too at the same time."

Not only the Centurion and the soldiers, but, as S. Luke (xxiii. 48) adds, "All the people . . . smote their breasts," in token of sorrow, "and returned." They begin now to put forth the blossoms of repentance, that they may bear fruit at the preaching of S. Peter and the Apostles (Acts ii.).

Here comes in S. John xix. 31, on which see notes *in loc.*

Ver. 55. *And many women were there* (*beholding*) *afar off*, &c. S. Matthew says this to set forth how much greater faith, constancy, and affection for Jesus these women had than men. "See how things were reversed," says Euthymius; "the disciples had fled, but the women remained." For women are commonly more

holy than men, and hence the Church prays "for the devout sex of women." It was also to point out that they, as grave and pious matrons, were reliable witnesses of what had taken place, and moreover that they had carefully provided for His burial. It was also to show that they had been so drawn to Him by His patience and holiness, that they could not be torn away, either by fear, or by the threats of the Jews, from wondering, gazing, and meditating on Him.

Many women. The Blessed Mother was the chief, the others merely her attendants. She "stood by the Cross," bearing all the pains in her compassion which He endured in His Passion, and with like constancy and fortitude. S. Antoninus says (*Theol. par.* iv. *tit.* 15, *cap.* 41), "The Virgin was so conformed to the Divine Will, that, if necessary (as Anselm says), she would herself have offered Him on the Cross; for her obedience was equal to Abraham's."

Damascene (*de Fide*, iv. 25) points out the greatness of her pain. "The Virgin suffered at the Passion the pangs she escaped in child-birth." And S. Anselm (*de Excell. Virg. cap.* v.), "Whatever suffering was inflicted on martyrs was light, O Virgin, compared with thine." And S. Laur. Justiniani (*de Agone Christi, cap.* ii.), "The heart of the Virgin was made the brightest mirror of Christ's Passion;" and *cap.* xvii., "The Son was crucified in body, the Mother in mind." And S. Bernard, in *Apoc.* xii., on the words "a great sign," says, "A mighty pain, O Virgin, pierced thy soul, so that we rightly term thee more than martyr, for in thee the feeling of compassion was far greater than the sense of bodily suffering."

Baronius (*ad An.* 34, *cap.* xi.) describes, from Simeon Metaphrastes, her great self-possession, in helping to take Him down from the Cross, treasuring the nails in her bosom, washing His wounds with her tears, embracing His body in her arms, and saying at last with calm voice, "O Lord, the mystery ordained for Thee before all ages has come at length." And on giving the napkin to Joseph, she said, "It will now be thy duty to bury Him

honourably in this, to perfume Him with myrrh, and to perform for Him all rightful observances."

Afar off. S. John says they stood "by the Cross," meaning thereby opposite to it, though at some distance. For the soldiers who were watching Christ, and the dense crowd, kept them from coming very near. But they came as close as they could to hear and see Him. Adrichomius says about eighteen paces. Some say that they were close at one time, and farther off at another. The Greek adds, "beholding" both the wondrous patience of Jesus, and the prodigies which took place around Him, and pondering over them in their mind with holy meditation.

Ministering unto Him. Supporting Him and His disciples. S. Jerome says, "It was a Jewish custom for women thus to minister to their teachers."

Among whom (as the chief and leader of the rest) *was Mary Magdalene*, from whom He had cast forth seven devils, who clung to Him from gratitude, and would not be torn from Him.

And Mary the mother of James and Joses. The wife of Cleophas or Alphæus. Salmeron considers her the daughter of Cleophas; called from her relationship, Mary the sister of our Lord's mother, from her husband, Mary (the wife) of Alphæus. See above, chap. xiii. 55.

And the mother of Zebedee's children. Salome. See Mark xv. 40.

Ver. 57. *But when even was come.* Evening was drawing on, but had not yet come, and it was necessary for Him to be buried before the evening, when the Sabbath (on which they had to rest) began.

A certain rich man. For a poor man would not have dared to make such a request, says S. Jerome.

Of Arimathæa. Called (1 Sam. i.) Ramathaim-Zophim, afterwards Rama, Aarima, and Memphtis (S. Jerome, *de locis Hebr.*), called Rama from its high position. Joseph was a native of the place, but a citizen of Jerusalem. Arimathæa, says S. Jerome, means "lifted up," as was Joseph here.

Named Joseph. Christ came into the world by Joseph the

betrothed husband of the Virgin,* and was buried by another Joseph. Joseph means "increased"—that is, by the grace of God. For as the Patriarch Joseph abounded in chastity and affection for his father, so did Joseph the husband of the Virgin excel in chastity; and this Joseph, again, was eminent for his tender love for Christ, his spiritual father, when now dead. S. Mark calls him a noble Counsellor (*βουλευτής*), in Vulg. *decurio*, which was the provincial word for Senator. He is supposed to have been a Councillor of Jerusalem, from his having lived and made his burial-place there. Maldonatus supposes he took part in the Council about taking and killing Christ (Matt. xxvi. 4), but that he did not agree with the rest (Luke xxiii. 51). "Whence some think," says S. Jerome, "that he is spoken of in Ps. i."

Who also himself was Jesus' disciple, and thus wished to perform the last offices for his Master.

Ver. 58. *He came to Pilate.* "Came boldly," says S. Mark, for though, for fear of the Jews, he was a secret disciple, yet he fearlessly entered on this difficult work; for he was both strengthened by Christ and urged on by the Blessed Virgin (see above, ver. 55). "From this we may see," says Victor of Antioch, "his great resolution and boldness, for he nearly sacrificed his own life for Christ's sake, by drawing down on himself the suspicions of his Jewish enemies;" and S. Chrysostom, "The boldness of Joseph is highly to be admired, when for love of Christ he incurred peril of death, and exposed himself to general hatred." S. Luke and S. Mark say, "who also himself waited for the Kingdom of God." He hoped, *i.e.*, through Christ, for heavenly love, and thus risked danger for His sake.

And begged the body of Jesus. S. Anselm (*Dial. de Pass.*) says it was revealed to himself by the Blessed Virgin that Joseph gave this reason, among others, for his request, that His mother was dying of grief for her only Son, and that it was unreasonable that

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* Cornelius adds, "For He did not wish to be born except of a virgin espoused to Joseph."—*Editor.*

the innocent mother should die as well as the Son; but that it would be some consolation to her to bury Him. Grant her, therefore, most afflicted as she is, this favour. It is probable, also, that he alleged the holiness and innocence of Jesus, which Pilate well knew, and that therefore His body ought not to be cast forth with those of criminals into the Valley of Corpses, adjoining Golgotha, but was worthy of honourable burial, which he was ready to provide.

A wild story is here told, on the authority of the Gospel of Nicodemus, that Joseph was in consequence imprisoned by the Chief Priests, and miraculously delivered; and that, when the Chief Priests required the soldiers to produce the body of Jesus, they replied, "Do you produce Joseph, and we will produce Christ" (Greg. Tur. *Hist.* i. 21), whereupon the soldiers were acquitted of the charge. There is an equally improbable story in Baronius (*ad An.* 35, *cap.* 4), that Joseph crossed with S. Mary Magdalene and others in a vessel without oars or sail to Marseilles, and from thence to England, where he preached Christ, and was venerated after his death there as the Apostle of England.

Then (having heard and approved of Joseph's reasons) *Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.* That he might thus make Him some kind of satisfaction for having condemned Him to death, and also palliate his own conduct by giving Him an honourable burial, as though he had condemned Him by compulsion.

To be delivered. On Joseph paying a price, says Theophylact. But this is not probable, for the reasons just given, and because S. Mark says, "He gave the body to Joseph," who had it as a gift, and did not pay for it. It would indeed have been a most sordid and avaricious act for Pilate to have sold it. "To be delivered" means "to be given," as in the Syriac. But the Evangelist says "to be delivered," because the body had been already given up to the soldiers for crucifixion. He orders them, therefore, to return it to Joseph. S. Mark adds, "But Pilate marvelled if He were already dead," because the thieves were not yet dead, and also (says Euthymius) because he expected that

Jesus would die slowly, being a divine man, far surpassing others in endurance. "But when he knew from the Centurion that He was dead, he gave the body to Joseph" (Mark xv. 45).

Ver. 59. *And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth.* Such a cloth well suited this most pure body. Sindon is a cloth woven of the finest and most delicate flax, so called from Sidon, where it was first made. The Jews used to wrap their dead bodies in it, bound their hands and feet with bandages, and the head with a napkin (John xi. 44). Thus did Joseph do to Christ (John xix. 40). S. Jerome from this condemns the lavish funerals of the rich, and adds, "But we can take this to signify, in a spiritual sense, that he who receives Jesus in a pure mind wraps him in a clean linen cloth."

For this reason the body of Christ is in the Mass placed only in a very clean and fine linen cloth. This is called a Corporal, from the body of Christ which it contains within it, as though in a tomb. S. John adds that Nicodemus brought myrrh and aloes to anoint and perfume the body (John xix. 39). For these kept bodies from putrefying.

Mystically: Euthymius wishes us to be fragrant with these ointments when we receive the body of Christ in our breast, as in a new tomb. "Let us, too," he says, "when we receive the body of Christ at the altar, anoint it with sweet odours, *i.e.*, by virtuous acts and by contemplation," &c. Baronius describes from Jewish writers their mode of laying out for burial.

Ver. 60. *And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock.* S. John adds (xix. 41) that it was in a garden. It was "a new tomb," lest any one else who had there been buried should be supposed (says S. Chrysostom) or pretended (S. Jerome) to have risen again. S. Augustine says,

Mystically: As no one either before or after Him was conceived in the Virgin's womb, so no one either before or after Him was buried in this tomb.

In the rock. "For had it been built of many stones, and the foundations had fallen in, it might have been said that the body

had been stolen away," says S. Jerome. Bede, on Mark xv., describes fully its shape, "That it was so high that a man could hardly touch the top. Its entrance was on the east. On the north was the place where the Lord lay, raised up above the rest of the floor, and open on the south." Adrichomius also describes it, and adds "that Joseph gave up his own tomb to Christ, who was thus buried in the grave of a stranger." "He who had no home of His own when alive (says Theophylact), has no tomb of His own, but is laid in another's tomb, and being naked is clothed by Joseph." "He is buried," says S. Augustine (*Serm.* cxxxiii. *de Temp.*), "in the tomb of another, because He died for the salvation of others. Why needed He a tomb of His own, who had not any true cause of death in Himself? Why needed He a tomb on earth, whose seat was for ever in Heaven? What had He to do with a tomb, who for the space of three days rather rested in His bed than lay dead in the grave?"

Anagogically: Christ thus signified that He and His were strangers on earth, and that Heaven was their true country. S. Antony, S. Ephrem, S. Francis, and others preferred to be buried in another's grave, and not their own, after Christ's pattern. Here, then, was fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy (xi. 10), "And His sepulchre shall be glorious." Hence, too, the custom of pilgrimages to Jerusalem for so many centuries. Hence the erection by S. Helena of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, with its surpassing splendour, enclosing under the same roof the site of the crucifixion, resurrection, &c. Hence the wish of Godfrey of Bouillon, and other kings after him, to be buried on the same spot, and the institution also of an order of knighthood.

Lastly, that tomb was in a garden, because Adam had sinned in a garden. Hence, too, Christ began His Passion in a garden, and completed it by being buried in a garden. And this, too, to atone for the sentence passed on Adam; and, moreover, that He might form and plant a most beautiful garden, flourishing with the blossoms and fruits of all virtues, *i.e.*, His Church. Note here that Christ's body was laid in the tomb, as on the Cross, with its head and face

so turned as to look away from the east, and towards the west. So Bede and Adrichomius.

Observe, Christ, as soon as He expired, descended in His soul to the *Limbus Patrum*, and made the patriarchs glad by manifesting to them Himself and His Godhead. He freed also the souls in Purgatory, and gave them the first general jubilee. He manifested His Godhead to them also, and made them blessed (see on 1 Pet. iii. 19). The devils also, and ungodly men in hell, He condemned to perpetual punishment, as their Lord, their Judge, and their triumphant Victor. The soul of Christ there remained till the third day, when it came forth with the Patriarchs and other saints, resumed its body, and rose in glory. He then made the Patriarchs resume their bodies, and rise together with Him. The order, mode, and time when these things took place is mentioned in the beginning of Chap. xxviii. Observe, the Godhead of Christ, the Divine Person of the Word, ever remained hypostatically united both to His body in the tomb and to His soul in the *Limbus*, for that which it once assumed it never gave up, and will not give up for ever.

And he rolled (aided by his servants and Nicodemus) *a great stone to the door of the sepulchre.* That no one might take away the body; or, rather, Divine Wisdom so ordered it, lest the Jews after the resurrection should deny the fact, and maintain that the Apostles, who had stolen the body away, had boldly invented the tale. And for the same reason God willed that His body should be buried by those, as Joseph and Nicodemus, who were worthy of credit, and that it should be sealed up and watched by the Jews, that in this way His death and subsequent resurrection might be clearly known to all. Now the Lord's body, while still in the grave, gave indeed an indication and prelude (as it were) of His resurrection, by remaining uncorrupt for three days; being in truth a virgin and holy body, fashioned by the Holy Spirit, and as such does it abide for ever.

Ver. 61. *And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary.* The other Mary, the mother of James and Joses. It appears that

Salome, having no further office to do for Jesus, returned home in sorrow, or took home the Blessed Virgin. Simeon Metaphrastes, however, asserts that the Blessed Virgin remained on the spot till the resurrection, as assuredly believing that it would take place on the third day.

Sitting over against the sepulchre. Our Lord, as was fitting, was laid out by men, and not by women, who, while this was taking place, did not venture to enter the sepulchre. But they waited till the men retired, and then went in and saw how he was laid, that they might return very early the next morning, when the Sabbath was over, and anoint His body.

Ver. 62. *Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together to Pilate.* The day of the preparation was the Friday, so called because they then prepared everything needed for the Sabbath, on which day they had to rest.

But it was the day after, that is, on the Sabbath, that they came together unto Pilate. Theophylact says, "He names not the Sabbath, for there was no Sabbath (or rest) in the Jews' madness." They raged, indeed, like madmen against Jesus, to abolish utterly His name and memory. And it increased their rage to see Him so honourably buried, as though it were the prelude to His future resurrection, whether it were actually to occur, or would be a mere invention of the disciples.

Ver. 63. *Saying, Sir, we remember that deceiver said, when He was yet alive.* "That impostor" (S. Augustine, *Hom.* xxxvi. *inter* l.). "By this name," he says also (in Ps. lxiii. 7), "was the Lord Jesus Christ called, to console His servants when called deceivers."

After three days I will rise again. Three days not completed, but only begun, *i.e.*, within three days, or the third day after.

Ver. 64. *Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His disciples come and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead.* Wishing before this to prove Him an impostor, they carry out their malice even to the

grave. They were greatly afraid that He would rise again, and therefore ask for a guard, either to keep Him from rising, or to seize Him at the moment and put Him to death. For what they add about the disciples stealing Him was a mere pretext, for they knew that they had fled in fear and consternation, and would never think or attempt anything of the kind.

So the last error shall be worse than the first. The first error was the Gospel doctrine that Jesus was the Son of God. The last error was His resurrection, and it would be the worst as confirming the first. For if Jesus had spoken falsely in calling Himself the Son of God, God would not "have raised Him." But if He is believed to have risen, He will have a multitude of followers; and if this belief once takes root, it will not afterwards be eradicated. Lastly, it would arouse great hatred and ill-will against the Chief Priests and Romans for having killed Him unjustly; and might indeed lead them to avenge His death by war or rebellion. It would therefore have been better not to have killed Him than to allow Him to rise again. For the devil, foreseeing the future of the Church (the numbers, the faith, the holiness of Christ's followers), endeavoured to crush and choke it in its birth. But "there is no counsel against the Lord" (Prov. xxi. 30).

Ver. 65. *Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch* (*i.e.*, the soldiers assigned you for His crucifixion; use them now to guard Him in the grave).

Go your way, make it as sure as ye can. Guard Him as ye know how (Vulg.), *i.e.*, in the best way ye know. I leave to your skill and prudence the mode of doing it. I do not wish to interfere any more in this matter. "As if taught by experience," says S. Chrysostom, "he does not wish to act with them any further."

Some take the word (ἔχετε) imperatively, Take ye, summon ye the guard. But it is more forcible to consider it in the indicative mood, "Ye have," &c. (So Vulg., Arab., and A. V.)

Ver. 66. *So they went their way, and made the sepulchre sure,*

sealing the stone, and setting a watch. They secured the sepulchre in a twofold way—with the guard of soldiers, whom they ordered to keep diligent watch, and by sealing the stone.

They sealed it with a signet, not Pilate's, as S. Chrysostom suggests, but with their own, *i.e.*, with the signet of the city of Jerusalem, or of the Sanhedrim, so that the stone could not be moved, nor the body be taken away, without its being detected. So, too, Darius (Dan. vi. 17). Nicephorus adds that the Jews bored through both the stones of the tomb, and fastened them with an iron band. And thus, by endeavouring to prevent the resurrection of Christ, they did but add to the miracle, and furnished greater evidence for it; which God, as it were, extorted from them. So S. Chrysostom, "An undoubted demonstration is furnished by your own doings. For if the sepulchre were sealed, no room was left for fraud and deceit. But if no fraud had been committed, and the tomb was found empty, it is clear beyond all question that He had risen. Thou seest how, even against their will, they help to demonstrate the truth." "It was not enough," says S. Jerome, "for the Chief Priests and Pharisees to have crucified the Lord, unless they took a band of soldiers, sealed the stone, and, as far as they could, opposed His resurrection; so that all they did was for the furtherance of our faith. For the more it is kept back, the more fully is the power of the resurrection displayed."

Tropologically: Says Barradius, "From this deed of the ungodly let us learn godliness. After we have received Christ into our breast, as into a new tomb, let us take diligent heed that He may remain therein by grace, and never forsake us. Let us post our vigilant guards—that is, our watchful virtues—to drive away sleep and sloth from us; let us gird ourselves with a weapon stronger than iron; let us fortify our breasts with an unconquerable resolve to sin no more."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1 *Christ's resurrection is declared by an angel to the women.* 9 *He himself appeareth unto them.* 11 *The high priests give the soldiers money to say that he was stolen out of his sepulchre.* 16 *Christ appeareth to his disciples,* 19 *and sendeth them to baptize and teach all nations.*

IN the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:

4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men.*

5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

9 ¶ And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

11 ¶ Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him *away* while we slept.

14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

16 ¶ Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 ¶ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

In the evening of the Sabbath (Vulg.), *as the first day of the week was dawning*, &c. How could it be called evening if day was dawning, or even if, as S. Mark says, the sun were risen? Firstly, S. Jerome answers that these women had gone forth frequently to the sepulchre, both in the evening and in the morning, so that the Evangelists refer to different occasions of their going forth.

Secondly, S. Ambrose thinks that they were different women who went out in the evening and in the morning. So Nyssen (*Orat.* 2, *on the Resurrection*) thinks that the women went four times to the sepulchre. But it is clear to any one who compares the different accounts, that the Evangelists speak of the same visit made by the same women to the sepulchre of Christ.

Thirdly, Baronius by *the evening* understands the star of Venus, which is called Lucifer, so that the meaning will be, "When Lucifer was risen in the morning before the sun, Mary Magdalene came to the sepulchre of Christ." But this star is not denoted by the Greek word ὄψε, or by the Latin word *Vespere*.

I say, therefore, that by the *evening of the Sabbath* is signified the night which followed the Sabbath. That it was so clear, first, from S. Mark, who says, *and when the Sabbath was passed;* secondly, because S. Matthew is wont to sum up many things in a few words. Accordingly, he here sums up the time when the women came together and made preparations for visiting and anointing Christ, which was in the evening, or immediately the Sabbath was passed; and he also wished to indicate the time when they came to the sepulchre, which was at the dawn of the

Lord's day. For this is what S. Luke says (chap. xxiii. 56), "*And they returned* (after Christ had been buried), *and prepared spices and ointments, and rested on the Sabbath day, according to the commandment; and on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared.*" And S. Mark (xvi. 1) says, "*When the Sabbath was passed, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, that they might come and anoint Jesus. And very early in the morning on the first day of the week, they came to the sepulchre.*" Mark is generally the interpreter of Matthew. S. Augustine says, "Thus, *on the evening of the Sabbath* is just the same as if he had said *on the night of the Sabbath*, that is, the night which follows the day of the Sabbath, which is sufficiently proved by the words which follow, *as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week.*" This could not be if we understood only the first portion of the night, its beginning, to be signified by the word *evening*. For the evening, or beginning of the night, does not begin to dawn towards the first day of the week, but only the night which is concluded by the dawn. For the end of the first part of the night is the beginning of the second; and the dawn is the end of the whole night. Whence *the evening* could not be said to dawn towards the first day of the week, unless by the word *evening* the night itself is understood, which is concluded by the dawn.

Matthew, therefore, declares that these women had prepared ointments at night, but came to the sepulchre at the rising of the dawn, as Luke, John, and Mark say. But John adds that they came early in the morning, while it was yet dark. I answer, That also is true, because it was dawn, since the sun not having yet appeared, but only his rays reflected from the hills or clouds, there still remained a measure of darkness in the air.

Peter Chrysologus, in a sermon on the resurrection, gives another symbolical reason. "According to nature," he says, "it was dark, and yet it is said that the sun had risen, because on that day the sun, rejoicing as it were at the resurrection of

Christ, rose before the wonted time." Remigius agrees with Chrysologus, "The dignity of that night is declared, for according to the course of nature evening does not dawn towards day, but darkness towards night; but the Lord by the light of His resurrection made the whole of that night joyful and brilliant."

It is clear that these women came to the sepulchre early in the morning; for their love for Christ urged them on to hasten to this, and anticipate the day; and also their fear of the Jews, lest if they had come by daylight, and had been seen by the Jews, who were hostile to Him, they should have been ill-treated by them.

Further, Matthew here only mentions directly the time of the coming of the women to the sepulchre, yet he indirectly signifies also the time at which Christ rose, namely, in the early morning, a little before the arrival of the women, according to the common opinion of the Doctors and the Church, which S. Jerome and S. Augustine prove from Ps. lvi. 9, *I will awake early*.

The general sense, then, is, that Christ rose after the middle of the night before sunrise on the Lord's day, for otherwise He would have been found dead by the women; and as He was born at the same time thirty-three years before of the Blessed Virgin, so now He was born again through the resurrection, that He might as a new Sun of Righteousness shine upon the world. Whence also in former times, Christians, after the middle of the night on the day of the Passover, broke off their fast and keeping of vigil, and began to rejoice greatly.

Further, Christ does not seem to have risen immediately after the middle of the night. For Mark more exactly says that Christ rose early in the morning. And most of the Fathers teach this, whom Suarez quotes (3. *p. disp.* 46, *sect.* 2), and the Church in the Paschal hymn, *Aurora lucis*.

On the first day of the week. That is, on the first day after the Sabbath, on the Lord's day; about the religious observance of which day S. Augustine thus writes (*Serm.* 251, *de Temp.*), "The

Apostles and apostolic men appointed that day to be observed with holy solemnity, because on it our Redeemer rose from the dead; and it is called on that account the Lord's day, that abstaining on it from earthly works, we may devote ourselves only to the study of divine things, giving to this day honour and reverence, on account of the hope of our resurrection, which we have in it. For, as the Lord rose from the dead, so also we hope that we shall rise."

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary. That is, the wife of Cleophas and mother of James. These were the leaders and standard-bearers of the rest who were wont to follow Christ; for that there were several others is clear from Luke xxiii. 55, where, among others, he names Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward; and Mark adds Salome. The Blessed Virgin Mother of God did not come with them, because she certainly knew and expected that Christ would rise on that same day; whence she knew that the anointing would be useless.

Morally: Learn from this that Christ reveals Himself and His grace and glory to those souls who hasten to anoint Him with the good works of prayer, penance, and charity. Whence S. Gregory (*Hom.* 21) says, "Those women who came with spices see the angels; and so those souls behold the heavenly citizens who, with the sweet odours of their virtues, approach the Lord in holy desires."

To see the sepulchre. It is very probable that they were ignorant of the watch of the soldiers that had been posted by the Jews at the sepulchre, and also of the sealing. For if they had known of these two things, they would not have dared to come to the sepulchre, lest they should fall into the hands of the watch, much less to break the seal. But God removed both of these hindrances out of their way. Hence learn courageously to undertake works for the glory of God, and certainly to trust that God will either remove, or cause us to surmount, all hindrances that lie in our way.

Mystically: Bede (*on Luke* xxiv.) says, "By the women coming

early in the morning to the sepulchre, we have an example given to us, that, having cast away the darkness of our vices, we should come to the body of the Lord. For that sepulchre also bore the figure of the altar of the Lord, wherein the mysteries of Christ's body, not in silk or purple cloth, but in pure white linen, like that in which Joseph wrapped it, ought to be consecrated, that as He offered up to death for us the true substance of His earthly nature, so we also, in commemoration of Him, should place on the altar the flax, pure from the plant of the earth, and white, and in many ways refined by a kind of crushing to death. But the spices which the women bring signify the odour of virtue and the sweetness of prayers, by which we ought to approach the latter."

The following was the order of events:—First, Christ was in His Passion during about eighteen hours. For on the Thursday, towards evening, He ate the lamb, He washed the disciples' feet, He instituted the Eucharist, and held a long discourse on love, and at last proceeded to Gethsemane; all which things would easily take up three hours. Wherefore, about the third hour of his death in Gethsemane, He began to be sorrowful, and to pray that the cup might pass from Him. Hence, if you reckon all the hours up to the third hour in the afternoon of Friday, when Christ died, you will find eighteen hours; so that you may learn, according to the moral meaning, how short is the time of the suffering of Christ and of Christians, and how long the time of resurrection and of glory, for it is eternal. So bountiful is God, so brief is the suffering, so long the reward and the glory.

Secondly, Christ dying at *the third hour* in the afternoon, immediately as to His soul went down into hell; but His body was taken down from the Cross, and washed and wrapped in linen, so that He was buried before night, for it was the night of the Sabbath, on which the Jews must rest from all work. Wherefore He was in hell about thirty-six hours (but in the sepulchre thirty-three).

