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THE LIFE

OF

OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

BY

LOUIS VEUILLOT.

"SIC DEUS DELEXIT MUNDUM."

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

BY

THE REV. ANTHONY FARLEY,

St. Monica's Church, Jamaica, L. I.

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DILECTO FILIO

ALOISIO VEUILLOT

LUTETIAM PARISIORUM.

PIUS PP. IX.

DILECTE Fili, salutem et Apostolicam benedictionem.

Gratulamur Tibi, Dilecte Fili, quod, etsi submotus ab arena ubi adeo strenue ac utiliter pro veritate et justitia pugnabas, talentum Tibi creditum in terram non foderis, sed alacriter eidem, quam tuebaris, causæ servire perrexeris ac novas ferre suppetias. Id testantur recentiora scripta Tua, id postremum confirmat Nobis oblatum de vita D. N. Jesu Christi in læsæ Divinitatis vindicium edita. E perpaucis enim illis quæ, multiplices inter curas Nostras, inde delibare potuimus, accommodatissimam omnium proposito fini methodum a Te electam fuisse existimavimus, Teque in re pertractanda Tibi plane parem exhibuisse. Accessit autem

quod hæc lucubratio Tua se Nobis obtulerit extrinseco etiam peculiari splendore ornatam ab ærumnarum, quibus obnoxius es, indole; quippe, quæ, adversis istis in adjunctis, veterem redolet esuriem ac sitim justitiæ, eamdemque animi comparationem ac firmitatem in suscepto olim certamine obeundo. Hinc, etsi Tuis Nos commoveri ægritudinibus, et ad dolendam vicem Tuam humanitus inclinari senserimus, inopportunum tamen censuimus conquestum ubi Apostolus ait: *Beatus vir qui suffert tentationem*, imo etiam: *Omne gaudium existimate, fratres mei, cum in tentationes varias incideritis.* Itaque, cum constantia Tua doceat probationem fidei Tuæ reipsa operari in Te patientiam illam quæ opus perfectum habet, ad gratulationem potius compellimur, Teque ad gaudium excitare cogimur. Quod ut facilius Tibi assequi contingat, uberius semper gratiæ incrementum Tibi ominamur atque adprecamur a Deo; atque hujus cœlestis doni auspicem et præcipuæ benevolentiæ et grati animi pignus, Benedictionem Apostolicam Tibi Tuisque peramanter impertimur.

Datum Romæ, apud S. Petrum, die 9 julii 1864, Pontificatus Nostri anno XIX.

PIUS PP. IX.

[TRANSLATION.]

TO OUR BELOVED SON LOUIS VEUILLOT,

AT PARIS.

PIUS IX., POPE.

BELOVED SON, HEALTH AND APOSTOLIC BENEDICTION:

WE congratulate you, dear son, that, driven from the arena where you fought so bravely and usefully for truth and right, far from burying the talent entrusted to you, you have gone on cheerfully serving the cause you had defended, and bringing new vigor to its support. This is attested by your later works, and is confirmed by your last, which you have sent to us, on the *Life of our Lord Jesus Christ*, published to vindicate his outraged Godhead. From the short perusal we have been enabled, amid our incessant and increasing duties, to bestow upon it, we are of opinion that you have chosen the most suitable method for attaining the end you proposed to yourself, and that you have been quite equal to yourself in the fulfilment of your task. Nay, more, that this new work presented to us gains peculiar lustre from the nature of the trials to which you have become subject; since, amid those trying circumstances, it is marked by that

hunger and thirst for justice, that zeal and strength of mind, you always manifested in maintaining the combat you entered upon. Although we were sensibly moved at your trials and tenderly inclined to compassionate your condition, we considered condolence inopportune, since the apostle says, "Blessed is the man who endureth temptation"; and again, "Count it all joy, my brethren, when you shall fall into divers trials." Therefore, since your constancy attests that the trial of your faith really produces in you that patience which has the perfect work, we are compelled rather to congratulate than to grieve, and are constrained to exhort you to rejoicing. That you may the more easily attain that joy of spirit, we presage and entreat for you from God abundance and increase of grace, and with all the love and sincerity of our heart we bestow on you and yours the apostolic benediction—a token of the celestial gift and a pledge of our special benevolence and affection.

Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, the ninth day of July, 1864, in the nineteenth year of our pontificate.

PIUS IX. POPE.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THIS book, now for the first time presented to the public in an English garb, was written by the great Catholic apologist Veuillot, in answer to Renan's celebrated *Life of Jesus Christ*, which some years ago stirred the Christian heart to its centre, awakening throughout the world a clamor of devout horror or of infidel applause.

It is truly what our Holy Father Pius IX. calls it, "A Vindication of the Outraged Godhead of Christ."

Nothing need be said by the translator in favor of such a work. Let its title, its author's name, and the high eulogy passed upon it by the Supreme Judge of Christian truth, answer for its worth.

But the translation itself requires a few words of vindication and apology.

Appearing as it does some time after the existence of the original work, it might seem that the object of the book had ceased to be, had been forgotten, or was of no moment to the public of our day and of our country. But when we remember the

deep impression produced by Renan's work—an impression stamped (it would seem indelibly) upon the religious literature and religious teaching of our times—we have to admit that a vindication of Christ, *the God-Man*, is as necessary to-day as it was when the new Voltaire appeared to shock religious sentiment in France and in the world. "Christus heri et hodie," is the war-cry of the foes, just as much as the trust and comfort of the faithful lovers of the God-Man.

For the devout Catholic this book is full of unction as it is of instruction.

As regards the style of this work, some apology is due to the reader. To translate well from French into English is, under any circumstances, a difficult task. But, besides this, the peculiar nature of this work, the profound depths the author sounded, especially in his introduction, and his characteristic style of composition, rendered this translation a laborious work, and one that seemed at times impossible. The reader will therefore, it is hoped, pardon in it much that is crude and inelegant. For the rest, he may be assured that this translation exactly renders the sense of every portion of the book.

The author himself vouches for the accuracy of his quotations from other writers, without particularly referring to the works from which he quotes. The translator has relied entirely upon his learned authority; so may the reader.

As to Scripture passages, so necessarily frequent in a book founded on Gospel narrative, they are supposed to be quite familiar to the reader. Hence neither author nor translator have deemed it necessary to refer to particular gospels or chapters of gospels. Such passages also are for the most part freely translated from the French of the author, the main object being historical, not textual, accuracy.

Finally, hoping that this modest labor may be well received by the clergy, who will find in the work excellent reflections on the Gospel they were sent to preach; by the devout laity, who will appreciate the holy and happy thoughts of one of themselves on a subject so dear to the Christian heart; and by some too, perhaps, of those "other sheep" whom the divine Pastor so wishes to nourish with the knowledge and love of himself, and "lead into his fold," it is humbly but trustfully committed to the public by the translator.

PREFACE.

THOSE who have seen Jesus Christ, living, dying, and dead; who, having detached him from the cross and carried him to the tomb, have seen him alive after his death, have touched him with their hands, have seen him with their eyes ascend to heaven—these irrefragable witnesses of Jesus have also published his history. With a loud voice, in the presence of the people, a witness, like themselves, in the presence of the powerful and wicked who crucified their Master, they have proclaimed "that he is the Son of God, that he has spoken the words of God, that he did the works of God, that he has arisen, that he lives, that he is seated at the right hand of his Father." Thus they have spoken even in the midst of torments, and since their time the miracle of the same truth has not ceased to be attested by the miracle of the same martyr.

Here, then, we behold the first history of Jesus. We preserve it intact in its native form, as divine as the life it relates. It is called the Apostolic Symbol, or the Apostles' Creed. Divine faith has given it a name more profound and more magnificent—it is the *Credo:*

"I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son,

our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into *hell;* the third day he arose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting."

This abridgment contains a doctrine and at the same time a history—a divine doctrine which has conquered error enrooted in the heart of man. Nothing has been said, nothing will be said, nothing can be truly said, which is not contained in the Credo. All truth flows from it, and truth is found in it and nowhere else. Every error is here bruised and annihilated. Twelve poor fishermen of Judea received this luminary, and man issued forth from the womb of darkness.

For the space of more than eighteen hundred years the Symbol of the Apostles, attested by the Catholic Church, holds back the entire world from plunging into the darkness of error; and for more than eighteen hundred years an unwearied voice denies this heavenly light.

Denial is one of the names of death; it would wish to take Jesus Christ out of the world, the only Son of God, whose mercy has clothed our mortality in order to communicate to us his eternal life. Innumerable sophists have exerted all their ingenuity to get rid of Christ, true God and true man, at one time his divinity, at another his humanity. They have denied the God, they have denied the man; they have even denied that the person of Jesus has ever

existed. The Jesus of the Credo could only be, according to them, the product of the popular imagination. Poor human reason has furnished its quota of sects to that sweeping logic of negation, because it is less impossible to deny the existence of the man than to deny the God in man.

But the logic of the absurdity has too well unmasked the absurdity; the inconsequence has appeared preferable, and every effort in these days is directed against the Divinity. They say that God made man is simply a man whom ignorance has made God—a man without doubt endowed with genius and virtue, good, amiable, almost sincere; nevertheless, a man, and in whom we discover frailty, passion, falsehood. They advance an impudent thesis, according to which falsehood is the right and privilege of the elevated and intellectual minds, who are to be considered the *élite* of the human race; and Jesus, they say, has availed himself of falsehood to invest a sublime morality with credit. They are profuse in this sort of eulogy, which is the most subtle refinement of outrage, blasphemy, and insult. In the questionable perfections they yield to the man; they hope to annihilate the God.

Passus! Yet living in his church, he yet suffers. Those sufferings are but a sketch of his continued Passion. Amidst his benefits hatred breaks out; negation rears itself in the face of miracles; betrayal sits at the banquet where he gives his *flesh*. Derision insults him on the cross. It is in the Gospel humanity can see how sin has made it the slave of death. By instinct it rejects salvation; it does not wish to be saved.

There is nothing more obstinate than the malignity of sectarians, except the inclination of fallen nature to accord them credit. St. Paul, forced to combat Alex-

ander the silversmith, attests the injury done to him and his cause by that obscure adversary. Millions of martyrs, of confessors, of apologists, prevail not against the wily cunning which attempts to lead astray human presumption. On the word of a sophist the ignorant man rejects the testimony of nineteen centuries. For him, everything is proof against Jesus Christ. He counts as nothing so many men of every epoch, of all countries, masters in all the sciences, bound together by community of unbelief, who have bowed down before the Gospel, in spite of their tyrant hearts, in opposition to their own self-love. He will not admit to himself that those men, far from eluding them, were bound to seek objections; that they have been anxious to find it insoluble; and that they only abandoned it after having incontestably proved its emptiness. No; those men of Christ, say they, were either deceived or wished to deceive. As for the silversmith, he was honest and learned. Not that they argue from conviction even. In the eyes of the ignorant the knowledge and integrity of heresy are more doubtful than the divinity of Jesus. But the wickedness of the human heart co-operates with heresy. Thence the gloomy fire which casts a lurid cloud over the light of evidence. That God be other than he is, or be not at all—therein lies the hidden wish, the secret longing, of incredulous science. Therein is it sure to run counter to belief. However, no science can contend against Jesus Christ. There never has or will be any. Scientific unbelief is but a labored ignorance, a mask of impiety adjusted to deceive the conscience and furnish it with some reasons for not believing. As soon as conscience throws off Jesus Christ, it becomes easy and pliant as regards its way and its guide. It accepts every road; it accords

to the hypocritical guide all the virtues he wishes to attribute to himself; it pardons in the cynic guide all the vices he exhibits.

Among these learned adversaries of Christ, what manifests itself the most is the desire to remain in ignorance. They are impious rather than really unbelieving. What industry they show in shutting out the light of truth! What a vile artifice to thicken the darkness around them! And when evidence forced them to shout denial, their ravings are like to the most formal acts of faith. In the Gospel the demons, seeing Jesus, cry out to him, "Son of God, leave us in peace; do not disturb us; let us alone." For the demon, the father of the supreme lie—that is, of false knowledge—father also of negation, is very learned and very believing. But, torn by an eternal pride, he hates, he blasphemes, he denies.

On whatever ground denial or negation wished to measure swords with the unerring and unfailing truth, it has been beaten. Its most boasted works have never been able to stand the test of sound criticism. After a short triumph of deceit the enemies themselves end by repeating that beautiful expression of Tertuilian to Marcion, a falsifier of the Gospel: "*Christ yet exists.*" Nevertheless, it is true a general success, often enduring, encourages those miserable labors. They survive for a long while the contempt wherein they have suddenly fallen, equally protected in their disgrace by the complaisant ignorance of the public and by the unreflected insufficiency of the refutations.

Doubtless those deniers and falsifiers of the truth have been admirably refuted in every objection raised by them; but since their supreme art lies in feigning and producing ignorance, the essential point should

be to reply especially to what they do not say This is what we unavoidably forget.

The last of those wicked impugners of the divinity of Christ our Lord who has rendered himself celebrated has well understood, in a book of five or six hundred pages, how to speak of Jesus Christ without pointing him out. Perpetually avoiding all that belongs to God, with the same stroke he perverts all that belongs to *the man*. This artifice of weakness is the only strength of the book. It has drawn the apologist into the discussion of trifles in which the Man-God completely disappears. The refutations are excellent, but they leave us ignorant of what Jesus Christ has done, and for what purpose he came into the world. Thus it is not Christ who has the case gained, yet less the laborious reader of so much controversy; it is this miserable man, who has proposed to himself to betray God and his neighbor.

Hence the idea of this life of our Lord. The attacks of contemporaneous incredulity have been the occasion of it; they are not directly the object of it.

The element wisdom of Jesus has not been left to the mercy of sophists, nor to the resources of reason, nor to lowliness or feebleness of faith. It has foreseen the weakness of the mind of man, and has prepared a succor always victorious. It is not necessary to ransack the libraries, to collect together so many dead languages, so much history, so much physics, so much philosophy, to know with certainty Him who came to save the little ones and the ignorant. The bread of life is as easy to find as the material bread, on the same conditions. A simple, faithful Christian or member of the Church of God, a man

of the world, provided he may have studied a few books and heard some instruction, can render an account of his faith far better than the "savants," the pretended unbelievers, are in a condition to give an account of their incredulity. The Gospel is sufficient for that.

The Gospel contains motives conclusive of the faith in Jesus Christ, true God and true man—motives, reasons, which the Saviour himself has put forth. We can paralyze, by the contents of the Gospel, the sophistry of the infidel, without being shocked by its contact. What does it matter that the sophist should amass notes against the sincerity of the Evangelists, if we have clear proof that he of whom the Evangelists speak is God? On bended knees, before *the Real Presence*, one is not tempted to withdraw from its contemplation in order to consider or view more closely this vile apparition of blasphemy. We are by no means bound to extract from it open avowals of repentance.

There are different degrees in the region of the mind; discussion belongs to the inferior degrees. In discussing, man is pitted against man; the reason of the one seems as good as that of the other. In expounding, we place God against man.

This exposition of the truth must get the preference when God is absolutely and personally in the case. From the apex of those lofty heights the voice of man properly avoids discussing with nothingness, lest weak human reason might be inclined to believe that nothingness could reply; that the beauty of truth might appear alone in the presence of the absolute deformity of falsehood.

We will suppose a man almost completely ignorant of religious matters, without hatred, but not without

prejudices; his mind unsettled about the existence of God; very uncertain about the divinity of Jesus Christ; rather disposed not to believe it, yet avoiding to speak on the subject through simple feeling of delicacy, because he knows that he does not know,—this man has listened to the deniers. He doubts their sincerity; at least, they appear to him frivolous. Nevertheless, is there another *God* besides the indulgent and shadowy God of deism? And he who has proclaimed himself the Son of God—this Jesus Christ whom negation attempts to paint in colors exclusively human—is he truly what he has said he is? Is he God? Powerful impressions, flowing from a corrupt carnal heart, exist against this belief. Long discussions appear necessary to discover its falsehood or truth. But to admit the falsehood of the belief would be frightful and destructive of human and eternal happiness. The soul shrinks and refuses to be robbed of God, its creator. The truth of this belief, that there is a *God* eternal, self-existing, the avenger of evil, and the rewarder of good —this thought is consoling, and cheers on the pilgrim here below till he arrives in the inexpressible majesty of his presence. Truth proposes and imposes solemn engagements.

The common inclination is to remain in doubt, expecting that doubt may produce indifference, and indifference forgetfulness.

Well, a man, an uncertain being floating on uncertainty, who tends towards indifferentism; an indifferentist who does not deny God, who does not wish to make war on him, who has simply resolved to forget God, not knowing that God will not forget him—a man, in a word, who has never reflected on God, and who desires never to think of him—such a man the

author of this work has been, and for such men is it written.

In the Introduction we discuss the elementary question of man considered as a proof of the existence of God, of the end for which he has been created, of the fall, and of the necessity of a mediator. We touch after that on the pagan world; we present the result of its discoveries on the knowledge of man. Thence we pass to the prophets. The prophets, like the apostles, are inseparable from Christ. It is a deception to pretend to relate the history of Jesus Christ, and suppress the divine heralds who march before him from the remotest antiquity, proclaiming his mission and recounting beforehand his works and his life.

In the recital of the mortal life of the Incarnate Word we follow no other document but the Gospel. We do not attempt to prove anything. Long since, proofs were established. It is a long time ago since Tertullian said: "The first truth we ought to believe is that we should believe nothing rashly or superficially."

The beautiful works of M. Abbé Freppel, of Mgr. Bishop of Nimes, of M. Augustus Nicolas, of R. P. Gratry, of M. Wallon, sufficiently demonstrate that the ancient rule has always been observed.

There are excellent replies to all the ancient and modern objections in the learned *History of Our Lord* that Abbé E. J. Darras is just now publishing. It is our wish in this book to write for those who are worthy to submit themselves to the simple reasoning of Jesus. The Gospel relates the divinity of Jesus Christ, and the divinity of Jesus Christ invincibly proves the truth of the Gospel. The cavillers are forced to avow it. They pretend to follow the Gospel, but they falsify it.

It is certain the Gospel presents to us a wonderful spectacle. Astonished at what God has done for it, and the little he requires in return, the soul, quite overcome by evidence, asks itself how can it believe what it does not comprehend. We behold afar off a something created by God; created in his image. We enter on the way of the Inaccessible; we view heights or summits we cannot reach.

But that mystery of divine love, that abasement of a God towards our loneliness; that suavity of expression, that patience of his kindness, that bitterness of his agony, that phlegm, that buffeting on the cross, that sepulchre—and all that for us, and we know we are what we are. Who will explain to us the excess of the love of God? What do we carry within us to aid us to comprehend it? We are forced to believe it for the sole reason that this unfathomable mystery, which nothing can explain, is itself the sole explanation of all besides.

Let us refuse to believe that God loved the world to this degree, and we have no longer an explanation of anything; neither of God, nor man, nor of the world. But the Gospel is full of palpable realities. It is manifestly the work of witnesses on whom it has been enjoined to bear witness to what they had seen. Say you, therefore, "Yes, yes," "No, no"? Whatever we add "proceeds from evil." The Gospel is the truth of the God of truth. It is this same God who puts it in our hands, who presents it to our senses as well as to our reason; and there is nothing the world can render a higher testimony of. Besides, the Gospel is in itself ever youthful. Too many readers find it quite new.

Among infidels ignorance of the Gospel is generally complete; among a great many Christians it is hardly

less so. They know the Gospel by heart, and they do not understand it. They have not read it with care, with order, such as it has been delivered. They do not know how to explain it or meditate on it as they ought. Whoever sees in the Gospel only the letter, does not understand even the letter; and whoever seeks for morality only in its pages, does not find the morality they contain.

The Gospel of the letter and of strict morality is but the skeleton of the true Catholic Gospel. It is stripped of all the beauty wherewith God wishes to clothe it, in order to unite our hearts to Jesus Christ by the chains of love. It has been the design of God that the Gospel should be written, as we have it, by four authors, in four different parts, which we must in some sense take singly in order to fit them together as a whole.

The authenticity of the divine book is thus secured from doubt; and at the same time it can never become a common or vulgar production. If this defect of combination should provoke the spirit of contradiction, it also stirs up the spirit of faith. The ocean of sacred literature is before us to demonstrate that nothing more weighty or pressing could animate and fertilize the human mind.

Apart from the interpretation, properly speaking, the labor alone of establishing a chronological order—about which the Evangelists did not care—has produced wonderful lights. The Gospel history existed beforehand in the will of Jesus Christ, as in the prophecies which it came to accomplish. The first steps of the Saviour were directed towards the hill of Calvary. He proceeded thereon, knowing well where he was going; holding his enemies and death powerless as long as he wished. He

arrives at the hour eternally fixed, and all is consummated that was to be.

This universal miracle is the proof of all the others. Like all the others, it proves the love of God for all mankind. Incredulity contests miracles, because it wishes to reject love; it controverts them, sometimes by brutish negation, sometimes by unjust and false explanations. It proclaims that a miracle is not admissible either in history or in philosophy. Forced by the word of the Saviour, some "savants" admit that Jesus was capable of believing that he accomplished those things impossible to man. But, say they, he has neither performed them nor could he do it, not being God. Because Jesus Christ, according to those infidel philosophers, is not God, he has not performed miracles; and because, according to them, Jesus Christ has not performed miracles, he is not God.

Their sophistry must give way to solid reasons adduced. Reason believes miracles, because the Man-God was and is capable of accomplishing them; because he was bound to perform them; because he incontestably proves his having performed them. A Gospel without miracles would be a foolish, incredible Gospel. It required that the *Incarnation* should tinge with the divine reflex all the acts of the Saviour, which were but the ostensible marks of his humanity; otherwise, when I behold a God yielding to hunger, thirst, fatigue, sadness; concealing himself by flight; laboriously troubling himself to instruct his apostles, so dull of apprehension; bearing strokes, enduring calumnies, even the shameful and cruel death on the cross, it is then my astonishment could lead me to doubt. In all those circumstances God appears dissociated from the divine nature. He reasserts his nature divine when he com-

mands the elements, raises the dead, institutes the mysterious Eucharist. How could it be that he should have descended from heaven and not have wrought miracles? He came "in infirmities," for the purpose of healing the infirm—a double condition, which demands of him the working of miracles. He was obliged to work them for our sake. It belonged to his justice to lavish them, so as to throw divine light on his humiliations and to aid our infirmities. For the deaf it needed those signs; for the blind it needed those touches; for the paralytic it required those sudden shocks, awakenings. If he had not proven himself the master of nature, they would demand of him what had he done that surpassed the power of man. Bergier said to the philosophers of the eighteenth century, "Consider well, and see if your predecessors were not conquered by a miracle." The objection against miracles "because they are not credible" is ridiculous.

What is a credible miracle? They have been precisely made incredible, so that faith might accept them, or be bound to accept them, and so that reason could not controvert them. A miracle is given to make us believe something superadded to the natural order. The man who should pretend to comprehend the Incarnation without the aid of miracles would be a fool, quite as much as he who denies the existence of God. Common sense laughs at philosophers and historians who pretend that God cannot interpose as God, in the affairs of this world, and that man has no need of him. Jesus Christ has treated us better; he does not require us to surrender ourselves to man, but to God. He has proven himself God, so that our pride might be fairly vanquished. By his miracles he has rendered nugatory for ever every philosophy that would wish to

exclude his *divinity*, and he has mercifully treated the philosophers themselves, or those "savants," in letting them know that he is more learned than they are. When their pride refuses this kindness, they are wrong. Nevertheless, his clemency proposes to them other arguments.

He said to the Jews, "If you do not believe my Word, believe at least my miracles." We say to-day the same to the incredulous: "If you do not believe the miracles, at least believe the Word." This Word is also a miracle, and the greatest of all miracles, which we cannot gainsay. The Word created the miraculous, to rest thereon; and on that altitude which it has made accessible it dwells, living and creative. It is the miracle of miracles—it is God himself. We hear him; our ears, obstructed by the dust and filth of the earth, could not misunderstand that voice, whose accent has awakened man, and whose fecundity has created a new world. "The words of Jesus Christ," says Bossuet, "reflect something of the divine in their simplicity, in their depth, by a certain gentle authority with which they issue forth. *Never has man spoken like this man*, because man has never been God, like him. Nor has man had over all spirits that natural authority which pertains to truth, and which speaks to the soul so sweetly and so intimately."

But this Word, absolutely divine—divine by its own character, divine by its effects, always subsisting—whose should it be if not Jesus Christ's? Who should be the inventor of the wisdom of Jesus Christ? At a distance of nearly two thousand years the Word of Jesus Christ remains the only true light of man on himself and on God. It upholds the Catholic world, encompassed by fanatical enemies; it sustains the natural law, infested

and crushed by a mad philosophy; it upholds human reason, subject to madness and error; it not only preserves and repairs, but it brings forth; it begets both priests and saints; it begets faith, and from the most stony and sterile hearts it wrests admiration and love. Who could have invented this Word?

Against the effulgence, the power, and number of the miracles of Jesus Christ, attested with so much splendor and power, by so great a number of witnesses, no objection is admissible at the tribunal of human reason. No objection will be received at the tribunal of God. We are bound to believe in miracles. Let us, however, suppose a possible refuge for doubt as to facts. How will you account for the invention of the Word, for the creation of the doctrine, and for the triumph of that doctrine? Those witnesses, so upright and sincere, whom you are anxious to suspect either for not having seen or for having seen but imperfectly what they relate—how can you suspect them for not having heard what they relate? They do not relate things which everybody may have known, and which every one would be accustomed to ponder on; but, on the contrary, they relate what is above and beyond everything. They relate them, not in the same terms, but with the same depth of unheard-of ideas, with the same clearness of style entirely new, with the same accent of sovereign authority: all is beaming with divine light, full of prophecy, radiant, dazzling, with a force from which you cannot escape. All flows from the Divinity; all returns thereto. Thus, the miracle reappears in the Word, and in its turn becomes the Word divine.

Yes, those miracles were given to uphold the Word —they are transformed and changed, and become the

Word. Under those miracles, so hateful to science, as a sap beneath the tree's bark, the divine germ lies hid, and by the breath of the Holy Spirit it blossoms into flowers of celestial beauty. From these flowers, as from the divine Word, an invigorating fragrance diffuses itself. These physical impossibilities teach us the most salutary moral truths. Humanity needs this teaching; it is ennobled or degraded according as it listens to or rejects it.

Miracles are the parables in action—they abound in admirable and wonderful thought. The larger portion of them explain the prophecies and undoubtedly prove their fulfilment, and also prophesy the future order. They have healed bodies; they will for ever cure souls. They have demonstrated the almighty power and goodness of the Son of Man, and they will for ever demonstrate the wisdom and knowledge of the Son of God.

The physician of long experience and deep erudition may work wonderful cures, and restore health to those afflicted with diseases almost incurable; the thaumaturgus may raise up the dead; but all that has no influence on the general affairs of this world—it only shows desperate diseases cured by an able man or by a holy man. Sin does not interrupt its works, infirmity ceases not to show itself, the tomb ceases not to receive those who raised the dead; and quickly those wonderful men disappear, leaving behind them a remembrance soon forgotten. The remembrance of the man of learning soon passes away; and as for the thaumaturgus, if it please not God to honor his grave by the permanency of miracles, he is soon forgotten. So that those things so strange, wonders of science and greater wonders of holiness, rest purely on facts, either absolutely isolated or suddenly unfruitful. But the miracles of Jesus

Christ adhere to all things, contain all things; history terminates in them and flows from them; they possess a vitality universal and immortal; they are resplendent with heavenly light; they establish the perpetuity of miracles.

"The miracles of the Saviour," says St. Gregory, Pope, "are real, and at the same time they serve to teach us some truth. By those acts of his power, God points out to us certain things; he reveals to us from them other things, through the mysteries that his wisdom has placed in them."

All the facts of the Scripture are susceptible of four different senses, equally true; for the profundity of the Spirit of God is infinite. Besides the literal sense, there are, first, the allegorical sense—by the application of one fact to another of which it is the figure or the prophecy; second, the tropological sense—by the application to the wants of the soul and to the direction of morals; third, the anagogical sense—by the application to the joys of the celestial country. These three senses constitute the spiritual or mystical sense, which places the miracles in harmony with the whole history of religion and with the entire history of humanity

The study of the mystical sense has been for a long while among us confined to morals—and, we may remark *en passant*, morals have gained nothing by it. Morals flow much less from the dogma which remains obscure; impiety disputes the origin or source of morality, and destroys its savor and its authority. Without neglecting by any means the moral, the Fathers have taken care to give to the mystical sense its full development. Their minds were elevated to marvellous heights; and our minds, accustomed to morality of the

earth earthy, are astonished at following them without effort to those sublime regions which are hardly any longer laid open to us, but for which we were made. The little we can in this book borrow from the Fathers will clearly manifest that there are in them good arguments and solid instruction. Joseph de Maistre says that the human body appears even more marvellous on the dissecting-table than in the most beautiful attitudes of life; so the anatomy of a miracle demonstrates it at once more real and more astonishing—the power and the wisdom of God are revealed more abundantly therein.

In extending the relation of the life of Our Lord even to the end of the evangelical age, we have sketched the last and the greatest of miracles, that for which all the others have been made—the establishment of the Church, a universal and permanent proof of the divinity of Jesus and his love for man. There should have been another chapter, or, to say better, a second book, written—that is, to manifest our Lord actually living, actually God, actually visible. But it is sufficient to open our eyes. The Church is the life of Jesus Christ continued. Through the Church the God-Man dwells in the world with that same character of human infirmity and divine power which expresses the union of the two natures. There is accomplished in her the same works of man, the same works of God—Man suffering, God conquering. He is at Bethlehem, at Samaria, at the Last Supper, among the throng at Tabor, and on Calvary. He is listened to and denied, glorified and insulted, followed and betrayed. All his friends turn away from him; all his adversaries and all his enemies remain.

He also is there whom the Scripture calls liar. It

has been said to others, "You belong to him." His lineage pretend not to know him, and say that he does not exist. He does exist, and his lineage know him and do his works. The existence and influence of Satan alone can account for a strange phenomenon, most capable of bewildering the human intellect. During a period of nearly nineteen centuries Jesus has been profusely lavishing his mercies, and he is always insulted, declared worthy of death, hated—in fact, personally hated. No one can deny this frightful prodigy. How comes it? Science will not answer. The Gospel answers, and Satan confirms the response by his perpetual endeavors to obscure the divinity of Jesus Christ. St. Augustine opportunely applies this expression of the Scripture to Porphyry: "Impii in circuitu ambulant"—"The wicked circle round and round," because they are turning and moving round in a labyrinth of errors, always retracing their steps. Porphyry, an apostate, pretended to honor Jesus Christ very much. He wrote a book entitled *Philosophy by the Oracles*, in the latest style of "the modern science" of this time, in which he cites the oracles who call Jesus Christ a pious man and worthy of immortality, and the Christians, on the contrary, impure men. These are precisely the oracles which they pronounce nowadays in learned societies. It is curious to see our unbelievers either copy the old follies of Porphyry or receive exactly the same inspiration of mind which "goes turning around"; and all this to show themselves such as they are depicted or portrayed in the Holy Scriptures, and to hurl against God himself the cry, "We do not wish to know your ways; we do not desire to know the knowledge of your commandments; scientiam viarum tuarum nolumus."

But the science of the ways of God is the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and this knowledge is nowadays far more indispensable than ever.

This book is written to mark out for souls a serene asylum in these unhappy times which are come to us. They will find in it all the remaining strength, consolation, and happiness of earth. For the conspiracy that we behold raising itself up against Jesus Christ is a conspiracy against the human race—a conspiracy to enslave it and to degrade it. And whoever will not acknowledge and love Jesus Christ will be crushed, enslaved, and degraded.

But whether society escapes the danger or falls a victim to it, Christians are bound nowadays to comprehend the obligation which is imposed on them of being better instructed. We do not sufficiently know how much God is God—that is to say, how good, how great, and how beautiful he is. In Christianity the incomparable sublimity and solidity of its moral code astonish less, enrapture less, than the solidity and sublimity of the dogma which renders not only possible, but easy, the practice of that morality, so elevated. There is the life-giver, the infinite, the incommunicable. In the mystery of Jesus we behold God. The splendor of that brightness surpasses all expression. We are guilty towards God and towards ourselves for the negligence which keeps us back so far from the wonders with which he has taken care to surround us. This negligence is a considerable and personal part taken by us in the crimes of unbelief. If we were more instructed, and instructed as we should be, infidelity would feel the necessity of studying itself more, and the half-science which alienates, acknowledging its insufficiency, would become the true science which converts.

The object of this work will be attained among those readers who are resolved to advance the study of religion. The Acts of the Apostles have preserved to us the touching history of that man of good-will who travelled alone along the desert road, reading a chapter from Isaias, which he understood not. Jesus sent him an interpreter, and, whilst the interpreter was yet speaking to him, as they were passing near a fountain, the man of good-will said: "Behold, here is water; what is there to prevent me from being baptized?" The men of good-will are numerous on the road of this world. Jesus takes care to convey to them the Word, which is enough. If this Word only be found in these pages, the writer will have rendered back what was given him.

It would be superfluous to accumulate notes in this book, which sincerity addresses to sincerity. We quote accurately, without marking the texts of the Fathers or other interpreters, often uniting in one phrase two or three texts for the sake of rapidity. These citations, properly speaking, form the entire work. On a subject like this the author, or rather the translator, would have feared to produce his own ideas, when he had those of so many of the saints and great men. He has taken the idea, and often the expression, and perhaps not an entire page belongs to him.

As to a certain malicious book which unhappily signalizes the age in which we live, we have been obliged to refer to it two or three times. We could have wished not to touch on it. The first sentiments of Catholics on this deplorable book have become much modified since they have been enabled to perceive more exactly the malicious industry of the author. While we see him assume the task of ignoring, we are convinced he is yet far from having lost, the faith. He

dare not look upon the crucifix face to face—he would fear to see the blood trickling down. In his conscience he declares himself a traitor. This is the confession which we read in his book, turned resolutely away from the light of day. We blame this miserable man, and we detest and abhor his crime; but he is to be pitied, and every Christian will be happy to say to him what Ananias said to Saul: "My brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, *who appeared to you on the road whence you are coming*, has sent me to meet you, so that you may receive your sight."

O living Christ! those who deny you will behold you. May they, in this time of your clemency, implore your pardon, which is always offered to them! May those be entrapped in the gentle snares of your mercies who conspire to lead others from the paths of light and pardon! This is the profound and sincere desire of a Christian soul that is terrified at their danger; that mourns over them, and does not feel the need of accusing them. At the supreme tribunal, what accuser will those guilty ones find more implacable, more unrelenting, than themselves?

Ascension Day, 1864.

INTRODUCTION.

I.

GOD AND MAN.

THERE are in the Gospel two personages—God and man. The place that man holds therein is scarcely lowor than that of God. It is for man's sake God descended from heaven; it is on his account the uncreated Spirit clothes himself with the weight of the flesh; it is for him the Infinite circumscribes himself in that prison; for him that purity itself assumes the semblance of guilt; for him the Immortal comes to taste death, the death of the cross. Man is the object of this inconceivable love.

Presently, we will direct our thoughts to God; but, first, What is man?

According to the latter-day science, he is an animal who has invented God: "When man began to be distinguished from the animal, he became religious." This stroke of science expresses the mother-thought of a book purposely written to destroy the belief in the Godhead of Jesus Christ—a sure means of ruining religion and reason, and of making man what science pretends he is—an animal.

Science deceives itself: man had no difficulty in becoming religious; he was so from the beginning, having known, first of all, the God who created him. It would therefore be more correct to say that as soon as man ceases to be religious, that moment he is no longer perfectly distinguished from the animal. For it is the mark of the animal-man not to discern the things of God.

But this sublime quality of being religious by nature does not make us sufficiently know man. Why is man religious? What does he know naturally of God? What does he know even of himself? All he learns by contemplating himself and others is obscure, the subject of hopeless doubt and shame. Is he only an atom in the abyss of space? Has he alone a full knowledge of his being? And yet he thinks himself great—and this feeling is just; but whence does he derive the sentiment of his greatness?

The individual knows what day he has entered into life; does he know truly that on which he has commenced to live? No more than he knows that day on which he will die; and he dies without knowing at what moment he began to live. Between those two dates of his birth and of his death, and in the short space of time he has lived, he is born many times, he has lived many lives quite diverse; and he asks himself if he has ever existed. He walks, he speaks, he thinks, and he takes his part on the stage of life. Nevertheless, he is dying repeatedly and of many deaths, and he feels it sensibly; and he also knows that he will never die.

Man is finite, and he cannot look on himself without acknowledging it—so finite, so circumscribed, that he hardly knows whether he exists or not. His thought

--that subtle and ready instrument which serves him even when all his faculties refuse to serve him—here fails him, becomes stupefied and wandering, doubts itself, and makes him doubt himself. It is but a nothingness amid nothing. And it is this evidence of the nothingness of man that becomes the last refuge from which thought deliberately infers its own existence. It exists, because it cannot invent itself, because it experiences a difficulty in knowing itself.

Nevertheless, this finite being, so miserable, so vile, is the work of the Infinite Being, and in the work there is something of the Worker, something of the Infinite. Behold, herein what a wonder of thought! Man, circumscribed on every side, is nevertheless everywhere. The sluggishness and infirmity of his body cannot arrest the flight of thought. It roams; he is with it wherever it goes. Space is opened out before it, time is at its command; and yet it breaks through the limits of space and time. This being, who finds it difficult to place himself in the present, who asks himself if he exists—this being, placed between moments of time, one of which is no more, and the other never has been, lived nevertheless before his birth through his ancestors, and he will live furthermore after his death through his descendants—above all, by his works, a numberless offspring born to die no more. Before him, all has been made for him, all has contributed to form the term in which he must live; he has some part in all that shall come after him. Captive, he has wings always free, and the eye of the eagle cannot penetrate so high the starry heavens as he can soar; blind, he sees the light of day beyond the sun, and in darkness far beyond that of the shades of night; his mental vision reaches further than the horizon; ashes, yesterday

without a name, to-morrow without a remembrance; imperceptible on this earth, lost amid starry atoms, he is himself but as a flash of lightning in the course of time, which is not a flash in the duration of eternity; nevertheless, living in the first man, he is in fact as ancient as time, and he will yet live when time is no more. When God said, "Let us make man to our image and likeness," that very moment he was born. Is that his true, real birth? Not at all. God pronounced these words, and he fulfilled them at the moment marked out in his wise purposes; but his designs were in him from eternity.

Thus must he reflect: "Created in time, but conceived in eternity, I am created for eternity. I will never die, and I know it, because I am the work of God; and the works of God are never made to perish. Matter, to which my soul is not united, is nothing. It is to the creation what my garments are to the body. This body even is not mine. It is as the clothing which is used and which is changed. I have repeatedly changed my clothing; over and over again I have changed my body. Where is the body of my infancy? Where is the flower and strength of my youth? All that is dead; as dead as the perfumes and sounds that course through the air. What remains of the grass of the house-tops? True creation, that which is imperishable, is the creation made to the image of God. That has received perfection from its origin, and will never perish.

Thus God by his divine power placed in death eternity; in the mutable, immutability; in the finite, the image of the Infinite.

Behold, here is man—not in his entirety, nor even in the degree in which it is given him to know himself,

since I do not speak of the treasures and burning love of his heart. And was this being originally created an animal only, like to those who were created to serve him, and who do not think? And was he to grovel among that unreasoning throng until he had learned how to "distinguish" himself from them by becoming religious—that is to say, by inventing thought and by creating God?

This is an old trick of "science"—to debase man to this degree, and to place him at the very start in the rank of the animal, and even lower. It inflates his pride afterwards by the consideration of what he can do to free himself from his infirmity, and thereby it persuades him that he is only dependent on himself for all his greatness. "See now how you have been able to ascend," it says to him. "Do not check your progress; disengage yourself more and more from the bonds of your infancy, and rise higher still; and you will be a God—you will be the only God."

This is what we call "the modern spirit." It does not date from yesterday, because this is the language of Satan, written on the first page of human history.

It is good to recall to man that the hand of God has formed his body, as the breath of God has given him a soul.

Animal, indeed, by matter, and miserable, if we judge him from his grosser part, nevertheless man is born the most powerful and the best constituted of animals. He is a long time, some say, helpless in his swaddling clothes; a long time incapable of going where necessity calls, of comprehending the danger that threatens him, of flying from the danger which he does not understand. But those who speak thus do not wish to un-

derstand how God has made man. Man is better mailed than the tortoise, more powerful than the lion, more swift than the bounding stag, than the eagle soaring in the heavens, than the swimming shark. Give to this animal his true name: he is social. He is such from his cradle, and there more than anywhere else. He only becomes an individual when he can see danger and prevent it, and defend himself against it and conquer it. In the cradle he has his father, he has his mother; he is surrounded by all the vigilance, all the strength, all the knowledge of society. The question is not to know what he is able to do if he be left alone: he is not alone; by the very law of his nature he cannot be alone. He comes into the world endowed with the power of society, far more than the lion with his muscles or the eagle with its talons. Even in a rude, savage state, he yet appears the king of creation; and the savage state is not the normal state of man. Man is social; his normal state is that embryo of perfect order we call civilization. He is slow in improving himself, in polishing and cultivating his moral and mental qualities. It matters not, since all the resources of society are employed to improve him. And society will form, regulate, and polish him; it will teach him to master fire and air; to subdue the rushing torrent, and even control the flashing lightning; to make himself clothes warmer than the fleece of the sheep, more impervious than the downy feathers of the birds; to build himself mansions that will brave the storms; to earn his bread from the fields; and to surround himself with comforts. Such is this feeble animal; and he will go far beyond—he will learn to live in the past and in the future, and to dwell on earth when he will be no more.

And that he may not be tempted to refuse the joys and pleasures of mortal life, that he may not isolate himself, in which state he would indeed be the most destitute of all animals, the necessity of life obliges him to remain in society—that is to say, in a state which gives him superiority over all creatures. He only is deprived of his royalty at death. I comprehend what he calls death, since, not being created for death, he cannot die. For good or evil, his power is limited to change of life alone.

Notwithstanding, man's education is rude. It need be so for the general welfare and his own advantage. This king has need to acknowledge his feebleness and his dependence. In the presence of this necessity, behold the wisdom and affection of God. Child and youth, man is provided with a hidden strength that enables him to support, without being bowed down and remaining in that posture, the burdens Providence may load him with. Youth possesses an interior buoyancy that makes labor pleasant, subjection, grief, troubles, and hardships endurable—things so difficult to bear later on, and which would crush him if the weight was the same from the first starting into life. Youth surmounts the elements of everything. The past is to him nothing; he flies towards the future, where he is sure of reigning. Tombstones rise up before his path—he hardly stops to notice them; he dashes them in pieces, and he dreams of them no more. Death! It is not for him; it will not injure him; it shall not take from him the future; it will not prevent him from existing, acting, and having what he would wish! If suddenly death presents itself and stretches out its hand, he is astonished. "Take me," he says; and he dies, as he does other things. This life, so full of reveries

wherein he sees himself master of all, is yet but a sport which he leaves off without regret.

But in this wonderful being what inexplicable defects, what inexplicable miseries! There are two indispensable secrets which he does not possess and which he cannot acquire. It is necessary that God should reveal them to him. Abandoned to himself, he feels a horrible incapacity of knowing and loving. Darkness envelops his mind—a brazen wall repels his heart. Whence comes he? Where is he going? What power has thrown him into life, to be at war with men? For society rears him up in vain; in vain is it indispensable to him; there is no natural love between him and society. It does not love him, it does not respect him; he does not respect it, he does not love it. On both sides he sees but services imposed by necessity, rules by force—no respect, no love; and his urgent want is love.

Behold the immense misery of this creature, so beautiful, and formed with so much care! Man does not know God, and he does not love man. What do I say? He does not love him; he passionately hates him. He overwhelms him with delights; and by his frenzy all the charms of society are for him changed into bitterness, and its advantages into tortures; he finds in it but hatred and tyranny. This king of creation, this conqueror of all terrestrial beings, capable of resisting every shock, who hunts the wild beasts of the forest and rebuilds his cities on the soil of the volcano—he encounters an enemy who humbles him, binds him, chains and kills him. And this enemy is man! Is that the primal design? Is it thus man has been created? No; we feel there is disorder, immense disorder, not to be repaired by human power, which gives us to understand that man is a wreck.

Whence comes this disorder? Why is man but a wreck? What will those answer who say that he becomes religious when he distinguishes himself from the animal—that is to say, when he invents a God; that is to say again, that God is a chimera of man, and that there is no Creator, no God?

It matters little what they reply. We have nothing to do with it here. The existence of man is the first and decisive proof of the existence of God. Man has not created himself. Who has created him, if not God? And if we wish a definition of God, it is found in the symbol of the Apostles, developed against the folly of those who deny the Nicene Creed: "Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible." Behold, in a few words, the clear conception of a power and of a wisdom without bounds! For from what has God created all things? From nothing, unless we suppose matter pre-existing and coeternal with God. Those who pretend not to be able to comprehend God creating all things out of nothing flatter themselves that they comprehend matter, inert matter, either eternal or self-creating, and afterwards creating order and intelligence.

If it be impossible to comprehend how matter could have created order and intelligence, it is also impossible to comprehend how God, sovereign and perfect intelligence, could have created man otherwise than through love, or to ask of him aught else than love. Every other explanation degrades God, and makes him inferior to man in justice and goodness, declares him impotent in the midst of this creation, which is his work. But to lower God is to annihilate him in the thought of man, who ceases then to adore—that is, to know—him; and by this deprivation of God, thought and

man himself are annihilated. He remains but a discontented and intelligent animal, who gives and receives hatred, who engenders and undergoes death.

God is love, and love is life. A continual expansion of the love of God, which is the uncreated life, continually creates life. All life created of God is good and perfect in its order, is endowed with beauty, and gives something which is the support of another life. The more the being is elevated, the more he receives and diffuses life. The perfection of life is the knowledge and love of the Creator; the perfection of love is adoration.

Created through love to know perfectly and to love perfectly, according to the hierarchy of his nature; created by the Sovereign Good to ascend up to the abundance of life, which is adoration—man, a work sublime, has received the sublime complement of liberty. With liberty he combats, he merits, he has something in him to raise himself up to the love of God, to recompense God for having given him being. Thereby also he has it in his power to separate himself from God, to withdraw from him, and to deny him. He has this choice. As the last mark of the Almighty power, he has given man the power of denying him.

Loving, he is bound to obey, for obedience is the law and form of love; free, he is at liberty to disobey, to violate the law, to refuse to love.

Already God had encountered rebellion: before the visible creation, a combat had taken place in heaven. Among the innumerable angels there were cohorts rebellious. A party of those pure spirits, created to adore, permitting pride to be born in them, separated themselves from God, lost love and light, and became

demons incapable of repenting. According to a high doctrine, the anticipation of the revealing of the Word's incarnation, by whom they had been created, was the cause of their revolt. In advance, they refused adoration to the Word of God—the Word-God—when it should have become Jesus; that is to say, when it should have been clothed with the infirmity, the lowliness, of mortal flesh. The mystery of divine love surpassed their intelligence; the condition of man, this new creature, in many respects above them, whom it was necessary everywhere to adore in Jesus, excited their envy. The rebellious angels were precipitated into the bottomless abyss. Then evil began to exist, as evil for ever, as a power for a time—the power of seduction, dreadful to man, but less powerful than man when he wishes to obey God.

Tempted by the devil, man disobeyed. He violated the law of love, he refused love, he preferred disorder, confusion, and death. And if man commenced, not by confounding himself with the animal, but by distinguishing himself from it less than he ought, and thus assuming some one of those hideous traits of the brute which philosophy is pleased to acknowledge in him—traits that God had not given him—it was on that day of disobedience he did so. That day, ashamed of his nakedness, he sought to conceal it, and he got a garment made of the skins of beasts—a symbol of mortality.

In the eyes of science, that denies God and man, that inauspicious day should be the first date of progress, the first step of man towards the religious sense. Alas! that day but marks the day of his death. Driven out of paradise, chased from the delights of an innocent, angelic life, hurled from the clear, bright presence of

God, his creator, he sinks into the depths of human darkness. He did not commence to become religious, but, by an effect of the divine mercy, he cannot cease to be so. It is said that the last objects which are depicted before the eyes of the living being at the moment that death seizes him remain engraved on the soul, and can never be effaced; so, on the threshold of those long and dismal ages of ignorance, obscurity, and darkness, wherein he was plunged by his own fault, man carries away an indelible vision, radiant of Paradise, and his soul does not cease to give back some imperfect echo of the great things that it had known and the promises that made it expect a Redeemer. Here, at that far-off, far-distant period, the grace of Christ appears; it will be renewed in signs and symbols without number till the days of the ineffable reality.

Let us resume.

Man could not sin without being free, else God could not have been offended. The All-powerful could not exact the fulness of love of a being without liberty. What constitutes the gift is the power of refusing it. God could neither deceive himself to the point of exacting of his creature, as a free offering, what he had not given him; nor punish that creature for a defect of the organization which it received from him. An error and injustice in God, an improvident God, a God not only without mercy but without justice, are palpable absurdities.

If God had loved sinful man less, not having to destroy him as a work badly made, he would have crushed it as a rebellious work.

Because his work is conformable to his plans, he has preserved it; because it is intelligent and free, and

because it has prevaricated voluntarily, he has punished it; because he has loved it with an eternal love, he has repaired it.

At the sacrifice of the altar, the priest, having poured the wine into the chalice which shall be changed into the precious blood of Jesus Christ, mingles therewith a few drops of water, which represent our humanity assumed by the Saviour, and he pronounces those astonishing words: "O my God! who hast wonderfully created man in a state so noble, and yet more wonderfully thou hast reinstated him in his former dignity, grant us, through the mystery of this water and this wine, one day to have a share in the divinity of Him who has deigned to clothe himself with our humanity—Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord."

God, therefore, has restored his fallen creature, and he has confided the redemption to this Word by whom he has created mankind—this Word which "is in him from the beginning; begotten, not made; by whom all things have been made, and without whom nothing was made that was made." The Word becomes incarnate, and has taken the form and weight of sin; charges itself with death, which was the punishment of sin; and by his sacrifice satisfies at once justice and love, restores life, and abolishes death. And "the Word was God"; for who else but God could repair the work of God, satisfy the justice of God, sovereignly accomplish the objects of God's love?

Man understood those things which enlighten his reason and give him the key of his own mystery. He has known them, not as having discovered them, but because they have been revealed to him by the divine Word, and afterward explained under the dictation of that Word, whose voice is never silent. Be-

hold here what was written towards the end of the first century of the Christian era, more than eighteen hundred years ago, by a man who had been a poor fisherman on the Lake of Tiberias. Here he speaks as the prophet, as the witness, as the historian—he who reclined his head on the bosom of Jesus. Thus he speaks: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him: and without him was made nothing that was made. In him was life; and the light was the light of men: and the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness did not comprehend it. . . . That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him; and the world knew him not. He came unto his own; and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them he gave power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in his name: who are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us: and we saw his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

What a page! What an illumined portal for entering into the light of God! Bossuet says of the same Gospel in another place, "You will discover therein depths to make one tremble." Here is the evidence which gushes forth from those depths, and which solves the enigma of man and of God, as the heavenly sun swallows up the night. Humanity is not mistaken in it. Before the splendor of this heavenly brightness instantly it has felt the vision of Paradise appearing again to its darkened vision; it has partly, if not en-

tirely, recognized the God who had spoken to it in the days of its innocence, when it yet dwelt in its cradle of flowers; and it has well known that the Redeemer came, and that he gave to men "power to be the children of God."

But the light shone in darkness, and the darkness does not comprehend it. And He by whom the world was made came into the world, and the world did not know him. And the world requires that we should contradict the murderous folly that advises men to refuse being made the children of God, saying to them that Jesus Christ was not the Son of God nor the Redeemer of the world, and that God has no Son, and that the world does not stand in need of a Redeemer!

II.

BEFORE CHRIST.

NEVERTHELESS, the world waited; and in what condition! The modern writer, according to whom man "became religious," depicts humanity abandoned to its own conceptions on religious matters. For gods it had fetiches; sorcerers and jugglers for priests; human beings for a victim: such were the religions invented by man. "So this divine faculty of religion for a long time resembled a cancer that required to be extirpated from the human species—a cause of errors and crimes which the sages were compelled to suppress." The author adds that the brilliant civilization of China, of Babylon, and of Egypt made a certain progress in religion. But what progress? China remained "mediocre"; the religions of Babylon and Syria, never having "detached themselves from a foundation of strange sensuality, remained, even to their extinction, in the fourth and fifth centuries of our era, the schools of immorality." In other words, all the religions anterior to Jesus Christ, the Jewish excepted, were satanical, anti-social, dishonoring to God and man. This is the acknowledgment of one who is a declared enemy of the Catholic Church. He could not help acknowledging the fact, and the fact overthrows his whole system. Bossuet, with the superiority of his

genius, which was often but the superiority of his faith, has said: "The most enlightened nations were the blindest in matters of religion: so it is true that among them it required to be raised up by a particular grace or by wisdom more than human."

In what religion of antiquity do we not discover gross sorceries, fetichism, the abomination of human sacrifice? What temple was not in some manner the school of immorality? Those horrors kept pace with the flourishing splendor of Athens and Rome. There, even in those centres of civilization and refinement, the rite of immolations was never abolished. To multiply executions, it was not necessary that a religion should accumulate dead bodies around its idols, as at Carthage and at Dahomey. At Rome, the circus was a temple. Before commencing the sports (those sports where as many as thirty thousand men were put to death), they invoked the immortal gods, and occasionally upon a portable altar human blood flowed, shed by the hand of the priests.

In the circus, religion made victims by the sword of the gladiator and the teeth of wild beasts. Throughout the whole empire, and over the entire surface of the earth, she slew souls with greater tortures by the prevalent corruption of morals.

Do we—sons, daughters, fathers, through the grace of Christ,—do we represent this "brilliant civilization," where the family existed not for three-fourths of men, where none tasted its bliss in its sacred fulness? The name "father of family" signified possessor of slaves. In all Greece, devoted to the worship of unchaste love, conjugal love had no temple.

Behold, therefore, the progress of the man become religious. His religion was a "cancer," and the can-

cer devoured his flesh. But the "sages" who undertook to extirpate the cancer—where do we find them? Only since Jesus Christ, only as opposed to Jesus Christ, has the world known of such sages. Antiquity is ignorant of their species, and would not have borne with them. When Satan sets himself up to be adored, he neither excites nor permits a free examination. Not having the truth, he has no longer that patience which is the forbearance of God. They did not discuss Minerva at Athens, Jupiter at Rome, more than they did a little while ago Calvin at Geneva, Mahomet at Mecca, Luther at Copenhagen, or Joe Smith among the Mormons. The Christians publicly refused incense to the idols. Among the enlightened pagans, those who wished to remain "sages" demanded that the idols should be regilded and Christians delivered over to the lions.

Before Christianity, what could the sages effect? What baptism gave them light? What could they have discovered to put in place of the gods? Reason, abandoned to itself in the search after God, rushes into polytheism by the rapid downfall which now hurries into pantheism all that has severed itself from Jesus Christ. Polytheism tends to the worship of idols; pantheism will end there also. The sages will resist but little! Man is made to adore; he must adore. Wherever Christ has not appeared fetichism reigns. Wherever he is banished, there the fetich will arise. The passions remain; they are the masters, and they invoke the gods. Separated from divine revelation, science incontestably demonstrates nothing but terrible phenomena, before which the faculty of adoration quickly vanishes; man appears as the sport of contrary powers, for the most part cruel, all inexorably unfathomed,

whose dark, mysterious will he cannot conquer, whose wicked caprice he must continually dread. Perpetual terrors, whence surge up the ravings of superstition—this is paganism in its full and proper meaning.

"There is," says Bossuet, "a Christianism of nature." There is also a paganism of nature, yawning under men's feet; and how many daily plunge therein in presence of the full light of God? The world will be swallowed up therein.

Could the sages of antiquity withdraw themselves from it? It is certain they have not attempted it. Natural sagacity does not compromise itself for the love of truth. It despises vulgar error, yet accompanies it to its vilest altars. Moses, animated with the Spirit of God, is the only legislator of antiquity who dared break to pieces the popular idol; he has no imitators, except among his people. Solon established at Athens the temple of prostituted Venus. Socrates, Plato, Cicero, Seneca, voluntarily believed in the unity and immateriality of God; but Socrates, when dying, sacrified to Esculapius; Plato took good care not to incur the charge of impiety; Cicero, already priest of the temple of the earth, sought after and obtained the office of augur; Seneca observed the pagan rites. Whatever might have been their sacred or private thoughts, they would connive at no irreligion in public. The sages of our day assume more license; they make war on a suffering and peaceful Redeemer. Neither Greece nor Rome present anything which deserves the honor or disgrace of being compared to them.

No, no; to overturn idols it required the arm of the martyrs; to heal the "cancer" it required their generous blood, become the blood of Christ. The

philosophers and free-thinkers of pagan times have done what those fine talkers were able to accomplish whom the disciple of Socrates points out to us at the banquet of the poet Agathon. Though discoursing sometimes admirably on virtue and truth, still they corrupted the earth. The genius of Plato, roused by the far-off vibrations of Sinai, has given back some magnificent echoes. Does he suspect that it was the echo of truth?

In the dialogue of the *Banquet*, where Socrates seems for a moment filled with Christian thought, the most abominable passion is glorified as the most active principle of virtue; and Socrates asserts that he took from a courtezan the beautiful ideas with which he charmed his auditors. All the depravation, the wickedness, that one could nowadays collect together in the places of infamy, in the abodes of depravity and vice, could not give or present the like essence of degradation and corruption. To refine in infamy was the design and the art of the "sages." St. Augustine chides himself for having lauded those impious men: "Plato and his school were not born to enlighten the people, or to draw them away from the universal folly of idols to the true worship of the true God."

One may cite beautiful pagan maxims. Among them beautiful maxims abounded, just as temples abounded. Their temples became holy and their maxims efficacious only when Christ entered them. Pay attention, says Bossuet, to their high, lofty expressions. Do you not perceive they understand them not? Nothing is more admirable than the apology of Socrates on the character and destiny of the truly just man, contrasted with the impostor who feigns righteousness: "Let his love for justice draw on him the stigma of infamy;

though always virtuous, and yet always reputed as criminal, he ardently desires to persevere till death. . . . The just man will be buffeted, loaded down with chains, delivered up to torture; they will burn out his eyes, they will nail him to the cross." The Christian spirit is astounded at this prophetic inspiration. But what impression does it leave on Socrates; what impression does the world conceive of it before the world had seen the tree of Calvary and tasted its fruit? This pagan conclusion is that it was all-important that the Just One on the cross should acknowledge that he was not suffering for justice's sake, but only for appearing to be just; and all ends in this grovelling conclusion: that the lot of the unjust is more happy.

The Roman poets are rich in irreproachable expressions of morality. In the writings of Ovid many moral lessons abound—that is, to speak of the profit one might draw from them. There are many of them in Horace, too, who so calmly despises everything that is not voluptuous. Horace, as hard as a Pharisee, hesitates not to declare that death is too slight a punishment for the impure vestal. But at the same time this rigid devotee does not cease to repeat, in thrilling accents, the advice to "seize pleasure while it flies, for 'tis of heaven the gift." We have also the famous expression, "Know thyself"—a word admired, engraved in the temple of Delphos, "and from heaven derived," says Juvenal. He failed to discover the art of knowing himself, and afterward the art of conquering himself Few heroes essayed this, and still fewer, having essayed persevered. They are forced to follow the counsel of Horace:

> "To be troubled at nothing:
> Perhaps the only thing here below
> To make us happy and keep us so."

We will hear Pilate asking, with a shrug of his shoulders, What is truth? This same Pilate, who orders the Just One to be scourged in order to save his life; who caused him to be crucified to relieve himself from a difficulty—this Pilate, who pronounces the *Ecce Homo*, doubtless was not ignorant of the *Homo Sum* of Terence. He murmured the words, perhaps, at the first sight of the Man of Sorrows.

We do not despise those unfruitful accents. They are the testimonies of a soul naturally Christian—testimonies like the rich grass which attests the richness of a neglected soil.

After the coming of Christ the moral vegetation becomes more abundant, and assumes a character more august. Perseus, Seneca, Juvenal, were affected by the breath of the apostles. Under Caligula and Nero Seneca pronounces those admirable words: "The unfortunate man is a sacred thing." But Seneca, a flatterer of Caligula and Nero, had renounced the bar not to wound the vanity of the former, who believed himself an orator; he returns to eloquence to excuse the second for having killed his mother. Juvenal has glimmering lights and vigor of expression which seem to be obtained at the foot of the cross: "There is no wicked man happy"; "Esteem it dishonorable to love less your honor than your life"; "Whoever meditates crime is already guilty"; "Respect more than all the candor of youth." Among the pagans, thoughts that are fruitful in the Gospel are but stoical emphasis, a flourish of the cymbals of genius.

The last word of Seneca is suicide. Juvenal, like Seneca, produces only the abortive fruit of the good grain fallen on the highway of temporal solicitudes. "Pray for a valiant soul—one which, disfranchising

itself from the terrors of dying, rather looks on death as the choicest benefit of human nature—a soul unassailable by anger, superior to vain desires, capable of preferring to all the pleasures of Sardanapalus the severe labors of Hercules and all that he has suffered." Sublime desires, noble thoughts! In the days of Nero and Adrian, when Juvenal lived, who prayed for a glory like this, and who obtained it? Christ crucified gratified the love of those who had learned of him to pray, "Our Father who art in heaven"; Juvenal saw their labors greater than those of Hercules, and he was not converted.

In order to give a better account to ourselves of this world, where it is said that Jesus Christ was not necessary, let us listen to what was thought of the soul—a question very much debated among philosophers; that is to say, among those who constituted the head of pagan society. For Athens and Rome were headquarters of philosophers and literati.

According to an academician of our epoch, Judea was a "stranger to the theory of individual rewards or recompenses, which Greece had taught under the name of the immortality of the soul." By this turn of expression the academician avows that, in his mind, the immortality of the soul, and perhaps the soul itself, are but philosophical conceptions, very debatable. This is the point on which antiquity prided itself. Only, those efforts it made to raise itself so high must be made to-day to descend from those heights. Doubtless such efforts will be made. The question of the soul is bound up with the question of Jesus Christ: in order that Jesus Christ should cease to be God, it is essential to suppose either that the soul is not responsible or is not immortal.

Let us here first observe that Judea was not "a stranger" to this "theory." In the books of Moses, anterior to all literature and all philosophy, God is called "the only God, master of all, who wounds and who heals, who strikes with death and who raises up to life again." Twenty passages of the Sacred Scriptures establish the same truth. Daniel: "Those who sleep in the dust, will awake from the sleep of death and rise up one day; some for eternal life, and others to torments without end." Tobias: "We are the children of God, and we await that life that he is bound to give to those who do not renounce his faith." Job: "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that I will rise up from the earth at the last day." Behold what Judea knew and believed touching the soul before there were any Greeks! "Those Jews," says Tacitus (portraying at the same time the Romans), "believe that souls are immortal. They rejoice in becoming fathers, and do not believe it lawful to take away the life of any of the children which were given to them." All this is so well known that it would require a sort of courage to appear not to know it.

The numerous systems of the ancient philosophers on the soul or thinking substance belong to the number of those things which mark more vividly human infirmity. The Christians made representations of them full of salutary reflection. We find in those various systems that the soul is the heart itself—a certain section of the brain—a subtle air—a harmony resulting from the concordance of the various parts of the body—a number that moves itself—a portion of matter distributed through the human body, wherein it assumes a peculiar character according to the place it occupies. According to others, there is no soul. An "active

principle" resulting from the combinations of matter gives place to the phenomena that one calls life and movement. Aristotle imagines the soul has its origin in the *Entelechia*, or perpetual motion. To what end? Aristotle knows not. Is the soul immortal? The master of Pythagoras, Pherecides, was the first to affirm it, in relation to Cicero, who seems too embarrassed to reject it, and quite content in not being sure of it. A great many maintain that the soul ends with the body. The Stoics are of opinion it lives as long as the crow. Pythagoras makes the soul neither perishable nor immortal. After indefinite transmigrations, this something or other, which is a part of the Divinity, having dwelt in men, beasts, and even vegetables, goes to unite itself to the universal Soul, and is lost in all. Aristotle is unintelligible, not to say mute; Plato, always brilliant and ingenious, contradicts himself; Panetius, observing that the soul is subject to sufferings, concludes that it could not be endowed with immortality. This idea of the immortality of the soul appears to Pliny a childish story, an intolerable inflation of human pride, the zenith of madness. Seneca says: "The last day of life is the birthday for an eternal life"; and again: "If it be true that the soul survives the body without living in the body, the future life is preferable to the present." Marcus Antoninus is equivocal; Plutarch is hypothetical; Epictetus inclines to annihilation.

An humble sentiment of Socrates is worth far more than all the speculations of the others and than all his own. Contemplating the problem of the union of the soul and body, he confesses the weakness of the human mind, and invokes the aid of *some divine revelation.* After the lightning flashes through the darkness of night, the darkness becomes deeper and more obscure.