Thirdly, Christ, as soon as He appeared in hell, that is, in *Limbus*, showed to Adam and Abraham and the rest of the

fathers and prophets, not only His soul, but also His Deity united to it. Wherefore He gladdened them with the vision of His divinity; then, too, did hell become like heaven. Whence He said to the robber who was about to go to Him in *Limbus*, *To-day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.*

Fourthly, About the ninth hour of the night of the Lord's day, Christ, having passed forth from hell with the fathers, came to the sepulchre, and there He showed them His body, livid, blood-stained, and torn for them; and presently cleansing His body from all lividness, blood, and ointment, and again sending angels (though some are of opinion that all these things were done not by angels, but by the soul of Christ itself, which had this power through the hypostatic union with the Word) to gather up the blood which had been scattered by the scourging; and after it had been gathered up, He again infused it into the veins of His body, which the glorious soul of Christ entered, and uniting to itself, animated and glorified.

Fifthly, To many of the fathers, as Abraham and others, He restored their bodies, that He might make them sharers of His resurrection and glory, and witnesses of it to the Jews, as is clear from Matt. xxvii. 53.

Sixthly, Christ, when He rose, passed through the stone that covered the sepulchre. Soon afterwards the angel descended and caused an earthquake, and removed the stone from the sepulchre that He might arouse the watch, and open a way for the women to the sepulchre.

Seventhly, He appeared in glory to the Blessed Virgin, His mother, and showed the Patriarchs to her, who all saluted her, and were filled with great joy. Then He appeared to Mary Magdalene, who had stayed near the sepulchre.

Tropologically: Learn here how religiously we ought to venerate and adorn the tombs and relics of Christ, the Martyrs, and other Saints. "The bodies of the just," says S. Augustine, "are not to be thought meanly of, which the Holy Spirit used as organs and vessels for all good works."

And, behold, there was a great earthquake, &c. Firstly, By it was signified the power, magnificence, and glory of Christ in His resurrection as God. For by an earthquake God made known His presence on Sinai and elsewhere.

Secondly, That the women might recognise the angel not only from his glorious appearance, but from this earthquake, and might more easily believe the resurrection of Christ proclaimed by the angel; especially because by means of the earthquake he rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, that the women might enter, and seeing it empty, might know that Christ was risen.

Symbolically: The earth which trembled with horror at the death of Christ, as it were leaped with joy at the resurrection.

For the angel, &c. Franciscus Lucas and others are of opinion that this angel was Gabriel, who, according to the meaning of his name, is the minister of *the power of God*. It is not to be doubted that other angels were present with him, and guarded the sepulchre during the three days, and adored the sacred body of Christ lying in it, as being hypostatically united to the Deity.

Further, the angel appeared in the form of a young man, as Mark says, first, because youth is a sign of the never-failing vigour and strength of the angels. Secondly, because the angel represented Christ, who was a young man; for He died and rose again in the thirty-fourth year of His age. Thirdly, his youth showed that he was strong and warlike, ready to fight against the watch. Lastly, youth represents beauty, immortality, activity, and the glory of the glorious body which Christ had assumed in the resurrection.

And rolled away the stone, of the sepulchre of Christ. Not that He might rise out of it, for He had already risen while the sepulchre was closed, but that he might show to the women that Christ their God and Lord had already risen. Opening to them a way to the sepulchre, he showed it to them empty of the body of Christ. For as Christ was born from the closed womb of the Virgin, so also He rose from the closed sepulchre.

S. Augustine (*Serm.* 138, *de Temp.*) says, "The unbelieving Jews

set a seal on the stone of the sepulchre that Christ might not come forth. But how would it be impossible for Him to come forth from the sepulchre who had come forth from the pure womb of His mother, her virginity being preserved? He escaped the notice of the guards; He leaped forth from the sepulchre; He appeared to the disciples when the doors were shut: from the one place He came forth when He was shut in; into the other He entered when He was shut out." So Euthymius, Chrysostom, &c. S. Leo, in his 83rd epistle to the monks of Palestine, says that the stone being rolled back, Christ rose again on the third day; and that the rolling back of the stone was not the cause, but the sign and the proof that the resurrection of Christ was not in appearance only, but real.

We may gather, hence, in opposition to Calvin, that by the same power of God, whole Christ can be obtained under a small host. For if Christ in passing through the stone of the sepulchre could occupy the same place as the stone, therefore in the same host there can be at the same time the great and several members of Christ. The Calvinists, in order to evade this argument, answer that the stone being softened like wax melted away, and so opened a way for Christ as He rose. But this is an absurd figment of theirs, and altogether opposed to the consent of the Fathers, the Doctors, and the Church.

Some think that there were two stones to the sepulchre, the first on the outside, which closed the outer entrance of the sepulchre; the second on the inside, which protected the sepulchre itself. But the Evangelists make mention of only one stone. Chrysologus (*Serm.* 74) says truly, "The rolling to of the stone was a proof of death; the rolling back of it asserted the resurrection." And Severian in the *Catena* says, "He says not 'rolled,' but 'rolled back' the stone; because the stone rolled to was a proof of death, and the rolling of it back asserted the resurrection. The order of things is changed. The tomb devours death, and not the dead. The house of death becomes the mansion of life; it receives a dead, and renders up a living man."

Samson was a type of this, who having entered Gaza, and being besieged by the Philistines, rose up in the middle of the night and carried away the gates to the top of a mountain; because, as S. Gregory (*Hom.* 21) explains, "our Redeemer rising before it was light, not only came forth free from hell, but destroyed also the bars of hell. He carried away its gates, and ascended to the top of the mountain; for by rising again He carried away the bars of hell, and by ascending He entered the Kingdom of Heaven."

And sat upon it. Not as if wearied with the labour of removing the stone, but to show, first, that it was he who had rolled away the stone. Secondly, to protect the women against the watch. Thirdly, that he was the guardian of the sepulchre of the Lord, says S. Jerome, so that no one seeing it empty might bring in another dead body, and say that Christ had not risen. Fourthly, that he might terrify the soldiers.

S. Thomas assigns symbolical reasons for the sitting of the angel. "He sat, though he was not weary, as teacher of the faith, as master of the resurrection. The angel laid upon the stone the foundations of the faith upon which Christ was going to found His Church. Or by the stone may be designated death, by which all men were oppressed: by the angel sitting upon the stone it is therefore signified that Christ subdued death by His own power." And Bede also says, "The angel *sat*, to show that now He had overcome him who had the power of death; He had mounted the throne of the everlasting kingdom. He sat upon the stone that had been rolled back, wherewith the mouth of the sepulchre had been closed, to teach that by His power He had burst the bars of hell."

You will say, How do Matthew and Mark say that the angel *sat*, when Luke says that he *stood*? I answer, that by a Hebraism, to *stand* is a term applicable to any position; for it only signifies that a thing is present, whether standing upright, or sitting, or lying. Then, also, the account given by Matthew and Mark is a different one from that given by Luke, as I shall presently show.

You will say, secondly, How does Matthew say that the angel sat

upon the stone rolled back, that is, outside the sepulchre, when Mark says that the women saw the angel not outside, but on entering into the tomb? I answer, that the angel first removed the stone which closed the sepulchre, and then terrified the watch who were outside, and drove them away, so that they might not hinder the women from approaching the sepulchre; then, that he entered the sepulchre itself, and was there seen by the women, that he might show them the empty sepulchre, and that Christ had risen. Whence he says, "He is risen, as He said; come, see the place where the Lord lay." So Theophylact. Or, rather, the angel of whom Matthew speaks was a different one from that of whom Mark speaks. So Barradius.

But I maintain that the same angel is spoken of by Mark as by Matthew. For Mark is generally the interpreter of Matthew. Wherefore, what Mark says about their entering into the tomb is to be understand thus, when they were preparing or beginning to enter the tomb; for they had not yet entered it, but were still outside, and there they saw and heard the angel, as Matthew has it. For *to enter* signifies, here and elsewhere, an act begun and not finished.

And his countenance was like lightning, &c. First, because lightning is akin to, and best represents the nature and properties of angels. For lightning is most brilliant, swift, and powerful. For this reason it is spoken of the cherubim who accompany the chariot of God (Ezek. i. 14), "They ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning." And the 103d Psalm, quoted by Paul, Heb. i., "Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire."

Secondly, lightning signifies the glory of the angels, which shines with the lightning of divine knowledge. Again, lightning signifies the glory of Christ rising; for the body of Christ shone with glory like lightning. For angels, when they appear, appear in that manner which is in agreement with the matter on account of which they appear. Since, therefore, this angel appears to represent the glorious resurrection of Christ, His countenance therefore was like

lightning. For lightning best represents the four properties of the glorious body of Christ and of the blessed, namely, brightness, impassibility, subtlety, and agility. "For by the resurrection of Christ," says S. Leo, "weakness has been changed into strength, mortality into immortality, and shame into glory."

Thirdly, Lightning represents the zeal and the anger of the angel against the impious Jews and soldiers, who wished to hinder the resurrection of Christ. Whence to them only he appeared shooting forth lightning, as if he were going to spring upon them; but for the women he tempered this lightning, and showed to them a countenance glorious indeed, but mild. For the Blessed appear to different persons with such appearance and form as they will; wherefore to the women he appeared only clothed with a white robe, as Mark says (chap. xvi. 3). Listen to what S. Gregory says (*Hom.* 21, *in Evang.*), "In lightning is terror, but in snow is a tempered brightness; and because Almighty God is terrible to sinners and mild to the righteous, so the angel, who is a witness of His resurrection, is rightly shown with a countenance like lightning and with raiment like snow, that by his appearance he might terrify the wicked and comfort the good."

Tropologically: Holy and angelic preachers may be like thunder and lightnings, by which the vices of enemies are destroyed. So John and James are called by Christ Boanerges—that is, sons of thunder, thundering and lightning against impiety and impious men.

Anagogically: Lightning represents the fire of Gehenna, prepared for the impious Jews and the soldiers, because lightnings are sulphurous, and smell of fire and sulphur, and Gehenna burns with fire and sulphur.

And his raiment was like snow. Pure and white. This brightness signifies, first, the purity, innocence, and chastity of the angels; secondly, the joy and glory of the resurrection of Christ.

Ver. 4. *And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.* That is, they were astonished and stupefied like the dead, as S. Jerome says. For they feared lest they should be

blasted, as it were, and killed by lightning. If the angel only by the lightning glance of his countenance so struck and terrified the soldiers, what would he have done if he had laid his hands on them? For one angel slew in one night 185,000 soldiers in the camp of Sennacherib.

Ver. 5. *And the angel answered*, &c. You will say, How is it that Matthew and Mark speak only of one angel as seen by the women, when Luke affirms that two were seen, who comforted the women with different words from those which Matthew and Mark have? I answer that the account of Luke is different from that of Matthew, and that he relates what happened later, as I shall hereafter show.

The women. Namely, the Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Joanna, and the rest (see Luke xxiv. 10). Those are mistaken, therefore, who think that Magdalene, after she had seen the empty sepulchre, immediately ran back to tell the Apostles, without seeing the angels, and that they were only seen by Mary the mother of James and the rest. John, therefore (chap. xx. 1), while he mentions Magdalene only, with her understands all the rest of her companions; for she was the leader and chief of them all. Eve conversing with the devil incurred death; but these conversing with the angel found life. Sorceresses and witches are like Eve, who, conversing with the devil, drink in death; but penitents are like Magdalene, who, invoking angels, obtain life.

Fear not ye. "The word *ye*," says S. Chrysostom, "carries with it much honour, and at the same time declares that those who had dared to commit that great crime would, unless they should repent, suffer extreme punishment. For it is not, he says, for you to fear, but for those who crucified Him."

For I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified. The word "for" gives the reason why they ought not to fear the sight of the angel, but to rejoice and be glad, because they both love and worship Jesus which was crucified, and minister to and serve Him.

He expressly says "crucified," both to show that he is not

ashamed of, but that he openly confesses the Cross and the Crucified, and that he is His servant, because the Cross is the highest honour and glory to Christ and to His followers, and also to signify the fruit of the Cross of Christ; because, says S. Chrysostom, it is the head and sum of blessings, and because by His Cross Christ redeemed not only the women and the rest of mankind, but also made the angels to rejoice, yea, even conferred grace and glory on them. And lastly, because by the Cross He reconciled angels to men, and Heaven to earth, "reconciling through the blood of the Cross both the things which are in earth and in Heaven," as Paul says (Col. i. 20).

He is not here. "He is not here in His fleshly presence," says S. Gregory; "and He is nowhere absent in the presence of His majesty."

For He is risen. The Greek word is ἠγέρθη, which means, He has awaked from death, as it were from a short and light sleep, to light and life. For the death of Christ was like sleep, for He slept, as it were, in the sepulchre thirty-six hours. So also will it be with us. Wherefore, as sleep is a sort of brief death, so also death is a sort of longer sleep. Hence Paul (1 Cor. xv.) does not speak of those who have departed from life as dead, but as *sleeping*, because we shall all be awakened from the sleep of death, and shall arise again to life in the Day of Judgment.

Again, He has awaked as trees, which in winter having been, as it were, stripped and asleep, wake up in spring, when they begin to put forth leaves and flowers and fruit. So S. Jerome (on Mark xvi.) says, "The bitter root of the Cross has vanished; for the flower of life has burst forth with fruit—that is, He who lay in death has arisen in glory." And in the same glory He will make His faithful ones to rise.

As He said. Christ, whom ye all esteemed as a holy and divine Prophet, foretold and promised that He would rise on the third day. Therefore believe that He has risen, for so great a Prophet could not lie; especially since ye now see that the body has departed from the sepulchre, and has risen, as I, who am an

angel of the living and true God, most certainly affirm. He Himself foretold the same by David in the 15th Psalm, "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption;" because, as S. Peter says (Acts ii. 24), "it was impossible that He should be holden of it."

Moreover, Christ rose before He was anointed by the women, that He might show that He did not need that anointing, since He rose again by His own power. S. Bernard (*Serm.* 12, *in Cant.*) gives another moral reason,—because He would rather the price of this anointing should be given to the poor than to Himself.

Come. "Enter with me into the sepulchre; for your sake, that you may enter, I have removed the great stone." *See the place where the Lord lay.* That by the beholding of it with your eyes, says S. Chrysostom, ye may see that His body is not here, but has risen from it, so that, "if ye believe not my words, ye may believe the empty sepulchre," says S. Jerome. The angel therefore led the way, and as a guide introduced the women into the sepulchre, and showed it to them empty, that they might not doubt that Christ had risen from it.

Ver. 7. *And go quickly, and tell His disciples*, &c. *Quickly*—so that ye may quickly banish the sorrow of the disciples, caused by the death of Christ their Master, and cheer their sorrowful minds, and fill them with joy by the most joyful news of the resurrection of Christ. For the women deserved this favour above others, because above others in their devotion to Christ they had come to the sepulchre. S. Gregory (*Hom.* 25) gives a symbolical reason, "For because woman in Paradise ministered death to man, woman from the sepulchre announced life to men. As if the Lord were saying to mankind, not in words but by deeds, 'From that same hand by which the potion of death was administered to you, receive ye the cup of life.'"

Tell His disciples. Mark adds, *and Peter*—that is, chiefly and before all, Peter, both because Peter in Christ's absence was the first and Prince of the Apostles, and because Peter, as he loved Christ above the rest, so also above the rest he was mourning over

His death. S. Gregory adds a third reason (*Hom.* 21, *in Evang.*), "If the angel had not expressly named him who had denied his Master, he would not have dared to come amongst the disciples; he is therefore called by name, lest he should despair on account of his denial. In which thing we have to consider why Almighty God permitted him to fear the words of a maid-servant, and to deny Himself, whom He had appointed to set over the whole Church, which thing we perceive to have been done by a dispensation of great goodness, in order that he who was to be the pastor of the whole Church might learn through his own fault how he ought to have compassion upon others."

He goeth before you into Galilee. First, because Galilee was the native country of the Apostles, to which, after the death of Jesus, they were purposing to return, that they might live more safely among their own relations. Secondly, because in Galilee Christ willed to show Himself openly to all His assembled disciples. For the Jews would not have permitted them to assemble in Judæa. Thirdly, because in Galilee Christ had for the most part preached, and had performed very many miracles.

Symbolically: S. Gregory (*Hom.* 21) says, "For Galilee means a passing over from death to life; for our Redeemer had already passed from His Passion to His resurrection, from death unto life. And He is seen first by His disciples after His resurrection in Galilee, because we shall have joy in seeing the glory of His resurrection, if only we pass over from vice to the heights of virtue. He, then, who is announced at the tomb is shown in passing over; because He who is first known in mortification of the flesh is seen in this passing over of the soul." Yet Christ appeared to the Apostles in Judæa also, but secretly; in Galilee publicly.

In the historical order of the events must be brought in here what Luke mentions (chap. xxiv. 3), namely, that Magdalene and her companions, while at the invitation of the angel they had entered the sepulchre and seen that it was empty, yet were affrighted; on account of which the angels cheered them, and at the same time gently reproved their want of faith. For that

Luke's account is not the same as that of Matthew and Mark, as some think, is clear from the words themselves, which are evidently different. Also, from the circumstance that in Luke two angels are said to have appeared, while in Matthew and Mark only one is mentioned.

Ver. 8. *And they went out quickly*, &c., *with fear.* That is, with a sacred trembling, which was caused by the sepulchre of Christ and the angels, and the resurrection of Christ announced by the angels to them, which came upon them in their sorrow for the death of Christ, and in their thoughts about anointing Him, as a thing not only unexpected but well-nigh incredible; wherefore a new fear was added, lest this vision of angels was only a phantom which deceived them, and lest the body of Jesus had been stolen.

And with great joy. Because they had seen the angels, and had received from them the joyful news of His resurrection. Their minds, therefore, were alternating between joy and fear. So S. Jerome says, "A twofold feeling possessed the minds of the women, fear and joy; fear at the greatness of the miracle, joy in their desire for Him that was risen."

Tell His disciples. Matthew does not mention what they told; but John and Luke explain it, but in different ways. For John says that Magdalene only said to Peter, *They have taken away my Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him.* But Luke says that they related to the Apostles all the things they had seen and heard.

You will say, Whence this difference? I answer, It arises from the women being possessed with fear and doubt, and therefore they told no one anything by the way. And because they did not firmly and certainly believe that Christ had risen, they spoke alternating words, in accordance with the alternations of their thoughts; for at one time they speak of the vision of angels, at another they declare their opinion that the body of the Lord had been taken away.

At this point we must bring into the history what S. John relates (chap. xx. 2–19).

Magdalene, then, was the first to see Christ, as Mark says. Afterwards, at the command of Christ, she hastened after the other women, and overtook them, and then with them again saw Christ, and heard His salutation. So SS. Chrysostom, Jerome, and others.

Ver. 9. *And, behold, Jesus met them*, &c. As after the courtiers follows the king, as after the priests the High Priest, so here after the angels follows Christ, and confirms His resurrection by showing Himself alive to the pious women. For it was His will that the angels should prepare the way for Him, to this end, both that they might more easily believe that He had risen, and that they might not be terrified, as they would have been if, without warning, He had unexpectedly shown Himself to them.

Met them. Because they were seeking Him with greater affection and desire than the men. For he who seeks Jesus with fervour finds Jesus lovingly coming to meet him, according to that saying, *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find.* So S. Jerome says, "They who thus desired, and who thus ran, merited to have their risen Lord come to meet them, and first to hear the word 'Hail,' that the curse of the woman Eve might be removed in these women."

Tropologically: Rabanus says, "Jesus sometimes meets those who are entering on the path of virtue by helping them." Moreover, Eve is to us the mother of perdition and of sorrow. But these women, instead of the word "Eva," bear the word "Ave," because they are the messengers of resurrection, salvation, and joy. Hence we sing to the Blessed Virgin, the mother of Christ, the queen of these women, the hymn "*Ave Maris Stella*," &c.

Hail. In the Greek χαίρετε—that is, rejoice; in the Syriac, *Peace be to you.* For this is the proper salutation of the Hebrews, in which, under the name of *peace*, they pray for every blessing and every felicity. In the Arabic, *Rejoice*, because ye see your Master now alive again. So, after the example of Christ, blessed souls and angels, when they appear to men, cause joy; but demons, and the souls of the damned, cause sorrow, fear, and despair.

And they came and held Him by the feet. That is, with reverence and love for His majesty, and with joy at His glorious resurrection, they embraced and kissed His feet. So the Shunamite laid hold of Elisha's feet, praying him to raise her dead son to life again. So the faithful embrace and kiss the feet of the Pope, and of men illustrious for their sanctity. Christ on this occasion allows Himself to be touched by the women, that He may prove to them that He is really risen, and make them witnesses and heralds of His resurrection. Whence S. Chrysostom says, "When with great joy they had hastened towards, they by touching Him received a certain proof of His resurrection."

And worshipped Him. With the worship of *latria*, as the true Messiah or Christ the Son of God, who by the power of His Deity had raised His humanity from death, as He Himself had predicted when alive. The vision, therefore, of Christ risen confirmed and increased their faith in His Divinity, and in the other mysteries which they had been taught by Him when He was alive, but had not fully understood; so that with Thomas they said, if not with the mouth, yet certainly with the heart, *My Lord and my God.*

Then said Jesus unto them, Fear not, &c. The vision of what is supernatural and celestial, as was the resurrection of Christ, strikes and alarms the nature of the beholders; whence S. Jerome says, "This may be always observed both in the Old and New Testament, that when there is an appearance of any majestic person, the first thing done is to banish fear, that the mind being tranquillised may receive the things that are said."

Go, tell My brethren. Christ now made glorious, in order to give us an example of humility, calls His disciples brethren, so as to console them and raise them up from their sorrow. As if He had said, Tell the Apostles, who are the sons of one and the same God and Father with Me; but adopted sons through grace, whereas I am His Son by nature through the Deity which I have received from Him as God, and through the hypostatic union with the Deity which I have received from Him as man. S. Chrysostom says, "Because a woman was made the cause of

sorrow to man, now women are made the ministers of joy to men." Luther wrongly concludes from these words of Christ that women may preach; for it is one thing to *tell*, another to *preach*. But if Christ had said to Magdalene *preach*, she might and ought to have preached.

There they shall see Me. In Galilee they shall see Me frequently and openly, and talk with Me face to face, but not so in Judæa, although even there I shall appear to them sometimes. For in Judæa on the day of His resurrection Christ appeared six times. First, He appeared to His mother, as S. Ambrose, S. Anselm, and others teach, and this is the common opinion of the Doctors and of the faithful. Secondly, He appeared to the Magdalene at the sepulchre (*Mark* xvi. 9). Thirdly, He appeared to her again with the other women as they returned to Jerusalem (*Matt.* xxviii. 9). Fourthly, He appeared to Peter (*Luke* xxiv. 34). Fifthly, to the two disciples as they went to Emmaus (*Luke* xxiv.). Sixthly, to all—that is, to ten of the Apostles, for Thomas was not with them, and Judas had hanged himself. After the day of the resurrection He appeared, first, to the eleven Apostles, when Thomas was with them, on the eighth day (*John* xx. 26). Secondly, He appeared to eleven disciples, among whom were Peter and John, as they were fishing in the Sea of Galilee (*John* xxi.). Thirdly, He appeared on a mountain in Galilee to many—that is, to more than five hundred (*Matt.* xxviii. 10; 1 *Cor.* xv. 6). Fourthly, He appeared to James the brother of the Lord in the same place. Fifthly, He appeared to all the Apostles, and to others of the faithful, on the Mount of Olives, when He was going to ascend into Heaven (*Acts* i. 9). Sixthly, He appeared to Saul when He made him Paul. Christ appeared often on other occasions, which are not mentioned by the Evangelists.

Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch, &c. We may conclude from this, that when the soldiers saw the angel rolling away the stone they fled and hid themselves behind the hedges, and there remained half dead with fear, so that they could not and dared not stir from the place; and this was according to

the purpose of God, that they might, from their hiding-places, see and hear all that the angels said to the women about the resurrection of Jesus, so that they might report the same things to the Chief Priests, and so become messengers of the resurrection of Christ. Wherefore neither the women, nor Peter and John, saw the soldiers, who were lying hid in the hedges. But after the vision of angels had disappeared, and when the women had departed from the sepulchre, the soldiers, coming to themselves, approached the sepulchre, and seeing it empty, they formed a plan, and sent some of their number to the Chief Priests to tell them all they had seen and heard, and to show that it was not through their carelessness that the body of Christ had left the sepulchre.

And when they were assembled with the elders, &c. See here the perversity of the priests and elders, who, not content with having put Christ to death, persecute Him after His death, and try to do away with His resurrection, so as to cover their crime, and lest any one should rise against them as the slayers of Christ, and avenge His death. This was the design of the devil, who was attempting to destroy the Church and all Christians in Christ. The priests corrupt the soldiers with money, who were witnesses of the truth, that they might become witnesses of a lie. S. Jerome says that they took this money from the treasury of the Temple, and therefore were guilty of sacrilege: "The money," he says, "which was given for the use of the Temple they convert for the purchase of a lie, as before they had given thirty pieces of silver to the traitor Judas."

Saying, Say ye that His disciples came by night, &c. By their perversity, says S. Chrysostom, the High Priests increased the faith which they endeavoured to extinguish, for they speak things impossible and incredible. For first, says Remigius, "If the soldiers slept, how could they see the theft?"

Secondly, The disciples were afraid and had fled; how, then, would they have dared to steal the body of Christ, which they knew to be guarded by so many soldiers?

Thirdly, It is incredible that Roman soldiers, who were so faith-

ful and watchful, should all have slept at the sepulchre of Christ, especially when they knew that their own lives were in danger. And let it be granted that they all slept, they would certainly have been awakened by the noise caused by the removal of the stone. So S. Chrysostom says, "How should the disciples carry Him away by stealth, who did not dare to show themselves? They fled when they saw Him alive; how, when He was dead, would they not have feared the soldiers? And why did they not rather steal the body on the first night, when there was no one there? Truly they confirm the truth of the resurrection, for they confess that the body was not in the sepulchre."

And if this come to the governor's ears, &c. That is, we will persuade Pilate that your sleep and negligence in guarding the body of Christ was a light matter, and that no harm can happen from it; for he knows that this business does not concern himself, but us, and so he, to please us and against his own conscience, condemned Jesus to be crucified; for if he was so yielding when he unjustly condemned Jesus, in compliance with our urgent request, he will be much more yielding in absolving you at our request. But the soldiers secretly disclosed the whole matter to Pilate, and confirmed the truth of Christ's resurrection, and Pilate wrote the account to Tiberius, who forthwith was desirous of enrolling Christ among the gods. So Hegesippus relates from the acts of Pilate himself. "The chief of the Jews," Pilate says, "falsely asserted to me that Jesus was a sorcerer, and had broken their law. And I believed that it was so, and delivered Him to be scourged, according to their will; but they crucified Him, and set a watch at the sepulchre. But He rose again on the third day, while my soldiers were keeping watch. But the wickedness of the Jews was inflamed to such a pitch that they gave money to the watch, and said, Say ye that His disciples stole away His body. But when they had received the money they were not able to be silent about what had been done; for they testified that they had seen Him rise, and that they had received money from the Jews. I have therefore made a statement of these things, that no one

may falsely allege otherwise, and suppose that credit ought to be given to the falsehoods of the Jews."

So they took the money, and did as they were taught, and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews unto this day. That is, among the common people and those of little sense; for the wiser men easily saw through the deceit, and found out the whole matter in secret from the soldiers. Moreover, Longinus, the centurion, asserted that Christ had risen, and on that account died as a martyr for Him. But this false story was chiefly confuted by the Apostles, who affirmed that Christ had appeared alive again to them, and who confirmed the same by many miracles. It is also confuted by Josephus, although he was of the nation and sect of the Jews. Let the Jews then listen to him, and believe one of their own nation, though they will not believe Christ. For thus he writes (*Antiq.*, *book* 18, *ch.* 4), "At the same time lived Jesus, a wise man—if it is right to speak of Him as a man. For He was a performer of wonderful works, and a Teacher of those who willingly received Him, and had very many followers both from among the Jews and the Greeks. This was Christ whom, on His being accused by the chiefs of our nation, Pilate had sentenced to the Cross; yet those who had begun to love Him from the first, did not cease to do so. For He appeared to them on the third day alive, for the Prophets had foretold this and many other wonderful things concerning Him. And to this very day the body of Christians, so called from Him, still continue."

Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee. Matthew omits the rest of Christ's appearances, and mentions only that one which took place in Galilee, because it had been promised both by the angel and by Christ, and because it took place publicly before five hundred brethren, as Paul says (1 Cor. xv. 6). For all the disciples, of whom He had very many in Galilee, were assembled there, according to the command of Christ, because they were safer there than in Judæa from the persecution of the Jews.

To a mountain. It is certain that this mountain was not the Mount of Olives, from which, in the presence of His disciples

Christ ascended into Heaven. For the Mount of Olives is in Judæa, and not in Galilee. Dionysius, S. Bonaventura, and others think it very probable that this mountain was Tabor, where Christ in His transfiguration had shown His glory to Peter, James, and John.

Mystically: S. Jerome says, "Galilee was the abode of all vices, where before were error and deceit, and it behoved that it should be illuminated by the presence and glory of Christ." Again, Bede says, "The Lord now had passed from death unto life, from corruption to incorruption; for Galilee is the same as transmigration."

Allegorically: S. Augustine (*de Cons. Evan., lib.* 3) says, "Galilee is the same as transmigration, from the Heb. *galal,* because the grace of Christ was about to pass over from the people of Israel to the Gentiles; whence He says, 'I will go before you into Galilee,' because they would not believe when the Apostles should preach the Gospel to them, unless the Lord Himself should first make ready their way in the hearts of men. 'There shall ye see Him;' that is, there shall ye find His members."

Anagogically: S. Augustine, in the same place, says, "Galilee in Hebrew also signifies 'revelation,' whence it represents Heaven and the beatific vision. That revelation will be the true Galilee: we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him there as He is. That will be the more blessed passing from this world to that eternity, if we so embrace His commandments that we merit to be set on His right hand."

And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him, but some doubted. Not of the eleven Apostles, but of the other disciples. For all the Apostles had now been confirmed by so many visions and proofs, that they did not doubt that Christ had risen. Or if any one prefers to refer this expression to the Apostles, it must be understood as meaning, They had before doubted, but were not now in doubt. So Theophylact says, "You ought to understand it as meaning that when they were come into Galilee they worshipped Him; but they who worshipped Him in Galilee had first doubted in Jerusalem."

Moreover, Christ appeared in the same form as He had when He was alive, so that He was recognised by the Apostles as the same and not another. Whereupon He veiled His brightness, for the weak eyes of mortal men would not have been able to bear it. S. Augustine (*de Civ. Dei*, 22, *c.* 19) says, "We must believe that the brightness which Christ's body had when He rose was veiled from the eyes of the disciples."

And Jesus came and spake to them, &c. Maldonatus and others are of opinion that these things were not done and said by Christ now when He appeared in Galilee, but at the last appearance which took place on the Mount of Olives. For Christ seems there to have said His last farewell to His Apostles, and to have given them His last commands; and to have sent them forth as His ambassadors to evangelise the world, which He did at His ascension.

Is given to Me. That is, to Me alone; and that both because I am the Son of God and God, for from eternity has been given to Me by the Father, with the divine essence, all power and majesty; and also because I am man (as S. Cyril, Athanasius, and others say). It was given to Me inchoately in My incarnation on account of the dignity of the hypostatic union with the WORD; and it was given to Me in its fulness by God on account of the merits of My Passion, when having overcome death, sin, hell, and the devil, as the Redeemer of men, I obtained full right and dominion over them at the price of My blood.

Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, &c. Hence, according to the tradition of the Church, it is well known that this is the form of baptism, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" in which we profess our faith in the Holy Trinity and in the Divine Unity, saying, *in the Name*, not *in the Names*. Hence S. Isidore (*lib.* 7, *Etymol. c.* 4) says, "It is called a Trinity, because One Whole is constituted of Three, as it were a Tri-unity, resembling memory, intelligence, and will, in which the mind has in itself a certain image of the Divine Trinity; for since They are Three, They are One." Whence, in opposition

to the Arians, Macedonians, Nestorians, and other heretics, it is clear that the Son is true God, and of one substance (ὁμοούσιον) with the Father and the Holy Spirit, as S. Athanasius, Augustine, Hilary, and others teach. Christ, therefore, here most clearly expresses the mystery of the Holy Trinity, which Moses obscurely shadowed forth in the Old Testament, lest the ignorant Jews should believe that the Three Persons were Three Gods, and so after their custom worship a plurality of Gods.

Morally: Learn here that it is a divine work to teach and convert all nations, even rude and barbarous ones. Whence S. Gregory (*Hom.* 12, *in Ezek.*), "There is no sacrifice so acceptable to Almighty God as a zeal for souls." That saying also of Dionysius the Areopagite is well known, "Of all divine works, the most divine is to co-operate with God in the conversion of the wanderers, and in the bringing back of sinners to Himself."

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. That is, all the commandments which I have enjoined in the Gospel; for faith alone does not suffice for salvation, but the keeping of the commandments is required, and the constant practice of virtues. *For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified* (Rom. ii.).

And, behold, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Although I ascend into Heaven, I will not forsake you, whom I am sending abroad over the whole world. *I am with you*, both as God and as man, by present help, grace, consolation, guidance, deliverance, which I will always bestow upon you and your successors; by means of which I will make all difficult things easy to you, says S. Chrysostom, so that out of all nations ye may gather together for Me a Church, that is, a company of faithful and holy men. And I am with you *unto the end of the world.* This world shall come to an end sooner than My presence in the Church shall fail. "He who promises," says S. Jerome, "that He will be with His disciples to the end of the world, shows both that they shall live for ever (in their successors), and that He will never depart from them that believe."

"Do not fear," says Prosper (*lib. 2, de Vocat. Gent. c. 1*), "because of your own weakness, but have confidence in My power, for I will not leave you in the performance of this work. Not that ye shall be without suffering, but, which is a much greater thing, I will take care that ye be not overcome by any cruelty of them that rage against you."

This is what Christ promised to His Apostles before His death (*John* xvi. 16), *I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth.* For the gifts of the Holy Spirit and of Christ are the same, since the Deity of each and the operation of each is the same. For the external works of the Holy Trinity are undivided; and that which One Person works, the other Two also work. To the Holy Spirit, however, who proceeds forth as love, are fitly attributed the works of grace and holiness. So Christ was visibly present with Paul (Acts xxii. 17), and S. Stephen in his martyrdom (Acts vii.).

For this reason, likewise, Christ has willed to abide continually in the Church in the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. For as the humanity and deity of Christ are present in glory in Heaven, and are adored visibly by the angels and saints, so are the same likewise present in the Eucharist, but hidden under the forms of bread and wine, and therefore invisible, and are there adored, and even partaken of by the faithful. Wherefore it is Christ who, by the ministry of every priest, performs daily that miracle of miracles, namely, the wonderful conversion of the bread and wine into the body and blood of the Lord, which theologians call transubstantiation; for neither man, nor angel, nor created power could effect this. He Himself, therefore, in it offers Himself as an unbloody victim to the Father.

Tropologically: Christ is in and with the faithful soul even to the end of life, granting to it that great gift of perseverance, by which the elect are brought to Heaven. For He does not desert the just man, unless He first be deserted by him. Wherefore Christ is in a holy soul, first, *politically*, as it were a king

in his kingdom, inasmuch as He directs and rules it aright according to the laws of justice.

Secondly, He is in the soul *economically*, as a father in a house and family, which he rules wisely; He is what a charioteer is in a chariot, so that we ought ever to be crying out to Him, as Elisha did to Elijah when he was being carried up into Heaven, *My Father, the chariot of Israel and the charioteer* (Vulg.) *thereof.*

Thirdly, Christ is in the soul *ethically*, in the manner of reason and prudence, which prudently directs all its actions, according to the rule of divine reason and eternal law which is in the mind of God.

Fourthly, He is in the soul *physically* that which the soul is in the body; for He is, as it were, the soul of the soul, Himself the life-giving life of grace, in order that the soul may live not an animal and carnal life, but a spiritual and divine one.

Lastly, He is, as it were, a divine fire, kindling the soul with the flame of charity. He is in the soul what the sun is in the world, making it fruitful in good works, according to that saying, *He worketh in us to will and to do* (*Phil.* ii.). And, *He worketh all things in all according to the purpose of His own will* (*Eph.* i.). It is He who inspires our words with power, in order that they may be effectual to the conversion of the hearers from sin to holiness, according to that saying of Paul, *I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase* (1 Cor. iii.). Therefore, O wise and holy soul, go forth to meet thy God with love and desire. Thy Jesus desires to be with thee; do thou in thy turn desire to be with nought but Jesus. His delights are with thee; let thy delights be with Him. Suffer thyself, therefore, to be ruled and guided by Him, as a kingdom suffers itself to be ruled by its king, an army by its leader, a chariot by its charioteer, the will by the reason, the body by the soul, the world by the sun. "Thou art sufficient for God," says S. Augustine; "let thy God be sufficient for thee."

END OF S. MATTHEW.

COMMENTARY

UPON

THE GOSPEL OF S. MARK.

INTRODUCTION.

"MARK," says S. Jerome in his *Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers*, "was a disciple and interpreter of S. Peter. At the request of the brethren at Rome, he wrote a short Gospel, based upon what he had heard S. Peter relate. This, when Peter had heard, he approved of, and sanctioned its being read in the Church." Shortly afterwards, S. Jerome proceeds to say, "Mark took his Gospel, which he had compiled, and went to Egypt. He first preached Christ at Alexandria, and founded a Church there, which possessed such great purity of doctrine and life that it influenced all followers of Christ by its example. In short, Philo, the most eloquent of the Jews, beholding the primitive Church of Alexandria, as yet Judaizing, wrote a book upon its peculiarities, as it were in praise of his own people. And similarly as S. Luke records that at Jerusalem those who believed had all things common, so has Philo preserved the memory of what he saw at Alexandria under S. Mark as the teacher of the Christians. He died in the eighth year of Nero, and was buried at Alexandria. Anianus succeeded him."

Clement of Alexandria (*Strom. l.* vi.) and Papias of Hierapolis attest the same things; so does Eusebius (*H. E.* ii. 15), who adds

that S. Peter confirmed S. Mark's Gospel, and delivered it to be read for all time in the Churches. S. Athanasius (*Synops. sub fin.*) and S. Epiphanius (*Hæres.* 51) say the same. Wherefore Tertullian (*l.* iv. *cont. Marcion*) attributes the Gospel of S. Mark to S. Peter, because, as S. Jerome says, "it was compiled from what S. Peter related, Mark being the writer." The same S. Jerome, or whoever is the author of the preface to his Commentary on S. Mark, says, "After Matthew soweth Mark, He, I say, who roareth as a lion, who flieth as an eagle, who learneth as a man, who sacrificeth as a priest, who watereth as a river, who flourisheth as a field, who fermenteth as wine. For Christ who is spoken of is man by being born, is a calf by dying, a lion by rising again, an eagle by ascending into heaven."

For this cause the cherubim of Ezek. i. and the Apocalypse, which have four faces, signify the four Evangelists. For the face of a man denotes Matthew, who relates the works of Christ's humanity; the face of an eagle, John, who speaks of the divinity of Christ; the face of an ox denotes Luke, who begins with the priesthood of Zacharias; and the face of a lion designates Mark, because he begins his Gospel from the loud roaring of John the Baptist, as it were of a lion. For these four have drawn the chariot of the glory of God, the chariot of the Gospel, through the whole world, and have subdued all nations to Him, that He may triumph.

The name Mark happily agrees with this symbolism, whether we derive it from the Hebrew or from Latin. For *Mark* in Hebrew, says Pagninus (*in interpret. Heb. nomin.*), means the same as *smoothed, polished, cleansed from rust.* It is derived from מרק, *marak, to clean, to polish.* As Jeremiah (xlvi. 4) says, "Stand in the helmets, polish the lances;" where for *polish* the Heb. has מרקו, *mircu, polish ye.* Thus S. Mark polished the lance of his Gospel and preaching, that it, like a lion, might subdue the Egyptians and other nations to Christ. But S. Isidore (*l.* vii. *Origen, c.* 9) says, "*Mark* means *high in commandment*" (but I know not from what root), that is to say, on account of the

Gospel of the *Most High*, which he preached. Again, the Heb. of *Mark* may be, as it were, מר כוס, *mar cos*, or the *Lord of the Chalice*, that is to say, of suffering and martyrdom.

But in Latin, Carolus Signonius (*de Nom. Roman.*) says, "He is called *Marcus* who is born in the month of March." But Isidore says *Mark* means *a strong hammer*, *Marcellus* is a *moderate-sized hammer*, and *Marculus* a *little one*. Thus S. Mark was a mighty and strong *hammer*, breaking in pieces the rock, *i.e.*, bruising with compunction the strong hearts of the Gentiles, and moving them to repentance and a Christian life. *Mark*, then, and *Marcellus* are the same as *Martellus*, a *hammer*. So Charles, the grandfather of Charlemagne, was called Charles Martel, because of his warlike prowess, by which he crushed a host of 300,000 Saracens. Or *Marcus* may be taken to be the same as *Martius*, a sort of heavenly Mars. The Marcian *gens* at Rome, an ancient patrician family, was so called from Ancus Marcius, the fourth king of Rome. King Ancus was called *the sacrificial*, because he restored worship which had fallen into decay, or had been improperly performed.

How religious and brave S. Mark was appears from the institution of the Essæi,* who were the first religious, and the prototypes of all religious, of whose wondrous sanctity more anon.

Lastly, the Romans used to give the *prænomen* Marcus to first-born sons. Marcus Tullius Cicero was so called because he was a first-born son. Thus Mark was a first-born son, and singularly beloved of S. Peter. Thus he speaks of him as *Marcus, my son* (1 Pet. v.). For he as a son had drunk of S. Peter's spirit, and was an express image of the wisdom and holiness of S. Peter.

You will ask, Of what country, who, and what was S. Mark? I answer: 1. That he was of the Hebrew nation, and of the tribe of Levi. Bede adds that he was a priest, of the family of Aaron.

2. Theophilus, Victor of Antioch, and Euthymius think that this Mark was the same as John Mark, who was nephew of

* The Christian Essenes of Alexandria (Trans.).

Barnabas, and who journeyed with him and S. Paul to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, the same S. Mark as he to whom S. Paul refers in his Epistle to Philemon, and Col. iv., and 2 Tim. iv. But I say that this Mark was a different person from John Mark, for at the same time that John Mark was with Paul and Barnabas in Greece, this Mark was with S. Peter at Romè, and was sent by him to preach first at Aquileia, and afterwards at Alexandria.

3. Origen (*lib. de Recta Fide*), S. Epiphanius (*Hæres.* 51), and Dorotheus (*in Synops.*) think that Mark was one of Christ's seventy-two disciples. But the contrary, namely, that he was converted and baptized by S. Peter after Christ's death, is more probable. For he calls him his (spiritual) son (1 Pet. v. 13), "The Church which is at Babylon saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son." So S. Jerome, Eusebius (*H. E.* vii. 14), &c., who say that S. Mark was a disciple and companion of S. Peter.

4. S. Austin (*l.* 1, *de Cons. Evang. c.* 2) calls Mark the abbreviator of Matthew, not because he made a compendium of his Gospel, as some say, but because he often relates more briefly, as he had received them from S. Peter, the things which Matthew records at greater length. I said "often," for occasionally Mark relates events in the life of Christ more fully than Matthew does, as is plain from the account of Peter's denial. Some things also he unfolds with greater clearness than Matthew. Mark is fuller in narrative than Matthew, but has less of Christ's doctrine. Mark's, therefore, is an independent Gospel. Whence the Arabic prefixes the following title to his Gospel:—*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, One God, the Gospel of the Father, Patriarch, Apostle, S. Mar* (i.e., *Lord*) *Mark the Evangelist.*

5. Mark wrote this Gospel A.D. 45, in the third year of the reign of Claudius, as Eusebius says (*in Chron.*), shortly before he went to Alexandria, where he governed for nineteen years the Church which he there founded. His disciples were so excellent that they were called Essæi, that is, *holy* and *pious*. For they, as

the first religious, lived in such purity and holiness as to become the admiration of the whole world, and afforded a mirror of perfection to all other Churches. Hence S. Jerome and Cassian call S. Mark the chief and founder of the Cœnobites. See what I have said concerning the Essæi in Acts v. 2.

Moreover, S. Mark founded the first Christian school at Alexandria, from which so many holy doctors, bishops, and martyrs proceeded. This school of Alexandria wonderfully flourished under the Emperor Commodus, A.D. 180, when Pantænus presided over it. Pantænus was succeeded by Clement, Clement by Origen.

Finally, S. Mark added to the laurels of an Apostle, Doctor, and Evangelist the crown of martyrdom. In the Roman Martyrology for the 25th of April we read concerning him thus, "At Alexandria, the natal day of B. Mark the Evangelist, he, for the faith of Christ, being stretched and bound with cords, was dragged over the rocks, and grievously tormented. Afterwards, being shut up in prison, he was first comforted by an angelic vision, and at last by the appearance of the Lord Himself, by whom he was called to the heavenly kingdom in the eighth year of Nero." The body of S. Mark was translated by merchants from Alexandria to Venice, A.D. 827. There it is cherished with the utmost veneration, insomuch that the Senate have adopted as their insignia a lion, the emblem of S. Mark; and when they issue any command, they call it the mandate of S. Mark.

You will ask, secondly, in what language Mark wrote his Gospel,—in Latin or Greek? Many think he wrote it in Latin. And the reason seems plain. For Mark wrote at Rome for the Romans; therefore, say they, he must have written in the Latin tongue. For the Romans did not understand Greek (as Baronius abundantly proves) in A.D. 45. For although S. Chrysostom on Mark asserts that he wrote his Gospel at Alexandria, yet S. Jerome, Eusebius, Clement, and other Fathers declare, *passim*, that he wrote it at Rome. And the author of that Commentary upon S. Mark was not S. Chrysostom, as I will prove hereafter. So the Syriac version, which at the end of S. Mark's Gospel adds expressly,

"Here endeth the holy Gospel, the Gospel of Mark, which he spake and preached at Rome, in the Roman language." S. Gregory Nazianzen, in the poem in which he gives a catalogue of Holy Scripture, thus assigns the Evangelists to languages and nations,—

> "The wonders of Christ for the Hebrews S. Matthew did write;
> S. Mark for Westerns; for Greeks S. Luke in learning bright;
> For all S. John, who soared aloft with heavenly sight."

On the other hand, S. Jerome affirms expressly, in the preface to the Gospel, that Mark wrote in Greek. "I am speaking," he says, "of the New Testament, which, without doubt, was written in Greek, with the exception of the Apostle Matthew, who first in Judæa published the Gospel of Christ in Hebrew." And he adds that he for this reason, at the command of Pope Damasus, corrected the ancient Latin Vulgate version of the New Testament, and therefore of S. Mark's Gospel, in accordance with the Greek original. S. Augustine teaches us the same thing: "Matthew is said to have written in Hebrew, all the rest in Greek." The same was the common opinion of ancient and modern writers.

Reason favours the same view. For S. Mark wrote his Gospel when he was about to pass to Alexandria, that he might preach it there. But the inhabitants of Alexandria spoke at that time the Greek language. For Alexandria was founded, and its name given, by Alexander the Great. SS. Athanasius and Cyril, Theophilus, Clement of Alexandria, and the rest wrote in Greek. Again, Mark was more skilled in Greek than he was in Latin. Wherefore, also, the Greek text of his Gospel is more polished and elegant than the Latin. For the Jews, who were neighbours of Greek-speaking countries, and subjects of Alexander the Great and his successors, learned thoroughly the Greek language, but not so the Latin, as being far distant from Latin-speaking countries. Moreover, the Greek language was then very widely diffused, as Cicero says. For this reason the Romans, especially the patricians and the wealthier sort of people, were skilled in Greek. Indeed, they sent their sons to Athens that they might

be thoroughly grounded in Grecian wisdom and eloquence. And Mark wrote this Gospel not for the Roman plebeians, but for patricians and nobles, for such persons as S. Clement, S. Pudens. Listen to Clement of Alexandria (*tom.* 6, *in Biblioth. Patr. in Edit. Parisiensi.*), "Mark, the follower of Peter, when Peter was preaching the Gospel publicly at Rome, in the presence of certain knights of Cæsar's household, and was advancing many testimonies about Christ, being requested by them, wrote from the things which were spoken by Peter a Gospel, which is called that according to Mark." In like manner S. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans in Greek, as I have shown in my preface to that Epistle.

Lastly, S. Mark was present with S. Peter at Antioch, where the disciples of Christ were first called Christians. And at Antioch Greek was spoken. Hence Greek was more familiar to Mark than Latin, and it is possible that Greek was his mother tongue. For although the Apostles and primitive believers received the gift of tongues from the Holy Spirit, yet they received it for sufficiency, not for elegance, and so they spoke each their own vernacular better and more elegantly.

You will reconcile both opinions if you say that Mark wrote his Gospel both in Greek and Latin, as Genebrard thinks, and our Barradi (*tom.* 1, *l.* 1, *c.* 19) and Possevin. Hear Peter Natalis (*in Cat. Sanct. l.* 4, *c.* 86), "Peter sent Mark to Aquileia as its first bishop. There he wrote again his Gospel in Greek, which he had previously written in Latin at Rome, which Gospel, together with the ivory chair in which he sat to write it, is still shown in the church of Aquileia."

Further, some imagine that the Latin original of Mark has perished through the injuries of time, as the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew has perished. But it is difficult to believe so. For how would the Roman Church, so faithful to her trust, and so careful a guardian of the sacred writings, and especially in those early ages from Mark to Constantine, when it was so ardent and constant in zeal for religion, have suffered so great a treasure

committed to her to be lost? Surely she who kept so faithfully what pertained to others did not lose her own. What, did so many copies of the Gospel of S. Mark, which noble Romans and other Italians, converted to Christ by SS. Peter and Paul, would emulously cause to be transcribed, perish to a single copy, so that not even one has survived? Wherefore we shall say, with greater probability, that Mark, for the reasons already assigned, wrote originally in Greek, but immediately afterwards, either by himself or by some other translator, rendered the Greek into Latin, and delivered both to the Romans, in a similar way to S. Paul, who wrote his Epistle to the Romans in Greek, but sent the same to them translated into Latin by Tertius, his scribe and interpreter. The reasons are—1st. Because SS. Jerome and Austin affirm that Mark wrote in Greek, not in Latin. 2nd. Because, as Bellarmine has rightly perceived (*de Script. Eccles. in Marc.*), it is evident, from a collation of the Greek and Latin texts, that the Old Latin and the Vulgate editions, both of Matthew and Mark, have been translated from the Greek. This is proved by Franc. Lucas by many examples. To these you may add that the Latin translator of Mark Grecized, as when he says (ii. 2) *et convenerunt multi, ita ut non caperet neque ad januam*, words which are obscurely translated into Latin from the Greek, which reads clearly and elegantly, ὥστε μηκέτι χωρεῖν μηδὲ τὰ πρὸς τὴν θύραν, *i.e., so that not even the places about the door could contain the crowd.* Again, in iv. 10, the Vulgate has, *et cum esset singularis*, whilst the Greek is plain, καταμόνας, *i.e., alone.* Also vii. 17, 18, 20, *Quæ de homine exeunt, illa communicant hominem*, the Gr. κοινοῖ, *i.e., make a man common or unclean*, is clear. For the Hebrews call *common* unclean things, that is, things which all, even the impure, use promiscuously and in common. So, again, in chap. i. 47, διαφημίζειν is translated verbally, *diffamare, to make known abroad.* Again, προσάββατον is rendered *ante sabbatum*, i.e., *the day before the Sabbath.*

The original of the Gospel of S. Mark is religiously preserved at Venice, but the letters are so corroded and worn away by age

that they cannot be deciphered. When I was inquiring about the matter at Rome, several reliable persons, who had carefully investigated the subject, wrote to me to this effect, that the following is the tradition among the Venetians. They say that this Gospel was written by S. Mark at Aquileia, and left by him there, and that it was brought from thence to Venice. For when Attila took Aquileia after a three years' siege, and destroyed it, many of the inhabitants fled to the marshes bordering on the Adriatic, and there, in a marvellous manner, laid the foundations of Venice, A.D. 452. Moreover, a trustworthy man, a canon of S. Mark's at Venice, who has the custody of this relic, and is therefore an eye-witness, wrote to me in answer to my inquiries, within the last few days, that this autograph of S. Mark is written in Greek, and was brought from Aquileia to Venice A.D. 1472.