Socrates hopes that after death he will be found among the good people; nevertheless, he dares not affirm that anything remains of the good or bad people after death. This is the substance of the entire discourses of Socrates on this subject; and Plato, for his part, does not speak otherwise. This is also the main point of Cicero, in spite of the penetration which, in the *Dream of Scipio*, led him to the threshold of truth. There was among the Scipios a Jewish teacher whom Cicero certainly consulted. Except in this sublime flight of thought, Cicero differs not from the common thinker; he asks, "If the soul be annihilated, what greater advantages than to escape so many miseries, and to enter into the sweets of eternal sleep? As long as I exist I shall not suffer, *because I have nothing to reproach myself with.* Annihilated, I shall not experience either sorrow or pain." The thought of a future responsibility does not torment them. If they had experienced it, they would be less presumptuous in declaring themselves just; and doubtless if they had sincerely believed in their justice, they would have cherished less the idea of nothingness or non-existence —a thought so dreadful to the soul ennobled by Christianity. In reality, they did not consider themselves just; they did not wish to be so, and they were not happy. The tone of despair and disgust of himself is not rare with the Epicurean Horace; the Stoics considered it the right, and almost the duty, of man to commit suicide—all view total annihilation as the surest felicity. Socrates cries out, "To sleep without dreaming or awaking—if death be anything like this, I call it a great gain." Oh! what a gain to be no more. What a comment those outcries of human misery are on the word of the apostle where he proclaims Christ

and the revelation which Socrates expected: "In him was the life, and the life was the light of men." Because mankind had not Christ, they had not life.

"Among the pagans," says Lactantius, "wisdom has its doctors who do not teach the means of approaching the gods, and religion has its ministers who do not teach wisdom; hence we may conclude that among them there is neither true wisdom nor true religion." Aberrations from religion and aberrations from wisdom produced a moral teaching which was but the contempt of everything. The most logical sophists madly maintain that nothing is just or unjust in itself, but only through the will of the legislator; others, without saying this, show too well that they believe it.

The noble school of Socrates and Plato brought forth the Pyrrhonites and the Cynics, and those foolish and impure sects were very soon the only memory that remained of them. There is almost the same space of time between the teaching of Plato and Cicero as there is between the teaching of the apostles and the Council of Nice. But what essential truth was acquired or established among the human race up to the days of Cicero? He speaks of the "obscurity" of those lofty questions which led Socrates to confess his ignorance, and, even before Socrates, almost all the ancient philosophers, whose opinion was that one can arrive at nothing, understand nothing, know nothing; that the senses are limited, the mind incapable, life too short; that truth is profoundly hidden; that there is no longer room for it on the face of the earth, strewn over with conventionalities and opinions; that, in a word, all is covered with a thick darkness. "This is why," he adds, "Arcesilaus maintained against Zeno that we can know nothing, not alone that we do not

know anything, which was all that Socrates held. There is nothing we can see or comprehend, and consequently there is nothing we can hold for certain." Such is the drift of ancient wisdom some ages after Plato raised it to its highest summit. In a space of time of the same length, amid heresies and torments, when the pagan world was about being dissolved, the teaching of the apostles chanted the universal Credo of Nice—sovereign affirmation of the truths which save the soul and which will reconstruct the world. The ancient Athenians, having been delivered from a plague, raised an altar to the Unknown God, "in order to discover," says St. Paul to their descendants, "if by groping for God in the dark they could find him." But when St. Paul, announcing this God before the Areopagus, touched on what regarded justice and the resurrection, the sages of the school of Plato laughed him to scorn. They no longer deigned even to examine. All enlightened paganism expresses the disdain of Pilate: *Quid est veritas?*

St. Augustine is astonished that after Christ people were to be found who, undertaking to speak and enlighten men, loved more to have Plato in their mouths than Christ in their hearts. There are many of the same stamp always to be found. Let us grant them that a favorable interpretation may be given of many doubtful points in the doctrine of Socrates and Plato; let us acquit those sages of having positively believed in metempsychosis, in the pre-existence and eternity of matter, in the annihilation of the soul; yet we must refuse to justify them in their teachings on conduct and morals. Their manners were not simply gross, wicked customs, as we understand it to-day; they were not content to yield to nature, but they violated it.

They did not refrain from this; they did not blush for it. Socrates is absolutely cynical. In the *Dialogues* of Plato the most degrading vice is presented as something so natural in itself, so much in usage in spite of prohibitive laws, that it is doubtful if those polite and learned authors, those sages, those philosophers, could have discovered any evil in the practice of the most revolting vices. Christian morality may be often powerless against the wicked inclinations of man; but even when defeated, it awakens to repentance; it excites in the consciences dreadful remorse. The sinner is the first to accuse and condemn himself. But if he be so bold as to justify crime, then he is not only a sinner, he becomes an apostate. His very apology for his sin is an acknowledgment upon which the public conscience ratifies the just decree by which he becomes an outcast.

Whatever one may think of the genius of Plato, it must be acknowledged that the truth was known to him; that he amused himself with it, played with it; and that he amused himself also with vice. Whatever one may think of the lofty presentiments of Socrates, of his qualities, and of his death, it will always be true that Socrates did not know his faults, nor did he wish to condemn them. Plato despised the philosophers who would not render themselves plain enough and clear enough to be understood by the common people. Socrates, after a life of free-thinking, died without having the least spark of repentance. By this trait of character of the greatest of men, by this trait of one of the best of men, we can perceive what were the precursors of Christianity.

Antiquity had nothing in it that was Christian, nothing whatever. Doctrines, laws, customs, whatever

flowed from its wisdom, concurred to grind the helpless and feeble—the child, the mother, the poor, the slave, the people. The proof of this lies in those famous legislative acts wherein is revealed with so much evidence the inspiration of him who was "a murderer from the beginning." The Spartan laws present not what is most diabolical and impure; Plato insults human nature more deeply, if possible. The imaginary laws of Plato explain the extreme helplessness of the mortal who seeks after wisdom by himself; and these laws show the extent of his implacable pride when he imagines he has discovered it himself. Humanity, according to him, is but inert matter, over which the mind has the right to govern as it will. He shapes humanity with a stroke of the axe—he cuts, lops off, tears to pieces at his will, and uses death itself as he pleases. Plato, the legislator, wishes only to have perfect bodies and beautiful minds; consequently physicians should let badly-formed individuals perish. The tribunals should put to death the incorrigibly wicked; the children badly made or born of wicked parents should be abandoned. Out of regard for beauty and vigor of manhood, he limits the age for becoming father or mother; nevertheless, before and after the period fixed, the law only imposes sterility, and in case of crime—that is to say, in case of production—that the children should be abandoned to their own fate. Women shall be common for soldiers; so that children, not knowing their parents, and not known by them, shall be considered to belong to all. The free man can kill his slave, and he is only bound thereafter to purify himself; but the slave who, even in defending himself, should have killed a free man, shall undergo the punishment of a parricide. Thus it is that the

greatest philosopher of antiquity, supposing himself master of the people, would wish to mould them to beauty and virtue. Plato had criticised the laws of Lycurgus; they were capable, said he, of forming valiant but not just men. We meet, indeed, some views of justice and dignity in this Utopian world of Plato's, which sometimes seem to have grown out of dim shadowings of the Hebrew republic. But Plato had not the God of Israel, and, on the other hand, the brutality of the Spartans fascinated this dainty philosopher. Elevating himself in imagination above the effeminate Attics, he spurns poetry and encourages bloodshed. Voluptuousness is not barren; it always brings forth a daughter—ferocity. The voluptuous Horace demands that the perjured vestal should twice be put to death; the voluptuous Plato wishes to crush the heart of the mother and of the spouse; he puts to death the slave, and casts deformed children into the filthiest sinks. O Christ! O purity! O love! hasten thou, come and instruct the Samaritan, raise up the sinful woman who weeps, and place your hand on the head of the little children.

It is not necessary to object that the laws of Plato were but the sport of his imagination — a chimera. Greece had seen in this same line of enactments attempts and successes which permitted everything. Plato did not invent infanticide; the condition of the Helots of Sparta was worse than he made that of the slave. The lot of the Roman slave and the Roman infant was not better. Tertullian said to the magistrates of the empire: "Who is he among you who has not put to death his own child?" In the third century Plotinus, a philosopher jealous of Christianity, undertakes to found a city wherein the laws of Plato

should be observed. The philosophers whom Christianity shall not enlighten become even blinder than those. Notwithstanding the aid of Gallienus, the emperor, Plotinus could not succeed. In the third century it was already too late. Nevertheless, those things sprang from the vitiated source of human nature, and even to-day one could not swear that they can be found there no more.

"Opinions opposed to reason," says Bonald, "inevitably produce actions opposed to nature." In spite of the inward groanings of this nature, which cannot entirely disappear, the pagan world, yielding to the reason of its sages, was made to the image of its gods. Human intelligence became obscured, public and private acts were dissolute. Let us take any ten years of Roman history: in the civil as well as the domestic society the ulcer deepens, enlarges itself; divorce and licentiousness devour the family, ambition devours justice. More and more foreign war appears to be the only remedy for internal disorders, and more and more it is their aliment. The more the great aspire to tyranny, the more the multitude plunge into ignominy; until at length they must be satiated with blood. They lick the hand that spreads before them the poison and whets the sword that becomes the avenger of their crimes and immoralities. Natural virtue becomes more precarious, usury more ferocious, debtors more miserable, slaves more barbarously oppressed, in proportion as riches augment, as morals become effeminate, as letters and arts multiply wonders. Everywhere cruelty, venality, deceit; everywhere lying and barefaced wickedness—the impudent, captious lying of words, the cynical lying of judgments and of oaths, the monstrous lies in treaties and com-

pacts. The Punic faith has devoured Roman faith; allies are but enemies whom they gained over by treason. Whether we speak of strangers or fellow-citizens, war is without humanity, alliance without security peace without amenities. Such is the greatest of those ancient peoples whom an infatuation of literature wishes to portray to us as so free, noble, and bold. Their baseness is only comparable to their corruption. The dominant character of ancient Rome is a profound forgetfulness of God, an unutterable contempt for man. These two things can hardly be separated—the one engenders the other.

Before Christ, man was the prey of man. The moment Christ appears the prey is submissive and resists no more. It is not that man has lost his instincts. Pursuing the path of darkness, he preserved this vain light. With it guiding him, he rushes on madly, fatally, to slavery and bondage. Without speaking of Ninive, of Tyre, of Babylon, which have disappeared, and of Memphis, which is fast decaying, we have had those dazzling Greek democracies and that grand Roman Senate—Homer and Plato, Phidias and Aristotle, Cicero and Virgil, Alexander and Cæsar. Legislators, conquerors, artists, poets, have not been wanting; but nothing taught man the love of God nor respect for man, and everything tended to place the world under the sway of Rome, and Rome under the feet of Tiberius, Caligula, and Nero. Behold the grand total, the names which sum up those vast labors of the human race and of time—Tiberius constitutes himself a divinity; he is followed by the divine Nero. That is the rule and order of things. The god Tiberius shuts himself up in the isle of Capri, inventing voluptuousness, brutality, and punishments, restless, and already

a prey to dissolution. It is not the anxiety to consolidate his divinity that caused restlessness; he is more embarrassed to limit the number of his temples and the multitude of his priests. Tiberius does not demand incense—he refuses it; but he fears death, he fears Rome at his knees, he fears his ministers, the accomplices of his murders and debauchery; he fears especially his heir, that Caligula whom he raises up to revenge himself for the misery of being divinized, and to bequeath to his adorers a monster capable of making even himself regretted. However, ten thousand Pretorians suffice Sejanus to maintain respect for mighty Rome, trembling under the indictment of her impeachers. Very soon they will have a Caligula, the fool; then Claudius, the imbecile; next, Messalinus and Agrippinus govern; and, at last, Domitius Nero will be the political head, the centre, the peace-giver of the human race.

"Let the gods rain down miseries, double our woes;
Be our storm-riven galleys entombed in the main;
Let the best blood of Rome, as in torrents it flows,
Still crimson our hearths, where her heroes lie slain.
What matter though all sink in ruin untold?
Nero rules, we are happy, and Rome is consoled!" *

This is the last word of polytheism, its last civil and religious expression—Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, Heliogabalus, masters round whom the world naturally throngs! Against the dogma of the unity of God Satan, the denier, brought forth the heresy of polytheism. When the Son of God assumed human nature, and clothed himself with our mortality, to reveal all truth and to restore all liberty, Satan, the parodist,

* *Pharsalia*, Brébeuf's translation.

is also anxious to be incarnated; he enthrones Cæsar sovereign pontiff and vicar of all the gods, and in the main the only god. And Tertullian said that they would rather perjure themselves after having sworn by their gods than after having sworn by the genius of Cæsar. This power adapted itself so well to the degradation of humanity that it lasted for three centuries, passing from the wicked to fools, from fools to brutes, from brutes to monsters, without causing the sluggish beast to revolt whose veins it empties while staining it with perpetual infamy. The pagans kill the emperors; the Christians only will put to death the empire. They will kill it by rejecting its gods, and by offering up their own life, dying themselves thus to redeem the world. But those haughty Romans, those philosophers, those idolaters, who refuse the truth, do not wish liberty either. They kill the emperor either to rob or sell the empire, not to deliver it. "Our glory at present is to obey." They kept this engagement, taken before the face of Tiberius. The ancient legislators proposed to themselves to institute some form of liberty; but the imperial world entertains no more this dream. Under the feet of Cæsar civilians grow up true theologians of the imperial worship; they give to this pastor the entire ownership of the human cattle. Cæsar kills and robs by an authority founded on right. "Quidquid principi placuit legis habet vigorem." But, after all, far better are the caprices of Cæsar than the laws of Plato.

And the world, carrying to its extreme verge its forgetfulness of God and hatred of man, adores abjectly the idol of flesh which devours it, and feels itself abjectly dying.

III.

THE PROPHECIES.

ONLY one people or nation, escaping from this natural condition of degradation and ignominy, adored the true God, possessed a legitimate priesthood, and practised a holy worship. These were the only people who believed in the immortality of the soul—the Jewish people, reserved to furnish the flesh of the Incarnate Word. By dint of chastisements and miracles, God had plucked from their heart the growing bud of idolatry. Indifferent observers of the divine law, inclined to misconstrue it, they were still zealous guardians of it. They transgressed it, they did not abjure it; and this was enough to elevate them morally far above all other peoples and nations, without even excepting the Romans, who were their proud oppressors and their masters. Under the protection of the Temple, man was a man, a son of Abraham, a subject of the Most High. Equitable regulations protected his liberty, guarded his dignity, maintained him in the possession of his inheritance. Ceremonies at once religious and national instructed him in the history of his fathers and that of his religion. If he wished to walk in the way of the divine commandments, the strength of holy prayer continually elevated his heart;

he offered up pure sacrifices, he did works of penance and justice; he awaited the accomplishment of the long-expected promise, knowing that a Redeemer would be born for him of the race of David, Son of Abraham, and that he would see the God of his ancestors in the land of the living.

This God of Abraham, who was to send forth the Redeemer, has revealed to us some of his high and holy names: He is who is—the Lord of Lords—the All-Powerful Protector of the weak and the orphan, who created the world, who gives life and conquers death. Lowly Palestine was more learned than Athens and richer than Rome; for already she, in a certain manner, knew and possessed God.

Despite terrible vicissitudes, all occasioned by their transgression and announced by their prophets, Israel, the people of God, had tasted long periods of repose. The traditions of the golden age, seen in vague beginnings in other histories, formed in the Jewish history certain and recent epochs. Since the return from the Babylonish captivity up to the Roman domination, Judea, rather protected than enslaved, mistress of her worship, perfectly undeceived as to the worship of idols, and preserved from false prophets, had enjoyed four centuries of honorable peace. During those four ages, Greece passed from the Persian war and the defeat of Xerxes to the victory of the Consul Mummius, where she died; Carthage saw her last day; the history of Rome was full of the blood that flowed from Tarquin to Marius. The peace of Israel, wherein each, according to the gracious expression of the Scripture, lived happily under his own vine and fig-tree, was not notably interrupted, save by the short and glorious war of the Machabees, the last heroes, and almost the last

priests, of that people whose incomparable destinies are not yet completed.

Strange people, truly immortal, founded by God, instructed by God, cared for by God, who also received directly from God all their laws and all their great men; and who, having separated themselves from God, perished without dying and without disappearing! Guilty of a crime as unheard of as their privileges, object of a chastisement unheard of, dragging along a living death under the arms of the cross to which they nailed the living God, the Jew erred amid light like others amid darkness, blinded by the very torch that ought to have been his guide; but the faithful promises he obstinately rejects pursue him, they overtake him, and he will die to live again, ennobled by all humanity.

In the bosom of this people is to be accomplished, at the moment announced five hundred years before by one of its last prophets, an event the most important that the world ever witnessed or that heaven has ever seen. On earth the reparation of the first creation is to be effected; and this reparation requires a new and more perfect creation, since the degraded and outlawed creature, re-established in his primeval state, shall be honored by a participation in the Divinity. In heaven was to take place what we might dare to call a change of the Unchangeable, an enlargement of the Infinite. "The mystery [of the redemption] concealed from all eternity in God, who created all things," is to be manifested to men and angels, to become the faith and salvation of the human race, the admiration of angels, the perfection and glory of God. By this mystery the earth, whereon God was about to descend, should be an enlargement of heaven, a new heaven, in which God dwells in a manner more divine than that in which he

dwelt before in the highest heavens; and the heaven to which human nature is to ascend, indissolubly united to the divine nature, shall be enriched with an adoration hitherto unknown. Heaven had a God adored, and it will have a God, an adorer, clothed with humanity, as the most signal of the divine attributes. It will behold around this God the cortége of pious souls—a terrestrial harvest that the Son of God garnered to be eternally the prize of his victory and the triumph of his love.

This event is the establishment of fixed and definite religion, the ransom of humanity. Although it had pleased God to execute it in a manner which surpasses infinitely all that humanity could hope for and even comprehend, nevertheless the outward world itself and all the Gentiles had a long and lively presentiment of it. We find at the bottom of all the traditions the type, more or less altered, of the Messiah, the dogma of the necessary redemption, which could not be performed but by an innocent man. The conscience of the human race at least renders this homage to innocence, disdained and often hated though it was. The expectation of this divine succor, faith in the superabundant merits of the innocent One, is a universal inheritance. Admirable proof that the human family sprang from the same cradle!

Grief for lost wealth, sorrow for disinheritance and dispersion, produced an abundance of legends. The legendary Messiah, colored by the character of each family of peoples, nationalized and materialized, obscured and disfigured the true Messiah. In the depth of the soul there is an echo to the saying of Moses, "Hear, O Israel! the Lord thy God is One." And as this idea of the unity of God, always subsisting, remained, nevertheless, suppressed and depraved in the

fables of polytheism, so the idea of the Messiah was everywhere enveloped in dark clouds of error. It was requisite that the Messiah should come and that they should not acknowledge him; it was requisite that the redemption should be an effort and a conquest; it was necessary that Christ should suffer, that the innocent one should bear the pain of the guilty. This was necessary in order that man might be redeemed, and that justice might be done toward the prince of this world, from whom the divine mercy snatched his prey; and that all foretold might come to pass.

Among the Jews it seemed that nothing that concerned the Messiah could become obscure. Depositaries of the promises, they did not insult him by any doubt or any forgetfulness. They believed their fathers and Moses, to whom God had spoken by miracles. Since Moses, instructed in all things, neither the Spirit of God nor miracles were silent. The promise, renewed, affirmed, developed, as it were without intermission, resounded in all the prophets, lived in all the great men. The Holy Scripture is full of the Messiah. The revelations announce him; events and historical personages foretell and typify him; all his traits are described; the day of his coming is clearly pointed out; the circumstances of his birth, his life, his death, are marked in detail, and even with minuteness. The Jews, says an historian of the Church, possessed his very signature: God had taken four thousand years to write it. And at length, when he appeared, the voice of heaven, of earth, and of hell, John the Baptist and Pilate, the angels and the devils, thunder and miracles, all cried out: Behold him! There he is! *Ecce Agnus Dei! Ecce Homo!*

The Jews (but not all of them) disowned him; they

are yet unmindful of him. But in disavowing him they admit that they expected him; and their peculiar fate, which they could not remedy, and which the world was not able to complete, being also foretold, attests that He who is come is also he who was to come. The unbelievers of new generations, as ungrateful as the Jews, and less blinded, ignore this brilliant proof of their common folly. Embarrassed by the testimony of the prophets, at one time they eschew those great documents and Hebraical history; at others they treat them as reveries, as wild fancies artfully interpreted. The entire life of a people is rendered suspicious, in defiance of the most certain and authenticated monuments the world could have produced. And this is done for the purpose of putting out of sight the very first page of the history they pretend to write. What an avowal of this Godhead, over which so many veils must be thrown, and which pierces them all for ever!

To speak correctly and truly, the history of Jesus Christ has no commencement, nor will it have an end: "In the beginning was the Word. Of his reign there shall be no end." But, even in the order of his temporal manifestation, Jesus neither commences in the crib nor does he end on the cross. He proceeds from the creation of man to the consummation of destined humanity—to the last judgment. The Christ was, he is, and he will be. When the slime of the earth, fashioned by the hands of God, received the breath of God, and became a living flesh united to an immortal soul, here and then commences the temporal life of Jesus with the life of the Church, according to the saying of St. Epiphanius: "The beginning of all things is the holy Catholic Church." There the historian com-

mences, if he does not entirely wish to betray his God, who is truth, and men, who stand in need of truth. All the evangelical demonstrations contain, with reason, this history of Christianity before the Christ. Let us pay attention to a short summary of it.

After the fall, at the moment when driven out of Paradise, Adam and Eve, punished, not cursed, understood this word of God addressed to the serpent, organ of the spirit of darkness, who had counselled disobedience, and who had triumphed: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." These are the words which the ancient Jews have always applied to the Messiah. "It was," says Bossuet, "by this divine germ, or by the woman who should bring forth this germ, that the ruin of the human race should be repaired, and the power of the prince of this world be destroyed."

Abraham humbly and faithfully obeys God. Through obedience he quits his country to go into a land God had pointed out to him. And God said to him: "I will cause to issue forth from you a great people, and I will render your name wonderful, and you shall be blessed, and all the people shall be blessed in thee." Soon after God puts him to another trial. He demands of him the sacrifice of his only son, born when Sarah was very old and a long time barren. Abraham nevertheless obeys; the victim is tied; he is about to be immolated. God arrests the stroke: "By my own self have I sworn, saith the Lord; because thou hast done this thing, and hast not spared thy only begotten son for my sake: I will bless thee, and I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand that is by the sea-shore: thy seed shall possess the gates of their enemies. And

in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice."

The same promise is renewed in the same terms to Isaac, son of Abraham. Jacob, son of Isaac, saw in the dream of the mysterious ladder, whose foot was placed on the earth, and whose top touched the heavens—"angels of God ascending and descending"—a figure of the reconciliation of heaven with earth, through the incarnation of the Word, and the Lord said unto him: "I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: The land wherein thou sleepest, I will give to thee and to thy seed. . . . And in thee and thy seed all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed."

Jacob, near to his death, foretold the destinies of his children. He speaks of Juda, and instantly cries out: "The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from his thigh, till he come that is to be sent, and he shall be the expectation of nations."

Having related these promises, which he could equally have known by tradition, at that time not far removed, or by divine revelation, Moses is filled with the Holy Ghost, and predicts in his turn the Liberator of whom he was the true and imposing type: "And the Lord said to me: They have spoken all things well. I will raise them up a prophet out of the midst of their brethren like to thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak all that I shall command him. And he that will not hear his words, which he shall speak in my name, I will be the revenger." Of all the prophets who have appeared after Moses, none has been like him, except Jesus Christ, who surpassed him in everything.

The prophets succeed each other, and traits more and more precise foreshadow Him "who is about to

come." Micheas salutes the humble Bethlehem, where first he will see the light; David speaks of him as if he were present, or speaks of him as if actually contemplating him; Habacuc is overjoyed in Jesus, the Saviour-God; Isaias declares that he will be of the race of Jesse (father of David); that he will be born of a virgin; that he will be called *God with us.* He called him Christ, King of Israel. The name of Son of David was given him by Jeremias and by Ezechiel. Isaias points out the object of his mission, depicts his sweetness, describes his miracles, and beholds him in humiliations, the object of disdain and the contempt and ridicule of men.

David characterized his preaching. Many of the prophets described his Passion, just as it was recounted by the Evangelists. They saw in it the council of Jews, the betrayal of Judas, the agony in the Garden of Olives, the flight of the disciples, the outrages in the house of the high-priest, the thirty pieces of silver given to the Iscariot, the way of Calvary, the crucifixion, the garment for which lots were cast, the gall and vinegar, the injuries endured even on the cross, the prayer for the executioners, the last cry—"My God, why have you abandoned me? Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit."

They descried afar off in his Passion the reprobation of the Jews, the resurrection, and the triumph. Daniel: "The Christ will be put to death, and the people who will have denied him shall no more be his people." David: "I have been in a profound sleep, and I awaked." Isaias: "At that time the branch of Jesse, elevated as a sign of salvation before all the people, will be adored by the nations, and his sepulchre will be glorious." David: "Throughout the entire earth his

miracles will be remembered, and it will be converted to the Lord, and the immense family of nations will be in adoration before him. . . . for the entire posterity yet unborn will be declared to belong to the Lord. And the heavens will announce his justice to the people yet unborn, to the people whom the Lord has made." Malachias: "From the rising to the setting of the sun, my name is great among the nations, and they will sacrifice me in all places, and they will offer to my name an oblation all pure, because my name is great among the nations, says the Lord, the God of armies." And there the prophets are silent to the coming of John the Baptist, the Precursor, who pointed him out living, "Behold the Lamb of God."

There is yet another general prophecy, and not less striking than the ardor wherewith the prophets sigh for the Messias. Love had never sweeter or more penetrating accents: "Lord," says Jacob, "I will live on the expectation of your salvation"; "Lord," says Moses, "I implore thee send down him whom you are bound to send"; "Arouse your strength," says David, "and come and save us"; "Hasten the time, hasten the end," says Ecclesiastes, "that men may recount your wonders"; "Ye heavens, drop down dew, rain down the Just One, and let the earth open up and bring forth its Saviour."

The names and titles which they give him, the images under which they represent him, express this same love and prophecy again. The Patriarch Jacob calls him the "Desired of the Eternal Hills"; the Prophet Aggeus, the "Desired of all the Nations"; the Prophet Isaias, "God with us," the "Father of the future world," the "Prince of Peace." Isaias compares him to the gentle and fertilizing dew which be-

dews the earth and ascends to heaven. Osee says his uprising is like the morning sun; "for," says an interpreter, "as the aurora is but a half-sun which is momentarily becoming more luminous, till it bursts out in its majestic effulgence, so the infant Jesus grows exteriorly in wisdom and grace before God and men; and as the light of the morning is very pure and very agreeable, and very mild to men, fatigued by the darkness of a long night, so the birth of Jesus Christ is the mildest, most precious aurora that comes to delight humanity, plunged for four thousand years in the regions of death."

Behold, among many others, a few traits of the character of the Messias, dictated by God to the prophets, so that he might become known to Israel and to the world. Without doubt all that regarded him was not equally clear, and could only receive from himself its full and perfect light; and doubtless even all the Jews, congregated in great numbers at Rome and throughout the empire, did not understand in the same degree what might have been understood even at that time. He was known well enough to wake up the traditions that lay dormant in the bosom of very remote history; to cause more rays of light to penetrate the Gentiles than their sages wished to receive of him. We now know how it is whence came the idea to Socrates, so strange, of the Just One hated and nailed to the cross; we now comprehand how Plato and Cicero got those sublime ideas touching the divinity and the immortality of the soul; and of what voices those presentiments of the people were the echoes, the supernatural predictions, announcing the King who established himself in Judea,

the wondrous Babe who changed the course of things, and established a new order.

For us, who came in the order of time, God has manifested to us the fulness of those wonders; we can compare the original to the portrait executed in advance, and the portrait appears to us so much the more finished. A writer ingeniously brings out the miraculous nature of this divine work: "Figure to yourself an excellent statue formed of many pieces, inlaid and chiselled by many sculptors at divers times; the one commences the head at the first age of the world; the other forms the body a thousand years after; another comes afterwards who makes an arm; another a foot, then another a hand. Each one makes part of it, so that not one of those learned masters knows anything of the work of his companions; and, nevertheless, putting all together, you will find the true form and figure of the Messias; that this statue, made a long time before his birth, represents him in every particular just as he was when he conversed among men. You would say those prophets always lived with him, that they acted in concert, not only among themselves, but with the Evangelists, so great is the relation between what the latter recounted as passed and what the former predicted as about to happen."

This harmony has been clearly perceived. Indeed, and in order to avoid seeing it, some *savants* have boldly plunged themselves into the ridiculous. They have said that many prophecies have been introduced or interpolated; and, as this invention gave them small chance of keeping up the falsehood, since the Old Testament has a certain fixed date, many centuries anterior to Christ, others have explained the mystery by advancing that the Gospel had been manufactured

from the prophecies. Later historians circle as much as they dare around this system, and the science of negation springs from it. But this system does not procure for them any great advantages, many of the prophecies of the Old and New Testament not having received their fulfilment until a long time after the nearest epoch wherein it could be possible to place the Gospel story. It must be avowed that these falsifiers, if they were learned enough to have conceived their Christ from the model prophecies, have moreover been themselves prophets.

Such objections are shameful. Let us lay them aside, and recall the last prophecy given by God to compel incredulity to shelter itself in unreasoning denial. At a distance of fifteen hundred years the prophet Daniel fixes the very year, and probably the very day, of the advent of the Messiah.

"During the captivity [of Babylon] Daniel saw in order, at different times and under various figures, four monarchies under which the Israelites were obliged to live. He marked them by their proper characters. We see rushing along like a mighty torrent the empire of Alexander, king of the Greeks. Through its fall we behold another empire established, less than his and weakened by its divisions; it is that of his successors. We behold coming forth at last in all its grandeur the 'reign of the Son of Man.' By this name you acknowledge Jesus Christ; but this reign of the Son of Man is also called 'the reign of the saints of the Most High.' All peoples are subject to this great and pacific kingdom; eternity is promised to it, and it must be the only one whose power will never pass away to any other empire. God clearly discovers to Daniel when this Son of Man shall come, this Jesus so

long desired, and how he will accomplish the work committed to him—that is to say, the redemption of the human race. Whilst Daniel was occupied with the captivity of his people in Babylon, and the seventy years it pleased God to detain them therein, amid the sighs and invocations he poured forth to God for the deliverance of his brethren, he is suddenly elevated to the highest mysteries. He sees another number of years and another deliverance far more important. Instead of the seventy years predicted by Jeremias he sees seventy weeks, commencing from the ordinance of Artaxerxes, about the twentieth year of his reign, to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. Here is pointed out, in precise terms, at the end of these weeks, the remission of sins, the eternal reign of justice, the entire accomplishment of the prophecies, and the anointing of the Holy of Holies. Christ must assume his charge and appear as conductor of the people after sixty-nine weeks. After sixty-nine weeks [for the prophet repeats it] the Christ will be put to death; he will die a cruel death. He will be immolated on the cross to fulfil the mysteries. One week is marked out among others—it is the last, the seventieth; it is that wherein Christ will be immolated, wherein the covenant will be confirmed, and in the middle of which offerings and sacrifices shall be abolished—without doubt, through the death of Christ, because it is in consequence of the death of Christ that this change is marked. After this death of Christ and the abolition of sacrifices we behold only horror and confusion; we behold the destruction of the holy city and of the sanctuary, a people and a general who come to destroy everything, the abomination in the temple, the last, irremediable desolation of a people ungrateful to their Saviour.

"These weeks, reduced into weeks of years according to Scriptural usage, make four hundred and ninety years, and lead us precisely from the twentieth year of Artaxerxes to the last week—a week full of mysteries in which Jesus Christ, immolated, put an end by his death to the sacrifices of the law, and fulfilled its types and figures.

"The learned make different calculations to make this time quite exact. There is nothing surprising in that, since there is found some uncertainty in the dates; and a few years on which they were able to dispute about a reckoning (four hundred and ninety years) would never make an important question. God has decided the difficulty, if there were any, by a decision which admits of no reply. A manifest event places us beyond and above all the subtilities of chronologists; and the total ruin of the Jews, which followed a little after the death of our Lord, demonstrate to the most short-sighted the fulfilment of the prophecy."*

The weeks of Daniel reach to their term, and already the sign indicated by Jacob strikes every eye. The sceptre is departed from Juda. On the throne of David, Herod, a stranger to the royal blood, and even to the blood of Israel, reigns a tyrant by the favor of the Romans. The policy of Herod embellishes the temple and dishonors the priesthood. He has put up to public auction the sovereign pontificate. Alternately changed, established, deposed, by the prince or by the Roman governor, the high-priest is but the ephemeral creature and the sport of these intruded powers. Religion declines amid the pomp of ceremonies. The sects become numerous, and fill with bitter con-

* Bossuet, *Dis. on Univ. History.*

tests the city, the schools, and even the interior of the temple. The Sadducees, rich, unbelieving, cynical, inculcate contempt of the law. The Pharisees, full of pride and hard-heartedness, outrage it in another manner, by overloading it with insupportable practices, overpowering to the weak and odious to reason; the Essenians, imposing on themselves the rules of an austere life, chain legitimate liberty, but in compensation they free themselves from the precepts, reject the traditions, and pretend to honor God without offering sacrifice. Great immoralities follow from this disorder of minds—sure sign that those doctrinaires are not ignorant. In the hearts of the just and the wise the presentiment of a catastrophe is mingled with the certainty of expectation.

All are awaiting it. As regards the Messias there are no unbelievers; but, at the same time, mostly all lose by degrees a true notion of the divine embassador. National pride contributed thereto no less than sectarian spirit. The domination of the Romans, though relatively moderate, exasperated a people who were not without reasons for esteeming themselves above their arrogant masters. Besides their rapacity and cruelty, they were reproached for their sacrilege. Their insolence had oftentimes violated religious usages. The Messias was therefore especially expected as their avenger. The Jews accustomed themselves to believe that the Desired of nations would come with an army, terrible and triumphant, to satisfy their cupidity, and to substitute them as the masters of the world. Thus in those hearts, turned towards the earth at the very time the light was about to dawn, a darkness arose thicker than had been their night. The Messias will say, "Blessed are the pure of heart";

and those only will see him who will ask, not their kingdom, but his.

However, peace reigned in Judea, as it did everywhere else. Augustus had subdued all seditions in Rome, all revolts in the world. The doctrinal tumults of Jerusalem, quelled by a sense of expectation, troubled not this general state of tranquillity. No longer was any party politically formidable at Jerusalem. This was a rare instance in history. Rome possessed a hypocritical temple among those she raised up—the Temple of Peace, whose portals remained open as a continual form of prayer during the war, to recall banished peace. But from Numa to Augustus, seven centuries, the Temple of Peace had been closed but twice, and then but for a short time. However, to demonstrate at what price might alone can pacify, twice again the homicidal hand of Augustus was pleased to close the dreadful portals, or rather Augustus had clogged them up with the dead bodies of the citizens. They were reopened, and he once more closes them; and to do this he employs the sword of Tiberius. By his wars in Germany Tiberius becomes the enactor of what one may call the first evangelical fact — he makes the din of arms cease, and in the midst of the silence God whispers forth the word of the true and eternal peace. The empire commences to accomplish the designs of God. Henceforth, whether it likes it or not, it can no longer act any other part. The deeds of war, the only resounding events of antiquity, are everywhere silent; it has been predicted the earth would enjoy peace at the hour to which we now approach. Hour of joyful song, hour of triumphs! At Rome, Horace and Virgil sing at the feet of the conquerors, Tiberius and Augustus; in Judea, beneath

the crib wherein reposes a poor, new-born Infant, celestial voices, heard only by a few shepherds, are about to intone the summary of the eternal Gospel: "Glory to the Most High God, peace to men of good-will!"

This was a solemn hour for all nature. In the vast firmament the stars have not deviated from their course; there was nothing to repair; no perturbation shook those inviolable kingdoms from their regularity. Nevertheless, there is a circumstance about to signalize the advent of the new Adam, of the new Moses, of the new Josue, of the Man whom the demons, and the angels, and the wind, and the sea, and the planets, and all created things are to obey. This circumstance was the universal jubilee of the planets. All at this moment had accomplished their revolutions, and held themselves ready for labor or rest; all, obedient, set out again for a new course, the same as the day on which the Word of God having called them from nothing, each one by his name, each one answers, "Behold, here I am," and takes the route which has been marked out for him.

He who has created the world is about to appear, living our life in the infirmity of our flesh. It is the God whom we seek, it is the Man who is going to manifest himself. But the Man manifests himself only to raise us up to God. We will have no difficulty in acknowledging him. However, let us ask of him a good-will.

Jesus is now no more concealed or disguised; he has passed through the world in infirmity; he now dwells in glory. But for nineteen centuries this Sun, always more brilliant, encounters blindness and darkness more obscure. Such is the mystery of human liberty; in the presence of evidence it preserves the

merit of believing: it has the dreadful power of denying. If, having conspired to remain in darkness, we have not the desire to depart from it, let us ask the aid of grace. Our reason is subject to troubles which the intellect cannot formulate, nor divine, nor approach. Prayer obtains grace; grace brings with it light and truth. Let us pronounce the powerful words which the Holy Ghost has suggested to us to conquer ourselves and to overcome God, as the mother suggests to the guilty child the word which the father requires before pardoning so much ignorance and obstinacy. Let us not be so headstrong against the divine mercy; let us not refuse salvation. We can always say: "Lord, grant I may see." We always believe enough, and always little enough, to give us cause to repeat that word addressed to Jesus: "I believe, Lord; help my unbelief."

BOOK I.

THE PROLOGUE OF THE GOSPEL.

CHAPTER I.

NAZARETH—BETHLEHEM—THE JORDAN.

ZACHARY the priest, and his wife Elizabeth, both just and irreproachable before God, had no posterity, nor did they expect any, on account of their very advanced age, and because Elizabeth was barren. One day, as Zachary, selected by lot, exercised his office in the Temple, the angel of the Lord appeared to him, and told him that his prayer was heard; that Elizabeth would present to him a son, whom he would call John. The angel added that this son should be great, filled with the Holy Ghost in his mother's womb, and would walk before the Lord with the power of the prophet Elias, to prepare mankind to receive the Holy One.

Zachary doubtless did not ask a favor which he considered impossible to obtain, and confined himself to prayer for the coming of the Messias. He was frigh-

tened, not having understood the announcement of the angel, and did not believe him. The angel reproached him for his incredulity, and declared to him that God, in order to punish him, would render him mute till the accomplishment of the thing predicted; and Zachary departs from the Temple pale and voiceless. His appearance made known that he had had a vision. Elizabeth conceives. Humbly retired, she gives thanks to God, who took away from her the opprobrium of her barrenness.

Six months after, the Angel Gabriel, the same who appeared to Zachary, was sent by God to a virgin of the race of David, who remained at Nazareth, in Galilee. She was called Mary. Sweet, tender orphan, she had been brought up in the Temple. A little while after the high-priest, or, according to others, those who adopted her, betrothed her to Joseph, a just man, much older than she was, and, like her, of the blood of David. Joseph worked for a living; his occupation was that of a carpenter. Mary was then fourteen years of age.

The angel presents himself before this virgin, saying to her: "I salute you, O full of grace! Thou art blessed among women, and the Lord is with thee." He then announces to her Him who would be born of her, adding that she should call him Jesus—that is, the Saviour.

Accustomed, as it appears, to the vision of angels, but not prepared for the solemnity of such a message, the humble daughter of David is troubled. She doubts not, like Zachary. Her prudent response was that she had made a vow to God to remain during her life a virgin, and that she would not nor could not violate it. The angel then informed her how she would become

a mother by the power of the Holy Ghost, and that therefore the Holy One who should be born of her should be called the Son of God. He made known to her "that she whom they called barren" was in the sixth month of her pregnancy—because it was proper that Mary should know before all others the secret of the miraculous conception of the Precursor. Mary, having understood these things, said: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word." And the angel left her.

"Behold the servant of the Lord." In pronouncing this word of humility, the word that accomplished our salvation, Mary was the echo of the incarnate God. By the lips of David, predicting his coming on the earth, he calls himself, not the son of the virgin, but the son of the handmaid: "Ego servus tuus et filius ancillæ tuæ." As soon as Mary is acquainted with the designs of God the mystery of the incarnation is accomplished. "And the Word was made Flesh and dwelt amongst us."

Instructed by the revelation of the angel, and obeying the inspiration of Him who already dwelt in her, the Virgin Mary with haste goes to the mountainous country at Hebron, where Elizabeth dwelt. Jesus was anxious to sanctify his precursor by his hidden presence. On entering the house Mary salutes her cousin. Instantly the child leaps in the womb of Elizabeth, and Elizabeth herself was filled with the Holy Ghost.

Addressing herself to Mary, she cries out with a loud voice: "Blessed art thou among women; and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. And

blessed art thou that hast believed; because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord." Mary bursts forth in this sublime canticle: "My soul doth magnify the Lord: and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour: because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done great things to me: and holy *is* his name. And his mercy is from generation to generation, to them that fear him. He hath showed might in his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble. He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent away empty. He hath received Israel his servant, being mindful of his mercy. As he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever." The term of Elizabeth having arrived, she gives to the world a son. On the day of the circumcision, which was the eighth, the relatives wished to give him the name of his father. Elizabeth demanded that he should be called John, which Zachary, yet dumb, confirmed by writing: "John is his name." At that instant the tongue of Zachary is loosened, and he prophesies and blesses the God of Israel for having been mindful of his mercies toward his people, and for having raised up for them a Saviour of the house of David. And addressing himself to his son, he tells him that he will walk before the Lord to prepare for him the way, so that the remission of sins may be obtained from this rising Sun who is coming to enlighten the darkness and the shadow of death, and to direct our feet in the way of peace.

The rumor of these things is spread throughout the

mountains of Judea, and men say one to another: "What, think you, will this Child become?"

Mary, on her return to Nazareth, remained in silence, relying entirely on her God. And Joseph, instructed in a dream by the angel of the Lord, kept his spouse, whom he had thought of putting away. He knew then that the Son of the Virgin should be called Jesus because he would be the Saviour of Israel. Joseph, just and pious, versed in the Scriptures, knew then that what was going to happen would fulfil the prophecies of Isaias: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and give to the world a son."

There was another prophecy to be accomplished. It was written that the child should be born at Bethlehem of Juda. A pressing circumstance obliged Joseph to quit Galilee and come to this city with Mary, although she was near her confinement. Bethlehem being the place of David, their common ancestor, there they were obliged to have their names recorded for the general enrolment commanded by the Emperor Augustus. Therefore they came to Bethlehem, whilst a throng of strangers flocked to it from Jerusalem, where they were celebrating the feast, and, finding no place wherein to lodge, they sought refuge in a grotto in the field.

There it was in the middle of the night, without suffering any of the pains and sorrows of childbirth—as the sun emits his light, and as the flower sheds its fragrance—that Mary brought forth to the world her first-born and only Son—he whom St. John calls the "only-begotten Son of the Father," and St. Paul "the first-born of God." She wraps him up in swaddling clothes, and places him in a manger. Tradition gathers round this cradle an ox and an ass, whose breath gave warmth to the new-born Babe. Those animals had been led by

Joseph—the ass to serve the purpose of carrying Mary, the ox to be sold and to defray the expenses of the journey. Isaias has said: "The ox knows him to whom he belongs; the ass its master's stable."

The field wherein Jesus was born was the property of the Temple. On it they fattened cattle destined for the sacrifice. Shepherds were there, too, who watched during the night. Suddenly those men beheld an angel encircled by a luminous cloud of heavenly light. The angel told them not to fear, but rather to rejoice; for he came to announce to them a great joy. "To-day," he continues, "in the city of David, a Saviour is born to you, and he is the Christ our Lord. Behold the sign by which you shall know him: You will find an Infant wrapped up in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger." Instantly numerous troops of the heavenly host unite themselves to the angel, causing the air to resound with the song: "Glory be to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to men of good-will."

The shepherds say one to the other: "Let us go over to Bethlehem."

They find Mary and Joseph, and the Child laid in the crib, and they acknowledge the truth of what had been told them. Immediately, having returned to their flocks, they published what they had heard and what they had seen.

Mary lost nothing of those things, and treasured them up in her heart.

Some time after men from the East called Magi, on account of their knowledge, appeared at Jerusalem. They said the King of the Jews had been born, because they had seen his star, and they asked where they could find him, having come to adore him. Their presence puts the whole city in commotion. Herod,

King of the Jews, is quite anxious to speak with them. He was a suspicious, cruel, and deceitful prince. Believing that he was about to have a competitor to his royalty, he enquires diligently where the Christ was to be born. The ancients, scribes, and priests all answer him: "At Bethlehem of Juda." Herod sends off the Magi there, after having besought them to inform him where they had seen the child, in order, said he, that he might be able to adore him. Joyful and confidant, the Magi departed. The star which guided them to Jerusalem, presenting itself again, conducts them to the place where Jesus was. .They found the Child and his mother. Having adored him, they offered him gold, frankincense, and myrrh; then, warned in a dream not to see Herod again, they returned to their own country by another route.

The Judaical circumcision had taken place eight days after his birth. The fortieth day was fixed for the double ceremony of the purification of the mother and the presentation of the Child. Every first-born male, being consecrated to the Lord, should be redeemed with an offering of silver, in memory of the deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The parents of Jesus therefore brought him to the Temple to fulfil the law. At the same moment, urged on by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, a just man, who expected the consolation of Israel, arrives at his side of the Temple. He was named Simeon. It had been revealed to him that he should not die until he saluted the Christ.

Simeon, having seen the child Jesus, took him into his arms, and instantly burst forth in acts of thanks. "It is time," says he, "O Lord! that, according to your word, you would let your servant depart in peace; for behold my eyes hath seen the salvation which

comes of you, the light which is revealed to the nations, the salvation of Israel your people." The venerable old man blesses Mary and Joseph, and, divinely enlightened, he prophesies. Addressing himself only to Mary, he says to her: "Behold this child here present has been born and placed in the world for the destruction and salvation of many in Israel. He will be set up for a sign of contradiction, that out of many hearts the truth may be revealed; and you, his mother, your soul shall be pierced with a sword of grief."

There was there also a prophetess called Anna, daughter of Phanuel. She was a widow, aged eighty-four. Since the death of her husband, whom she had espoused when a virgin, she departed not from the Temple, where she passed the nights and days in prayer and fasting. She also saw Jesus, and she also praised the Lord, speaking of the Child to all who awaited the redemption of Israel.

After these things, all that the law required being executed, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in sleep, and commanded him to flee into Egypt, because Herod sought the Child to put him to death. Joseph obeys without delay; and whilst Jesus thus escapes, Herod, having learned of the departure of the Magi, caused all the male children around Bethlehem up to the age of two years to be put to death. Herod dies some years after this crime. Then, by a fresh warning of the angel, received in a dream like the preceding ones, Joseph brings back the Child into Israel. But because Archelaus, son of Herod, reigned over Israel, he dare not go there, and, always obedient to the divine admonitions, he establishes his dwelling at Nazareth of Galilee. This was the will of God, so that those words might be fulfilled: "I have called my Son

from Egypt"; and elsewhere, "He will be called a Nazarene.

The Gospel relates but one fact more of the infancy of Jesus. At twelve years, age of precepts, his parents conducted him to Jerusalem for the Passover; but, when they were journeying home, he remained in the city for a whole day. Neither Joseph nor Mary perceived his absence, because the men and women travelled in separate bands, and each thought he was with the other. Retracing their steps, in vain they sought him for three days. At length they found him where he ought to be—in the Temple, seated in the midst of the doctors, whom he heard and interrogated, manifesting to them a wisdom that filled them with admiration. His mother said to him: "My son, why have you acted thus with us? Behold, we have sought you quite sorrowful, your father and myself." He answered them: "Why have ye sought me? Did you not know that it was necessary I should be employed about the business of my Father." They did not understand the service or business about which he spoke; but his mother preserved the remembrance of all. Forthwith he follows them to Nazareth, and was subject to them. And he grows in age and grace before God and man.

In the meantime the son of Zachary and Elizabeth had from his infancy retired into the wilderness. He there led a life the most mortified, clothed with sackcloth, praying and fasting; unknown in that solitude, as was Jesus in the obscurity of Nazareth. At the age of thirty years he awaits the order of God for the day of his manifestation. At length, in the fifteenth year of the empire of Tiberius Cæsar, the word of the Lord is made known to John, the son of Zachary, according

to what the prophet had announced: "Behold, I will send my angel before thy face, and he will prepare the way before thee." And elsewhere: "A voice of one crying out in the desert, Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight his paths."

John then commences to preach in the desert of Judea and the country about the Jordan. He baptizes and preaches the baptism of penance, which was to dispose men to obtain the remission of sins. He cries out, "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He chastises severely the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and the impiety of the Sadducees, mingled in the throng that flock to him. "Ye brood of vipers, who has taught you to flee from the wrath of God now pending over ye? Bring forth fruit worthy of penance. Do not say among yourselves you have Abraham for your father, because I say to you of these very stones God can raise up children to Abraham. Now the axe is laid to the root of the tree, and every tree which produces not good fruit shall be cut down and cast in the fire."

The exhortations of John, supported by his holy life and the remembrance of his miraculous birth, made all Judea shudder and quake for fear. From all sides they come in crowds to the preacher of penance. Those vast multitudes, deeply moved, confess their sins, and ask what they must do to receive baptism. John recommends to all the precept of almsgiving. "Let him who has two coats clothe him who has none, and let him who has something to eat nourish him who has nothing." To the publicans, collectors of taxes, he says: "Do not require anything beyond what is commanded." To the soldiers: "Use no violence, accuse no person falsely, be satisfied with your pay."

The people are very soon persuaded that John was

the Christ. He says to them: "I baptize you with water, so that you may do penance; but He who is about to come after me is greater than I am, and I am not worthy to stoop before him to untie the latchet of His shoes. It is he who will baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in his hands, and he will sweep clean his barn floor: he will gather the wheat into his granary, and he will cast the chaff into the fire that shall never be extinguished."

Jesus quits Nazareth to be baptized, and appears before John on the borders of the Jordan, among that throng of sinners who do penance. John, living in the desert from his infancy, could have never before that moment seen the Son of Mary. However, he acknowledges him by an inspiration which a visible sign quickly confirms. He hesitates to baptize, saying to him, "It is I who should receive baptism of you, and you come to me." Jesus answered him, "Do it, nevertheless; it is proper that we accomplish thus all justice." Then John baptizes him. And whilst Jesus was going out of the water, praying, the heavens opened up, and the Holy Ghost, under the form of a dove, descended and rested upon him, and a voice like a clap of thunder burst forth from heaven, "You are my well-beloved Son."

Jesus immediately retires into the desert. He remains there forty days and forty nights, living among the beasts, and suffers himself to be tempted by Satan. Whether the temptation may have lasted the forty days, or whether the Son of God may have permitted it only after this long fast, the Gospel relates three attacks on him in the desert by Satan.

When, therefore, Jesus began to feel the pangs of hunger, Satan says to him, "If you are the Son of God,

command that these stones be changed into bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, Man lives not by bread alone, but by every word proceeding out of the mouth of God." Foiled by this expression of unbounded confidence which Providence expects of man, the enemy wishes in his turn to avail himself of the arm of the Scriptures and of the confidence in God. He transports Jesus to the pinnacle of the temple, and says to him: "If you are the Son of God, cast yourself down; for it is written he has charged his angels to take care of you, and they will bear you in their arms, lest you hurt your foot against a stone." Jesus replied, "It is also written, You shall not tempt the Lord thy God." Vanquished a second time, Satan tries the last assault. He carries him up to the top of a high mountain, and displays before him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. "I will give you all these," said he to him—"the entire power and glory of these empires; because these things are mine, and I can give them to whom I wish. Adore me, and they will be yours." Jesus answered him, "Begone, Satan; for it is written, You shall adore the Lord your God, and serve him alone." Satan, having vainly essayed the temptations, withdrew, and the angels surrounded Jesus, and adored him and served him.

John continues his ministry, and his reputation excites the hatred of the Scribes and Pharisees. They send to him trustworthy persons to learn of him who he was, hoping without doubt to receive such replies as might afford a pretext for his persecution. John openly declared that he was not the Christ. They asked him if he was Elias or some other prophet. He answered no. "Who, then, are you?" say they to him. "What do you say of yourself?" He replies as

he previously had done, "I am the voice of which Isaias speaks—the voice of one who cries out in the desert, Make straight the way for the Lord." They insist: "If you are not the Christ, nor Elias, nor a prophet, why, then, do you baptize with water?" John replies again: "I baptize with water; but there is One in the midst of you whom you know not—he who shall come after me, and who is before me; and I am not worthy to untie his shoe-strings."

The deputies of the Jews interrogated him no more, and John added nothing; but the following day, seeing Jesus passing, he said: "Behold the Lamb of God; behold him who takes away the sins of the world. . . . This is he of whom I have said, There comes after me One who is before me. For he is more ancient than I am. I know him not, but I am come to baptize in water, that the people of Israel may know him." He adds: "I have seen the Spirit descend from heaven in the shape of a dove, and light on him. I did not know him; but he who has commissioned me to baptize with water has said to me, He upon whom you will see the Holy Spirit descend and rest, he it is who baptizes in the Holy Ghost. And I have seen; and I render testimony that he is the Son of God."

The day after, John, being with two of his disciples, saw Jesus again passing, and says: "Behold the Lamb of God." Forthwith the two disciples of John follow Jesus, who was going away. Jesus turns about, and asks them, "Whom do you seek?" "Master," say they to him, "where do you live?" And he answered them, "Come and see." They came and remained. One was John, the son of Zebedee; the other, Andrew, brother of Simon. Andrew said to his brother, "We have seen the Messias." He then led Simon to Jesus,

and Jesus, having cast eyes upon him, says to him: "Thou art Simon, son of Jona; thou wilt be called Cephas—that is to say, Peter."

Such is the prologue of the Gospel reduced to the nakedness of the fact. Nothing can be conceived so simple and so magnificent; and God, if one might dare so speak, could not express less to man, and give at the same time more to God.

God, according to a remark of one of the fathers, can do humble things without prejudice to his nature, whilst man renders himself criminal in attributing to himself the supernatural and divine. Let a king act as a soldier for the salvation of all—it is the work of a king; the little things which save the world are the works of God.

There was once a god-king—a god of the world, according to the spirit of the world, in the world. He was enthroned at Rome; he was called Augustus. He lets Herod reign, whom he well knows; he deposes Tiberius, on whom he had passed sentence. The history of those times are full of those horrible names. Messalinas, Herodias, Drusillas, Agrippinas, Poppæas, surround and bow before those gods of the earth. They have for ministers Narcissuses the Sejanuses.

The court of the God made man is composed of the rarest personages. A few, such as Zachary and Elizabeth, Simeon and Anna, seem to have been preserved from the general corruption to proclaim his entry into life. He comes to increase their number, or rather to create anew their exhausted race. This is his work—the only work worthy of him. Before appearing he concealed himself in the womb of Mary; he sanctifies John in his mother's womb; immortal words greet him, sublime dialogues between the saints of the Old and the

New Law, who are all his saints; prophecies of his reign, which accomplish the prophecies of times past. The chain of love once more links together heaven and earth; Bethlehem throws open again the gates of Eden; heavenly songs announce the reconciliation; miracles abound; nature, divinely energetic, produces unheard-of wonders; all is resurrection and mercy; figures become realities; all these immortal realities are so many types of humanity rejuvenated, so many torches lit up to guide it to the kingdom of God.

Following the fathers, let us read the Gospel differently from those who interrogate it, as the Jews interrogated the Precursor and interrogated Jesus, only to have some pretext to condemn them to death. Jesus, whom they have put to death, is not dead, and the Gospel which they blaspheme will annihilate them. Let them accomplish this prodigy of finding death in the source of life. But let us grasp what is offered us. Let us drink in life.

CHAPTER II.

ZACHARY — ELIZABETH — MARY — JOHN — JOSEPH — THE CRIB — THE SHEPHERDS — SIMEON — ANNA — THE MAGI — HEROD.

ST. LUKE begins by these words, which may seem indifferent: "In the days of Herod, King of Judea." These words undeniably prove that the prediction of Jacob is accomplished. Juda has lost its temporal and warlike royalty. The days of the Prince of Peace are near at hand. Very soon this Desired of Nations, the hope of the last divine instinct that humanity retains, shall appear to the world. The angels are deputed as ambassadors to men. Zachary, in some respects distrustful and incredulous, although just, represents his nation, forsaken and barren. His justice is rewarded far beyond his expectations; his incredulity is punished by loss of speech. Israel has no more prophets, and will have no longer a priesthood until the day wherein, born again of faith, she shall become worthy of a true priesthood, and then she will recover her voice to praise God.

The angel intimates to Zachary the name of the child, his son: "You shall name him John"—that is, he in whom is grace. "He will walk in the spirit and virtue of Elias, . . . so as to prepare a perfect people

for the Lord." For the Mosaic law has produced nothing like his perfection, and the Jewish nation is but the rough draught of the great Christian people.

Zachary is the son of Abia, Elizabeth the daughter of Aaron — flowers of the sacerdotal race. It was right and proper that St. John should be born of that race, in order to proclaim more impressively the new priesthood. The two principal branches of Israel, in John the sacerdotal and in Jesus the royal, are united in the work of the fulfilment.

Elizabeth was barren; Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, wives of the patriarchs, were also barren; not through punishment—for they walked in justice—but that their fruitfulness might display the power of God. Elizabeth was barren in order to show that God is master of all. A virgin may bring forth, since the barren one has conceived.

Freed from the opprobrium of her long sterility, Elizabeth gives thanks. Her legitimate joy seems to enhance the hallowed character of Mary, the prophetess of the beauty of virginity, who had resolved to sacrifice the greatest honor that a woman could obtain in Israel out of love for virginal purity.

The Angel Gabriel ("power of God") is sent to the Virgin. Such was the commencement of the reparation —an angel sent down to the Virgin through the goodness of God; because the commencement of perdition began when the serpent approached the woman through the malice of the demon. Since the divine Restorer of mankind should be born in the flesh, says St. Augustine, he should be born only of a virgin, in order to be unequalled in his birth. The Head should be born of a virgin according to the flesh, whose members are born of the Church—a virgin according to the spirit.

Mary is at the same time both a virgin and a wife—a virgin to be full of grace; a wife to avoid injurious suspicions. The Lord did not wish that we should doubt the honor of his Mother. He did not wish that the Jews should seem to simply persecute the fruit of shame. The law condemned illegitimate births; if he had appeared to carry the least stain of it, how could he be able to say, "I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it"? Finally, this condition of wifehood was calculated to inspire trust in the words of Mary. A mother without being married, she might be supposed to wish to conceal her fault; as a wife, she had no motive for lying, since maternity is the privilege of marriage.

The angel says to her that He who is born of her shall be called the Son of the Most High, and that the Lord will give him the throne of David, his father. When the Holy Ghost reinspired these words, and dictated them to the Evangelist to be spread abroad in the world, Jesus Christ had no throne but the cross. The angel says again: "He will reign eternally in the house of Jacob, and his reign will have no end." Truly, Jesus Christ reigns in the house of Jacob. His kingdom on earth, the visible Church, which shall last as long as the world, was formed at first of those children of Jacob who received his law. The others, having rejected Christ, have thereby cut themselves off. They are no more the true Israel. The Gentiles, called in their place, form but one same people with their faithful posterity. Jacob is the common stock of the natural and engrafted branches. Thus St. Paul represents him. The people of God is a great tree, whose stem, always subsisting, loses some branches and acquires new ones.

Isaias, announcing the incarnation of the Word, exclaimed with admiration, "Who will recount his generation?" Enlightening Mary, who objects to him her design of remaining a virgin, the angel says to her: "The Holy Ghost will come upon you, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow you; and for this reason: the Holy One who shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God." According to the commentary of Bossuet, the Most Pure only unites himself to purity itself. He conceives his only Son without sharing his conception with another; he does not wish, when he causes him to be born in time, to share him with any but the Virgin. The Heavenly Father extends in Mary his eternal generation. Of the blood of the Virgin he will compose a body so pure that the Holy Ghost only can form it. At the same time this divine Spirit will breathe into it a soul which, having but himself for its author, without the concurrence of any other cause, must be holy—holy by his nature, not a holiness derived and accidental, but substantive and essential—*sanctum;* that which only can be properly applied to God, who alone is all holy by his nature. . . . Behold, then, a new dignity created on earth—the dignity of the Mother of God. And such is the reward of virginity; she only could become a Mother of God.

With Mary a new beauty appears in the world. This loveliness is the virgin, the mother, the saint, the martyr; she is the beloved one; she is yet something greater—she is the perfection of humility. She possessed all virtues, and united them in perfect harmony in such a degree that the beauty of her countenance was but the expression of her sanctity rendered visible to all who beheld her. The Spirit of God pro-

phesied of her throughout the entire Scriptures. She is the gate, always closed, that Ezechiel saw, and which permits none to pass through but the Lord; she is the temple of Solomon embellished outwardly with the white marble of purity, inwardly with the purest gold of charity. She is the rod of Aaron, which, deposited in the tabernacle, blooms forth miraculously into fruit and flowers. She is the fleece of Gedeon, only watered with the heavenly dews, whilst the earth all around remains dry. She is the vessel of gold that keeps the manna; the ark of the covenant which contains, not the tables of the law, but the Author of the law. She it is who was announced to the serpent and who will crush his head. She is the new Eve, all pure and invincible, preserved from sin and victorious over sin. She has the same part in our salvation that Eve has had in our destruction. Through her the new Adam, Jesus Christ, is about to receive a new generation, like that of the first, which was but its figure. With the divine Word enclosed in her womb, she will be the holiest temple the earth can ever behold. But the temple is the place of sacrifice! The angel says to Mary that she "has found grace"; she has found it only to offer it to the world. That which Eve had lost Mary found again; the sons of Eve ask it back. The cross will restore it to them.

The lovely scene of the visitation, where Elizabeth, John Baptist, and Mary prophesy under the influence of the hidden God, contains, says Bossuet, a profound evelation of the economy of grace and the manner in which he acts differently on souls. We see in Elizabeth the humble astonishment of a soul that he approaches in John Baptist, the burning ecstasy of a soul that he attracts; in Mary, the ineffable peace of a soul that possesses him.

Under the influence of grace, John is already the precursor. Those palpitations admonish his mother of the fact. "The infant that I carry in my womb has leaped with joy." With joy—that is, with perfect knowledge of God's bodily presence. And such is the abundance of the benediction and the splendor of the light bestowed that Elizabeth repeats to Mary the word of the angel, "You are blessed among women." She goes further: she calls her the Mother of God. And forthwith she exalts faith in the same terms which Jesus will employ: "Blessed art thou, who hast believed." Jesus afterwards says the same to Peter, and, after his resurrection, to Thomas. The Gospel has but one language—the same on the vigil of Bethlehem as on the morrow of Calvary.

Elizabeth again says to Mary: "The fruit of thy womb is blessed." The patriarch had prophesied: "The odor of my son is like to that of a sweet-smelling earth." Elizabeth prophesies the sweet fruit of the cross, destined to nourish souls and destroy in them the effects of the fatal fruit plucked through the disobedience of the first Eve.

In the entire New Testament we find but seven words of Mary, all very brief and ordered by circumstances. She is mute when Joseph is inclined to suspect her—mute at Calvary. Once only she departs from this reserve, and she chants the glorious *Magnificat*, which St. Ambrose calls the ecstasy of her humility. Bossuet does not dare comment on it. Those who have dared to do so have found the matter so vast that their labor cannot be abridged here. Let us reflect only on this prophetic word: "From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." Nineteen centuries bowed down their heads in veneration, and future ages shall reverently incline their heads, and will say, Amen.

The Jews, in their turn, will reverently bow down their heads in veneration of Mary. They have been, from the beginning to the present, the only ones in the world who could have hated Mary, the Mother of Jesus. It is one of the maledictions which weighs upon them, and one of the heaviest and bloodiest. Mahomet makes God to say: "Because the Jews have not believed in Jesus, and because they have uttered great blasphemies against Mary, we have cursed them." The Mussulman's sceptre still executes the sentence.

The style of the Holy Ghost in the canticle of Zacharias is not less manifest. The holy priest praises God, who has visited his people; points out the accomplishment of the ancient law, and prophesies the graces of the future law. Among the objects of the Saviour's mercy he names Abraham and David, and the fathers of Israel who are dead; for Jesus Christ comes to fulfil the promises which they received—his benediction, going back to ages passed away, at the same time that it is about to extend itself to yet unborn ages, brings deliverance to those who wait in Limbo, as it will cause an abundance of light to shine on those who are seated in the shadow of death. Zachary gives Jesus the name of "Orient," by which name one of the last prophets had designated him: "His name is the Orient, the Morning Sun." Thus at the cradle of the Precursor this man of the temple attests that God has sent down Him who was ordained to come. With the same inspired vision he sees the part his Son will have in the great work of salvation. No human voice could address anything more solemn than those words of Zachary addressed to his son, aged eight days: "And you, helpless babe, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the face of the Lord, preparing the ways

for him, so as to give to his people the knowledge of salvation for the remission of their sins."