Pagnini has written a dissertation on this question, dedicated to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, in which he maintains that S. Mark in the first instance wrote his Gospel in Latin at Rome, and afterwards in Greek at Aquileia, but that the Latin has been lost, since the present Latin of S. Mark is a translation from the Greek. He cites many passages which go to prove the great prevalence of Greek at Rome in those times. He also cites Damasus as saying (*lib. de Vit. Pont.*) in the *Life of S. Peter*, that the Evangelists wrote in Latin (mentioning Mark), in Greek, and Hebrew. But it is well known that this work is not by Damasus, but by Anastasius, the librarian. What Pagnini adds, that S. Peter preached to the Romans in Greek, and that S. Mark, as his interpreter, rendered his words into Latin, cannot be considered worthy of credit. Besides, the duty of an interpreter was different from this, as I have shown on 1 Cor. xii. 10.

The Syrians, as Fabricius tells us in the preface to his Syriac New Testament, assert that Mark wrote in Latin. They also say that the same Mark translated not only his own Gospel into his Galilean or Syriac mother tongue, but all the other books of the New Testament.

But it is difficult to believe this. For there is no mention of

such a translation by Clement of Alexandria, or Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, Epiphanius, Cyril, Theodoret, S. Jerome, or other Fathers, who either were Syrians, or who lived in Syria and Egypt, and treated carefully the subject of the various editions and translations of the Holy Scriptures. Therefore this Syriac translation of the New Testament seems to have been made later than S. Mark's time.

Lastly, S. Mark's Gospel has always been reckoned amongst the canonical Scriptures, with the exception of the last chapter, doubts about which were formerly entertained by some, as S. Jerome testifies (*Ep.* 150, *ad Hedib. q.* 3), because it contained certain things which savoured of Manichæism, which S. Jerome recites (*lib.* 2, *cont. Pelag.*). The words were these, "And they were satisfied, saying, Substance is that world of iniquity and unbelief, which suffereth not through wicked spirits the true power of God to be apprehended: therefore now call back thy righteousness." But these words have been since removed.

Observe Mark's whole strength is given to narration, and does not care for the order in which things were done. Hence he places events which were done afterwards before some which were prior to them in order of time, and *vice versa*. Hear S. Jerome (*Introd. to S. Matt.*), "Second, Mark, the interpreter of the Apostle Peter, who indeed had not himself seen the Lord, the Saviour, but had heard his master's preaching, related according to the truth of the things which were done, rather than the order in which they were done."

There is extant a second volume of S. Chrysostom's Commentary upon S. Mark, which, although not devoid of genius, learning, and piety, nevertheless seems to be wanting in the style, spirit, and subtlety of S. Chrysostom. Hence Bellarmine says that it is undoubtedly not the work of that Saint, but of a certain simple monk, who expounded the Gospel to his brethren.

Victor of Antioch, an ancient author, wrote especially upon S. Mark, whom one Theodore Peltanus has translated out of Greek into Latin.

The author of the Commentary or Scholiast upon S. Mark in the works of S. Jerome is not S. Jerome himself, for he shows himself to be unskilled both in Greek and Hebrew.

Here only a few things occur to be noted, because most have been spoken of in S. Matthew. There the reader will find them annotated. Here, therefore, I shall be brief.

CHAPTER I.*

1 *The office of John the Baptist.* 9 *Jesus is baptized,* 12 *tempted:* 14 *he preacheth:* 16 *calleth Peter, Andrew, James, and John:* 23 *healeth one that had a devil,* 29 *Peter's mother-in-law,* 32 *many diseased persons,* 41 *and cleanseth the leper.*

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaias, &c. Many place a full stop before *as,* thinking that *the beginning of the Gospel,* &c., is the title of the book. But that these words are not the title, but the introduction of the book, is plain from the word *beginning,* and because they are really dependent upon the clause *as it is written,* &c. Therefore a comma, not a period, must be placed before *as.* The word *Gospel,* then, in this place does not denote the book of the Gospel which Mark wrote, as when we say, *the Gospel of Mark,* but the Gospel preaching of Jesus Christ as it follows. The meaning, therefore, is, "The Gospel preaching of Christ had such a beginning as Isaiah and Malachi foretold, that is to say, the preaching of John the Baptist and his testimony concerning Christ." For John began to preach the kingdom of heaven, that it would be opened by Christ's preaching and death. Wherefore he urged them to repentance, that they might be capable of receiving the grace of Christ, saying, *Repent ye,* &c. For Moses and the ancient Law preached and promised a land flowing with milk and honey, if the Jews would obey God's commandments. But Christ and the Evangelical Law preach

* It has not been thought necessary to print in full the text of S. Mark. The citation of the few passages commented on is from the Douai Version.

and promise the kingdom of heaven, if men will repent of their sins, and obey the commands of Christ. John's preaching of repentance, therefore, was the preparation for, and the beginning of, Christ's preaching the Gospel.

Observe, Matthew and John commence their Gospels from Christ Himself—John from the divine, Matthew from the human generation of Christ. Mark and Luke begin with John the Baptist—Luke from his nativity, Mark from his preaching.

Vers. 2, 3. *As it is written in Isaias the prophet, Behold, I send my angel before Thy face, who shall prepare the way before Thee. A voice of one crying in the desert, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths.* The former citation in the 2nd verse is from Mal. iii. 1. The latter is from Isa. xl. 3. Wherefore the Greek has, *it is written in the prophets.* But the Vulgate and some Greek copies, also the Syriac and Arabic, have as above. And S. Jerome says that this was formerly the reading of the Greek (*lib. de Opt. Gen. Interpret. Scrip.*).

You will ask, "Why does Mark only cite Isaias and not Malachi?" I answer, because the prophecy of Isaias is of greatest importance in this place, for the voice of John crying in the desert, *Do penance*, &c., was *the beginning of the Gospel.* But inasmuch as Malachi shows that John was not sent by man, but by God, to utter these words, therefore Mark prefixes the words of Malachi to arouse the attention of the reader to receive and venerate the voice of John. Besides, Malachi in reality says the same as Isaias. For the angel sent by God to prepare the way of Christ was none other than John himself, *crying*, and preaching repentance, by which the hearts of men must be prepared for the preaching and grace of Christ. This is therefore, as it were, one and the same oracle of two prophets, uttered concerning one and the same John, but in different words, so that they mutually confirm and explain one another. This, then, is the reason why Mark in this place, and the other Evangelists and Apostles, when they cite two prophets, or two or more sentences of the same or different books of the Old Testament, quote them

as one and the same testimony. This is plain from 1 Pet. ii. 7, compared with Ps. cxviii. 22 and Isa. viii. 14. Also 1 Cor. xv. 54, compared with Isa. xxv. 8 and Hos. xiii. 14. The reason, I say, is, because one sentence confirms and explains the other, so that they are in truth not two, but one sentence.

Ver. 4. *John was in the desert baptizing, and preaching the baptism of penance unto remission of sins.* That this remission was to be received from Christ and His baptism, which was the perfection and consummation of John's baptism. For Christ, as it were the King of Heaven, preached that the kingdom must be received by His grace, of which the first part is remission of sins, which is given by the baptism of Christ, inasmuch as it is furnished and, as it were, animated by the Spirit and grace of Christ, according to those words of John (*in Matt.* iii. 11), "I indeed baptize you in water unto penance, but He that shall come after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; He shall baptize you in the Holy Ghost and fire."

And immediately the Spirit drove (Gr. ἐκβάλλει, i.e., *sends out, expels*) *Him out into the desert. The Spirit, i.e.*, the Holy Spirit, who a little while before had glided down upon Him in His baptism in the form of a dove. *Drove*, that is, impelled Christ with great power of spirit and ardour, that He should, of His own accord, go into the desert, and there, as in a *palæstra*, match Himself in single combat with the devil.

And He was in the desert forty days and forty nights, and was tempted (Gr. πειραζόμενος, i.e., *suffering temptation*). Whence many think that Christ during the forty days was frequently tempted by Satan, by means of various spectres and horrible monsters, such as the demon presented to S. Anthony, to terrify him and distract his mind from prayer. So Franc. Lucas. But it seems better to take Mark as speaking only of the three well-known temptations (*see what has been said in Matt.* iv. 2).

And He was with beasts (Gr. θηρίων, *wild beasts*). This is an intimation of the excessive solitude of the place, as well as of Christ's innocency. Although He was in such a desert place,

with lions, wolves, leopards, serpents, yet He did not fear them, nor was He injured by them. Just as Adam, so long as he was innocent, lived with such creatures without harm in Paradise. For they all looked up to him, and reverenced him as their lord.

And the angels ministered to Him. Not before His temptation and victory, as Bede supposes. For if so, Jesus would have been recognised by the devil as the Son of God; nor would the devil have dared to approach Him. But it was after the temptation and the victory, as is plain from Matt. iv. 11. And for this reason, that Jesus might show in His own person that consolation and comfort and the ministry of angels has been prepared by God for those who overcome temptations.

Ver. 14. *And after that John was delivered up*, &c. This was the second coming of Christ from Judæa into Galilee, that He might flee from Herod, lest he should cast Him also into prison. For Christ had been preaching and baptizing in Judæa. And the increase of His glory there had excited the envy of the Scribes and Pharisees, who denounced Him to Herod as though He were a revolutionist. Wherefore this is the same coming of Christ as that mentioned in Matt. iv. 12, Luke iv. 14, and John iv. 3 and 43. Although some say that this last was a different one, and the third advent of Christ into Galilee, because Christ was then fleeing from the Pharisees, as John says; but in His second coming He was fleeing from Herod, as Matthew and Mark say. But, as I have observed, He fled from the Pharisees because He fled from Herod. For they had accused Him to Herod. Wherefore this was the same flight of Christ, and the same coming into Galilee.

Ver. 15. *And saying, Because* (Gr. ὅτι) *the time*, &c. *The time*, that is, of the advent of Messiah, and the kingdom of heaven. That, indeed, what had been shut for so many thousands of years, Christ by His preaching, His death, and His grace, might open and unclose.

Repent ye: do penance, that ye may detest the sins ye have

committed, and determine to change your lives for the better. Beautifully says the Scholiast in S. Jerome, "The sweetness of the apple makes up for the bitterness of the root, the hope of gain makes pleasant the perils of the sea, the expectation of health mitigates the nauseousness of medicine. He who desires the kernel breaks the nut; so he who desires the joy of a holy conscience swallows down the bitterness of penance."

Ver. 19. *James the son of Zebedee and John.* Again beautifully says the Scholiast, "By this chariot of the four fishermen we are carried up to heaven, as Elias was. On these four corner-stones the Church was first built. By four virtues we are changed into the image of God, being obedient by prudence, acting manfully by justice, trampling on the serpent by temperance, and gaining the grace of God by fortitude." Theophylact says, "*Peter*, that is, *action*, is first called, afterwards *John*, that is, contemplation."

Ver. 23. *And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, i.e.*, a man having an unclean spirit, that is to say, *possessed by a devil.* The Greek has, *in an unclean spirit*, and it is a Hebraism. For the Hebrew uses ב, *beth*, i.e., *in*, when one noun governs another in the genitive.

And he cried out, i.e., *the spirit*, by the mouth of the man possessed, "as though he were suffering torment," says the Scholiast in S. Chrysostom, "as though in pain, as though not able to bear his strokes." "For," as Bede says, "the presence of the Saviour is the torment of the devils." Christ desired that by this public testimony of the demon concerning Him, in the synagogue of Capernaum (for it is plain from ver. 21 that these things occurred there), the Jews who were gathered there might acknowledge Him to be Messias. There is nothing about this demoniac in Matthew, but there is in Luke iv. 33.

Saying. The Gr. subjoins ἔα, which the translator of Luke iv. 34 renders by *let alone*, as if the imperative of the verb ἐάω, i.e., *suffer, permit;* as Euthymius says, *dismiss us.* Others take ἔα as an adverb of *grieving, wondering, beseeching.* As it were, "Ah! alas! Lord, in what have I injured Thee?"

Ver. 24. *What 'ave we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us? I know who Thou art, the Holy One of God.* "What is there between us and Thee, O Jesus? We have not attacked Thee, O Christ, who art holy; but sinners, who are, as it were, our own. We have no contention with Thee; do not Thou, then, contend with and destroy us."

Come to destroy us. Some MSS. add, *before the time.* But the words are not found in the Greek, Latin, Syriac, and Arabic received texts. They seem to have been transferred hither from S. Matt. ix. 25. With respect to the meaning, in the first place, Bede says that the demons, beholding the Lord upon earth, supposed that they were to be immediately judged. It was as though they said, "Do not Thou, O Jesus, by Thine advent bring on so quickly the day of judgment, and banish us to the bottomless pit without any hope of coming forth." Second, the Scholiast in S. Chrysostom says, "Thou givest us no place among men when Thou teachest divine things." But this is mystical. Third, and correctly, "Hast Thou come to destroy us, to cast us out from men, and send us to hell?" Whence Theophylact says, "He calls going out of men his destruction." For the highest pleasure of the devils is to possess and vex men.

I know, &c. Arab. *O Holy One;* the Gr. ὁ ἅγιος, emphatically, *the* Holy One. "Thou who art so holy that Thou communicatest Thy holiness to others, since Thou art, as it were, the Fountain and the Sun of holiness, who sanctifiest all the saints, the Messiah and the Son of God, for whom all are eagerly waiting so many thousand years!" There is an allusion to Dan. ix. 24, "until the Holy of Holies, *i.e.*, Messiah, be anointed."

I know, i.e., *I suspect, I think.* For, as the Scholiast in Chrysostom says, the devil had no firm and certain knowledge of the coming of God. Because, as S. Austin says (*lib.* 9, *de Civ. c.* 21), He only made known to them as much as He wished; and He only wished as much as was expedient.

Ver. 25. *And Jesus threatened him:* Gr. ἐπετίμησεν, i.e., *rebuked,*

chided him with threats. That He would punish him unless he were silent.

Saying, Speak no more: Arab. *shut thy mouth.* Wherefore? I answer, First, Because it was not fitting that Christ should be commanded by the devil.

Second, That He might not appear to be a friend of the devil, and to hold intercourse with him. For afterwards it was objected to Christ that He cast out devils by the aid of Beelzebub. By acting as He did, Christ has taught us to shun all dealings with the devil; for he is the sworn enemy of God, and is wholly bent upon injuring and destroying us, even when he promises or brings us any corporal aid. Wherefore, as the Scholiast in Chrysostom saith, "Be silent; let thy silence be My praise. Let not thy voice, but thy torments praise Me. I am not pleased that thou shouldst praise Me, but that thou shouldst go forth."

Third, To show that we should resist flattery, that it may not stir up any desire of vainglory in our breast.

Fourth, Euthymius says, "He has taught us never to believe the demons, even when they say what is true. For since they love falsehood, and are most hostile to us, they never speak the truth except to deceive. They make use of the truth as it were a kind of bait." For, liars that they are, they conceal their lies by a colouring of truth. They say certain things that are true at the first, and afterwards interweave with them what is false, that those who have believed the first may believe also the last. For this cause Paul drove out the spirit of Python, who praised him, Acts xvi. 18.

Fifth, Because the demon in an unseasonable manner, and too speedily, disclosed that Christ was Messiah. For this might have injured Him, and turned the people away from Him. For so mighty a secret should be disclosed gradually, and the people be persuaded of its truth by many miracles; for otherwise they would not at first receive it and believe it. This was why (viii. 30) Christ forbids the Apostles also to say that He was Christ. So Maldonatus and others.

Symbolically: Bede, "The devil, because he had deceived Eve with his tongue, is punished by the tongue, that he might not speak."

Ver. 26. *And the unclean spirit tearing him*, &c. *Tearing* (Vulg. *discerpens*), not by lacerating or mutilating the man who was possessed by him, for Luke says (iv. 35) that he did no harm to him, but by contorting and twisting his limbs this way and that, as if he wished to tear him piecemeal. For the Greek σπαράττω signifies *to pull or tear in pieces.* The devil did this through rage and madness, that being compelled by Christ to go out of the man, he might injure him as much as he could. But the nearer and the more powerful the grace of Christ is, the more impotently does the devil rage. For, observe, the devil only raised a dreadful tempest, but one that was vain and ineffectual. For he cannot hurt when Christ forbids. Christ permitted it for three reasons. 1. That it might be plain that this man was really possessed by the devil. 2. That the malice and wrath of the demon might be made apparent. 3. That it might be clear that the demon went forth, not of his own will, but because he was compelled to do so by Christ.

Tropologically: S. Gregory teaches (*Hom.* 12, *in Ezek.*) that the devil wonderfully tempts and vexes sinners when they are converted. "As soon," he says, "as the mind begins to love heavenly things, as soon as it collects itself for the vision of inward peace with its whole intention, that ancient adversary, who fell from heaven, is envious, and begins to lie in wait more insidiously, and brings to bear sharper temptations than he was wont, so as, for the most part, to try the soul which resists in a way that he had never tried her when he possessed her. Wherefore it is written, My son, if thou come to serve the Lord, stand fast in justice and fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation."

And crying out. With dreadful howlings, shrieking, and roaring, to show how unwillingly he went out, and what great power was applied to him by Christ. For he uttered no articulate speech. For Christ had forbidden him to speak when He said *shut thy mouth.* Thus Euthymius says, "Being scourged by the Lord's

commands, he cried out with a loud voice, and yet he spake not when he cried, because he uttered cries which signified nothing." Titus adds, "When the man was restored to himself, then he uttered the speech of a man."

Ver. 27. *What new doctrine is this*, &c. "What is this heavenly and divine doctrine, which indeed God confirms from heaven by so many and such mighty miracles? For Christ, the Teacher of this doctrine, not by prayers, but of His mere power, and by His command only, orders the devils to go out, *and they obey Him.* Wherefore this must be the Messias, the Son of God, and the true God; for He alone commands the devils by His power."

Ver. 32. *When the sun had set:* Gr. ὅτε ἔδυ ὁ ἥλιος, *i.e.*, when the sun was swallowed up and sunk in the sea. For δύομαι means *to be sunk, submerged*, and is spoken of islands which are submerged and drowned by the sea. This is a form of speech adopted from the common people, who think that when the sun sets it is submerged in the ocean.

Ver. 33. *And all the city* (Capernaum, as appears from ver. 21) *was gathered together at the door.* Of the house of Peter and Andrew, where Jesus was being entertained, as is plain from ver. 29.

Ver. 34. *And He healed many, i.e.*, all who presented themselves, for they were many.

Suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew Him. Arab., *because they knew that He Himself was He.*

Ver. 35. *And rising very early*, &c.: Gr. καὶ πρωὶ ἔννυχον, i.e., *in the morning, whilst it was still night.* For it was at the very first commencement of dawn, whilst it was yet dark. Thus it might be called *night* by S. Mark, although by S. Luke (iv. 42) it is called *day*, because the day was just about beginning to dawn.

He went into a desert place, that He might pray thus more quietly and attentively. Wherefore it follows, *and there prayed*, both that after so many miracles He might avoid the praise and applause of men, and to teach us to do the same. Learn here from Christ to give the early morning to prayer, and to rise up

with the dawn, so as to have leisure for meditation, and to give the first-fruits of the day to God. For the dawn of day is a friend of the Muses, but a greater friend of God and the angels.

Ver. 43. *And He strictly charged him.* The Gr. is, *And having threatened him, he straightway sent him out.* He severely commanded him with threats to conceal the miracle of healing which He had just wrought; and therefore He dismissed him, and sent him away from Him, that it might not be known that He had cured him of his leprosy; and that this might afford us an example of avoiding the applause of men.

Ver. 44. *Show thyself to the high priest* (Vulg.). Gr. *to the priest.* For not only the High Priest, but any priest might judge concerning leprosy, whether it was healed or no, as is plain from Lev. xiii. 2. It is probable, however, that because the case of leprosy was so grave and difficult, the decision concerning it was, by the interpretation and decree of the pontiffs, reserved for a *Chief Priest*, as is here said, that is, for one of the twenty-four heads of the priests, who each in turn presided for a week over the rest of the priests, and the sacrifices, and the other offices and rites of the Temple, according to the institution of David, as appears from 1 Chron. xxiv. 3, &c.

Ver. 45. *But he, being gone out, began to publish and to blaze abroad the word, i.e.*, the fact of the miracle of his leprosy having been healed by Christ. For he thought that this was for the glory of God and Christ, although Christ, out of humility and modesty, had enjoined silence; but he himself did not consider this command binding upon him.

So that he could not openly go into the city, without feeling His modesty hurt by the honour and applause of the people. Or *could not* may mean *would not.* For so *could* is often put for *would*, as Nazianzen shows by many examples (*Orat.* 4, *de Theolog.*).

CHAPTER II.

1 *Christ healeth one sick of the palsy,* 14 *calleth Matthew from the receipt of custom,* 15 *eateth with publicans and sinners,* 18 *excuseth his disciples for not fasting,* 23 *and for plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath-day.*

Ver. 1. *And again He entered into Capernaum after some days.* A few MSS. read, *after eight days.*

Ver. 2. *And many came together, so that there was no room,* &c. See what is said in the Introduction to this Gospel.

Ver. 5. *Son, thy sins are forgiven thee.* Hear Bede, "When He is about to heal, He first forgives the man his sins, to show that he was suffering for his faults." For men are afflicted with bodily ills, either for the increase of merit, as Job and the martyrs; or for the preservation of humility, as Paul; or for the correction of sin, as the sister of Moses, and this paralytic; or for the glory of God, as the man who was born blind; or for a beginning of damnation, as Herod.

Bede adds that this paralytic was carried by four bearers, to signify that a man in the faith of his soul is lifted up by four virtues to deserve soundness, namely, by prudence, fortitude, justice, and temperance.

Ver. 14. *He saw Levi (the son) of Alphæus, i.e.,* He saw Matthew, who by another name is called Levi before he was called by Christ, for after his vocation he is always called Matthew. *Of Alphæus, i.e.,* the son, as the Syriac expresses it. This Alphæus is a different person from the Alphæus who was the husband of Mary of Cleopas, who was the father of James the Less and Jude

(*Matt.* x. 3). Luke and Mark call Matthew Levi, out of regard for his good name, because this name of Levi was known but to few. But he calls himself Matthew, to humiliate himself, and to profess openly that he was a sinner and a publican.

And rising up, &c., *i.e.*, leaving everything. Wherefore Bede saith, "He left his own possessions who was wont to seize those of others. He left also the accounts of his taxes imperfect, and not cast up, because the Lord had so inflamed him that he straightway followed Him who called him."

Ver. 26. *Under Abiathar.* You will say that it is said in 1 Sam. xxi. 6 that this was done under Ahimelech, the father of Abiathar. I answer, first, that Abiathar was even then the pontiff together with his father, because when his father was absent, or sick, or otherwise engaged, he discharged the High Priest's office; and he was shortly to succeed his father, at his death, in the pontificate. Listen to Bede: That the Lord calls Abiathar the High Priest instead of Ahimelech involves no discrepancy, for both were on the spot when David came and asked for and received the loaves. And when Ahimelech was slain by Saul, Abiathar fled to David, and was his companion through the whole of his exile. Afterwards, when David was king, he received the rank of the high-priesthood; and continuing in the pontificate during the whole of David's reign, he became much more celebrated than his father, and so was more worthy to be called High Priest by the Lord, even during his father's lifetime.

Second, and better, It is clear from Scripture that both father and son bore both names, and were called sometimes Abiathar, sometimes Ahimelech. This appears from 2 Sam. viii. 17, 1 Chron. xviii. 16 and xxiv. 6. So Jansen, Toletus, &c.

The Sabbath was made (Syr. *created*) *for man*, &c. That is, the Sabbath was instituted for the benefit of man, that man, by the rest of the Sabbath, should refresh and restore his body, fatigued by the continuous labour of six days of the week; and that he should apply his mind to the things which concern his eternal salvation, such as hearing and meditating upon the law of God.

The force of the argument is this: Since the Sabbath was instituted for the sake of man, and not man for the sake of the Sabbath, therefore, if the Sabbatical rest be hurtful to man, it must be abandoned, and the labour undertaken that man may be benefited. Therefore rightly do I permit My disciples to engage in the moderate labour of plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath, to satisfy their hunger. For it is better that the rest of the Sabbath should be broken than that men should perish.

Therefore the Son of Man, &c. Some understand the *therefore* in this place as properly inferential from what has gone before, thus: Since the Sabbath was made for man, and the Son of Man, that is, Christ, is Lord of all men, and of all things which pertain to man's health, therefore He is Lord also of the Sabbath, so as to be able to dispense from it. But it is better and simpler to take the *therefore* not as *inferential*, but as *complementary* for *lastly*, *in short*. Wherefore the Arabic so translates, and makes the passage of the following effect: "Lastly, the Son of Man, that is, I, Christ, because I am the Messias and God, am Lord of the Sabbath, I who instituted it at the beginning for man's benefit, and therefore am able for the benefit of man to order, to relax, or to abolish it. This is the fresh and final reason by which Christ proves to the Scribes that it was lawful to pluck the ears of corn on the Sabbath to satisfy hunger."

Mystically: Says Theophylact, Christ healing on the Sabbath signifies that those who have rest in their passions are able to heal sinners agitated by their passions, and lead them to virtue. More fully Bede. The disciples, he says, are teachers. The corn means those planted in the faith, whom the teachers visit, and hungering for their salvation, pluck away from earthly things. And by *their hands*, *i.e.*, by their examples, they bring them away from the lust of the flesh, as it were out of husks. They eat them, that is, they incorporate them as members into the Church. And they do it upon the Sabbath, because this is for the hope of future rest.

CHAPTER III.