The witnesses of John's birth say among themselves: "What do you think will this child be?" Thirty years later Jesus Christ will answer: "There is none born of women greater than John."

Christian humanity, the sure appreciator of moral worth, honors the heroic loveliness of character by which St. John the Baptist is not less the imitator than the precursor of Jesus. His conception and his nativity, his penitential life in the desert, his preaching and baptism, his persecution, his imprisonment, his death, were ordered to prepare for Jesus Christ. All, in him, is conformable to that august resemblance. He perfected and accomplished it by his fidelity, and thus he became the admirable type of all the saints. The salutary boldness of his piety and virtue oblige the proud, even, to come and listen to the hard sayings which condemn them; he preaches penance to the purple, bowed down before his ragged garments. His humility equals his courage. More than all other mortals, says Bossuet, he has sacrificed his own glory to the Son of God. When all the world greets him as master, he proclaims that he is but the servant. Glory does not seduce him, and death does not make him tremble. He will say to Herod, "Non licet," and to his disciples, in pointing out Jesus, yet unknown, "Behold the Lamb of God." Those who follow him will come to learn of him with a jealous feeling that the ignorant and the learned will flock to this new master. He will reply to them that this Great Being must grow in your thoughts, and self disappear from them. Such is, after the almost divine Mary, the best work of the grace of Jesus. John will be the first voice of the Word; he

terminates the line of the patriarchs and commences that of the apostles; the first who will announce the kingdom of heaven. He will behold first the Blessed Trinity manifesting itself over the waters of Jordan he will point out first Him whom the prophets have announced; he first will be martyr, prophet, patriarch, hermit, witness of Jesus Christ.

When Mary returns to Nazareth, another personage manifests himself. It is Joseph—a creation not less marvellous of the grace of Jesus. The Gospel has but one word whereby to praise him: "He was just." The charge with which he was honored and the manner in which he fulfilled it demonstrate the abundance of this righteousness. He receives of God, for the sake of Mary and Jesus, the affection, watchfulness, and authority of husband and father. He is formed after the model of Mary; like her, son of David; virgin, like her; humble, like her; obedient, full of prudence and courage. He resembles the patriarch Joseph, but surpasses him as much by the perfection of his merits as by the character of his mission: not only chaste, but virgin; not only instructed, but inspired and directed of God. Joseph, son of Jacob, preserves the grain necessary for himself and for the people; Joseph, spouse of Mary, receives the Bread of life and watches over it, protects it for her and for the entire human race. It is said to him, "Take the Child," as if God had addressed to him the word that the prophet addressed to God himself: "To thyself alone belongs the care of the poor." Joseph is the type of the apostles, who carry Jesus Christ into all the universe. Thus St. John Damascene, St. Bernard, St. Hilary of Poitiers, and other fathers and doctors, express themselves. A great servant of God, who lived in our day, penetrates more

deeply into this beautiful mystery. When Joseph, after Mary, draws near to adore Jesus in the crib, it is, says Faber, the shadow of the Eternal Father that rests over the infant, and the temporal birth of the Son of God is completed by this figure of his nativity, without beginning and without end. Joseph was, before the face of Jesus, visibly in the place of the Eternal Father. The human soul of Jesus regarded him not only with the most tender love, but with unspeakable submission. Hence veneration is our dominant feeling towards the gentle Joseph, because of that shade of identity between him and the Father. We cannot describe his sanctity, because we lack the term of comparison. That sanctity, more elevated than that of all the other saints of God, is still of a different kind. Joseph has been an apparition in the world—the apparition of the Eternal and Unbegotten Father. He is gentle and clement; he is poor and obscure; he is passive and docile; and he is, at the same time, an impregnable fortress where the honor of Mary and the life of Jesus were sheltered; hidden like God, full of divine tranquillity, just with a justice tempered by mercy, like that of God. He communicates with God during his sleep, as if his sleep was but the mystical repose of contemplation. First, after Mary, he adores Jesus, and the Infant sanctifies him anew—elevates him to a more eminent sphere of holiness, in order that he may be qualified to be the highest official of God.

Who can picture that moment at the crib when the infant Jesus contemplates for the first time with his human eyes the countenance of Mary? Who can express the joy and respect of those looks turned toward St. Joseph—the man chosen to be called his father, one who is worthy of such glory, one who is worthy to live

more than any other in his affections, and who, we may well suppose, loves him with the deepest love? Jesus, Mary, Joseph—three kingdoms of which God is the only King; three creations, yet one only, through a wonderful union of love; a terrestrial trinity!

In this miserable dwelling, full of incomparable splendors, Jesus, the newly born, just entering into a world that he is to instruct, gives one of the lessons on which he will insist the most. This is the "Egenus et pauper" of the Psalmist; the King who will after a while carry on his shoulders the cross as a mark of royalty; the Man who has known trials and sorrows from his youth. He is also that little Babe of whom Isaias speaks, who knows how to reject evil and choose good. The good he chose is to be born in that stable—first reprobation and condemnation of the luxury and effeminacy which make us slaves; first mark of the power which undertakes to conquer us by disdaining and rejecting those things that we covet most. Behold the incomparable miracle of the Man-God: he is going to subjugate man by restoring to him the strength that sin deprived him of, which man regretted having lost, yet does not care to recover—such is man's perversity that he will not be reinstated. Thus Jesus manifests himself in despised weakness, in hated poverty; it is thus we will love him, and that, turned away from the covetousness and unlawful desires of the earth, we may be drawn to the desire of invisible things.

However, the Divinity is not concealed in such a manner that we cannot see it. That spot is not indifferent, that night has not been selected by chance. Before the mystery of his name had been revealed, Bethlehem—"The House of Bread"—was not without notoriety. There Jacob, returning from Mesopotamia,

stopped to bury his beloved Rachel. There too David built his symbolical tower, which was so dear to him, and which was stamped on his coins. The King of Israel is born in the dominion of his ancestors. A tomb—a pile of ruins—a crib! But he comes to re-establish what was lost, to resuscitate what was dead, and he brought worth and life divine into a world where those among men who pride themselves most on their wisdom envied the lot of the brute creation.

He is born in the middle of the "Festival of Lights," the anniversary of the second dedication of the Temple, which they celebrated for eight days, in memory of a miracle which had marked that solemnity. The Festival of Lights was also a feast of nature. Jesus Christ, our Saviour, the light of the world, is born at the moment in which the night of idolatry is profoundly dark, and the day of his nativity (25th of December) is found to be that wherein the material sun, overshadowed and almost extinguished in its struggle with darkness, is reanimated and prepared for conquest. On that day, says St. Gregory of Nyssa, "the darkness begins to diminish, and the light begins to increase, and the night is ebbing beyond its frontiers. This does not happen fortuitously at the moment wherein He who is the life of humanity casts an effulgence of divine light over the world. Nature, under this symbol, reveals a secret to those who are capable of understanding it. Short-sighted science expected to have profoundly shaken the foundations of the Christian religion by discovering among the ancients the existence of a festival of the sun at the winter solstice. In their eyes, religion can no longer pass for divine when the usages of its worship offer analogies with the phenomena of a world created

nevertheless for Christ and for his Church. But we find the confirmation of our faith even where our adversaries think they perceive its ruin." *

At the moment of his birth the King claims his people. An angel of heaven invites the shepherds to go to the manger. They are the first called, because the Lord came to "console the poor in their sufferings and the wretched in their woes," and because they are simple people. Plato ridicules the sages for having made themselves understood by the common people; but the Lord loves converse with, and instruction of, the simple-minded.

The angel said to them: "There is born to you this day a Saviour"—*Vobis*, to you and for you! "You will find him, the Infant, in a manger." They come; they contemplate his glorious lowliness. Certainly, neither himself nor his own have undertaken to deceive the world. But those shepherds, those simple-minded people, have read nothing that blinds them to the truth. They adore, and they return glorifying God. Peace be to men of good-will!

Simeon expects the Salvation of Israel. He was found worthy, and he was aware of it, not to die until he should salute the Saviour. The learned believed the time had come; the saints doubted it not. Simeon is inspired to go to the Temple. He hastens, and sees Him whom he awaits. He sees him among the poor. What does it concern him? His knowledge is according to God; he has the simplicity of the shepherds. He takes the infant Babe in his arms. He is already in that familiarity that God wishes to establish between himself and the just: he

* Guéranger, *Année liturgique.*

has that foretaste of the Eucharist, and he chants his canticle, which is to resound throughout the entire world till the end of time: "Now, O Lord! let me die in peace, because my eyes have seen thy Salvation." Job reappears in Simeon: "I know that my Redeemer liveth." The holy old man adds that Jesus is given for the "light of the world." Like Zachary and Elizabeth, he prophesies the calling of the Gentiles, and that the benefit of redemption is extended to the human race. John the Baptist is about to speak of the stones out of which God can raise up children to Abraham, and already those elect of Israel, breaking through Jewish constraint, are Catholics.

Anna, the prophetess, comes in her turn. Zachary, the priest; Simeon, the just and wise; Elizabeth, the spouse; Mary, the virgin, have prophesied. Behold, the holy widow is filled with the same divine Spirit. It is written: "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy." All these excellences, all this purity, all those sublime virtues, are united in one and the same rapture of joy, and all those inspired voices proclaim with the angels: "Glory to God, peace to men of good-will."

Now behold the Magi! According to tradition, they were priests and kings, or princes of their people, descendants of the three great races sprung from Noe. By their knowledge, their power, and their number, they represent the human race. They render to Jesus Christ the homage of the priesthood, of the empire, and of the wisdom of nations. It is conjectured that they came from the country of Balaam, where the remembrance of his prophecy remained: "A star shall depart out of Jacob, and the Man shall be born in Israel." They had seen the star, they sought after

the Man—the Man-God, the Man-King. They are the first-fruits of the Gentiles.

Where is the King born? This question agitates Herod and all the doctors of Israel. They are troubled, because they are wicked. They understand not the prophecies: "Rejoice thou, Jerusalem. Behold, thy King comes to thee full of meekness"—"Venit tibi mansuetus." They answer Herod: "The King must be born in Bethlehem." And not one of them goes there: like the workers who built the ark, and who entered not therein. The Scriptures are useless to them, and they show to the Gentiles what they themselves do not wish to see.

How did the Magi recognize that poor, helpless Infant in his wretched home? They did not array themselves against the miraculous. They had the faith which can see, and the love which sees better yet; and, having sought, they must find. And then Mary, the merciful, was there to introduce them: "They find the Child with its mother." We observe a triple confession in the words of the Magi: "Where is born the King of the Jews? We have come to adore him." They acknowledge him Man, King, and God: Man, because he is born; King, that is the name they give him; God, because they come to adore him. The presents they offer speak the same language: to the King, gold; to the God, incense; to the Man, who dies, myrrh—perfume for the sepulchre. The Church consecrates those beautiful symbols, and commands us to offer to Jesus the gold of charity, the incense of prayer, and the myrrh of compassion.

Compassion! it is due to the Son and to the Mother. Here, in Bethlehem, end for Jesus triumphs without bitterness; here end for Mary joys without tears. Be-

hold already the point of the sword of which Simeon spoke to her—the sword which will pierce her heart. Joseph is warned in a dream that Herod seeks the Child to destroy it. He does not ask why this marvellous Child, to whom are promised so many noble fortunes, must fly to escape death. The Gospel is a lesson of obedience: Mary is Mother through obedience; Jesus is born to be obedient, even to the cross; Joseph obeys. Nothing indicates that he could have known the mystery of that flight: to obey is to know. He immediately arises: "He is submissive, and complains not; he departs and goes into Egypt, where he has no acquaintance, without knowing when he will return to his country, to his workshop, and to his poor, humble hut. Jesus dwells not with us for nothing; we must take part in his crosses." But why those crosses? "Was there no other means of saving, except that of flight so precipitate? God does not wish to do everything miraculously, and it belongs to his providence to follow often the ordinary course, which is as much his as extraordinary ways. The Son of God came in infirmity. To conform himself to this state, he has subjected himself voluntarily to trials and encounters common to human life, and by the same dispensation which brought it to pass that, during the time of his ministry, he withdrew himself, he hid himself, to baffle the wiles and secret machinations of his enemies, he was also obliged to seek an asylum in Egypt."* The Scriptures say nothing of his journey to, nor of his sojourn in, Egypt. According to a tradition, when the Holy Family traversed the desert where the Hebrews had wandered, flowers and fruits ornamented suddenly those arid soli-

* Bossuet.

tudes. At least, Jesus himself was the seed of those flowers and those admirable fruits that we will see germinating there when his servants shall come to the desert.

Meanwhile, Herod causes all the children about the country of Bethlehem, up to the age of two years, to be put to death. Herod was the king of the world. Many traits of his cruelty and policy equal that of this massacre. When tyrants fear, they are revengeful; and those who can do what they please are liable to fear everybody. Jeremias said: "Cries are heard in Rama; tears and wailings innumerable. Rachel mourns for her children, and cannot be consoled, because they are no more." Rachel was interred at Bethlehem. The Holy Ghost attributes to her, in St. Matthew's gospel, those wailings and lamentations of the mothers which re-echoed at the beginning of the Church. Bossuet condemns, with just indignation, those critics who would wish, in order to make certain this belief, that profane historians had mentioned this cruelty of Herod, as well as the others. Our faith depends not on what the negligence or the policy of the historians of the world make them say or not say. Human motives alone were sufficient to hinder St. Matthew from doing injury to his gospel by inserting in it a fact of this kind, if it had not been indisputable. Happy children! whose lives were immolated to preserve the life of the Saviour. Jesus says: "Suffer little children to come to me." How often this word has consoled mothers! If the mothers of Bethlehem had known this mystery, instead of wailings and lamentations we would hear but benedictions and praise. They would have known that their sons were not dead, and that the baptism of their blood had, on the contrary, obtained for them eternal life; and that

where Christ has called the little infants his mercy wishes also to bring their mothers.

Herod is no more; Joseph, always warned and always obedient, quits Egypt and betakes himself to Nazareth. "He shall be called a Nazarene." The word Nazarene contains a great mystery. Nazarene means one separated from the people, consecrated to God, consecrated to penance. Pilate accomplished the prophecies by inscribing this word on the title of the cross. But while Jesus Christ is the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies, his entire life in this world and all his words are the prophecy of future things. Why is he already persecuted? To warn the Church, replies Bossuet. "This King, *whose kingdom is not of this world*," Herod hates from his birth, and bequeaths that hatred to his house. Thus the hatred for the rising infant Church has been perpetuated from prince to prince, from temporal potentate to temporal potentate; thus a twofold persecution has been raised up against the Church, the first bloody, the second less violent, but which nevertheless oppresses her. Tyranny has not lost that odor of Herod.

At the age of twelve years Jesus pronounced the first discourse that the Gospel has preserved for us; he spoke it in the Temple, and it proves his deity. The Gospel prepares us for it when it says that the Child, seated among the doctors, heard them and interrogated them. He is seated among the masters in spite of youthfulness; probably because, after having heard him, surprised at his knowledge, they themselves called him to that rank. To prove his humanity, he listens; to demonstrate his divinity, he interrogates with intelligence; and his answers to questions they put to him, or to

those he himself proposes, excite the admiration of all those who hear him.

His mother, after three days' search, finding him, full of sorrow and grief, says to him: "My son, we have sought you quite sorrowful, your father and myself." He answers with some apparent severity, "Why did you seek after me? Did you not know I must be about the things that are of my Father?" She speaks of Joseph, and he speaks of God. Mary herself does not comprehend him. If they had comprehended and understood; if they had known all that the Son of God was, how could they have withstood that majesty? It was necessary that that divine majesty should be twice veiled even to Mary. But the reverence of Joseph sufficiently showed how much of the divine appeared on this occasion through the human nature of Christ. "And Mary preserved all this in her memory"; and, as it is again written, "She meditated this in her heart." She learns detachment from the world; she makes her novitiate for the day of the cross. This recital is from St. Luke. We love to represent to ourselves St. Luke receiving knowledge of those details from the mouth of Mary.

The Gospel adds: "Jesus went down with Mary and Joseph, and he was subject to them." This is one of the words which hold together human society—submissive to paternal authority, submissive in the humblest labors, submissive for thirty years!

Up to the preaching of the son of Zachary we know nothing more of the life of Jesus; only that he dwelt with his parents, and was submissive to them, earning his livelihood by the work of his hands. He did not travel to instruct himself in the famous sciences of the Egyptians and the Greeks. The Jews, astonished

at his wisdom, ask one another if this be not he whom they have seen among them in the humble condition of a mechanic, the son of a carpenter. According to the testimony of St. Justin, he made yokes for ploughs. His heavenly bread was to accomplish the will of his Father; he earned the terrestrial bread by the sweat of his brow. For thirty years his life was one continued sermon of obedience, of humility, and of travail.

There is another word which astonishes us: "Jesus autem proficiebat." How could it be that the Eternal Word, principle of all grace and of all wisdom, could grow and increase or advance in wisdom and grace before God and men? Many fathers have examined this question, and they are truly the men who have understood the great difficulties of Gospel study. According to St. Gregory, those words can signify that the wisdom of which Jesus was the source was daily shed more abundantly on those who heard him, preparing them for the lights of his doctrine. According to St. Thomas, Christ did not wish from his infancy to manifest the fulness of the divinity that was in him, in order to show clearly that the human nature with which he was clothed was not an appearance, but a reality, since he submitted himself to its conditions of feebleness and progressive development.

St. Bonaventure does not fear to cast a glance into that little cottage at Nazareth where Jesus lived submissive to his mother and to his reputed father. There is the great levelling of human pride; there is the life of the poor, with all its disgusts and petty annoyances. Neither preaching, nor controversy, nor miracles—nothing but obscurity. Every day each simply earns his daily bread. Joseph, says the holy doctor, works

at his trade. Our Mother, with needle or spindle in hand, supplies on her part the wants of the house. She performs other womanly offices: she sees to the good order of the dwelling, prepares the repast, waits on her husband and her Son—all this she does without a helper. But why should we say without a helper? Is not He there who is come, according to the expression, *to serve?* Jesus, therefore, serves both her and Joseph. Doubt not that the Son of God aided his mother, and that he attended to the humblest affairs. Yes, yes, let us not hesitate to think so: the cares of the workshop and the cares of the household. And thereby can envy be rooted out of the heart of the poor, and wisdom enter therein, and that humility in every human condition becomes great and glorious in the eyes of the Christian.

CHAPTER III.

The Ancestors of Jesus—The Temptation in the Desert—The First Disciples.

THIS lesson of humility is continued even to the baptism which Jesus came to demand of John. By the baptism of Jesus, says St. John Chrysostom, our sins are remitted; by the baptism of John, the Jews promised to expiate theirs. The baptism of Jesus is a gift; that of John a work of mortification. This is why John hesitates before Jesus, and Jesus says to him, Perform this act; he humbles himself to penance like a sinner; and this is the very pinnacle of justice. Our Lord Jesus Christ accomplishes now "all justice" in doing what will be for the Christian a source of all justice—that is to say, by receiving a baptism the necessity of which no one could ever after call in question. And at length, going down into the waters, he purifies them; he banishes the devil from them; he sanctifies them by the contact of his sacred flesh; he gives them the power of regeneration—"the power of purification," says St. Bernard. He communicates to them the privilege that his flesh has had of Mary, to bring forth nothing but what was pure. He does at the baptism what he will do later at the Pasch. As he will eat the paschal lamb, figure and remembrance, and give us his flesh as pledge of eternal happiness, so he

receives Jewish baptism, an inefficacious ceremony; but gives to us a Christian baptism, the true source of grace. In a word, accepting the law and giving the Gospel, he receives the shadow, and adds thereto the truth.

The Holy Ghost appears under the form of a dove. It was proper that John should see him. Invisible in the substance of his divinity, he has assumed this form because by baptism we ought to become as gentle and simple as a dove; and it ought to render us peaceful like it. The dove is the symbol of reconciliation, of pardon, and of peace. The dove returns to the ark, carrying the olive branch, which announces that the waters of wrath have receded, and that life is re-born on the earth.

It is proper to make a remark here on the two genealogies of our Saviour, presented differently and not at the same place in Christ's history, by St. Matthew and St. Luke. Their divergences, and the different systems proposed to harmonize them, are not the subject of this book. It is sufficient to observe that the genealogy given by St. Matthew, which is properly that of St. Joseph, spouse of Mary, is equally that of the holy Virgin, who, according to the law, could only espouse a man of her house; and that the proper genealogy of Mary, given by St. Luke, makes her, like the other, descend from David.

From the circumstances and the place of each of these genealogies we can draw important instruction.

St. Matthew, commencing with the genealogy, before relating the carnal birth, follows the proper order of all history, and descends from the ancestors to the children, as the Word descended in assuming our flesh. He commences at Abraham, after having first mentioned

David: "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, son of David, son of Abraham." This is an echo of the fourth chapter of the Book of Genesis, entitled "The Book of the Generation of Adam," and a contrast between the new generation which built up and the old generation which destroyed. The list points out David and Abraham, because both received a particular promise. God had said to Abraham: "All nations of the earth shall be blessed in thy race"; and to David: "I will place on thy throne Him who shall be born of thee." Both these ancient ancestors combine in themselves the triple dignity of the Messias—Abraham, priest and prophet; David, prophet and king.

St. Luke places the genealogy after the baptism, and, starting from this regeneration, develops another succession of ancestors. He goes backward from the children to the fathers, omitting the sinful, whom St. Matthew had named; for whoever is reborn in God becomes a stranger to his guilty ancestors, being made the son of God.

In both genealogies the names by their signification prophesy the Saviour by expressing some trait of his character, of his life, of his mysteries; and many personages are at the same the figure of Christ: "Abraham, father of many people"; Isaac—*gladness.* "For as Isaac was born at the extreme old age of his parents to be their joy, less as a child of nature than of benedictions and graces, so Jesus Christ, in later times, was born of a pure mother to be the joy of the universe. The one was born of a virgin, the other of one barren in her old age; both aside from the course of nature. Abraham begets Isaac, as faith begets hope. Jacob, son of Isaac, expresses charity, which embraces

two different lives—the active life, for love of the neighbor; the contemplative life, for the love of God. He is born of Abraham and of Isaac, as charity is born of faith and hope." This is the interpretation of St. John Chrysostom. A great many fathers have meditated on this prophetic character of the genealogy of Christ, and have unravelled its magnificent mysteries. "All things," says St. Paul, "happened to the Jewish people in figures." Bossuet adds, "There is not a page, there is not a word, in the Holy Scriptures that is not full of Jesus."

St. Matthew, writing for the Jews, contents himself with establishing that Christ descended from David and Abraham. St. Luke, writing after him for all people, having become the companion and disciple of the apostle of nations, traces him backward to the first man. He passes by Noe, the constructor of the ark, which is a figure of the Church; he passes by Enoch, who, having been snatched from death, proves that Christ could have avoided death, and that he delivered himself up voluntarily to the cross; he arrives at Adam. Thus he commences the genealogy with a son of God, and terminates it with the Son of God—in this sense: that Adam was made by the hand of God. Adam, created at first in figure, is born afterward in reality. Jesus Christ, by whom all things have been made, is truly the father of Adam. He is the Word, who, by putting on humanity, elevates his carnal ancestors even to God. He makes them children of God. Thereby again St. Luke shows that the co-operation of man has nothing to do with the generation of Christ. Adam has a Father who forms him without any germ; he has no mother. Jesus, as man, has a Virgin Mother; he has no father.

We must remark the last particularity, which is very important. Among the ancestors of Jesus St. Matthew only mentions some women, and all those whom he names are signalized by a stain of sin: two idolaters—Rahab the Chaananite, and Ruth the Moabite; three of bad character—Thamar the incestuous; that Rahab whom we hold to have been the courtesan at Jericho, who received into her house the spies of Israel, and sent them away safe and sound; Bethsabee, an adultress. And this last woman is not called by her name, but by her crimes. "She who had been the wife of Uriah." We find here many deep mysteries. Rahab and Ruth, daughters of infidel people, becoming the daughters of Jacob and the ancestors of the Messias, announce that the Gentiles will have the right to enter the Church. Rahab, espoused of Salmon, son of the chief of the tribe of Juda, notwithstanding her idolatry and her ignominy, separates herself from the hatred of her people. Her name signifies *hunger, extension, an impetuous, rapid movement.* She typifies the Church of the nations, which, espoused to the true heir of Juda and cleansed of her stains, hungers and thirsts after justice, whose reign she will extend upon earth. In the Gospel we rediscover Rahab in the persons of the Samaritan; of Magdalene, converted and purified; of Paul, vessel of election; and the name of the son of Israel who wedded Rahab—Salmon—signifies: "Receive this vessel."

Ruth ("she who sees and hastens") is another figure or type of souls that are called, another figure of the Church. The son of Salmon and of Rahab, Boaz ("he in whom is found strength"), contracts an alliance with the gentle daughter of Moab, which the law forbids. On account of her virtues he causes her to enter the

society of a people who should reject her as a stranger. Ruth the Moabite is the type of the woman afflicted with the issue of blood, who receives the name of "daughter"; she prefigures the Chaananite, so persevering, so triumphant in prayer; the centurion Cornelius, and every one else who, enlightened by purity of heart, abandons vain attachments and hastens to God.

As to the sinful women, Thamar and Bethsabee, their presence gives us to understand that He who has desired to be born of sinners will be anxiously zealous to redeem sinners. His goodness, which takes upon it our iniquities, and subjects itself to injuries, does not disdain the bar-sinister of a tainted origin. And in order, St. Ambrose says, to remove from us the pride of birth, he has shown us the benefit of his incarnation, derived though it was from such ancestors and beginning with them. Bethsabee is not called by her name, because she was not only an adulteress, but guilty of participating in the death of her husband. The name of Uriah, that is used instead of hers, recalls the greatest crime of David; and in this remembrance there are two lessons—human weakness and the power and beauty of repentance.

Jesus, being baptized, goes into the desert; and, before treating with men, he puts himself face to face alone with God, to fortify himself in his intercourse with men for the service of God. The authority he comes to establish on a new principle, and to burden with duties hitherto unknown, stood in need of learning of him a practice carefully observed in his Church. He will be tempted by the devil; he is not ignorant of this. His strength goes to seek a danger which human weakness must learn to shun. He also goes to furnish a model of resistance in the inevitable combat. "If you

wish to serve God," says Wisdom, "prepare your soul for temptation." He remains in the desert for forty days. Forty is the number of expectation, of penance, of preparation—forty ages of the expectation of the Messias; forty years of expiation between Egypt and the promised land; forty days of deluge; forty days of purification and mortification, to prepare the soul for the joys of the Paschal festival.

Jesus is in the desert with wild beasts, and he is hungry. The angels are with him, and he remains there forty days without eating. We behold in him, therefore, both the man and the God. The demon has but a confused idea of the divine secrets, not knowing whether Jesus is man or God. At length he approaches him. Against the new Adam he employs the means which he used against the first, and which he avails himself of against all men. He touches successively on the three passions—on the gratification of the senses, on pride, and ambition. Under another form it is thus he ruined Eve.

To Eve: "Why do you not eat of this fruit?" To Jesus: "Command these stones be changed into bread." To Eve: "You will be as God." To Jesus: "If you be the Son of God, cast yourself down." He quotes the Scriptures, and he cites them falsely, as heretics do. He says to Eve: "You will know good and evil." He says to Jesus: "I will give you the kingdoms if, falling down before me, you adore me."

To fawn, crouch, and debase one's self is the road to human glories; it is the king of nothing who promises to load us with abundance. Thus, remarks St. Gregory VII., the princes of the earth, who are not sure of a day, dare speak to the Vicar of Jesus Christ. Those haughty potentates say to him: "We will give you power,

honor, riches, if you acknowledge our supremacy; if you make us your God; if, falling at our feet, you adore us."

Satan addressed this very language to Judas, to Mahomet, to Luther, to many others who listen to him. Thus he still speaks, and will speak till the end of time; and even to the end many, very many, will hear him, and will prostrate themselves before him and adore him. Some, like Judas, will receive but a paltry sum, soon followed with despair and eternal shame; others, like Mahomet and Luther, will see themselves wielding the sword with one hand and the torch in the other, and will become lasting scourges in the world; but they will not escape the despair of Judas, and the glory they acquire will vanish from them. Where now is the work of Mahomet? Where is that of Luther? Even shutting out the idea of eternal torments, what of them remains but tears and blood which they have caused to flow? Jesus exhibits to Satan neither the frailty of man nor the omnipotence of God. Employing the victorious wisdom of the man instructed of God and faithful to God, he answers him each time with a short sentence of the Scriptures, and he overthrows him, as David did Goliath, with a pebble taken from the brook.

Ever since the coming of the Magi the Jews had given of themselves signs of their reprobation; they gave a second one, more decisive, after the sojourn of Christ in the desert. John the Baptist, having declared to them "that he is not the Christ nor Elias," adds: "There is One in the midst of you whom you do not know." The great, the rich, the learned, are deputed to John, hear this word, and inform themselves no more about Jesus, and John the Baptist is silent. But the following day, being surrounded by his own, who

are simple and just, without any question on their part, he points out to them Jesus: "Behold the Lamb of God." And John and Andrew, disciples of John the Baptist, follow Him of whom it had been predicted that "the just will love him." Thus Jesus wished to do honor to his precursor by receiving from him his two first disciples.

We have already noticed the only word that Jesus used to attach them to him: "Come and see." That is all. They remain with him. The Gospel indicates the moment: "It was at the tenth hour"—that is to say, toward the evening. Toward the evening of life, if we are covered with the shadows of sin and already touched with the cold chill of death, let us not say it is too late. Let us seek Jesus: "Lord, where dwellest thou?" and he will conduct us to his dwelling, to the eternal mansions.

Jesus waited for the signal from John the Baptist. The following day Andrew brought him to Simon, and Simon made the first act of sublime faith; for he had not, like Andrew and John, the authoritative word of John the Baptist. Nor did any personage of the Gospel believe so firmly yet ostensibly on so light a foundation. Jesus had seen him—*intuitus eum*—seen into the deepest recesses of his heart, and said to him: "You will be called Peter." Philip is called afterward spontaneously by this sole word of his Master: "Follow me."

Philip speaks to Nathanael. This person is of a different character—he jeers; Philip, a simple, uneducated man, does not dispute with him—what good is it? He contents himself by saying: "Come and see." And Jesus gently compassionates the caviller, a slow but sturdy and straightforward spirit. He draws him to

him. "Here is," he says, "a true Israelite—one in whom there is no guile." Israel signifies *sincere*, who *walks straight before the Lord;* and this name was substituted for Jacob, which means *supplanter*, because from Jacob should be born Him who is the truth.

Nathanael replies: "How did you know me?" He thought without doubt that Philip had described him. Jesus yields to his weakness and gives him a sign. "Before Philip called thee I had seen thee under the fig-tree." Nathanael shows a sincerity that explains the condescension of the Saviour. He no longer resists. "Master," says he, "you are the King of Israel." Our Lord answers him, as he will at a future time reply to the confession of Thomas: "You believe because I have seen you under the fig-tree. You will see things greater than these." The words he adds have a relation to the prophetic dream of Jacob, the remembrance of which he has evoked, and, at the same time, they invite his first disciples to a higher expectation than that of a temporal Messias. "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opening over the Son of Man, and the angels ascending and descending."

This is all, and thus the first disciples were attracted to him—no discourses, no shining miracles, no promise of earthly things. Jesus turns himself toward Andrew and John, and he looks on Peter, and he says to Philip, "Follow me," and to Nathanael, "I have seen thee." All remain, all will be faithful to death, all will die in testimony of their faith, and will see the heavens opening up. This first promise of Jesus prophesies Thabor, the Ascension, and the ecstasy of Stephen, the first martyr of the Gospel—that gentle Stephen who, prostrated to the earth by a volley of

stones, cries out: "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man seated at the right hand of God."

Notwithstanding the brevity of this sketch and the necessity of omitting so many things, it is difficult not to recognize God in it. And nevertheless he is barely seen. But who else but God could in this way make use of occasions to announce himself by such heralds and inspire them with such language, and thus to fill up the past and the future? The entire Gospel is contained in this prologue; its whole dogma, its whole morality, its combats, its glory—in a word, its divinity. Man obeys and suffers; God commands: faith is the foundation of all. Excepting the divine Person, there will appear no miracle hereafter greater than the conception and life of John the Baptist; no sanctity more perfect than his and that of Mary and Joseph; no humility more profound than the birth at the crib and the life at Nazareth; no labor, no endurance, harder than the forty days in the desert. Thabor will not be more luminous than the night of Bethlehem and the glorification on the banks of the Jordan; the Uncreated Wisdom will not manifest itself by acts more victorious and words more profound; prophecy, that mental grasping of the future, will never more truly reveal the Master and Possessor of eternity. The King is in the midst of his court; the Conqueror is at the head of his army. He marches preceded by his prophets on earth and in heaven; he carries his crown of martyrs; he is surrounded with his cortége of virgins and of saints representing all conditions, all ages, all characters of the Christian and religious life. Who are like Mary, Joseph, and John the Baptist, Zachary and Elizabeth, Simeon and Anna? His people are already formed.

the shepherds and the Magi; the simple, to whom simplicity gives knowledge; the learned, to whom science has afforded simplicity; and he has shown by what arms he will conquer others. He has chosen his principal generals and captains. John is chosen, Peter is named. In fact, he has already fought the fight; he baffled by a dream the crafty policy of Herod; he upset by one word the power of darkness, over whom one day he will close the eternal abyss, while he will call to eternal joys the happy multitude of believers, and the songs of victory will resound for ever, *Gloria, pax!* celebrating him who is for ever the King of Glory and the Prince of Peace.

BOOK II.

THE HAPPY YEAR.

CHAPTER I.

MARRIAGE FEAST OF CANA—MIRACULOUS FISHING.

THREE days after the promise made to Nathanael commenced that public life of teaching and instruction whose fruitfulness is inexplicable to those who do not see the Divinity operating in it.

Its first scene is at Cana, a small village in Galilee, in a house where a marriage festival is celebrated. The Holy Virgin assists at it, doubtless as a kinswoman or relation, and probably presides at the feast; Jesus goes there, accompanied by his first disciples. Through the intercession of Mary a miracle is wrought, whose profound meaning we will forthwith consider; but his presence at the nuptials contains another lesson we should first understand. He came to regenerate man. As he went down unto the flood of penance to sanctify the waters which will be made the matter of the sacrament of spiritual regeneration, so he goes over to the marriage feast and renders it glorious by his presence and by a miracle, so as to honor for ever the marriage

state—the future sacrament which will purify the source of life.

Marriage was then, even among the Jews, looked upon as the most undervalued of contracts. Josephus, the historian, a grave and sagacious man, informs us that he had been divorced three times. Divorce and celibacy thinned the ranks of Roman society. Augustus sought to apply a remedy for this. He commanded his senate to enact laws and his poets to sing verses; but the law that enjoined marriage bore the names of two celibate consuls, and there was no more confirmed bachelor than Horace, who wrote the best verses. The emperor met almost with the same difficulty in finding young women who would accept the condition of a vestal; a matron who had not been divorced; a rich man who would marry. Jesus Christ gives to marriage a twofold majesty: it becomes sacramental and indissoluble. Against the enemies of all classes and degrees who would replunge it into its former degradation he surrounds and defends it with the eternal rampart of his own presence, so that, at least among the faithful, the indissolubility of the conjugal tie may prevail over all corruption of doctrines, customs, and of laws. Therefore, he begins by establishing marriage—that is, the Christian family. Thus he places his own memorial at the base of the social edifice; with one word he will build up the edifice, and the immense work will be consummated.

Let us remark, once for all, that a great many of the words and acts of Jesus were not immediately understood even by the disciples and the apostles. They saw miracles, but they had yet to receive the Holy Ghost. Those things were said and those acts were done for the future world—for us, who were to under-

stand them throughout the course of ages, sometimes by the fruits they have borne, sometimes again by the interpretations of the Church. The Church is a perpetual miracle: she rejoices our hearts, and our minds, and our eyes; she will rejoice to the end the posterity of Christ. The manna falls from heaven, always the same, and yet always varied to suit the tastes of those who eat it; the Gospel yields its harvest of truth, always the same and always new, according to the wants of the world at the different times when it buds forth. The evidences of truth brought forth in the past remain in the treasury of faith, while new evidences suggest the answers made in advance to objections not yet raised, but which the Holy Ghost has anticipated. Thus the Gospel, in which all the ancient prophecies have their fulfilment, is itself a perpetual prophecy.

The miracle of Cana was one of those prophetic acts by which Jesus Christ, in manifesting himself, wishes again to prophesy of himself and his Church.

During the marriage feast, the wine having failed, Mary, yielding to the natural feeling of her generous, affectionate heart, and doubtless also moved by a divine impulse, turns toward Jesus, and addresses him in this language, or rather implores him by this mysterious prayer: "They have no more wine." Jesus appears to refuse what she demands. He says to her: "Woman, what is that to thee and me? My hour is not yet come." But Mary says to the waiters: "Do as he bids you."

There were there six stone jars which served for purification. Jesus ordered the waiters to fill them with water, and, when they had filled them up to the very brim, he said to them, "Now draw out." The

six jars, which contained each from two to three measures, were found full of wine, whose excellent flavor surprised all the guests. St. John the Evangelist, an eye-witness, adds: "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him."

The increase of faith in the disciples was the immediate reason of this miracle, and a sufficient reason, since their salvation depended on their faith, as well as our salvation depends on our faith. But Jesus does nothing which is confined to circumstances, and there is nothing in what we here consider without mystery and without teaching. His reply to the holy Virgin is a new proof that he gives of his divinity; it was opportune at the outset of his public career.

In telling him that the guests had no more wine, Mary, as the sequel proves, asks him to perform a miracle. It is therefore to the divine nature she addresses herself, and it is the divine nature that answers her: "Woman, what is that to thee and me? What hast thou to do with me?" (Kenrick). For although Mary was the Mother of the Man-God, and, by a consequence of the indissolubility of the two natures, the Mother of God also, nevertheless she is not the Mother of the Divinity, and there is nothing common between her and the God whose hour has not yet come. Many, for want of reflection, are astonished at what they call the hardness of this language. Jesus prefers to give light to the world rather than afford a passing pleasure to his mother. But who tells them that in expressing his sovereign thoughts to her he was wanting in gentleness and filial respect?

Mary manifests no astonishment, no uneasiness, at not being heard. She instructs the waiters to do what

Jesus might tell them. She knows the power of her prayer. And, indeed, Jesus is forthwith influenced by it, and performs the miracle she desires. Thus he himself explains in advance, in the first act of his public mission, that profound expression which he pronounced from the summit of the cross when his mission terminated: "Man, behold your Mother"—behold her who incessantly prays to me for you, and whose prayers I will always hear and render effectual, even to changing the order of nature and the course of things.

By a complete change of substance the water becomes exquisite wine. This miracle is the effect of the simple will of God, of his inward thought, not articulated. The word of man only signifies; that of God accomplishes at the same time it signifies; it creates what it says. The earth was not, the heavens were not, the sea was not; God speaks—those things spring forth, they exist. The same word which gave existence to what was not can cause what is to remain, to cease, or to be transformed, and it can cause it to be changed without ceasing or being transformed. According to the will of God, all matter, every particle of matter, can either fall back into nothingness, or be reduced to any degree of inconsistency whatever, or be raised to any form of consistency that he may please to give to it. He suspends it, he penetrates it, he changes its qualities—in short, he makes of it what he wishes it to be, and it is what he commands it to be.

God, says St. Ambrose, possesses this art of acting by changing the substance when he wishes to show that he is the author of nature. The withered branch blossoms again; the rod is changed into a serpent; vast bodies of water become blood; the hand of God makes a dry road through the vast watery deep, and causes

the rushing torrents to stand as liquid walls to protect the dry path through the sea; the iron floats on the surface of the fountain; the handful of meal and the drop of oil cannot lose their value; the bitter waters are sweet to drink. The Scripture is full of such wonders, so that we can know that everything is from the hand of God, and that all obey him.

In renewing at Cana this mark of his sovereignty he brings to pass more quickly what he does elsewhere every day just as wonderfully, though we take no heed of it. Every day the dew and rains falling from the heavens, distilled into the bowels of the earth, sucked in by the roots of the vine, and distilled a second time in that alembic under the rays of the sun, swell out into the bunch of grapes. The instantaneous transmutation is not more difficult nor more mysterious than the other. He who from nothing created substances and the means by which they are transformed, can transform them without employing any medium whatever.

At the same time, this change which Jesus makes in the nature of the water is the prophecy and figure of that which he is about to accomplish in human nature. The six urns set apart for the water of purification are those six periods between which we divide the times which have preceded the coming of the Messias—from Adam to Noe, from Noe to Abraham, from Abraham to Moses, from Moses to David, from David to the Captivity, from the Captivity to Jesus Christ. These six periods contained the revelation of the future Messias, expressed by water, in the language of Scripture; and without this revelation, necessary for the purification of the Jews, the times that went before would remain barren and void. Christ, therefore, was contained in them,

but concealed, as in a certain manner the water contains the wine, without our being able to discover it therein. By order of Jesus the six jars or pots are filled up to the brim, because the prophecies have received in him their accomplishment or fulfilment. Thus the changing of the water into wine represents all the mysteries of redemption: the prophecies have announced them, Christ brought them to reality.

The Jews have had this water, and it has been to them but water—the instrument of a material, incomplete purification, or rather of a vain ceremony, like the repeated ablutions of the Pharisees. They washed their hands, and did works fruitless and impure; they drank, and their hearts received no warmth, no strength, no joy. The books of the prophets, says St. Augustine, are insipid and wearisome, if we do not understand them; and to understand them, we must discover Jesus Christ in them. Because the Jews did not discover Jesus Christ in them, they read them without understanding them, and interpreted them only to disfigure them; because Jesus Christ appears to us in them, they inebriate our souls with joy. Now we comprehend the merciful heart of Mary when she says to her Son: "They have no wine"—that is to say, Lord, they stand in need of strength; they stand in need of happiness, of joy; they stand in need of light; have pity on them; bring forth your light; give them the wine of truth.

And Jesus, by turning water into wine after he heard this prayer, promises that he is about to replace the literal sense by the spiritual sense—the letter which kills by the spirit which quickens, the figure by the reality. He will turn the water into wine when he shall give his disciples the true knowledge of the Scriptures, inebriating their souls with the joy of God by means

that hitherto left them cold and indifferent. "Pour out now." This miraculous wine will procure another transformation, another miracle, by which the unchaste will be chaste, the proud will become humble and meek, those who tremble before the world will be filled with courage to confess God. For a greater wonder will happen, and the wine of Cana is but the figure of the true beverage. Remove this last veil; we see the mystery of mysteries appear—the Eucharist.

The first act of the public life of Jesus is, therefore, the foretelling of what is to be the object of his mission. He prepares them to believe in the sacrament which is to be the crowning and the incomprehensible and immortal miracle of his mission. He has deigned, by this act at Cana, says a father of the Church, to give us a token in advance of the power by which later he would, in the institution of the Eucharist, change the wine into his blood, as, in reality, the wine which is consecrated is a real, true blood, just as the water at Cana instantly and really became pure wine.

It is written of this vine of the chalice "that it would bring forth virgins," because its virtue, removing every earthly desire, enkindles in souls a pure love for the Sovereign Good, or creates an unbounded love of God. Although the wine of Cana was but a figure of it, yet Jesus does not fail to attach his grace to it. Not only those to whom he had given the wine of Cana believed in him, but, we learn from tradition, many followed him. The bridegroom became the apostle St. Simon; the bride dwelt near the Holy Virgin. The presence of Jesus and Mary at their nuptials had sanctified the affection by which they were united. The grace of virginal chastity recompenses those pure hearts. They love one another with a most holy love,

which, sacrificing all for God, receives from him in return a charm eternally lasting and holy.

Such were the works of this great day at Cana—the first day of the manifestation of the Lord. "They represent what Jesus Christ had come into the world to accomplish: the faith of the disciples, which is the beginning of the Church; the intercession of Mary; the communion of saints. The best wine, at the end of the repast, is the perfect doctrine for the last age of the world, now inaugurated; water turned into wine typifies the law changed into the Gospel; figure into reality; the letter into the spirit; fear into love." It is thus Bossuet sums up the teaching of the fathers. By this recital we perceive how Jesus remains concealed, even in the Gospel, to those who pretend to find him without the lights of the Church; and we can judge of the respect the "historians" have for their readers and for themselves when they content themselves by saying, apropos of Cana, that Jesus liked private parties, and that one of his miracles was performed to enliven a marriage feast in a small village.

From Cana Jesus repairs to Capharnaum, where he preaches penance. Capharnaum, which signifies *village of consolation, village abounding in fruits*, was an opulent little town, well peopled and busy, situate on the confines of Zabulon and Naphtali, at a spot where the Jordan flows into the Lake of Genesareth. This part of Galilee was called Galilee of the Gentiles, on account of the pagans whom they permitted to dwell among them, which had led them to fall into spiritual apathy so marked that the Jews considered them wicked and impure. Isaias said: "Land of Zabulon and Naphtali, which borders on the sea, the country beyond the Jordan, the Galilee of the nations.

A people who were seated in darkness have seen a great Light; the Light has risen upon those who were seated in the region of the shadow of death." Jesus was this light, and he comes into this shadow. He says to them: "The time is come, the kingdom of God is at hand. Do penance, believe in the Gospel."

A more important work even than this preaching is about to signalize his first sojourn among the Capharnaumites. His presence at the marriage feast and the first public manifestation of his power gave honor and dignity to the marriage state, the source of the human race; a second miracle is about to be performed to incontestably prove the establishment of the Church and signify her mission.

Jesus passes along the border of the sea. He sees Simon and Andrew, who were casting their nets, for they were fishermen; and after the first interview, as already related, they return to their business, by which they lived. He says to them: "Follow me"; thence advancing a little, he sees in a bark James and John, also fishermen, working at or mending their nets, and he likewise calls them. At this moment the people run to hear him and press around him; he ascends into one of the barks, which was Simon Peter's, and, having besought Simon Peter to move out a little from the shore, he sits down and teaches. When his discourse was finished, he says to Simon Peter: "Conduct your vessel out into deep water, and cast the net." "Master," replies Simon, "we have been laboring all night and caught nothing; but at your word I will throw out the net." And at this haul they take in so many fishes that the net threatens to break. They make signs to their companions in another boat to come and aid them. The two boats were so full that little more

might have sunk them to the bottom. Then Simon Peter, casting himself at the feet of Jesus, says to him: "Lord, depart from me, for I am a sinner." He and his companions were frightened at this miracle. Jesus says to Simon: "Fear not; henceforth you will become fishers of men." And forthwith, having brought the barks ashore, they quit all and follow him.

The Church is established and foretold.

Those first chosen apostles are laboring men, hard-working men, living by the labor of their hands, and not by the fruits of iniquity; this is what renders them worthy of their calling. They are simple and illiterate. Knowledge will be given them later on; but at first it is necessary the faith of the believers should be the effect of the divine power, and not of human eloquence. They are called: forthwith they obey; the children of Zebedee forsake their father—nothing must hinder them from following Christ. There are two ships: that wherein Jesus ascends to teach is Peter's; there words are spoken which beget faith. Out of this bark Jesus teaches the vast multitudes, and out of this bark he will instruct nations. He begs Peter to haul out a little from the shore; he must preach to the people in a measured way, not attaching them to the things of the earth, nor yet carrying them too far into the regions of mystery; he must condescend to the infirmity of all to guide mankind, floating, amid the changeful and bitter things of this life, towards a haven of peace.

Then Jesus says: "In deep water." That was said to Peter; for he must visit all shores, and he has nothing to fear, either from the depth of controversies or from the fury of the storms. The bark of Peter is figured in the Old Testament by the ark of Noe, which ascends higher in proportion as the waters are increased

and are shaken by the storms: "Multiplicatæ sunt aquæ, et elevaverunt arcam in sublime." "Cast out your nets in deep waters"—in the middle of the ocean. Peter is fatigued, laboring the whole night, and has caught nothing; so the prophets have labored in the obscurity of the Old Law. But Peter does not refuse to labor; at the word of the Master he throws in the deep the net of the Gospel—the ample and pliable net-work formed by light and charity, which hurts not those whom it catches, and which, from the deep wherein they were struggling, fetches them up toward heaven.

The great day of grace is at hand; the net is replete to bursting; so those who, on the word of the Master, will cast out the net of doctrine, will gather together the multitude of nations.

Peter is humbly frightened at the miracle, and attributes nothing of it to himself. He only considers that he is a weak, sinful man. Jesus gives him courage: "Fear not; henceforth you will be the fisher of men." This word is also addressed to others, but especially to Peter; it is he who superintends and directs the fishing, who throws out into the deep the great net, who calls out to the others to come and help him. "You will be the fisher of men." Other promises as magnificent will be made to him, and they will be as magnificently accomplished. St. Ambrose translates: "You will bring men to life."

And in guiding their barks to dry land the fishermen quit all to follow Jesus—figure of the end of those ages wherein those attached to Jesus will quit for ever the sea of this world.

A numerous people have seen and daily see those realities and receive those symbols and those promises.

There are on the lake hundreds of fishing barks constantly and actively occupied. The Gospel fishing is carried on in the full light of day. It has been remarked that the Gospel land, in its inhabitants and the configuration of its soil, was quite typical. Near to the Dead Sea the Jordan flows on in a lingering, serpentine way, as if it feared the bed of the sulphurous lake. The instinct of the fish warn them to turn back, because those the current has carried into the deep water instantly die. This is the reason why this place was frequented by fishermen. Simon, Andrew, John, and his brother went there to cast their nets—a figure of what will one day happen when they will become fishers of men: at the extremity of the stream of life they will catch for the kingdom of God those whom the proximity of that frightful gulf will cause to tremble and recoil. Jeremias has said: "A day will come when I will send a number of fishermen, and they shall catch men."

By the chariot of those fishermen, says St. Jerome, we are caught up towards the heavens like Eliseus. They are the four angels of the first church erected, the four Hebrew letters of the divine name. Their example urges us to obey the call of God, to forget the vicious throng, to quit the bark of our former life and the delights of the paternal mansion—this tissue of worldly solicitudes, this spider's web wherein, if caught, we, like so many gnats, will hang without support.

CHAPTER II.

NICODEMUS—THE SAMARITAN WOMAN.

AFTER some days passed at Capharnaum Jesus returns to Jerusalem. There he performs other miracles and celebrates the Pasch.

The custom and connivance of the priests allowed the merchants to establish themselves under the porticos of the Temple. He drives them thence for the first time, saying: "You make of my Father's house a den of thieves." Later they remember what is written: "The zeal of your house has eaten me up." The merchants do not resist him, although his hand was armed only with a whip of small cords; and they did not invoke the aid of the priests, who tolerated them. Doubtless they were intimidated by the awful majesty of his countenance. However, some among the doctors demanded of him by what right he acted in such manner, asking him to perform a miracle to prove his mission. He replied to them: "Destroy this temple, and within three days I will build it up again." They understand him to speak of the Temple out of which he chased the buyers and sellers—that Temple whose ruin he would very soon predict, and which never should be rebuilt; but he spoke to them of the temple of his body, wherein dwelt the fulness of the Divinity, and of the miracle of

his resurrection three days after they should have put him to death. For the Messias was the living Temple of God; and the Jews themselves declare it. In the course of time many believed that the Messias was born at the time the Romans destroyed the Temple. According to St. Mark, Jesus pronounced those words the day on which each one purchased the paschal lamb, and, according to the computation of some historians, on the same day on which (three years after) he arose from the dead.

His replies are *quasi* enigmatical, and he ordinarily refuses an answer when interrogated by unbelief, vain curiosity, or pride. He spoke clearly to the meek and docile of heart. He granted them the favors they demanded. Whatever might be the expression that issued from the lips, he seizes on their thought; those even who are silent hear him answering their very thoughts. He knows all men thoroughly. He mercifully regulates his discourses to suit their intelligence and their faith, giving them only what they can actually bear.

Many came to him who were merely surprised at his miracles. Some he retained, and others he let go. He called some who did not present themselves. Levi the publican was seated at his bureau of finance. Jesus passes and calls him: "Follow me." The publican rises and forthwith follows him; leaves his bureau, as Peter and John had left their nets, and becomes Matthew the Apostle. Some time after, a doctor of the law presents himself to him, and says: "Master, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus saw the heart of this savant; he replies to him: "The foxes have their dens, and the birds their nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." The

savant withdraws himself from Christ's presence. He only wishes to advance in knowledge; the labor of the Gospel, rough and disinterested and unselfish, did not please him—type of those thieves who harass the Church in order to steal from her whatever knowledge they can use to their own profit. Another—who was, on the other hand, called—asks a delay till he buries his father. Jesus answers him: "Let the dead bury the dead." Come to the work of the living; learn that the first duty toward men is to preach the Gospel, and that your Father himself needs that you forsake all to obey the voice of God—an everlasting answer to the objections of false charity. Jesus does not impose a weight that he refuses to take upon himself. He does not wait to close the eyes of his mother.

At Jerusalem, among those who first approached him, there was a senator named Nicodemus. He came in the night, with an upright but timorous heart. He was afraid of the Jews, dreading, perhaps, at the same time their wrath, already manifested, and their railleries. We find him again, more courageous at Calvary. Jesus declares to him unreservedly his divinity. In the discourse which he holds with him he reveals to him the whole plan of Christianity. In it he points out his death on the cross, and pronounces these words, which are the adorable reason of the Incarnation: "God so loved the world as to give his only Son for it." Then he unveils the causes of incredulity: "The Light came into the world, and men rather prefer darkness, because their works are wicked. For whoever does evil hates the light; but he who comes to the light is led by the truth." This is he who declares himself judge on the last day.

Having thus received with kindness the timid Jew,

he goes himself to win the Samaritan woman to divine truth.

The Samaritans were the remnant of colonies, formed of divers peoples, which the Assyrians had established. They pretended that they sprang from the race of Abraham, and they received the books of Moses, but mixed up with them much of their ancient idolatry. The Jews treated them as strangers, and a reciprocal hatred divided them. The synagogue forbade all relations with these schismatics, save to buy and sell. Jesus goes towards them; he rises above national and political enmities, as he will shortly put himself above the traditions and prescriptions of the Pharisees regarding the Sabbath. We behold here his first public mission to those outside the Jewish pale.

Travelling, then, through Samaria to get back again into Galilee, and finding himself at the gates of a city called Sichem, Jesus rests himself, feeling the fatigue of the journey. The road, says St. Augustine, was the flesh he had taken to arrive at humanity; and the fatigue he was pleased to endure makes us comprehend the labor of his apostolate. His disciples enter the village to purchase something to eat; for he so disdains the comforts of life as ordinarily to carry with him no provision. Once he spoke of a loaf they had for the whole company, and which the apostles forgot.

But Sichem was not a place without a memory. Abraham, returning from Mesopotamia, had erected an altar there; and God made known to him that this place belonged to him. It was here that Simon and Levi, sons of Jacob, had killed a great number of the Amorrhites to avenge the outrage done to their sister Dinah. Jacob, having purchased here a territory for a flock of an hundred sheep, had given it as an inheri-

tance to Joseph, and he had dug a well that is yet called Jacob's well. Thus, on this strange soil, Jesus, Son of God and Son of the patriarchs, was doubly at home. He comes there to reveal the true God, to bring pardon to the abode of vengeance, to open up the fountain of the true living waters which gush forth even to eternal life.

Whilst Jesus, remaining alone, rested himself, seated on the brim of Jacob's well, a woman comes from Sichem to draw some water. She was a woman of bad morals and of bad repute. She represents the Church not yet purified, but about to be so. The woman comes from among strangers: the Church will be established among the nations. It is said that Jesus stopped here at the sixth hour, at mid-day. The material sun, arrived at his highest point, begins to decrease; the Sun prophesied by Zacharias, the true Orient, rises to enlighten those who are seated in the shadow of death, and he comes to direct their feet in the way of peace. The sixth hour is yet to be the hour of sacrifice, when, bleeding and bruised, the Saviour will rest himself from his fatigues by lying down on the bed of the cross, and then from those bleeding wounds of his will gush out the sources of salvation.

Jesus says to the Samaritan, "Give me to drink." On Calvary he will say, "I thirst." It is the same thirst he expresses here; she replies in the language of raillery, common to her class: "How! you, a Jew, ask of me a drink—I being a Samaritan?" The Jews, be it remembered, even refused to make use of the vessels of the Samaritans. Jesus gently reprimands her: "If you knew what the gift of God is, and him who is speaking to you, asking you to give water to drink, you yourself would be the first, or should be to ask a drink of water

from him, and he would have given you to drink of the living water."

The Samaritan, yet scoffing, but astonished and more respectful, says to him: "Sir, you have not wherewith to draw, and the well is deep. Whence have you living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who has given us this well?" She knows no other water than that which quenches the carnal thirst, and, though impressed with respect, she treats lightly the stranger who asks her to give him a little water, whilst she holds possession of the means of drawing it. Thus it is that the pride of the rationalists will dispute for a long while.

Jesus answers her: "Whoever will drink of this water will thirst again; but he who will drink of the water that I will give will never thirst, because the water I will give will become a fountain that will spring up to eternal life." The water of the well is the sensual pleasures which dwell in dark recesses of the human heart. He who partakes of the pleasures of this world, he who drinks of this water, will thirst again. The living water of Jesus is the Holy Ghost, who will satiate all the desires of the soul, and raise up man to eternal life, being the principle of resurrection. He who has this fountain within him will never thirst.

The Samaritan does not yet comprehend Christ's meaning. Always preoccupied with carnal thirst, but more and more respectful, she says to Jesus: "Sir, give me to drink of this water, so that I may thirst no more, and that I may come no more here to draw water." She inhabits the country where Eliseus, the great prophet, had, among other prodigies, lived forty days without drinking and without eating. Remembering his history, she believes that he who speaks to her can give

her the true secret of Eliseus. Jesus wishes to confer on her a gift far more precious. He says to her: "Go, call your husband, and return."

For the first time, perhaps, in her whole life, as we can conjecture it from what is about to be revealed, this woman at the same time fears to lie and to be sincere. She says: "I have no husband." Jesus replies: "You have reason to say, I have no husband, for you have had five; and he with whom you are now living is not your husband." Repudiated successively by five husbands, this sinful woman lives in sinful connection with an adulterer. In a mystical sense, a father of the Church sees here the five senses, the domination of the flesh which presses on all men, before they can make use of their reason. Error follows the passions of the senses; it has no husband, legitimate guide, but an adulterous lover. Remove your error; put away that adulterer who corrupts you; appeal to your reason to comprehend the truth.

The Samaritan woman makes this noble effort. She bows down before the light that appears to her, and acknowledges her sins and her shame. "Lord, I see well you are a prophet." And forthwith, leaving off every question of temporal interest, she seeks after more light by proposing clearly the point of doctrine that divides the Samaritans and the Jews. In the midst of all her crimes, this woman had not disdained to meditate at times on the importance of salvation; the Son of God knew this. Then she says to him: "Our fathers have adored on this mountain, and you say (you, the Jews) that Jerusalem is the place where we must adore."

Jesus, without answering her directly on this point, which thenceforth would have but little importance

either for the Samaritans or the Jews, raises her up higher than she thought to ascend. "Woman," says he to her, "believe me, the time is at hand when you will no longer adore the Father on this mountain nor in Jerusalem (for the sacrifices of the Samaritans, as those of the Jews, would be abolished). You adore what you do not know, and we adore what we know, because salvation comes from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and it is at hand, when the true adorers will adore the Father in spirit and in truth; for those are the adorers whom the Father desires. God is a spirit, and those who adore him must adore him in spirit and in truth."

This parable at once upsets the symbols of the Jews and the idols of the Samaritans. Both neglect the soul, seeking by every means to purify the body. Jesus Christ declares that God, who is a spirit, is honored by the purity of what there is incorporeal in us, the purity of the understanding which he calls the spirit. The Church adores in spirit, because she offers up a spiritual victim; she adores in truth, because her sacrifice is not purely figurative, but gives the reality of the sacrifices of the ancient law and of what its signs represent.

The Samaritan says to Jesus: "I know that the Messias, whom they call Christ, must come. When he does come, he will instruct us in all things." It needs but the five books of Moses for the Samaritan to expect the Messias, so often is his advent predicted therein, and so much is Christ the object of the whole ancient Testament. Jesus replies: "This Messias whom you expect is now speaking to you: it is myself." The Son of God reveals himself to the simple heart that confesses its misery to him. It was only in

the presence of the cross the Jews could obtain this clear expression; for they only asked him if he was the promised Messias to deny, to insult him.

At this moment the disciples return. They were astonished to behold their Master holding conversation with this strange woman; for it was, to their eyes, a sort of a transgression of the law, and doubtless, also, a condescension quite contrary to Jewish haughtiness. Nevertheless, they do not question him. They had learned, says a father, to observe their rank of disciples; they respected and feared him. The Samaritan, leaving the vessel she carried to the well, returns to the city, and publishes what she had seen. She said to all she met with: "Come and see a man that has told me all that I have ever done. Might he not be the Christ?" An admirable example of God's workings in our hearts! The conversion of this sinful woman is, so to speak, instantaneous, and yet all the degrees of it are perfectly marked. She passes from haughty, mocking indifference to respect; from respect to the desire of riches which are promised her, and of which she is ignorant; she acknowledges Jesus to be a prophet, and at the same time she avows that she has prevaricated; she is instructed, and she is docile; as soon as she possesses the divine light she exerts herself to spread it abroad. Leaving there her pitcher, as the fishermen leave their nets, she acts the part of evangelist by publishing, to the honor of Him who had enlightened her, the words which have humbled her. She blushes not to reveal this truth; the soul, once illumined by the divine fire, regards not the things of the earth, neither glory nor honor. She knows, says St. Chrysostom, only the flame of holy love that vivifies her. She leaves her urn or pitcher, says St. Augustine: the urn is the love of the

world, the cupidity by which men seek to draw pleasure from the dark depths of earthly life, of which the well is an image.

Whilst the Samaritan woman was applying herself to make known the gift of God, the disciples press Jesus to eat. The Lord says to them: "I have other food to take"; and they thought somebody had brought him something to eat. Thus Jesus does not refuse to receive nourishment from the hands of strangers, since he possessed nothing, so that those who assisted him might be rewarded for it, and also that his disciples might learn to honor poverty. But he carries their thoughts far from this. "My nourishment," says he, "is to accomplish the will of Him who sent me, and to perfect his work."

To perfect a work is to labor to realize the design of him who has conceived it and who has commanded it. If the work of God is perfected by Christ, it therefore was not perfected before him. But what can there be wanting to perfect the work of God? Origen replies: The perfection of the reasonable creature is the perfection of all nature; it is for the perfection of this nature, hitherto incomplete, that the Word was made flesh. Man was perfect in a certain degree; but transgression rendered him imperfect. The Saviour was sent down, firstly, to accomplish the will of Him who had sent him; secondly, to perfect the work of God, not only by restoring man to his original condition, but by elevating him to his perfection, which is to nourish himself with the knowledge of God. The Son of God accomplishes and perfects in two ways the work of the Father—in man, when he makes us behold in his person human nature, without sin, without corruption, worthy of the divine love; in the law, for Christ is the end of the law:

he conducts to maturity all it contains, and he elevates the world from carnal to spiritual worship.

This was the lesson Jesus Christ taught his disciples, by telling them that they should reap what others had sown, and that this harvest, which would be fruitful to eternal life, would rejoice those who worked first—that is to say, the prophets. It was also to indicate how the accomplishment of the law and the work of salvation is but one work of God, undertaken from the beginning. They did not yet understand him, but they remembered. They also thought reapers must become sowers; for the missionary of Christ reaps and sows at the same time. He performs the double labor of prophet and apostle. Because the Church is one in duration of time, differently to what passes in the world, the joy of him who harvests with full hands is the recompense and joy of him who has sown in sorrowfulness and barrenness, and who has not even seen the furrow become green.

The Samaritan had said to her fellow-citizens: "Come and see. May not this be the Christ?" A great number received this word. Departing from the city, they flock around Jesus; they implore him to remain with them. He stays with them two days; and after having heard him speak, a great many more of them believed in him. They say to this woman: "We believe no longer on your testimony; we have heard him ourselves, and we know truly he is the Saviour of the world." They affirm what was presented to them but as doubtful. However, they had seen no miracles; the word alone converted them. As they depart from the city to hear the word, so in receiving this sincere word they renounce every other doctrine. The Evangelist, according to the saying of

Origen, takes care to say that they implored him not to enter the city, but "to dwell among them." For Jesus dwells among those who importune him by prayer; especially when, departing from their city, denying themselves, they come to him.

The episode of the Samaritan woman signalizes the advent and character of definite religion, and clearly points out to us the form and miracle of the preaching of Jesus. The whole possesses the simplicity of the most ordinary things of life, and yet all is divine; it seems that all might be by pure chance, and the more we regard it, the more we find eternal depths in the preparation, in the fact and the consequences, which last for ever and will be eternal.

Let us remark that this mission to Samaria was an act that could greatly compromise Jesus among the Jews, if he had, as they did say, sought popularity. The aversion for the Samaritans was universal, and rendered public opinion even more formidable than legal prohibitions. This city of Sichem, where he dares to sojourn, the Jews called Sichar, which means *inebriation, drunkenness.* He heeds not their prejudices. His immense compassion for human miseries never flattered error—a twofold mark of his divinity: that he did it not, and that he was incapable of doing it.*

* The Roman martyrology and the Greek menology make mention, on the 20th of March, of the Samaritan woman, and call her Photina. She attaches herself to our divine Lord. Tradition says she was at Calvary and at the Last Supper. St. Photina was exiled into Africa, where she received the crown of martyrdom at Carthage, in the year 60 of the Redemption, at the same time as her two sons, Joseph and Victor, and her five sisters, whom she had converted. Their relics are at Rome, in the basilica of St. Paul (*Cornelius à Lapide*).

CHAPTER III.

THE SICK HEALED—THE TEMPEST CALMED—DEMONS VANQUISHED—THE PHARISEES.

IT was almost as a fugitive that Jesus Christ travelled through the territory of Samaria. Herod Antipas, King of Judea, had at that time arrested John the Baptist. By the power of his preaching he continues to draw to him vast multitudes. The Precursor irritates the Pharisees. Herod respects him, and would have willingly let him preach penance; but John reproaches him for his public violation of God's law. This tyrant had espoused Herodias, his sister-in-law. The man of God says to him: "It is not lawful for you to take to wife your brother's wife." *Non licet!* John was the first who had the honor and glory of pronouncing this salutary word, which the Church has been obliged so often to repeat almost daily, like him, at the price of her civil liberty and her blood. Princes demand of the Church to teach obedience to the civil laws; but when she contests the right they have to infringe on those laws, then they accuse her of sedition and cast her into irons, or they put her in chains. The Gospel is a complete picture of all human history.

In the eyes of the Pharisees Jesus was already guilty of the crimes of John the Baptist. Those hypocrites were not ignorant of what the voice in the desert said

of him, and they were impatient to make him an object of equal suspicion. His hour was not yet come; he seeks shelter from their wrath—giving an example to the Church to fly from danger when the occasion requires it. She often has had and will have need of this example.

Arrived at Galilee, he continues to teach and work miracles. "They were all astonished at his doctrine; because he taught as a man who had authority, and not as the Scribes do." So authority is the character of his miracles. At Cana an officer approaches him, begging of him to heal his son, who was dying at Capharnaum. Jesus, knowing his faith, though it was yet imperfect, says to him: "If you people do not see miracles and great wonders, you do not believe." The officer, engrossed with the danger of his son, does not attempt to justify himself. "O Lord!" says he to Jesus, "come before my son dies." Jesus says to him: "Go; your son lives." The Gospel adds: "He believes what Jesus tells him, and he goes his way." *He believes!* The divine Word performed a double miracle, accompanied by a twofold grace: the body of the son is healed, and the heart of the father is changed—the one receives health, the other faith.

The same sovereign authority appears in all the works of Jesus. By a word he cures the blind, the deaf, the lame; he banishes demons from the bodies of the possessed. Sometimes, however, he uses certain signs or marks: he touches the sick or imposes hands on them. He wishes to act thus either to give a particular instruction, or, as we will see elsewhere, to make manifest, as St. Augustine says, that his body is the organ of the Divinity.

At Capharnaum, where he remains in the poor cot-

tage of Simon Peter—a significant circumstance—all the sick and the possessed are led to him. In presence of all the inhabitants assembled before the gate he cures them, fulfilling this expression of the prophet: "He has taken on him our infirmities, and he has loaded himself with our maladies." "And the demons, departing out of the bodies of the possessed, cry out, You are the Son of God; but Jesus makes them keep silence, because they knew he was the Christ."

Let us mention here particularly one of the cures, which was a promise for the Jews, so often reproved and so terribly chastised. Simon Peter's mother-in-law, worn down by age and afflicted with a violent fever, was in danger of death. The disciples entreat Jesus to relieve and comfort her. He commands the fever to leave her, and forthwith this malady is not only cured, but, full of vigor, she rises and serves them. To seize the spiritual sense of the miracle, and to comprehend what the mother-in-law of St. Peter represents, let us recollect that the spouse of the Prince of the Apostles is the Church. The mother-in-law is therefore the synagogue, of which the Church is born. She is that poor, sick creature, wearied with envy, avarice, hatred, decrepitude, and devoured by care and anxiety about profane things. She will not die; she will be resuscitated, and enjoy a life she had not known. The Saviour, who stops at Simon Peter's house, will extend his hand toward her, and she will rise up to bless and serve him.

One day Jesus embarked on the lake to seek a little repose in the neighboring solitude. He encountered a great tempest. The water, entering into the boats, threatened them with sudden shipwreck. Notwithstanding all this, Jesus seems to sleep. The disciples,

terrified, cry out: "Lord, save us; we perish." But the fathers say it is written the Guardian of Israel never sleeps, nor will he ever slumber. He sleeps as if he were taking a repose at the well of Jacob, to show us that he has taken a body like ours. His divine nature is on watch, and the Divinity has ordained that this storm should break forth, so that we might have a proof of the power of Jesus alike over men and over the elements. Therefore, he awakes, and says to the disciples: "Men of little faith, why do you fear?" Then, stretching out his hand over the winds, he says to the sea: "Be still"; and suddenly there came a great calm. David had chanted: The waters have seen thee, O Lord! and they have feared; thou commandest the roaring billows of the sea, and curbest its billows, and stillest its raging fury.

By this miracle, says St. Jerome, we ought to understand that all creatures acknowledge Jesus Christ for their author, and obey his voice. Not that material things may have a soul and senses, as certain heretics have dreamed, but such is the majesty of God that things insensible to us may become sensible before him. And the witnesses, the disciples and the others, though they were about to perish, seized with a new fear, say to one another: "Who is this Man who commands the winds and the sea, and they obey him?"

It is no longer Peter that is fearful. The Church, in favor of whom the miracle was performed, attests its renewal, or rather its permanency or lasting duration; she derives from this miracle an invincible confidence. Very often has she seen the winds toss the sea to and fro. But she knows the power of Him who watches when he seems to sleep. She invokes him; and whether he appeases the sudden storm, or whether he lets it fol-

low its course, the menaced bark is never overwhelmed. On the contrary, the tempest itself protects it by the shipwrecks it multiplies around the Church while endeavoring to submerge it; and Peter, standing in the bark in place of his Master, governs amid perils with a firmness, boldness, and courage that no earthly threat or fear can trouble.

During this evangelical journey Jesus publicly shows anew his power over the devil. A frenzied, possessed man comes to him and adores him; and at the same time the demons who torment this man say through his mouth: "Lord, what have we to do with you? Thou art Jesus, Son of the Most High God." Forced to quit their prey, they implore Jesus not to command them to plunge into the abyss, but to permit them to enter the flock of swine that feed hard by. He consents to their wish, because all belong to him; because the owners of the swine gave scandal; and because he wishes to prove that the devil can have no power over us nor over the things which belong to us, except inasmuch as God permits him. Forthwith the possessed was delivered, and the swine are precipitated into the lake, where they are drowned.

A Roman poet boasted, some years before, of being "a pig of the herd of Epicure." We may judge accurately whence he got this taste and this inspiration: surely from Satan. The sort of wisdom which the poet celebrates has cherished the same sympathies for hogs; and it drowns them in the watery deep of infidelity and rationalism.

When Jesus returns from Capharnaum, they bring to him a paralytic, so that he might cure him. Not being able to force his way through the crowd, the men who did this good work hoist up the sick man to the

flat roof of the house, and forthwith lower him gently near to the Saviour. Jesus, touched at their perseverance, tenderly says to the paralytic: "My son, take courage; thy sins are forgiven thee."

In the throng there were Scribes and Pharisees, doubtless very overbearing, and as persuaded of their justice as ever. They thought among themselves, "This man blasphemeth. Who can remit sins but God alone?" Jesus, penetrating their thoughts by his own mind, speaks to them thus: "Which is the easier, to say to a paralytic, Your sins are forgiven you; or to say to him, Rise up, take your bed, and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins, I will order him to do this. He says to the paralytic, Arise, take up your bed, and return to your home." The man forthwith stands on his feet, takes his bed, and walks away, publishing the wonders of God.

Among those murmuring Pharisees many were sent from Jerusalem to spy after Jesus. From this very moment we behold pharisaical hatred concocting and laying plans to entrap him.

Jesus was dining at the house of the publican Levi, who afterwards became Matthew, the apostle and evangelist of our Lord. As usual, the divine Master is found in the midst of publicans and sinners, many of whom follow him. The Pharisees were scandalized at this. Jesus replies to them: "It is not the healthy and strong who stand in need of a physician, but the sick, the weak." Conceive what this expression of the prophet Osee signifies: I wish mercy, and not sacrifice; because I am not come to call to repentance the just, but the sinners.

By the irony of this language the Pharisees feel that

Jesus does not view them with that courteous regard they had for themselves. With the design of embarrassing and ensnaring him, they bribe certain of the disciples of John the Baptist, who say to him: "How comes it the disciples of John and those of the Pharisees frequently fast and pray, and that yours eat and drink, and do not fast?" Jesus responds: "The friends of the Bridegroom are not in mourning, and do not fast whilst the Bridegroom is with them; but a day will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they will fast." He draws a comparison which is an admirable lesson of gentleness and condescension toward novices, whose weakness we should not discourage by wishing forthwith to raise them to a state of perfection. In establishing the Church he instructs her for ever; since her office and duty are always to cure the sick and convert sinners. But the Pharisees could not see so far, and do not yet see. As to Jesus Christ himself, prayer, fasting, and apostolic labor were his principal nourishment, according to that word he uttered: "My food is to do the will of Him who sent me."

CHAPTER IV.

THE WOMAN AFFLICTED WITH THE ISSUE OF BLOOD —THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS.

THE Pharisees, nevertheless, availed themselves of every occasion to recur to the power and goodness of Him whom they endeavored to persecute, vilify, and censure. It is probable that Jairus, the chief of the synagogue at Capharnaum, belonged to this party; but he had a daughter, twelve years of age, who fell sick. Believing her about to die, Jairus flew to Jesus, who was teaching on the shore of the Sea of Tiberias, and prostrated himself at his feet, and, with a carnal faith, he implores him to come and restore his dying daughter to life, persuaded that he could and would accomplish it, but, on the other hand, as a carnal and worldly man, believing that his presence and the imposition of his hands were necessary for the accomplishment of his desire. The Lord, without reproving him, rises up and follows him.

Amidst the throng of people following him there was a woman from the city of Cesarea. She came, doubtless, to see Him about whom so much had been said everywhere. For twelve years she suffered from a flow of blood, which baffled the skill of the most noted physicians; for instead of ameliorating her condition,

they made it worse. This woman, not daring to accost him nor ask anything of him, but full of faith, and more enlightened by a supernatural light than by any other teaching, says within herself: "If I could but touch the hem of his garment, I would be cured." Instantly the Lord turns around and asks who touched the hem of his garment.

And as all declared themselves guiltless of the act—a fact which shows the profound respect in which he was held by the people, even when he allowed himself to be annoyed and worried by them—Peter says to him: "Master, the throng press around and overpower you, and you ask who has touched you." But Jesus, continuing to look upon the vast multitude that flocked about, replies: "Some one has touched me; for power has gone out from me."

The influences of Jesus are incorporeal, and do not proceed from him in a material way, so as to communicate themselves to others, as if this power abandoned him, the same as science does not forsake him who teaches it, to go to him who is taught. Jesus turns about and questions, so as to show that he knows that this woman is cured, and how she is healed, and thereby to honor her faith. "Who has touched me?"—that is, by faith and desire. The multitudes who press about me do not touch me, because they do not touch me by faith and desire.

The woman afflicted with an issue of blood, terrified, casts herself at his feet, avowing what she had done. Jesus says to her: "My daughter, have courage; your faith has made you whole. Go in peace." She becomes his daughter when she obtains the faith; it is her faith that heals her, and not, says Tertullian, her profound knowledge of the Scriptures. This is a great lesson

taught the Scribes. Jesus requires of her this declaration to impart to us that teaching, so that our souls may hear it.* "Confide, filia, fides tua te salvam fecit." To what innumerable souls has not this word brought peace, strength, and salvation!

Jairus, doubtless, was the first in whose soul it increased faith. To him word is brought that at this very moment his daughter had expired. Although some body in the crowd advised him not to importune the Saviour any more, "Lord," he cries, "my daughter is dead; but come, put your hand upon her, and she will live." O happy father! O thrice happy for having thus spoken! One word of Jesus strengthens his hope. They arrive at the house; lamentations and sobbings and weepings are heard on every side. Jesus says to those who were lamenting and weeping: "Why do you weep? The young girl is not dead: she sleeps."

The people jeer at him, because they had seen the girl dying. Jesus causes the pressing throng to be turned out, also the musicians, who were there according to funeral usage. Observing near him only the father and mother and three of his disciples—Peter, James, and John—he takes hold of the hand of her that was dead. "Young woman," says he, "arise." The young woman arises and walks. Jesus orders them to give her something to eat. At the same time he expressly forbids the parents to divulge anything of what they had seen; but they disobey him, as well as many others who had received the same injunctions. He has

* According to a respectable tradition, the woman afflicted with an issue of blood is that very same woman, called Veronica, who, on the road to Calvary, dried the sweat and blood from the adorable body of Jesus with a linen handkerchief, on which he left the impress of his countenance.

sometimes forbidden and sometimes commanded the publishing of his miracles, for various reasons, which cannot be quite well comprehended; for the explications given of them are not always quite satisfactory. The truest reason is that he wished that his disciples would learn to conceal as much as possible the gifts he conferred upon them, so as to avoid the danger of vainglory. But why has he commanded this miracle to be concealed rather than others? No doubt he desired it for motives worthy of himself, and we ought to know how to ignore what he has judged proper for us not to know. What we understand is sufficient, and is all that is necessary to be known.

The fathers have remarked and have clearly explained for us the mysterious connection of these two miracles, related on the same page of the Gospel, and which are equally prophetic and equally fulfil the ancient prophecies. In the first miracle, the healing of the woman afflicted with the flowing of blood, wrought by the simple touch of the Saviour's garment (by which the Saviour has justified the veneration of holy relics), are signalized a remembrance of Aaron's, and a promise of Christ's priesthood, and a shining figure of the Incarnation. It is said that the unction shed on Aaron's head flowed even to the extremity of his garment, and preserved throughout it its power and virtue. The sick woman comprehended this symbol. More learned by faith than all the Jewish doctors, with their learned researches, without pausing to reflect on the apparent weakness of visible nature, she believes the Man of miracles who passes before her, tormented and harassed, and pressed by the vulgar throng, is God himself, and that the divine virtue went forth from that garment of flesh wherewith he touched the earth as if with the hem of his garment.

But the mantle of Christ is his Incarnation, by which the Word has put on our humanity; and the hem of this garment are the dogmas of faith which depend from the Incarnation.

And this sick woman who extends her hands to touch the garment of Christ, so as to be healed—this sick and afflicted creature who year by year loses her natural strength—this afflicted woman, given up as incurable, is the Church of the Gentiles, lost and ruined by philosophy, wisdom, science, and crime, and about to die if He who is the expectation of the world had not appeared. In vain does she interrogate the physicians. There is no doctor to be found to cure her malady. Plato, Jupiter, Cæsar, only torment and destroy her. Whatever they may say, whatever she may do, her blood flows. In the eyes of the Jews, this loss of blood, though they cannot stop it, renders her corrupt and impure; the Jews do not trouble themselves about her, only to exclude her from offering sacrifices in the Temple to the Lord. She must die; she is so exhausted from the malady she cannot live. It is then Jesus shows himself, and prevents her by a sublime faith. She does not say, on beholding him, "Perhaps"; she says, "Certainly I shall be healed." She follows him in the throng of those who follow him and press around him, but do not touch him, who rather, as St. Peter says, "oppress him and afflict him," because their curiosity admires him; but their hearts ask nothing of him, and, above all, offer him nothing. She follows him; she touches him to be healed, and she is healed. Thus the Church of the Gentiles, says St. Leo, without having seen Jesus in his mortal flesh, but having heard him in his apostles, as it were seized by the hand the mystery of Incarnation. She presses forward, says St.

Hilary, to receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is the fruit and adornment of the Incarnation of the Word, and flows from it just as the fringe hangs from the garment that it adorns and borders. And as the woman afflicted with the issue of blood, healed without being seen, is called back to acknowledge the benefit and receive the sweet name of daughter, so the Church of the Gentiles, which Jesus Christ healed by the ministry of the apostles, without having seen him with the eyes of the body, received from him that sweet, paternal expression, "Confide, filia."

However, when Jesus cured the woman afflicted with an issue of blood, it was not to her he seemed to go. She is encountered on the way by his will, which has ordered all things to instruct mankind; but he goes elsewhere. He follows Jairus, who had come to him, to restore his dying daughter to life.

The name of Jairus signifies *illumined* and *illumining*. By this name, and by the title of chief of the synagogue, Jairus represents Moses. His daughter was twelve years of age; the synagogue, daughter of Moses, existed for twelve centuries. And as the woman afflicted with the issue of blood suffered for twelve years, so for twelve centuries the Gentile nations, more and more oppressed by idolatry, lost more and more their patrimony of natural virtues, and bled under the hand of false sages, from whom they demanded in vain light and peace. The Church, says Raban Maur, was weak, whilst the synagogue was vigorous and full of life; and when the synagogue perished because of her infidelity and incredulity, then the salvation of the Gentiles began.

Jesus also offered salvation to the dying synagogue. He did not wish to destroy, but to accomplish what

Moses, his prophet and his precursor, had prepared. He walked in his footprints, and said to the Jews: "The books of Moses contain the history of my life." And instead of establishing the Church on the ruins of the synagogue, he offers to the synagogue, spread out to the boundaries of the earth, to receive all nations into her bosom, and to become herself the Church. At the time we are speaking of, observes St. Jerome, he had wrought seven miracles; the eighth (the complement of the mysterious number which expresses the New Law—that is to say, the new creation by redemption) was the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus; the renovation, by a second birth, of the synagogue, the daughter of Moses. But the synagogue did not believe, and she did not implore to be healed or cured by faith; and in view of faith her rank is taken by the humble and fervent Gentiles. The last to demand aid, the Church is first to be heard; she is substituted for the synagogue. David announced that dark Ethiopia—heathendom—blackened with innumerable vices, would be the first to extend its hands toward the Saviour; and Jesus himself said to the Pharisees that the publicans and fallen women would precede them in the kingdom of heaven. The salvation destined for the synagogue, says St. Hilary, was given to the Church, and thus was accomplished the mystery whereby the Gentiles were put in possession of the benefits promised to the Jews, but refused by them.

In replacing the synagogue Jesus, the Son of God, on all occasions shows that he does not forget her. He continues his route toward the house of Jairus, toward the daughter of Moses, thereby teaching us beforehand what St. Paul so admirably interpreted in his

Epistle to the Romans on this point: "Has, then, God rejected his people? By no means. . . . God permitted the blindness of a portion of the Jews, so that the fulness of the nations may enter into the Church: and then all Israel shall be saved."

All the episodes of the miracle confirm this doctrine. There are indeed other meanings in it various and profound, for the divine character of the Scriptures, especially of the Gospel, has an inexhaustible variety in the consistent unity of its teaching, and this is why the fathers say the Gospel is typified by those beasts of the Apocalypse who are covered all over with eyes.

On arriving at the house of Jairus the Saviour meets with tumultuous throngs of mourners and funeral musicians. These were the useless band of rabbis by whom the Jewish people were environed. They called themselves the doctors of Israel; they were but the sad mutes of the funeral of its expired reign, of its defunct priesthood, of its annihilated temple. They did not comprehend the canticles which they sang in their temples on the Sabbath day; they were incomprehensible to them. Their Sabbath was destroyed, like everything else. What is dead is dead, and they knew it; but they did not wish to know that all would revive with Christ when Christ would reassume life. Jesus caused those sycophants to be still; he imposed silence on those who filled the ears of the dead body with vain words, as if to prevent the entrance of the words of Christ—words which revivify, words which are "spirit and life."

There was in the house other tumult—a confusion of lamentations and wailings. The Jewish people, remarks St. Jerome, are not a believing, but a turbulent, seditious people. Jesus, with his majestic self-posses-

sion, says to them: "The young woman is not dead; she is only sleeping." They ridicule this language, whose mildness already consoles those who are afflicted with real grief. Behold indeed, says St. Hilary, the men whom Jesus endeavors everywhere to convert—everywhere he finds them unwilling to believe; these very men were ready to mock all his doctrine, and he drives them off, for they were unworthy longer to behold his works. The Jews did not assist at the restoration to life of her who to them was dead, but who only slept before Him who is the life eternally victorious. This young woman was no more dead than Lazarus, of whom he also said, "He sleepeth," although Lazarus at that moment was sleeping in the tomb. He sleepeth, but I will go and awake him; I will draw him from the sleep of death, which is also my servant, and which obeys like the sea and the winds. I will call upon death, and it will come; I will send it away, and it will go away. I will demand again of it what I had permitted it to seize, and it will render it back again. As regards you who surround me, the girl is dead; but before me she is only sleeping, for I possess the power of life and death: *Vobis mortua est, mihi dormit.* This is the commentary of St. Jerome on the words spoken in the house of Jairus. The faith of the Christian will triumph over the phantom of death. St. Paul, speaking the language of Jesus, says to them, Let us only shed tears of hope for those who sleep in Christ; for they will rise up with Jesus who have fallen asleep in him. And this people of God will call the field enriched with life-giving blessings "Dormitories," where its ashes repose, as it were an immortal brood under the wings of the cross.

In accomplishing the resurrection from the dead

Jesus took care to have near him the father and mother and the three disciples. Resuscitated by virtue of the promise made to Moses, the Jews will receive life by the preaching of the apostles.

And the Lord takes the young girl by the hand, because no other hand but that of Jesus can render life to the Jews, whose hand put him to death. And when the dead girl rises up and walks, he orders them to give her something to eat—give her the divine nourishment of Christians, give her the Eucharist, and let the synagogue drink out of the new chalice, from which even now the Gentiles and the Samaritans drink together, so that all may have life, and an eternal abundance of life.

Such is the prophetic sense of the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus, in harmony with the curing or healing of Simon Peter's mother-in-law and every work of Jesus. There is yet another sense we will have to consider further.

Departing from the house of Jairus, Jesus meets with two blind men, who cry out to him: "Son of David, have mercy on us." He appears not to hear them; but the blind men, without ceasing, follow him even to his lodgings. There he demands of them if they believe he can accomplish what they desire of him. They reply: "Yes, Lord." Then he touches their eyes, saying, "Let it be done according to your faith,' and their eyes were opened. Soon after they present to him a man who became dumb by the power of the devil. Because this mute person was deprived of his liberty, he heals him without asking him any questions, just as we give baptism to little children. The people, full of admiration, cry out: "Nothing of the like has ever been seen in Israel." The Pharisees, acknow-

ledging these miracles, which they could not deny, said: "It is by the means of the prince of devils he casts out devils." That very same day he had cured sick ones whose disease baffled all human power, healed infirmities, conquered devils and death; but the impiety of pride would not believe.

CHAPTER V.

THE SICK MAN AT THE POOL—MAGDALEN.

JESUS, teaching and healing on his way, returns to Jerusalem to be present at the feast of the Jews—what many understand to have been the Pasch. He knew he would meet Pharisees as malevolent as, and more powerful than, those in Galilee. Since the miracle of Capharnaum, the Pharisees conspired against him—not that he could or had as yet attacked them much, but because he preached a penance different from theirs; because he had performed other works which they could not do; and because he led a life other than theirs. They accused him of blasphemy. His charity furnishes them wherewith to impute to him another crime. The miracle whose recital is about to follow is one of the most signal, by its importance, in the life of the Saviour, and by the vast and deep meaning of the circumstances which accompanied it.

There was at Jerusalem a pool celebrated by the favors God bestowed on it. It was called the Pool of Bethsaida, and in Greek the Pool Probatica, or the sheep-pond. Bethsaida signifies *the house of mercy*. The priests were accustomed to wash therein the sheep destined for the sacrifice—thereby the name of sheep-pond. It was a basin or pool of rain-water, enclosed

by five galleries of architecture. A vast number of all diseased persons assembled—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed, and others—who awaited the stirring of the waters. For it happened at certain times of the year the water was suddenly stirred by the invisible action of an angel, and the sick person who descended the first into the pool after the water had been so stirred was forthwith healed, whatever might be his infirmity.

Like these sick persons assembled under the galleries of the pool, awaiting that the waters might become healing and curative, the Jewish people, separated from other peoples named in the five books of Moses, expect the Redeemer. But that people became sick and infirm, and their law did not heal them. Given only to make sin known, the law accused the sinner; it could not absolve him. However, it kept him near the pool, near to salvation. That vast multitude of invalids, animated by faith and hope, represents, then, the throng of faithful Jews, hastening by their aspirations the advent of the Messias. In specifying diseases, aggravated and quite incurable, the Gospel extends the type to the rest of the human race. The Gentiles were sicker than the Jews—they were the blind, ignorant of the fundamental truths; the maimed, become even incapable of practising the natural law, of which they only preserved a vague notion; the consumptive, in whom the ardor of voluptuousness had dried up the sap of divine love. Those, therefore, radically lost could expect nothing save from a miracle. They were the mighty plague lying on the earth. To cure this disease, says St. Augustine, it required the services of the great Physician descended from heaven. This Physician was Jesus Christ. The prophets had announced him; the angel of the pool typified him.

The angel descended invisible — the divine Word, covered with the veil of humanity; the angel stirs up the waters: Jesus Christ, by his doctrine and miracles, stirs up the consciences and relieves the torpor of the things of this life. Life will no more stand in need of stagnant waters, as in former times. The sluggish mire in which the soul expected the healing of its original wound leads but to death. Unheard-of energies will be aroused in it; their sharp, stirring contact will fortify the debilities that effeminacy engenders. Jesus brings to the world three things—trouble, fire, and the sword; and these three things will establish therein peace. Peace be with you! I give you my peace! This peace is the excellent fruit of the supreme power—the peace which surpasses every other good.

Whatever infirmity they were afflicted with, the first that plunged into troubled water was instantly healed. By this interpreters of Holy Writ recognize two important figures or symbols: baptism and our Saviour's passion. By the Passion of Jesus Christ, who was, is, and will be ever the great trouble of the world, the waters of baptism receive their virtue of healing or curing souls. The reality surpasses the figure in as far as the power of God exceeds man's understanding. Nevertheless, the figure is the exact expression of the reality. The water of the pool possessed no virtue of itself; the baptismal water, of itself, has none. The water of the pool required the descent of an angel and the movement he excited in it; it was also necessary that Jesus Christ should descend into the Jordan, so that the water, through the contact with his immaculate flesh, might acquire what St. Bernard calls the *jus baptismi*—should become the water of baptism; and it baptizes

not, it effaces not sin, until put in motion and stirred in a certain manner by the Holy Trinity, who suddenly unites to it the grace of the Holy Ghost. The action of plunging one's self in the pool expresses faith in the Passion of Jesus Christ: by the sacrament of penance, which renews in us the splendor of baptism, we descend into the pool wherein the blood of Jesus Christ, washing away our impurities, heals our infirmity.

And it was the sheep-pond! This place bears this name, wherein breathes the mildness and tenderness of the Gospel. They washed therein the sheep destined for the sacrifice; this is what the world then knew. Now we see the prophecy of the Sacrifice offered for the sheep. While Jesus appears under those porticos, witnesses of so great and so constant a miracle, the name and the miracle, the past and the future, all are illumined by his splendor. Behold the Lamb of God at the sheep-pond—the Lamb, the Ruler, the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world. Behold Him who will give his flesh and his blood for the sins of the world; and he is, at the same time, the shepherd of the lost sheep, who wanders through briers and thorns to find it out, who carries it back on his shoulders, and who will take care of it in the eternal sheepfold. It is He who, by the prophet, had called his faithful "the sheep of God's pasturage"—he who will say to Peter: "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep." Behold him on the border of the pool: type of the treasures which he carries with him. He comes where the sheep of sacrifice are washed, himself the true Victim, who will anxiously wish to be washed in his own blood when the hour shall come to die for us.

As he gives meaning to the place, so he is the meaning of the miracle. This great miracle, renewed each

year for so many ages, recalls to the Jews, in a striking manner, both the inefficacy of the law to purify from sin and the power of the Messias to save mankind. The healing qualities of the pool explain the mysteries announced in the Temple; they inspire prayer, strengthen hope, and predispose to faith by baptism. Since water can heal diseases of the body, by water the diseases of the soul can equally be healed.

But why is it that there was but one cure performed each time the water was stirred? To signify unity, answers St. Augustine—only one God, only one baptism; he only is purified from all spiritual infirmity who participates in the unity of the Catholic Church and in the mysteries of Jesus Christ. In vain can the baptism of heretics be called a true baptism; it will not save those who live knowingly and voluntarily beyond the pale of unity of the Catholic Church. Salvation is obtained only through her; she is the only Church that has received the power from God of saving souls. This sick man, only healed by the waters of the pool, is therefore a type or figure of all true Christians, washed in the baptismal font, who form but one unique Christian people—the first and last mystic body of Jesus Christ. Those who, although at divers times and places, receive the baptism of Catholic unity, are members of the one same divine body; they descend into the sacred bath, and rise up out of it as only one man. Others, not pertaining to the body of the Church, are like those who plunge themselves into the waters after the first, and who derive no advantage from them. They arrive too late; they receive a baptism which, so to speak, apostasy effaces, and therefore nothing is left for them.

Thus Providence sustains the Jewish faith, and,

advance, fortifies and enlightens ours, giving to it the foundation of the figurative testimony and the foundation of the apostolic testimony—both indestructible bases, whereon is built up the divine edifice of religion, whose corner-stone is Christ.

But there was crouched there, under the porticos of the pool, a man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. Jesus, knowing the long duration of his infirmity, says to him: "Do you wish to be cured?" The sick man replies: "Lord, I have not a man who will assist me to descend into the waters when they are troubled: whilst I am coming another goes down before me." Jesus says to him: "Rise, take up your bed, and walk." Forthwith, this man was healed. He takes his bed and walks away. The Jews, seeing this, say to him: "This is the Sabbath day, and it is not lawful to carry your bed." He responds: "He who has cured me told me to do so; to take up my bed and walk." They ask him: "Who told thee to take up thy bed and walk?" But this man did not know who was his benefactor, and could not point him out, because Jesus mingled among the throng.

Even when we do not know the Physician, he will reveal himself by his boundless mercy and goodness, as well as by his power. This infirm man is the human race. He suffers for thirty-eight years. This number is not marked out without a purpose: two great interpreters, St. Augustine and the Venerable Bede, have studied its mystery. Forty, they say, made up of the number ten four times repeated, marks the perfection of the law in all its works. This number is the symbol of a holy and perfect life; for the just observe with exactness the ten commandments of God, repeated in the four books of the Gospel of Christ. But one

cannot observe the divine law without the practice of two precepts of charity, towards God and towards his neighbor; and where this twofold love is wanting the whole perfection of the law is broken, although man possesses otherwise the knowledge and faith of it. This is why this number thirty-eight—forty less two—demonstrates to us that the infirm man at the pool is an image of guilty and suffering humanity. It possesses the knowledge of the law of God, engraven divinely on the hearts of all men; it does not possess the twofold love by which alone this law is accomplished.

Such is the explanation of St. Augustine, developed by Bede. The world is unaccustomed to these kinds of researches, and little disposed to admit their results. Nevertheless, no sound mind will deny that the thirty-eight years cover a mystery, and will not disdain a solution which such men have proposed. One will more easily comprehend the preference which Jesus gave to the infirm man at the pool over all other sick or afflicted persons whom he could have cured. Thirty-eight years of expectation and useless efforts have not conquered the faith of this man. He always hopes; he always struggles in the hope of being cured. For having beforehand put in practice the lesson the Lord will give later on perseverance in prayer, he is saved by a miracle greater than that he hoped for. Jesus at first asks him if he wishes to be cured? The physician and the priest ask questions. How many implore to be cured, and in their hearts do not wish to be healed—that is to say, do not wish to do what is necessary for curing them! This sluggish will to avoid being healed manifests itself especially in spiritual matters. "I prayed," said St. Augustine, "and I was afraid I would be heard too soon."

The word the Lord addresses to this infirm man warns us anxiously to desire our deliverance from temporal and spiritual infirmities; for every word dropped from his lips is addressed to every man in this world. Besides, it opens up to the infirm man the way of faith. Jesus does not require an act of faith from this infirm man, who did not come to him, who asked nothing of him, who did not know him; but he wishes that he might know and remember that he had been the object of a miracle, so that his soul also might be healed and saved by faith.

The infirm man humbly responds as a man who has profited by his sorrow. He murmurs not, accuses not Providence, and doubts not of the virtue of the divine remedy. "Lord, I have no man to help me down to the pool; and whilst I am dragging myself along to endeavor to plunge in, another person descends into it before me." Here there is no complaint. Every soul that Jesus predestines exhibits this ground-work of righteousness, humility, and greatness. This is without exception in the Gospel. Notwithstanding all abjectness and humiliation, in spite of all stains, the divine impress remains on the last drachma. The eye of God only can discern this mark; he recognizes it, and there is no mire wherein he will not thrust his hand to seize his property and his treasure. He will go to Samaria and to the borders of Tyre and Sidon; he will go among the publicans and Pharisees; he will even go down to hell, where those await him who, overtaken by the Deluge, raised their eyes to heaven and confessed that they sinned. Later, we will see his grace sometimes penetrating like the morning dew, and sometimes like the impetuous stroke of a thunderbolt, into places shut and

fortified against him. He does not disdain to stand by the criminal on the scaffold, nor does he disdain to enter the cabinet of the learned, nor even—O miracle!—the shameful haunts of the voluptuary; he will enter wherever a tear, a sigh, protests against the triumphs of Satan and says to him: "I have no man; come assist me."

Jesus said to the infirm man: "Arise"—that is, be healed. These words give power and force to the infirm man which he had not before. He adds: "Take thy bed and walk." Two commandments addressed to the cured man to prove incontestably a miracle, to convert the Jews, and to strengthen our faith. The human family, in the person of the paralytic, said: I have no one; no man is found. Pilate will say to him: *Ecce Homo*—Behold the Man. The word of the paralytic prepares the word of Pilate, and both these mysterious words explain one another in all their wonderful mysteriousness. It is, then, the whole human race Jesus commands: Arise, get ye up, my people, from your prostrate condition. Now you are making an effort to get out of the mire of sin wherein you wallow; you have only to will to accomplish what you desire. The pool is always open for you, the water always stirred, and every infirmity of the soul always healed. *Take up thy bed!* The bed of the soul is the body. In this corrupted body you lie; raise it up from the earth, snatch it away from corruption. By the grace of the sacraments your soul is the mistress of your body, and you can bring it under subjection. "*Go forth!*" Remove yourself from this empoisoned air in which you sicken; ascend to the healthy mountains upwards to heaven.

The paralytic obeys. The Jews interfere, with their

worldly sneers: "What are you doing? You violate the law." "I only do what I was commanded; I only do what he who cured me told me to do." The Jews insist. They ask the paralytic, not who cured him, but who told him to take his bed and walk. They cared nothing about the miracle, and were not anxious to know its Author. They wish only to know who had ordered what they regarded as a violation of the Sabbath. This is the character they display everywhere, as faithful to themselves as Jesus to himself, persevering in their justice inspired by hatred, as he is persevering in mercy inspired by love.

The paralytic cannot name him nor point him out. He does not know Jesus, and Jesus hides himself among the crowd. The throng is clamorous, says a father; Jesus wishes to be seen in secret. Amid the crowd of those who are spiritually sick, figured by the infirmities of the body, among sinners, and among the wicked, there is none able to raise himself to the knowledge of God. Nevertheless, the paralytic knows well who had cured him. Jesus finds him in the Temple. This fact of being in the Temple is a new feature, creditable to this man. Using his recovered strength, he does not go to mix himself up in the affairs and pleasures of the world; he goes to the Temple. Hereby he merits the honor to behold Jesus. Jesus says to him: "Sin no more, lest something worse happen to you."

Therefore, this man's infirmity was the consequence of his sins. Though all bodily diseases do not originate from sin, says St. Chrysostom, yet sin is the most general cause of them. God punishes the body with the transgressions of the soul; so that the infirmity of the body may make us reflect on that of the soul, which we shamefully abuse. His clemency turns the affec-

tions of the flesh to the advantage of the spirit. We fall sick only by the dispensation of Providence, often hidden, always useful, never unjust. We can cure ourselves more surely by prayer than by doctor's medicines, whose wisest prescriptions have besides for their object our restoration, at least materially, as regards the law of God. The law of God is given to the body as well as to the soul; to fulfil it is as useful to the one as to the other. What we take from the body we give to the soul.

The warning of the Lord is terrible: Take care, lest something worse happens to you. This sinner passed thirty-eight years, almost his whole life, in the captivity of a malady more dire than imprisonment. What has he to dread worse? Nothing in this world; everything in the other. The fathers interpret this menace as the chastisements of the future life, reserved for the obstinate and imprudent, who cease only to sin when they cease to live. The longest afflictions of this life are as nothing compared to the eternal punishments in hell. Enjoy yourselves, you men of mind, says St. Chrysostom; riot in all sorts of dissipation, let go the reins of your passions, plunge into every vice, whilst you are here—you who do not admit the divine justice could punish the sins of a moment with eternal torments. Had this sick man sinned for the space of thirty-eight years, since he was to be punished for the space of thirty-eight years? He had committed sins in an instant; you see the duration of his punishment. The world does the same. Homicide is the crime of an instant; the punishment is perpetual. But why do we speak of the crime of a moment? The act is instantaneous. The intention is irrevocable. The sinner would wish to live always to sin; always sin for-

sakes him, not he sin. In hell the desire of sinning is inherent in the sinner. He does not say that he hates sin; there is an immense difference between hating sin and doing penance for it for salvation. Repentance, contrition, is a grace which makes one detest sin, not only as disastrous and deceitful, but as offensive to God. This grace does not descend to the eternal abyss of hell; for it requires the beginning of love which makes penitents—a love impossible to the damned. Sin is an apostasy—a voluntary separation from God. If man dies in that state wherein God has not placed him, he remains there, because he finds no means of reconciliation but in the Church and during life. Apostasy becomes irrevocable; the apostate remains there irrevocably. St. Irenæus compares the reprobate to a man who, with full knowledge, plucks out his eyes. This madman remains blind for ever—not blind for the want of light, but blinded through himself, having been, by his own will, deprived of the organ he holds from the goodness of God to enjoy light. Such is the dreadful mystery of the damned: wishing always to sin, and detesting sin; wishing always to repent, and detesting repentance; irrevocably attached by his will to all that his will detests; fixed and riveted to what is intolerable; not even able to imagine a state he would wish to be in, nor to conceive anything but the state he is in. For if he dreamed only of another state, even more horrible, he would take refuge in his dream and esteem himself happy. "There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." This is an eternal revolt from God, an eternal hatred of God, an eternal writhing and torment of the soul; this is an immortal and eternal sin, a punishment mortal and eternal.

As the grace of repentance, and the beautiful character of the sinner penitent and pardoned, appear in the paralytic, so the character of the reprobation is manifested among the Jews who surround him. This infirm man has been humbled; he is found at the Temple; and, according to many interpreters, Jesus, so anxious not to discourage the sinner, gave him this severe lesson only because he found in him a soul truly patient and a docile mind. Indeed, he listens respectfully, and manifests his gratitude. The Jews asked him who had ordered him to carry his bed on the Sabbath—that is, in their mind, to transgress the law. This was the only thing they wished to know. As soon as he knows Jesus he goes to them, not to say, "He who has ordered me to carry my bed," but, "He who has healed me is Jesus." In other words, according to the divine signification, He who has cured me is the Saviour. They denounce him as a criminal. He boldly and fearlessly confesses the truth. He is not slow, says St. Augustine, to publish what he has seen.

But the Jews continue to make no account of the miracle nor of the benefit, and only adhere to what they considered as a transgression of the Sabbath. They saw Jesus showing himself on all occasions a strict observer of religion; but it was not their religion, for their religion was only what they had made themselves by their pride and self-interest. They think of nothing else from this moment but to put him to death, and begin to persecute him, publishing everywhere that Jesus of Nazareth violated the law of the Lord.

Jesus replies to them: "Up to this moment my Father has not ceased to act, nor have I myself ceased to act." By these words he affirms his divinity. God

rested on the seventh day, in this sense only: that he ceased to create. He did not cease, nor does he cease, to act for the preservation of created things. In calling God his Father, and establishing his unity of operation with him, Jesus therefore affirms, declares, proves, the unity of the divine nature. He does not call himself the Son by adoption only—what the Jews do not object to—but the Son by generation. He attributes to himself the divine nature, the perfect equality with God.

So this is what the Jews understood, and what we are absolutely bound to understand, like them, or like them also accuse Jesus of imposture, and consequently deny the divine mission, as well as his divinity. For if Jesus Christ is not God, he is not even a sincere man, and consequently he is not the envoy of God. But how can human reason prove that he is not God, without believing Christ Jesus God—how can human reason comprehend the New Testament, Christianity, God, even herself? After having related the healing of the paralytic, St. John narrates the discourse by which Jesus establishes the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father, and produces to the Jews undoubted titles of his mission. Before these words, burning with a divine glow, reason bows down; she acknowledges profoundly the master of life and death: "Amen, amen, I say unto you, that he who heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath life everlasting; and cometh not into judgment, but is passed from death to life. Amen, amen, I say unto you, that the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so he hath given to the Son also to have life in him-

self: and he hath given him power to do judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Wonder not at this, for the hour cometh wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." But "the Jews were now more eager to put him to death, not only because he violated the Sabbath, but because he said God was his Father, and made himself equal to God."

Jesus detests the vices of the Pharisees, not their persons. He accepts the invitation to dine with one of them called Simon. During the feast a woman enters the hall carrying a vessel of alabaster which contains an odoriferous liquid. She was called Magdalene. She was a sinner; the whole town knew her wicked, scandalous life. In the presence of the invited guests she prostrates herself behind Jesus, bitterly weeping for her sins. She kisses his feet, pouring on them her perfumes, mingled with her tears, and dries them with her hair.

The master of the house, seeing the action of Magdalene, is astonished that Jesus should allow her so to act. He thinks within himself if he were a prophet he should know the character of this woman, that she was a scandalous sinner.

Jesus wishes to show to the Pharisee that he knew better than he who this woman was, and that he knew him better than he knew himself. "Simon, I have something to say to you. A certain creditor had two debtors. One owed him five hundred denarii, the other fifty; and as neither the one nor the other had wherewith to pay, he remits both what they owed him. Which loved him the more?"

"According to my opinion," answers Simon, "he to whom the most was remitted." "You judge rightly," replies Jesus.

Then, turning himself toward the sinner, but continuing to speak to the Pharisee: "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You prepared no water for me to wash my feet; this woman has bedewed them with her tears, and has dried them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss; she, since she has entered, has not ceased to kiss my feet. You have not poured oil on my head; she has poured out her perfume on my feet. This is why I say to you her many sins are forgiven, because she has loved much. But he to whom less is forgiven loves less."

The perfume of Magdalene has filled all earth and times. Accepted by Jesus, it has become even the odor of Christ, the odor of infinite clemency, which attracts to eternal life. Magdalene is the Saviour's first penitent. She acknowledges him truly the Saviour, in the sense that he was "to save his people from their sins"; she implores him to heal her perfectly; she begs of him to heal the mortal wounds of her soul. She makes true satisfaction; she satisfies with her tears; she pays the true tribute—that of her love. Jesus decrees to her a glory which he has not given to any other: "She loved much." This is a word never before pronounced in the world, and the world never imagined anything approaching it; it remains in the world more powerful over hearts than all the lights of reason, than the books of morality, than all the constraints of the law.

Jesus then says to this great sinner, henceforth the great penitent: "Your sins are forgiven." The Pharisees murmur, as they did at Capharnaum on hearing

the same language. "Who is this," they say among themselves, "who even pardons sins?" The world in such a case does not permit us to condemn, nor does it permit us to pardon. It permits either an infamous indulgence or an implacable rigor. God sees the repentance, pardons and purifies.

Without replying any more to the Pharisee, Jesus says to Magdalene: "Your faith has healed you." He does not say to her what he said to the paralytic, what he will later on say to the adulterous woman: "Sin no more." She loves, and he has nothing more to say to her.

This sinful woman is the same Magdalene of whom it is elsewhere written that our Lord cast out from her seven devils; she is also the same person known as Mary Magdalene, sister of Martha and Lazarus, of whom Jesus said she had chosen the better part. She will be at Calvary at the side of the blessed Mother of Jesus and St. John—two of the purest vessels of virginity; she will be there as the reality of the promises of the immense mercy of which Thamar and Rahab, the ancestors of the Messias, were the figures. Exalted by grace, she will yet have the glory of being the first among the disciples who will see Jesus issuing victorious from the tomb. And the Church, instructed and guided by the Holy Ghost, chants, on the festival of the Assumption of the Most Holy Virgin, the gospel wherein it is related that Mary, seated at the feet of the Lord, remains listening to him. Such is this woman—a touching and sublime type among so many others, which Jesus created and gave to the earth for ever by moulding with his own hands and with his own blood the slime of humanity.

About this epoch the time is ended which St.

Jerome calls the year of peace, the sweet, mild year of our Lord; for, indeed, Jesus up to this time met with but little contradiction, and was almost accepted by the world. The Pharisees had not organized their resistance; the people, left to themselves, received with love the goodness of God.

These just recitals of the Gospel, in spite of their austerity, excite a certain feeling of divine joy. One breathes in them the sweet fragrance of opening day. It seems that nature, enriched with its share of graces, should appear in those happy moments more smiling, as if adorned with the reflection of Eden. There was without doubt something more perfect in the serenity of those nights that beheld Jesus praying; in the clearness of those waters which bore him on their bosom; in the purity of that air which received his breath. If the perfumes of Magdalene made fragrant the whole house wherein they were poured out, what an odor of life must not all that country rejoice in which was filled with the breath of Jesus! Do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand! The sweet, mild voice of Jesus repeats and confirms this cry of John the Baptist. At the same time the divine Master spreads abroad the beauty of the doctrine and the abundance of miracles. Never had anything like this been presented to the eyes or hearts of men. Nowhere before had there been a question of the proximity of heaven. The golden age was passed; behold, it comes, it is at hand, and repentance is a tear of the heart, immediately compensated by the fulness of love in the truth of God.

BOOK III.

THE STRUGGLE.

CHAPTER I.

CONSPIRACY OF THE JEWS—MIRACLES ON THE SABBATH DAY—INSTITUTION OF THE APOSTLES—JUDAS.

AFTER Simon's banquet the Pharisees exert themselves to keep a watchful eye on Jesus. Everywhere he goes they surround him, controlling his actions and criminating his words, making an effort to avoid the truth. One day, as Jesus passed through a field of wheat, his disciples, feeling the pangs of hunger, plucked a few heads and ate them. This was on the Sabbath day. The Pharisees were present. They reprimanded the disciples sharply, and said to the Master: "See how your followers do what is not permitted on the Sabbath day!" Jesus responds to them that the priests who serve the Temple violate the Sabbath without being guilty. He recalled to their memory David, who on a Sabbath day ate the loaves of presence placed before the altar. Accused himself, he does not vindicate himself by alleging the continual

travail for his Father. When the question arises of excusing his disciples, he is satisfied with producing the example of David, a servant like themselves. He declares to the Pharisees that God prefers mercy to sacrifice, and at length, to give them a knowledge of the law, and to assert anew his own power, he adds: "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath: the Son of Man is even master of the Sabbath." St. John Chrysostom remarks that in this question of the Sabbath, which so often presents itself, Jesus not only justifies himself as regarded his divinity, but also as regarded his humanity alone. Sometimes in one manner and sometimes in another he takes care to establish both, endeavoring to enforce the mystery of his humiliations and his divine dignity.

The Pharisees could oppose nothing to this sublime wisdom, and became more furious on that account. A little while after—it was on the Sabbath day—Jesus enters into the synagogue to teach according to his custom. They demanded of him if he believed it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day; for they had resolved among themselves to impute to him as sinful those acts of mercy. They await his reply to cry out scandal or to force him to contradict himself. Jesus knows their thoughts. There was a man seated in the midst of the assembly whom he commanded to rise, and this man's hand was withered. Then, addressing himself to the Pharisees, he demands of them if it be permitted on the Sabbath day to do good or evil, to save life or to destroy it (in not saving it when one has the power to do so). They are mute. Jesus proceeds: "Is there any one among you who, having but one sheep, if it falls in the pit on the Sabbath day, will not drag it out?" And how far

superior and more excellent is man to the sheep! He is, therefore, allowed and permitted by the law to do good on the Sabbath day. They continue to keep silence, raging with spite. Jesus, afflicted at the hardness of their hearts, looks on them with indignation. Then he says to the man who had his right hand withered: "Stretch out your hand." Forthwith the withered hand becomes sound like the other.

This is the man of the world. His left hand, the hand of carnal works, is living, active, and able. His right hand, the hand of holy works, remains idle, and becomes withered. If you wish your hand to be healed, extend it, apply it to the works of justice. Open it to the poor. Let charity distribute what avarice and fraud have amassed.

The Pharisees go away and deliberate with the Herodians on the means of destroying Jesus. The Herodians were of the Sadducees, infidel in religion, absolute in politics, partisans of Herod and the Romans, whom the Pharisees detested. The rigorists and the corrupt, hitherto enemies, commenced to agree together against the Just. This is the future history of religion. The sects and the impious always and everywhere have ended by coming to a mutual understanding to oppress the Church. But means are required. Herod had not yet dared to kill John the Baptist, because of the people. The Pharisees seek a pious pretext to put Jesus to death. He proves and believes it permissible and lawful to perform miracles on the Sabbath day; but he only has employed his word for that purpose. "Was he forbidden to speak on the Sabbath day, or was he bound to exclude from the number of works permitted, those which healed the sick?"

The conspiracy, so visibly formed, attests the veracity

of the Gospel history. The two cardinal points of accusation against our Lord are that he called himself the Son of God, equal to God, and that he violated the Sabbath day. But he has never violated the Sabbath, except by performing miracles.

But the hour had not come, and Jesus gives them time to deliberate against him. He retires towards the sea. A mighty throng of people follows him from Jerusalem and the various countries of Palestine. Tyre and Sidon flock together after him. The sick and infirm are carried and laid at his feet. He heals them all. The demons who torment the possessed prostrate themselves before him, and cry out: "You are the Son of God." This testimony, coming from his declared enemies, proves his divinity. The prophecy receives its accomplishment in the full light of day: "Behold my Servant whom I have chosen, my Well Beloved. I will pour out my Spirit on him, and he will announce justice to the nations. He will not contest, nor will he repine; nobody will hear him breaking out in high places in complaints; he will not trample on the bruised reed, and he will not extinguish the lamp that yet burns, until he causes justice to triumph; and it is in them the people will be saved."

His tender compassion for the present and future miseries which he healed, and the necessity of divulging his mission, were not the only causes that caused him to multiply miracles. He wished to confirm the faith of his disciples. The moment had come to institute the Apostolic College, which existed in germ since the first calling of Peter. Jesus could himself alone convert the world; but since he had united himself with human nature, he could not confer a greater honor on it than associating it in the work of salvation.

Therefore, after having passed the night in prayer, so that the Church may well comprehend how important it is for her to be aided by the Holy Ghost in the election of her ministers, he calls the disciples, and chooses twelve from among them, for the purpose of sending them over the world to preach his Gospel. He gave them the name of apostles—which signifies *sent* or *envoys* of God—with the power to cure the sick, and to have power over and cast out devils. Here are the names of the twelve: Simon, to whom Jesus had given the name of Peter; James, son of Zebedee; John, brother of James; Andrew, brother of Peter; Philip; Bartholomew; Matthew, the publican; Thomas; James, son of Alpheus; Jude, his brother, called Thaddeus; Simon, of Cana; Judas the Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus.

It is believed that Bartholomew is the same as Nathanael, who appears at the first calling, brought by Philip. James and Jude, or Thaddeus, sons of Alpheus, are children of Mary, wife of Alpheus, or Cleophas, and sister of the Blessed Virgin.

The Evangelists do not assign all of them the same rank. St. Matthew puts Andrew immediately after Peter, and he places himself after Thomas, whilst the others place him before. Peter is always the first, and Judas the Iscariot the last.

We find in the fathers divers interpretations of the name of each apostle, having relation to some symbolical trait of their vocation. The surname of *children of thunder* may signalize the ambition of the children of Zebedee, who wished to elevate themselves above others. This term, applied to John, announces the future author of the Apocalypse and of the Gospel of the Word. Apropos of Peter interpreters

apply the words of St. Paul: "The Rock was Christ." As to the number of twelve, it is predicted and typified many times in the books of the Old Testament. If we regard them, says Rodolfus, as the Christian fathers, we will find them with twelve patriarchs, fathers of God's people. When they irrigate the world with the abundant waters of doctrine, they resemble the sources of living water which flow miraculously from the Rock of Elim. When they ornament the Church with the splendor of their virtues, they are the twelve precious stones that decorate the pectoral of the high-priest. When they nourish souls with the Word of Life, they are the twelve consecrated loaves placed before the altar of the Lord. When they penetrate the divine secrets, which they communicate to the faithful, they are the twelve spies whom Moses sent into the promised land, and who, at their return, gave the people so glowing a description of it. They are also the twelve stones set up in the running stream of the Jordan, against which the billows of the age are dashed to pieces; they are the twelve young lions of the throne of Solomon, the twelve pillars of the altar of the Jehovah, the twelve oxen that bear up the molten sea, typified by the baptism wherein every stain is washed away. They are the twelve gates of the heavenly Jerusalem, the twelve unshaken, immovable foundations of its holy walls, and especially they are the twelve brilliant stars which encircle and form the eternal crown of the well-beloved Spouse.

The title alone of apostle recalls the miracle of miracles. St. Paul, who received it from Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, insists on the wonder of which he himself is the most wonderful instrument: "Wonderful work! God converted the world, not by the art of human wis-

dom, but by the simple manifestation of his doctrine, which is spirit and truth. He has not taken advantage of the learned, according to the flesh, nor of the powerful, nor of the noble, to establish his Gospel; but he has chosen a few men, the most impotent, the weakest, the most illiterate, to confound the strong. He made use of what was nothing to destroy what was, so that none might glorify himself in having succeeded in so great an enterprise, but that all might be attributed to the power of God."

The apostles, then, were all poor boatmen and sinners, people of low extraction. Judas was the only Jew; the eleven others were Galileans. The proverb says: The Galileans love honor, the Jews gold.

Judas was charged with the common purse. It is believed he came from the town of Karioth, situated on the confines of the Dead Sea—a miserable place, whose name indicates many sinister significations. Iscariot: the man of Karioth, the man with the purse, the man addicted to usury, the man of murderous intent, the traitor. Why did our divine Lord, cognizant of all things, past and future, and who reads the innermost thoughts of the soul, admit this miserable man among his apostles? There are many reasons for it, all of great instruction. Our Lord wishes to do him a favor; he does not desire to take away from him the liberty of making a bad use of it, rendering himself more guilty by slighting it. It was by his will alone Judas becomes guilty, just as he might become a saint y the right exercise of his will. His fall teaches us with what fear and with what vigilance man must always labor to be saved. On the other hand, it is certain that Judas, when he preached by virtue of the choice of Jesus Christ, was as privileged to be heard

as St. Peter; hence we learn that the ministry is independent of the pastor, and that we ought to respect the pastors in the exercise of the mission they lawfully have received, leaving them to answer before God for their personal unworthiness. Thus Judas is a great witness of this. By the crime of his betrayal he accomplishes and fulfils the prophecies; by the crime of his death he attests the innocence of Jesus. Incredulity has well understood this, and has insinuated that perhaps Judas did not commit suicide. If he had had any testimony to render against his Master, he would have lived; if he had lived, we would have known him. Nor would the synagogue wish to leave him in the shade, nor the Church consent to let him fall into despair; either the Pharisees would have made him write, or the apostles would have made him weep.

St. Augustine adds that the Lord having taken upon him our human frailty, he did not wish to refuse this bitter destiny of human infirmity, to be betrayed by his apostle. It is not only in the time of his Passion he is obliged to give us an example of patience in the cruelest torments. He gives himself up, bearing with Judas' perfidy, so that every one may learn to bear with moderation an error of judgment and contempt of benefits conferred.

CHAPTER II.

SERMON ON THE MOUNT—THE LEPER HEALED—THE CENTURION—THE WIDOW'S SON—THE ENVOYS OF JOHN THE BAPTIST—THE PHARISEES.

ABOUT the time of the institution of the Apostolic College—a few days before, or a few days after, or the very same day—Jesus delivers his sermon on the mount. He addressed it principally to his disciples, but making himself heard by the multitude. This discourse contains the whole morality of Christianity. The Saviour prophesies in it the destiny of the Church; and by traits full of majesty and empire he takes possession of the future world. It is enough to notice here what belongs more to history and to the character of the Man-God.

Listen, then, to what he says to those men of low extraction and humble parentage—men without name, without fortune, without education—who are grouped around him in little circles, on some mound of earth, on some unknown hillock, in a tributary province. He proclaimed the beatitude of the poor, of the meek, of the afflicted, of the oppressed, of the merciful. He adds: "You will be happy when men will heap on you opprobrium and all manner of insults on account of me and the doctrine I preach to you; they will persecute you; they will say all sorts of evil about

CHRIST PREACHING ON THE MOUNT

you contrary to the truth. Rejoice and give vent to your joy, because the reward that awaits you in heaven is very great. You are the salt of the earth; you are the light of the world." But what kind of light should they carry? The truth that he reveals, which surpasses all comprehension, which absolutely requires faith. And what is the salt they must spread over the earth? A morality which he imposes, and which he makes incomparably severer than all the duties, the yoke of which the most part of men find already too heavy.

"You have learned that it has been said to your forefathers, You shall not kill; but for my part I say to you, whosoever is angry with his brother merits to be condemned. . . . You have learned that it has been said to your ancestors, You shall not commit adultery; I say to you that whosoever looks on a woman with lustful eyes has already committed adultery in his heart. It has been said, Whosoever puts away his wife, let him give her a bill of divorce; but I, of my own authority, say to you that whosoever will put away his wife, if it be not on account of adultery, exposes her to commit adultery; and that he who marries her after that her husband has put her away commits adultery."

Three times he repeats this all-powerful, sovereign expression. *Ego autem dico vobis*—BUT I SAY TO YOU. The history of Christianity, from the first to the last page, is but the history of the triumph of these few words; by their force and character, which would seem to indicate more of defeat than victory, this triumph continually surrounds with the radiancy of the Divinity the Man who has wished to impose it on the world, and who has known how the world should submit to it. If Jesus Christ had

ended his divine mission on Calvary, if his graces had ceased to flow thenceforth, he would only be a sublime madman; astonished reason would ask itself how this man of miracles, this model of all wisdom, of all justice, and of all truth, could have believed himself God.

It was in the sermon on the mount that he taught and, we might say, created prayer; for few men had till then truly prayed, not truly knowing who God was, nor what man was, nor what man ought to ask of God. From the lips of the Man-God went forth to resound eternally the common prayer of the human race—that short but significant demand, the two first words of which consecrate the brotherhood of men in the paternity of God: *Our Father!*

As Jesus descends from the mount a leper comes to him; bending the knee, he says to him: "Lord, if you wish, you can heal me." Jesus commiserates his forlorn, helpless condition. He stretches out his hand, touches him, and says: "I will: be thou healed." Forthwith the leprosy of this man disappears. The touch of the leper renders one defiled; nevertheless, Jesus touches him, and, putting himself above, beyond, and superior to the legal observances, demonstrates that charity abolishes them. Other diseased, infirm persons were continually brought to him, and he healed them all.

The leper who comes to Jesus, or rather towards whom Jesus descends, is the human race in the state in which the divine Word finds them when he humbles himself by coming down from his glory in heaven and assuming our nature. He is the man who has not received or who has lost the gift of God. The leper, in the language of the Scripture, is the type or figure, the very name, of sin. Inherited by blood, it is origi-

nal sin; contagious, it is actual sin. It burns, inflames like envy, it withers up like avarice, it inflates like pride, it enervates and destroys like sloth; it corrupts, it devours; it spreads infection and horror. Like the leper, man, a prey to every vice, is separated not only from God and the angels, but from men. They fly from him, they exclude him from society. The condemned of human justice, like the lepers, formerly wore a particular dress. The bagnios or prisons are the lazar-houses of sin. Human law, impotent like the Old Law, excommunicates by excluding from society those miserable wretches. It enchains its lepers; it does not pretend or undertake to heal them. There are many among them whom it declares incurable. There are many among them it kills. So Jesus goes towards those, and many of them say to him: "Lord, if you wish, you can heal me." He wishes it, and he cures them; and if all would say to him, Heal us! all would be healed.

However, he seeks solitude to pray; but charity or love leads him back among the mighty throng imploring his aid. Having returned to Capharnaum, the chief men of the town entreat him to come to the house of a centurion to cure his servant, dangerously sick. Jesus answers them: "I will go and cure him." He sets out on his way to perform acts of mercy—the only Son of the living God goes to cure a poor invalid in the service of a stranger. The centurion, notified of his approach, says to him, or causes to be said to him: "Lord, I am not worthy you should enter into my house; but say only this word, and my servant shall be cured." Jesus, admiring this language, declares that he had not found so much faith in Israel. He announces the conversion of the Gentiles and the reprobation of

the Jews: "Many will come from the east and from the west, and will be placed at the feast with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast into darkness." Then he says to the centurion: "Go, and be it done to you according to what you have believed." At the same hour the servant was healed.

The Gospel makes mention of three soldiers to whom the gift of faith was given: he whose son our Lord had cured, this one, and he who presided at Calvary. Further, tradition states that the soldier who pierced the side of the crucified Saviour was converted. It is believed he it is whom the Church honors under the name of St. Longinus. Cornelius was the first Gentile whom St. Peter received into the Church. The soldiers are seen flocking to the preaching and the baptism of John the Baptist. The profession of arms, the profession of obedience, of devotedness, and of sacrifice, arouses in the hearts of men certain dispositions which lead them to God. Christianity causes them to entertain sentiments of humanity, of which they were ignorant; it elevates and ennobles their profession, raises it to an honor it never could have attained without religious influence, and which it loses at once when that influence departs from it.

After this Jesus proceeds to the city called Naim. As he drew near to its gates he meets with a sad and mournful multitude; they are carrying to the grave a widow's only son. The poor, heart-broken mother was there. He says to her, "Weep not." And, touching the bier, he says to the dead man: "Arise!" And he that was dead arose, seated himself, and began to speak; and Jesus gave him over to his mother.

This is the second resurrection mentioned in the

Gospel; and there will be a third. Each one has its different signification, which will be explained further on.

The noise of these miracles resounded throughout all Israel. John the Baptist hears them spoken of in prison, where Herod Antipas held him captive, without preventing him from seeing, at least sometimes, some of his disciples; and, though captive, he continued to announce the Messias. What he knew of Jesus did not allow him to be unmindful of him; but his disciples, as it often happens, neither understood well his lessons nor his true greatness. Seeing Jesus elevating himself far above their master, they conceive a jealousy of him which leads them to incredulity. Through a false zeal for John they refuse his testimony. The Precursor wisely wishes that they should use the testimony of their own eyes. For this reason he sends two of the most obstinate to Jesus, and they demand of him on the part of John: "Art thou he who was to come, or are we to expect another?" Are you the person predicted by the prophets? The response of Jesus was divine. At that very moment he cures a vast number of diseased and infirm and possessed persons who encompassed him. Forthwith addressing himself to the disciples of John the Baptist: "Go, tell John what you have seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead come to life again, and the Gospel is preached to the poor; and happy are those who shall not be scandalized in me"—words clearly referring to those of Isaias, announcing that when the Messias should come on earth the lame would bound forth like the deer, the tongue of the mute would be loosened, and the ears of the deaf and the eyes of the blind would be opened. Thus the disciples of John received a double

proof: the one of miracles, the other the fulfilling of the prophecies. Forthwith Jesus eulogizes John, proclaiming his firmness, his austere life, and his rank among the prophets: "Yea, more than a prophet. Of him it is written, Behold I send before you my angel, who will prepare the way for you. And I say to you truly, Among children born of women, there is none greater than John the Baptist."