1 *Christ healeth the withered hand,* 10 *and many other infirmities:* 11 *rebuketh the unclean spirits:* 13 *chooseth his twelve apostles:* 22 *convinceth the blasphemy of casting out devils by Beelzebub:* 31 *and sheweth who are his brother, sister, and mother.*

Ver. 4. *And He saith to them, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath-days, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy? But they held their peace.* The translator reads ἀπολέσαι, that is, *to destroy.* We now read ἀποκτεῖναι, i.e., *to kill.* But *to destroy* is better. For the Gospel is speaking of a maimed person, who had a withered hand, not of one who was dead. With reference to healing this maimed person, the Scribes had proposed a doubt or scruple, *Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-days?* Christ resolved this doubt by means of another question, not dubious, but plain, *Is it lawful to do well on the Sabbath, or to do evil; to save a soul, or to destroy it?* (Vulg.). *A soul,* i.e., *a man,* says S. Augustine. The meaning is, if any one should not succour or do a kindness to one who is sick or heavily afflicted, like this maimed man, on the Sabbath, when he is able to do it, as I, Christ, am able, he does him an injury; for he refuses him the help which is due to him by the law of love. In a similar sense S. Augustine says, "If thou hast not fed the hungry, thou hast killed him," because thou hast allowed him to die of hunger. In like manner, if thou hast not delivered him who was about to be killed by a robber, when thou mightest have done so, thou hast slain him; for his death will be reckoned to thee by God

for guilt and punishment, in exactly the same manner as if thou hadst killed him thyself. Christ, therefore, signifies that not to do good on the Sabbath to a sick person, when thou art able, is to do him evil. But it is never lawful to do evil. Therefore it is always lawful to do good to such persons, even on the Sabbath. For the Sabbath is devoted to God and good works. And thus it is a more grievous sin to do evil on the Sabbath than upon other days. For by this means the sanctity of the Sabbath is violated, even as by doing good upon it it is the better kept and hallowed.

Ver. 5. *And looking round upon them with anger.* Being angry at their unbelief, says the *Interlinear*, showing by His countenance that He was wroth with the blind, and obstinate, and perverse minds of the Scribes, in that they ascribed Christ's miracles of goodness, which He wrought upon the Sabbath, to a breach of the law enjoining the observance of that day. From hence it is plain that there was in Christ real anger, sorrow, and the rest of the passions and affections, as they exist in other men, only subject to reason. Wherefore anger was in Him a whetstone of virtue. "Anger," says Franc. Lucas, "is in us a passion; in Christ it was, as it were, an action. It arises spontaneously in us; by Christ it was stirred up in Himself. When it has arisen in us, it disturbs the other faculties of the body and mind, nor can it be repressed at our own pleasure; but when stirred up in Christ, it acts as He wills it to act, it disturbs nothing,—in fine, it ceases when He wills it to cease."

This is what S. Leo (*Epist.* 11) says, "The bodily senses were vigorous in Christ without the law of sin; and the reality of His affections was governed by His soul and deity."

Lactantius says (*lib. de Ira Dei ex Posidon.*), "Anger is the lust of punishing him by whom you think yourself to have been injured." Wherefore anger in other men springs from self-love; but in Christ it sprang from love of God, because He loved God perfectly. Hence He was infinitely grieved and angry at offences against God by reason of sin, and committed by sinners, wishing

to compensate for those offences by punishing or correcting sinners and unbelievers. Wherefore Christ's anger was zeal, or seasoned with zeal, even as in the angels and the blessed it is not anger but zeal. (See S. Thomas, 3 *p. q. art.* 9.)

Being grieved at the blindness, Syriac, *hardness* or *callousness, of their hearts. Grieved*, Gr. συλλυπούμενος, i.e., *condoling with* and *commiserating* them, because, being blinded and hardened by envy and hatred, they would not acknowledge Him to be the Messiah, but spake evil of His kindness to the sick upon the Sabbath-days. It is meant, therefore, that the anger of Jesus did not proceed from the desire of vengeance, but was mingled with pity; and that Jesus was angry with sin, but sorry for sinners, insomuch as He loved them, and strove to save them. Lastly, all such anger is mingled with sorrow; for he that is angry grieves for the evil at which he is angry. Thus the sorrow for the evil causes and sharpens anger, that it may strive to remove the evil at which it is grieved.

Ver. 9. *That a little ship should wait upon Him.* Gr. προσκαρτερῇ, *i.e.*, should be close at hand, that He might betake Himself to it when the multitude pressed upon Him.

Ver. 10. *Plagues*, Gr. μάστιγας, i.e., *scourgings*, viz., *strokes* and *diseases*, with which God chastises and scourges men on account of their sins.

Ver. 11. *And unclean spirits fell down before Him, i.e.*, they fell down, kneeling at His feet, not out of love and devotion, but from fear, deprecating punishment, that He would not drive them out of the men, and banish them to hell.

Saying, Thou art the Son of God. You will ask whether the devils really knew that Jesus was the Messiah or the Christ, the Son of God? I answer, it is plain from this passage, and from S. Matthew viii. 29, and from S. Luke iv. 41, and from the Fathers and commentators generally, that the devils, although they did not fully know Christ at His baptism, and before His baptism, because they afterwards tempted Him, that they might learn who He was; yet subsequently they did recognise who He

was, from the many and great miracles, which they clearly saw were true miracles, and far transcending their own power and that of the angels. They saw that what Christ did was wrought by the alone power of God, with this end in view, that He might prove, first, that He was the Messiah promised to the fathers; second, that He was God, and the Son of God. Wherefore, I say that the devils knew that Jesus was the Messiah and the Son of God, especially when they compared the Scriptures and the ancient prophecies with the miracles of Christ. For they saw that Jesus was to be such a person, and would work such miracles, as they had predicted.

Observe, however, that the devils did not so clearly know this truth, as not, on the other hand, when they thought of the greatness of the mystery, and of the infinite dignity and humiliation of Christ incarnate (which would appear a thing of itself incredible, especially to the devil, being most proud), somewhat to hesitate and be in doubt whether Jesus were really Messiah and the Son of God. They the more hesitated, yea, they were ignorant of the object and fruit of this mystery, that indeed by the incarnation and death of Christ men were to be redeemed, and that the kingdom of God was to be erected in them. Especially were they blinded by their hatred of Jesus, because they saw that many souls were delivered from them by Him. Hence they felt that He must be altogether opposed and crushed by them. Whence it came to pass that they, being blinded by their hatred of Jesus, did not understand the Holy Scriptures, otherwise so plain, concerning the cross of Christ and our redemption thereby. Thus, by means of the Jews, they crucified and slew Jesus as an irreconcilable enemy; and thus they ignorantly destroyed their own kingdom. Thus S. Leo (*Serm.* 9, *de Pass.*), "Nor did the devil himself perceive that by his rage against Christ he destroyed his own principality; who would not have lost the rights he had gained by his ancient fraud if he had refrained from shedding the blood of the Lord Jesus. But by his malice, being greedy of doing harm, when he rushes upon Him, he falls; when he would

capture, he is taken; whilst he pursues a mortal, he stumbles against the Saviour."

And Simon He surnamed Peter. Several Greek codices prefix to these words, πρῶτον Σίμωνα, *first Peter.* The rest omit them. The same thing is sufficiently gathered from the fact that Peter is here first named by Christ, and his name changed, so that he who was first called *Simon*, is afterwards called in Syriac *Cephas*, in Greek and Latin *Petrus*, that is, *a rock*, because he was to be made by Christ the rock and foundation of the Church.

And James the son of Zebedee (James is named first because he was the elder), *and John the brother of James. And he called them Boanerges, which is, Sons of thunder.* He saith not name, but names, because they were two. They were *thunderers*, thundering forth, as it were, Christ's Gospel and doctrines.

Boanerges: so the Arabic, Egyptian, and Persian. The Ethiopic has *Baanerges.* This name is a corruption, for in Hebrew, or rather in Syriac, it would be *Banerges* or *Bonerges*, as it is found in certain MSS., as Franc. Lucas attests in his *Notation.* For the Syrians, like the Bavarians and the Westphalians, pronounce the vowel *a* like *o*, and *e* like *a*. For *Semuel* they say *Samuel*, and for *bene*, or *sons*, *bane*. It may be that *Banerges* has been changed into *Boanerges* by persons ignorantly supposing that *boa* signifies *the sound of thunder.*

Banerges, as Jansen observes, is a compound word, consisting of בְּנֵי, *bane*, *sons*, and רֶגֶשׁ, *regesch*, a *roaring*, *i.e.*, of *thunder.* Thus Jupiter is called by the Greeks ὑψιβρεμέτης, *loftily roaring*, i.e., *thundering on high.* The Syriac version has in this place *bane reges*, *sons of thunder*, instead of the Hebrew expression, *bene raam.* For Christ here spake in the Syriac of that age. There is here, then, a metathesis or transposition of the letters *r* and *e*, *banerges*, instead of *bane reges.* A similar transposition is common in many languages, as Angelus Caninius shows (*Hellen.* p. 64). Thus, for καρδία the Greek poets say κραδίη, κρατερός for καρτερός; for ἰεῦρον the Latins say *nervus;* for ἅρπαξ, *rapax;* for μορφή, *forma.* Punic has *gerac* for ἄκρα, i.e., *arx*, a *citadel.* Etruscan

has *bigr*, *virgo*, a virgin; *darag*, *gradus*, a step; *elmara*, *mulier*, a woman; *cabbirim*, cherubim, &c.

The meaning, then, is as follows: Christ called James and John by a new name, *Banerges*, *Sons of thunder*, because He charged them above the rest of the Apostles with the glorious preaching of His Gospel, that by the holiness of their lives and their miracles they might be like thunderbolts, and might, by the power of their voices, shake as with claps of thunder unbelievers and barbarians, and bring them to repentance and a holy life. This appears in the history of S. James. Because of his liberty and zeal in preaching, he was the first among the Apostles to incur the wrath of Herod and the Jews, by whom he was beheaded (Acts xii.). The same converted the Spaniards, and by their means the inhabitants of the East and West Indies, to the faith of Christ. John preached for a very long period, and very efficaciously. He was the last of the Apostles to depart this life, which he did after he had subdued Asia and other provinces to Christ by his preaching. Hence, also, his Gospel begins with divine thunder, as it were an eagle of God crying with a voice of thunder, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* (S. Epiphanius, *Hæres.* 73). Wherefore, when he was writing his Gospel, there were lightnings and thunderings from heaven, like as it lightned from Mount Sinai when God gave the law to Moses. So Baronius shows from Metaphrastes (A.D. 99 *in fine*).

See what I have said on Ezek. i. 14, on the words, "They went like a flash of lightning," where I have given a threefold meaning to the expression, *Sons of thunder*. Thus Pericles, as an orator, seemed, says Quintilian, not so much to speak as to thunder and lighten. Wherefore he was called by the poets the Olympian, that is, the heavenly.

Ver. 21. *He is beside himself.* See what has been said on S. Matt. xii. 46. The Arabic has, *saying that He is foolish*. The Greek is ἐξέστη, i.e., *He has gone out of His mind*, through too great piety and zeal. The Syriac renders literally. Others render differently, *saying that He has swooned*, from hunger, because, on account of the multitude, He had no leisure to eat.

CHAPTER IV.

1 *The parable of the sower,* 14 *and the meaning thereof.* 21 *We must communicate the light of our knowledge to others.* 26 *The parable of the seed growing secretly,* 30 *and of the mustard seed.* 35 *Christ stilleth the tempest on the sea.*

Ver. 10. *And when He was alone:* Gr. κατα μόνας, Vulg. *singularis, solitary, by Himself.*

The twelve that were with Him asked Him. The Greek, Syriac, and Arabic have *with the twelve,* meaning that the seventy disciples, who, with the twelve Apostles, were followers of Jesus, asked Him what was the meaning of the parable of the Sower.

Ver. 21. *Doth a candle come in, i.e.,* is it brought into a house, *to be put under a bushel or under a bed?* That it should be hidden under a vessel? No! but that it should be exposed publicly, and give light to all. Christ signified by this parable that it was not His will that the mysteries of this parable and the other doctrines of the Gospel should be concealed and hidden, but that His disciples should unfold them in their time, and communicate to others who at that time were not able to receive them. It was His will that they should publish and preach them openly. This is plain from what follows.

Ver. 22. *For there is nothing hid which shall not be made manifest; neither was it made secret, but that it may come abroad.* This is the Greek and Latin reading. Although the doctrine of the Gospel and My deeds and words are as yet hidden and secret, I do not wish them always to remain so. At the proper

time they must be openly proclaimed by you, O My disciples. So SS. Jerome and Bede. This is what Christ says in S. Matt. x. 27, *What I say unto you in darkness, that speak ye in light*, &c.

Ver. 24. *And He said unto them, Take heed what ye hear.* The meaning, says Euthymius, is, "Attend to the things which ye hear of Me, that ye may understand them, and commit them to memory, that when the proper time shall arrive ye may communicate them to others." And He assigns the reason, which, as Theophylact says, is, "That none of My words may escape you." Hear Bede, "He teaches us carefully to hear His words, in such manner that we should carefully digest them in our hearts, and be able to bring them forth for the hearing of others."

In what measure you shall mete, it shall be measured to you again, and more shall be given to you. He means, if ye largely and copiously communicate and preach My doctrine to others, I also will copiously impart to you more understanding and greater wisdom, grace, and glory, as a recompense and reward to you. Thus fountains, the more they pour out above, the more they receive from below. Therefore, let preachers, teachers, and catechists learn from this promise of Christ, that the more pains they bestow in teaching others, the more grace and wisdom they will receive from Christ themselves, according to the words, "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he that soweth in blessings," *i.e.*, abundantly, "shall reap also in blessings" (2 Cor. ix. 6), *Vulg.*

Ver. 25. *For he that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, that also which he hath shall be taken away from him. Hath*, that is, *uses*, and shows that *he hath* by using. For such a one hath indeed, but he who useth not a gift or grace hath it but in name. This is what theologians say, that he who uses his grace hath it in a second act; but he who uses it not hath it only in the first act, that is, in power and possession. The meaning therefore is, he who, by study or by imparting to others, uses learning given him by God, an increase of learning shall be given; but from him who uses not his learning, shall God take it away.

Ver. 26. *And He said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the earth.* This is another parable, different from that of *the Sower*, which precedes it. Both, however, are taken from *seed*, but differently applied and explained. Moreover, by *the seed*, as SS. Chrysostom and Bede rightly explain, both here and in S. Matt. xiii., is signified *evangelical doctrine*. By the *field, hearers;* by the *harvest*, the *end of the world*, or each one's *death*, is meant.

Ver. 27. *And should sleep*, that is to say, *the sower, and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up whilst he knoweth not.* Some refer the words *rise night and day* to the *seed;* meaning that the *seed* should germinate, it knoweth not how, that is, like a man sleeping. More obviously, S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Maldonatus, and others refer the words to *the sower*, so that *night* pertains to the word *sleep*, *day* to the word *rise*. The meaning is, As the husbandman who has sowed is sleeping idly in the night, and is employed in various occupations during the day, and thinks not about the seed, that seed is germinating by its own innate force, and is growing up whilst the husbandman knoweth it not. So also it puts forth *first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear.* So, too, in the same manner is the doctrine and preaching of the Gospel. They were sown by Christ and His Apostles, that is, they were preached from small beginnings. But by degrees they grew insensibly into the mature and mighty harvests of the faithful, whilst Christ was, as it were, sleeping in heaven, and permitting the Jews and unbelieving nations and tyrants to rise up against His Apostles, and persecute and kill them. It increases, I say, and propagates itself gradually, until it fills the world, when, the *harvest* being ripe, the *corn, i.e.*, the elect, shall be gathered into the granary of heaven.

By this parable, then, is signified the power of the Gospel, which by degrees has pervaded the whole world, and is converting it to Christ. Tacitly, also, it is signified that preachers of the Gospel must not glory in their preaching, as though they by it were convert-

ing the world. For, as the Apostle saith, "Neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase (1 Cor. iii. 7). Christ further intimates that preachers ought not to be downcast if they see small and tardy fruits of their preaching, because God will, by the few converted by them, gradually convert many more. So S. James, by means of seven, or, as some say, by nine, whom he converted in Spain, converted the whole country.

Ver. 28. *For the earth of itself bringeth forth fruit; first the blade, then the ear, afterwards the full corn in the ear.* Arabic, *Because the earth alone bringeth forth fruit; . . . afterwards the ear is filled, and when the fruit is perfect, then the sickle is applied, because it is harvest.* Thus, in like manner, by the preaching of the Gospel, the faith of Christ and His Church grew by various degrees of increase.

Moraliter: Expositors adapt these three expressions, *blade, ear, full corn,* to a threefold increment of virtues and merits. For the *earth* of our heart germinates, first, *the blade,* when it conceives good desires; secondly, *the ear,* when it proceeds to earnest working; thirdly, *the grain,* when it brings the works of virtue to full maturity and perfection. Theophylact says, "*The blade* is the beginning of good; *the ear* is when we resist temptations; *the fruit* is perfect work."

Hear S. Gregory (*Hom.* 15, *in Ezek.*), "To produce *the blade* is to hold the first tender beginning of good. The *blade* arrives at perfection when virtue conceived in the mind leads to advancement in good works. The *full corn* fructifies in *the ear* when virtue makes such great progress that it has its perfect work."

Christ here intimates that the Apostles, and those who work for the conversion of souls, ought with long-suffering to await the fruit of their labours, as husbandmen do. They ought to cherish those who are tender in the faith, and gradually lead them on to the height of virtue by teaching, admonishing, and exercising them. Let no one, therefore, says Bede, who is beheld to be of good purpose in the tenderness of his mind, be

despised, because the fruit takes its rise from *the blade*, and becomes *corn.*

Symbolically: The Scholiast says the *blade* was in the law of nature, the *ear* in the law of Moses, the *fruit* in the Gospel.

Ver. 29. *And when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle. Greek,* ὅταν δὲ παραδῶ ὁ καρπός, that is, *when indeed the fruit has brought itself forth;* for fruit is here in the nominative case. The Syriac has, *when it has become fat;* Arabic, *when it is perfect.* This is a Hebraism, for in Hebrew verbs in the conjugation *Hitpael* have a passive, or reflex, signification, by which the agent receives the action in himself, so that the agent is the same as the recipient of the action. Wherefore some codices read, *when the fruit has produced itself.* Otherwise Maldonatus explains, "When the fruit, that is, the seed itself, which was the fruit of former seed, shall have brought forth, that is to say, other seed from itself."

Ver. 33. *And with many such parables He spake the word unto them, as they were able to hear it,* that is, as they were worthy to hear, as Maldonatus says, from Bede and Euthymius. More simply and plainly, Theophylact and Franc. Lucas explain *with such, i.e.*, common and easy *parables*, which all could understand, not with what was abstruse; so that they might take in their literal drift, and perceive that there was something heavenly and divine lying beneath the surface, although they did not comprehend each particular. Thus, by what was known of the parable they were stirred up by Christ to investigate what lay hid.

Ver. 36. *As He was in the ship.* The disciples took up Christ upon the deep sea, that they might cross over it with Him; Christ, I say, as He was in the ship, namely, sitting and teaching the people standing on the shore. This is plain from ver. 1, for afterwards it appears that He changed His position, sleeping in the ship. It marks the ready obedience of the disciples, and in turn Christ's facile accommodation of Himself to their promptitude, that He might escape the tumult of the

thronging multitude. The Syriac translates, *when He was in the ship*; the Arabic, *they took Him up in the ship.*

And there were other ships with Him. It happened by the counsel of God that the many persons who were carried in those ships should be spectators and witnesses of the miracle very shortly to be wrought by Christ, namely, the appeasing the tempest.

CHAPTER V.

1 *Christ delivering the possessed of the legion of devils,* 13 *they enter into the swine.* 25 *He healeth the woman of the bloody issue,* 35 *and raiseth from death Jairus his daughter.*

Ver. 7. *I adjure thee by God.* Because the devil knew that Christ would grant nothing to his prayers or deserts, he interposes the name of God, to which he knew Christ gave the highest reverence. It was as though he said, "I entreat Thee, by the authority of the Divine name, and as far as I can, I constrain Thee, that Thou wilt not cast me out of this body, and banish me to hell." For this was the greatest torment to a demon.

Ver. 9. *My name is Legion;* Syriac, *our name,* &c., adding, by way of explanation, *for we are many.* A legion contained properly 6666 soldiers. See what is said in Matt. xxvi. 53. In this place a certain number is put for an uncertain. Observe, the devil is God's ape. Hence he imitates God, who is "the Lord of hosts," that is, of angels. In a like way the devil calls himself *legion,* because he leads out many companions into line of battle to fight against God and His faithful people. Wherefore men have a right to dread that battle, knowing that their warfare is not with men, but devils, and those many in number, who conspire for their destruction. Therefore they ought to implore the help of God and the holy angels, as Elisha did (2 Kings vi. 17).

Ver. 25. *And a woman which had an issue of blood,* &c. This

woman was of Cæsarea Philippi, which was formerly called Dan, and afterwards Paneas. This is the celebrated woman who, being healed by Christ of her issue of blood, erected in memory of so great a benefit that statue to Christ at Cæsarea Philippi from whose base grew an herb which cured all diseases (Eus. *H. E.* vii. 14). Julian the Apostate threw the statue down, and set up one of himself in its place. But this was shivered to pieces by lightning, as S. Jerome testifies, and the Tripartite History (*l.* vi. *c.* 19). Our innovators, who cast away, burn the relics of the saints, whilst they preserve and venerate the relics of their own leaders, act like Julian the Apostate. For the Zuinglians, or followers of Zuinglius, preserve with great devotion his heart, which was found among the ashes when he was burnt. So says Capito in his Life of Zuinglius.*

It is not probable that this woman who had the issue of blood was Martha, the sister of Mary Magdalene, as S. Ambrose thinks (*lib. de Salom. c.* v.). For Martha lived at Bethany, near Jerusalem, not at Cæsarea. The Gospel of Nicodemus says that her name was Veronica, the same who gave Christ a handkerchief to wipe the sweat when He was going to be crucified, and on which He left an impression of His face.

Ver. 28. *For she said, If I shall touch but His garment, I shall be whole.* Matthew (ix. 20), instead of *garment*, has *the hem of His garment.* This *hem* was a fringe of threads attached to the bottom of the robe, of a hyacinth or violet colour, which God commanded the Jews to wear, that it might put them continually in mind of God's precepts and of heaven itself. This Christ wore, according to the law, as a mark that He belonged to the Jewish race and religion.

There is here an example and proof of the use and efficacy of holy relics. For of such a nature was the hem or fringe of Christ which healed her that had the issue of blood. Calvin

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* Zuinglius fell in battle. Does à Lapide refer to his body being burnt after his death?—(*Trans.*)

replies that the woman was superstitious, and that a certain amount of superstition was mingled with what she did. But Christ and Mark refute this; for they ascribe her healing not to superstition, but to her faith, and commend her for it. For in the 30th verse it is said, *And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue was gone out from Him* (*de illo*), *i.e.*, from (*de*) His fringe. And 34, *Daughter, thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace.* Rightly says S. Hilary, "Like as the Author of nature has given to a magnet the power of attracting iron, so did Christ give to His garment the power of healing her who touched in faith." And if it were so with a garment, how much more with the Eucharist? Hence S. Gorgonia was healed of a severe disease by touching the Eucharist. (See Nazianzen, *Orat.* 11.) So, too, was S. Catherine of Sienna, and many others. (See Salmeron, *tom.* 6, *tract.* 15.)

Tropologically: The issue of blood, says Bede, is fleshly delight, as gluttony, luxury. The most pure flesh of Christ heals these when piously received in the Eucharist.

Ver. 30. *And Jesus . . . had gone out of Him,* and had healed her; not as if any quality had gone out from Christ's hem, or as if this virtue had gone from place to place, from the hem into the woman who had the issue of blood, but by reason of the effect which it produced in the woman. For the virtue abiding in Christ wrought the effect of healing in the woman. Like as, saith Theophylact, the learning of doctors is said to be communicated to their disciples, when, nevertheless, the learning itself remains in the doctors, and produces its effect only, that is, a like knowledge in the disciples.

Observe, this virtue of healing and working miracles conferred by the Word upon the humanity of Christ, was not a physical quality. For that would have been infinite, as having divine and infinite efficacy, of which the humanity of Christ was not capable, being created. But it was a moral quality, that is to say, an instrumental virtue. For the humanity of Christ did these things as an instrument of the divinity.

Who hath touched My garments? Christ asks this question, says Bede, that the healing which He had given to the woman, being declared and made known, might advance in many the virtue of faith, and draw them to believe in Christ.

Ver. 33. *But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth. Fearing and trembling*, not because she had been guilty of an act of superstition, as Calvin would have it, but because she had approached secretly, and, unclean, had touched Christ the clean, and had, as it were, stolen a gift of healing from Christ without His knowledge. Therefore she was afraid lest Christ should rebuke her, or lest He should recall the benefit, or afflict her with a worse evil. Hence it is plain that she had not perfect faith and hope in Christ, or she would not have thought that she could be hid from Him, nor would she have been afraid of Him. Wherefore Christ said, to reassure her, *Daughter, be of good courage*, as Matthew says. Ver. 34. *But He said to her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole.* Christ here confirms the healing which had been conferred upon this trembling woman. It was as though He said to her, "Not My mere fringe, which with great faith of obtaining healing thou hast touched, hath saved thee, but chiefly My omnipotence, but secondarily thine own faith. For this, either as a disposition or a meritorious cause, has delivered thee from the issue of blood, which deliverance I ratify and confirm."

Go in peace. For God dwells in peace, that she may know that she is cleansed from her sins. For whom Christ healed in body, He likewise sanctified in soul.

Ver. 39. *The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.* For although she is really dead, yet she shall be forthwith awakened by Me from death as from sleep. Or, as the Scholiast in S. Jerome says, "To you she is dead, to Me she sleepeth."

Talitha cumi. In Hebrew a boy is called *ieled*, for which the Syrians and Chaldeans say *tali*, from whence comes the feminine *talitha*, that is, *girl*. *Cumi* means *arise*, that she being dead should arise from the bed. Moreover, that Mark might give greater

emphasis, and express the sense of one who called and commanded, he added, *I say unto thee*, as S. Jerome says.