The death of the Precursor occurred a little while after. Herod, who kept him under his own eye for a whole year in his house, where he celebrated his incestuous marriage with his brother's wife, gave his head to a daughter of this Herodias, as a recompense for having danced before him at the winding-up of the feast. It was the custom among women of high rank to dance, in imitation of the two celebrated buffoons and mimics, Pylades and Bathyllus, whom Rome admired. Such were the king and potentates of the world at the epoch of Jesus Christ.

However, Jesus went through cities, towns, and villages, announcing the kingdom of God. The twelve apostles accompany him, forming themselves on this divine Model for the ministry yet unknown, and which they must one day fulfil. There were in his train of followers, as custom allowed it, some women already cured of diseases or delivered from wicked spirits. They were Mary Magdalene; Joanna, wife of Chusa, Herod's steward; Susanna, and many others. They assisted our Lord with their means. He, therefore, received rich persons among his friends; and the Gospel, frequently remarking this circumstance, refutes the error of those who would wish to see in Jesus a sort of leveller, a preacher of equality of possessions and conditions. In reality, those wealthy persons were poor of

heart; they were bound to be so, since nobody can serve God and Mammon. Jesus teaches them the good use of riches; but he imposes poverty only on those whom he calls to the ministry of the Gospel.

The Pharisees also follow him. Mingling in the throng, they endeavor to corrupt the right minds of this people, who could neither understand Jesus nor contemplate his miracles without acknowledging him the envoy of God. Often, when he had entered a house to take a little repose, so many flocked about him he could not eat bread. They conduct him to the sick; the sick are cured, and the people exclaim: "Is not this the Son of David?" This popular enthusiasm increases the hatred of the Pharisees. Unable to deny the miracles, they begin saying that Jesus expels demons by the aid of demons. Others demand of him to perform some prodigy in the heavens. One day he assembled them, and pointed out to them the absurdity of this reproach; for the demon never acts against himself, and it is not in the name of Satan one can cast out Satan. He adds, "If it be by the Spirit of God I cast out Satan, the kingdom of God has come without doubt." But these sages did not wish to be converted. He sees their obstinacy, weeps for them, and is obliged to condemn them: "I say to you, every sin and every blasphemy shall be pardoned unto men (on sincere repentance), but the sin against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall have spoken against the Son of Man, he shall be pardoned for it; but he who will have spoken against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor the next." This he says, remarks the Gospel, "because they accuse him of being possessed of an unclean spirit"—that is, the spirit of deceit, of

lying, which is the proper name of Satan. He that hath ears, let him hear.

He refuses those who demand of him to work wonders in the heavens, as he had refused Satan, who dared to tempt him in the desert. At the same time he announces to them a miracle which they did not demand, more wondrous than any—that of his resurrection. This is a wicked race. "They ask a sign, and no other will be given to them than that of Jonas the prophet. For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the womb of the earth."

As he finished speaking, a woman, raising her voice in the midst of the multitude, cries out, "Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and blessed are the paps that gave thee suck." "Rather say," replies Jesus, "blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it." It is thus his wisdom and the public admiration confound the Pharisees.

Nevertheless, those perfidious wretches from that instant combined to sow the seeds of ignorant defiance and brutal hostility, which burst forth in cries of death to him before Pilate on the day of his crucifixion. Some of his relatives, according to the flesh, dreaded that the leaven of the Pharisees would ensnare him to ruin.

One day, according to St. Matthew, his mother and his brothers called on him while he was speaking. According to Mark (who does not mention here the Blessed Virgin), they came to arrest him. Their faith, yet weak, allowed them to be overcome by fear. This fear was doubtless awakened by some evil dispositions which they perceived growing in wicked minds.*

* It is not known who were those relatives. Of the four cousins of our Lord, whom the Gospel calls brothers, three were at that moment

However it be, our Lord, who knew the danger better than they, replies conformably to the beauty and majesty of his divine character: "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" Casting his eyes on those who sat around him, he adds: "Behold my mother and my brothers; for whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, that is the person who is my brother, my sister, and my mother." To the shepherds of Bethlehem, representatives of the human race, the angel said, "A child is born to you." Jesus ratifies once more the promise of the angel. He belongs to the human family more than to his relatives and his mother. This harmony of the Gospel is the joy and light of the heart.

Forthwith Jesus proceeds to teach the multitude. He speaks to them in parables—a sort of instruction by which he facilitates for ever the comprehension of the sublimest truths by the simplest and most illiterate minds. The prophet had said in his name: "I will speak in parables, and I will make manifest things which have been hidden since the beginning of the world." Jesus fulfils the prophecy by prophecies of a new order, clearer and not less profound, whose fulfilment, daily revived, will be in his Church a perpetual source of light and faith.

near him with the apostles. It is not, therefore, of those that there is a question. Whoever they were, their fear is quite comprehensible. The humble life of Jesus at Nazareth revealed to them but his perfect virtue—that is, the quality that men observe the least—and by no means his power. The Blessed Virgin kept in her heart what she knew; but she knew him well, and we cannot admit that she could have conceived the thought of interrupting the mission of her Divine Son. It is thought, therefore, that she came only to see him, without knowing the design of his relatives.

CHAPTER III.

THE SOWER—THE TARES—THE MUSTARD-SEED—THE NET CAST IN THE SEA.

THE parable of that day concerned the salvation of souls and announced the Church.

The Sower had sown. A part of the seed fell on the roadside; the birds came and ate it up. Another part fell on stony ground; the grain at first fructified, but was dried up by the scorching winds and the sun. Another part fell among thorns, and the smothered stems produced nothing. Another part fell on good earth, and the grains rendered some thirty, others sixty, and others an hundred for one.

The seed is the word of God. The explanation given by Jesus himself discovers the different dispositions the word of God will find in the heart of man. In those who hear by the wayside, without quitting the ways of the world, the word will never germinate; upon this trodden road every error passes, on it every vice sojourns. Vain thoughts, brutal passions, like ravenous birds, devour the good seed as soon as it has fallen.

The stony places are the hearts that fear more than they love. Occupied with the interests of the flesh and life, they have no depth whereby the root can be secured. The word has been received, it fructifies,

some penitential works appear; but as soon as trouble, temptation, or persecution arises, this feeble germ succumbs.

The thorns that grow up are the tumult of human affairs. In hearts which are represented by this soil the depth is not wanting; but the trumpery of ambition and riches smother the divine plant; amid the increasing cares of the world it remains unfruitful.

But the fathers say nobody neglects the divine word but in the ways which are here predicted: contempt of the word, carelessness or instability of character, and enslavement by the riches of the world. Such is the natural order: a road, stones, and thorns. The first thing we require is thoughtfulness, then courage, and lastly a contempt of the things of the earth. And this is what our Lord expresses when he adds: "What falls on the good ground represents those who, having heard the word with a good and upright heart, retain and preserve it, and bear fruit through patience." Indeed, those who are on the roadside do not retain the word; those among the rocks and stones cannot withstand patiently the assaults of temptation; those who are among the thorns are those who bear no fruit. Thus the seed is the same for all; it falls from the hand of God, ready to fructify in all hearts; the Divine Sower gives it to all. But woe to him who renders himself a barren, unfruitful soil—a stony soil, a soil full of thorns and briers. For there are many soils wherein the seed of the Lord cannot fructify.

The parable of the tares is allied to that of the seed, and contains a more especial teaching. While the servants were asleep the enemy comes and sows tares in the field that the father of the family had sown with

good seed. The tares make their appearance, and the negligent servants propose to pluck them up. "No," replies the father of the family, "lest you might also root up the good grain. Let both grow till the day of harvest. Then I will say to my reapers: First gather the tares; they shall be bound into sheaves, and cast into the fire; and the wheat shall be put into my granary."

The field is the world, the Father of the family is God, the enemy is the devil, the tares or the bad grain are the seed of schism and heresy, which he will cast on the earth when the pastors of the Church become negligent.

There is no question about the different sorts of seeds, but only about the tares or bad grain. The seed of the tare produces a stem resembling that of wheat. At the beginning heresy veils its presence; when its liberty is well rooted, and when it has acquired partisans, then, says St. John Chrysostom, the fruit shows itself; then heresy spreads its poison. However, the Father of the family forbids the plucking up of the tares—not that he accepts or sanctions this bad weed, since it is reserved for the fire; the reason he permits it to grow up is that, in rooting it out, they would run the risk of pulling up the good grain.

But there is another reason, all merciful and divine. In this fruitful soil of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the tares or bad grain can become pure wheat; for there is a sap which corrects the plant it nourishes. As it requires time for one to ripen, so it requires time, says St. Jerome, for the other to repent and do penance; and we are forbidden to effect the sudden destruction of our brother. Such as are to-day corrupted by a perverse and wicked doctrine can become to-morrow

the defenders of the truth. "For fear you might, at the same time, pluck up the wheat." For it may be, says St. Augustine, that the future wheat may be rooted up under the actual appearance of tares. By patience you become perfect; and this patience, which brings forth thirty, sixty, an hundred fold, tolerates the wicked, in order that they may become good. In plucking up the bad grain you tear up the wheat; whereas the grace of God and your patience ought to be sufficient to change the bad into the good. You hinder the good themselves, whom they are bound to yield to, in spite of themselves. "Let them grow till the harvest-time"—that is, till the day of judgment. That will be the time to root them out, when they no longer will have time to repent or to change their lives, and also because the contrast of their faults will then be no longer useful to stimulate the good to virtue.

This precept, or rather counsel, does not contradict that which commands us to root out evil from among us. We are not forbidden, St. John Chrysostom remarks, to oppose ourselves to heresy, to prevent its assemblies and its propagandism, to cause the truth to prevail against it, to confine and punish its abettors. It was at first the opinion of St. Augustine that nobody should be compelled to the unity of Christ: to act only by discussion, to convince only by reason. He feared that those who were known as determined heretics might thus be changed into hypocritical Catholics. Notwithstanding, his opinion, he says, was not combated by words, but yielded to contrary examples. He thought of those terrible laws which command kings to serve the Lord with trembling. Many render God thanks for having constrained them through fear, through force, through persecution, and

who, in forcing them, had delivered them from another constraint immeasurably more humiliating and unendurable—the constraint of error. He concludes that the kings of the earth are bound to serve and obey Christ in publishing the laws in favor of Christ; for the worship of Christ is in unity. The house of David could not obtain peace unless by the destruction of the rebellious Absalom, although David had recommended that he should not be molested, and only awaited his repenting to pardon him. David wept for this guilty man, and was consoled at the thought that peace was restored to his people. Thus it is that the Catholic Church, our mother, when she acquires a vast number of children by the perdition of some, finds consolation in the sorrow at beholding so many souls saved. Heretics cry out and rebuke us: To whom has Christ done violence? Whom has he forced or compelled? Behold the Apostle St. Paul; Christ compelled him, then instructed and consoled him; and it is worthy of remark that he who enters by the coercion of corporal chastisement labored more than those whom the word alone had called. Why should not the Church compel those to return who, by their wandering from the truth, have led others to perdition?

And woe to those who, not open to persuasion and rebellious to compulsion, will not be changed! The time of the harvest will arrive; the reapers, the redoubtable angels, will enter the field, and they will make a definite separation, and the tares, bound up in sheaves, will be hurled into the fire. Observe, says an interpreter, that punishment is announced to those who "*do* evil," not to those who *have done* evil. Only those will be eternally punished who persist in their sins, and by no means those who do penance. Re-

mark, says another interpreter, the love of God. He is prompt to confer benefits, slow to inflict punishments. When he sows, it is by himself; when he punishes, it is through others—through the angels whom he sends out, or delegates from heaven.

The grain of mustard-seed—this small grain, the smallest grain of all—is also the Church, is Jesus Christ himself, is the faith in the hearts of the faithful. What did the twelve apostles appear in the eyes of the world, or Jesus Christ lying under the tombstone? What does an obscure and unknown man appear to be in whom an humble, kind word has sown the grain of mustard-seed, the germ of faith? We know what has issued from the tomb and what the apostles became. The man who receives the faith has something in him greater than humanity. He may have been beforehand skilled in all sciences and in all errors. He may have been devoted to every species of ambition, abandoned to every vicious seduction, enslaved to sensuality, and harnessed to the yoke of every tyrannical passion. Faith now rules in him above science and error; she arms him against temptation; she delivers him from slavery; she is stronger in him than the world, stronger than himself. This tree, with its mighty branches, grows out from his barren soul, and where reigned decay and death, now abundant fruitfulness abounds.

Jesus says again: "The net, cast into the sea, gathers in all sorts of fish. When it is full, the fishermen put aside the good and cast away the bad fish. Such will be the case at the end of time: the angels will separate the wicked from the just, and will cast them into the furnace. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The Church gathers in all kinds of fish; for she calls all to do penance for the remission of sins—rich and poor, ignorant and learned, foolish and wise. When the net shall be full, the destiny of the human race shall be sealed. Then we will behold what the net contains. Then a distribution shall be made. In the parable of the tares the point at issue is about those who persist on account of the perversity of heretical doctrine, because they have not discerned or embraced the truth. Here the point in question is concerning those who perish on account of the perversity of their lives, though taken in the net and having received the knowledge of God. We should here, says St. Gregory, rather tremble than comment. The torments of the damned are here announced in proper terms, so that nobody can allege his ignorance, and plume himself on the obscurity of the dogma of eternal punishment.

In giving these instructions Jesus made the apostles understand that they should repeat them all over the earth. "No person, after having lit a candle," says he to them, "covers it with an urn or puts it under the bed; but they put it on the candlestick, so that those who enter may see the light." This recommendation will suffice to show that the word of God is not, cannot be, bound up, tied up, even when those who are commissioned to disseminate it are loaded with chains. The light will be put on the candlestick. It will shine; it will illuminate; it will cast all over the world an effulgence of heavenly light.

And at length, to warn his hearers and to attract their minds to meditate on the mystery of the parables, Jesus frequently said: "He that has ears to hear, let him understand."

CHAPTER IV.

INCREDULITY OF NAZARETH—FIRST MISSION OF THE APOSTLES—THE FIVE LOAVES—PETER WALKS ON THE WATERS—ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE EUCHARIST.

JESUS retired from the place where he had given these instructions, and returned to Nazareth, his country. He enters the synagogue on the Sabbath day to teach, according to the privilege and right of every son of Israel. He rises up to read. The book of Isaias is put in his hands, which was liturgical reading at that season of the year; for he changed nothing from the ordinary course, and carefully fulfilled all things according to the law. On opening the book he finds this passage: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, and this is why I have received his unction to evangelize the poor, to heal those who have a broken heart, to announce deliverance to captives, light to the blind, to publish the happy year of the Lord and the day of retribution." Having closed the book, he hands it to the priest of the synagogue, and sits down. All the bystanders eye him closely. He says to them, "Those words are fulfilled on this day that you hear them."

The majesty of this expression is the more striking as our Lord was not ignorant of the wicked disposi-

tions of his hearers. They are affected by a twofold feeling. At first they admire, but soon after the leaven of the Pharisees manifests itself and predominates.

This leaven could ferment at Nazareth more freely than elsewhere. The Nazarenes doubtless regarded the gift of prophecy and of miracles as a great favor; they were jealous that this gift should have fallen on a man whom they esteemed so little. They begin to say to one another, "Is not this man the son of Joseph the carpenter, the son of Mary? Do we not know his brothers, his sisters? Are they not in our midst? Whence, then, comes all this to this man?"

Jesus reads the secrets of their wretched hearts, and foresees the unjust request they were about to make to him. "Perform miracles, if you be God!" The first who utter this malicious cry had seen the dead resuscitated. When miracles shine forth, they seek to prove them unlawful, or they attribute them to the power of the demon.

Jesus reminded them that Elias had been sent to the widow of Sarepta, although widows were not wanting in Israel; that Eliseus did not heal the numerous lepers of Israel, but only Naaman, who was a Syrian. This was to warn them to dispose themselves to receive grace by renouncing their jealousies and their incredulity. But they, on the contrary, revolt against the Saviour, cast him out from their synagogue, and drag him off to the summit of the mountain, with the design of precipitating him from it. His mercy spared them from attempting this crime. "Jesus, passing right through their midst, goes his way"! He had either rendered himself invisible to their eyes, or he had paralyzed their hands.

This was almost the only miracle he performed at

Nazareth—the miracle by which he daily baffles so much intervention of impiety. He renders himself invisible, he paralyzes the furious, he passes through their midst, and vanishes when they contemplate his destruction. He refused them miracles which their insolence required; he accomplishes them when their incredulity sees not, and their souls profit not by them.

Nevertheless, his clemency for his fellow-countrymen could not absolutely remain inactive. He imposes his hands on those who were sick, and cures them. The sacred text adds: "Their incredulity astonishes him."

He forsakes those ungrateful, hard-hearted, incredulous people, and resumes his journey of mercy, passing over routes which the prophets and the patriarchs had passed through, imparting throughout health, hope, and life. "He had pity on them, because they were heavily oppressed with many evils, and hiding here and there like sheep without a shepherd." Having then assembled the apostles, he sent them out two by two in different directions to succor those who could not come.

This first mission was but an easy step to the novitiate of the hard and trying labors of the apostleship. All at once Jesus gives to his ambassadors heavenly instruction, which, later on, must make them breast every peril, and which, transmitted by them to their successors, will render those too victorious over death. He enjoined on them poverty, prudence, and mildness. He bade them not to carry with them two pairs of shoes, nor two coats, nor money; to have but one stick for their journey; not to resist nor to defend themselves. He gave them power to cast out devils and to heal the sick; he warns them against the

attachments of flesh and blood: "Who loves his father or his mother more than me is not worthy of me; who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me; who loves his life more than me will lose it, and who loses it for my sake shall save it." Behold the conquerors of the world!

At that time the name of Jesus came to the ears of the tetrarch Herod. This tyrant believed that the prophet of whom so many great things were spoken was no other than John the Baptist resuscitated. He desired to see him, but Jesus withdrew himself. Herod's malady was not that of those he spontaneously goes to heal.

The apostles return to render him an account of what they had done. The good Master anxiously desires to lead them to some solitary spot, so that they might enjoy a little repose; for the throng did not leave them even time to eat. He took them with him in his bark, and steers his course towards a solitary place in the territory of Bethsaida. The vast multitudes followed here, as they did everywhere else. He compassionates them, as is always his wont. He conducts these poor people to the mountain; then, having seated himself in the midst of his apostles, he heals those afflicted with various diseases, and speaks of the kingdom of God.

The day advances. The twelve entreat the Lord to dismiss the multitude, as it was high time, so that they might arrive at the village to purchase something to eat before the shades of night should overtake them, because no one among them had any provisions; moreover, the place was a desert. Jesus says to them: "Give them yourselves something to eat." At which they ask him if they should go and purchase two hun-

dred pennies' worth of bread. But Jesus, not appearing to hear them, contemplates the multitude. There were there about five thousand men, without reckoning the women and children. Jesus, knowing well what he would do, says to Philip: "Where will we get means to purchase food for this vast multitude?" Philip answers: "With two hundred pennies' worth we cannot purchase enough of bread that each one may get a little." Then Jesus is informed of the provisions they can obtain, and Andrew advances to tell him: "There is a boy here with five barley loaves and two fishes." He adds: "What is that among so many?" Nevertheless, Jesus orders the apostles to make them all sit down in order on the grass. Then, having taken the five loaves, with the two fishes, and raising his eyes to heaven, he blesses them, he breaks them, and gives them to the disciples to distribute them to those who had sat down. He commands his disciples to give them as much as they could eat. All eat, and all are satisfied, and with fragments that remain they fill up twelve baskets. Thus the Eucharistic bread satisfies the world, and is never exhausted, never fails. This is not the only sense of this miracle, which further on he will speak of.

The people wondered exceedingly. They said among themselves: "This is surely the Prophet that was expected to come; let us make him king." Jesus dismisses them to prevent their design, and to teach his priests that they must not seek popular fame. Forthwith, having ordered his disciples to embark and await him on the other side of the lake, he flies off to the mountain, where he remains alone in prayer.

But the bark which carries the disciples struggles against the wind. Toward the fourth watch of the

night they had made not more than twenty-five or thirty furlongs. Jesus, seeing they rowed with difficulty, draws near to them, and walks on the boisterous billows. The disciples perceive him, directing himself as if he would pass them by, and they imagined they saw an apparition. They cried aloud. Jesus says to them: "It is I; fear not." Peter cries out: "Lord, if it be you, command that I may go to you on the waters." Jesus says to him, "Come." And Peter left the bark—walked also on the sea. But the wind was strong. Peter was afraid, and at the same instant he was sinking. He who fears not to trust himself to the mighty deep suffers himself to be terrified by the noise of the wind. This is the very same man whom love for Jesus will drag to the pretorium, yet whom the voice of a servant will frighten into denial of him.

Yet the apostle does not outrage the heart of his Master so far as to forget his power and goodness. He cries out: "Lord, save me." Jesus takes him by the hand, and says to him: "Man of little faith, why have you doubted?" If his faith had been strong, the winds would not have power to hurt him, the sea would have remained solid under his feet. It was not Peter who walked on the waters, says St. Jerome; it was faith. Peter had need to learn it. Jesus had given it to him, in order that he might know him for ever. He takes him by the hand, as a mother, seeing the danger of her little one that goes out too soon, takes it under her wings and brings it back to the nest. Then Jesus ascends with Peter into the bark, and forthwith the winds cease, and immediately the bark is at the shore which they were going to.

Jesus walked on the waters; he made Peter walk on

them; he appeased the tempest; a passage of many hours was accomplished in an instant. The eyes of the disciples were not opened by the multiplication of bread; but those recent miracles, multiplied for them alone, at length caused the bandage to fall from their eyes. They adore their Master, saying to him: "You are truly the Son of God."

Everywhere the people were made acquainted with the wonderful prodigies of Jesus, and of his presence among his people. Into whatever place he withdrew, town, village, or city, they bring him the sick. Ranged along in rows in public places, they implored him to let them but touch the hem of his garment, and all went away cured.

The men who had profited by the multiplication of the loaves always wished to proclaim him king. After having sought him on the borders of the lake, after the day of that miracle, they met in great crowds at Capharnaum when he entered it. In the depth of their zeal they had but one desire, as is proved from what follows—that is, to lead an indolent life with an abundance of the good things of earth. They desired nothing more of the Messias. The moment had arrived to give them a more sublime idea of him, and make them understand what sort of bread the Messias brought from heaven to the world.

Then Jesus told them they sought him because he had satisfied them with bread; that, notwithstanding, they must labor, not for the food that perishes, but for that which remains unto eternal life; and that this was the bread which the Son of Man would give them.

They ask him what works would render them pleasing to God. Jesus answers them: "The work of God is that you believe in Him whom he has sent." For

faith produces humility, desire, love, and all the other virtues of this life.

But the spirit of the Pharisees was fermenting in them. They deny that the miracles of which they were witnesses should or could oblige them to believe. Alluding to the multiplication of the loaves, which was but a moment ago the foundation of their hopes, they object that Moses had done more feeding and nourishing their fathers in the desert with manna; whence it is written, "He had given them to eat of the bread of heaven." Jesus replies to them: "The true celestial bread is not of Moses, but of my Father; for the true bread of God is that which comes from heaven and gives life to the world." They say to him: "Lord, give us always of that bread."

Then Jesus, entering into the depths of the mystery, says to them: "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me shall not hunger; and he who believes in me shall not thirst. . . . This is the will of my Father who sent me—that whoever sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life; and I will raise him up on the last day"—words literally true, but which the Jews did not understand, nor did they wish to understand.

That eternal life of which Jesus speaks, being exempt from the miseries and wants of the present life, it is literally true that whoever will possess it shall hunger and thirst no more, but shall be perfectly satiated. And although the eternal life may be said to commence only at the resurrection, yet in the present life the eternal exists in those who are nourished or fed with the living bread. Mingled with their flesh, the Eucharistic bread implants in them a spiritual, immortal germ of eternal life, and natural

death will not destroy it. This immortal germ shall be preserved in their dry, withered bones; not an atom of their scattered dust shall be separated from it. It will sleep with them till the day whereon God shall command it to bud forth; and forthwith that flesh shall live again, or rather shall bloom in fulness of glory, clothed with immortality, rid of concupiscences, which have been the cause of its corruption. Nothing impure will remain in it any more. Nothing in it can feel the sting of death; the contact with the Son of God will destroy and consume the principle of death. What the faith of man has believed and desired the love of God has willed and accomplished.

Instead of believing and awaiting an explanation of what they did not comprehend, the Jews began to murmur like those of Nazareth, many of whom, perhaps, were among them. "Is not this man Jesus, the son of Joseph? Why does he tell us that he descended from heaven?" Jesus sternly warns them not to murmur, and after some sublime words, reserved, so to speak, for the interpretation of St. Paul and the Church, and for a later development of this mystery of grace, he continues his discourse. Imposing upon their rebellious reason the yoke and weight of divine authority, he informs them that this mysterious bread he announces to them was himself—was his own flesh. "Verily, verily I say to you, he who believes on me has eternal life. I am the Bread of Life. Your fathers ate manna in the desert, and they are dead. This is the bread descended from heaven, so that if any one eats of it he shall not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If any one eats of this bread, he will live for ever; and the bread which I will give is my flesh."

At these words they redouble their murmurings: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" *How!* true Jewish word, says St. Cyril. By the right, power, and authority of his divinity. Jesus replies, reaffirming what he had already said by a new asseveration "Verily, verily I say to you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and if you do not drink his blood, you will not have life in you. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day; for my flesh is truly meat and my blood is truly drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood dwells in me and I in him. As my Father, who is living, has sent me, and as I live by the Father, so also he who eats me shall also live by me. This is the bread which has descended from heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna, and died: who eats this bread shall live for ever."

Man, says Bossuet, always reasons against the goodness of God, and consequently against himself. Those people believed that Jesus spoke to them of the flesh of man like that of others, of the flesh of the son of Joseph; that it would be a flesh like that with which men nourish their bodies, and so a flesh they should consume by eating. To these three errors Jesus makes three replies: "I am the living bread descended from heaven"; therefore the bread which I promise is not the flesh of the son of Joseph: it is the flesh of the Son of God—flesh conceived of the Holy Ghost and formed of the blood of the Virgin. "The will of my Father is that I should not lose any of those whom he has given me, and that I will raise them up on the last day. . . . He who eats of this bread, of my flesh, that I will give for the life of the world, will live for ever"; therefore the life that

his flesh preserves is not this ordinary and mortal life, but eternal life, as well of the soul as of the body, whereby we will be changed and become like to the angels of God. "You will see the Son of Man ascend whence he came"; therefore, though his flesh is given for the food and nourishment of our souls, it is not on that account less living and whole.

St. John, who relates these divine things, adds: "This is what Jesus said, teaching in the synagogue at Capharnaum." It was meet that those things be said at that time, so as to prepare the apostles for the institution of the Eucharist; and it was proper they should be said in the synagogue publicly, so that when the apostles, the only witnesses of the institution of the Holy Eucharist, would have to propound this formidable, tremendous mystery, they could invoke or refer to the public expression of our Lord. On all occasions the merciful wisdom of Jesus has taken care to aid our incredulity.

Nevertheless, the greater part of those men, who could so easily believe him because of the miracles they had seen, did not believe him. There were even among the disciples unbelievers. "Many went away." This is an exact fulfilment of the prophetic parable of the seed sown.

Jesus was not surprised at them. He knew from the commencement, "from all eternity as God," and from his conception as man, who they were who would not believe in him, and who he was who would betray him. He says to the twelve apostles: "And you—do you wish also to go away?" Peter, in the name of the others, not doubting but they were like himself, full of humble, submissive faith, answers: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal

life. We have believed, and we have acknowledged it, that you are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Jesus says: "Have not I chosen you twelve? And yet there is one among you who is a demon."

Oh! how long the tender, compassionate heart bleeds before it is pierced.

BOOK IV.

EDUCATION OF THE APOSTLES.

CHAPTER I.

FALSE PURIFICATION—THE CHANAANITE—THE DEAF MUTE—THE SECOND MULTIPLICATION OF THE LOAVES.

WE might say that the Gospel is the history of the training of St. Peter and the apostles. Jesus, because he is a perfect man, is the worshipper and perfect Priest, and this was his mission: to form worshippers and priests.

From the period at which we have arrived he begins to apply himself to the furtherance of his mission with not more untiring, but more direct, zeal. Instruction holds the chief place instead of miracles. His manner of instructing is in the form of parables or of controversies with the Pharisees, scribes, and doctors of the law.

These men, who abounded in Jerusalem, were elsewhere numerous. Mingling with the people, they follow Jesus step by step, always ready to propound captious questions to him, so as to obtain answers in which they might discover something objectionable.

If we had in our possession the accounts they sent to the Sanhedrim, we would have the substance and the artifice of all the calumnies which shall ever be hurled against the Church.

One day, having observed that some of the disciples ate without having washed their hands, they stigmatize as a trangression this forgetfulness of customs. We read in the prophets: "Wash yourself and be pure"; "Purify yourselves, you who carry the vessels of the Lord," and other like expressions. That sentiment was directed towards the correction of heart and soul. The Pharisees interpreted it in a material sense. Their continual ablutions dispensed with tears, alms, and other justifiable works. They said to Jesus: "How comes it that your disciples violate the traditions, and do not wash their hands before eating?" Jesus disdains to reply to them.

This is one of the petty circumstances which weak minds avail themselves of to do injury to the simplicity of the Gospel. "Behold the Son of God," say they, "contesting about the point of knowing whether or not it is right to wash the hands before eating dinner!" Happily for us, the Son of God despised less than those our littleness. He willed this dispute as he willed to appease the tempest, as he willed to resuscitate Lazarus, as he willed to die on the cross. The childish question of the Pharisees gives him an opportunity to point out the character of true purification, as distinguished from formalism, in which the pharisaical mind made piety consist.

He severely reproves those censures which manifest so much respect for the minuteness of a tradition purely human, but which did not fear to violate the most essential precepts; scrupulously cleansing the rim of

the vessel, and leaving foulness at its bottom; filtering the water to avoid swallowing a gnat, and yet swallowing a camel He rebukes them for having a tradition, or rather a sophism, which dispenses the son from assisting the father, even in need, provided he does not fail to make an offering to the Temple. "Ye hypocrites! you pretend to be very holy by dispensing with the commandments of God to attach yourselves to your traditions." He then addresses himself to the people, who had not heard this reprimand, and, with upraised voice, he continues: "All of you pay attention and understand well: not what enters a man's body defiles it; what proceeds from a man—that is what defiles him."

The disciples, alarmed at the wrath of the Pharisees, perhaps scandalized themselves, ask an explanation of an expression new to them, and which seemed opposed to a prohibition so respected as that against eating unclean meats. This Jewish barrier too must disappear, but later. Peter, according to usage, had spoken for all. The Master replies: "What enters man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not enter in the heart; but what goes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart. It is from the interior and from the heart of man that wicked thoughts proceed; impurities, homicides, robberies, avarice, blasphemies, pride, and every other crime—that is what renders impure, and not eating with unwashed hands"—fruitful words of the number of those which have given to man new thoughts, and which have given him knowledge of himself. The heart of man, says Origen, is great whilst it is clean; its corporeal littleness hinders it not from receiving the Lord, who is spirit. When the heart of man possesses cleanness, it embraces truth.

Jesus quitted this place, and went away to the confines of Tyre and Sidon. After having condemned the superstitious observances of the Jews, who did not wish to hear him, he directs his attention toward the pagans. From this we derive instruction analogous to that we infer from his mission to Sichar, in Samaria. The patient Master accommodates himself to the weakness of the disciples, and often repeats the same lessons, but adds thereto each time something which engraves it better on their enlarged intelligence. This time he conceals himself, because the time of his preaching to the Gentiles had not yet arrived. However, among the throng, that must not know his presence, there was one faithful, believing soul, whom he was anxious to recompense, and that one knew well how to approach him.

A Chanaanite woman, from the country of Syro-Phœnicia, rushed towards Jesus, saying and crying out along the road: "O Lord, Son of David! have pity on me; my daughter is cruelly tormented with a devil." The Holy Ghost, who inspires prayer, says all in a few words: "Lord"—this woman confesses his divinity. "Son of David"—she confesses his humanity. "Have pity on me"—she does not say, Have pity on my daughter; for the affliction of the daughter is the grief of the mother herself. "My daughter is cruelly tormented with a devil." Behold the malady exposed to the Physician in all its force and in all its gravity.

The action of the Chanaanite woman is as sagacious as her prayer. She asks nothing from men. Relying on faith, she addresses herself directly to God.

However, Jesus seems not to hear her, and answers her not a word. The disciples, compassionating her

sorrow or importuned by her wailings, implore him to dismiss her by granting her what she solicited. He tells them he had been sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and he continues his course. But the Chanaanite woman, manifesting as much faith as maternal love, follows him, and enters into the house where he was. She casts herself at his feet, crying out always: "Lord, assist me; deliver my daughter from the devil." Then, with a severity which was not usual to him, and in order that this pagan might know the power of faith, he says to her: "Let the children be first satisfied; for it is not proper to take the bread of the children and cast it before dogs." This harshness (doubtless tempered by his tone) could not repulse or dishearten this suppliant. "It is true, O Lord!" she replies; "but even little dogs may eat the crumbs of bread that fall from the children's table." By this trait of humility, after a perseverance so determined, Jesus, as it were conquered, says to her: "O woman! your faith is great. Be it done to you as you wish. Go, your daughter is cured."

The daughter of the Chanaanite woman and the servant of the centurion are both cured without the Saviour having entered their houses. The nations that Christ had not visited were to be saved by his word and by the prayers of his Church. The Church is this mother, whose tenderness and faith never allows her to be repulsed. She goes on saying always: "O Lord! have pity on me; heal my sick child." Like the woman afflicted with an issue of blood, and like the Samaritan woman, both of whom set out from their homes, so the Chanaanite woman quitted her native country; and she symbolizes the Gentiles. Like Ruth the Moabite, named among the ancestors of the Lord.

she is admitted into the house of God by the power of her love and of her faith.

Jesus then quits the country. If he did not perform other miracles in it, this one, by which he powerfully inculcates the efficacy of prayer, contains a second lesson; it teaches us that the welfare of one soul sufficed for the Son of God to undertake the labors of a special mission.

He returns to the shores of the Galilean sea, and as soon as they know of his return thereto they bring to him a man deaf and dumb. He draws him aside, touches his ears and tongue, and raises up his eyes to heaven and sighs. Then he says: "*Ephphcta*" (be opened), and the deaf mute hears and speaks.

The removal from the throng of people, the eyes elevated to heaven, and the sigh, are to warn the apostles against vainglory; to remember that it is from heaven we must expect all good; that everything is obtained of God by heart-felt prayer; and that humility is by far more powerful than miracles. This sighing, which was in Jesus the effect of compassion, ought to be in us the disavowal and the expiation of evil. When we know how to lament, to mourn, it is then we efficaciously demand deliverance from the consequences of sin.

Jesus touches the infirm man to show that his body, united to the Divinity, is enriched with the power of the Divinity, and works divinely; and this fact is an argument against future heresies. Appearing in our flesh, he has shown it re-established in all its perfection, and invested with all the glory which shall be given to it. He makes use of his finger to open the closed ear, and of his spittle to loose the mute tongue, and at length he commands, *Ephpheta*. The two natures are here distinguished without separation. He prays, sighs

mourns, and toils as man. He heals the deaf man with one word of God alone: "Be opened."

Other miracles follow in great numbers. The dumb speak, the lame walk, the blind see. A shout of joy bursts forth from the hearts of the multitudes: "He has done all things well." All publish the praises of the God of Israel.

As the multitude was considerable and the place a desert, Jesus renews the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves. The disciples had already forgotten the first. They were yet preoccupied about the means whereby they could purchase so much bread, so as to feed and satisfy more than four thousand persons, exclusive of the women and children. There were there but seven loaves and a few little fishes. Jesus blessed them with that benediction by which at the beginning the Word gave to creatures the virtue of increasing and multiplying, and they multiply in his hands as the grain multiplies in the earth. All ate and were satisfied, and with the crumbs that remained they filled up seven baskets.

Besides divers particular senses, very copious and very beautiful, the two miracles of the multiplication of the bread have a general sense which is peculiar to them, and by which they are the complement one of the other. Before examining it let us turn our thoughts to the solution that the teaching which results from these miracles can actually give to one of the greatest difficulties of the world. The point in question is the multiplication and distribution of riches.

The problem to solve is how to give food to nourish a whole people: five thousand the first time; four thousand the second, besides the women and children;

on both occasions their numbers might at least be doubled. To face the want there was nothing. They were in the desert. The apostles, who represented human power, were disquieted at the situation. They propose to Jesus what human wisdom may propose: "Dismiss this vast throng, so that each one may provide for himself the best he can." Jesus replies: "Give them bread to eat yourselves."

The apostles then thought of purchasing bread, and generously desired to employ all they possessed for that object. A sudden and sad reflection discourages them. Even should they put together for this purpose the two hundred silver pennies (probably more than the common purse contained), this would not be sufficient to give each of them a morsel. However, according to their human views, there was no other alternative. It seems they must now leave the vast multitude to themselves to do the best they can, without regard to the feeble and little ones—that is, sacrifice the poor or cast into a gulf the public treasure; that is, sacrifice the rich; and even this sacrifice would be insufficient.

A third means is suggested, but suggested with shamefacedness, so foolish does it appear. Among this famishing multitude there is one rich person found—a boy having five barley loaves and two little fishes. He possesses more than is required for him. They despoil this rich one, who possesses too much, for the good of those who have nothing, and make his abundance, his five barley loaves and two little fishes, common property. "But," says the inventor of the plan, "what is all that to divide among so many mouths?"

To abandon the poor, to feed them for a moment at the expense of the state, to ruin the state by despoiling the rich without benefiting any one, and with-

out saving the state from peril—so this problem presents itself. More and more governments behold themselves hemmed in by these perilous abysses. Out of them no political science can find an issue.

In the Gospel history Jesus interposes. Jesus is bound to provide for this vast throng of people, who have followed him into the desert to hear his word, and who consequently have fulfilled the precept "of first seeking the kingdom of God."

First of all, he commands the apostles to create order among the crowd, and to distribute them in groups of hundreds and fifties, and to make them sit down on the greensward. Then, when the mob is put in that order, which places each band and each individual under the direction of a pastor, he orders the slender provisions which they had discovered to be brought to him, and he blesses them. It is to him they bring them, because to him they belong, as the Creator of all and every good, of all wealth, riches, and power, and the Master of all creatures. Raising his eyes to heaven, he blesses them, because it is of God we must implore every blessing and every increase. He distributes them by the hands of the apostles, because it is he who has the right to dispose of them. They suffice, because his benediction has multiplied them. Much is left of them after each one has eaten and is satisfied, because God gives all things abundantly; because he has made this law: that alms impoverish not him who bestows them, but, on the contrary, enrich him. Such is the social economy of the Gospel, to inspire the people with a taste for the things of God; to establish order among them, and provide them with pastors; to teach them to despise the unlawful desires which render them insatiable; to ask of God to bless and

multiply the real, material riches which are necessary for our existence. Nowadays all that evangelical economy is despised; but the abyss of pauperism is opened up, and for a remedy communism is seriously proposed. One can already foresee that the communistic institutions will open circuses more easily than they will give bread.

The mystical signification of the twofold multiplication of bread is, as in many other miracles, the accomplishment of the law by the institution of the Eucharist and the ministry of the Church.

"I have pity on this people," says Jesus before the second miracle. "They have nothing to eat; and if I send them away hungry, their strength may fail them on the way, for many have come from afar off." Elsewhere it is said that Jesus regarded them with compassion, "because they wander as sheep without a shepherd." But Jesus is come into the world to feed and nourish them, and to give them pastors whom he will have chosen; and he it is who will be, at the same time, the everlasting and supreme food and nourishment, and the Eternal and Supreme Pastor.

The first miracle feeds and nourishes five thousand, all from that country. This is the number of those who will be converted at the second preaching of St. Peter, and who will be all Jews. At the second miracle there were four thousand, "come from afar off," according to the remark of the Lord. By the number of four thousand the miracle is already figurative of the conversion of the Gentiles, who were bound to come from each quarter of the globe, and, as the Scripture says, "from the four winds." At first the apostles consider the wants of the multitude. They are weighing the matter of sending them away, so as they may go off to provide for them-

selves, each one as best he can. This is the character of the Jewish priesthood. It has nothing to give to "strangers," and little to others. Nevertheless, even this anxiety of dispersing them indicates some interest in their well-being. The patriarchs and prophets prayed to God for the people of Israel.

The second time, though the throng was there a long while, and the desert more arid, no one thinks that they can suffer from hunger. Jesus only thinks on them; he only has had pity on the sad and afflicted throng of nations; he casts on them a look of tender love. "I do not wish they should depart hence without food. They will faint on the road."

In the first miracle there were five barley loaves; in the second, seven loaves of wheat-bread. The Evangelists, says St. Cyril, could have contented themselves with relating that the Saviour satisfied a vast multitude of people with a little food carried by a child. Since they so exactly marked the number and the quality of the loaves, it is clear that these circumstances conceal a mystery.

In effect, the five loaves of the first miracle indicate the rites of the Old Law contained in the five books of Moses, whence the Jewish people drew their spiritual food; and the seven loaves in the second miracle admirably represent the Evangelical Law, in which the seven-fold grace of the Holy Ghost is distributed to all the faithful by the preaching of the Word and by the sacraments. These seven loaves, says the Venerable Bede, represent the seven sacraments instituted by Jesus Christ to nourish Christians on their journey to eternity.

The five loaves of the first miracle were barley. Barley is the food of beasts of burden and slaves.

The spirit of the Old Law was a spirit of fear and servitude. The nutritive part of the barley is recovered from very tough coverings; the vital food of the soul, in the Mosaic law, was enveloped in very thick coverings. The barley loaves are found in the possession of a child, who carried them without eating them; the Mosaic books were placed in the hands of a priesthood and a people who understood them but in a childish sense, and who even observed them without reaping any profit from them.

The wheat of which the seven loaves of the second miracle are formed is the nourishment of men, the prophesied nurture: "He has nurtured them with the purest wheat; by the product of the wheat are they multiplied." Thus had David chanted this feast of the Messias, and nothing can better express the spirit of the New Law, the sweetness, the grace, the love, the abundance, of Christ.

Christ himself is typified in the feast. The fish drawn through the fire represents Jesus Christ from the hour of his Passion. This symbol is as ancient as the Church. Père Ventura thinks the two fishes indicate the two characters of priest and victim which Jesus united together on the Cross. The five barley loaves and the seven wheat loaves: the rites of the Mosiac law and the sacraments of the new law draw their efficacy for the salvation of souls from his immolation.

Jesus did not see fit to create out of nothing, which he could have done, those loaves with which he fed the multitude; nor did he desire to command them to fall from heaven, like the manna, in sufficient abundance. On the one hand, the bread had already descended; it existed, such as he wished to give them. It was himself. He multiplies it; he only multiplies it by a

miracle as great as the Creation, to indicate that it is indeed himself, and that he gives his own bodily substance. On the other hand, really receiving the loaves and the fishes from the hands of the apostles, he supplies anew instructions. At the same time he makes man co-worker with himself in his heavenly labor, as he did on innumerable occasions by other acts, notably by the institution of the apostles; he confirms the ministry of the Church; he completes, in fine, the symbol which it has pleased him to give, and renders more sensible the truth he wishes to instruct us in. In the sacraments he does not create; he receives from the Church the matter of which they are formed.

In the hands of the disciples the loaves were unsavory, insufficient, useless; in the hands of Jesus, and by his benediction, they were multiplied, they acquired a marvellous virtue, they sufficed, and some were left. So the water, the bread, the wine, the oil—matter of the sacraments—are of themselves incapable of producing any moral effect; but by the benediction of Jesus Christ this matter receives the virtue of conferring and augmenting the grace which satisfies the soul and fills it with spiritual strength.

The fishes, like the bread, are carried by the apostles. The fish are the booty of the fishermen, who have caught them in deep waters—there where they were told to cast out their nets. The most intimate possession of Jesus Christ is the lot of those who have given themselves more than others to him, who have with greater eagerness heard his word, whom he has chosen and with whom he dwells. They distribute the bread by preaching, especially by the preaching of his sufferings, which attracts people to the sacraments and communicates to them his divine sweetness. "I preach

but Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ crucified," says St. Paul. The fish is with the bread, because the preaching of the mysteries of Jesus Christ enlightens the understanding; whilst the bread of the sacraments nourishes the heart, and both are the nourishment of God's people.

The fathers make another remark. As the loaves, they say, were sufficient only because Jesus Christ blessed them, we only see their interior because he broke them. Thus we know that the prophecies of the Old Law and the mysteries of the New Law would remain concealed from us, if we had not the divine light of the Word. Neither would the ancient rites nor the new sacraments possess any virtue to support the Jewish people and to nourish the Christian people if Jesus Christ had not at first himself in figure, then in reality, given fecundity to them by his all-powerful benediction. This benediction, pronounced at the commencement of the world on all creatures, gives to them life through the faculty of reproducing and multiplying themselves; the same benediction, pronounced on the spiritual institutions of the law and the Gospel, assures to each of them duration and efficacy without measure.

Thus the first miracle typifies the ancient covenant; the second the new. And in both Jesus having operated, he indicates to us thereby that the heavenly Mediator, born according to the flesh, in the fulness of time, is also the Word of God anterior to time—the God of the law and the God of the Gospel, who gave to the prophets the knowledge of the future mysteries, to the apostles the knowledge of mysteries accomplished; the same who nourished the Jewish people with the barley-corn of the figurative sacraments, and who

feeds the Christian people with the wheat of the real sacraments.

However, Jesus does not wish to crush human liberty under the weight of miracles. What he does so well the enemy, whom he lets free for a time, will undertake to destroy. Satan will raise up heretics who will endeavor to infuse poison into the bread that Christ gives. The providence of Christ foresaw this danger. Without taking away from men the merit of combating it, he furnishes them in advance the means to avoid it. With this power and this sovereign wisdom, which by one word can enlighten four thousand years of mystery, by an act of the will can multiply and enlarge a morsel of bread so as to feed and nourish a people, Jesus also concentrates in a few words and in a few simple circumstances instructions which will baffle all the subtleties of heresy, even to the end of the world.

Heresy will deny the necessity of the ecclesiastical ministry for the dispensing of the doctrine and the grace of Jesus Christ. It will pretend that everybody can obtain light from God, without any intervening power, immediately through faith; and that, consequently, there is no need of bishop nor of sacerdotal intervention.

Assuredly Jesus could cause it to be so. He could accomplish all by himself, without recurring to the disciples; but assuredly he employed them not without design. This design the apostles understood from the Saviour himself. "Let every one," says he, "consider us as the ministers of Jesus Christ and the dispensers of the mysteries of God." All the circumstances of both miracles reveal this doctrine.

Jesus commences by saying to the apostles: "It is

not necessary to send away these people; give them to eat." By this mysterious language, prophetic of what was going to happen, Jesus, remarks Origen, gives exclusively to the apostles and their successors the power of nourishing and feeding the faithful people. He fixes from that moment, adds St. Ambrose, the economy of the evangelical preaching for the food and nourishment of souls. "Give them to eat." This is the very same word that will be said to them at a later period: "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; whosoever shall believe and be baptized shall be saved."

The apostles put in order the vast multitude, and make them sit down on the grass. They group them in distinct bands. We might say they arrange and place them in order by dioceses, by churches. Therefore it is the will of God that it does not belong to the faithful to unite themselves in religious assemblies nor to govern themselves. To the bishops only, as the apostle teaches, belongs the care of establishing and governing churches.

Jesus does not distribute with his hand the miraculous bread, but, as the evangelists remark with a sort of emphasis, he gives it to the apostles, so that the people might receive it; and they, the apostles, gave to each one his share. Thus it is the divine wisdom of Jesus Christ which establishes the means by which he wishes that life may be distributed in his Church.

He does not give to the apostles the loaves entire, but broken. He opens them, just as, before giving them the supreme order to distribute the Gospel, he opens out to them the mysteries of the Scriptures. How is it people do not understand by that manner of

acting, asks St. Augustine, that he has confided to the bishops and to the priests only the true sense of his mysteries and the distribution of the sacred aliment?

Finally, when the multitude were satisfied, he commands the apostles to gather up the remains. At the first miracle they fill up twelve baskets brimful; and these twelve baskets are the twelve apostles themselves, who will contain henceforth, teeming and abundant, the doctrine hitherto bound up, as if barren, in the five books of Moses. The apostles appeared then of little worth in the eyes of worldly men; however, these fragile baskets, mean and despicable in appearance, are interiorly enriched with the treasures of God. At the second miracle, after the seven loaves, there are seven basketfuls. As for me, says St. John Chrysostom, I do not admire less the miracle of this superabundance than the miracle which furnished what was necessary. The seven basketfuls are the seven sacraments, always prepared and ready for the faithful people; ever living, immortal as the God who instituted them. But what became of the seven basketfuls? They remain at the disposal of the apostles; so that, says Origen, the seven baskets or hampers of the living and spiritual bread, the seven sacraments, have been left by Jesus Christ in the hands of the ministers of the Church, who have cared for them and preserved them, even to the present time, and will preserve, guard, and defend them till the end of time.

All this happened at evening, at the hour the sun declines, at the hour of the cross.

CHAPTER II.

THE BLIND MAN OF BETHSAIDA—CONFESSION OF PETER—THABOR.

NOW the Pharisees and the Sadducees, irreconcilable among themselves, but perfectly in accord against Jesus, according to the constant usage of sectaries and infidels, endeavored to withdraw the confidence of the people from him, so that they might more easily afterwards deprive him of his life and liberty.

They always approach him suddenly and unawares, always artfully surprise and ensnare him. Once more they ask him to work wonders in the heavens for them. Jesus replies to them that they knew well when the heavens portended calmness or a storm, but that their hypocrisy hindered them from learning to know the time they lived in, and to discern what is right; that is to say, they did not wish to see that the epoch of the Messias had arrived. Heaving a deep sigh, he again declares that that perverse and wicked race should have no other sign than that of Jonas; and he left them.

He betakes himself to Bethsaida, where he restores sight to a blind man, with these particular circumstances: that the healing, instead of being sudden, is performed only by degrees. Jesus takes the blind man by

the hand, and leads him out of the town; touches his eyes with spittle, lays hands on him, and asks him if he sees anything. The blind man says: "I see men walking who appear to me like trees." Jesus again lays his hand on his eyes. The blind man begins to see, and at length is healed.

These circumstances are for the instruction of preachers and the ministers of the Gospel. The Saviour, says Bede, takes the hand of the blind man, in order to render him capable of practising good works. He conducts him out of the city. Man, separated from the world, meditates better on divine truths. Whoever desires to be illuminated with the eternal light must follow Jesus into solitude. If Jesus does not heal the blind man by a single word only, it is to show the depth of our blindness, and so that his priests may learn not to despair, but redouble their efforts by prayer and patience, when the ignorant and the sinner arrive only by degrees, almost insensibly, to the vision of the truth. The Lord uses spittle with the imposition of hands; thus does he act every day, teaching men in two ways: by the invisible gifts of the Spirit, and by the visible sacrament of his Incarnation. The order he gives to the blind man cured is to return into his house; he warns the sinner to look into his own heart, to enter into his interior, and meditate upon the benefits of God.

Very soon after Jesus puts to the test the faith of the apostles. Being on the road, in the environs of Cesarea, he suddenly asks them: "Who do they say is the Son of Man?" They answer him, "Some think he is John the Baptist; others Elias; others Jeremias; others one of the ancient prophets arisen from the dead." "And you?" says he to them. Simon Peter

responds: "You are Christ, Son of the living God." Jesus says to him: "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jona, for flesh and blood did not reveal it to you, but my Father who is in heaven."

The quality, son of Jona, given to the apostle, receives from the circumstance an importance quite peculiar. Son of Jona signifies *son of the dove.* Jona, father of Simon Peter according to flesh and blood, is not the subject of consideration, but the grace which Peter received, and by which the Spirit of truth, the Dove which appeared over Jordan, brought forth in him the word of truth.

Jesus adds: "I solemnly declare that thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever you will bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and what you shall loosen on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

After this declaration and this promise he expressly forbids the apostles to tell any one that he was the Christ. Then forthwith, without giving them time to form in their minds a flattering image of the glory that awaited them, tearing away the veil of the future, he points out to them Calvary. "He commences from that instant to declare to them that he must go to Jerusalem, to endure the Passion, to be condemned by the ancients, by the high-priests, and by the scribes, be put to death, and to rise up again on the third day." He spoke to them thus openly.

Peter cannot understand him. "No, Lord. God forbid! No. It shall not be so." But Jesus, looking on the apostles, says to Peter with a reproving look: "Withdraw, go behind me, Satan; you are to me a

scandal, for you have no desire or taste for the things of God." Peter, who knew that Jesus saw the love of his heart, neither replies nor justifies himself. The others, like himself, keep silence.

Then Jesus, ordering the throng to approach him, pronounces unheard-of words, which exceed by excess of divine greatness all that the masters of the world could say.

"If any one wishes to walk in my footsteps, let him deny himself; let him carry his cross daily, and let him follow me. For he who would wish to save his life (at the expense of duty) shall lose it; and who loses his life for my sake and for the Gospel shall save it. And what will it avail a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Behold what was said on that day on the dusty road not far from Cesarea, which is now no more. It is thus that Jesus brought down from above a new fire on the earth; it is thus he educated Peter, the disciples, and the whole world, or, rather, he created a new humanity.

He had terminated this discourse by announcing that many among his disciples would not taste death until they should have seen the kingdom of God. Eight days after this promise was accomplished. He takes with him Peter, James, and John, and conducts them alone and apart up to a high mountain, where he becomes absorbed in prayer. Whilst he is praying he becomes transfigured. His face is resplendent as the sun; his garments shine with a soft, white, living light like that of snow. Near him two men, full of majesty, who were Moses and Elias, spoke to him of the death he was about to suffer at Jerusalem. Peter, astonished and overwhelmed with joy at the sight, says

to Jesus: "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three tents here—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elias." The apostles were wonderfully amazed. They were plunged in a mixture of joy and terror. When Peter spoke again, without knowing what he said, a luminous cloud overshadowed Moses and Elias, and a voice descended from the cloud, which said: "This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I place my delight. Hear ye him." The apostles prostrate themselves on the earth. When they rose up at the command of Jesus, they saw him alone. He had suspended this heavenly splendor, which tended continually to usurp or invade his humanity, which was the proper and natural state of the only Son of God, but which, by his omnipotence, he contains within him, so that the Son of Man, the Victim, might not disappear in him. For the wonder was, not that the divinity should throw out a flood of heavenly light, but that the humanity should be enabled to veil it, and in some sort absorb it.

The three who beheld this vision of Thabor—Peter, James, and John—were the same whom Jesus retained near him to be witnesses of the resurrection of the daughter of Jairus. They are seen apart by themselves in the Garden of Olives at the hour of the agony. Peter was the chief of the new alliance; James must be the first martyr in the order of the apostles; John represented the virgins who follow the Lamb wherever he goes—all three, represent the perfect type of the definitive priesthood which is about to be born at the foot of the cross.

The glory of the God-Man was not to be manifested till after his Passion. Jesus commands the witnesses of Thabor to reveal to no one what they had seen until

the Son of Man should have arisen from the dead. They obey, but they were not forbidden from speaking to one another about it. They ask themselves what could this mean: "Until he should have arisen from the dead." What is so clear now to us was not so to them then. Having no idea of the second coming, they believed that the death of their Master would be the end of all he should do in this world; and they are astonished that Elias, who is to precede the Messias, had not yet reappeared on the earth. Our Lord tells them, indeed, that Elias will come to re-establish all things, and would be, like the Son of Man, persecuted and treated with disrespect. He spoke of the second coming. He adds: "But I tell you Elias has already come, and they have not known him, and that they made him suffer as they willed, and that it is thus they will treat the Son of Man." They understand that this Elias was John the Baptist, whose violent death foretold more and more intelligibly the Passion of the Messias.

It was in descending the slopes of Thabor Jesus announced so clearly his end. By this discourse the disciples, equally dazzled with light and shade, receive an instruction which they comprehended later on. Already they have had Christ in his entirety, with his ignominies, with his glory, with the attributes of the divinity, and the shortcomings of humanity. Very soon they will recognize the Christ of the prophets, the all-powerful God, and at the same time the lowest and most abject of mankind, seated in the highest heavens, nailed to the cross. Wonderful contrasts, incomprehensible, yet contained, nevertheless, in the name of Jesus alone: *Saviour!*

Saviour! He can only be so by saving men from

the consequences of their sins; only so by satisfying for them; only so by taking on him the rigor of their chastisements. He must humble himself, suffer; he must be God, and he must be something else than God.

If he had been only God—a strange expression—the conditions of the humiliations and the sufferings could not have been fulfilled; but that he should be simply a creature, simply a man, was also impossible.

What relations could the sufferings of a simple creature have with the rights of infinite justice? What love and what acknowledgment would the human race have preserved of him? Who would have believed to-day that this foolish holocaust had been offered, had been accepted, had truly satisfied?

And, finally, whatever may be the value of the Just, by what right should such a satisfaction be offered? The human race, created by God, is nothing before God; but, nevertheless (in comparison with the rest of creation), it is not so little a thing that a simple creature could redeem entire humanity, from the first man who existed and who sinned to the last who shall live and sin. One dares to say that God had no right to come to agreement in this suit between man and himself. Either his disdain should have contented itself with the blood of goats and the oblation of the fruits of the earth, or his justice should exact the offering up of the blood of a God. In other words, either there is no redemption or Christ is God, and this God is Man at the same time as well as God.

To-day the children of faith know these divine things. The apostles possessed but confused ideal forms of them, and they remained buried in their memories until the Holy Ghost came to enlighten them

In reserving the co-operation of this Spirit of light Jesus Christ gave another great lesson. He informs us thatexterior teaching profits only inasmuch as the interior light is united to it. It is not, therefore, withou reason and without fruit, says a commentator, that he announced to his disciples truths of whose connection he left them ignorant. He engraved on their hearts mysterious characters. The Holy Ghost gave them the key to unravel and explain them. They learned all of Jesus; they comprehended all through the Holy Ghost; and it is thus the Holy Ghost taught them all things.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHILD AFFLICTED DELIVERED FROM THE DEVIL—THE DRACHMA—PRECEPT OF FORGIVENESS.

AS Jesus descended from the mountain a vast throng of people preceded him. The Evangelist St. Mark says that at his aspect "all were struck with astonishment and fear." Something, without doubt, remained with him of that splendor which had prostrated the three apostles to the earth.

A man casts himself at his feet, beseeching him to deliver his son, possessed of a devil, whom the disciples had not been able to drive out. At the command of Jesus they conduct the sick lad to him; he was very young. The demon had tormented him from his infancy, and often had cast him into water and fire, that he might perish. He writhes, he foams. "If you can do anything," says the father, addressing himself to our Lord, "have pity on us and aid us."

To this prayer of an imperfect faith Jesus replies: "If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes." The father, with tears in his eyes, exclaims: "I believe; O Lord! aid my unbelief." Then Jesus commanded the devil to depart out of the youth, and to enter in no more. The unclean spirit now uttered

hellish yells; then the boy, violently shaken, lay motionless on the ground, so that many of the multitude thought him dead. But Jesus, taking him by the hand, aided him to rise, and from that moment he was cured.

By these details, which the apostles enter into, we perceive that on this occasion, as well as on every other, he applies himself to inspire faith. The reply he makes to the afflicted father corresponds to his request, stamped with doubt. Instead of forthwith curing him, as he did the leper, who prayed with a heart full of confidence, he obliges him to describe this terrible malady which the disciples were not able to conquer, and he permits the sick person to be tormented in his presence. Besides, the evil is deep. He paints the soul totally buried in sin. Nothing less than the power of God can deliver it. But what matter, since God is there, since he always descends from the mountain toward those who know how to importune him?

From the age of this youth, tormented from his infancy, St. Augustine draws a proof of original sin against Julian the Pelagian, who asserted that all men are born without any stain of sin and quite innocent, such as Adam was at the creation. How could this boy, possessed of a devil, be tormented from his infancy, if he were not conceived and born in original sin? What sin could he have committed peculiar to his stage of life? How could childhood be guilty of actual sin? The Venerable Bede also remarks that Jesus cures by touching with the hand him whom the enemy had rendered like unto death; and thus by this veritable touch is refuted in advance the folly of Manes, who denies that the Saviour could be clothed with the same flesh as ourselves. But it is not in this

place alone, it is everywhere, that the Gospel refutes and will refute all heresies.

Nevertheless, the apostles demand of the Lord why this demon had resisted their power. Jesus answers: "It is because of your little faith." They say to him: "O Lord! increase our faith." If your faith, continues Jesus, equalled the grain of mustard-seed, you could say to this tree, Uproot yourself and transplant yourself in the sea, and it would obey you. Yes, indeed, if your faith only equalled a grain of mustard-seed, you could say to this mountain, Move from here to there, and it would remove; nothing would be impossible to you. To impart to them a more special instruction on what had transpired, he adds that this sort of demon which had baffled them could not be chased away but by fasting and prayer. St. John Chrysostom eloquently comments on this text. There is nothing, he says, more powerful than the man who prays as he ought. He who prays as he ought, and who fasts, has no need of many things. He has two wings swifter than the wind, and he is superior to terrestrial nature.

"I believe; O Lord! assist my unbelief; O Lord! increase our faith"—profound prayers, full of pious depth and thought; triumphant words, by which the world was conquered. Whoever will sound the depth of this first prayer will understand the true wound and real want of the soul. Whosoever will have been heard pronouncing the second shall reign for ever.

The faith of the apostles had increased as they had implored it, save especially in what regarded the dolorous part of the mystery of Jesus. They did not doubt his power—sufficient proofs of it were given to them every day; but these multiplied miracles ren-

dered it more difficult for them to believe or comprehend that he could or ought to suffer.

Jesus conducts them to Capharnaum, which he wished to visit for the last time. This journey was a triumph. The people celebrate the praises of the Man sent by God who cures all maladies and all diseases, and who had all power over devils. Our Lord says to the disciples: "I implore you, engrave well on your hearts what I announce to you: the Son of Man must be delivered up. They will put him to death, and, after having put him to death, he will rise up the third day."

The time of opprobrium approaches. He must prepare and fortify those hearts naturally infatuated by so many wonders. He must also, by those repeated discourses, teach them that the Passion and death of the Son of God should be entirely voluntary, since he could foresee them, could also easily avoid them. But as yet they did not comprehend, and this language saddens them. Their ambition was wounded by it, not less than the love they bore their Master. Divided between love and hope, they were afraid to interrogate him on this point.

The Gospels relate but one of the miracles which Jesus performed at Capharnaum during his last sojourn there. In this we equally behold the power of the Son of God and the humility of the Son of Mary.

Those who had charge of the didrachma which was raised for the maintenance of the Temple sought information of Peter whether his Master paid taxes or not. Peter forthwith flew to his Master to acquaint him of the circumstance, and to notify him of their sinister motives; but our Lord foresaw their malignant designs. He asks him, From whom do the kings of

the earth exact tribute: is it from their children or strangers? Peter answers: "From strangers." Jesus replies: "Then the children are exempt from it. However," he adds, not to scandalize them, "go, cast the hook and catch the first fish that comes up; in its mouth you will find a piece of money to the value of four drachmas. Give it to them for yourself and for me."

Jesus, says Origen, does not carry the image of Cæsar. The prince of this world had no power or control over him; he had nothing to do with him. This is the reason why he draws from the bosom of the sea what he did not possess—the coin wherewith to pay the tribute. It was not his intention to refuse this tribute, which he discharges in the ordinary manner. It was only after having clearly pointed out that he was not subject to the law that he submitted. He pays, so that the tax-gatherers might not be scandalized, and also he does not wish to scandalize his disciples.

These remarks and recent attestations of the Divinity cause the disciples to forget the apprehensions they had entertained. A contest arose to know who was the greatest among them. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, asks them, some moments after, what they were disputing about; but they dared not answer him. They were instructed enough to foresee that he would condemn their ambition. Then he says to them: "If any one wishes to be the first, let him be the last of all and the servant of all." And taking a child, he places it in the midst of the apostles; he extols the candor and simplicity of childhood. "Whosoever, therefore," he adds, "shall become humble as this little child, that one shall become the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

After this instruction on humility he speaks to them of charity. It was there and then that the sweet, tender parable was proposed of the faithful shepherd leaving his entire flock on the mountains, and going to seek the lost sheep. He gives an admirable precept never to refuse pardon.

In this intimacy with his apostles and disciples, as a good father, he lets himself be interrupted and interrogated. Peter says to him: "How many times ought I to pardon my brother, who has offended me seven times?" Jesus answers: "I do not tell you to pardon seven times, but seventy times seven"—that is, always. This sovereign expression had not been addressed to Peter without containing a deep meaning and a certain object in view. The chief or head of the Church ought and must be the inexhaustible dispenser of pardons.

CHAPTER IV.

TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE—THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY.

AFTER that Jesus hastens with pious eagerness to the Feast of Tabernacles—one of the three which the Jews were bound to celebrate at Jerusalem. He goes there in a sort of secret manner, and after having expressed some doubt as to his intention; for the hour had not yet arrived to give rein to the designs of those who wished to take his life.

On the road ten lepers, who were kept separated from the people to obey the law, ran forward and cried out to him, "Jesus, our master, take pity on us." "Go," said he to them, "show yourselves to the priests." For the leper made clean was bound to receive the purification of the priest and to make an offering. They departed forthwith, and on going they found themselves cleansed of their loathsome disease. One of them returns and prostrates himself to the earth before his benefactor, and gives thanks. He was a Samaritan; the others were Jews. They were ungrateful, perhaps at the instigation of the scribes, who were incessantly prowling around Jesus. Our Lord says: "Were there not ten cleansed? And where are the nine others? There is none but this stranger to return and give thanks to God." Then he says to the

leper: "Arise, go thy way: for thy faith hath saved thee." This superior and sublime faith not only heals the body, but obtains the salvation of the soul.

Arrived at Jerusalem, Jesus begins to preach. A great division is manifested among the people at his subject. As the venerable old Simeon had predicted, he was a sign or mark of contradiction. Nevertheless, the wisdom of his words subjugated the entire world. Friends and enemies admire that eloquent science of a Man who had never studied. He says to them: "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do the will of him, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh the glory of Him that sent him, he is true, and there is no injustice in him."

Knowing what accusations the Pharisees and the scribes brought against him on the subject of the Sabbath, since the healing of the paralytic he gives them new proofs that the law had not been violated by that act of mercy, but that they violated it themselves by not judging according to equity. He demands of them why they sought to put him to death. Irritated at seeing their perfidy unveiled, some among them cry out: "Who seeks to put you to death? You are possessed of a demon!" Others are inclined to believe that he was the Christ. But those ignorant blasphemers add: "However, we know whence this man came; and when the Christ will come, nobody shall know whence he comes." Their error probably proceeds from a too literal interpretation of that text of Isaias: "Who will recount his generation?" What the prophet understood was the mystery of the Eternal Generation.

Jesus says in a loud voice: "You both know me, and you know whence I am: and I am not come of myself; but he that sent me is true, whom you know not. I know him, because I am from him, and he hath sent me."

Here those Jews, his enemies, very well understood that Jesus said he was the Son of God, and that he was equal to God. Although some of his adherents, beginning to fear, did not boldly manifest their faith, they let it be seen they were of the number of Christ's followers. Among the multitude many said: "When the Christ will come, will he perform more miracles?" The scribes and the Pharisees, the heads of the priesthood, judged that this sentiment should not be allowed to grow among the people; and to arrest its influence they sent out their subalterns to seize Jesus. But he himself, without being in the least degree disturbed by those premature and powerless measures, says to those who surround him, perhaps to those who had been charged to arrest him: "I am yet with you for a little while, and I go to him who has sent me. You will seek me, and you will not find me; and where I am you cannot come."

"Where I am"—"*ubi ego sum*"—words of God. Jesus Christ, present and speaking on the earth, is also in heaven, where he ceases not to dwell.

The Feast of the Tabernacles lasted a week. The last day they were accustomed to draw water from the fountain of Siloe, and they sprinkled that water on the altar, imploring of God an abundance of the fruits of the earth. That day Jesus, according to his wont, seizing the occasion of the circumstance, says in a loud voice: "If any one thirsts, let him come to me, and let him drink. From the heart of him who believes in

me floods of living water will flow." He speaks of the Holy Ghost, which will be given to those who believe in him.

Among the people there were spies charged to seize him; as on the days preceding, they did not dare execute their commission. To the reproaches of the Pharisees and the princes of the priests they replied: "No man has ever spoken like that man." These fanatics demanded of them if they had allowed themselves to be thus duped and seduced like the populace, and if they had not seen that no person among the rulers and the distinguished citizens esteemed this Galilean.

However, Nicodemus, the senator, had the boldness and courage to make an objection. He invoked the legality of the law, finding that no one could judge even a Galilean without knowing what he had done. Now, what crime could be imputed to this man? The Pharisees were more and more transported with rage. There is room to believe that their design was to put Jesus to death without any formality of law, only by virtue of the excommunication pronounced against him. "Are you also a Galilean?" they say to Nicodemus. "Search the Scriptures, and learn that out of Galilee there comes no prophet." Such were their reasons; the difficulty of finding out better ones has made such as these be still advanced. He listened only to the ignorant and the populace. He is a Galilean. That has been said for a long time, and it is still repeated. The miserable Emperor Julian thought to destroy Christianity by this impious expression; the descendants of those who invented it, everywhere submerged in the ignominy of the Jewish name, yet call Jesus the Galilean.

Whilst they were plotting his ruin Jesus retires to the Mountain of Olives. He was accustomed to pass the nights there when he sojourned at Jerusalem. Judas knew it. The Mountain of Olives is the mountain of perfumes—the mountain of unction; there should dwell the Christ, the *anointed with the holy oil*, who has anointed us with his strength to combat the mortal enemy; anointed us with his grace to weep for our faults, with his love to obtain pardon for them. The Mountain of Olives represents to us the sublime goodness of Jesus. The fruit of the olive, says Alcuin, is appropriate to this mystery. Placed under the press, it yields oil—a sign of God's mercy; for the oil swims on the top of all other liquids, as it is written, "The mercies of the Lord are above all his works." In the wandering life of Jesus there are but two places that one can call his abodes: the Mountain of Olives, the mountain of mercies; and the house of Simon Peter, whom he has commanded to pardon seventy-seven times a day.

Having, therefore, passed the night on the mountain, the next day, at the dawn of the morning, he returns to the Temple. The throng eagerly flock to hear him. Urged on by an instinct of salvation, the people rush around Him who had said through the prophet: "I will draw them by the bonds of love." He had sat down, and was instructing them, when the Pharisees appeared, dragging along a woman, whom they placed in the midst of the assembly. "Doctor," they say to him, "this woman is an adulteress. Moses commanded us to stone such guilty ones; what do you think about it?"

According to what Jesus would pronounce, they were prepared either to accuse him of disrespect for

the law of Moses or severity toward sinners. Jesus, observing silence, stooped down and wrote on the earth with his finger. According to one tradition, he wrote the secret sins of the accusers of the adulteress. According to others, he contented himself with tracing out some short sentence of the Scriptures applicable to their wickedness; as, for example, this text of Jeremias: "O earth, earth! write that these men are damned." However, the Pharisees continued to interrogate him, and wished to force him to answer. When he stood erect, he said to them: "Whosoever among you is without sin, let him take up the first stone and throw it at her"; and without regarding them, probably to give them time to make a retreat, he stooped down again and began writing. Whether the words he had said had been sufficient to arouse their wicked consciences, or whether it had the power of unmasking more clearly their hypocrisy, all her accusers went away one after the other; the oldest left the first. Within the circle which was formed, says St. Augustine, only two personages remained—misery and mercy. Jesus said to the adulteress: "Where are those who accused you? Has no person condemned you?" "No person, Lord," said she. "Nor shall I condemn you," replies the Saviour; "go, and henceforth sin no more."

"Come forth," David cried, "establish thy reign in truth, in sweetness, and in justice!" By one word the Son of David caused mercy to triumph, without wounding the law; unmasked hypocrisy; confounded malice; delivered the adulteress from their evil machinations; and, we may believe, converted her heart. Nevertheless, he observes all justice and all truth. "Sin no more." By this, at the same time, he shows mercy and he condemns. He is the protector of the

sinner, but not of the sin. If he had wished to absolve the crime, he could have said to the guilty: "Go, love as you like, and be sure I will deliver you from hell." But he says to her: "Sin no more." Let those pay attention to this who would wish to see only clemency, and let them fear; for the Lord is clement and just. This is St. Augustine's commentary.

After this scene Jesus resumes the instruction it had interrupted. His discourse turned on his mission and his divinity. By its profoundness, often difficult to be understood, it seemed rather destined for those who would meditate on it in future ages than for those before whom it was pronounced. It is supposed the Evangelist preserved but the substance of it, and that our Lord gave developments to it that suited the intelligence of the auditors. It is said that many believed in him, despite the denials and the injurious interruptions of the Pharisees.

These latter did not cease to demand of him who he was. He said to them: "When you shall have raised up the Son of Man, you will then know who I am, and that of myself I do nothing, but that I do the things the Father has taught me. He who sent me is with me, and he has not left me alone, because I always do what pleases him." This is what he had said to Nicodemus from the beginning, what he had announced to the apostles and the Jews themselves, declaring to them that they should have no other miracle but that of Jonas. They understood it after they had raised him on the cross. When he adds, "He who sent me is with me," he proclaims the unity of nature, which renders the Father inseparable from the Son. He informs us, besides that great and consoling truth of Christianity, that God attaches himself inseparably to

those who always do what is pleasing to him, and never leaves them alone.

As many in the throng believed, he said to them to strengthen them: "If you remain attached to my words, you will be truly my disciples; you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." At this the Pharisees affect to misunderstand him, and to stand on their dignity of being the children of Abraham, and of never having been slaves of anybody. Jesus tells them that he who sins becomes the slave of sin; that, children of Abraham according to the flesh, but by their works enemies of the truth and of justice, they render themselves children of another father. "We have but one father," they say, "who is God." "If God be your father, you would love me," replies Jesus; "for it is from God that I proceed and that I am come. You are the children of the devil, and what your father desires, that you wish to do. From the commencement he was a murderer; he has not remained in the truth, and this is why the truth is not in him; and when he lies, it is from the depth of his own wickedness, because he is a liar and the father of lies. For my part, because I tell you the truth you do not believe me. Who among you will convict me of sin?" At this word they keep silence. The Saviour continues: "Why, then, when I speak the truth, do you not believe me?" And answering himself, he says: "He who is of God hears the words of God; and you do not hear them, because you are not of God." They replied to him in recriminations, saying he was a demoniac and a Samaritan.

Their insults were powerless to weary his patience. "In truth," he says to them, but at the same time he says it to the human race for all time—"verily, if any

one keep my word, he shall not see death for ever." They cried out again: "Now we know for certain that thou hast a demon! How! Abraham is dead, and the prophets are dead, and you say, 'If any one keep my word, he shall not taste death.' Are you greater than our father Abraham and the prophets who are dead? For whom do you proclaim yourself?" Jesus answers: "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. He who glorifies me is my Father, whom you declare to be your God. And you have not known him, but I know him; and if I said I did not know him, I would be like you—a liar. But I know him, and I obey his word."

Reverting to Abraham, whom they cited so much, he added these words, full of majesty and light: "Abraham, your father, desired ardently to see my day. He saw it, and he has been filled with joy." The Jews cry out: "You are not yet fifty years old, and you have seen Abraham." "Truly, truly," Jesus answers: "I say to you, before Abraham was known I AM." To define himself he was obliged to create an expression which was not that of men. This word expresses his divinity. *Before* indicates the past; *I am*, the present. In the Divinity there is neither past nor future, but always being. "Before Abraham was I am"—an expression similar to that which the Jews had already understood: "I am who am."

By this flash of lightning they get a glimpse of his equality with God, and they take up stones to stone him who speaks in such a manner; but Jesus becomes invisible to them, and he departs from the Temple.

In concealing himself from their fury he did not fly from them; neither did he curse them nor forsake

them. That same day a great miracle at once demonstrates to them his power, his mercy, and also his perseverance in the doctrine for which they upbraided him touching the observance of the Sabbath.

CHAPTER V.

THE MAN BORN BLIND.

JESUS sees a man born blind, and his disciples say to him: "Master, is it this man who has sinned, or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answers: "Neither himself nor his parents have sinned, but that the works of God may be manifested in him. It is necessary that whilst there is light I should do the works of Him who has sent me. The night cometh, when no person can work. Whilst I am in the world I am the light of the world."

Having said these words, he moistens a little earth with his spittle, and with this clay he anoints the eyes of the blind man, and says to him: "Go, wash yourself in the pool of Siloe (which signifies *One Sent*)." The man born blind obeys, and returns with perfect sight.

But his neighbors, and those who before had seen him begging, said: "Is not this he who sat and begged, asking alms?" Some said: "This is he"; others, "No, but he resembles him." And the blind man, now having got his sight, said: "I am he." "But how were your eyes opened?" He replies: "That man whom they call Jesus made a little clay, rubbed my eyes, and said: 'Go to the pool of Siloe. and wash,'

and I went and washed, and I see." They said to him: "Where is that man?" He answered: "I know not." And they conducted him to the Pharisees.

It was on a Sabbath day that Jesus thus moistened a little earth and opened the eyes of the man born blind. In their turn the Pharisees asked the man born blind how he recovered his sight. He said to them: "He put a morsel of clay on my eyes, and I washed, and I saw."

Some among the Pharisees, speaking of Jesus, said: "That man who does not keep the Sabbath is not of God"; others, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such miracles?" And they were divided among themselves. "And you," said they to the man born blind—"what do you say of him who has opened your eyes?" He replies: "He is a prophet."

But those Jews did not wish to believe that he had been blind, nor that he had received his sight, until they had made his father and mother come. They interrogate them. They ask: "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How, then, does he now see?" The father and the mother answered: "We know he is our son, and that he was born blind. How he now sees we know not; nor do we know who has opened his eyes. Ask himself; he is of age. Let him speak for himself of what concerns him."

Those poor people were afraid of the Jews; for they had already agreed among them that they would cast out from the synagogue whoever should acknowledge Jesus for the Messias. This is why they said, "He is of age; interrogate him."

Having recalled the man who had been blind, the Jews say to him, speaking of Jesus: "Give glory to God We know that this man is a sinner." "If he be

a sinner," he says, "I know it not. I only know I was blind, and that now I see"

They reply: "What has he done? How has he opened your eyes?" He repeats: "I have told you already, and you have heard it. How comes it you wish to hear it again? Do you also wish to become his disciples?" Then they said to him, cursing him: "Be, then, yourself his disciple. As regards us, we are the disciples of Moses. We know God spoke to Moses; but as to this man, we know not whence he came." "Behold, here is a wonderful affair," retorts the man born blind, "that you have not known whence he came, and nevertheless he has restored to me my perfect sight! We know that God does not hear sinners; but if any one honors God and does his will, God favorably hears that person. Since the beginning of the world it is unheard of that anybody could open the eyes of, and give sight to, a man born blind. If this man did not come from God, he could not do this."

They said to him: "You were wholly born in sin, and do you teach us!" "And they cast him out."

Jesus meets him and says to him: "Do you believe in the Son of God?" "Lord, who is he, so that I may believe in him?" Jesus replies: "You have seen him," and it is he who speaks to you. The man born blind says: "Lord, I believe." And prostrating himself before him, he adores him.

In reading this recital of incomparable candor we see that the Holy Ghost has answered by anticipation those who demand that the miracles of our Lord should be proved by cross-examination. We have here an enquiry in all the forms: denunciation of the fact—witnesses called—information—judgment. There

is nothing wanting for their proof; all bears the stamp of truth.

Nevertheless, the splendor and evidences of the Gospel recital contain more beauties and truths than they reveal at first sight. When we regard them with an eye of intelligence, the circumstances of the miracle, already so vivid, and speaking to the eye of flesh, become so many images of the greatness of God. We cannot follow the fathers in the long and beautiful exposition they have given of it; but a few traits will suffice.

Alone, poor, desolate, covered with tattered clothes, without hope and without friends, seated on the public thoroughfare outside the Temple, where he enters not, seated in eternal night, this beggar born blind is the human race. He lives because he is not dead. His whole life is not to die. He sees not the day, and he is silent. Here is man in the very depth of his misery and ruin. Jesus, whom the Jews come to cast out of their Temple, goes toward him; he considers him and recognizes his worth.

The apostles, having remembered that the Master had said to the paralytic to sin no more, demanded whether the blind man were in this state through the fault of his parents. Jesus answered them that neither the man born blind nor his parents had sinned—not that he was born without original sin, but that neither himself nor his parents have committed the sin by reason of which he was born blind. He was blind in order that the glory of God might be manifested, and in order that this sick man himself might receive with sight a sense far more precious than sight—a light infinitely superior to that of the light of day, which is also about to be bestowed on him. And Jesus adds:

"Whilst I am in the world I am the light of the world." Whilst—that is, to-day and to-morrow, and as long as the world lasts. "I am with you even till the consummation of ages." The world shall cease to be when this light shall shine no more in it.

Of a little earth and of his spittle he makes a clay, with which he anoints the eyes of the man born blind. Why this clay? On other occasions a touch, a word, was sufficient for him; though neither touch nor word was ever necessary. At Cana an inward thought had changed water into wine. In St. Ambrose's time the Arians, on account of the clay, denied the miracle. They said this liniment was some secret of medicine to give sight to, and perfect the eyes of, the man born blind. The modern rationalists have taken up the argument of the Arians. St. Ambrose replies: "Jesus restored health. He did not use medicine; he applied no remedies." "In restoring sight to the man born blind," adds St. Augustine, "Jesus Christ employs clay because he is the same God who formed the whole man out of clay. As he had created, he repairs; as he had created to his image, he repairs to his image; because this man who shall see will instantly and boldly confess the truth." St. Augustine sees here a figure of the Incarnation. The spittle that Jesus mingles with the clay is the emblem of the Word, of the wisdom which proceeds from the mouth of the Most High. The clay is the humanity—it is man formed from the slime of the earth. The eyes of our souls have been illuminated by this spittle and this clay through Christ the God-Man. The balsam which imparts light to us is the Incarnation.

Jesus ordered the blind man to go wash himself in the fountain of Siloe. Siloe, says the evangelist, here

lifting up the veil, signifies envoy, the ambassador of God—that is, the Messias. It was meet that the incredulous Jews should see the man born blind, his eyes yet covered with clay ; it was meet the blind man himself should give a proof of obedience and of faith, and receive some interior light from the name of that fountain where he went to recover his sight, and at the same time to receive a sort of baptism. This inexhaustible fountain—the fountain of the envoy of God—is a beautiful image of Jesus Christ, the eternal source of all graces. It typifies particularly his baptism, which tends to enlighten minds after the evangelical teaching is given to them ; and this is the reason the Greeks call baptism *illumination.*

The blind man, with a faith prompt and docile, without raising contradictions, goes, washes himself, and sees clearly. He sees as if he had always seen. Jesus gave to him the eyes of his age—eyes exercised, and which knew how to see; supplying by his power all that habit and use effect, in order that man may avail himself of his eyes. Therefore he performed not only one miracle with a little clay, but a collection of miracles.

The man born blind is not ungrateful. He had heard men speak of Jesus, and he could not be ignorant that Jesus had his enemies. He does not cease to proclaim that to him he is indebted for his sight : " I am truly he. This man whom they call the Saviour prepared a little clay, and rubbed my eyes with it, and told me to go wash in the pool of Siloe. I went, I washed, and I see." In all that he says one discovers a noble and sincere soul. He does not speak of the spittle, he does not say more than he knows, and he did not know how Jesus had made this clay. Were this the place to discuss the question of the literary beauty of

his words, we could point to the language so expressive of the rapidity of the miracle: "*Abii, lavi, et vidco*" —"I went, I washed, and I see."

In the presence of the Pharisees the man born blind is not less firm and resolute, and not less composed. He is a confessor—the first confessor. And those Pharisees, those incredulous miracle-hunters—how they betray themselves! The miracle is before them, living, speaking, attested by the multitude. They shut their eyes against it; they do not wish to see it, to acknowledge it. And their hearts are filled with anguish and with a rage of hatred. Such will be the inward blindness of the wicked. They have not taken to heart, says St. Augustine, those eyes that beam in the countenance of the man born blind; they have not received them, because they do not wish to obtain redemption. For as the natural light which clarifies bodies is, as it were, the reflection of the face of God, the Creator, so the supernatural light which clarifies our understandings is, according to the expression of St. Paul, the reflex of the benign countenance of God the Redeemer.

What occupies the Jews is to criminate Jesus for having wrought a miracle on the Sabbath day. What is it to them that the poor are cured and consoled, that the blind see, that the beggar gets his daily bread? The uppermost thought in their mind is to know how they can apply to the Benefactor of the poor an article of law which might authorize them to stone him. To facilitate this action of the law they take care to create a crime. They did not say that Jesus cured on the Sabbath day; to cure on the Sabbath day is not forbidden. They accuse him of *violating* the Sabbath.

At the same time they would be glad to have it in their power to accuse him of imposture. Instantly he

says to them: "Which of you will convict me of sin?" And none raised his head to confront him. Could they not prove that he had lied; that this blind man who declares himself cured, and who has not seen him yet was not blind? But all their efforts but tend to establish more solidly the truth they pretended to gainsay. Conquered, divided among themselves, they give up the contest by driving from the Temple the man of heart, who will not consent to be ungrateful and a liar in order to remain there. Ungrateful and liars themselves, they could not better forecast the character of all the contests which shall be waged against the Gospel.

The Saviour was anxious to formulate himself the last conclusions of this procedure. He says to the man born blind and cured: "I am come into this world for judgment, that they who see not may see, and they who see (and who render themselves unworthy of the light) may become blind."

These words are applied to the miracle which Jesus wrought and to the faith of the man born blind, and at the same time, in a spiritual sense, to the voluntary blindness of the Pharisees. Some among them appear to understand him. They said to him: "Are we all blind?" Jesus replies: "If you were blind, you would be without sin." But now, as you say, you see clearly, your sin remains. For, having the knowledge of the Scriptures, which ought to lead them to the knowledge of the Messias, they did not see, because they did not wish to see.

Even in these severe words one feels how compassionate is his soul. But to manifest it more he presents to them the touching figures of the sheepfold and the good shepherd. He sums up in these two parables

all the teachings and instructions which he came to give in that laborious mission against the Pharisees, but for the profit of the Pharisees themselves if they but wished it, as well as of all the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

"I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved: and he shall go in, and go out, and shall find pastures. The thief cometh not, but for to steal and to kill and to destroy. I am come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. But the hireling and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep, and flieth: and the wolf catcheth, and scattereth the sheep. And the hireling flieth, because he is a hireling; and he hath no care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know mine, and mine know me. As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father: and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have, that are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."

But it should not be that this sacrifice, which he had so often announced, and which he yet announces, should be charged upon him one day as either an heroic folly or an inevitable and perhaps involuntary consummation, as if, at the end, life had been snatched from him rather than given up by him. He therefore declares, when concluding, two things: the first, that he died to accomplish his Father's will; the second, that he was free to depart or not to depart life, and to take it again after having quitted it. "And this is why my Father loves me—because I give my life to take it again. No person can take it away from me; but I

give it of my own accord. And it is in my power to give it; and it is in my power to take it again. Such is the order I have received from my Father."

Divine clearness of the mystery of the redemption, and which should be sufficient to make us comprehend, if the narrow heart of man could comprehend it, all the love of God!

BOOK V.

DISCOURSES AND PARABLES.

CHAPTER I.

MISSION OF THE DISCIPLES—THE SAMARITAN—MARTHA AND MARY.

JESUS retires to the confines of Judea, either to Galilee or the country known by the name of Perea, where the powerful ones of Jerusalem could not reach him. It is generally thought that it was there he chose the seventy-two disciples to send them out to preach two and two before him in the cities where he was going to go. The number seventy-two signifies the universality of nations. As light pervades and illumines the universe in twenty-four hours, says St. Augustine, so the function of illuminating the universe by the Gospel of the Trinity is confined to seventy-two disciples; for three times twenty-four makes seventy-two. They went two by two because there are two precepts of charity: the love of God and the love of neighbor. He who has not charity toward his neighbor ought not to be charged with the ministry of preaching. This association of two for the service of the Lord is,

besides, very ancient. God delivered Israel by the association of Moses and Aaron; and it is written, "A brother sustained by his brother is like a fortified city."

Jesus gave the new missionaries instructions like those the apostles had received, with the power of curing and healing diseases and casting out devils. This is the complement of the foundation of the apostleship:

"I send you as lambs among wolves; in whatsoever house you will enter, first say: 'Peace be to this house.' Eat and drink of whatever will be there; for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Cure the sick you will find therein, and say to them: 'The kingdom of God is nigh unto you'; and if any city receives you not, say to the inhabitants: 'We shake off the very dust of your city, which clings to us, against you.' And I say to you that on the last day Sodom will be treated less rigorously than that city. . . . He who hears you hears me; and he who despises you despises me; and he who despises me despises Him who sent me."

The seventy-two went and returned joyful. "Lord," they say, "the demons themselves are subject to us through the virtue of your name." Jesus answers them with a gentle severity, in a manner to preserve them in humility:

"Behold, I have given you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and on all the power of the enemy, without receiving any hurt from them. However, do not rejoice that you have power over the devils; but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." And at the same time, thinking of the happiness of those he loved, he rejoices in the Holy Ghost and says: "My Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I give you

thanks because, keeping those things concealed from the learned and the wise, it has pleased you to reveal them to the little ones." And in order to show that he disposes of all things as the Father, he adds: "All things have been delivered to me by my Father, and no one knoweth who the Son is but the Father, and who the Father is but the Son, and he to whom the Son chooses to reveal him." He says again to the disciples: "Happy the eyes that see what you see. For many kings and prophets have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them." And then, addressing himself to the multitude, to those who have lived in bygone ages, to us who now exist, to those who shall exist till the end of the world, "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will refresh you; take my yoke on you and learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart, and you will find peace to your souls; for my yoke is sweet and my burden is light."

St. Augustine gives brilliancy of thought to the deep meaning of this discourse. Those who take upon them the yoke of Jesus, says he, have to bear such afflictions that it seems to them not to pass from labor to repose, but, on the contrary, from repose to labor; but the Holy Ghost is there, who incessantly renews the interior man amid the ruins of the outward man. Through the affluence of the delights of God all dejection and sadness are turned into interior joys; those who love cannot suffer.

Thus Jesus appears to us always meek, humble, compassionate, and divine; lavish of the wealth of his unbounded compassion in proportion as he multiplies the proofs of his universal sovereignty.

The same day a doctor of the law, probably one of those mischievous declaimers who overran Judea, defamers of Jesus, says to him, with a view to entrap him: "Master, what must I do to gain eternal life?" He hoped for some expression contrary to the law of Moses. Jesus answers him: "What does the law command? What do you read in it?" By this question he obliges him to give of himself an evangelical response. He will prove to him afterwards that in citing the text of the law he is ignorant of its meaning. The doctor then replies: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind; and thy neighbor as thy self." Jesus said to him: "You have answered well. Do that, and you will live."

Forthwith the doctor, wishing to glorify himself in his justice, says to Jesus: "And who is my neighbor?" We see here that the first question of this man was crafty, and that he had no love for this neighbor, since he did not esteem that any one could or should be his neighbor. He repeats very well what it was necessary to do to acquire eternal life, but he does not consider the first word of what he recites. He is full of himself, and void of the love of God. Not loving his brother, whom he sees, he cannot love God, whom he does not see. But St. Cyril adds that he knows not his neighbor, because he does not believe in Christ. He who does not know Christ is ignorant of the law. Misunderstanding the truth, he cannot know the law which declares the truth.

Jesus says: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him went away leaving him half dead. And it chanced that a certain

priest went down the same way; and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed away. But a certain Samaritan being on his journey, came near him; and seeing him was moved with compassion. And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine; and setting him upon his own beast brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said: Take care of him; and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee."

Jesus, addressing himself to the doctor of the law, demanded of him: "Which seems to you to have been the neighbor of him who had fallen into the hands of robbers?" "He," replied the doctor, "who had had compassion and who assisted him." Jesus says to him: "Go, and do likewise."

This man who went down from Jerusalem—*the vision of peace*—towards Jericho—*the city of evil*—is Adam; it is the human race. He quitted his country for exile; he goes down from sunny heights, and wanders in regions of darkness; and there he meets with angels of darkness, who strip him naked, cover him with wounds, and leave him helpless. He is half dead, and what of life remains in him is not sufficient to enable him to raise his drooping head. Wounded and bruised in his free will, Adam could not regain the eternal life he had lost. Behold him, then, helplessly prostrate, covered with wounds. Aaron the priest sees him and can do nothing for him; he passes by. Moses the Levite sees and can do nothing for him, and he passes him by. Neither the law nor the prophets can cure the human race; and because they cannot cure, they must pass by. The law made known the sin, but did not abolish it.

And, besides, it was not given for that purpose, because at the beginning man could not receive the mystery of Christ. And if the priest and the Levite have felt a first movement of compassion, it was very quickly stifled by the hardness of their hearts; and they pass by with the law unaccomplished, which tells them in vain to love their neighbor as themselves. They do not love their neighbor, because they do not love God; and on account of this obduracy they are enemies to themselves without knowing it.

There comes a Samaritan. That man, a stranger by race, is a neighbor by compassion. Jesus himself is that Samaritan. Samaritan means *guardian, protector.* It is written of him: "He who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor will he sleep." When they accused him of being a Samaritan and possessed of a devil, he denied that he was possessed; he does not protest against the injury which one of those titles inflict on him—that of guardian of the weak and afflicted. Now, this Samaritan was on a journey; Jesus was really a traveller, and he descended for us to earth, and turned not from his course. The object of his journey was to help the human race wounded, bleeding, stripped naked, half dead. He becomes our neighbor by assuming our nature—our neighbor through mercy. He had compassion, and he drew near to us. The distance he had to traverse to come to our relief was immense. What more separated than God and man? The divine wisdom, that it might reach mankind, created the miracle of Jesus. Having in himself justice and immortality, seeing in us sin and death, Jesus took not upon him the two evils which would have rendered him equal to us, and would have placed him in the necessity of being re-

deemed with us. In order to be near us, with us, and not be what we are, though he could not become a sinner, he became mortal. Assuming chastisement without assuming guilt, he abolishes both guilt and punishment.

The Samaritan, coming to the abandoned and helpless man, bandages his wounds, after having poured on them oil and wine—the oil of mercy, which assuages, mollifies the wounds; the wine of justice, which cleanses from corruption. The oil is the consolation of hope; the wine is the exhortation to fervor. The oil, again, represents the human nature of the Physician; the wine, his divine nature. For Jesus Christ has acted sometimes humanly and sometimes divinely. He has poured out oil and wine by saving us by his humanity and his divinity; he has taught us to mingle severity with gentleness, so that we may be neither ulcerated by excess of rigor nor mollified by excess of condescension. And after having dressed our wounds he bound them up by imposing on us a check of a severe law, without which it would be impossible for us to regain our former health.

The Samaritan puts the bleeding and bruised man on his horse; the Good Shepherd carries on his shoulders the lost sheep. Jesus Christ eradicates the infirmity of our flesh by taking it upon himself. Under the figure of the Samaritan behold him already opening his arms, between which we shall be, not led, but carried off, to the bosom of the Church, where our restoration to health will be achieved.

The law did not receive all men. It is written that the Moabite and the Ammonite did not enter into the Church of God; but now the Church is the inn open to everybody who wills to believe. Come, ye from every nation; come, ye bowed down with every sor-

row; come, ye wounded; come, ye bruised and bleeding; come to the baptism of God, to the feast of God, to the hospitality and friendship of God. For the Samaritan is satisfied with lodging and caring for the wounded man in the inn. He enters with him, dwells with him, takes care of him.

Nevertheless, the Samaritan cannot remain. The following day he gives the innkeeper two pieces of silver, and says to him: "Take care of this man, and what you charge over and above at my return I will pay you." These two pieces of money are the two Testaments, which are stamped with the likeness of the Eternal King, and in which the Church finds the infinitely precious value of his charity; they are the two commandments of the love of God and of the love of neighbor which the apostles received to evangelize the earth; they are the promise of the present life and of the future life: "Hoc fac et vives." Those two pieces of money are also the knowledge of the mystery by which the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father. The Church receives this illumination, this heavenly insight, in recompense for the care she affords to the man, wounded and bruised, who has been confided to her, and whom the Saviour himself took care of for some time.

"And what you demand over and above I will pay to you on my return." For this innkeeper, this new priest, is not the mercenary who renders only those services whose price is stipulated for and paid; nor the mechanical instrument, as it were, that goes not beyond the required labor. The apostles, full of the Spirit of God, paid over and above. To precept they added counsel; on duty they placed the crown of perfection. Although it might be allowed them to live

by the Gospel, yet they lived by the labor of their hands; they sought the cross when they could have avoided it. But it is not possible for man to be more generous than Jesus. "At my return I will pay you." This return, his coming back again, will be the day of judgment. He will pay without measure those who have served him without measure.

After this recital Jesus interrogates the doctor. "Which was this man's neighbor?" The doctor, puffed up with the knowledge of the law, must nevertheless admit that neither the priest nor the Levite, who lived under the law, knew what the law commanded. The Samaritan alone fulfils its prescriptions. Jesus says to him: "Go, and do likewise." When you see an unfortunate creature, whether he be Jew or Gentile, behold your neighbor. The dignity of the priesthood is nothing, the knowledge of the law is nothing, if good works be wanting. Whosoever is merciful, he it is who fulfils the law.

Other circumstances led the Saviour to repeat the instruction on prayer. He speaks of the power of constant prayer, of which the example of the Chanaanite had been so striking an example. To him everything was an occasion of instruction, and he hastened to seize it. He spread abroad those creative words which revealed to men the spiritual life and established charity. At the same time the hypocrisy, pride, false knowledge, and obduracy of the Jews and of the doctors of the law are overwhelmed with terrible anathemas. Through charity for those whom their false justice and false wisdom led astray, and through pity for themselves, he treats them as they were accustomed to treat sinners; but he applies himself especially to portray them in order to give a lesson to his Church

so that the illusion of false justice should never be able to corrupt the truth in her. In reality, he has preserved her from this danger. There are Pharisees in the midst of Christianity, because all the vices are of human origin; but there is no greater stranger to the Church than Phariseeism in doctrine and in morals.

At that moment a sentiment was expressed justly considered among the profoundest and the most fruitful that may have fallen from the lips of the God-Man.

Passing through Bethania, Jesus stops at the house of a woman named Martha, sister of that Mary Magdalene, the penitent and pardoned sinner, whom we saw at the banquet of Simon the Pharisee. Martha occupies herself at once with the repast she wished to prepare for her guest and the disciples, while Mary, seated at the feet of the Master, hears him speak; for Jesus, giving an example to the apostles, did not enter solely to rest, but chiefly to teach. But Martha presented herself before him, and said: "Lord, do you not see how my sister leaves me to serve all alone? Tell her, then, to come and assist me." Jesus answers her affectionately: "Martha, Martha, you trouble yourself about many things; but, truly, there is but one thing necessary. Mary has chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Of all this discourse of Jesus the Holy Ghost has preserved for us but this saying, which expresses the only thing necessary for the present and the eternal happiness of the soul; the only thing without which all the rest is but trouble and torment, or but a transient joy which will be very soon snatched away from us. Jesus did not blame the eagerness of Martha,

who was anxious to serve him; but he warned her that every work done for God must be done with calmness and humility, and that it is by love he is best served; that there is nothing more timely than to listen to Jesus Christ and to attach one's self to him alone. By this expression he raises the contemplative life far above the active life, however laudable may be the action; for it is the contemplative life which is truly fruitful for heaven, which produces even here below the greatest works. The contemplation of God makes known his beauty; beauty illumines love; love gives out that ample flame, that living fire, which is sacrifice. All the saints have contemplated God; and this is why they wished to live and die for him. Martha served the Lord, but Mary contemplated him; and it is Mary who will be at the foot of the cross.

CHAPTER II.

THE WOMAN BOWED TOGETHER—THE BANQUETS AT WHICH JESUS ASSISTED—THE DROPSICAL MAN—LECTURES TO THE PHARISEES.

A MAN came to ask Jesus to divide an inheritance between himself and his brother. Jesus did not wish to do it, and said to him who besought him: "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses." On this occasion he proposes the parable of the rich miser of whom God demanded an account of his soul, whilst he was intent on filling up his granaries with the fruits of the earth.

He insists on alms, on confidence in God, on humility and penance. All these short and sweet words have become the noble laws of Christian society. He mingles in them prophecies concerning the Church, the second coming, the reprobation and conversion of the Jews.

Thus he everywhere taught wherever occasion presented itself, but more particularly on the Sabbath day, in the synagogues, where the people thronged to hear him; and this was a continual motive of wrath among the Pharisees.

One day, being at the synagogue, he saw among the audience a woman bent down by a spirit of infirmity

for eighteen years. She could not look upwards. He said to her: "Woman, you are freed"; and forthwith she raised herself and glorified God. The chief of the Pharisees was much irritated at this. But not daring to attack Jesus, whose retorts he dreaded, he attacks and blames the poor woman now healed and all the people who manifested joy. "Are there not six days in the week," he says to them, "to work? Come, then, on one of those days and be cured, and not on the Sabbath day." Despite this cunning shift, the Pharisee could not avoid the telling reprimand: "Ye hypocrites, doth not each of you on the Sabbath day loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead it to the water? And this woman, whom Satan has held bowed down for eighteen years—is it not proper to heal her on the Sabbath day?"

Whether on account of Adam's transgression, which introduced into the world infirmities and death, or whether on account of her own crimes this woman suffered through the malice of the demon, God has left to Satan this power, so that mankind should experience the desire of becoming better; but because Satan is wicked, he endeavors to exercise his power, so as to render mankind more wicked. He applies himself to remove from their view the sight of heaven, so that men may suffer and lose all hope; he bends down the wicked to the earth like the brutes. The head of man was made to turn itself towards heaven; this woman could not raise her head and look heavenward. Jesus calls her by a movement of his preventive grace: "Thou art freed." He touches her with his hand. "Now, daughter of Abraham, look heavenward. The demon has no longer power over thee; thy bonds are broken." She stands erect and glorifies God.

Like those who were enraged against the man born blind, the ruler of the synagogue, witness of the miracle, sees in it but the glory which will result to Jesus; he would prefer that this woman should always remain in her deplorable condition, bent down to the earth like a beast, rather than that Jesus should be glorified. We see here all rulers of synagogues, all masters and disciples of every school of error. They would prefer that the Church should not do the good that she can and does accomplish, so that she might not be honored and esteemed. Above all, those teachers of error do not wish that she would reform mankind and make it look heavenward. Some seek a pretext for curbing her influence in the very worship of God. Others seek a pretext in the well-being of man himself. They say that it is ruinous to man to raise him up; that his interest is to grovel and be bent down to the earth. They employ every sophism; they use force to turn away the people from coming to Jesus Christ, whether on the Sabbath day or on other days. They fear, above all things, that man should hear this word: *Sursum corda.* Yet, at the very time that they strain every nerve to extinguish the light of the Gospel, they throw off its yoke. They unharness the ox and the ass, the brutal instinct; they lead them to the pool; they have ready muddy and stagnant waters that extinguish reason and make the light hateful. When they have thus accustomed man to a taste for uncleanness and a love of darkness, they will say to him: "You see! We have set you free." And they will make him work for them.

Christ instructs his Church to fear not: Those enemies will say what they wish, they will do what they can, against you. I say to you, speak, act, accomplish,

the work of my love. In spite of their menaces, spread abroad the truth, spread the light; and, if it be necessary that you should give light to the world from the gibbet's height, that those victims of the demon may raise their heads again and be free, do as I have done—die!

A few days after that Jesus provoked anew his adversaries. He went in to eat on the Sabbath day to a house of the Pharisees. All observed him. Among the number there was a dropsical man who stood before him. Jesus said to the doctors, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" They all kept silence. Then Jesus took the dropsical man by the hand, healed him, and sent him away. Then, knowing the thoughts of the guests, Jesus said to them: "Who among you, if his ox or his ass should fall into a ditch, would not forthwith draw it out?" And they knew not what to answer.

This was the fourth banquet at which we behold Jesus. As at others, he performs at this also a great act of mercy, and imparts sublime teaching. He went to those feasts because there also they had need to see him, and because those whom he found there did not come to hear him. It was his ardent desire to save the Pharisees themselves, at the same time that he brought the benefit of his presence to their servants, to whom they would not allow the freedom to go to him. Like the dove that embraces her little ones threatened by the fowler, says St. Augustine, he appeared corporally amid the rejoicings of the world. Even now he appears again to our mind to recall us to where there are true feasting and true joy.

On account of the great renown of Jesus, the Pharisees voluntarily received him; they even invited him,

but, instead of hearing him, they watched him. He knew it; he saw their malice when the dropsical man advanced and stood before him, a model of faith in his mute and persevering prayer. The Pharisees thought within themselves: "What will he do? If he cures this malady we will accuse him of violating the Sabbath; and if he sends him off without healing him, he is then not so merciful as the simple and weak-minded people supposed he was." Jesus, by one word, already pronounced on a similar occasion, baffles them: "Is it permitted to heal on the Sabbath day?"

The Pharisees dared say nothing. This question, which they unanimously solved against Jesus, was controverted among themselves. Many contended that none should administer a cure unless there were danger of death; others were less rigorous. Jesus shows them that, despite their malice and wicked intent on his life, they are powerless to seize him without his voluntary surrender. He despises their machinations and fears not their envy. He teaches them that it is good to sanctify festival days, and to consecrate them to charity. He rewards the faith of the dropsical man, who humbly waits, not presuming to implore his aid, except by exhibiting before him his disease. The dropsical man is cured. Behold the crime for which the Pharisees traduce the loving Jesus. He hears the murmurs which they dare not articulate, and he replies to them: "If your ox or your ass—the least temporal interest that can be in danger of being lost—were imperilled, then you would care very little about the Sabbath."

The ox and the ass are named to renew in the mind of the Pharisees the prophecy of Isaias, and to give them the interpretation of it: "The ox knows his

master, and the ass his master's stable; but Israel has not known me." The ox tied to the yoke is the Jewish people, whose neck is hardened under the yoke of the law. The ass is the symbol of the Gentiles, subject to all errors. He who will come at the last day to draw them from the pit wherein they have fallen is he who cures all diseases, who delivers from all captivity, who dispels all darkness. What the Pharisees do through avarice he will do through charity.

Avarice was the capital vice of the Pharisees. The dropsical man was a perfect figure of this vice. The dropsical man is burning with an insatiable thirst; one part of his body is horribly swollen, the other part is dried up, parched. From this body, where all is changed into corrupt humors, a fetid breath is exhaled. This is the avaricious man; ever changing, always insatiable, poor in the lap of abundance, having no other thoughts but filthy lucre, only aspiring to quench his thirst of that gold that swells and kills him. St. Paul says that avarice is an idolatry. Who can cure this evil? Jesus can do it. We must importune him, as did the dropsical man, by presenting ourselves before him. *Erat ante illum*, says the Gospel, pointing out with divine conciseness the steadfastness in prayer and the strength of hope in that man who wished to be healed. He came forth without being invited, and he stands there braving the gibes and sneers and taunts of the bystanders, only heeding him who healed, teaching the world to ask and obtain miracles. Jesus takes him by the hand, heals him, and sends him away.

The hideous disease which this man harbored in his body the Pharisees had in their souls. So, in order to heal them and apply the remedies which were suitable

for the wound of those souls, inflated and hardened, Jesus gives them the beautiful lesson not to thrust themselves in the first places, as they were always eager and anxious to do. "For whosoever exalteth himself shall be humbled; and whosoever humbleth himself shall be exalted." He recommends them to give banquets to the poor rather than to the rich, because the rich will repay what is given to them, but what is given to the poor God will repay it. These things appear to us common enough; they that become so only through Jesus Christ and through his Church, to whom he has taught them.

One of the invited guests exclaimed: "Happy the one who will be at the feast in the kingdom of God!" Jesus replies by the parable of those who refused to resort to the feast of the father of the household. The invited guests first called alleged divers pretexts and did not come. One was going to look after his farm; another wished to try a yoke of oxen newly purchased; another replied that he was going to get married. Thus the care and anxiety for temporal affairs estrange men from the things of God. All that is in the world, the apostle says, is the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life. The householder orders the poor to be gathered in: the lame, the blind, even the vagrants who stroll along the streets; he wishes them to be compelled to enter, so that the banquet-hall should be filled up. This is a prophecy of the vocation of the Gentiles and of the multitude of sinners who shall be washed and clothed with festive robes, so as to participate in the feast of God. The proud refuse; the humble are chosen. "Gather in those on the highways and along the hedges," says the father of the family, "and compel

them to enter." This is that famous *compelle intrare* which has so much shocked heretics and scandalized so much the false wisdom of a great number of orthodox believers. The Gentiles come from the roads and the market-places of the town. Heretics, says St Augustine, come from the hedge-rows; for those who plant hedges establish divisions. Let them be removed from the hedges. Let them be snatched from among the thorns. But they do not wish to be forced. We will enter, they say, by our own will. This is not what God has commanded: *Compelle intrare.* Let the necessity come from the outside. Thence is born the will. And this compulsion, adds St. Gregory, often is from God and his mercy. Those enter through violence who, harassed and bruised by the adversities of the world, return to the love of God. They escape the terrible sentence which has been pronounced in those words: "I say to you that none of those who have been invited, and who have not wished to come, shall taste of my feast."

Jesus betakes himself to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Dedication. Some of the Pharisees came to him and counselled him to flee, as Herod was determined to take his life. Our Lord knew that it was Herod himself who commissioned those officials. He replied to them: "Go and tell that fox, behold I chase out devils and that I heal the sick; to-day, to-morrow, and the third day all will be consummated. To-day, nevertheless, I must travel on, and to-morrow and the day following; for it is not proper that a prophet should be killed out of Jerusalem." At this thought, more touched at the chastisement that awaited guilty Jerusalem than at his own punishment, he allows his love and his sorrow to speak: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem,

you who put to death the prophets and stone those who are sent to you, how often have I desired to gather together your children, as the hen gathers her young brood under her wings, and you have not wished it!"

The Pharisees of Jerusalem, resolved to get rid of him, accost him in the Temple with one of those captious questions by which they meditated taking his life. They say to him: "How long will you hold us in suspense? If you be the Son of God, tell us boldly."

What they demanded they knew well, and Jesus for a long while had satisfied them on this point; but they were bent on ensnaring him in his words and thereby condemning him. Everybody expected a temporal kingdom of Jesus Christ. Jesus, by saying, "I am he"—by this word only would have constituted himself in a state of rebellion against the Roman nation. Yet if he kept silent, impiety could take advantage of his silence.

The question of the Pharisees might indeed embarrass human prudence; they had not reckoned on the divine wisdom, and it confounds them. Our Lord did not wish either to conquer as a common victor or perish as a seditious citizen; nor did he wish to afford any pretext for their wicked designs. He says to them: "I speak to you, and you do not believe me. The works which I do in my Father's name give testimony of me. I and the Father are one."

On hearing these words they took up stones to stone him. They understood, but their avowal was required, so that the word which they endeavored to draw from him should issue from their own mouths. He continued: "I have done many good works be-

fore your eyes by the power of my Father; for which of those works do you stone me?" The Jews replied: "It is not for any good work that we stone you, but for your blasphemies; because you, a man, make yourself God."

It is they who say it, confessing with the same breath the object for which they interrogated him. Jesus, however, without departing from the prudence which it pleased him to use towards those perfidious wretches, confirms what they had understood: "Is it not written in your law, I have said, *you are* gods?" If, therefore, the Scriptures—which cannot be destroyed—call the judges of Israel gods, why do you say to him whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world—why do you say to him, You blaspheme, because he has said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do them, even if you do not wish to believe my word, believe in my works, and know and believe that the Father is in me, and that I am in him.

The Jews did not undertake to reason. They sought to lay hands on Jesus; but he escapes them, as he had already done, by rendering them immovable or by rendering himself invisible, and he departs from Jerusalem.

CHAPTER III.

THE SHEEP—THE DRACHMA—THE PRODIGAL SON.

JESUS came from beyond the Jordan to a spot where John at first baptized, and he dwelt there. His goodness continued to attract around him a multitude of publicans and sinners. He rejected nobody, and he instructed them. The Pharisees, the scribes, and the doctors, always the same, did not cease to blame his condescension towards those of low birth and public immorality. "See," said they, "this man receives sinners, and eats with them."

Jesus answers by a parable of a shepherd who leaves his flock of an hundred sheep to find out only one lost sheep, and that of the woman who rejoiced at finding her lost drachma. He said to the Pharisees that the angels of God in heaven rejoiced more at the conversion of one sinner than at the penance of ninety-nine just. In order that they yet might take a higher and more just idea of the munificence of divine mercy, he proposes to them the parable of the prodigal son, wherein the heart of the father of the family is pictured with traits so touching. And yet we know this does not represent the entire love of God and the entire love of the Saviour. For the father of the parable awaited his son; he looks out for him; but God, the true Father, calls, moves, the sinner plunged in his crimes; he be-

seeches, implores, him to return ; he assures him of his pardon ; he goes himself to find him out And to reach the ungrateful sinner through what roads has not Jesus passed ?

These three parables (so to speak) make but one. The Gospel does not contain a more touching and affecting lesson.

The hundred sheep of the first parable are the universal domain of God. The hundred, a perfect number, represents all creatures. The lost sheep is the human race. The Son of God, the good Pastor, leaves the faithful flock, and comes on earth. Having recovered his sheep, he does not chastise it ; he does not lead it back by rudely hurrying it on with the whip of hirelings and with the teeth of dogs. He carries it on his shoulders. We here recognize the Samaritan. Jesus Christ takes upon himself the burden of our humanity. We know what is this weight, what are the ways of return ; but he found what was lost. And as the shepherd calls his friends and his neighbors, Jesus Christ invites his saints and his angels, and says to them : " Rejoice with me." He does not say, " Rejoice with the sheep that was lost," remarks St. Ambrose, but " Rejoice with me." Our life is his joy, our return to heaven is the fulness of his happiness.

The parable of the sheep teaches us that we are the creatures of God, and that we belong to him. The parable of the drachma teaches us more clearly that we are made to his image and likeness ; for the drachma, a royal coin, bears the figure of the king. The woman who searches for her lost drachma holds a lighted lamp in her hand. The lighted lamp is a shining, brilliant light in an earthen vessel. Jesus is the Divinity in terrestrial flesh ; the woman is the Church. She

holds the light of Christ in her hand; she also holds the doctrine of truth. By the effulgency of this immortal lamp, by the strength of her faith, the Church triumphs over darkness. She searches without ceasing; she stirs up and moves about the refuse of humanity; she purifies it. At length she finds the lost soul, and her joy is great, and all those who love her rejoice with her. In this woman who "sweeps" we recognize again him of whom John the Baptist has said: "He will take the winnowing fan, and he will make clean his thrashing-floor; he will put the good grain in his granary, and he will cast the chaff into the fire which will never be extinguished."

The same sense reappears more extensively in the parable of the prodigal son. We see more clearly in it the fault of the sinner; by it we are far better moved by the mercy of God, whose object the sinner is. There is in it, besides, another great lesson regarding the Jews. Their obduracy and their jealousy are vividly depicted; their return to the faith is again predicted.

The householder has two sons, who represent the two peoples. The eldest stays in his paternal mansion; the other claims his patrimony. He receives it and goes away. The Jew retains the worship of God; the Gentile abandons himself to the worship of idols.

This son has received his fortune: reason, free-will, the riches of nature and of the earth, and, in a certain degree, the treasures even of grace—that is, the remembrance of the primitive revelation and the promise of the Redeemer. He wanders far from his father, not by the distance of space, says St. Augustine—because God is everywhere—but by alienation of the heart. The sinner shuns God and keeps himself far

away from him. He goes off and squanders all the patrimony that had been apportioned to him. Debauchery devours all. In this estrangement from God wherein he is plunged, in this sea of the world, in these grottos of the siren, he abandons his soul to error, his heart to its passions. He destroys the faculties of the mind, the purity of the soul, the just discernment between good and evil. Incredulity surrounds him, weakens his will, smothers his reason, and leads him to idolatry. He leaves his father; he finishes by forgetting him. This is the climax of his ruin. When all is spent, famine supervenes. There is no more truth, no more love; there is famine of the soul and famine of the heart.

Then he engages in the service of one of the inhabitants of the country, and he is sent out into the fields, where he is obliged to herd swine. By the work with which this prodigal son was charged one recognizes the master he had selected. This master fed him not, or the nourishment or food he gave him did not satisfy him, did not satiate his appetite. The water he drank quenched not his thirst. The bread he ate satiated not his craving appetite. "And he desired exceedingly to fill his stomach with the husks that the swine did eat," but nobody gave him any. Those husks with which the master of the prodigal son fed his swine; those shells of food, void of substance, which fill up and clog the body, but never nourish it—St. Augustine well remembers having eaten of those husks. They are the customs of the age and its high-sounding vanities; gross, swinish sensualities, and festivities in which they wallow in obsceneness; pleasures that enervate the powers of the soul. But the prodigal son had not even these. O son of the king! you have de-

voted yourself to herding the flock of Satan. Satan will not even give you the food of his swine. Drive them on, feed and fatten them, play with them, and live in their filth and mire. They may excite your envy; you shall not taste their joys.

This is the last shift of the sinner, the last grace God will send him. He is miserable. In the excess of this misery he thinks of himself; he enters into himself; he forms the resolution to go back to his father. In the depth of his soul he feels his father will repudiate him. Of the riches he took away nothing remains for him save that instinct, that gnawing worm—his conscience; that he cannot destroy without annihilating his very self. As soon as he thinks of his father he says to himself that his father would pardon him. In order that we might not be able to squander even this part of our inheritance, the Father does not put it into our hands, which would let it fall, nor has he written it on the tablet of our mind, lest it might be effaced; but he engraves it on the innermost recesses of the heart, where this sacred writing resists all and everything. The world recognizes God when it says he is good. Despite the blindness in which he was plunged, the prodigal son instantly knew what he should do. "I will arise, I will go to my father, and I will say to him: My father, I have sinned. I am not worthy to be called your son; treat me as one of the servants who are in your household." This language is the very essence of human nature, and those are its sentiments. It is thus constituted: it stands in need of purifying itself by the confession of its faults; it stands in need of proclaiming itself unworthy, such as it knows itself to be—unworthy not by origin, since it calls God its Father, but by its fault and its wicked works; it stands

in need of proclaiming that of itself it cannot raise itself, replace itself in the high position of honor and dignity it formerly occupied.

So the prodigal son rises and goes to seek his father. When he was yet afar off the father saw him. He did not wait for him; he did not wait till he should speak and humble himself; he runs to meet him, throws himself on his neck, and embraces and kisses him. Thus God is revealed in him who has appeared, says St. Paul, as the love and goodness of God.

He runs, says St. John Chrysostom. The weight of our crimes hinders us from reaching the desired, happy spot; but he, being able and willing to descend, does descend, and before we can say a word he kisses our lips, whence the confession is about to issue which ascends from a penitent heart. We have not even articulated the confession when he has already received it. He hears our most secret thoughts, says St. Ambrose, and, even when we are a long distance separated from him, he runs lest some enemy might stop and seize us. He runs by foreknowledge, and he embraces us by his clemency. By the outpourings of paternal love he hastens to raise up that which was fallen; to set up again heavenwards that which was bent towards the earth. But what is this arm of the Father which so tenderly entwines itself around the sinner? The Father, says St. Augustine, has not withdrawn from his only Son, through whom he has made this long and tedious journey in search of the lost sheep. For God was Christ *reconciling himself to the world.* He casts himself on the neck of the sinner—that is to say, he lowers towards us his arm, which is the Lord Jesus Christ As man works through and by the arm, God works through Jesus Christ, and that is why the

Christ is called the power of God. Isaias has said: "To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

And then the prodigal son makes a confession. He says: "My father." He declares he has sinned; he declares that he is not worthy; but he does not add what he had proposed to himself to do: "Make me one of your servants." He could not say so after he had pronounced this name of father, in the face of his father, and after his father had embraced him. He feels he is reinstated, and that his rank of son is restored to him; and the father does not blame him, does not recall to him that course of crime, of shame, and of sorrow. That is effaced, blotted out; the material trace of it must disappear. Hide these tattered clothes; give him his first robe—his robe of innocence. Thus do I restore my son to his former purity. Put a ring on his finger—the mark of nuptials, the pledge of union between him and God, the symbol of faith which will shine in his works. Put shoes on his feet, that his feet no more may slip on the way, and may no more touch the earth. Kill the fatted calf, and let us eat and rejoice; because my son was dead, and now he is alive again. The fatted calf was the victim the priest offered for sins. Here it typifies the Eucharist—the victim which is destined to feed and nourish humanity restored in this son who was dead. And they placed themselves at table and began the feast. And now, says St. Augustine, the feast is celebrated throughout the entire universe.

Those three parables must have enraged those who reproached Jesus for having paid so much attention and devotion to sinners. The episode of the eldest son awakened their murmurings.

This eldest son, who did not wish to enter into the house because the return of his brother was honored

by a grand banquet, and who resisted even the entreaties and prayers of the father of the family, is the Jewish people. It is said he returned from the fields. He did not set out for a far-off country, and nevertheless he is not in the paternal mansion. He is in the fields, occupied listlessly in manual labor. He serves his father, but he does not love him. The prodigal son, thinking on his father, had unbounded confidence in his paternal tenderness and kindness of heart; he is resolved to approach humbly and penitentially. The eldest son doubts the justice of the father, or rather denies it. With a base jealousy he waits outside; his doggedness prevents him from entering the house. His father, in a pathetic and loving manner, implored him to come in; but he refused. We see every day this headstrong, obdurate son; he represents those whom the Church of God calls daily to the feast of the Lamb, but who will not receive the food of angels, to be found only in the Catholic and Apostolic Church. However, the Father does not in vain go out to call in this eldest son. He will use tender violence to this rebellious heart; but he will await the proper time, when the fulness of the nations shall have entered.

Like those who murmured about the price paid the laborers at the eleventh hour, this eldest son also represents those faithful, or rather exacting, but still narrow-minded zealots who live uselessly in the broad sphere of Christianity. They would almost dare quarrel with God for affording the graces of conversion to sinners at the last moment. Because they look on themselves as just, and in fact really are so (they have a cold, frozen justice which of itself stands in great need of pardon), they would willingly expect that those

should not be received whose sins are more notable. But God hates this Phariseeism. God is rejoiced at the conversion of sinners. Let them take care that their disrespect for the sinner and their spite against the mercy of God may not prevent themselves from entering. The man who cries out from a bruised and sorrowful heart, "My Father," and gives to God his true name, wishes to do the true thing that God requires. "And who, then, are you," says St. Ambrose to them, "to exact of the Lord that he should not pardon? Let us applaud and praise God that our sins are forgiven through penance, lest our sins should not be forgiven. Let us not repulse those who return from a far-off country; for we ourselves have been in those remote regions, and it is by God's overflowing mercy we were brought back."

The same doctor shows that those three parables agree and harmonize with each other, and that they represent three parts of one great whole. They contain the essence of all good. He saw in them three great consolations afforded to our misery; three consoling motives of hope in the abyss of our sins; a triple chain which the divine mercy casts to us when in danger of being for ever engulfed in the sea of eternal death. The father is God, the shepherd is Christ, the woman is the Church filled with the Holy Ghost. Jesus the Saviour is everywhere. He seeks after our souls as the humble mother of the family sought after what she considered most precious. He leads us back from our errors and wanderings, and watches over us as the vigilant shepherd, and he welcomes us home as a tender father. We are his sheep. O Pastor! O Good Shepherd! lead us, conduct us, into the eternal pasturage. We are the drachma. O King! we bear

engraved on our souls your image and your name; take us out of the mire and restore to us our former beauty. We are the prodigal son. O Father! come to us; run. Take away from us this yoke of the devil, that hangs so heavily on us; give us the yoke of your love!

The divine Master, always speaking that sweet language of the parable, gives us new lessons on the contempt of riches. He also wished to teach men the way to purify riches unjustly acquired. "Nourish, provide for the poor with them," said he; "by alms make friends for yourselves in heaven."

The rich Pharisees, both proud and avaricious, considered that the wealth they possessed was but a just recompense of the virtues they attributed to themselves. They sneered and mocked these discourses. Jesus replies to their mockery by the parable of the poor Lazarus and of the wicked rich man. The poor Lazarus, covered from head to foot with ulcers, implores of the rich man for the crumbs that fell from his table, and could not obtain them. He dies; the angels carry him into the bosom of Abraham. The rich miser dies in his turn, and hell is his tomb. In the midst of those flames he cries out to Abraham: "Have pity on me, and send Lazarus here to dip his finger in water to quench my burning thirst." Abraham answered this damned soul: "Between Lazarus and you justice has placed an abyss that neither you nor he will ever be able to bridge over."

CHAPTER IV.

THE UNJUST JUDGE—PRAYER—MARRIAGE.

THE Pharisees were not converted, but the disciples were instructed; and those divine lessons dwelt in their memory, to be transmitted to humanity for unborn generations.

Jesus spoke to them again of perseverance in prayer. He had antecedently taken the example of a man who rose in the middle of the night, and who gave what he did not wish to give, solely to rid himself of the importunity of him who ceased not to knock at his door. "If man does this," added he, "what will not your Father do, who is good and just?"

He repeats this lesson by another representation: "We ought always to pray and never to cease praying. There was a judge who did not fear God and who did not care for men. A woman came to him and said to him, Do justice to me on my side. For a long time he refused her; but at last he said within himself: Although I fear not God nor do I care for men, nevertheless, because this woman urgently solicits me, I will render her justice, lest at the end she might offer me an insult. You hear what the unjust judge said. And will not God do justice to his elect who cry to him day and night, and will he not have patience in

their regard? I say to you he will quickly avenge them."

The vengeance of the just—that which he has ordered them to ask—is their deliverance from sin and hell. They do not ask to be avenged, as the world understands it; and as it is forbidden to them to avenge themselves, they could not do it without ceasing to be just. They ask to be delivered, not from the unjust Judge, but from his iniquity. They ask also to be delivered from the temptations of the enemy within them; especially they ask to be delivered from the world. God hears this prayer, and in a short while they are delivered. Life is short for the oppressed as for the oppressors; the things of life are shorter yet, and God disposes of them in such a way that they always tend to justice. In the end the just are always avenged, even under the yoke of iniquity, when God affords them that patience and that strength by which he humbles iniquity, even in its triumph of a moment. The prisoner who carries away with him justice into his dungeon, full of serenity, is already avenged of the judge. The martyr, smiling amid tortures, is already avenged of the executioners. Whoever accepts oppression rather than abandon truth, God forthwith avenges him, filling his heart with the gifts of truth, and planting like iron claws, in the heart which prides itself in not fearing God and not caring for man, spite, and shame, and barren remorse. The world has always had solemn examples of this, and it is not even now deprived of it. Everybody can see where iniquity is triumphant and degraded; where justice is oppressed and full of glory, rejoicing in a profound peace, already avenged.

All that the Saviour said and did bears a relation in

some way to his Church. We find the type of the Church in that widow forced to plead so warmly her just cause before an unjust judge.

Until the coming of him who now mysteriously protects her the Church is the widow, and her history presents to us the continual spectacle of that justice, so long refused, granted with difficulty and promptly avenged.

The wretched tortures of mind that vex and agitate the unjust judge, and at last compel him to do justice, all-powerful and perverse as he is, do not trouble the mind of the Church. She fears God, but she does not fear either insults, affronts, or persecutions. She importunes her earthly judge, and even threatens him; she implores her heavenly Judge, and she well knows he will judge justly. She bears patiently; she is cast off, loaded with irons; she is bound hand and foot, and cast into prison, condemned to death; but she sits crowned with justice, immortal as justice, serene as truth itself, and as tranquil and calm as immortality. O beauty of God on earth! she will be delivered from her enemies, and she will be avenged.

But why, asks St. Augustine, does the widow say, "Avenge me"? Why did the chosen servants of God, even the martyrs, speak thus in the Apocalypse of St. John? We are not expressly commanded to pray for our enemies and our persecutors. By this vengeance of the just we must understand that they demand of God the destruction of the reign of the wicked, whether by their return to justice and truth or by the chastisement which destroys their power. Or yet, as St. Cyril expressed it, if the offence is personal to us, it is our glory to forget it; but if the injury or the insult attacks God himself, then we invoke God against the enemies of his glory and his truth.

Jesus terminates by those dreadful words: "When the Son of Man shall come, do you think he will find faith on the earth?" When the all-powerful Creator will appear in the form of the Son of Man, so rare shall be the elect, says the Venerable Bede, that the destruction of the world will be sudden—not because of their supplications, but on account of the indifference of others. The Lord warns us for all time, for we are ignorant of the moment; and prayer ceases and loses its power as soon as faith is extinguished. Let us believe, then, says St. Augustine, in order to pray, and let us pray in order to believe. Faith produces prayer, and prayer strengthens faith. This is the teaching of Christ, outside of which, teaching which, is the Catholic Church; for Christ teaches in her only. All knowledge is vain and foolish; without faith we can do nothing, without prayer we can do nothing. Whoever does not desire to hear this truth does not wish that Jesus had come into this world for him; and his proud forehead, that refuses the light of God, will go down through the mire into utter darkness.

But prayer can become barren, fruitless. Jesus completes those lessons by a parable on humility, which we ought to bring with us to prayer: "Two men went up to the Temple to pray. The one was a Pharisee, who, standing up, prayed thus with himself: My God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, who are robbers, unjust, adulterers, nor such as this publican; I fast twice a week; I give the tenth part of what I possess to the poor. And the publican, standing afar off, did not dare even to raise his eyes to heaven, but struck his breast, saying, My God, have pity on me, for I am a sinner. And I declare to you the latter went away justified, and not the former."