Ver. 42. *And immediately the damsel rose up and walked*, that she might show she was alive. *Mystically*, as Bede says, "The soul, when raised from sin, ought not only to arise from the filth of its wickedness, but should advance in good works."

Ver. 43. *And commanded that something should be given her to eat*, that He might show that she not only had arisen, but was in good health and hungry. For boys and girls are wont, when they awake out of sleep, if they are well and strong, to ask for food. And death was to her in the place of sleep, as Christ says in the 39th verse.

CHAPTER VI.

1 *Christ is contemned of his countrymen.* 7 *He giveth the twelve power over unclean spirits.* 14 *Divers opinions of Christ.* 27 *John Baptist is beheaded,* 29 *and buried.* 30 *The apostles return from preaching.* 34 *The miracle of five loaves and two fishes.* 48 *Christ walketh on the sea:* 53 *and healeth all that touch him.*

Ver. 1. *Going out from thence, i.e.*, from Capernaum, where He raised Jairus' daughter.

He went into His own country, i.e., to Nazareth, where He was brought up.

Ver. 2. *They were in admiration at His doctrine:* literally, *they admired in His doctrine.* This is a Hebraism. For the Hebrews use ב as a preposition of contact either corporal or mental in the place of an accusative Thus they say, *I touch in the hand*, instead of, *I touch the hand; I believe in God*, instead of, *I believe God; I admire in wisdom*, for *I admire wisdom.*

Ver. 5. *And He could not do any miracles there. Could not*, i.e., *would not*, because He did not think it proper to give what was holy to dogs, that is, to force His miracles upon unbelieving and ungrateful citizens. So *could not* is used for *would not* (Gen. xxxvii. 4, and John vii. 7). "Because," says Victor of Antioch on this passage, "two things must coincide for the attaining of health, namely, the faith of those who need healing, and the power of him who will heal; therefore, if either of these be wanting, the blessing of a cure will not readily be attained."

Ver. 6. *He wondered because of their unbelief.* This seems to

conflict with what is said in Luke iv. 22, *And all bare Him record, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth.* I answer, that the inhabitants of Nazareth wondered, indeed, that Jesus, the son of a carpenter, their well-known neighbour, should be so wise and eloquent, and yet were incredulous with respect to His doctrine and person, that He was in very deed the Messias or Christ. And that this was so is plain from what Luke subjoins.

Ver. 13. *They anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.* Some are of opinion that this anointing was the same as that of which S. James speaks in his Epistle (v. 14), that is to say, the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. So Bede, Theophylact, Lyra, and others, who think that the Sacrament of Extreme Unction was at this time instituted by Christ, and that the Apostles by His command conferred it upon the sick, although they had not as yet been ordained priests.

But the contrary seems more probable: 1. Because the priest alone is the minister of this sacrament; but the Apostles were not yet priests, for Christ created them priests afterwards.

2. Because the Apostles here anointed all sorts of sick persons, those not baptized, and those not about to die. But Extreme Unction is conferred only upon those who are baptized, and in danger of death.

3. All who were here anointed by the Apostles were healed. But this is not the case in Extreme Unction, which has primary reference to the health and strength of the soul.

4. Because the Council of Trent (*Sess.* 14) says that the Sacrament of Extreme Unction was hinted at in S. Mark, but was commended and promulgated to the faithful by S. James, the Lord's brother. This anointing, therefore, was a type, and as it were a prelude, of the institution of the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, not the sacrament itself. This, then, was a miraculous anointing, or a gift of miracles, bestowed upon the Apostles for a time, that they might by its means confirm their preaching of Christ. It was not the sacrament itself. So S. Genoveva and many holy

anchorites were wont to heal the sick by means of oil blessed by them and sent to the sick. Victor of Antioch gives the reason why they used oil rather than wine,—"oil, amongst other things, assuages the affliction of labours, cherishes light, and promotes gladness." Oil, therefore, which is used in the holy anointing, signifies the mercy of God, the healing of disease, and the enlightenment of the heart. In a similar way the baptism of John was not a sacrament, but a type and prelude of the Sacrament of Baptism.

Ver. 16. *Which Herod hearing, said, John whom I beheaded, he is risen again from the dead.* It was as if he said, The soul of John has passed into Jesus, and so there, as it were, by rising again, has become more divine, and works such great and stupendous miracles. Luke (ix. 7) says that Herod doubted at first, but afterwards, on account of the universal fame of the miracles of Jesus, believed that John had risen again in Him. So S. Chrysostom, Theophylact, Augustine, and others. For the opinion of Pythagoras concerning the metempsychosis or transmigration of souls was then very prevalent. S. Chrysostom says, "How great a thing is virtue! for Herod fears even the dead man." For, as Rabanus says, "it is agreed by all that the saints shall have greater power when they rise again." So also Bede.

Ver. 17. *For Herod himself had sent and apprehended John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, the wife of Philip his brother, because he had married her.* This Herod was not the Great, who was called Herod of Ascalon, who slew the infants of Bethlehem, but his son, surnamed Antipas, who arrayed Christ in a white robe and mocked Him. He it was who beheaded John the Baptist.

You will say, Herod Antipas was only a tetrarch, for so Matthew calls him (xiv. 1). Why, then, does Mark here call him a king? I reply, he calls him king because he was the chief potentate in his tetrarchy, equal to a king in his kingdom. Wherefore he assumed the name of king, and it was given him by others, even by S. Matthew himself (xiv. 9).

In prison. Josephus adds that John was incarcerated in the fortress of Macher, on the confines of Galilee and Arabia, where he was beheaded. This prison was made famous by S. John, for the place, says Philo (*lib. de Joseph.*), was not so much a prison as a school of discipline. Seneca says (*in Consolat. ad Albinam*), "When Socrates entered his prison, he was about to deprive the very place of ignominy, for that could not seem to be a prison where Socrates was." Whence S. Cyprian (*lib.* 4, *epist.* 1, *ad Martyr.*) says, "O blessed prison, which your presence has made illustrious: O darkness, brighter than the sun himself, where the temples of God have been!" The same (*lib.* 3, *epist.* 25) says concerning the chains of the martyrs, "They are ornaments, not bonds. They do not link the feet to infamy, but glorify them for the crown." Wherefore S. Ambrose says (*lib. de Joseph. c.* 5), "Let not the innocent be distressed when they are the victims of false accusations. God visits His own, even in their prison. Then, therefore, is there the more help where is the greater peril. And what marvel is it if God visit those who are in prison, who speaks of Himself as shut up with His people in prison? I was in prison, He says, and ye visited Me not" (Matt. xxv. 44).

On account of Herodias. This Herodias was the daughter of Aristobulus, Herod's brother. Herod, then, had married her who was his niece, being his brother's daughter. So Josephus. Herodias, therefore, was the sister of Herod Agrippa, who killed James, and who was himself slain by an angel (Acts xii.). Wherefore Rufinus, and following him S. Jerome, Eusebius, and Bede, are in error, who say that she was a daughter of Aretas, a king of the Arabians. For they confound Herod's first wife, who was the daughter of Aretas, with Herodias, his second wife. For Herod repudiated the daughter of Aretas to marry Herodias. For this reason Aretas made war upon him, and cut his army to pieces, as Josephus relates (*lib.* xviii. *Antiq. c.* 7), adding, "It was an opinion among the Jews that Herod's army was destroyed by the just vengeance of God because of John the Baptist, a holy man, whom he had slain."

His brother's wife. You will say that Josephus (*lib.* xviii. *Ant. c.* 6, 7, 9) says that she was the wife of another Herod, who was the brother of Philip and Herod Antipas. I reply that Josephus is in error in this matter, as well as in many others; unless you choose to suppose that Herodias was previously married to Herod Antipas. Josephus falls into another mistake in the same place, when he says that John was put to death not because of Herodias, but because Herod was afraid lest, on account of the concourse of the people to John, an insurrection might occur.

Whether Herodias married Herod whilst her husband Philip was alive, or after his death, commentators are not agreed. But it is certain that either way it was an illicit marriage, and involved incest, to which was added adultery, if Philip were still alive. For by Leviticus (xviii. 16) it is forbidden for a brother to marry his brother's wife if there were offspring of the marriage, and Philip had left this dancing daughter, whom Josephus calls Salome. But I say that Herod did marry Herodias during his brother's lifetime, and against his will, and so committed a threefold sin,—the first, adultery; the second, incest; the third, violence. This is proved: 1st. Because Josephus expressly asserts it (*lib.* xviii. *Ant. c.* 7). 2nd. Because the incestuous marriage took place about the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar; for that was when John began to preach, as is plain from Luke iii. 1; but Philip died in the twentieth year of Tiberius, as Josephus affirms (xviii. 6), where he praises him for his justice and modesty. 3rd. Because the Fathers everywhere accuse Herod of adultery, because he took away his wife from his brother, who was of a meek disposition, whilst he was yet living. Thus Herod took advantage of his gentleness.

Ver. 20. *For Herod was afraid of John, knowing him to be a just man and a holy.* At first, therefore, it was only Herodias who wished to kill John, as the rebuker of her adultery. Herod did not assent, as Mark here signifies, and Luke (ix.). But afterwards she persuaded Herod, which she did the more easily, because, as Josephus asserts, he was of a malignant disposition, and prone to

cruelty; and he was incensed against John on account of his frequent reproofs. "Herodias was afraid," says Bede, "lest Herod should some time or other come to a proper mind under John's rebuke, and dissolve the marriage, and restore Herodias to his brother Philip."

Ver. 22. *And when the daughter of the same Herodias had come in, and danced, and pleased Herod.* That female dancers were formerly introduced into their feasts by the Jews out of luxuriousness appears from Josephus (*lib.* xii. *Ant. c.* 4). That there was a similar fashion among the Greeks we learn from Xenophon's *Symposium*, and from Lucian's Dialogue *de Saltatricibus*, where he shows by many examples, and by the opinions of philosophers, that dancing enervates even a manly mind. Truly saith *Ecclesiasticus* (*c.* 9), "Use not much the company of a female dancer, nor listen to her, lest perchance thou perish through her influence." Truly saith Remigius (*on Matt.* xiv.), "The shameless woman brought up a shameless daughter, teaching her to dance instead of to be modest. Nor was Herod less to be blamed for allowing a woman to make a theatre of his palace-hall."

Ver. 25. *I will that forthwith thou give me in a dish the head of John the Baptist.* You will say, John the Baptist was not, then, a martyr, because Herod slew him not because of his faith, nor because of his rebuking him for his adultery, but for the sake of pleasing this dancing girl, and fulfilling his promise. I answer by denying the conclusion. For, 1st. This girl asked the head of John at the instigation of her mother, who wished to cut off John for reproving her adultery. Herodias, therefore, was the virtual cause of John's death, because she impelled Herod to behead him. 2nd. Herod assented to her. Knowing the malignant disposition of his wife, he gave way to her, and killed John. 3rd. Herod himself desired to kill John, as Matthew says expressly (xiv. 5); but he did not dare to do it through fear of the people, who made great count of John as a holy man. Lastly, many are of opinion that probably all was done collusively and of set purpose—namely, that Herod had suggested to Herodias that

she should send her dancing daughter in to supper, and that she should ask for the head of John; that thus he might have from his promise a colourable pretext for killing him; and that this is the reason why Christ calls him *a fox* (*Luc.* xiii. 32). S. John, therefore, was a victim of chastity, because he died a martyr for it, like S. Paul, S. Matthew, S. Clement, and many others.

Moreover, S. Gregory Nazianzen assigns a loftier cause for the early death of John from the hidden counsel of God (*Orat.* 20). "Who," saith he, "was the precursor of Jesus? John, as a voice of speech, as a lantern of light; before Whom also he leapt forth in strength, and was sent forward to Hades by Herod, that there likewise he might preach Him who was shortly to come." The same Nazianzen (*Orat.* 39) teaches that S. John, by the spirit of prophecy, was aware of this his martyrdom. For he says, "I ought, O Christ, to be baptized by Thee; yes, and for Thee." For he had found out that he was to be baptized by martyrdom. For he knew what was to come; that as after Herod Pilate would reign, so Christ would follow him after life was over.

Ver. 26. *The king was sorry, i.e.*, he pretended to be so, say SS. Hilary and Jerome. For he really wished John to be killed, as Matthew says. Wherefore the *Gloss* on the fourteenth of S. Matthew says, "Herod's sorrow was like Pilate's repentance." And the *Interlinear*, "The dissembler showed sorrow in his face, but was glad in his heart."

But more simply. S. Chrysostom and Euthymius think that Herod was really sorry is the meaning of SS. Matthew and Mark. For though he wished John to die, yet he was sorry for his cruel and shameful death, that he should have killed so great a prophet for the gratification of a dancing girl.

For his oath's sake. Herod made a pretext of his oath; for he knew that in such a case, that is, at such an iniquitous and sacrilegious a request of the girl, it was not binding. However, he thought it a king's part not to retract it before the nobles, according to the saying, The word of the king is the king. Thus this worldling acted. Whence S. Augustine says, "A girl dances,

and a mother rages, and there is rash swearing in the midst of the luxurious feast, and an impious fulfilment of what was sworn." For, as S. Isidore says, faith ought to be broken in wicked promises; that is, an impious promise which is fulfilled by a crime.

Ver. 27. *But sending an executioner*, that is, a hangman; for soldiers were executioners and attendants of the prætors, and were armed with javelins (*spicula*). Hence they were called *spiculators* (the word in the Vulgate translated *executioner* is *spiculator*). Our Gretzer (*lib.* 1, *de Cruce, c.* 25) is of opinion, from Suidas, that hangmen (*carnifices*) were called *speculatores* (for the Greek has σπεκουλάτωρα, which is really a Latin word, and the same as *speculator*), Gr. ὀπτῆρας, because it was their office to spy out the plans and movements of an enemy, to be around princes as their bodyguard, and to execute those whom they condemned. So also Franc. Lucas on this passage, Lipsius on Tacitus, and some others. These assert that Suetonius and Tacitus call a *carnifex*, *speculator*. But they cite no passage in support of what they say. Neither have I been able to find any in which the word *speculator* is used for an *executioner* (*carnifex*), with the exception of this one in S. Mark. *Spiculator*, then, becomes σπεκουλάτωρ in Greek. For the Greeks often change the vowel *i* into *e*, as the Italians also do.

He commanded his head to be brought in a dish. Thus did the savage season his feast with this horrible spectacle of cruelty. Bede adds, he wished all his guests to be associated with him in his cruelty. Moreover, S. Gregory says (*Moral. lib.* 3, *c.* 4), "God afflicts His own with infirmities, because He knows how to reward them in the highest. If God exposes to anguish those whom He loves, what are those about to suffer whom He rejects?"

S. John, then, has many laurels—1st. That of doctor; 2nd. of virginity; 3rd. of martyrdom; 4th. of a prophet; 5th. of a hermit; 6th. of an apostle; 7th. of the precursor, index, and baptizer of Christ.

You will ask, At what time was John put to death? 1st. Abulensis says it cannot be determined.

2nd. Bede, and from him Baronius (*A. C.* 33), Maldonatus, and Barradi think that John was slain about the time of the Passover in Christ's thirty-third year. They support this view, because Matthew says (xiv. 13) that Christ departed into the wilderness when He heard of the death of John, and there fed the 5000, an event which happened about the time of the Passover (John vi. 4).

3rd. And very probably, our Salianus (*Annal. tom.* 6, *in fin. ad ann. Christi* 32, *num.* 20) thinks that John suffered at the end of the thirty-second year of the life of Christ, probably in December. He proves this, because Nicephorus (*lib.* 1, *c.* 19) says that John at his death was thirty-two years and a half old; that is, at the completion of Christ's thirty-second year. For John was born on the 24th of June, and was just six months older than Christ, who was born on the 25th of December of the same year. He gives us a second reason, because although Christ's departing into the desert (Matt. xiv.) occurred about the time of the Passover, yet John's death preceded it by some considerable time. For Christ departed not so much on account of John's death, as because the fame of His own miracles had so greatly increased that many thought John had risen again in Him. But this took place when some considerable time, comparatively speaking, had elapsed after John's death. That is to say, John's being put to death took place in December, and Christ's retiring into the desert about the following March. And the intervening period must have been taken up by the miracles which Christ wrought after John's death, and by the fame of them being so widely spread abroad as to lead Herod to suspect that John had risen again in Jesus. This led Jesus to retire into the desert lest Herod should kill Him also.

Lastly, some think that John suffered on the 29th of August, because the Church keeps the Feast of the Decollation of S. John the Baptist on that day. Baronius, however, thinks that this day is kept in memory of the Invention of the head of S. John.

Ver. 28. *And brought his head in a dish: and gave it to the damsel, and the damsel gave it to her mother.* S. Chrysostom (*in*

Matt. Hom. 49), S. Austin (*Serm.* 36, *de Sanctis*), S. Ambrose (*lib.* 3, *de Virgin.*) enlarge upon the indignity, yea, the sacrilege, of this murder. Apostrophising Herod, the latter cries, "Behold his eyes, even in death the witnesses of thy cruelty! He turns them away from the sight of thy dainties. His eyes are closed, not so much by the constraint of death, as by horror at thy luxury. That lifeless golden mouth, whose sentence thou couldst not endure, is silent, and yet it is dreaded."

S. Jerome says that Herodias insulted the severed head, and punctured his most holy tongue with a needle; upon which the Father exclaims, "Do not boast thyself so much because thou hast done what scorpions and flies do. So did Fulvia to Cicero, and Herodias to John, because they could not bear the truth; they pierced the tongue that spoke the truth with a needle" (S. Jerome, *Apolog. cont. Rufin. sub finem*).

Wherefore the just vengeance of God burned against all who were concerned in this crime. Herod was defeated by Aretas. Afterwards he was banished with Herodias to Lyons, and deprived of his tetrarchy and everything by Caligula, at the instigation of Agrippa, the brother of Herodias, as Josephus relates (xviii. 10). Moreover, the head of the dancing daughter was cut off by means of ice. Hear what Nicephorus says, "As she was journeying once in the winter-time, and a frozen river had to be crossed on foot, the ice broke beneath her, not without the providence of God. Straightway she sank down up to her neck. This made her dance and wriggle about with all the lower parts of her body, not on land, but in the water. Her wicked head was glazed with ice, and at length severed from her body by the sharp edges, not of iron, but of the frozen water. Thus in the very ice she displayed the dance of death, and furnished a spectacle to all who beheld it, which brought to mind what she had done." Hear also L. Dexter (*in Chron. A. C.* 34), "Herod Antipas, with Herodias his incestuous mistress, was banished first to Gaul, and afterwards to Ilerda in Spain. Herodias dancing upon the river Sicoris when it was frozen, fell through the ice, and perished miserably."

Placed it in a tomb. S. Jerome says that the body of S. John was buried at Sebaste, the former Samaria, where also the prophets Elisha and Obadiah were buried. Moreover, S. John wrought so many miracles at Sebaste that Julian the Apostate ordered his body to be burnt, but the Christians secretly conveyed away his relics.

CHAPTER VII.

1 *The Pharisees find fault at the disciples for eating with unwashen hands.* 8 *They break the commandment of God by the traditions of men.* 14 *Meat defileth not the man.* 24 *He healeth the Syrophenician woman's daughter of an unclean spirit,* 31 *and one that was deaf, and stammered in his speech.*

Ver. 2. *To eat with common, that is, with unwashen hands.* Hands unwashed were called *common*, because unclean and profane things were *common* to both Jews and Gentiles, to clean and unclean persons alike.

Observe, the Apostles were not so boorish as not to wash their hands before dining or supping, which even husbandmen and artisans do before meals; but they abstained from the ceremonial, or rather the superstitious washing of the Pharisees, which they scrupulously observed from the tradition of their ancestors.

Ver. 3. *Often washing:* Syr. *betilarth*, i.e., *diligently* or *carefully;* Gr. πυγμῇ, *zealously;* Heb. *caph el caph*, i.e., *hand to hand*, namely, by constant rubbing, as they do who wish to cleanse defiled hands.

Ver. 4. *From the market.* Because in the market are all kinds, both of persons and things, clean and unclean, by coming in contact with which they feared they had incurred pollution, and so they thought they could not cleanse themselves from such contamination except by washing, not their hands only, but their whole body. Whence it follows:

Unless they be baptized, i.e., unless they immerse and wash their

whole body, as the Jews do frequently, even at the present time. For *to be baptized* is more than *to wash the hands*. Because, therefore, by conversing with and touching Gentiles in the market they were compelled to handle some things that were unclean, they washed themselves all over when they came home.

Of pots: Gr. ξεστῶν, *i.e.*, of wine-drinking vessels. The Syriac has *œnophororun, vessels in which wine is carried.* Vatablus understands wooden vessels, which were turned and polished, or ornamented with carving.

And beds: on which they reclined at table.

Ver. 15. *Make a man common* (Vulg.), i.e., *defile him*, as some MSS. read.

Ver. 19. *Because it entereth not into his heart, i.e.*, into his soul, and cannot therefore defile it. *But goeth into the belly*, where the purer portion of the food, being separated, proceeds to the liver and heart; but that which is impure and feculent *into the draught*, by its going forth, *purging, i.e.*, leaving pure *all meats.* For in that it, the impure, goeth away, it cleanses and purifies the remainder of the food.

Ver. 26. *A Gentile:* Gr. ἑλλήνις, i.e., *a Grecian woman*, for where the Greeks bore sway, all Gentiles were called Greeks. Hence the expression in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, "The Jew first, and also the Greek," *i.e.*, the Gentile.

A Syrophenician, i.e., belonging to that part of Phœnicia which looks towards Syria.

Ver. 32. *And dumb:* Gr. μογιλάλον, i.e., *speaking with difficulty* or *an impediment, stammering.* For when he was healed by Christ *he spake right*, i.e., *freely*, as it is in the 35th verse. He was not, therefore, entirely dumb, as they are who are born deaf. These are called in Greek ἄλαλοι.

Ver. 33. *And spitting, He touched his tongue.* Christ wrought harmoniously, as though by His healing saliva He would moisten and loosen the dumb mouth, which was bound through drought.

Now He spat not upon the mouth of the mute, but upon His own finger, and by means of His finger applied the saliva to the

mouth of the mute, as may be gathered from the Greek. This was required by propriety and decorum. Moreover, when Christ opened the ears and unloosed the tongue of the body, He opened also the ears and tongue of the soul, that they might listen to His inspiration, and believe that He was the Messiah, and that they might ask and obtain of Him pardon of their sins.

Tropologically: Every one ought to seek the same thing, and say with the Psalmist, "O Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise" (Ps. li. 17). We ought to do the same as regards our ears, that we may be able to sing aloud with Isaiah (l. 4), "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to *him that is* weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned." Now this is done when He Himself with His own *Finger*, that is, the Holy Ghost (for He is "the Finger of God," Exod. viii. 19), and the spittle of Heavenly Wisdom, which is He Himself proceeding forth from the mouth of the Most High, touches the tongue of the soul.

Ver. 34. *And looking up to heaven* (because from thence come words to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, healing for all infirmities, says Bede), *He groaned;* both because He sympathised with the misery of the deaf and dumb man, as because in groaning He prayed and obtained healing for him from God.

Ephpheta, which is, Be thou opened, i.e., which so signifies. "Where," says Bede, "the two natures of the one and the same Mediator between God and man are plainly set forth. For, looking up to heaven as man, He groaned, being about to pray to God; presently by a single word, as having the power of Divine Majesty, He healed." For we all have eyes, but the blind have theirs shut and closed, which in the Syriac idiom are elegantly said to be opened when their shutters are unclosed, as Angelus Caninius says (*in Nom. Heb. c.* 10). Moreover, the Heb. *patach* signifies *to open.* From whence is the imperative passive, or *Niphal, hippateach*, by crasis *hippatach*, for which the Syrians use *Ephpheta, be open.*

Ver. 36. *He charged them that they should tell no man.* This was not properly a command, involving a fault if disobeyed, but merely a token of urbanity and modesty, that, indeed, He might signify He would not make a parade of His miracles, or by their means obtain the vain glory of men. Wherefore they did not commit sin who nevertheless divulged them. Wherefore it follows, *the more He charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it.* "We are taught by this," says Theophylact, "that when we confer benefits we should not seek for applause therefrom; but when we have received benefits we should praise our benefactors, even though they are unwilling to be praised." And S. Augustine says, "By His prohibition the Lord wished to teach us how very fervently they ought to preach to whom He has given a command to preach, when they who were commanded to be silent could not hold their peace."

Ver. 37. *He hath done all things well:* Gr. καλῶς, i.e., *beautifully, becomingly, harmoniously.* Christ did nothing which the Pharisees or such like fault-finders could justly blame. Again, the Heb. for *well* is *heteb*, i.e., *beneficently*, because He gave hearing to the deaf, speech to the dumb. Indeed, Christ's whole life was one continuous beneficence.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 *Christ feedeth the people miraculously:* 10 *refuses to give a sign to the Pharisees:* 14 *admonisheth his disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod:* 22 *giveth a blind man his sight:* 27 *acknowledgeth that he is the Christ, who should suffer and rise again:* 34 *and exhorteth to patience in persecution for the profession of the gospel.*

Ver. 15. *Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the leaven of Herod. The leaven* is the doctrine of the Pharisees, by which they taught children to say to their parents *corban*, as well as other things contrary to the law of God. *The leaven of Herod* is the doctrine of the Sadducees, for with them Christ had had His most recent controversy, as appears from Matt. xvi. 1–12. For Herod, as well as many of the principal people at that time, were Sadducees (see *Jos.* xviii. *c.* 2). They denied the immortality of the soul, and lived as Atheists. So Herod lived in adultery, killed John, and committed many other crimes, having no fear of God. For although he thought that John had risen again in Christ, yet that opinion did not arise out of faith, but was wrung out of him by fear. Others, with Origen and S. Jerome, understand by *leaven* the sect of the Herodians, who flattered Herod, saying that he was the Messiah. But that referred to Herod of Ascalon, not Herod Antipas, as I have shown on Matt. xxii. 16.

Ver. 23. *And taking the blind man by the hand, He led him out of the town, i.e.*, outside of Bethsaida, as is plain from ver. 22. He led him forth for the same reason that when He was about to

heal the deaf and dumb man He took him aside from the multitude. This was, 1st. For the sake of prayer, that, being alone, He might collect His thoughts, and unite Himself wholly to God, and pray the more intently and collectedly. 2nd. To fly from the applause of men, and teach us to do the same. 3rd. Because the citizens of Bethsaida were unworthy of the miracle of Christ; for although they had seen Him work so many miracles, they would not believe in Him.

And spitting upon his eyes. Fasting spittle does good to the purblind, but does not illuminate those who have actually lost their sight. The saliva, therefore, of Christ was not a natural but a supernatural remedy for blindness, being the instrument by which Christ's Godhead wrought.

S. Hilarion imitated this miracle by which Christ gave sight to a blind man, as S. Jerome relates in his *Life*. "A blind woman was brought to B. Hilarion, who said that she had expended all her substance upon physicians. Hilarion said to her, If thou hadst given to the poor what thou hast thrown away upon physicians, Christ the true Physician would have healed thee."

Laid His hands, i.e., when He had placed His hands upon the eyes of the blind man, and again removed them. For that is improbable which the Scholiast in S. Chrysostom says, that this blind man saw people (ver. 24) when Christ's hands were over his eyes. For this would have been a new and uncalled-for miracle.

Ver. 24. *And looking up, he said, I see men as it were trees, walking.* As much as to say, I see something obscurely and confusedly; for I see men walking, but in such a way that I cannot distinguish whether they are men or trees. Just as it happens to ourselves, says Bede; when we see people at a great distance, we can only distinguish men from trees by their motion, because men walk, but trees do not. The word *walking* must be referred to *men*, not to trees, as is plain by the Greek. The word *walking* in the Latin text, however, might refer to trees in this sense: I see men as it were trees split, and therefore two-footed,

and so walking. This blind man, therefore, as yet in darkness, saw men as it were through a mist and cloud, in which they appeared greater than they really were, it might be as thick and tall as trees, as by means of magnifying glasses letters appear larger than they are in reality.

It is related of S. Gregory Thaumaturgus, that in the Decian persecution he fled with his deacon to a certain hill. A certain traitor made known where they were to the persecutors, who carefully searched the whole hill to discover Gregory. With strong faith in God, he stood in prayer, with eyes immovable and hands stretched out. But God smote the persecutors with inability to see. They returned and reported that they had seen nothing on the hill except two trees a little distant from one another. When they had gone away, the traitor himself went up the hill and saw two men, Gregory and his deacon, instead of the trees. He acknowledged that it was the work of Divine power that they had appeared to the persecutors to be trees, and he fell down at their feet, and from a traitor became a confessor of the faith. (S. Greg. Nyss. *in Vita.*)

Mystically: The Scholiast in S. Jerome says, "The blind man is a penitent sinner. He sees men as trees walking, because he esteems every one superior to himself. With David he counts himself unworthy to be called a man, deeming himself to be a dead dog and a flea" (2 Sam. xvi.).

Ver. 25. *After that again He laid His hands upon his eyes, and he began to see, and was restored, so that he saw all things clearly.* Christ wished not suddenly, but by degrees, perfectly to illuminate this blind man: 1st. That He might exhibit miracles of every description. 2nd. That this miracle might be more esteemed. 3rd. And principally, That He might accommodate Himself to the imperfect faith of the blind man and those who brought him, their faith increasing as the miracle proceeded; and that He might the more kindle in them faith, hope, and desire that it might be brought to a perfect work. "In the first place, He cured this blind man imperfectly," says Euthymius, "inasmuch as he believed imper-

fectly, that he who as yet had but a little vision might by means of the little light believe more perfectly, and be healed more completely; for He was the wise Physician." And by and by he says, "Increase of faith deserved increase of healing."

Tropologically: Christ wished to teach us that the unbeliever and the sinner are gradually illuminated by God, and that they ought correspondingly to make gradual increase in the knowledge and worship of God. "He did it," says Bede, "that He might show the greatness of human blindness, which is wont to arrive step by step, and by certain grades, as it were, of progression, at the light of the Divine knowledge." For as the Scholiast says, "There are degrees of knowledge; neither can any one arrive in a single hour, or, indeed, without considerable time, at perfect knowledge." We have experience of this in children and scholars, who must be taught and instructed step by step. For if the teacher, being impatient of delay and trouble, should wish to teach them everything at once, he would crush their memory and intellect, so that they would take in nothing. It is like wine when it is poured into a vessel with a narrow neck; if you try to pour it all in at once, you pour in scarcely anything, but nearly the whole is spilled. Worthy of note is the Italian proverb, "Gently, gently, if you would go far;" or the saying of the philosopher, "Progression is by degrees."

Symbolically: The Scholiast in S. Jerome says, "Christ laid His hands upon his eyes, that he might see all things clearly, that is, that by visible works he might understand things invisible, and which eye hath not seen; and that after the film of sin he might clearly behold the state of his soul with the eye of a clean heart. For blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Ver. 34. *In this adulterous generation,* of depraved Jews, who are sons of God, though not genuine ones, but like spurious children, the offspring of adultery. For they are degenerate from the faith of their fathers, the Patriarchs, since they will not receive Me, who am the Messiah promised to them. Therefore they are not so much children of God as of the devil. Such are called

in Hebrew *bene nechar*, *i.e.*, children born of a strange, alien, or adulterous father. See what has been said on S. Matt. x. 33.

Ver. 39. *The kingdom of God*, *i.e.*, the glory of the kingdom of God, which is about to be in My transfiguration.

Coming, *i.e.*, appearing, and showing itself to Peter, James, and John. *In power*, *i.e.*, with great power, glory, splendour, and majesty.

CHAPTER IX.

2 *Jesus is transfigured.* 11 *He instructeth his disciples concerning the coming of Elias:* 14 *casteth forth a dumb and deaf spirit:* 30 *foretelleth his death and resurrection:* 33 *exhorteth his disciples to humility:* 38 *bidding them not to prohibit such as be not against them, nor to give offence to any of the faithful.*

Ver. 12. *And be despised:* Gr. ἐξουδενωθῇ, i.e., *be nothing accounted of.* Understand, thus shall it happen to Elias, that when by his great labours he has restored the faith, he shall in return for such great benefits receive curses and ill-treatment from the ungrateful and the impious, and shall at last be killed by them.

Ver. 15. *And presently all the people seeing Jesus, were astonished, and struck with fear: and running to Him, they saluted Him.* They were astonished because they saw Jesus so unexpectedly present after His absence, and at so opportune a time, to defend His disciples against the scribes. Again, it was because they saw in the face of Jesus, who had a little while before been transfigured, some remaining rays of His splendour; just as there were in the countenance of Moses, after his converse with God, rays, and, as it were, horns of light.

Ver. 19. *Troubled him:* Gr. ἐσπάραξεν, i.e., *bruised, tore, convulsed* his whole body. Wherefore it is added in explanation, *and being thrown down upon the ground, he wallowed about foaming,* because, in fact, the demon was experiencing the power of Christ, and foresaw that he would speedily be cast out, therefore with

indignation and gnashing of teeth he thus grievously afflicted and tormented the *energumen.*

Ver. 29. *They passed through Galilee, and He would not tha. any one should know it.* Lest He should be detained by the Galileans from love of Himself and His benefits. For He was hastening to Jerusalem to His cross and death, about which He was speaking privately to His disciples, that He might accomplish the will of His Father, and redeem the human race.

Ver. 31. *But they understood not the word.* That is to say, in what manner, and for what cause, Christ was to die; and how these words concerning His near approaching death agreed with what He had often told them, that His kingdom was at hand. For otherwise the Apostles understood and believed that Christ would die (see Matt. xvii. 23), when they are said to have been sorry at this saying of Christ concerning His death. Unless you prefer to say that they were ignorant of the death of Christ, because they were in hesitation with respect to it on account of the different sayings of Christ, apparently inconsistent with one another, and that accordingly they inclined to the view which was the more pleasing to them. For it was this which they wished to be true. "For so lovers frame dreams for themselves." So they endeavoured to persuade themselves that these words of Christ concerning His death had some other hidden meaning, and that they were not to be taken literally, but mystically.

Ver. 37. *John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, who followeth not us, and we forbade him.* It is as though he said, "Have we done well or ill?" John asks this question not out of envy, as Calvin would have it, but out of love and zeal for the honour of Christ. And it was occasioned by what He had said in the preceding verse, *Whosoever shall receive one such little child in My name receiveth Me.* As though he said, If he who receives a little one in Thy name receiveth Thy Father and Thyself, what must we think concerning him who works miracles in Thy name, and yet followeth not us, that is, is not Thy attendant and disciple, as we are? "Because,"

says Cyril (*in Catena in Luc.* xi. 49), "the Saviour had given power to His Apostles to cast out unclean spirits, they thought that it had been conceded to none others save themselves to enjoy such dignity." So Theophylact and Victor.

Here observe that those who thus cast out devils in the name of Christ, and yet did not follow Him, were believers, but imperfect ones, forasmuch as they shrank from the rugged poverty and renunciation of their goods, such as was the lot of the Apostles. They shrank from following Christ in His evangelical labours and His persecutions. Still they have some faith in Christ, by virtue of which they cast out devils. So S. Ambrose (*in Luc.* xi. 49). And in so doing Christ wrought and co-operated with them, that His power and glory might be the more made manifest, which wrought such great things by means of those who were so imperfect, and, as it were, aliens.

Observe, in the next place, that the Apostles did not forbid such people through hatred, but out of zeal for Christ, as though they were detracting from the glory of Christ and His ordinance, according to chap. iii. 15, where Christ gives to His Apostles only the power of casting out devils. But this zeal of theirs was indiscreet, especially because they had rashly, without consulting Christ, forbidden them. And Christ showed them that this was so for a double reason. The first is what He brings forward in the next verse. In a similar manner, when Joshua saw Eldad and Medad prophesying, he wished to forbid them, as if they were detracting from the glory of Moses, in that they had not received the spirit of prophecy from Moses. But Moses checked him by saying, "Enviest thou for my sake? Would that all the people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!" (Num. xi. 29). This is the Spirit of Christ, the spirit of love and of the Holy Ghost, which makes large the heart, and envieth none, but rejoices in all good things, by whomsoever and in what way soever they are wrought (see 1 Cor. xiii.).

Ver. 38. *But Jesus said, Do not forbid him, for there is no man that doth a miracle in My name, and can soon* (Gr. τάχα, i.e.,

easily) *speak ill of Me.* Do not hinder him in a good work, and one that honours Me; because even if he does not follow Me, yet he is doing the self-same thing which you do, that is to say, he is celebrating My name, and he is making it known to men by casting out devils. Wherefore he does nothing that is against My name, but rather propagates and glorifies it.

Ver. 39. *For he that is not against you is for you.* This man, therefore, is not your adversary, in that he does the same that you do. He stands on your side. He helps you; he does not oppose you.

Ver. 40. *For whosoever shall give you to drink a cup of water in My name, because you belong to Christ: Amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.* This is Christ's further reason to show why the man must not be forbidden to cast out devils. It is as though Christ said, "If he who gives you a drink of water in My name, and for My sake, does well, and shall receive a reward from God, so likewise shall he who drives out devils in My name. For both the one and the other do a good work, and are profitable to their neighbours in regard and respect of Me. But the one confers so much the greater benefit than the other, by as much as the devil whom he drives out is more hurtful than the thirst which the other alleviates by a draught of water." So Theophylact.

Ver. 41. *And whosoever shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.* This is antithetical to the 36th verse. For Christ returns after the question interposed by John to what He had said concerning those who should receive a little child in His name. For as he who receives and cherishes the little ones who believe in Me, receives Myself, and shall be rewarded by Me with eternal glory in heaven; so, on the other hand, whoso shall cause one of these little ones to offend, offendeth Me, and shall be by Me condemned to Gehenna.

Ver. 42. *And if thy hand scandalize thee, cut it off.* For a scandal is so pernicious that it harms not only the doer but the sufferer of it. Wherefore, if thou sufferest a scandal from thy

hand, cut it off. That is, if any one, relative or friend, as useful and as dear to thee as thy hand, thy foot, thine eye, scandalize thee, that is, draw thee into sin, separate such an one from thy company, lest he drag thee with him into Gehenna.

Ver. 43. *Where their worm dieth not.* He quotes Isa. lxvi. 24. Christ repeats this saying three times, that He may impress these dreadful worms and these fires upon us, that through horror of them we may avoid every scandal and every sin.

Ver. 48. *For every one shall be salted with fire: and every victim shall be salted with salt.*

1st. Franc. Lucas and Maldonatus understand *the fire of hell*, that Christ gives the reason of what He had just said, *where their worm*, &c. The reason is, *for every one*, namely, such as are adjudged to Gehenna, *shall be salted with fire*, that is, shall be burnt and tormented with fire, but in such manner that by the same fire, as it were by salt, they shall be preserved incorrupt for everlasting torments. For salt possesses the properties both of burning and preserving. It burns and torments by burning; by its saltness it preserves from corruption. The fire of hell does the same thing, wherefore it is appropriately compared to *salt*.

And every victim: and, that is, *like as*. As though He said, "As every victim of God is wont to be seasoned with salt, according to the Law (Lev. ii. 13), so whosoever shall be adjudged to Gehenna shall be a victim, as it were, of the justice and vengeance of God for ever, and so shall be salted with fire unquenchable as with salt, that is, shall be burnt and tormented, and shall at the same time remain unconsumed in the fire." So Isaiah teaches that the wicked shall in their torments be victims of God's vengeance (xxxiv. 6; see also Ezek. xxxix. 17, and Jer. xlvi. 10). For the wicked are, as it were, victims immolated to the honour of God's justice. This sense is very plain, apposite, and in accordance with the context.

2nd. Others refer the words more remotely to what Christ said in the 42nd and following verses about avoiding scandals, and that to do so a hand or a foot must be cut off. It would be as

though He said, "Cut off from thee the person who is as dear and as necessary to thee as a hand or an eye, if he scandalize thee; for every one who seeks to please God, and to offer himself to Him as a spiritual victim, must cut off from him, as by the fire of mortification, the man who causes him to offend, however dear he may be. He must, therefore, *be salted* by suffering tribulation, that is, he must be crucified and purified. He must be salted with the mystical *salt* of prudence, discretion, and evangelical wisdom, which teaches us that it is better to cut off our hand than to go into hell." There is an allusion to, or, indeed, in a mystical sense, a citation of Lev. ii. 13, "Whatsoever thou shalt offer in sacrifice, thou shalt season with salt." So Theophylact on this passage of S. Mark; Theodoret, Procopius, Bede, Radulphus, Ruperti, on Lev. ii., and Cyril (*lib.* 15, *de Adorat.*). Wherefore it is added, *salt is good.* Hear the *Gloss*, "To be salted with fire is for the love of Christ to deny ourselves of those who are nearest to us, and as dear as a hand or an eye." Hear also Bede, "The heart of the elect is the *altar*, the *victims* are good works, the *salt* is wisdom." Christ opposes the fire of mortification to the fire of hell, and the *salt* to the *undying worm.* As though He said, "That ye may escape the fire and the worm of hell, which concupiscence generates, be zealous for the fire of mortification and the salt of wisdom. For this shall take away the putridity of concupiscence, from which are generated the undying worms which shall be burned in the fire of hell."

3rd. By *fire* Bede understands *charity* and the *Holy Spirit*, and His gift of *discretion*, by which He guides us into all good.

Lastly, the Scholiast in S. Jerome by *salt* understands also *the fire of Purgatory.* Hear what he says, "The victim of the Lord is the human race, which in this life is seasoned with the season of wisdom, when the corruption of the blood, which is the source of putridity, that is, the mother of worms, is consumed, and after this life is tried by purgatorial fire."

Salt is good, i.e., *useful.* "Ye, O ye Apostles, who have

been chosen by Me to be *the salt of the earth*, are profitable to the world, that ye may season with your wisdom and evangelical doctrine all nations." Hear the Scholiast, "It is a good thing to hear the Word of God; to season the heart with the salt of wisdom; yea, to be salt, like the Apostles, *i.e.*, to minister wisdom unto others." Also Theophylact, "Salt preserves flesh; so the speech of a doctor prevents the unquenchable fire from being generated in carnal men."

But if the salt become unsavoury (the Gr. contains an elegant pun, ἅλς ἄναλον, i.e., *saltless salt*), *wherewith* (*i.e.*, with what other salt) *will ye season it?* It is as if He said, "If ye, O ye Apostles, who are the salt of the earth, lose this virtue of saltness, and become unsavoury and insipid, that through love or fear of men, through cupidity or ambition, ye fall away from My doctrine and an evangelical life, who shall restore you to your former wisdom, vigour, and sanctity?" Christ plays upon the word *salt*. For *salt* in Lev. ii. 13 is to be understood literally, but here it is to be taken mystically for wisdom, and metonymically for the Apostles, who had in themselves this mystic salt. Hear the Scholiast in S. Jerome, "Salt is savourless which loves the chief place, and which dares not either to rebuke or confess, loving the praise of men more than the praise of God." Christ has a reference to Judas, who being corrupted by the love of money, and becoming unsavoury, lost his Apostleship, and did not hesitate to betray the Lord.

Have salt in yourselves, i.e., *the salt* of wisdom and a Christian life, as humility, charity, contempt of the world, but especially *peace;* as Christ adds, saying, *And have peace among yourselves.* "Do not ambitiously contend among yourselves for the primacy, as ye have contended" (ver. 33), to which Christ refers. For such a contention will be a scandal to the whole world; and for that reason Christ subjoined what is said concerning the avoidance of scandal in verses 36 and 41. But if ye preserve peace and mutual concord, ye shall be for the edification of the whole world; and being united one with another in the bond of charity,

ye will be invincible, and will draw all men to yourselves and Christ. Therefore by *peace* the *Interlinear* understands *love*. And the Scholiast thus expounds, *Have salt in yourselves*, "The love of one's neighbour tempers the salt of correction; and the salt of justice preserves love."

Have peace, &c. That is, let him who speaks eloquently greatly fear lest by his eloquence unity be broken. For, as Bede says, "to have salt without peace is not a gift of virtue, but a proof of condemnation; for the wiser any one is, the greater his sin if he fall." "For there are many," says the *Gloss*, "that whilst greater knowledge lifts them up, it separates them from the society of others; and the wiser they are, the more they fall from the virtue of concord."

Lastly, the *Gloss* thus expounds, *Have salt in you, i.e.*, have discretion: *and have peace among yourselves.* By wisdom and discretion peace is both acquired and preserved among men. For the prudent and discreet do nothing which may offend others and disturb peace. The same bear with the infirmities of others, while those who are impatient are angry, and strive with them.

CHAPTER X.

2 *Christ disputeth with the Pharisees touching divorcement:* 13 *blesseth the children that are brought unto him:* 17 *resolveth a rich man how he may inherit life everlasting:* 23 *telleth his disciples of the danger of riches:* 28 *promiseth rewards to them that forsake anything for the gospel:* 32 *foretelleth his death and resurrection:* 35 *biddeth the two ambitious suitors to think rather of suffering with him:* 46 *and restoreth to Bartimæus his sight.*

Ver. 21. *And Jesus regarding him*, with a benignant and pleasant countenance, *loved him*, showed him marks of His love, taking his hand and smiling upon him, embracing and kissing him.

One thing is wanting unto thee, namely, for the perfection of a holy and evangelical life.

Follow Me. The Greek adds, *Taking up thy cross.* The Syriac has, *Take thy cross, and come after Me.*

Ver. 24. *Little children* (Vulg.); the Syriac, *My sons.* By His bland address He softens the hardness of the matter. He is like one who loves his children most dearly; and as such He would tell them the truth in sincerity, and persuade them to renounce riches as a bar to salvation.

That trust in riches. For rich men trust in their riches rather than in God, according to the saying in Proverbs (x. 15), "The substance of a rich man is the city of his strength" (Vulg.). With difficulty, therefore, are they saved, because salvation cometh only from God. Wherefore those who wish to be saved must put their trust in God, and must ask and wait for salvation from

Him, as the poor do. For inasmuch as they have no riches in which to trust, they are obliged to place all their hopes in God, according to the words (Ps. xiv. 6), "Ye have shamed the counsel of the poor, because the Lord is his hope." Therefore if rich men wish to be saved, let them turn their hope, their heart, their love from riches, and fix them upon God.

Ver. 30. *Who shall not receive an hundred times as much, now in this time; houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions: and in the world to come life everlasting.* I have explained this hundredfold in S. Matt. xix. 29. Mark here adds, *with persecutions.* The Arabic has, *in tribulations.* "Let him who has relinquished his possessions and friends for the love of Christ, and is set in the midst of persecutions, and is encompassed by them on every side, be faithful. For there will not be wanting *a hundred*, that is, very many, who will succour and cherish him, as brothers, fathers, and mothers." So Jerome, Bede, &c.

This is added because in persecutions the believer especially needs the help and assistance of others. Also, because this is a rare and marvellous thing, that in persecution, when a man is wont to be left destitute of help and friends, and when all, through fear of danger, withdraw themselves from him, those who follow Christ experience the exact contrary, and find *a hundred*, *i.e.*, very many to succour them.

Again, *with persecutions* may be taken thus—that persecutions and tribulations undergone for Christ's sake are part of the reward which shall be given, together with *the hundredfold*, to those who follow Christ. For to suffer for Christ is a great gift of God, as the Apostle teaches (Phil. ii. 19).

Ver. 32. *They were in the way*, from Jericho, . . . *and Jesus went before them*, as with alacrity, affording Himself as a guide in the way to the frightened Apostles, who shrank from Jerusalem, because they knew that Jesus was there sought for by the princes to be put to death. Yea, a decree had been made to that effect by their great council, the Sanhedrim (John xi. 52). Whence it follows—

They were astonished, and following, were afraid. Gr. ἐθαμβοῦντο, i.e., *they were astonished with great fear and dread.* The imminent peril of death, says Bede, was the cause of their fear. They were amazed that Christ with so prompt and resolute a mind should bring Himself and His disciples into such open peril of death. They were afraid lest they might suffer and be put to death with Christ.

Ver. 38. *Or be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized.* Christ calls His Passion a *baptism*, because He was to be evidently immersed and drowned in it, according to what David says of himself, but much more of Christ (Ps. lxix. 12), "Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me."

Ver. 42. *Ye know that they who seem to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them.* Gr. κατακυριεύουσιν αὐτῶν, i.e., *dominate over them*, or *against them.* For *who seem*, the Gr. is οἱ δοκοῦντες, i.e., *who please themselves, and rejoice in ruling.* For none rule more imperiously and harshly than those who are delighted with ruling and commanding. Whence the Arabic translates, *they who think themselves princes of the people are their lords, i.e.*, they exercise, as it were, a tyrannical domination over them.

Ver. 46. *Bartimæus, the son of Timæus.* This blind man, then, was called by a proper name, *Bartimæus, i.e.*, the son of Timæus, as Bartholomew is the same as son of Ptolemy. The same was called also by the same name as his father Timæus. Timæus was the name of that Pythagorean philosopher who wrote the life of Pythagoras.

Moreover, Bartimæus is interpreted by Pagnini in three ways (*in Nom. Hebraicis*). The first is from S. Jerome, to the effect that Bartimæus means *the blind son*, or *the son of blindness.* He says that it is a Syriac name, but corrupted from *Barsemia*, or *Barsamæus. Bar* is son, *semaia*, blindness.

The second opinion is, that it means *the son of honour;* as if compounded of the Syriac *bar*, a *son*, and the Gr. τιμή, *honour.*

The third is, that it means *the son of the admirer*, or *admirable corn*, or *admirable purity*. For this was what the blind man received from Christ. For being illuminated in body, he was far more illuminated in his soul. For *bar* means *meal*, or *wheat*, or *purity*, as well as son. *Tamah* is *to admire*.

And followed Him in the way. Moraliter: Says the *Gloss*, Let us consider the way in which He goeth, and follow Him by humility and labours. The *way* is that of which He saith, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." This is "the narrow way," which leads to the heights of Jerusalem and Bethany, to the Mount of Olives, which is the mount of light and consolation; yea, which leads to Zion and the heavenly Jerusalem. The blind man therefore sees and follows, for he who rightly understands the life of Christ ought to follow and imitate it by his works.

CHAPTER XI.

1 *Christ rideth with triumph into Jerusalem:* 12 *curseth the fruitless leafy tree:* 15 *purgeth the temple:* 20 *exhorteth his disciples to stedfastness of faith, and to forgive their enemies:* 27 *and defendeth the lawfulness of his actions by the witness of John, who was a man sent of God.*

Ver. 10. *Blessed be the kingdom of our father David that cometh.* It means, blessed by the benediction and goodness of God, *i.e.*, "let it be happy, propitious, flourishing, firm, and abounding in all good things, this kingdom of our father David, which is the kingdom of Israel — that kingdom which was most ample and flourishing under David and Solomon his son, and which fell to pieces at the Babylonian captivity, and subsequently. Now does that kingdom come. It returns, and is restored by this our Messiah, the Son of David, who shall restore it to its pristine glory and beauty, yea, who shall make it far more strong and flourishing."

Ver. 16. *And He suffered not that any man should carry a vessel through the temple. Vessel, utensil, instrument,* or *furniture,* for profane uses, such as basket, pot, ewer, or burden. *Through the temple, i.e.,* through the outermost court of the temple, which was the court of the Gentiles, where the Gentiles might tarry and pray. For to those who wished to pass from the sheep-market, called Bethesda, or by corruption Bethsaida, to the upper city, or Solomon's palace, the nearest way was through this porch or court of Solomon's. For otherwise they would have to traverse

the whole exterior boundary of this court. It was not surprising, therefore, that servants and children, who were carrying any burden, should take the nearer way through this court. But Christ forbade their doing so, both by His word and the gestures which He made with His hand, and compelled them to go back. What, then, would He have done with respect to the Holy Place itself? What with respect to our churches? (See Vilalpandus, *tom.* 2, *in Ezek. l.* 3, *c.* 9.)

Ver. 22. *Have faith*, i.e., *full and perfect faith.*

CHAPTER XII.