Pride is the passion which torments most the heart of man, and that is why Jesus reverts to it so often. The Pharisee affords a living image of it. He prays, but his prayer carries with it the character of pride, which is abominable to God. He denies God in attributing to himself his justice, and this haughty, proud justice is the ruin of this soul. He prays standing up —proud even in attitude, proud in himself; for he addresses himself to himself. He employs the formality, "My God, I give you thanks"; but it is to himself only he renders thanks for the merits he acknowledges, and he does not wish to give thanks to anybody else for them; he asks for nothing. Thus you are perfect, says St. Augustine; you have everything in abundance, and you need not say, "Forgive us our trespasses." Follow with attention his prayer: "I am not like other men"; if, at least, he had said, I am not like a great number of other men. No; he is the only one of his species. I myself am just; the others—all the others—are sinners. "Neither am I like this publican." The publican is like the others; he is a robber, unjust, an adulterer. The Pharisee despises the whole human race, and he causes the weight of his contempt to fall on that brother whom he saw humbled before God. He declares the summary of his good works, and behold his prayer. Let him boast as he will, says St. Gregory; through pride he opens the city of his heart to his enemies who besiege it.

In vain has he shut it by fasting and prayer; there is a place open, and the enemy enters. "I am not astonished," St. Augustine remarks, "that God pardoned the publican, who judges himself. He stands afar off; yet he draws near by contrition, and the Lord is attentive to his humble and contrite heart." "The Most

High humbles himself towards the humble." He does not look nor stare around, and it is thus he merits to be looked upon and considered. His conscience bends him down; his hope raises him up. He strikes his breast, as it were to punish his heart for its wicked thoughts, and he arouses it from its slumber. He confesses his sins, and the Lord will grant him pardon. You have heard the proud accuser, and you have heard the humble guilty. Listen to the judge: "I declare to you the publican went away justified, but not so the Pharisee; for whosoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whosoever humbles himself shall be exalted."

St. Chrysostom, instructing his people, develops this lesson under an image quite Byzantine. "You see," says he, "two chariots in an arena; the one carries justice united to pride, the other sin with humility. The chariot of sin outruns that of justice—not by its own strength, but by the virtue of humility; the other is conquered—not by the fault of justice, but because of the weight of pride. The excellence of humility triumphs over the weight of sin, and dashes forth and reaches God; the weight of pride fetters justice. Should you have done a multitude of virtuous works, if you presume on yourself, you have lost all the fruit of them. Should you have been loaded with the weight of a thousand crimes, if you esteem yourself guilty, take confidence; God will not reject an humble and contrite heart. But since humility united to sin is yet fleet enough to pass by and keep ahead of justice united to pride, what would not be the course of humility if it is united to justice? On the other hand, if pride can degrade and fetter even justice, into what a horrible abyss will it not drag us united with sin! Therefore neglect not justice, but avoid pride."

To understand the Gospel we must cast a look on the world and examine ourselves. We instantly perceive how a vast multitude of people were fed and lived on the manna; how every soul was enlightened by it. Then we ascend up to the Source of the flood of life and light. Who has been capable so perfectly to reveal God to man, and to put them in close proximity, and to find even in the misery of man the means of approximating him to God? Who could bring it about that sin itself, by the humility it ought to and must produce, should become a means of salvation? Considering that the fall was the motive power of the redemption, and that the redemption could not be accomplished but by the Incarnation, the Church has the right and power to sing, *Felix culpa.* Considering how pride constantly draws us further from God, the Christian will be tempted to exclaim: Oh! happy for us that there is sin. St. Paul gloried in his infirmities. He acknowledged that the temptation which assaulted and buffeted him as an angel of Satan was necessary for him to escape pride; for it is not possible, says a commentary, attributed to St. Ambrose, that the heart of a man which has seen things so grand and magnificent should not be puffed up with pride, had it not been humbled and bowed down by the weight of human misery. Thus sin serves at least to block up the road of pride. We escape the abyss because we fall and stumble on the way. This profound knowledge of man's misery and degradation and of God's clemency shines forth all through the parables, and at the same time their simplicity makes them accessible to every understanding. It is milk for children, and at the same time bread for the strong, says Bossuet. By these parables we behold Jesus full of God's secrets.

But we behold that he is not astonished at them; he speaks naturally of them, as being born in this secret and in this glory.

Among Christ's various instructions there is one in reply to the Pharisees on the indissolubility of the conjugal or marriage tie.

Whilst he was curing the sick and teaching in that part of Judea beyond the Jordan the Pharisees also came to find him out and to tempt him. "Is it permitted," said they to him, "for a man to put away his wife for any cause whatever?"

This question was well concocted, like those they commonly addressed to him, in such a way that he might not be able to solve it without furnishing against himself some theme for accusation, or without displeasing many persons. If he should reply that the woman ought to be put away for any cause whatever, it might be that he would declare himself against the severity of his own doctrine, already known. If he laid down conditions for the divorce, they would accuse him of condemning the law of Moses.

Jesus, interrogating them in his turn, says to them: "What has Moses commanded you?" "Moses," they replied, "has commanded a man to give a bill of divorce and put away his wife." "Yes, on account of the hardness of your hearts," replied Jesus. "Have you not read that he who made man at the beginning created man and woman, and that he said: It is on that account man shall leave his father and his mother, and that he shall cling to his wife, and that they shall be two in one flesh? Let man, therefore, not separate what God has joined together." "Then," the Pharisees again replied, "how comes it that Moses has commanded that the husband should give a bill of divorce to the

wife, and that he could put her away?" Jesus replied to them: "On account of the hardness of your hearts Moses has permitted you to put away your wives; but it was not so from the beginning. But I say to you that he who will put away his wife (except it be for fornication) and espouse another, becomes himself an adulterer; and whosoever will marry her who shall have been put away will be guilty of adultery also."

Behold, in a few words, the abolition of open polygamy, the condemnation of divorce, which is nothing else but disguised polygamy, in the establishment of Christian marriage. This is the grandest revolution, or, to speak better, the grandest social counter-revolution, which has been made in the world. The short dialogue which precedes not only gives us the law, but what we can call the *exposé* of the motives and historical and moral discussion of this great act of universal legislation. For nearly a century the civilized world has been but a store-house of legislation. Every people would fain make laws, and every individual considers himself qualified to understand them; so every one knows what results from them, both for the peoples and the individuals, and how long those laws will endure. Let us see the Son of God at this work.

The Jews thought of nothing else but to entrap him; and it concerned most of them little to know if it was permitted to send away a wife for whatever cause it might be—that is to say, without any cause. They made use of it, convinced that Moses had commanded it; and every other decision would be very unpopular, especially coming from Jesus, against whom adversaries the most opposed to each other were easily made of one mind. Jesus at first places them in the presence of Moses, whom they do an injustice to, and whom he

wishes to justify. "What is the commandment of Moses?" They reply that Moses had commanded to give a bill of divorce, and so put away the wife. He has permitted it to you "because of the hardness of your hearts."

In reality the bill or letter of divorce had been imposed as an obstacle to separation, which, by consequence of the corruption of morals, was accomplished without formalities. The scribes only could write a bill of divorce. They were grave and solid men. This charge invested them with the right of proper counsel to procure the reconciliation of man and wife. When their intervention failed, it was considered better to grant a bill of divorce, because otherwise the indissolubility of marriage might be broken by the crime of murder. Christianity must preside over the marriage life. Hardness of their hearts—such, therefore, was Moses' reason. It justified him, but it justified him only.

Having established this point, Jesus goes back to the primitive law. He does not consider it unworthy of himself to speak artfully. To avoid wounding the feelings of the Jews he does not tell them all at once, "It is not permitted," as a decision that he gives them of himself; he shows them what is the will of God: "Have you not read that he who made man at the beginning made him man and woman?"—one man and one woman, not one man and many women; so that there could be but one marriage, and there could not be many marriages. And the first woman was taken from the body of the first man, so that, submitted to a certain dependence, she must not nevertheless be despised nor looked upon by the man as a being inferior and different to himself. The man and the woman are

made of the very same substance, so as to be one. They are not taken simply from the same womb, so that they may consider themselves free either to marry or remain virgin. United, they must never be separated. "A man will leave his father and his mother, and will cling to his wife; and they shall be two in one only flesh"—to his wife, not to his wives; two in one only flesh, not three or four. And in order that they may be two in one only flesh, the man shall leave his father and his mother.

It would seem at first there should be more union between brothers and sisters, who issue from the same parents, than between husband and wife, who spring from different stock. The principal force of marriage comes from the law of God, more powerful than the law of nature. The commands of God are not subject to nature, whereas nature obeys the commands of God. Brothers issue from the same source, and they branch off in different routes; they take different ways on the great field of the world. Man and wife are born of different parents, and unite in the same destiny. Remark, says St. John Chrysostom, that pure love rises up in man as the sap ascends up in the tree. The sap sets out from the roots, and gradually ascends till it reaches the top, converting itself into rich and luscious fruit. The parents love, and are not equally loved by their children. Man does not bestow the ardor of his tenderness on his parents, but on the children he begets. "Man will quit his father and his mother, and he will cleave to his wife, and they will be two in one flesh." Nothing could express more forcibly the indivisibility or the indissolubility of the marriage-tie. This is, says St. Remigius, the mystery which is in Christ and his Church. Indeed, the Lord Jesus aban-

doned, in a certain sense, his Father when he descended on the earth. He abandoned his mother—that is, the synagogue—on account of her infidelity, and he adhered to his spouse, the holy Catholic Church, and they are two in one flesh; for Christ and the Church form but one body.

After having related the text and the spirit of the old law, replies St. John Chrysostom, Jesus gives his own interpretation: "So they are no longer two, but one flesh." Thus those who spiritually love one another are considered but of one soul and one heart; so the man and wife instantly united are acknowledged but one flesh. But as it is horrible to tear asunder the body of Christ, so is it horrible to separate a wife from her husband. Such an act would be an abominable stain on human society. God, in his indignation, rises up against it and says: "What God has joined let no man dare separate." The man who puts away his wife has no regard either for the law of nature or for the law of God; he tramples on nature, because he divides one flesh; he violates the law, because he breaks the union which God has made, and which he has forbidden to be broken. "At the beginning it was not so." Moses did not command a divorce. He permitted it. What one commands he wills; what one permits is dragged from him by a wicked will that he cannot curb. Moses preferred divorce to murder. Because of the obduracy of your heart Moses has permitted this laxity of the divine law. On account of your hardness "Moses permitted this," not God. You have the law of a man for it, but not the law of God; because God cannot contradict himself on this point by establishing a principle and destroying it by a new commandment.

In the course of this historic and dogmatic discussion Jesus expresses with authority the entire, definite law: "I declare to you that whosoever quits his wife, unless it be for a case of adultery, and espouses another, commits adultery; and he who marries her whom the husband has put away commits also an adultery."

By this clause of adultery Jesus does not throw open the door to divorce. In the law of Moses adultery was not a cause of divorce, but a cause of death. It was forbidden to retain the adulterous wife. The Gospel imposes on her a penitential course of life, which raises her up from her fallen state, and pardon follows. After the purification or reconciliation of an adulteress, says St. Augustine, the husband must not present obstacles nor the reconciliation be regarded as shameful; there is where we believe in the remission of sins by the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven. We do not call her any more an adulteress who has been reconciled to the Church remarried to Christ.

Adultery is a cause of separation, but not of divorce and rupture. Marriage, constituted by the mutual consent of the parties, is not destroyed by the separation of the bodies, but by the separation of the will. The married couple, lawfully separated, nevertheless remain husband and wife. This is why the Lord did not say, "He who sends away his wife is an adulterer," but, "He who takes another in her place," because such a one divorces the will.

Let us sum up. There is but one carnal reason that can legitimize the separation of husband and wife—that is, adultery; and there is only one spiritual reason—that is, mutual consent for the love and service of God. There is no reason which permits one to contract a second marriage, unless death has broken the first.

By this law Jesus re-established marriage in the purity of its first institution, on the model God had proposed. He delivered the wife from her long ignominy. He gave to the married couple the glory of conjugal chastity; to their children the security of domestic happiness; to the entire human race a purer origin and the honor and peace of a better life. In speaking of those sublime things one's mind is disturbed by the clamors and derisions of a dissolute horde who experience no longer any pure, unalloyed joy in the world, and who impute to the Gospel the vile sufferings they endure for having despised it. This scum of impure and adulterous men ought to be passed by; it has no longer any rights to claim, but legitimate examples to furnish. Woe to the people who listen to the talk of dissolute women, and of fathers who do not rear up their own children! Shame and ruin attend every society foolish enough to receive its rule from those hands burning to tear to pieces the laws of God. When one wishes to judge correctly the institutions of a people, it is not the outlawed and perverted we are to interrogate; we must look into the very heart of that people, and see what fruits those accepted and obeyed institutions have produced in it. By Christian marriage man has become a son, he has become a husband, he has become a father; of these three things he had really only the name. Woman has become virgin, wife, mother—three dignities which were unknown to her. Christian marriage has created the family, and the family has put the human race in a general condition of honor and happiness which was not given to paganism to dream of, and yet less to comprehend.

But the corruption and the error of the world were so deeply rooted in the human heart that the disciples

themselves were frightened at this noble law. When they were alone with Jesus, they naïvely expressed their thoughts to him. "If such be," they say to him, "the condition of a man in regard to his wife (that he may not send her away), it is not good to marry." Jesus answers them: "All are not capable of such resolution but those to whom it has been given"—that is to say, those who by the grace of God seek and implore to be continent, so as to gain heaven. This word has created angelic legions who have preferred virginity to marriage.

CHAPTER V.

VOLUNTARY POVERTY—LITTLE CHILDREN.

A CIRCUMSTANCE, guided and arranged by God, causes the disciples to comprehend the happiness and reward of voluntary poverty. There comes a young man of the nobility of the country, who, bending the knee before Jesus, asks him what he should do to obtain eternal life. Jesus says to him: "Keep the commandments." "Which commandments?" asks the young man. Jesus replies: "You know them: you shall not commit murder; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not deceive any one; you shall honor your father and your mother; you shall love your neighbor as yourself." The young man says: "I have observed all these precepts from my youth. What yet more do I require?" Jesus loved his sincerity and his innocence. He says to him: "There is one thing yet you must do, if you wish to be perfect: go, sell what you possess, and give it to the poor, and you will have a treasure in heaven; then come and follow me." But the young man went away quite sad, because he possessed great wealth. And Jesus, casting his eyes around, said to his disciples that "it is difficult for those having riches to enter the kingdom of God." As the disciples manifested their astonishment

at these words, Jesus repeated: "My little children, how difficult it is for those confiding in their riches to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." The disciples said the one to the other: "Who, then, can be saved?" Jesus tells them "that is impossible to men, but all things are possible to God."

Peter asks the Lord what shall be the recompense of the apostles, who have left all to follow him. He answers him that on the triumphal day of the Son of Man those who will have followed him shall be with him the judges of the world. For whosoever shall have quitted for his sake and for the Gospel his house, or his brothers or his sisters, or his father or his mother, or his wife or his children, or his inheritance, shall receive a hundredfold in the full joy of eternal life. But to keep them in a salutary fear whilst he announced to them the new order that the justice of God would establish on the day of retribution, he adds that then many that are first will be last, and many that are last first. And so that they might know the independence of God in the distribution of his graces, he proposed to them the parable of the workers in the vineyard, where those at the last hour received the same recompense as those who had labored from the first dawn of the day.

Thus he spoke to them and instructed them, travelling slowly to Jerusalem, not wishing to arrive there before the beginning of the festival of the Passover. On his way he healed the sick, always with that same gentleness and that same dignity which equally formed the character of his word and of his works; always the humblest of mortals, always quite resplendent with

the Divinity. Nobody had spoken like him, and he spoke as no one had a right to speak. One day, addressing the multitude, he pronounced these words, which the mind alone of man could not have been able to dictate nor to comprehend: "If any one wishes to come to me, and does not hate his father and his mother, his wife, his children, his brothers, his sisters, and even his own life, and does not carry his cross, that person cannot be my disciple." One feels that he had in his hand heaven, the earth, and the heart of humanity.

We heard him a while ago addressing himself to his disciples, calling them "my little children." This word, so tender, which is often repeated in his discourses, is doubly their glory, because it shows the affection he bears to them and the quality that he loves in them. The sense of this tender expression is revealed by one of those acts wherein his heart is also revealed.

It was the custom to bring little children, that he might bless them. Once the disciples wished to put them aside, fearing that this throng might weary and annoy him. In the mystic sense the disciples typified the Jews, jealous of the vocation of the Gentiles. Jesus said to them: "Let little children come to me, for theirs is the kingdom of God; truly, unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

It is not that one age may be preferred to another; for then it would be grievous to advance in life. It is innocence that is preferred above all. The kingdom of God is open to those who resemble little children; to those who preserve or regain that innocence which nature has given them. The child is without

hatred; it ignores pomp and display; it seeks not after honors and riches; it returns to its mother, who has corrected it; it is docile to the teachings of its masters; it disputes not, it contradicts not, it is not mistrustful. It is thus the man who wishes to "enter" must receive the Word of God. Such were the disciples. At the same time Jesus teaches them not to despise the little ones of the Church nor to use harshly their ignorance; to instruct them with patience and gentleness, and to make themselves children to gain children. By the love he manifests for infancy he teaches how much we ought to love and respect it. In the civilized world of Rome they made the children learn by heart the dialogues of Plato, and they recited them in the banquets to amuse the guests. This was but the least of the defilements to which infancy was exposed. The rights of infancy date from Christ.

Jesus embraced children; he imposed hands on them and blessed them. He shows thereby, says St. Remigius, that the humble in spirit are worthy of his graces. In imposing hands, says St. Chrysostom, he expresses the operation of his divine virtue; he blesses according to human custom, because he has become man while remaining God; he embraces in them down-trodden humanity, so as to lead it back to virtue and holiness.

Surely, if there were anything in the Gospel that one could not believe, they are not the great miracles that command nature to obey; they are not the celestial words that changed the face of the earth, nor those noble and fearless expressions that declared the publican justified only by the virtue of his prayer; it is not Calvary nor the Eucharist, nor is it anything of what is incomprehensible and thereby visibly divine. All that is of God; and when he wishes to do it, it is,

so to speak, quite easy for him to accomplish. What confounds and astonishes us is that goodness of the divine Majesty which mingles itself in the conversations of men, speaks their language, prattles with them, takes them by the hand, embraces their children, and treats sinful man with more tenderness than he was ever treated since that time when, clothed with his innocence, he dwelt in Paradise.

When the mind dwells on those scenes, on those little children enwrapped in the arms of God and touching his bosom, we are lost in amazement. So it is thus God has loved us; it is thus we know our worth; it is thus we estimate the value of innocence. And this innocence, perhaps, can be restored to us by one word that depends on ourselves to pronounce; on one sigh that it depends on us to heave into that abyss which separates us from the Infinite, that immeasurable space that our sins have placed between ourselves and God, that leprosy which covers us all over. All that disappears. One heartfelt, penitential sigh carried up to heaven by the angels with which the Man-God surrounds us will instantly be wafted to the throne of the incarnate God, and our leprosy will fall off in an instant, and we shall be without stain, the children of God the Most High; and nothing in heaven nor on earth, no power of justice nor any remembrance of our iniquities, will be able to prevail against that word which will open up to us his heart: "Father, I have sinned."

It is thus God has loved the world. A greater miracle and a more solemn circumstance (if we can mark the degrees of greatness in the miracles and solemn circumstances in a life all divine) are about to complete the portrait of Jesus. We are going to behold

him wholly, as Man and as God: as Man, the tenderest of friends; as God, such as we can comprehend him—master of the events, master of life and death, master of the past and the future, but, above all, the God whom he has taught us himself to know, who loves and wishes to be loved.

BOOK VI.

RESURRECTIONS.

CHAPTER I.

LAZARUS.

MARY MAGDALENE and Martha had a brother named Lazarus. All three dwelt at Bethania, a village adjacent to Jerusalem. Jesus loved him. Lazarus being confined to his bed, his sisters sent a messenger to tell Jesus: "Lord, he whom you love is sick"—a perfect prayer, like that of the Chanaanite woman. The perfect prayer consists in a simple exposition of one's wants and necessities, accompanied with a firm confidence in God, who can do all.

Jesus, knowing what was to happen, answered that this sickness would not cause death, but that it was for the glory of God, and so that the Son of Man might be glorified by it. He remained yet two days in the same place, after which he said to the disciples: "Let us return to Judea." The disciples, affrighted, said to him: "Master, the Jews are on the watch to stone you, and will you go back among them?" He gave them to understand that he must employ the time to

acquit himself of his ministry. And speaking in the name of the Holy Trinity in announcing a work of God, he adds: "Lazarus, our friend, sleepeth, and I am going to arouse him from his slumber."

The disciples thought he meant an ordinary slumber. They replied: "If he sleepeth, he will awake from it." Jesus said to them: "Lazarus is dead; and I am very glad, on your account, not to have been there, so that you may believe. But let us go."

When Jesus arrived, Lazarus had been buried four days. He died whilst the messenger of his sisters announced his sickness. According to the established usage among the Jews, after their return from Babylon they carried the dead body at once to the sepulchre, bound with small bandages; but the sepulchre was not instantly closed. Twice every day the parents and friends came there to pray for the departed soul and to mourn his death, until the sign of decomposition appeared on the uncovered countenance. Thus they accomplished the funeral rites of Lazarus amidst a great concourse of friends, because Bethania was but an hour's walk from Jerusalem. Those friends, for the most part yet present, accompanying Martha and Magdalene in their visits to the dead Lazarus, had seen the dead body, and had incontrovertibly attested the decomposition. It was only then that the winding-sheet had been placed on the face. Everybody retired from the sepulchre, and they rolled up the stone which closed its entrance.

Martha, aware that Jesus had come, went to present herself before him. Mary remained at home; she either was ignorant of the presence of the Master or she considered it her duty to remain at home and do the hospitalities of the house. "Lord," said Martha, "if you had

been here, my brother would not have died; but now I know God will grant you whatever you ask of him." This language expressed a wavering and hesitating faith. The sister of Lazarus seemed incapable of comprehending that the friends of Jesus could be stricken down by death and grief. Jesus said to her: "Your brother will rise again." Martha replied: "I know he will rise up at the last day." Jesus, wishing to increase and strengthen the faith of Martha, and to teach her that there was not even need of asking, said to her those words of God: "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me shall live, even should he be dead; and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

Already we have seen the Saviour requiring faith from others in favor of those for whom they implored him; because all the members are united in the one same body, and ought and must act the one for the other. This is the communion of saints. Martha answered by an act of perfect theological faith: "Yes, Lord, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the living God, who art come into this world."

After those words Martha returned to her sister and told her what Jesus demanded of her. Forthwith Mary goes forth to find the Lord at the place where Martha met him. Her guests followed her, thinking that she was going to the sepulchre. As soon as Mary saw Jesus she fell at his feet and said to him: "Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died." Jesus, seeing her weep (she and the Jews who had accompanied her), groaned in his spirit, and was troubled in himself,—that is to say, by his own will. Fully master of all the sensations that his humanity could expe-

rience, he allows himself to be freely carried away with grief for those whom he loved.

He said, "Where have you put him?" "Lord," they answered him, "come and see." Then Jesus wept, and the Jews said, "See how much he loved him." But others said, "Could he not prevent him from dying who gave sight to the man born blind?" The evangelist, remarks St. Cyril, relates with a sort of stupor the tears of Jesus. His tears, other interpreters say, flowed like those of the men who surrounded him, but not from the same source. Lazarus, in the obscurity of the sepulchre, represents to him the human race buried—that is to say, decomposed. He mourns and weeps for this condition of his creatures, destined to double immortality, but become the slave of a twofold death; he weeps for those who will rise no more. Jesus, groaning again within himself, came to the sepulchre. It was a grotto; a stone closed up its entrance. Jesus said: "Remove the stone." "Lord," Martha remarked, "he already begins to stink, because it is the fourth day." Jesus replied: "Have I not told you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?" They removed the stone, and Jesus, raising his eyes to heaven, said: "My Father, I give you thanks that you have heard me. As to me, I know you always hear me; but I say this for this people who surround me, that they may believe that it is you who have sent me." Then he cried out in a loud voice: "Lazarus, come forth!" And at that instant he who had been dead came forth with hands and feet bound by bandages, the winding-sheet yet on his face. Jesus said to them; "Unbind him and let him go."

What words! What a work! St. Chrysostom says

that it was the art of mercy by which Jesus veiled and at the same time made manifest his divinity. He prays to his Father and thanks him: "I know you always hear me; but I speak for this people." Giving them to understand that he has no need to supplicate, he considers, nevertheless, the weakness of his auditors. The Son of God considers not his dignity, but our salvation; humble things abound in his discourses, but the divine he shrouds. Nevertheless, they are visible, and heaven and earth are eager to obey. "I am the resurrection and the life"; "Lazarus, come forth!"—there we must recognize the Word, that Eternal Voice which speaks to nothingness, and from every side brings forth life. Death, says Bossuet, had never been treated before in this imperial manner. He names Lazarus, says St. Augustine, so as not to force all the dead to rise up from their graves.

Incredulity saddens human reason by the efforts it continually makes against this miracle, wherein historical reality is not less evident than the divine character. The groaning of Jesus has been pointed at as a mark of deceit. From it the savants discover that Lazarus had not been raised up from the dead, or that he was dead. The Fathers remarked this groaning of the Son of God. He groaned, they said, at the blind folly of the Jews, whose incredulity was confirmed by a miracle, and who said: "Can he not prevent the death of his friend who gave sight to the blind?" He was obliged to groan, besides, from the very depths of his soul, seeing in the future so many souls, washed in his baptism, reject evidence and choose damnation. In vain do we know that every folly is possible to man. The folly of wronging Jesus Christ appears inconceivable. It would be enough, one would think, to deny

without insulting so much goodness, so much justice, so much love. But there is a cause for this insanity. The cause is the horrible wish that there should be no God. And this wish proves that God is and that Jesus is God. "Why do you come to torment us?" cried out the devils by the mouth of the possessed. "What have we to do with you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?"

To resist the falsehood and wrong Jesus Christ has armed his works with a power that Satan can combat, but which will conquer him. He has given life to his works. Like all the other miracles, the resurrection of Lazarus is a perpetual miracle. In the least details it symbolizes a marvel the Church accomplishes every day.

Adam received at the one time two lives. While giving a soul to the body that he had fashioned God united himself to this soul by his grace. It is thus, the Scriptures tell us, that Adam went forth, a living soul, from the hands of the Creator. By the union of the soul with the body he had physical life; by the union, incomparably more exalted, of that soul with God, he had the spiritual life. The soul animates the body, God vivifies the soul; and all being of God, all has immortality. Man, separating himself from God by disobedience, instantly loses all. Separated from God, the soul dies, as the body dies separated from the soul. Though a sort of life may subsist, yet to depart irremediably from the condition for which one was created is to die. Thus to the twofold life which has been given to him, by sin a twofold death accrued to man. But God had pity on the works of his hands, and Jesus Christ, more powerful than death, came to repair this disaster. He declared it himself:

"Verily, verily I say to you, the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who shall hear it shall live." The doctors explain that those dead are dead through sin. It is clear that those who "shall hear" are those only who will believe and who would wish to be saved.

The three resurrections mentioned in the Gospel attest the promise of Jesus and teach man how he can obtain the fruit of them. Without doubt the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow, and Lazarus were not the only ones drawn from death. According to St. Augustine, many others who had passed away were brought back to life. The three resurrections are only marked, because the circumstances of each sufficiently indicate the three classes among which we can divide sinners, and the means which are given them to rise to a spiritual life.

The daughter of Jairus, dead, but yet in the paternal mansion, is the hidden sinner whom nobody suspects to be dead. The son of the widow, already outside of the city and on the way to the grave, is the public sinner when he has entered on his life of scandal. Lazarus, already four days in the tomb, and quite decomposed, is the hardened sinner, horrible to the world, horrible to himself, driven to despair under the weight of habitual sin, under the stone. Every sinner necessarily belongs to one of these three categories. The three resurrections teach us how each one can be born again.

The young daughter, who dies in her father's house, is raised up without trouble: "Daughter, arise." She is alive again before her father and her mother, so to speak, could have missed her. The apostles who are there present, representing faith, hope, and charity, are

a type of grace, inactive, certainly, though not quite departed. Effrontery has not banished good thoughts; habit has not done its systematic work there. Although to sin be always the same as to die, says St. Augustine, it is one thing to sin once and another to sin always; and if life be brought back so quickly, it is to give us to understand that the sinner who instantly corrects himself is instantly brought to life again. He who is not clothed in the habit of sin is not buried. "Only chase off," says St. Gregory, "banish from around your heart, the throng of irregular affections, those soft enchanters, those trifling babblers, those flatterers of the ear, who promise you so much joy, and who are in reality but chanting your death-dirge; then, finding no longer an obstacle in you, Jesus will take you by the hand, and he will raise you up as a man who sleeps is awakened by the hand of a friend." Rise up, then, and walk, as it is said the young girl arose and walked. To prove you are converted you must walk with more vigor than before. And eat; for Jesus, having raised up the young girl, commanded that they should give her to eat. This is what shows, says the Venerable Bede, the favorable condition of the sinner, of whom we have here a figure, because he can, as soon as reconciled, be admitted to the Eucharistic table; and what teaches us at the same time, according to another interpreter, that the flesh of Jesus Christ is the necessary nourishment of immortality.

Few sinners profit by this grace, offered to all, by struggling against seduction, rejecting the sophisms of evil, knowing how to withdraw themselves from the cynicism of habit. The greater number, on the contrary, harden themselves against God very soon; like those of Sodom, they glory in their sin. It is when the

dead man, carried from the city into the open field, appears in his hideous slumber, and his mother, the Church, follows and weeps over him. She weeps over this dead son; she weeps over those who see him. To many this pomp of the insolent corpse, couched on the vices which carry it to the grave, is not frightful, but rather a triumph they envy. And there are many of the children of the Church who love to see their mother weep. Such, then, is the public sinner. He goes forth an example. By his example he destroys modesty and the fear of God. "My feet have tottered," says David, "because I have seen the place of the sinner." Who shall resuscitate that man? The same God who raised up the other—this God who hears our prayers, who sees our tears, who wishes not that death would always carry off its prey, and who has made himself obedient to those who fear him, even to the granting of salvation for their sake to those who deny him. With the same goodness and the same power he will reanimate this dead body of sin. But that there is more effort and more doubt in the conversion of public sinners is what the Saviour has given us to understand by manifesting a certain hesitancy in the resurrection of the widow's son. Moved by the tears of that mother, he approaches the bier, touches it in a mysterious manner, stops those who carry him (for the intervention of Jesus takes from vice its power), and at length he commands, "Arise"; and at the sound of this voice the dead man returns to life. He raises himself and speaks, but remains seated in his coffin. He requires the assistance of Jesus to descend. "And Jesus hands him over to his mother." It was to hand him over to the Church that he resuscitated him; for she mourns, she weeps, for him. Go now; console your

mother; proclaim that you were dead; tell who has restored you to life again.

There is a death more profound and a hope more abandoned. Not only life is extinguished, but even the form of the body is dissolved in the enclosed tomb. The man four days dead, gone out from his house, departed from the city, buried, putrefied, is the sinner so engulfed and tied down in the habit of sin that it seems he cannot be moved, even by the desire to come forth to light. And if the desire arises, weak as the ray of light which may penetrate the rock rolled over him, he does not know how to make an effort. He despairs, and all is ended. St. Bernard, a great moralist, as all the saints are, points out the degrees of this fall: familiarity with sin becomes a habit, habit a necessity, necessity an impossibility of amending one's life, impossibility begets despair, despair is damnation. For peace was at least for a long time but on the surface. The decomposition or ruin of the conscience in the vanquished soul is not achieved without frightful pain. Many a one outwardly plumes himself who trembles within with great fear, and would wish to shake off his lethargy. We know them well. Before the world they are arrogant; at bottom, quite at the bottom of their heart, faith yet lives under the form of fear. We press them to save themselves; they rally, then they vacillate, then they say, I cannot! In fact, they cannot. Of themselves they cannot open again the tomb.

But what they cannot do Jesus Christ can and wishes to do. The faithful have called on him by their prayers, and he comes. The faithful weep and he is moved by their tears. The faithful believe, and he promises a miracle on account of their faith. Lord, if you had been

here my brother would not have died; Lord, you are the resurrection; Lord, come and see where they have put him. These prayers of the saints, the good works by which they are accompanied, are so many strong and powerful hands which "remove" the stone. The charity of the faithful, the grand and fecund virtues of the Church, crush to pieces the heavy enclosure, and cause the pure air and light to penetrate into that hideous cavern. The bondsman of sin, the captive, the corpse, conceives some good desire of being saved. This is Jesus' moment; he is there, he looks on, he raises up his voice, which creates life: "Lazarus, come forth!"

Lazarus comes forth alive, but not unbound; the bandages, tightly closed up in three doubles and soaked in aromatics, wrap his feet and hands; his face is yet covered with the shroud. When you despise, says St. Augustine, you lie in the tomb; when you confess, you go out from it. It is God who leads you out of it by raising his voice—that is to say, in calling you through a great grace. But he that was dead comes forth yet tied up, the penitent is yet guilty. And this is why he has said to the disciples: "Unloose him; let him go." Unloose him from his sins. Christ, continues Alcuin, resusitates, because it is he who revives the inward man. The disciples unbind; for it is by the ministry of the priests of Christ that those whom he has vivified are absolved. In the paintings of the Middle Ages it is St. Peter who unbinds Lazarus.

This great miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus contains another instruction. Jesus Christ, who thereby proved to us his divinity in so clear a manner, proves to us also the resurrection of the dead.

CHAPTER II.

THE GENERAL RESURRECTION.

JOB, eaten up with ulcers, seated on the dunghill, but even then glorified, glorious in his humiliation, cries out: "My Redeemer liveth; and I myself on the last day shall rise in my flesh, and I shall see my God. I shall see him myself; I shall contemplate him with my own eyes." Long ages after Job Jesus said: "The time is come wherein all those who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who shall have done good shall rise to possess life; and those who have done evil shall arise for their condemnation."

The dogma of the resurrection of bodies is established in the resurrection of Lazarus by a visible and material proof. God could do for all what he has done for one only. He who raised up Lazarus, four days dead and already decomposed, can also raise up Adam and all those who have died since Adam to the end of the world.

Jesus, weeping at the tomb of Lazarus, does not weep over Lazarus, who was going to receive life again; he wept over the human race, reduced by sin to submit to the horrors of death. Those tears, that trouble, those groanings, all those unusual emotions of his most holy soul, indicate an act more solemn than any other;

and, in truth, there was in all this a question of final victory. Here is the type of the consummation of all things: the destruction of the empire of evil, the destruction of death, the resurrection for life, and the resurrection for judgment.

His voice is raised as if to resound throughout the whole world, like the sound of the trumpet on the last day. He speaks in his own name with full authority, "Come!" and the dead lives. Nothing opposes him. The ties are broken, the decomposed flesh is reformed, the blood resumes its wonted course, the eyes see, the ears hear; as the arrow leaps forth from the bow, so life darts forth from the tomb. The general resurrection will occur in like manner. From every grave, from every pit, from the very dust to which our bodies have been reduced, the scattered atoms which had formed our bodies shall reunite themselves to the immortal souls that animated them. "In an instant," says St. Paul, "in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the last trumpet, the dead shall rise up to be immortal." Come, Lazarus! Dust of the human race, come to life. And instantly—*in ictu oculi*—that dust shall live again.

"I am the resurrection and the life." Why "the life"? Because, says St. Cyril, there is but one true life, which is life eternal. To rise up to suffer again is a life worse than death. Jesus Christ is the principle of resurrection for all. He is only the principle of life for his elect. "He who believes in me shall live; and he who believes and lives in me shall never die." That is to say, I am the life of the soul and the resurrection of the body. He who lives in me through a pure faith shares in this resurrection and in this life; and even if his flesh should be dead for a while, on

account of the law of the flesh, his soul shall live. And when his flesh shall rise up, associated to this divine life, it shall rise up for heaven, so that the whole man shall triumph for ever over death. Jesus Christ himself clearly distinguishes the resurrection of life: "All those who have done good shall go to the resurrection of life; and those who shall have done evil shall undergo the resurrection of judgment." Thus there are two sorts of resurrections—the resurrection of recompense and the resurrection of chastisement. This explains why so many men do not wish to believe in the resurrection, and deny Jesus Christ, the principle of resurrection.

The dogma of the resurrection flows from the dogma of the Incarnation. It is so strictly united to all the Christian mysteries that we cannot deny it without denying Christianity. How can we admit that God is united to human nature, and has assumed its infirmities, and undergone death, without leaving in it the germ of his strength and immortality? Death is one of the principles consequent on the sin of Adam. If the posterity of Adam was not to be resuscitated in its entirety, then it would not have been rehabilitated by the second Adam; then Jesus Christ would only have half purchased us; then Adam would have been more powerful to destroy than God to repair, and the great work of the redemption would be defective, and even vain and fruitless.

In effect, Jesus Christ, says St. Paul, had the same humanity as ourselves. If our humanity does not rise, his did not rise; if he cannot one day raise us up from the grave, he has not been able to raise himself up. But if Jesus Christ has not arisen, his apostles are nothing but a pack of false witnesses going about sacrile-

giously to announce to the world a miracle that God never wrought. If Jesus Christ has not arisen from the dead, he cannot triumph over death; if he cannot triumph over death, he is no longer capable of triumphing over sin, which is the cause of death. Therefore our sin subsists, with all its consequences. We have not been purchased; we are yet under the weight of the ancient anathema, the product of sin. But if Jesus Christ has not purchased us, he was not God, he was but man; and all the preaching of the Gospel is only imposture, all Christianity an absurdity. Thus, according to St. Paul, to deny the resurrection is to deny the incarnation, even the divinity, of Jesus Christ. This negation leads to the negation of the existence of God, of the soul, of everything.

On the contrary, the dogma of the universal resurrection affirms the whole of Christianity. He tells us that, as we shall presently feel the effects of the death of the Redeemer by our liberation from sin, so shall we receive, at the last day, the fruit of his resurrection through our deliverance from death. Now, we are bound to undergo sufferings and death, since our Chief and Lord underwent them; but this Chief, having suffered death for us, has also arisen for us. He is the pledge as well as the power of God, by which he has been raised up; he who is the consubstantial Son shall raise us up also—us, his sons by adoption. As Jesus Christ died united to all humanity, so entire humanity shall rise up as united through him to the Divinity. He has taken our death without ceasing to be "the Resurrection," and thereby has made us acquire resurrection, and we have relinquished death. Having destroyed sin in us, which is the death of the soul, the first death, he destroys even the second death, which is the death

of the body. But, concludes the apostle, since the resurrection of Christ shall be the cause of our resurrection, having once risen in him, we shall be raised up, like him, to die no more; we shall no more speak of death, and death will have no longer a right over the race of Adam. Then shall be accomplished the great prophesy of Osee: "Death, absorbed in the victory of the Redeemer, shall be abolished."

The learned and eloquent Ventura, whose comments we here follow, glances at the truth of the dogma of the resurrection in the natural order. In the presence of the reveries of incredulous science the ideas he draws from the Scriptures and the fathers afford opportune light.

According to the definition of the Council of Vienna, "the intelligent soul is the substantial form of the human body." Made to be the dwelling of the immortal soul, the human body has been created in such harmony with it that it ought also to live everlastingly. According to St. Thomas, God, in the institution of human nature, attributes to the body a certain incorruptibility, so that this matter should be worthy to be united to an immortal substance or form. God, says the Scripture, created man that he should endure for ever: "*Creavit Deus hominem inexterminabilem.*"

But the sin of man having disturbed the natural order between the soul and God, the primitive order between the soul and the body became also troubled. The soul was deprived of sanctifying grace divinely infused, which elevated it to God. The body lost the incorruptibility accorded to it, which lifted it to the dignity of the soul; hence the cause of death. The Holy Scriptures say that death is not the work of God; hence it is not the natural condition of man—it is but an ac-

cident happening in consequence of sin. But this accident, which has changed the condition of man, Jesus Christ has taken away. By the merit of his death Jesus Christ destroyed our death; his divine virtue has rendered to the body the primitive privilege of incorruptibility, whereby man shall one day be restored to a life thereafter exempt from sin.

Thus the resurrection of the dead, concludes St. Thomas, will be a prodigy, perhaps the greatest of all prodigies after that of the Eucharist; but it will be a prodigy only relatively to the active principle who will perform it—to wit, the divine power which alone can operate it. As to its *end*, the resurrection will not be a fact beyond or above the natural laws; it will be a thing most natural, most conformable to the laws which regulate and govern nature. It is natural that matter should be reunited to its form, the body to the soul. It will not be necessary to innovate, but to re-establish, to reinstate. There is no question of introducing a new order, but of restoring the ancient order, to bring back human nature to the condition wherein God had placed it.

Let us remark besides, continues the holy doctor, that the soul is immortal, and therefore it will survive for ever the death of the body. But, according to its essence, it is the substantial form of the body; if, then, the body does not rise, it will be a form for ever separated from its matter. But it is contrary to the natural laws that a form always subsisting should always be separated from its matter. But what is contrary to nature cannot always endure; therefore the soul cannot for ever be separated from the body. Therefore the resurrection is far from being a strange and inconceivable thing; the strange and inconceivable thing

would be, on the contrary, the everlasting death of the human body, the eternal widowhood of the soul separated for ever from the body, whose form it was, and to which it was substantially united.

Yes, yes, says St. Augustine, the primal unity, the ancient fraternity, of the soul and the body will be re-established. It will shine forth in the same man, never more to be dissolved; God having judged it worthy of his wisdom and of his goodness that the soul and the body, once substantially united, should reign together with Jesus Christ in heaven, since they will have served Jesus Christ on earth.

Without the resurrection of the bodies the natural order of the universe would be incomplete. The fathers have strongly insisted on this proof. Each species of seed, says Tertullian, after having been, in a peculiar manner, dissolved and corrupted, recommences to bud forth more vivacious than before. All created beings are preserved by perishing. Everything in nature after death returns to a new life. It cannot be that, in the midst of the flux and reflux of beings who die and who rise up again, man alone, who is the sovereign of all, could have been created to perish for ever.

But how is it possible that the human body could be born again from its ashes? Just as it has been possible that man should be born from nothing. Look on yourself, says Tertullian. The proof is in yourself. You are yourself the living proof of the future resurrection. There was a time when you did not exist, and you were absolutely nothing; and you now actually exist. He who drew you forth from nothing the first time, body and soul, cannot he draw you from nothing the second time? You are not now so engulfed in nothingness as the first time. In the resurrection nothing

new will happen to you, only the resurrection which was executed for the whole being the first time will be renewed for the lesser part of it. You were nothing, and you have issued soul and body from this nothing; you will be a soul only, and your body only will be restored to you from nothing, or rather, from the appearance of nothing. You are anxious to know how you will live again. Find out first, if you can, how you were brought to life at first, and tell us what hindered you from returning whence you came. St. Jerome and St. Augustine consider it a miracle of less magnitude to restore existence than to have given it. At the beginning, says St. Cyril of Jerusalem, God took of the dust and changed it into flesh which had never been before. Why could he not, at the end of time, change into flesh a dust which had already been flesh. What is the human body in the maternal womb? A germ hardly visible, a particle of matter unformed and inert. By infusing into it a soul God made man out of it. He hardens, figures, and arranges this matter, and he draws the beautiful form of man from it. And what he has known how to do so perfectly, is it not in his power to remake it?

The philosophers in St. Paul's time said, How is this? Simpletons, replied St. Paul, when you sow a grain, you but cast in the earth the seed which must produce it. You do not sow the body it will have. It is God who gives that body suitable to each seed.

In order that we may rise in the same bodies, it is not necessary, says St. Thomas, that our bodies bear all the same matter they had during life. This matter itself is always changing, flying away, continually renovated, and our adult body preserves almost nothing of what it was in infancy. Nevertheless, this perpetual renewal

does not indicate that the body of the grown-up man should be other than the body of his infancy. Since the soul, the substantial form of the body, which gives it life and a determined existence, is always the same, the body has always the same determined existence, is always the same. Since the vegetative force of the body resides in the soul, it is the soul that unites to the matter pre-existing in the body all that the body takes from exterior substances. It is the soul which transforms these new substances, assimilates them, makes them become its proper matter, its proper flesh. Since it is always the same soul which exercises the same action, it is always the same body to which it is united, despite the continual waste and reparations which many times in the course of life entirely renew it.

St. Augustine tells us in what consists the miracle of the resurrection of bodies.

God will do then in an instant what is realized in us during life successively. It is from a germ hardly visible deposited in the maternal womb, it is from a corpuscle just come to light, that our actual body, so grand and so perfect, is formed, with the addition of exterior substances during the course of time by nutrition and respiration. Thus from an atom of dust, the remains of our bodies, by means of the accession of exterior substances, God at the same instant will reform a perfect body for each of us. And as our actual body, renewed, ennobled, increased by the exterior substances, is numerically the same that it was at its birth, because it is formed on the same basis, of the same matter, by a union of the same soul, so by the same divine power our resuscitated body will be numerically the same as that we had at the beginning of

life, united to the same soul, formed of God on the bases of the same matter. The only difference is that what is effected slowly to-day will be accomplished with rapidity by the will of God.

God will do for our bodies, at the end of the world, what he does to-day for the plants. To the little bud that is produced from the small grain that dies he assimilates exterior substances, he gives growth, and forms a tree from it. In the same way, when our bodies no longer exist except as a little dust, the power of God will associate and will assimilate to them other substances, and will form a body from it. Our dust, in the hands of God, will be what the seed is in the bowels of the earth, to wit, a principle, a foundation of reconstruction; and it will be our very own body that we have had during life, although it preserves nothing of its identity, except a little dust and its substantial form—the soul.

As to the difficulty of finding again this original matter, pulverized, dispersed, dissolved, transformed in so many ways, and rejoining and associating it again to the soul to which it belongs, the objection is trivial. God knows the number of grains of dust which remain of the human race, and knows each of them by its name. It matters but little where this matter is and what transformations it has undergone. It is enough that it cannot be annihilated.

All flesh, says St. Paul, is not the same flesh, and the flesh of man is one thing and the flesh of animals another. By virtue of the natural law all flesh must follow the condition of its form; the flesh of beasts perishes wholly with its form, with the sensitive soul which was united to it. But the flesh of man, being matter of an immortal form, always preserves the seed

of immortality. Destroyed by fire, cast in dust to the winds, devoured, plunged into the volcano or into the sea, it is never transformed in such a way that nothing of it absolutely remains. God will discover those atoms which himself has made indestructible, and he will restore them to the soul which shall have formerly animated them.

Finally, let us remember above all that we have the Word of God. Even in the natural order, and by a greater reason in the supernatural order, there is no truth that is not in some point incomprehensible to our limited intelligence. The sight is troubled when the eye is too intently fixed on an object, and we no longer see what we could see when we strive to see too much. Let reason serve us to see God in season ; but it is with a superior organ that we must contemplate him. This is why, having helped our reason by the evidence of miracles, God has given us the incomparable gifts of faith and love, so that we might know and taste him truly. He will make great allowance for our weakness; his mercy even cannot allow for our pride. He will never reproach us for not having understood *how* he does his works; but he will be justly terrible to those who will have rejected his word by priding themselves on comprehending or knowing how his works are not of God.

CHAPTER III.

CAIPHAS—THE BLIND MAN OF JERICHO—ZACHEUS—MAGDALENE AND JUDAS.

AMONG the witnesses of Lazarus' resurrection a great many believed in Jesus; some others went to his enemies and related to them what had happened. At this news the high-priests and the Pharisees held a council. Without injuring Jesus, without treating him as a blasphemer, or as a seducer of the people, or as a rebel, as they often had done in public, they say among themselves, How or what will we decide? Behold, here is another miracle; if we let him act, every one will believe in him, and there will remain no one with us. Such was, in their eyes, the real crime of the Messias. But they did not confess the depth of their iniquity and their hatred. Hypocrites even among themselves, they formed a pretext of public utility. "The Romans," they say, "will come and destroy our nation and our country."

This was just what happened to them for having put Jesus to death. From that moment, as if with their own hands, they commenced to form those formidable lines of circumvallation whence the entire city of Jerusalem should be stoned to death and exterminated. Very soon they will ask a favor of Pilate, and he will give them Barabbas, and not Jesus. Barabbas will

be given to them; but in calling Barabbas they will have, without knowing it, called Titus; and Titus will come. Among them is found Caiphas, the very person who was the high-priest of that year, says the Scripture, holding up to contempt by that word alone that supreme sacrificial office now so degraded and long since reprobated.

Caiphas is the first to utter officially that decisive word. "You understand nothing," says he to them; "you do not reflect that it is for your interest that one man should die for the people, so that the whole nation should not perish." The Gospel adds: "He did not say this of himself, but, being the high-priest, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation; and not only for the nation, but also to gather together the children of God who were dispersed." The prevaricating pontiff wished only to render an oracle of malediction. God turns the accomplishment of it to his glory. Satan, in the earthly paradise, had provoked the fall of our first parents by saying to them: "Eat of this fruit, and you will be as gods." Behold how Caiphas labors to plant the tree of the cross; and the man who will eat its fruit will clothe himself with splendor and immortality.

After the words of Caiphas the Jews think of nothing else but to put Jesus to death. At length he conceals himself from their attacks till the hour that he himself had fixed. The Lord betakes himself to the borders of the desert, in the village of Ephrem, the ancient refuge of Eliseus against the persecution of Achab and Jezabel. During this time the Jews flocked to Jerusalem for the Pasch, or Passover. They sought Jesus in the Temple, and were astonished that he could not be found. They had not long to wait.

Very soon Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem to suffer there the death of the cross. He walks before his own beloved ones, and they follow him with a sentiment of astonishment and fear on the route of proscription. They dread the hatred of the Jews, without, however, it seems, foreseeing where it would end.

Jesus considers it good to go before them, whether to fortify them at the moment of the catastrophe or that they remembered that his sacrifice was free. Then he takes aside the twelve, and foretells them in a few words, clear and precise, the whole detail of his Passion. "Behold, now," he says to them, "we ascend up to Jerusalem, and all the things which have been written of the Son of Man shall be accomplished. He is to be delivered up to the high-priests, to the scribes, and to the senators. They will condemn him to death and will deliver him up to the Gentiles; they will buffet him, they will spit on him, they will scourge him, they will put him to death, and on the third day he will arise."

This was the third time that Jesus made this prediction; but they did not understand him this time more than the others. They could not, indeed, comprehend that he whom they believed the Son of God, and whose miracles they had seen, could wish to yield himself up to the desire of his enemies, to become their sport, their prey, and to be put to death. And even at this very moment the question of pre-eminence was raised among them.

Jesus said to them: "The princes of peoples domineer over them, and the great ones of the world command with authority. You must not use your authority among one another in this manner. Whoever would wish to be great among you, let him be your servant;

and whoever would wish to be first among you, let him be your slave; as the Son of Man has not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life for the redemption of many." These words contain the Christian idea of power, and are the Magna Charta of the liberty of Christ's people. A people is free when its legitimate interests are served, but, above all, when their souls are respected.

When they approached Jericho, a blind man begging, seated on the roadside, hearing that Jesus was about to pass that way, cried out, Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me. Those who preceded our Lord wished him to keep silent; but he cried out the more. Jesus slackens his pace, and orders the blind man to be led to him, and says to him, "What do you wish?" "Lord," replied the blind man, "that I may see." "Then receive thy sight," says Jesus unto him; "thy faith has saved thee." The blind man immediately saw and followed the Lord, and published the miracle in the midst of the people, who gave glory to God.

This is even now the state of the human race, and was the same before Jesus: deprivation of the truth which it is begging; the humanity of Jesus who passes; the divine mercy which stops; the faith that enlightens and saves. This blind man was healed on the highway. "Jesus is the way." Whoever, says St. Gregory, not enjoying the heavenly light, comes to believe in the Redeemer, begins to be seated on the roadside. If he neglects to pray, if he does not beg for alms, he will have nothing. Let him pray and let him acknowledge his infirmity; let him cry from the bottom of his heart. His voice at first will arouse the multitude of carnal desires and the tumult of vices; for they hasten to get away before Jesus comes, and by temptations

they endeavor to dissipate our good thoughts, and to stifle our prayers. O ye blind! cry out more powerfully; Jesus will hear and will stop. "What do you wish that I should do unto you?" What does the blind man wish? Jesus knows it well; but through mercy for his infirmity he gives him the occasion for an act of faith; through mercy for the Jews he obliges him to declare his infirmity. And this mercy for the Jews and for the blind is a double mercy for the world, because it obliges it to believe and instructs it to pray. The blind man gives an admirable lesson and makes a beautiful act of faith. He does not ask what he could not obtain from men; he asks what he can obtain but from God—light! Though one should give him all the wealth of the world, he could not purchase one ray of the sun with it, not even the sight of the gold. Lord, you who are the light, you who are the beauty, you who can do all, grant that I may see! This act of thanks of the blind man is as perfect as his prayer. He sees and he follows; he practises the good that he knows.

However beautiful this miracle might be Jericho was about to see one more extraordinary. Like Bethania it was going to behold a resurrection, and more than a resurrection—a real creation.

The place, to begin with its name, was full of symbols. Jericho signifies the *moon*—mutability, mortality, figure of this changing world, of which it has been declared, Woe to you! There were raised the bold, defiant ramparts that the sword of Josue could not cut through, which the sound of the sacerdotal trumpets upset. This is the idolatrous world, unconquerable by force, but which the apostolic preaching will deliver into the hands of the new Josue;

and Jesus is about to prophesy and give an outline of this victory. Master of the city, Josue had destroyed it by imprecation: "Cursed be he before the Lord who will rebuild Jericho. Let its foundations be cast on his first-born; let its gates be set but on the last of his children." Hiel was this rash man. He commenced to rebuild Jericho, and his first-born suddenly died; he set its gates, and he lost the last of his sons. Thus since Julian the Apostate the posterity of all those who were anxious to re-establish idolatry were extinguished. So of all other heresies and schisms, of all restorers of errors and vices figured by Jericho. The anathema, however, was not materially extended to the city. At the time of our Lord it was populous and very commercial, rich, and much addicted to pleasures. In the New Testament it is the city whence descended, departing from Jerusalem, the man who fell among robbers; it is there also the good Samaritan went. Behold the good Samaritan himself, who arrives at the end of his journey. He comes here to do a thing which he has declared impossible to man and possible only to God. Tempering by a miracle the anathema which in the whole course of the Gospel hovers over the rich, he comes to show how the camel can pass through the eye of a needle.

There were at Jericho a good many publicans, and their chief was a rich man who was called Zacheus. Like the Samaritan woman, he did not enjoy the best reputation, but, like her, he had reserved without doubt some part of his soul wherein the cares and dross of the world did not absolutely domineer; for he felt a lively desire to see Jesus. There are many such souls. There have been many in ancient times, and there are many yet, who do not love evil (or

rather, who are plunged into it without loving it), on account of not being able to learn how to love the good. They show forth a beauty to which they belong, a grandeur in which they are capable of elevating themselves. They await, they seek, and they suffer. In spite of his rank among the publicans, in spite of his riches and his renown, Zacheus was one of those souls. It is difficult not to believe it, since he had so great desire of seeing Jesus. And yet he lived by deceit. But he desired to see Jesus with his eyes, says St. Fulgentius—a sign that he had already seen him in his mind. Here, says another interpreter, was a seed from which salvation will bud forth on him.

Knowing, then, that Jesus was about to pass, he places himself on the road; and as he was very small in stature, the throng of people hindered him from seeing him, and he climbed up into a large sycamore-tree. All these circumstances inspire the fathers with beautiful and charming thoughts. Zacheus is the only personage in the Gospel of whom it has spoken with this detail. It is interpreted as a praise of his humility, who does not fear to expose himself to raillery—a mark of his ardor, which desired and knew how to triumph over a corporeal obstacle; a symbol of the smallness of the chosen people, who were as yet so little through the faith; a personification of the grain of mustard-seed which will become a great church. To make himself bigger Zacheus climbs up the sycamore, a tree whose fruits are red, which is also called *ficus fatua*—the foolish fig-tree. The humble is exalted. The Christian assumes majestic height by ascending the cross—the tree of folly to the scandal of the world. The fig-tree, we will see further on, has a great signification in the Scriptures. It was at the foot of this

tree that Adam concealed himself after his disobedience when the Lord called him, and he made himself an apron of the leaves of the fig-tree to cover his nakedness. But beyond these considerations it is evident that Zacheus, performing such a noble action, was by no means urged on by curiosity. Like the blind mendicant, and with like faith, this rich blind man wished for the benediction of the Incarnate God.

He gets a full and abundant blessing. He who searches the hearts of all cast a glance at him. But interpreters say that the look of Jesus was not fruitless. Jesus saw that Zacheus loved him; and he himself loves those whom he knows love him; and this is why Zacheus, in this regard, received pardon and grace and was called to eternal salvation. He only wished to see Jesus. He acted nobly. Jesus said to him: "Zacheus, come down; for to-day I wish to remain in your house with you." Zacheus descends in haste, and whilst he was going to his house everybody murmured against Jesus. "Behold," said the multitude, "how he is going to tarry in the house of this sinner." However, Zacheus, receiving his guest, said to him: "Lord, I give to the poor the half of my wealth; and if I have wronged any one, whoever it may be, I pay him back fourfold."

He does not say, "I will give," "I will pay back," but, "I give," "I pay back." That was done with as much humility as charity. According to the law, he who had stolen a sheep should render fourfold for it; but if the thing stolen was uninjured and restored by his own free-will, it was sufficient to add the fifth part of its value. Zacheus, then, accuses himself publicly, condemns himself, and applies to himself the greatest rigor of punishment. He restores fourfold the riches

badly acquired; he deprives himself of his lawful wealth. No teaching had been necessary, no word; a look had taught him all. As the sun, touching but the windows illuminates the interior of the house, Jesus by his presence alone had illuminated that soul which was anxious to see him. He infuses into it humility, penance, and charity. One is reminded of the rich young man, an exact observer of the commandments, to whom it was said: "One thing is yet wanting to you." This young rich man goes away and forsakes God to preserve his great wealth. By his own free-will, with a holy joy, the publican casts all patrimony and the fruits of usury at the threshold of the door which Jesus was about to open, and by stripping himself of his wealth he humbles himself. Zacheus is truly the first voluntary poor man—the host of Jesus, who accommodates him with the true feast that he loves. The Church intones the Gospel of Zacheus on the festival of a dedication or consecration of a church, because the conversion of Zacheus truly represents the entrance of the Lord into his temples.

And Jesus, entering into the house of the publican, says: "Salvation has come to-day into this house, because this man is a child of Abraham; for the Son of God is come to seek and save what was lost."

"This house"—Jesus wishes not alone to convert the master. God will not be less generous than the publican. The publican throws down all; God gathers up all. The whole house of Zaccheus shall be saved. And he is called a child of Abraham—although that title, given to him, might be revolting to the Jews—because he has had the desires, the faith, the piety, of Abraham. Like Abraham, he desired to see; he had seen and he was overjoyed. Like Abraham, he had

given hospitality to the Lord, which he preferred. As Abraham offered up his only son, so Zacheus sacrificed what he possessed. "And Zacheus opens to the Gentiles," says St. Fulgentius, "the way which closed them out from participating in the benedictions which Abraham received." *

Jesus departs from Jericho the same day. At the gates of the city he again restores to sight two blind persons who cried out to him, like him whom he found on entering: "Son of David, have pity on us; grant that our eyes may be opened."

At Bethania, where he remained six days before Pasch, his friend gave him a repast at the house of Simon the leper. Martha serves at the table. Lazarus was one of the invited guests. Mary Magdalene takes an alabaster box containing a pound of precious ointment; she anoints Jesus' feet with it and dries them with her hair. Then, having taken the vial, she poured the rest of the perfume on his head, and the whole house was filled with this perfume.

But Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, angrily remarked that she might have sold what was thus poured out and lost, and obtained three hundred pennies for it, which should be given to the poor. He advocates the interest of the poor against the prodigality of Magdalene. The Gospel adds that he did not care for the

* We know through St. Clement, pope, that, having sold and distributed all his wealth, Zacheus becomes a disciple. After the Ascension he attaches himself to St. Peter, as being confided to him by the Lord in the same manner as the Samaritan had confided the wounded, bruised man, found by him on the road to Jericho, and forsaken by the priest and the Levite, to the care of the inn-keeper. Ordained Bishop of Cesarea, in Palestine, Zacheus labored there holily for the Gospel. A tradition says that he came into France, and attributes to him the foundation of the sanctuary of Roc-Amadour.

poor; for he was a robber. He carried the purse, and what was put into it he had in his hands. However, many disciples fall into the same trap. After the example of Judas, they clamor for the poor and are indignant against Mary. Jesus orders them not to annoy her any more. He tells them that the poor they will always have, but that him they will not always have, and that this woman has done well; that she had embalmed his body for sepulture, and that wherever the Gospel should be preached her action would be lauded.

Many Jews came from Jerusalem to Bethania to see Jesus and the resuscitated Lazarus. The chief priests, knowing that many believed in Jesus on account of that resurrection, deliberated on putting Lazarus also to death. Already men meditated not only putting Jesus to death, but the Church also.

BOOK VII.

THE EUCHARIST.

CHAPTER I.

ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM—MALEDICTION OF THE FIG-TREE.

HAVING arrived at Bethania on the Sabbath, Jesus passed the holiday there out of respect for the law. The next day, followed by all his own, he set out on his journey for Jerusalem. Arriving at the foot of Mount Olivet, he sends off two of his disciples before him into a village quite near, where they would find an ass with her colt, that had never yet been mounted. He commanded them to untie the animals and lead them, and that, if any one enquired why they did so, they should reply, "The Master has need of them." In effect, the owners did not object to this answer. Then the two disciples untied the ass and her little one, and led them off. And having thrown their garments over the ass, they made the Lord sit on them.

When it was known he was approaching the city, a great multitude came out of Jerusalem to meet him, carrying palms in their hands, crying out, "Hosanna!

Blessed is the King of Israel, who comes in the name of the Lord." They spread their garments in his way; they cut down the green boughs of the palm-trees, and strew the road with them. On descending from Mount Olivet the disciples formed into many groups. Ravished with joy, they praise God and proclaim aloud the miracles they had seen. They say: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord; peace and glory to the most high heavens." The vast throng of people at the head and at the end of the cortége, repeating this echo of the canticle of Bethlehem, proclaim the Messias: "Blessed be the reign that comes—the reign of David our father. Hosanna! Long life to the Son of David."

Constrained by the human condition to distinguish his royalty by a triumph celebrated in human forms, Jesus wished only such as that. He made it a counterpart to the pomps with which the masters and conquerers of the world are surrounded. He selected the moment so that it might signify also his sacrifice. It was on that very day they brought into Jerusalem, decorated with ribbons and flowers, the lambs that were to be slain for the Pasch, four days after. John the Baptist, pointing him out to the disciples, said to them: "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world." Jesus accomplishes this word, the first that was said of him since he lived in the flesh; and he floods with divine light the prophecy given five hundred years before by Zacharias, when the voice of the prophets resounded throughout Israel: "Rejoice, ye daughters of Sion; behold your king. The Just, the Saviour, comes to you; and he is mounted on an ass, on the colt of an ass."

One of the greatest favors that God has bestowed

on man through Jesus Christ is the ravishing joy of the mind when it considers with the same regard the tender care with which Jesus wishes to make himself known as the exemplar of all the figures to arouse and strengthen faith, and the majesty which ceases not everywhere to shine forth in the humiliations to which the Son of God is condemned. Assuredly, this entry into Jerusalem answers but little to the first ideas we can form to ourselves of a king and of a God. However, he who sent forth two heralds, like Zacharias and John the Baptist, without counting the other prophets, can dispense himself from pomp which would be like the splendor of Herod and of Cesar.

Poor, undistinguished, he traverses Judea on foot, living on alms, acting and speaking, nevertheless, always and everywhere, as sovereign master of men and as sovereign possessor of all things. He calls those whom it pleases him; he enters where he pleases; he takes from him who possesses them the loaves and fishes that he is about to multiply, as he takes from the sea the piece of silver with which he pays the tribute. He says to Zacheus: "I am going to remain in your house to-day." He empties the hands of the publican as he fills the nets of the fishermen. At the moment of entering Jerusalem he gives another example of this sovereignty and of this dominion which universally belong to him. He sends off two of his disciples to untie the ass and her colt, and he expresses his right by one word, which encounters no resistance: "You will say the Master has need of them"—not Jesus nor the Son of David; no other designation but the LORD.

Through his wisdom those two animals, so humble, are profound symbols; the action, so simple, of having

them led and riding upon them, becomes a brilliant prophecy.