1 *The parable of the vineyard.* 13 *Touching the paying of tribute.* 18 *The Sadducees confuted.* 35 *A difficulty proposed to the scribes.*

Ver. 1. *Planted a vineyard.* Gr. ἐφύτευσεν, Vulg. *pastinavit.* The verb *pastinare* is especially used of vines. It means to dig the soil of the vineyard, and prepare it for planting vines. So the word *repastinare* means *to dig up vines* when they are sterile.

And dug a lake (Vulg.), a receptacle into which the *must* pressed from the grapes might flow. The Gr. is ὑπολήνιον, i.e., *beneath the winepress.* For ληνός means *winepress.* Hence the Arabic translates, *and dug a winepress in it.* S. Matthew (xxi. 33) uses the same expression. For *torcular*, or *winepress*, means not only the actual *press* itself, but the *vat* or *receptacle* beneath the *press* in which the grape juice was received. This last was said *to be dug*, or, as in Isa. v. 1, *to be cut out.*

Ver. 33. *And to love one's neighbour as oneself* is a greater *thing than all holocausts and sacrifices.* Holocausts were sacrifices in which the whole victim was burnt and sacrificed to God by fire. This is what God says, "I will mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than holocausts" (Hosea vi. 6). This young man tacitly assents to the saying of Christ, and condemns the scribes, who preferred sacrifices, which yielded profit to themselves, to mercy and the love of our neighbour. And this was why they bade children say to their parents, when they were in need, *corban*, i.e., *oblation* (see on Matt. xv. 6).

Ver. 34. *Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.* Thou art not far from the way of salvation, for the love of God and our neighbour is the pathway to heaven. Again it means, *thou art not far from My Church*, by which, militant here on earth, we go to the Church triumphant in heaven. "Still, as yet thou lackest faith to believe in Me as the Messiah, the Saviour of the world, and to obey My commands, so that thou mayest indeed become a Christian. And if thou wilt be perfect, leave all things and follow Me, as the Apostles have done." When, then, He says, *thou art not far*, "He shows," says Victor of Antioch, "that he was still at some distance, and that he ought to reach forward to that which was before, and seek diligently for the things that were yet wanting unto him."

Ver. 38. *Who love to walk in long robes,—stolis* (Vulg.). The *stola* was an elegant garment, flowing down to the heels. Wherefore the Scribes wore it for the sake of ostentation.

Ver. 40. *Who devour*, Gr. οἱ κατεσθίοντες, *i.e.*, who altogether consume and lick up *the houses of widows*, both by reason of the sumptuous feasts which they ask of them, as well as by the gifts and money which they avariciously extort from them under the pretext of offering prayers for them. "When, therefore," says Bede, "the hand is stretched out to the poor, it is wont to help prayer; but those men passed whole nights in prayer that they might take from the poor."

These shall receive greater judgment. A severer sentence of God, and a heavier condemnation shall press upon the Scribes in the day of judgment, because by a pretence of probity they are aiming at wrong-doing; and being clothed in the garments of God, they are fighting on the devil's side. "Simulated holiness," says S. Chrysostom, "is a double iniquity."

Ver. 41. *How the people cast money: æs, brass* (Vulg.), *i.e.*, all sorts of money, whether brass, silver, or gold. For the first money was made of *brass;* hence all money was afterwards called *brass*, even when made of silver or gold.

Into the treasury; gazophylacium (Vulg.). For *gaza* is a Persian

word, meaning *riches;* and φυλάττειν is *to keep.* This was a chest into which gifts were cast by the people, and kept for the service of the Temple, and for supporting the priests and the poor. Hence, also, the porch in which the chest was kept was called by the same name. Thus it is said in John viii. 20, "These words spake Jesus in the treasury (*gazophylacio*), teaching in the Temple." So Bede.

Ver. 42. *A certain poor widow cast in two mites, which make a farthing.* Not as if one mite made a farthing, as Euthymius understands, relying on Matt. v. 26. But two mites were equivalent to one farthing, as is here clearly expressed. For a farthing was the fourth part of a *little ass;* and ten *small asses* made a *denarius.* A *mite* was half a farthing.

Ver. 43. *This poor widow hath cast in more than all.* For although *per se*, and other things being equal, the greatest and best alms and oblations is that which is most, yet, *per accidens*, when other things are not equal, the greater alms is that which is offered with the greater devotion of charity and religion. For God does not so much regard the gift as the disposition of the giver. Again, the greater gift is not that which is of the greater value considered in itself, as that which is the greater and more difficult in respect of the giver. This widow, therefore, in giving a farthing, gave more than all, because she gave all that she had, although it was necessary for her life. And she would have given more if she had had more. For she trusted in God, that He in return would be more liberal to her, and provide for her necessity, according to the saying, "Give God an egg, and receive a sheep." Others truly gave of their abounding superfluities, as Christ here says. As Titus of Bostra says on Luke xxi. 3, "With such magnanimity and devotion did she offer two mites, that is, all that she had, as if she counted her own life as nothing." S. Paul gives the *a priori* reason (2 Cor. viii. 12), "If there be a ready mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, not according to that which he hath not." As Victor of Antioch says on this passage, "For God does not so much consider the greatness of the gifts, as weigh the

greatness and alacrity of the mind." And Bede, "He weighs not the substance, but the conscience of the offerers."

For, as S. Thomas says, inasmuch as the widow gave according to her ability, therefore it was the greater affection of charity which was valued in her. S. Ambrose thought the same (*lib.* 2, *Offic. c.* 30), "The two mites of that widow surpassed the offerings of the rich, because she gave all she had; but they offered only a small portion of their abundance." Whence he infers, "The disposition therefore makes the offering poor or valuable, and sets their true price upon things."

CHAPTER XIII.

1 *Christ foretelleth the destruction of the temple:* 9 *the persecutions for the gospel:* 10 *that the gospel must be preached to all nations:* 14 *that great calamities shall happen to the Jews:* 24 *and the manner of his coming to judgment:* 32 *the hour whereof being known to none, every man is to watch and pray, that we be not found unprovided, when he cometh to each one, particularly by death.*

Ver. 6. *Saying, I am* (Vulg.). That is, "I am Christ or Messias," as S. Matthew has (xxiv. 5).

Ver. 11. *Be not thoughtful beforehand what you shall speak.* Gr. προμεριμνᾶτε, i.e., *do not think anxiously beforehand.* The Greek and Syriac add, *neither do ye meditate*, after what manner or arrangement ye shall speak and answer governors and tyrants. *But whatsoever shall be given you* (*i.e.*, shall be suggested to you by the Holy Spirit) *in that hour, that speak ye.* The Arabic has, *because ye shall be given in that hour what ye shall speak.*

CHAPTER XIV.

¶ *A conspiracy against Christ.* 3 *Precious ointment is poured on his head by a woman.* 10 *Judas selleth his Master for money.* 12 *Christ himself foretelleth how he shall be betrayed of one of his disciples:* 22 *after the passover prepared and eaten, instituteth his supper:* 26 *declareth aforehand the flight of all his disciples, and Peter's denial.* 43 *Judas betrayeth him with a kiss.* 46 *He is apprehended in the garden,* 53 *falsely accused, and impiously condemned of the Jews' council:* 65 *shamefully abused by them,* 66 *and thrice denied of Peter.*

Ver. 3. *A woman having an alabaster box of ointment of precious spikenard.* "*Nard,*" says Pliny (*l.* 12, *c.* 12), "is a shrub which has a heavy and thick, but short, black, and easily broken root. It has a strong smell, like cypress, and a pungent taste. The leaf is small and thick, and the tops unfold into ears, so that spikenard is spoken of as being doubly endowed with both leaves and ears." From the *leaves* of nard ointment is made—that which is called foliated; but that made from the ears or spikes is called *spikenard;* and this is superior to the foliated, because it has more substance and marrow, so to say. Instead of *nardus spicatus* (Vulg.), the Syriac has *nardus capitalis*, i.e., *chief, excellent, principal.* As I have observed, the *spikenard* is superior to the foliated. The Greek has πιστικῆς, which the Vulg. of S. John translates *pistici. Pisticus* is the same as *spiked.* Wherefore the Arabic trans., *the best.*

Ver. 5. *Three hundred pence.* These were equivalent in value to thirty Roman *aurei.* So that for the thirty gold pieces which the miserable Judas accounted as lost in the anointing of Christ, he received thirty silver pieces for betraying Him.

Ver. 11. *They were glad.* "Not only that they were about to apprehend Him without tumult, being opportunely betrayed by Judas, but also because He was beginning to be hated by His own disciples."

Ver. 13. *There shall meet you.* "Observe the majesty of His Divinity," says S. Ambrose (*in Luc.* xxii. 8). "He is speaking with His disciples, and yet He knows what is about to happen elsewhere."

Ver. 14. *Where is My refectory?* That is, the place where I may refresh Myself with My disciples, and partake of the lamb. The Greek is καταλυμα, or *inn;* the Syriac, *place of dwelling;* Arabic, *place in which I may eat the Passover.*

Furnished: provided with tables, couches, or beds and tapestry, decorated also with leaves and flowers, and all other requisites for celebrating the Passover. The Greek, Syriac, and Arabic add, ἕτοιμον, i.e., *prepared.* For God had put it into the heart of the master of the house to prepare the supper-room for the sake of Christ, that He might find a place well adorned for the celebration of the Passover, that as soon as evening came there might be no delay, but that the lamb might be roasted and eaten, and all the other things accomplished which were to be done by Christ.

Ver. 23. *Giving thanks:* the Syriac adds, *He blessed.*

And they all drank of it, namely, after Christ had consecrated the chalice, saying, *This is My blood,* as it follows. There is, therefore, a prolepsis, or anticipation, which Mark makes use of to show that the disciples fulfilled the command of Christ. *Drink ye all of it,* as Matthew has, xxvi. 28.

Ver. 33. *He began to fear and to be heavy:* ἐκθαμβεῖσθαι καὶ ἀδημονεῖν, i.e., *to be affrighted and sore distressed.* The Arabic is, *to be very sorrowful and afraid.*

Ver. 36. *Abba Father:* Gr. ἀββᾶ ὁ πατήρ, where *Father* is in the nominative, as Mark interprets the Syriac word ἀββ by the Greek πατήρ; or rather the nom. πατήρ is put for the voc. πάτερ. For by a mark of affection, with the deepest feeling of the heart, Christ repeated the word *Abba,* or *Father.* Wherefore the Syriac has

Abba Abi, i.e., *Father, My Father.* The Arabic has *O Father.* S. Augustine (*lib. de Consens. Evang. l.* 4) thinks that Christ used both the Greek and the Syriac word; and that He spoke precisely as Mark has it, namely, ἀββᾶ ὁ πατήρ. For so the Apostle speaks, "In whom we cry, Abba Father" (Rom. viii. 15, Vulg.). "We must think," says S. Augustine, "that the Lord said 'Abba Father' to intimate the mystery of His Church, which was to be gathered out of Jews and Gentiles." And the Scholiast in S. Jerome says, "He speaks in Hebrew and Greek, because there is no distinction between Jew and Greek."

Ver. 38. *The spirit indeed is willing:* Syriac, *willing and prompt.*

Ver. 41. *The hour is come:* Arabic, *the end, i.e.*, of life, *is present, and the hour is come.*

Ver. 44. *Lead Him away carefully:* Gr. ἀσφαλῶς, i.e., *securely, safely.* Arab. *Fear ye concerning Him;* lest, that is, He glide away out of your hands, as He has done upon other occasions.

Ver. 47. *One of them*, namely, *Peter.* "Mark does not mention Peter's name," says Theophylact, "that he may not seem to praise his teacher, Peter, for his greater zeal for Christ."

Ver. 51. *And a certain young man followed him having a linen cloth cast round about his naked body; and they laid hold on him.* That is, he was clothed (*amictus*, Vulg.) with a linen vest over his naked body. It is plain, from the word *amictus*, that this piece of linen was a kind of linen garment, fitting the body, but so that it might easily be put on and off the back. This is also clear from Pollux, who calls *the linen cloth* περιβόλαιον, i.e., *a veil, a cloak, a covering.*

You will ask who this young man was: 1st. S. Epiphanius (*Hæres.* 78) and S. Jerome, or whoever the author is on Ps. xxxviii., think that he was James the Lord's brother.

2nd. Bede and S. Chrysostom, S. Ambrose, S. Gregory, and Baronius think it was S. John; for he was a youth, and the youngest of the Apostles. But that it was neither John nor James, nor any of the Apostles, is plain from this, that Mark has just

before said, ver. 50, *then all His disciples,* meaning Apostles, *forsook Him and fled.*

3rd. Theophylact and Euthymius think that *the young man* was some one from the house of John Mark, in which Christ had eaten the Passover.

4th. And more probably, Cajetan (*in Jentaculis*) and others conjecture that this *young man* was a member or servant of a house adjacent to the garden, who, being awoke by the noise made by those who were apprehending Christ as they passed by, rose up from his bed, and ran to see what was being done. That he was a favourer or disciple of Christ appears from what Mark says, *he followed Him.* Wherefore also *the officers laid hold of him, i.e.,* they wished to hold him by seizing his garment. The Hebrew active verbs often signify commencement and effort.

Ver. 52. *But he, casting off the linen cloth, fled from them naked.* "As Joseph," says the Scholiast, "left his garment in the hand of his immodest mistress, and fled from her naked."

Mark adds this incident in order to make it plain from this hasty flight of the young man how great was the trepidation about Christ, and how intense was the hatred and fury of the Jews against Christ, who even tried to seize a stranger who was following Him. Hence it is evident that far more would they have seized the Apostles, if they had not immediately fled away.

Ver. 68. *And the cock crew.* Hear S. Chrysostom on S. Matt. xxvi. 70, "Mark signifies that neither by the crow of the cock was he led to remember, nor did it keep him from denial." Chrysostom adds, "Mark only has written thus, most accurately detailing the gracious care of the Master for His disciple, and Peter's weakness. Wherefore we ought especially to admire him, because he not only did not hide his master's fault, but wrote the account of it in greater detail than the others, for this very reason that he was Peter's disciple."

Ver. 70. *For thou art also a Galilæan.* That is, by speaking in the idiom of the Galilæans thou showest thyself to be a Galilæan. The Arabic adds, *And thy speech is similar to their speech.*

Ver. 72. *And he began to weep:* Gr. ἐπιβαλὼν ἔκλαιε, *i.e.*, literally, *adding he was weeping;* which you may translate, 1st, *he began to weep;* 2nd, *he added to weep, i.e.*, "he began to weep very violently," says Theophylact. The Arabic is, *and he betook himself to tears*, not in the court before the Jews, that he might not betray himself to them, but when he was alone, having gone out of it as appears from S. Matt. xxvi. 75.

CHAPTER XV.

1 *Jesus brought bound, and accused before Pilate.* 15 *Upon the clamour of the common people, the murderer Barabbas is loosed, and Jesus delivered up to be crucified.* 17 *He is crowned with thorns,* 19 *spit on, and mocked:* 21 *fainteth in bearing his cross:* 27 *hangeth between two thieves:* 29 *suffereth the triumphing reproaches of the Jews:* 39 *but confessed by the centurion to be the Son of God:* 43 *and is honourably buried by Joseph.*

Ver. 25. *And it was the third hour, and they crucified Him. The third*, not beginning, but ending, and going on to *the sixth.* For that Christ was crucified at *the sixth hour*, or *midday*, appears from the 33rd verse. Some suspect that there is an error, and that *the sixth* ought to be read for *the third.* For the Hebrews had divided the day and also the night into four parts or *hours*, each of which contained three of our hours. The first began at sunrise, and lasted for three hours. When they were over, Terce began, and lasted for three hours, or until midday, when Sect began, and ended three hours afterwards, when None began, and lasted till Vespers, or evening. When Sect was beginning, or *the sixth hour*, Christ was crucified; and when None, or *the ninth hour*, was beginning, He died.

Ver. 28. *And with the wicked he was reputed:* Heb. נמנה, *nimma*, i.e., *was numbered, was counted.* See what I have said on Isa. liii. 12. The reason is, because Christ took to Himself our place, our account and reckoning. But we were *wicked.* He therefore *was reckoned* with the wicked, that He might make us, instead of wicked, just, righteous, and holy.

Ver. 42. *Because it was the Parasceve, that is, the day before the Sabbath.* The Greek is, *which is the Prosabbatum.* For *Parasceve* is the same as *Preparation.* Friday was so called because food and things needful for the Sabbath were prepared upon it. Hence it was called the *Pro-Sabbath, i.e.*, the day before, or the vigil of the Sabbath.

CHAPTER XVI.

1 *An angel declareth the resurrection of Christ to three women.* 9 *Christ himself appeareth to Mary Magdalene:* 12 *to two going into the country:* 14 *then to the apostles,* 15 *whom he sendeth forth to preach the gospel:* 19 *and ascendeth into heaven.*

Ver. 1. *And when the Sabbath was past:* that is to say, at the beginning of the night before the Lord's day. "After a sad week comes the radiance of a happy day," says the Scholiast.

Mary of Jacob (Vulg.), *i.e.*, Mary, the mother of James the Less and Jude, as the Arabic version gives it, and the wife of Cleopas.

And Salome: the wife of Zebedee, and mother of James and John.

That coming they might anoint Jesus. According to the custom of the Jews, says Theophylact; that the body might be preserved sweet. Spices are of a drying nature. They did not realise the dignity of Christ's Divinity, nor His resurrection. But they loved Him very tenderly, both as a man and a prophet, although now dead.

Ver. 6. *Who was crucified: He is risen; He is not here.* "The angel is not ashamed of the cross," says Theophylact, "for in it is the salvation of men." The *Interlinear* says, "The cross's bitter root is gone; the flower of life with its fruits, which lay in death, has arisen in glory."

Go, tell His disciples. "The women are bid," says the *Interlinear*, "to announce it to the Apostles, because as by a woman (Eve) death was announced, by a woman it might be told that life had risen again."

And Peter. "That him whom a woman had made deny, a woman might make confess," says Druthmar. The Scholiast in S. Jerome adds that "Peter was named especially because he counted himself unworthy of being a disciple, because he had thrice denied his Master." And S. Gregory (*Hom.* 21, *in Evang.*) says, "If the angel had not named Peter, he would not have dared to come among the disciples. He is called, therefore, by name, that he might not despair."

Ver. 8. *For a trembling* (of body) *and fear* (of mind) had seized them. Theophylact says, "ἔκστασις, that is, stupor, at the sight of the angel had come on them." But this astonishment was mingled with intense joy. For they were astounded and were glad at the wonderful things which they heard, even that Jesus their beloved was risen from the dead.

For they were afraid. Not only because of the vision of angels, but also "on account of the Jews," says Euthymius, "lest they should appear to have themselves stolen away Jesus; lest they should kill them when they heard that they had proclaimed the resurrection of Jesus: as shortly afterwards the Jews placed Mary Magdalene, Martha, and Lazarus in a ship without oars or sail, and sent them to what would have been certain destruction had not God brought them in safety to Marseilles."

Ver. 9. *Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils.* Mark adds this to show the power of repentance and love. With these was Magdalene the sinner so inflamed, that she deserved first to see Christ risen again, that from her sinners might learn not to despair, but vehemently to love; for so they shall surpass the Holy Innocents in grace and glory. So Bede, "Because where sin abounded, grace hath superabounded." Bede adds, "A woman was the beginner of transgression. A woman first tasted death, but in Magdalene woman first saw the resurrection, that woman might not bear the perpetual guilt of transgression among men." See what is said on Luke viii. 2.

Ver. 12. *He appeared in another shape:* Arabic, *garment, i.e.,* of a traveller, *as they were going into the country:* Arabic, *to*

the village; Gr. *into the field, i.e.*, to a country-house at Emmaus. For, as S. Austin says (*Consens. Evang.*), "under the name of *country* not only villages, but towns and boroughs outside the capital, which was the mother city of all, were wont to be called." These disciples, therefore, were going from Jerusalem into the country, that is, into the neighbouring small town of Emmaus. This place was made a famous city by the Romans, and called Nicopolis, as a monument of their victory in the capture of Jerusalem. This appearance of Christ is the same as that related by S. Luke (xxiv. 13), as is plain from the circumstances, which are the same in both cases. So commentators generally. Euthymius alone thinks they were different, because Mark adds that the Apostles did not believe them when they told them that Christ was risen, whilst Luke intimates the contrary, that they did believe. But the answer is easy, that some believed, but others did not believe.

Ver. 13. *Neither did they believe them.* This happened by the permission and providence of God. "For this their incredulity was not so much their weakness as it was to become our strength," says S. Gregory. "For the resurrection itself was made manifest to them by many proofs, when they doubted of it. And when we read and acknowledge these things, what else is it but to be confirmed by their doubting?"

Ver. 14. *At length He appeared to the eleven as they were at table.* The Vulgate has *novissime, last of all:* Gr. ὕστερον. This was the last appearance of Christ on the day of the resurrection, for S. Mark only relates those appearances which took place on that day. You may say, But if so, He did not appear to the Eleven, but to the Apostles, for S. Thomas was absent. Wherefore Maldonatus thinks that this appearance was that which took place on the Sunday after the resurrection, when Thomas was present. But I say that they are here called *the Eleven*, although Thomas was absent, because the college of the Apostles after the treachery of Judas was reduced to eleven. That is why they are here called *the Eleven*, although Thomas

was absent. Thus the Decemvirs were called by that name when gathered together, although one or two might be absent.

They did not believe. S. Jerome (*lib.* 2, *cont. Pelag.*) writes that in some Greek codices there is found added after these words as follows: "And they had content, saying, Substance is that world of iniquity which by means of evil spirits suffers not the true power of God to be apprehended: therefore now reveal Thy righteousness." But the Church has expunged all this, for it savours of the heresy of Manes and Montanus.

Ver. 15. *And He said unto them, Go ye into the whole world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.* He said this not on Easter day, when He appeared to the Eleven as they sat at meat, but afterwards, when He showed Himself to them and others on a mountain of Galilee, as it is in S. Matt. xxviii. 16, &c. Or it may be that He committed this chief and peculiar office of preaching the Gospel to the Apostles more than once.

Go ye into the whole world, that is to say, not into Judæa only, as ye have done hitherto, but up and down in all directions throughout the world. For it does not seem probable that a few Apostles should have traversed and converted the whole world, especially because in America, lately discovered, no traces of the faith of Christ have been found.

Every creature, i.e., to all nations, as it is in Matt. xxviii. 19.

Ver. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be condemned.* This saying of Christ is abused to support their heresies, 1st, by the Lutherans, to prove that faith alone without good works is sufficient to salvation. But I reply that the meaning of Christ, as Euthymius, Theophylact, and others have observed, is, *he that believeth*, &c., *i.e.*, "he that, believing in Christ and receiving His baptism, has been washed from his sins, imbued with the grace of God, and sanctified, *he* shall be saved," understand, "if he die in that state, retaining the grace of God even unto death." But it is impossible for the baptized to continue in this state of grace if

they do not those good works which the law of Christ commands. Also, in the name of *faith*, or *faith* and *baptism*, as the prime requisites, and which at the beginning of the Church were chiefly to be inculcated upon the Gentiles, all other things consequent upon them must be understood, such as hope, charity, and good works, as I have shown at length in the introduction to S. Paul's Epistles.

2nd. The Anabaptists infer from this saying of Christ that little children must not be baptized, because they cannot believe. But I answer, Christ is here speaking of adults. For only adults are able to believe, and all the preceding words apply to adults only. That little children ought to be baptized is plain from the perpetual tradition and practice of the Church, and from the words in S. John iii. 5, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, unless any one be born of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

S. Augustine adds, and reiterates in various passages, that these words of Christ do refer to infants also in a measure, for as they sinned by the will of Adam, not their own, so likewise they believe by the faith of the Church, in their parents, or those who present them for baptism, not by their own.

3rd. The Calvinists gather from these words of Christ that baptism is not necessary for salvation, but that faith only is sufficient, because of it alone, they say, Christ subjoins, *But he that believeth not shall be condemned.* I reply that under the word *believe*, i.e., *faith*, baptism must be understood, which is the sacrament of faith, as well as all the other things which spring from and follow faith, as I have just said. For Mark, studying brevity, left it to the reader to gather from what he had said immediately previous, that these must be understood, *or shall not be baptized.* For otherwise the antithesis would be imperfect. To complete it we must read as follows, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not, or is not baptized, shall be condemned.* For that baptism is necessary

for salvation is plain from the words of Christ in S. John iii. 5, already cited.

Ver. 28. *They shall take up serpents.* From the places which they infested, and as Euthymius says, "They shall destroy them, or even take them up in their hands without harm," as S. Paul did the viper. Therefore the Arabic translates, *They shall take up serpents in their hands.*

And if they shall drink any deadly thing. They shall drink poison unharmed, as the Apostles and many Saints have done.

They shall lay their hands upon the sick, &c. Observe that these signs were necessary in the Primitive Church for proving and strengthening the faith of Christ. Wherefore at that time almost all believers wrought miracles, at least of certain kinds; as, for example, the expulsion of devils from *energumens.* This is plain from Justin's *Dialogue against Trypho,* Tertullian (*Apolog.*), Lactantius, and others. Many also at that time received in baptism the gift of tongues. See Acts x. 47, &c.

Mystically: S. Bernard (*Serm. de Ascens.*) says, "The first work of faith which worketh by love is compunction of heart, by which, without doubt, devils are cast out when sins are rooted out of the heart. After that they who believe in Christ speak with new tongues when old things depart out of their mouth, and for the time to come they speak not with the old tongue of our first parents, who declined unto words of wickedness in making excuses for their sins. But when by compunction of the heart, and confession of the mouth, the former sins have been blotted out, in order that men may not backslide, and their latter end be worse than the beginning, it is needful that they take away serpents, that is, extinguish poisonous suggestions, &c. *If they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them.* This is, when they feel the stings of concupiscence, they shall not consent. *They shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover.* This is, they shall cover their evil

affections by good works, and by this medicine they shall be healed."

Ver. 19. *He was taken up into heaven.* By His Divinity communicating to His body the qualities of lightness and fleetness.

"O kingdom of eternal blessedness, where youth never groweth old, where beauty never waneth, nor love groweth cold, where health knows no sickness, where joy never decreaseth, where life hath no end" (S. Augustine, *in Solil. c.* 39).

END OF VOL. III.

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