In the Scripture the beast of burden is man himself, in the state wherein he has fallen and whence Jesus takes him. David, sullied with adultery, declares that man, having forgotten his dignity, and allowed himself to become the slave of his passions, is lowered to the condition of beasts. The human race was in this condition. The Gospel points out to us here those two beasts of burden, the ass and her young one, because there were in the religious order two classes of people. The ass typifies the Jewish people, submitted to the hard yoke of the law; the colt symbolizes the Gentiles, the idolatrous people. Jesus calls it, with perfect justice, "a beast that no one ever rode upon." For the Gentiles, strangers to the Mosaic law, possessed neither religion nor a true priesthood. The Lord was about to subdue this intractable beast and lead him into the heavenly Jerusalem. There is the mother and her young one, because, relatively to God, Judea is the mother of nations.

The two nations, though they considered themselves free, were bound up—the Jews by their false justice, the pagans by their false wisdom—bound shamefully by the hands of hypocrisy and by the hands of imposture; bound without, before the gate, between the two roads. Jesus Christ is the gate, and the Jews cannot enter; the two routes, the primitive tradition and the Mosaic law, lead to salvation, and the Gentiles cannot tread them. They are tied up without guide, without nourishment, without faith, without hope, awaiting the load of new superstitions and of new vices which the demon wished to load them with.

To loose them the two disciples are deputed. One

alone was not sufficient. There were two ranks among the apostles—the one more especially sent to the Jews, the other more especially sent to the Gentiles. "Untie them." The disciples receive this mission when Jesus was about to enter Jerusalem, as the apostles will be sent into the world when Jesus will be about to ascend into heaven. "Untie them; the Lord has need of them!" "Zacheus, come down quickly; for this day I must abide in your house." "Lazarus, come forth!" Who will ever prevent these words from resounding in the soul and being obeyed?

The owners of both animals say to the disciples: "What are you doing? Why do you untie these beasts?" This is what the synagogue will say, and Cesar, and others under other names. The disciples reply: "The Lord has need of them." At this word resistance ceases. At this word every resistance, whatever it may be and however it may be prolonged, shall cease. Every church that is raised up to God on the earth is the tomb or the reliquary of the martyrs. The martyrs have received a mission to unbind the souls whom the Lord stands in need of; they are put to death, and the souls which the Lord wish have been untied, and they lead them to him. This simple word, says Ventura, is a complete history and a wonderful prediction; it is the obstinacy of the conquered Jew and the pride of the subdued pagan; the universe submitted to Jesus Christ, and the cross elevating itself on the ruins of pride and vanity.

The Pharisees were present at the entry of Jesus. This spectacle could show them, as we now see it, what Jesus could have done with the people of Jerusalem and in all Judea, if it had pleased him. They only saw what Jesus did not do, and they confirmed themselves

in the thought that he would not resist them. They repeat the one to the other, considering the inutility of their calumnies and their menaces: "We have gained nothing. See how everybody runs after him." But though resolved to put him to death, and aware of his meekness, they could not at this moment arrest him. They content themselves with saying to him: "Master, then make your disciples be silent." Jesus answers them: "If they be silent, the stones would cry out."

However, he knew what to think of the stupidity of this multitude and how this song of joy would terminate. In the throng, even among those who wished long life to the Son of David, there were found those who cried out five days after, "Crucify him." Seeing Jerusalem, Jesus weeps. Very soon Jerusalem will be a sepulchre more closely sealed up than that of Lazarus. Never has mourning for country put forth sighs and lamentations so tender. "If thou hadst known in this thy day the things that are for thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For days will come upon thee when thy enemies will cast a trench round about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee to the ground and thy children who are in thee; and they will not leave in thee a stone upon a stone, because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation."

Jesus goes up to the Temple, and, after having viewed all as a master who inspects his house, he returns to Bethania, where he passed the night.

The next day's journey was marked at the outset by an act strange in appearance and of little importance, but of great meaning. As Jesus returned from Bethania to Jerusalem, he was hungry, and he approached a fig-tree that was on the wayside to see if he could find

any fruit on it; and he finds but leaves, because it was not the time for figs. "May fruit never grow on thee henceforward." The disciples heard this. Immediately the fig-tree withered, even to its very roots. The disciples did not remark it; but the next day, passing by this tree, they were seized with astonishment. Peter remembered what had happened the evening before, and said to Jesus: "Master, see the fig-tree you cursed; it has become quite withered."

It was in the morning, before the hour of repast. The hunger he wished to feel to mark his humanity was not natural. It was not the season of figs. Why did he seek the fruit where he knew he could find none, and what reason had he to curse a tree because it did not bear fruit at a time it ought not to bear any? This explains the astonishment of the disciples. Peter, to whom belonged the privilege of observing, remembering, and enquiring, makes a remark that solicits explanation; but Jesus, without explaining the mystery, contents himself by informing the apostles that he performed this miracle to impart to them the faith. He wished to fortify them against the terrors which the menaces of the synagogue had excited in them, of whom this fig-tree was a perfect image; and he gave them to understand, by this new proof of his power, everywhere sovereign, that whatever was about to happen happened but by his permission.

It was necessary, also, that Jesus should make the dreadful power of his justice shine forth; and we see at the same time, says St. Hilary, how great was his goodness, thus showing himself God only by his mercies. He has written the proofs of it on human bodies, healing the maladies of this life to proclaim the salvation of souls. Now, as he must give an example

of his severity towards this rebellious people, he does not crush a man; he causes a shrub to wither. He has chosen the fig-tree, in order that the miracle might be more evident, because of the very abundant sap of this tree, that one word alone causes to wither so soon.

Besides, the miracle was already explained in advance by the parable of the barren fig-tree. The owner of the fig-tree planted it in his vineyard, and, finding no fruit on it, says to the vine-dresser, "Behold, for three years I have sought fruit from this fig-tree without finding any on it; cut it down, since it cumbers the ground." But the vine-dresser intercedes: "Lord, let it yet stand this year. I will dig around it. I will put dung on it, and so it will bear fruit, if you do not cut it down too soon."

Those three years are those of the preaching of our Lord. The fig-tree uselessly cherished by the watering of the divine blood and the blood of the martyrs who perished during the first persecution had been cut down according to the sentence of the Master, but after the reprieve obtained by the vine-dresser. The cursed fig-tree did not wither instantly under the eyes of the disciples. Between the malediction and its total effect a whole day rolls by, and some time will pass away between the ruin of Jerusalem and the crime by which she herself pronounced the decree of her ruin.

Many passages of the prophets point out how much this figure of the fig-tree was commonly employed to represent the Jewish nation: "Like the bunches of grapes in the desert, like the first fruits that appear on the top of the fig-tree, thus have I loved the fathers of Israel." "I will send the sword among them, and they will become like bad figs that nobody can eat, be-

cause they are good for nothing." But here is a prophecy of the miracle itself: "Woe to me, because I have not found some of those figs *first ripe* which my soul has longed for. There is no longer any holy one to be found on the earth. There is none who has a clean heart." That is indeed what Jesus desired when he came to look for figs before the time. He knew that the Jews would not believe in him until after having been deceived by Antichrist; that the fig-tree would yield fruit only at the extreme end of the world; and, nevertheless, he comes because his soul loves them, because he wished them to avoid their punishment.

The malediction of the fig-tree affords, again, a great moral teaching. This tree, which had but leaves and no fruit, is the hypocrisy which has but words, but the appearance of sanctity; while the saints bear both the leaves of the word, and the flower of virtues, and the fruit of works. The hypocrite also is planted outside of the true way—along the public highway, where the seed does not spring up; among the stones, where the germ takes no root; among the thorns, where the fruit does not ripen. Jesus cursed this tree, because he hates hypocrites; and his malediction withered the fig-tree, even to its very roots, to show that words without works are worthless and wholly unfruitful. In this sense the malediction of the fig-tree is the confirmation and summary of evangelical morality. It is a parable in action, says the Venerable Bede; as Jesus speaks, so he acts. Neither Jew nor any one else will be saved by plausible expressions, unless good works accompany them.

The same day Jesus drove once more the traffickers out of the Temple. The high-priests and the scribes,

who authorized this commerce, so often fraudulent, with the traffickers, and who profited by them, felt their wrath boiling up; but they dared undertake nothing against Jesus, because of the admiration the people had for his doctrine, and of the concourse of sick and infirm people who sought him and were healed. The children themselves, repeating what they everywhere heard, cried out in the Temple: "Hosanna to the Son of David!" The Pharisees said to Jesus: "Do you hear?" "Yes," he replied; "it is written: You have received praises from the mouth of children."

CHAPTER II.

THE LAST JOURNEY TO THE TEMPLE.

THE next day Jesus, teaching in the Temple, says to the disciples: "The hour has come that the Son of Man must be glorified." This hour was that of his death, which he indicated by adding: "Truly, I say to you, if the grain of wheat cast into the turned-up soil dies not, it remains alone; but if it dies there, it will bear a great fruit. He who loves his life shall lose it; but he who hates his life in this world shall preserve it for eternal life."

Nevertheless, the Son of God at the approach of death allowed human nature to make him feel his feebleness. He had, as it were, a foretaste of the agony. Then he heaved a deep sigh. "My soul is troubled; what shall I say? My Father, deliver me from that hour. But it is for that hour I am come. My Father, glorify your name!" And a voice is heard from heaven like a clap of thunder: "I have glorified him, and I shall still glorify him." Many said: "It is an angel that speaks to him." He replied: "It is not for me, it is for you, this voice has been made heard. Now the prince of this world is about to be driven out. When I shall be raised up from the earth, I shall draw all things to myself." An expression from the multitude strikes the ear of Jesus: "We know that the

Christ must dwell for ever. Why, then, do you tell us 'it is necessary that the Son of Man is to be raised on high'? Who is the Son of Man?"

The eternal Christ was before them. They had interrogated him some hours before, but they desired neither his reign nor his cross; they wished his glory, predicted by the prophets, and not his sufferings, equally predicted. Jesus, who had so often instructed them on this subject, replied to them but a few words as a last lesson, but more suitable to sustain their faith than to restrain their infidelity. He said to them: "You have yet light for a little while. Walk whilst you have the light, lest the night come upon you. He who walks in darkness knows not where he is going. Whilst you have the light believe in the light, so that you may become the children of light."

In spite of so many miracles, which they did not deny, the Jews did not believe. It was the blindness predicted by Isaias; and those who believed did not declare themselves his disciples, lest they might be driven from the synagogue. They preferred the glory which they receive from men to that they receive from God. This is the everlasting trait of baseness and of human folly. How many believe from the bottom of their hearts whom the fear or love of men's opinion makes pretenders of unbelief!

Yet Jesus ceases not to open up the way to them and to lavish on them the divine light. To the timid he said: "He who believes in me, it is not in me he believes, but in him who has sent me; and he who sees me sees him who has sent me." To the incredulous he said: "He who despises me and who receives not my words, he is already judged. The Word itself that I have announced will judge him on the last day,

because my Father himself has prescribed what I say, and what he ordains is eternal life. Those things, therefore, which I speak, I speak them as my Father has spoken them."

Feigning not to hear, the high-priests, the scribes, and some of the ancients challenge him in the presence of the people: "Those things you do—by what authority do you do them?" Already they had put a similar question to him. And to his response they replied by threatening him and stoning him. Nevertheless, Jesus promises to satisfy their enquiries when they themselves would have told him whether they believed the baptism of John was from heaven or from men. They were embarrassed, fearing the argument of Jesus if they acknowledged the mission of John the Baptist, fearing the wrath of the people if they denied it. They resolved, then, to reply that they knew not whence this baptism came. And Jesus said to them: "Neither shall I tell you by what authority I do those things." But he did not wish to discontinue speaking without chastising those impostors who affected justice outwardly and hated it from their inmost souls. "Verily," said he to them, "the tax-gatherers and harlots shall enter the kingdom of heaven before you. For John came to you in the way of justice, and you did not believe in him; but tax-gatherers and harlots believed him, and you, seeing them converted, have not believed."

He does not stop there. In order to show them more clearly the consequences of rejecting the truth, and to make them confess the equity of the chastisements they were about to incur, he proposed to them the menacing parable of the vine-growers.

From a far-off country where he dwelt a rich lord

sent off one of his servants to receive the fruits of his vineyard. The vine-dressers or laborers beat him and sent him back with hands empty. The lord or master sent a second one to them: they bruised and wounded him. He sends the third, and they put him to death. He sent others, who were treated in the same way. At last the lord and master sent his only and well-beloved son, thinking they would receive him with respect; but, on the contrary, they said the one to the other: "This one is the heir; let us kill him, and we will possess the inheritance." They cast him out of the vineyard and put him to death. "But," said Jesus, addressing himself to the Jews, "when the master of the vineyard shall come himself, what will he do with those laborers?" The Jews answered: "He will make those miserable wretches perish, and he will let out his vineyard to others who will give him the fruits of it." "Yes," replied Jesus, "he will come and he will destroy those miserable wretches, and he will place his vineyard in the hands of others."

The majesty that appeared in him as he uttered these words made them without doubt comprehend the force of the decree they themselves had pronounced against those who, after having hunted down and killed the prophets, were prepared to put to death the only Son. Seized with terror, they cried out: "God forbid." But Jesus, looking on them, asked them if they were ignorant of what was written; and he cites for them this verse of the Scripture, which all the Jews understood of the Messias: "The stone which the builders have rejected has become the corner-stone of the building. It is the work of the Lord, and we will admire it." Jesus is elsewhere called the foundation-stone and the key of the arch. He is the

corner-stone, because he joins together two walls hitherto divided—two peoples, the Jews and the Gentiles. He adds: "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you and shall be given to others, who shall produce fruit from it; and this corner-stone, whoever will fall on it shall be dashed to pieces, and he on whom it shall fall shall be crushed to atoms."

The Pharisees well understood that he spoke of themselves; but the fear of the people held them respectful. They found themselves quite unable to disengage this people from Jesus, before whom and with whom he reasoned without even flattering them; they undertake a second time to compromise him on a political question. Then they came loudly proclaiming his courageous sincerity, and demanding of him if it was permitted or not to pay tribute to Cesar.

By the importance that this question has had at all times in the eyes of subjects and princes one can easily judge of its gravity under this double relation among a conquered and furious people. According to the response Jesus was going to make them, the Pharisees prepared to show themselves either patriots or Cesareans, and to decry him among the people or to denounce him to the representative of the emperor. "Hypocrites! why do you seek to entrap me?" However, he replies to their question, without doubt to confound them, but more so to instruct the Church. Having commanded them to present to him the coin of tribute, and having made them declare whose image it bore, "Render to Cesar what is Cesar's," he replied, "and to God what is God's." A thousand doctors have risen up who pretend to prove by these words that the Church must render to

Cesar what belongs to God. But what does it matter? The Church has understood the voice of the Master.

As to the Pharisees—who expected that he would side with the rebellious party, as they were themselves secretly rebels, so that they might denounce him to the governor, or, if he declared himself for the party in power to denounce him to the people—they found out once more that they could neither blind his justice nor take advantage of his prudence. Their conspiracy does not alter his serenity. He continues to instruct his disciples, the people, and those wicked wretches themselves. He maintains the dogma of the resurrection against the Sadducees, renews his teachings on the knowledge and love of God, on worship and prayer, and insists on charity. This was his last will he thus made, and for more than eighteen centuries human intelligence, sounding the depth of the words he pronounced during those last days, has found in them its inexhaustible food.

A Pharisee demanded of him which is the greatest commandment. He replies: "The Lord your God is the only God, and you shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, with your whole strength. This is the greatest commandment and the first. But there is another like to the first: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these two. The whole law and the prophets reduce themselves to these two precepts." The Pharisee praised this response, and added that in effect to love our neighbor is a thing greater than all the holocausts and sacrifices. Jesus said to him: "You are not far from the kingdom of God."

This was the last time the Pharisees, always conquered by his knowledge and his wisdom, dared to interrogate him; but in his turn he interrogated them. "What do you think," said he to them, "of the Christ? Whose Son is he?" They answered, "David's." "How comes it, then," replied Jesus, "that David himself, inspired by the Holy Ghost, calls him his Lord? For it is written in the Book of Psalms: The Lord has said to my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand. If David called him Lord, how, then, is he the Son of David?" They were so stupefied they could not answer him.

Hating Jesus as they did, they could not ignore any public detail of his life and of his origin. They knew very well that he was the Son of David, and they did not contest it; but, not wishing to acknowledge him for the Messias, they did not wish to so comprehend it, and still less to avow that, as God, he was the Lord of David himself, from whom he came by a natural generation. Thus their incredulity and their hatred have sprung the one from the other, and both are reciprocally augmented.

Jesus pours out his indignation against those arrogant hypocrites who deceived the people, thought to deceive God, and wished to deceive themselves. He flings at them those dreadful anathemas under which their name is heavily burdened and becomes execrable: "Woe to you, because you close the kingdom of heaven against men, and you will not enter it, and you will not let those who present themselves enter. . . . Woe to you who pay the tithe of mint, of rue, and of every herb, whilst you neglect justice, mercy, and faith." He does not forget any trait of their pride, of their stubbornness, of their avarice, nor the crimes with

which they would be loaded in the future as persecutors of the Church. "Act, and fill up the measure, ye serpents, brood of vipers! How will ye flee from the judgment of hell? I am about to send you prophets, wise men, and interpreters of the law. Some of them you will put to death and crucify; some of them you will scourge in the synagogue and persecute from city to city, that upon you may come all the just blood that hath been shed on the earth."

But as the vehemence of this discourse was only the bursting forth of his tenderness, he does not terminate it without expressing commiseration for the chastisement of Jerusalem with which his love inspired him—Jerusalem, the miserable accomplice of those wicked wretches: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent to thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not! Behold, your house shall be left to you desolate. For I say to you, you shall not see me henceforward till you say, Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord."

After having spoken Jesus seats himself opposite the treasury, where the worshippers of the Temple cast in their offerings. The rich gave a good deal; and there came a poor widow, who threw in two pieces of money of the least value. This sight consoled him. He called his disciples. "See," said he to them, "this poor widow has given more than all the rest. For the others have thrown in of their abundance; but this poor widow cast in of her indigence. She has given all that she had to live on." This is a divine commentary on the preceding malediction against those who paid the tithe on the most trivial thing—not because they paid

it, but on account of ostentation and because they forgot charity.

This was the last public instruction of Jesus and the last time he appeared in the Temple. He left it to enter it no more. When outside, his disciples wished him to admire the beauty of the edifice. Perhaps they hoped to induce him to revoke the condemnation with which he had struck it, and which seemed contained in those words: "Behold, your house will be left desolate." They then dwelt on the interior magnificence of the Temple and the solidity of its structure. "See, Master," said one of them, "what stones, what foundations!" "Indeed," replies the Master, "of all those grand buildings you behold there a time will come when a stone will not rest on a stone." The decree was definite. Forty years after the Romans demolished the Temple. Four centuries after the workers whom Julian the Apostate had sent to rebuild it rooted up its foundations.

Arrived at the Mount of Olives, Jesus seated himself, facing the Temple, and described to the apostles, who besought him to do so, the signs that would precede the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. The apostles believed that both these catastrophes would occur nearly at the same time. He did not mark out their precise epoch to them, as they had desired it, nor the distinction, confining himself to say what was necessary to instruct and strengthen the Church in such a manner that she would remain firm, unshaken, during her persecutions, and vigilant during peace. It was in accord with his divinity to predict with his mercy, to warn and to point out certain signs with his wisdom; to leave them ignorant of the hour and of its proximity, so that men, always expect-

ing it, should be always prepared. This vigilance, necessary at all times and for every one in particular (since death is for each one the end of the world), is recommended by the two parables of the servants who expected their master, and of the virgins who waited for the bridegroom. The teaching of both instructs us to watch and pray.

The third parable, reviewing the teaching already given, teaches the apostles that evangelical labor—that is to say, that growth of good in ourselves and that zeal to procure it in others—ought to be the result of vigilance and prayer. The Master will not only ask back again what he has given, but the fruit of what he has given; and the useless and unfaithful servant will be cast into exterior darkness.

Jesus resumed and terminated this discourse by presenting to the disciples a picture of the last judgment. The decisive importance he attributes to works of mercy, daughters of faith, in the motives of that sentence which will regulate for ever the lot of every man is testimony of his tenderness for the vast multitude of little ones and of the unfortunate, till now pitilessly and unmercifully down-trodden. The words which they are about to listen to will be one of the grand springs of Christian society.

"When the Son of Man will come in his majesty, accompanied by all his angels, then he will sit on the throne of his glory; and, all nations being assembled before him, he will make a separation as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will place the sheep on his right hand and the goats on his left. Then the King will say to those on his right hand: Come, blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom which has been prepared for you from the foundation

of the world. Because I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me to drink; I was houseless, and you sheltered me; I was naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you came to see me; I was in prison, and you visited me. The just will say to him: Lord, when did we see you hungry, and we gave you to eat; thirsty, and we gave you to drink; houseless, and we sheltered you; naked, and we clothed you; sick or in prison, and we visited you? And the King will answer them: Truly, as often as you rendered these services to one of the least of my brothers whom you see, so often have you rendered them to me. Then the King will say to those on his left hand: Depart from me, ye cursed; go into everlasting fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and you did not give me to eat; I was thirsty, and you did not give me to drink; I was homeless, and you did not shelter me; I was naked, and you did not clothe me; I was in prison, I was sick, and you did not visit me. Then they will say to him: Lord, when did we see you hungry, houseless, naked, sick, or in prison, and we neglected to assist you? Truly, as often as you have omitted to do it to one of these little ones you have refused it to me. After which these will enter into everlasting punishment and the just into eternal life."

Already on the very threshold of death, Jesus pronounces these words as a royal legacy which he made for the duration of ages to the multitude of the poor, to the indigent, to the captive, and to the abandoned. Moses, striking the rock, caused the living waters to gush out of it; the word of Jesus, penetrating into the human heart, has made an inexhaustible flood of charity

to well from it. A twofold grace besides, it has saved sinners as well as succored the afflicted.

Jesus then said to his disciples: "You know that after two days the Passover will be celebrated, and that the Son of Man shall be delivered up to be crucified."

This occurred on Friday evening. The day following Jesus remained on the mountain, as if in a sort of retreat, to prepare himself for death. This same day the high-priests, the doctors of the law, and the ancients assembled in council, deliberating again how they could get rid of him. They resolved to wait no longer. But the sentiment of the people always annoyed them. They thought the arrest of Jesus would cause or provoke a mutiny or commotion, and that they could not prudently seize him till after the festival, when the throng of strangers would have left the city. A succor that doubtless they did not expect caused them to hasten their nefarious designs. Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve apostles, who probably was near to Jesus the day before, hearing his instructions, presented himself to the chief priests to treat with them about the liberty and life of his Master. He said to them: "What will you give me, and I will deliver him over to you?" They agreed to give him thirty shekels or thirty denarii of silver. Judas accepts their offer, and promises to deliver Jesus up to them without the knowledge of the people. Thirty shekels of silver were about equivalent to a hundred francs of our money. This was the rate of the Judaical fine for the murder of a slave—the price of an ordinary slave. "He has been estimated as a slave, and his price has been fixed at thirty denarii."

CHAPTER III.

THE PASSOVER.

THE Passover was a great religious solemnity of the Jews. God himself had instituted this festival to be a remembrance of the favor he had conferred on Israel in delivering her from the captivity of Egypt—an image of that which he wished to confer on the human family by delivering them from the slavery of sin by the sacrifice of his only Son, Jesus Christ. All its ceremonies were symbolic as well as commemorative, and formed as if one prophecy of the second deliverance after which the entire world sighed.

The chief point of the Pasch was the immolation and manducation of the lamb. This lamb, immolated in the Temple according to a rite scrupulously observed, recalls this: that the Jews had eaten standing, ready for the journey, staff in hand, at the moment of their departure from Egypt—that is, at the moment of their departure from the land of slavery to the land of liberty; and this is why the name of the feast was Pasch, which signifies a journey. The blood of the lamb was the sign of salvation for the first-born of the Israelites when the exterminating angel was sent by God to strike down all the first-born of the Egyptians. At the same time that it consecrated those grand remembrances, the paschal lamb typified the

Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world—the incomparable Victim whose shed blood will preserve from eternal death those who shall be marked with it. Thus the immolation of the paschal lamb, centre of the ancient worship and heart or centre of the new law, forms the point of junction of both covenants.

Some interpreters of the law, favored by the Holy Ghost, had dimly seen through this grand mystery. The name even of *Eucharist*, given to the flesh of the lamb and preserved by the Church, prophesied a sacrifice far more august. After having eaten the lamb, Israel, delivered from the yoke of Egyptian bondage but not yet in possession of the promised land, had been miraculously fed by the manna falling from heaven. The sages of the ancient law expected the reality of the perfect manna, of which this real manna was but a figure or type. They announced a bread more wonderful for the day of universal deliverance. God wished that they should be particularly attentive to this verse of the Seventieth Psalm, as the whole applied entirely to the kingdom of the Messias: "The wheat will grow on the earth, and even on the top of mountains"; or from the Chaldaic version: "There shall be a sacrifice of wheat in the land on the summit of the mountains." They saw the relation between the wheat and the manna. Cotton, in his *Catholic Institution*, and Sepp, in his *Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, cite some of their interpretations, as well of this text as of many others which treated the same subject. Rabbi Eliezer has pointedly spoken of the manna of the Messias: "The just are destined to eat of this manna in the epoch that is coming; and if you ask if it will be of the same manna as the manna of the desert, no, but of a far more elevated and superior kind, so good that there was

nothing ever comparable to it." Rabbi Kimchi, on the Prophet Osee: "Some understand by these words, 'They will live on wheat,' that in the future, when the Saviour shall appear, he shall have changed it; there will be a transubstantiation in the nature of the wheat." Rabbi Moses, son of Nachman: "The manna is engendered from the divine Light, who has taken a body by the will of his Creator." Rabbi Moses Hardasan, on the Thirty-sixth Psalm: "The bread he gives to all is his flesh, and, though they taste bread, it is changed into flesh." Rabbi Cahana, on the words of Genesis, *Tying his ass to the vine:* "There he has shown us that the sacrifice which will be made by the means of wine will be changed not only into the substance of the Messias, but also it will be converted into the substance of his body." Rabbi Judas, commenting on the Book of Numbers, says that shew-bread placed in the sanctuary is also called the bread of presences, "because it will be changed into the substance of the body of the Messias when he shall be sacrificed." "This is the reason," he adds, "that you will take care to offer me up—that is, that myself shall be offered up. And there He will be invisible and impalpable. Our fathers even told us that it is named in the plural 'faces' or presences; whereas in this sacrifice there will be two substances—to wit, the divinity and the humanity." Rabbi Barachias, on those words of Ecclesiastes, *Who is that who has been, and who will be:* "As there has been a first redeemer—to wit, Moses—so there will be another; and as the first caused manna to descend from heaven, so also the Redeemer who will be the Messias will be wheaten bread on the earth." Rabbi Simon, on the Seventy-second Psalm: "Then God will be filled with mercy, and with a powerful and effi-

cacious virtue of the words which shall issue from the mouth of the priests he will change the sacrifice which shall be presented to him on every altar into the body of the Messias." Rabbi Salomon, on those words of the same psalm, *The wheat shall be on the earth and on the top of mountains:* "Our masters have interpreted this of the loaves that shall be at the time of the Messias, of which it is written in a book called *Siphra* that those loaves should be like the palm of the hand, and that each one shall take of them for his nourishment." * We find the same sense in the two altars of the temple, the opposition of which is remarked by the Jew Philo—the exterior altar continually inundated with the blood of the victims; the inner altar, whence the curling smoke of the purest incense ascends up toward heaven, and near to which was the table bearing the loaves of proposition, a symbol of the unbloody Sacrifice which was destined to replace all the victims. It was, moreover, the common belief among the Israelites that at the event of the Messias' coming all sacrifices should cease, but that the sacrifice of bread and wine should remain for ever. The Messias has come, and all truth has issued from the

* Those who pretend to have consulted the rabbinical books have not seen all they contain; but they must not be read with the eyes of modern rabbis. "If we had in our hands the works of the rabbis composed before the time of Jesus Christ, and which perished in great part in the conflagration of Jerusalem, we would be astonished at the admirable accord that the dogma of ancient Judaism presents with that of Christianity, and at the difference that exists in this relation between the Jews of to-day and their ancestors. Many precious manuscripts existed at the time of Pico della Mirandola, but since are lost. There was a time when the Jews sought by all means to procure them and to erase or totally deface them in the libraries, so as to destroy the testimony favorable to Christianity."—SEPP.

shadow, and all the hopes aroused in those who meditated on the Word are fulfilled.

Thursday, the first day of the feast, the apostles asked Jesus where they should go to make preparation to eat the Pasch. He instructs them about it in a manner that marks his divine power; telling them to go to the city and follow a man whom they would meet carrying a pitcher of water; to enter with him into the house where he dwelt, and there would be the place.

All happened as described; and in the evening, accompanied by the twelve apostles, Jesus came to the place he had chosen. From tradition we learn that the house wherein the Last Supper was celebrated was elevated on a spot whereon, at the time of David and Solomon, the ark rested forty years. Jesus awaited the hour, and when the stars appeared he sat at table and the twelve with him. At this moment, according to the Jewish custom of measuring the day, Friday had already begun.*

The paschal supper was a true religious supper. Our Lord religiously and punctually observed its rites, and the lamb was eaten as the law of Moses prescribed. It was properly the last supper. Afterwards another repast was celebrated that was more free. It was during the second supper that the reality succeeded

* "Among the Hebrews the day commenced at the setting of the sun. According to this manner of computing, the sixth day, which was the eve of the Sabbath, has, then, successively seen the celebration of the Mosaic Passover by the Saviour (the eating of the paschal lamb), the washing of feet, the institution of the Eucharist, the agony in Gethsemani, the whole Passion of Jesus, his immolation, his death, the descent from the cross, and the placing in the sepulchre. One Jewish day had seen all that."—*Froisset's History of Jesus Christ from Contemporaneous Texts.*

to the figures or symbols, and that the true, real Eucharist was instituted.

"Knowing that his hour was come to pass out of this world to his Father, and that Judas, himself now in the hands of Satan, had resolved to deliver him up into the hands of the Jews, he wished to give his own, whom he had always loved, a new and a greater mark of his love. He put aside his outer garments, girded himself with a towel, poured water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of his disciples and dry them with the towel with which he was girded." This was the function of a slave that he performed into whose hands all things had been put by the Father.

When he came to Simon Peter, this man protests loudly: "You, O Lord!—you wash my feet?" Jesus said to him: "What I do you do not understand now, but you will understand it." "I will never suffer," replied Peter, "that you should wash my feet." "If I do not wash your feet," answers Jesus, "you will have no part with me." He made allusion to the spiritual purification necessary to receive worthily the Holy Mysteries; the washing of the feet here was a symbol of it. Peter without doubt does not yet understand it, but he understands the merit of obedience; and with the open candor of his character he publicly declares: "Lord, wash not only my feet, but my hands and my head also." Jesus replies to him: "He who has been washed has no need but to wash the feet to be entirely clean. But you are clean, but not all." Judas was present, and Jesus washed his feet also

Having got through with this act of humility, he returns to the table and says to them: "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Master and Lord, and you say truly, for I am; if, then, I have

washed your feet—I, who am your Lord and your Master—ought you not to wash the feet of one another? For I have given you the example, so that what I have done you also may do. Verily, verily I say to you, the servant is not greater than the master, nor is the messenger greater than he who sent him; you will be happy if you understand that and if you do it." Again he said to them: "I have desired with a great desire to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer; for I declare to you I shall eat it no more henceforth until it be accomplished in the kingdom of God."

At the end of the repast he takes the cup, and, presenting it to them, after having given thanks, he says: "Take and share this among you; for I tell you I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God arrives." After that he takes bread, gives thanks, breaks it, and distributes it to his disciples, saying to them: "Take and eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in memory of me." Then, after he had supped, taking once more the cup or chalice, and after having given thanks, he transmits it to them, saying: "Drink all of you of this; for this is my blood, the blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for you and for many for the remission of sins." And they all drank of it.

After this august scene a word that Jesus spoke makes the apostles suddenly sad and melancholy. He said to them, with an emotion that he let them see: "One of you will betray me; the hand of him who betrays me is with me at this table." They at first looked at one another, uncertain of whom he spoke. At length Peter, placed at the side of our Lord, but behind him, made a sign to John, placed at the other side, and said to him: "Who is it?" Peter, the first

to inform himself about the name of the heretic, fulfils his office of chief of the Church. But the head of John almost touched the bosom of Jesus. Drawing himself yet nearer, he said to him: "Who is it, Lord?" Jesus answers, "He to whom I will present the bread steeped." The others understood not, and, greatly grieved, commenced each to ask Jesus: "Is it I, Lord?" By this question they manifested at once their humble diffidence of themselves and their charity for their brethren. Jesus, treating Judas cautiously, and wishing to leave him free, contents himself by answering: "It is one of the twelve who puts his hand in the dish with me. For the Son of Man is about to be delivered up, according to what is predicted of him. But woe to the man by whom he shall be delivered up; it were better for that man that he had never seen the world."

Nevertheless, Judas wished to speak like the others, and in his turn he had the boldness, the audacity, to say: "Master, is it I?" "You have said it," the Lord replied to him, but in such a way that the traitor only could hear him. And having steeped the bread, he gave it to Judas the Iscariot, son of Simon. This was a mark of affection that this miserable man yet received from his Master. He was not touched at it, or, if he felt any feeling of remorse, he stifled it, resolved to commit his unheard-of crime. This is why it was remarked that as soon as Judas had taken the morsel of bread Satan took possession of him. Jesus told him then: "What you do, do it quickly." Judas forthwith departs. None of those at the table understood this rapid scene. John himself, who knew the traitor, did not know that he would at that moment execute his design.

The excommunicated wretch went to have an understanding with those who guarded the Temple and who should seize our Lord. His departure from the hall of the Last Supper was the opening and the first episode of the Passion. A word of joy gushes forth from the heart of Jesus, as it were, saluting this threshold of death. "Now," said he, "the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified by him!" He commenced his discourse immediately after the Last Supper, formed from the substance of his teachings, and which he seems to have left us so that the whole world might see him such as he appeared on Thabor, resplendent with the divine light, and such as he always had been, full of meekness.

He renewed to the apostles the promise of his rewards, and he called them his little children—divine echo of the preceding word: "Let little children come to me"—eternal glorification of their candor and simplicity. He recommends them to love each other as he had loved them; and to point out to them how much the force of this evangelical love ought to surpass all that they had hitherto heard, he tells them that it was a "new commandment." Forewarning them that he was going to leave them, he assured them that he would not leave them orphans. He told Peter especially that he had prayed for him, so that his faith might be able to resist all the efforts and all the artifices of Satan. And he addressed him in the following words, which are the constitution and the foundation of the Church: "When you shall be converted, confirm your brethren." And he also told him he would follow him one day. He warned them that this very night all would abandon him. And when Peter declared his invincible fidelity, he warned him that this very night, before

the cock should crow twice, he would thrice deny him.

To prevent them from being confounded at their own weakness he adds: "Let your hearts not be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. I go to prepare a place for you. I will return to take you with me, so that you may be where I am." He strengthens them with a new strength against approaching scandal of his sufferings and his punishment by a clearer affirmation of his divinity. He says to Thomas: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; and no one can come to the Father unless through me." And he says to Philip: "Whoever sees me sees also my Father." He invested them with the power of miracles: "The works which I do, he who believes in me will do the same also. He will even perform greater miracles; for I go to my Father, and all that you ask of him in my name he will do it, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

As if all these protestations and assurances were not enough for him, and as if he stood in need of fortifying himself against the sorrow they would be afflicted with of seeing him no more, although he was not bound in reality to separate himself from them, he promises them six times over a Consoler: "If you love me, keep my commandments; and I will implore my Father, and he will give you a Comforter, who will remain with you for ever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him; but you shall know him, and he shall dwell in you, and he shall be in you. . . . And this Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name—he will teach you all things, and he will bring back to your remembrance

all that I have said to you." His kindness continually returns to these assurances, and, if one dare so speak, he cannot satisfy himself telling them how much he loved them, and strengthening them for the trial that awaited them.

He does not wish them to doubt, and he does not wish us to doubt—we who come later, and who shall see his Passion renewed under our eyes, in spite of triumphs and miracles. "I leave you my peace; I give you my peace. I do not give it you as the world gives it. Let not your hearts be troubled; let them not be affrighted and sad. You have heard that I go away from you; but I shall come back. If you love me, you will rejoice that the Son of Man goeth to the Father, who is greater than I.* I tell you these things now before they are accomplished, so that after their accomplishment you may have faith in me." He adds: "I shall speak to you but little more; for, behold, the prince of this world comes. He has no power over me; but that the world may know that I love my Father, and that I execute the orders my Father has given me. Arise; let us depart hence."

It is not known whether our Lord pronounced these words before leaving the hall of the Last Supper or at some point of the route. Whichever it may be, they mark his full and perfect will to accomplish the sacrifice by rendering himself obedient to death. He walked then toward the Mountain of Olives, where

* He speaks here as man. We must recollect that no book (least of all this abridgment of mine) can dispense one from studying the Gospel attentively; and the Scriptures cannot be read with fruit if the reader be not aided by some authorized commentary which explains the obscure passages.

Judas was not ignorant that he should pass the night. On his journey he continues his discourse.

Using, according to his wont, familiar objects, which helped to impress on their minds and enlighten them on his teachings, he avails himself of the vine to make his disciples comprehend the mystery of the union and the incorporation of all the faithful with the Man-God, and to prophesy at the same time the destinies of heresy:

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch that will be in me without bearing fruit he shall lop off; and all those that bear fruit he will prune, so that their fruit may become more abundant. Remain in me and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit if it remain not united to the vine; thus it is with you if you remain not with me. I am the vine; you are the branches. He who remains in me and I in him, that one shall bear much fruit; because without me you can do nothing. If any one abide not in me, he will be cast out as a rotten branch; he will become withered, sapless; he will be cast into the fire, and he will burn. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you will ask what you please, and it will be given to you. It is my Father's glory that you bear much fruit and that you become my disciples."

The true fruit of the mystic vine is love. He exhorted them again to this love, which he had so much recommended to them. The love of God is the foundation of the neighbor's love. Both, as he had declared in the temple, are the whole law; for all peoples, says Pope St. Gregory, form but one. Every precept tends to charity; every precept is founded on charity. Thus, as the same root or trunk produces

many branches, so from charity only abundant virtues emanate; and the branch of good works remains living only inasmuch as it clings to the root of charity.

The precepts are various on account of the diversity of works; they are one in root of charity. O law of love! the tenderest and the most glorious that God himself could give to man, but also the most opposed to the inclinations of fallen nature. On the threshold of the hall where the Last Supper was held the contest of pre-eminence was again renewed among the apostles, and Jesus had to gently reprimand them for it. He made them understand how much they ought to love each other by telling them how much he had loved them.

If it were necessary to find out in the whole Gospel of Jesus any passage where the Gospel and Jesus were more concentrated and more visible, where one could recognize more clearly the doctrine in its majesty, the God in his charity, the Man in his divinity, and the sublime indivisibility of the doctrine of the Man, of the God, it seems as though we cannot avoid pausing upon the following words:

"As the Father has loved me, it is so also that I love you. Abide in my love. You will abide in my love if you keep my commandments. My commandment is that you love each other as I have loved you. The greatest love is the love of him who gives his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I have commanded you. I will call you no longer servants, because the servant knows not what his master does; but I have called you my friends, because I have made known to you all that I have heard of my Father. It is not you who have chosen me; it is I who have chosen and appointed you, that you may

bear fruit and that your fruit may remain. I give you this command: that you love one another."

"You are my friends . . . and I have called you my friends." Christianity gives to the ancient expression a new root and, as it were, a new sense of its own. St. Gregory, on this passage, defines the word friend *amicus*, deriving it from *animi custos*—guardian of the soul. That is the whole Christian friendship; and there is another sentiment that merits this grand and holy name of friendship. Jesus is our friend, because he watches over our souls; and we love him not, and we love not others, and we love not ourselves, unless we keep his commandments and accomplish with him the work of friendship.

Having in preparation imbued his own with that strength of love and concord which will shine in them so wonderfully through their love of him, he warns them of the trials and combats they were destined to encounter. "If the world hates you, know that I have been hated before you. If you had been of the world, the world would have loved you; but because you are not of the world, and because I have chosen and set you apart, the world hates you. Remember, then, the words I have spoken to you: the servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also. They will drive you out of the synagogue; and the hour even approaches wherein whoever shall put you to death will be considered doing a thing pleasing to God. And they will treat you thus because of my name, because they know neither the Father nor me. Who despises me despises also my Father. If I had not come and had not spoken to them, they would be exempted from sin; but now their sin is without an excuse. If I had

not done amongst them things that no other one has done, they would be exempt from sin; but now they have seen them, and they have despised me and my Father. It is thus this word is fulfilled which is in their law: They have hated me without a cause."

He warns them to remember these things, which he had not spoken to them of from the commencement, because then he was there with them. And as he saw them silent and filled with sadness, he tenderly adds: "It is good for you that I should go away; for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you; and I go away, and I will send him to you. And when he shall come, he will convince the world of sin, of justice, and of judgment.* But these mysteries present themselves, the knowledge of which, being not necessary for us, may be simply desired. Then Jesus, reserving what the apostles could not yet learn, told them he had resolved to instruct them through the Holy Ghost. "When he will come, the Spirit of Truth, he will teach you all truth; for he will not speak of himself, but he will tell of what he will have heard, and he will make known to you the future (promise of the gift of prophecy). He it is who shall glorify me, because he will receive of what concerns me, and he will announce it to you. All that belongs to my Father appertains to me; and this is why I have told you that he will receive of what is mine, and that he shall announce it to you."

* "That is (if we dare interpret those words, so mysterious), through the Holy Ghost the world will be convinced that it is sinful because I am just, or rather that I am justice itself, and that at the day of general judgment I, who must be its judge, will present to the world the contrast (so overwhelming) of its crimes with my innocence, and my justice with its iniquity. And then the world shall know what 't is, and what I am, and what it must expect."—P. De Ligny.

This is the sublime mystery of the procession of the divine Persons in the most holy Trinity. If we meditate on these words, and the place and the instant wherein they were pronounced, the evidence of divinity will prostrate the heart and mind.

Jesus says to them again: "In a little while you shall see me no longer; and after a little while you shall see me, because I go to my Father." This was the announcement of his sepulture, of his resurrection, of his apparitions, and of his ascension into heaven, where very soon he would receive their victorious souls, to keep them for ever near him. But this thought was too much shrouded in darkness for them, and they ask among themselves: "What does he say—a little while?" Jesus replies: "In truth, you will weep and the world will rejoice; but your grief shall be turned into joy. A woman who brings forth is in pain. But when she gives birth to a son, she no more remembers her pains; and her joy is great, because a man is born. You likewise—you are now in sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall be full of joy, and no person will dare take away from you the joy of your heart, and you will demand of me nothing more. . . . The hour cometh that I will speak to you no more in parables, but I will announce to you clearly what regards my Father. You will ask then in my name, and I do not say to you that I will entreat the Father in your behalf; for my Father loves you because you have loved me, and because you have believed that I have come forth from God. I am come from the Father, and I am come into the world; I now leave the world, and I go to my Father."

The disciples say to him: "Now we know right well that you know all things, and there is no need

that any person should interrogate you. This is what made us believe that you have come from God." "At this moment you believe," replies Jesus; "but the hour cometh, and now is, that you go away, to be scattered and to leave me alone. However, I am not alone; for my Father is with me, and I say these things that you may have peace in me. And you will have to suffer much in the world. But have confidence; I have conquered the world."

Such was the sublime conversation wherein all is human and yet all is divine; wherein the God encourages his faithful to bear patiently with the hatred of the world by saying to them, "Know that it has hated me before having hated you"; wherein the man says, "I am the life. Have confidence; I have conquered the world." This was the last word of Jesus Christ to men. Henceforth he will teach no more but by his silence in labor and sorrow. But now he begins to pray. He prayed first for himself, then longer and more affectionately for those whom he loved. Human ears have never heard, and never will they hear, such like accents.

Jesus, then raising up his eyes to heaven, said: "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son may glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he may give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him. Now this is eternal life: That they may know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now glorify thou me, O Father! with thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with thee.

"I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou

hast given me out of the world. Thine they were, and to me thou gavest them: and they have kept thy word. Now they have known that all things which thou hast given me are from thee: because the words which thou gavest me, I have given to them, and they have received them, and have known in every deed that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given me: because they are thine; and all my things are thine, and thine are mine: and I am glorified in them.

"And now I am not in the world, and these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep them in thy name, whom thou hast given me: that they may be one, as we also are. While I was with them, I kept them in thy name. Those whom thou gavest me have I kept: and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture may be fulfilled. And now I come to thee: and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy filled in themselves. I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world: as I also am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from evil. They are not of the world: as I also am not of the world.

"Sanctify them in truth. Thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for them do I sanctify myself: that they also may be sanctified in truth. And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in me, that they all may be one, as thou, Father, in me, and I in thee: that they also may be one in us: that the world may

believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou hast given me, I have given to them: that they may be one, as we also are one. I in them and thou in me: that they may be made perfect in one; and the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast also loved me.

"Father, I will that where I am, they also whom thou hast given me may be with me: that they may see my glory which thou hast given me, because thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world. Just Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee: and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have made known thy name to them, and will make it known: that the love, wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them."

BOOK VIII.

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD.

CHAPTER I.

THE JEWS.

THE Mount of Olives, as has been noticed, was the abode of Jesus Christ—his dwelling in this world. He came there to redescend thence toward Jerusalem and death. He stops awhile at a place called Gethsemani—that is, *the fertile valley*—in a garden wherein he often assembled his disciples. All the apostles were present but Judas, excommunicated by himself. Jesus took three of them with him—Peter, James, and John, the witnesses of Thabor—and, after having recommended the others to watch and pray, he withdrew from them.

Forthwith he commenced to yield himself up to interior sufferings. He allowed fear, agony, and sorrow to penetrate his soul. He said to those who accompanied him: "My soul is sorrowful, even to death." Having asked them to watch and pray with him, he retires a distance of a stone's throw. He prostrates

himself to the earth. It was the first time they beheld him in this posture. "My Father, if it be pleasing to thee, take away this chalice from me. However, not my will but thine be done."

With his face prostrate to the earth he prayed for a very long while. He had taken on him our human nature, and he submitted to all its infirmities. By giving the example of prayer and submission, he receives death with the horror that it inspires in all flesh. A sweat of blood flows down from the body. He thus suffers this horror of the agony which he had often taken away from his saints and his martyrs.

In this sort of eclipse of the Divinity, which let human nature bow down, an angel from heaven came to him and strengthened him. It is thought that the heavenly messenger afforded him bodily strength or vigor, and comforted him by the price of his labors. He rose up and came to the three apostles; he finds them asleep through weight of their sadness. He said to Peter: "Simon, you are sleeping; you could not watch one hour with me. Watch and pray, so that you enter not into temptation." To enter is to abandon one's self to the torrent, and it sweeps away all before it; the resistance of prayer forces it back. Jesus retired again and prayed; returned to the apostles and found them all drowsy, not knowing what to answer him.

A third time he retired and prayed, saying: "My Father, if this chalice cannot be removed, and if I must drink it, let your will be done." His pity for the Jews appeared in the manner in which he speaks of *this* chalice, filled and presented by them through a hardness of heart for which they were to undergo unheard-of punishments. By these words, "Let it pass away," we see a mark of his tenderness for his future martyrs, so

that, when the chalice should be presented to them, they might be able to drink it, as he will very soon drink it himself, without refusing its bitterness, without fainting away with despair. The fathers find also a relation between the three renewals of this sublime prayer and the three dead persons resuscitated by Jesus Christ, the first in her house, the second going to the grave, the third in the tomb, figured by the three different states of the sinner. Since the chalice was the purchase of all the dead, it was the expiation of all sin. Besides, this triple prayer teaches that we must pray to obtain the remission of sins past, present, and future.

In the harmony of the redemption the garden of Gethsemani—*the fertile valley*—corresponds with the Garden of Eden; and the chalice accepted through the obedience of Jesus corresponds with the fruit plucked through the disobedience of Adam. Adam believed he could make himself master of life and knowledge. Driven out of Eden, he finds but darkness thicker and thicker, and death more and more multiplied. Jesus accepts to die and to be forthwith dragged from Gethsemani to the cross; but this route of the cross will be a luminous route, by which Adam, redeemed, ascending higher than Eden, and desiring more than its delights, will enter into the mansions of God. Then, having fully acquiesced in the will of the Father, Jesus, full of strength and meekness, said to his apostles: "The hour is now at hand when the Son of Man shall be delivered up to the wicked. Arise; let us go. Behold, he who is about to betray me is at hand."

At this moment Judas appeared, leading on a numerous troop of Roman soldiers and Jewish satellites, armed with swords and clubs, and bearing lighted torches.

He said to them: "He to whom I will give the kiss is the person." Immediately he approached our Saviour, and, giving him the kiss, he said: "Hail, Master." Then the kiss was the sign or watchword of traitors. Origen remarks that all heretics address Jesus with Judas's salutation: "Ave, Rabbi."

Jesus gently received the kiss of the Iscariot. He said to him: "My friend, what are you come to do?" These are words of tenderness and of divine depth. Judas, you are about to deliver up the Son of Man, but you cannot put your hands on the Son of God; you cannot either touch or betray the Divinity. And this Son of Man whom you betray has assumed this flesh for you, as well as for those who are going to tear it to pieces.

Judas did not lay a hand on his Master; he silently drew back toward his motionless band. Then Jesus, advancing a few paces, said to them: "Whom do you seek?" Either they did not see him, in spite of the torch-lights, or, in spite of the sign of Judas, they did not recognize him, or they dared not approach him. They answered: "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them: "I am he."

At this moment they saw without doubt something like what those will see who shall be placed at the left hand of the Judge on the day of judgment. As soon as our Lord said, "I am he, I am the one," they drew back and fell flat to the ground. The just prostrate themselves with their faces to the east, knowing well where they fall, and raise themselves up toward the Invisible on high; the damned, upset on the road of their crimes, fall backwards toward the invisible below, into the unknown eternal.

Jesus again demands of them: "Whom do you

seek?" They again answer: "Jesus of Nazareth." He replies: "I have already told you I am he. If, then, you seek me, let these go their way." This was a command he gave them, and they obeyed. It may be conjectured that they also seized some at least of those who followed Jesus. The Jews had thought of putting Lazarus to death. Caiphas interrogated our Lord about his doctrine and his disciples. But Jesus wished not to lose any of his own, whose faith was not yet strong enough to sustain the combat. Indeed, none was lost save the excommunicated one, who, through his avarice and obstinacy, perished.

Having thus twice manifested his power, and thereby offered to Judas and the Jews a pardon by which they might profit, Jesus let himself be apprehended.

The disciples then said to him, "Lord, shall we draw the sword?" Without waiting for a reply, Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the servant of the high-priest, and cut off his right ear. Peter struck at the head. This servant, called Malchus, which signifies king, symbolizes the Jewish people stripped of their royalty, fallen under the triple yoke of an infidel nation, subject to a venal priesthood and to the letter they no longer understand. Jesus touches the wound and heals it. According to some interpreters, it was this Malchus, servant of the synagogue, who buffeted and spat upon Jesus in the pretorium of Pilate. How many other powerful ones of the earth, hirelings of error, forgetful of the benefits with which they are loaded, buffet and disgorge their hellish phlegm on Jesus, accused in the synagogues of Satan! At the same time he healed the ear of this man he said to his disciples: "Remain here awhile"; and to Peter, "Put your sword in the scabbard. Who makes use of the sword shall perish by the sword."

Peter struck like Moses when he killed the Egyptian who maltreated a child of Abraham. Moses was not hindered; Peter is reproved. The ministry of rigor is abolished; mercy reigns. Peter shall be the great minister of mercy. Nevertheless, he keeps the sword; and he is ordered to put it into the scabbard, not to throw it away. With this sword he cuts off what will not be unbound; he lops off what wishes to hang on after being disunited. And those whom Peter has struck with this sword Jesus does not resuscitate.

Continuing to instruct Peter, Jesus goes on: "Can I not ask my Father, and instantly will he not send me more than twelve legions of angels? Shall I not drink the chalice my Father has given me? And how, then, shall the Scripture be fulfilled according to which this must happen?"

Addressing himself immediately to those of the high-priests and officers of the Temple and ancients who had accompanied Judas, "You are come," said he to them, "as if to a robber, with swords and clubs. I was daily seated among you, and I taught in the Temple, and you have not apprehended me. But it is necessary that the Scriptures should be fulfilled. Now is your hour and the power of darkness."

Your hour, the hour I have given you—I, who possess eternity; I, who am master of all things on earth and in heaven! In saying these words Jesus really and voluntarily puts himself in their hands, as if he abdicated his sovereignty, which had checked them till now. All the disciples fled and dispersed in various parts.

The satellites, having bound Jesus, led him at first to the house of Annas, the old high-priest, assistant of the high-priest in charge, Caiphas. This Caiphas was

a worthless man, a servile and incredulous priest, such as the Roman domination sought after; because they were tools in their hands to degrade the pontificate, the last strength of Israel. Annas, a consummate politician, perhaps more perverse than Caiphas, but less ostensibly mean, governed the powerful party of the enemies of Jesus. Although a Sadducee, as high-priest he obtained in this affair the confidence of the Pharisees. We are not aware whether he was bound to investigate juridically the case of Jesus, as president of the grand council, charged with accusing those who soiled the purity of doctrine, or whether our Lord was simply led to him, that he might the sooner see him gibbeted. Annas sent Jesus back, always in chains, to the house of Caiphas, where the Sanhedrim were assembled.

Peter had fled as well as the others. But love, combating fear, attracted him toward his captive Master. He follows at a distance. Alas! says a father, he followed him "afar off"; if he had followed him hard by, he would not have denied him. One of the disciples made him enter the hall of the high-priest's mansion. He stayed there among the domestics and the officers, warming himself at a fire lit up on account of the cold. Already the flame of charity had subsided in him; he warmed himself at the fire of the persecutors for the love and pleasure of the present life.

Jesus was before the council—before those whom he had convicted of ignorance, of hypocrisy and impiety. Caiphas interrogated him. He answers that he had always taught publicly in the synagogues and in the Temple, and that it was not he whom it was necessary to question, but those who had heard him. But in all that he said they saw nothing they could reprehend.

They hated him gratuitously. His response disconcerted them. They felt it among the auditory. A satellite, Malchus, or another—a man who is ready on all such occasions—upbraided him: "Is it thus you answer the high-priest?" And he struck him a blow. Jesus said to this man: "If I have spoken falsely, show me in what; but if I have spoken truthfully, why do you strike me?" It is well known that these unworthy, corrupt, and time-serving judges did not chide the subaltern for his misconduct, or rather for his atrocious act.

However, an appearance of proof was necessary. The Pharisees were not satisfied; but they could not produce any tangible proof. They brought forward many false witnesses; their depositions were contradictory. But two appeared acceptable, who thus deposed: "He has said, 'I can destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days. I will destroy this temple, which has been made by the hand of man, and in the space of three days I shall build up another which shall not be made by the hand of man.'" Jesus had said to the Jews—and we know in what sense—"Destroy this temple, and I shall rebuild it in three days." But these witnesses contradicted each other; and, besides, what they related could not warrant the sentence of death, which the judges were anxious to render.

Jesus remained silent, leaving the false witnesses and the judges to embarrass and contradict each other in their common ignorance. There was only there the mere form of justice, says St. John Chrysostom—wicked men who rushed upon truth like robbers rush upon their prey. The high-priest first, betraying by his inordinate movements the passion that animated him, said to Jesus: "Do you make no answer?" Jesus

continued to keep silence. The high-priest again interrogated him: "I adjure you, by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, Son of God, for ever blessed." At this word Jesus wished no longer to keep silence: "You have said it. I *am* he"; he added: "and I tell you that you shall see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Almighty God, coming in the clouds of heaven." Immediately the high-priest, as if struck with terror, tore his garments. "What further need have we of witnesses?" said he to the judges. "You hear the blasphemy. What think you?" The others answered: "He is worthy of death."

Caiphas, in the ardor of his hatred, forgot that so much angry emotion was not necessary to carry with him the judges, and he violated the precept given to the high-priest: "The high-priest shall not take away the tiara from off his head, and he shall not rend his garments." In rending his garments he rent his priesthood.

The judges appointed a day, so as regularly to pronounce sentence; and, awaiting the time, they abandoned Jesus to men selected to guard him. These were men who voluntarily offered themselves to such masters, and whom such masters knew well how to choose—men who hated, on their own account, those whom they persecute, and who torment them with more rage when they know them to be innocent. The Man of goodness, the Man of God, the Man of mercy, is delivered over to their hellish clutches. They savagely amused themselves by cruelly tormenting him; they spat in his face, struck him with their clubs, blindfolded him, struck him, and said to him: "Christ, prophesy, and tell us who has struck you?"

They preserved the practice of blindfolding him.

When it was the hour and power of darkness; when they considered him judged; when they beheld him bound with cords; when he was delivered up to them, then they blindfolded him, as if they wished to feign not to know him, or as if they thought he did not know them. However, they knew him well, and he knew them well, and he saw them.

Jesus submits in silence to their outrages; but a more bitter pain is offered to him—one that pierces more deeply his heart than any those vile and ignorant executioners could have inflicted.

Peter was standing in the judgment-hall. A servant, looking on him attentively, said to him: "You also—were you not with Jesus of Nazareth?" Peter boldly denies him, and he withdraws to the porch of the hall. And at this time the cock crew for the first time. Another servant, seeing him near the door, also denounces him. He turns about and draws near the fire; but there many persons said to him: "Are not you one of his disciples?" His terror increases. He denies again, swearing that he knew not this man. Despite all, love retained him in his danger. After a while, when he thought he was forgotten, others accused him of being one of the disciples; he denied it the third time with imprecations. As he repeated that he knew not "this man," the cock crew again, and a look from Jesus entered his very heart. Then the apostle remembered what the Lord had told him a few hours before: "This night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times." He went out and wept bitterly.

Peter denied three times; this triple denial represents or corresponds with three formulas or forms of heretical negation which attack Christ either in his

divinity or in his humanity, or in both at the same time. Those who cause the apostle to fall prefigure three sorts of enemies which the faithful encounter. The first servant represents the synagogue of the Jews; the second, the persecuting nations; the men whose reasoning and railleries provoke the third denial are the doctors and ministers of divers heresies. All together afford an image of the society of the wicked, and consequently of the peril that the disciple of Christ ought to specially avoid. It is, moreover, through the secret designs of Providence, St. John Chrysostom remarks, that Peter was the first to fall. The remembrance of his fall taught him to temper by mercy and patience the severity of the condemnations which it behooved him to level against others. Peter, teacher of the universe, sins and demands pardon, so as to establish this rule of indulgence for those who are obliged to judge. The sacerdotal power has not been remitted to the angels, who, sinning not, pursue without mercy sin in the sinner; but a man subject to passions is constituted over others. Discovering in them his own infirmity, he knows better how to compassionate and more easily to pardon others. Thus Jesus, delivered up to the outrages of men, finished the great work in the education of the apostles.

As soon as daylight appeared the Sanhedrim assembled. The Jews once more adjured Jesus to tell them if he were the Christ. He answers them: "If I tell you that I am, you will not believe me; and if I interrogate you in my turn [on the marks by which Christ is made known], you will not answer me; neither would you let me out of your hands. For the rest, the Son of Man shall be henceforth seated at the right hand of the All-Powerful God." They well understood. They

then reply: "Are you, then, the Son of God?" Jesus made them the same reply that he already had given to Caiphas: "You say it. Yes, I am." They exclaimed, like Caiphas: "What need have we of any other testimony? We have heard him."

The sentence was already pronounced. They hastened to put it into execution. Having led Jesus away bound, they presented him to Pilate.

Another sentence was about to be executed. Judas had, like Peter, followed up the incidents of the process. Already he felt remorse. Seeing that Jesus was condemned, he came to the chief priests, and brought the thirty pieces of silver to them. "I have sinned; I have delivered the Just One." They replied to him: "That is your own affair."

This miserable man forgot the goodness of his Master, or else he did not wish to invoke the avenging consequence of his crime. He said the "Just One"—not the Son of God. He considers Jesus as man. The crime of Judas was the want of faith—not believing that Jesus was clement enough or powerful enough to pardon him. He cast down his thirty denarii in the Temple, and went out and hung himself.

The chief priests had a scruple about the Judas silver. It was the price of blood, and they did not wish to put it into the treasury of the Temple. They purchased with it a field for the burial of strangers. This circumstance had been predicted by a prophet. And Jesus came to give peace to the living and the dead.

CHAPTER II.

PILATE.

THE multitude who were at Caiphas's house, judges and servants, dragging away Jesus, tightly bound, became tumultuous at the palace of the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. Our Lord, at his departure from Ephrem, had said: "We go to Jerusalem, where the Son of Man will be delivered up to the high-priests and to the doctors of the law, who will condemn him to death, and will deliver him up to the Gentiles." The torch of the prophets, throwing light on this hideous and frightful punishment, suffers not that the Divine Majesty be veiled for an instant.

The Jews are savagely excited before the pretorium; they dared not enter, lest they might become contaminated by coming in contact with the house of a pagan. Here we recognize the Pharisees whom our Lord describes. The law did not forbid them to enter the house of a pagan—that was purely an observance of their own making; but the law forbade them to put to death an innocent man.

Pilate went out and asked them what accusation they had against this man. They bellow forth that he was a malefactor; that otherwise they would not have led him to judgment. Pilate told them to judge him themselves according to the law. They replied: "You

know we are not permitted to put any one to death." Then the sceptre had departed from Juda; the time of the Messias had arrived.

Doing all they could to put Jesus to death, his enemies preferred, nevertheless, not to be his official judges. According to the law, they could only have condemned him to be stoned to death; and they were burning with a desire that he should undergo the death of the cross. The author of the Book of Wisdom makes the wicked say who plotted the death of the Just One: "Let us condemn him to the most shameful death." On the other hand, they imagined they could hide themselves from the wrath and possible resistance of the people; for this pack of hirelings whom they had let loose was not strong enough yet to effect their base designs. When the governor had assumed the responsibility of the condemnation, he interested himself the more to have the sentence of death executed. The hatred and policy of the Jews equally concurred, "so that the word which Jesus had spoken might be fulfilled, in order to point out what death he should die."

Then they commenced to accuse him before Pilate. "We have found this man," said they, "to be a perverter of our nation, who forbids us to pay tribute to Cesar, and who gives himself the names of Christ and of king." Five days before Jesus said to them: "Render unto Cesar what belongs to Cesar."

Pilate did not believe them; but on an accusation of such a nature his office obliged him to a semblance of information. He went on and caused Jesus to be brought before him, and said to him: "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus answers: "Did you say this of yourself, or have others said it to you of me?"

"Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Those of your nation have delivered you into my hands. What have you done?" He was the regular judge who spoke. Jesus continued to reply: "My kingdom," said he, "is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered up to the Jews; but my kingdom is not hence." Pilate said to him: "Then are you a king?" "You have said it. I am a king."

David sang, "The Lord has established me King over the holy mountain of Sion [the Church], to declare his law." Jesus, ending his reply to Pilate, describes in a like manner his royalty: "I was born, and for this end I came into the world: that I should give testimony to the truth; and every one that is of the truth heareth me." Pilate said, "What is truth?"

In the whole Gospel there is not a trait of historical accuracy more striking than this. It not only portrays for all time the high in station and the judges of the earth, but it was then particularly the *résumé* or practical summing up of all philosophy—the last word of human wisdom. In uttering it he did not demand an answer; he was sure that none would be given him.

Pilate then went to the accusers of Jesus, and said to them: "I find no crime against this man."

Such a decision, after an interrogatory so short, made it sufficiently known that the judge was already instructed on the count of the accused, and that the clamors of the Jews could not deceive him. Nevertheless, they continued to accuse Jesus, and they multiplied calumnies. Jesus remained silent, as he had done before Caiphas. It was the duty of the judge to demand proofs. Pilate, embarrassed in his official state, said to Jesus: "Do you not hear how many charges they bring

against you?" But Jesus answered no more. Pilate was greatly astonished at this. He did not understand that Jesus, having told him what was necessary to enlighten his conscience, was bound to tell him nothing more, and that it belonged to him, as judge, to defend the accused, whom he found innocent. Pilate had the misfortune of men who care little to know what truth is, and who doubt if there be any truth. He was weak, vacillating, and temporizing before the power of falsehood. The Jews felt the advantage that his timidity gave them. They were so emboldened by Pilate's weakness that they clamored louder against Jesus, saying that he aroused the people by the doctrine he had preached in all Judea, from Galilee, where he began, even to here. On hearing them speak of Galilee Pilate thought he had discovered a way to honestly get out of this cause.

Jesus being a Galilean and under the jurisdiction of Herod, he sent him off before this prince, who happened to be at this moment at Jerusalem.

Herod was glad to see Jesus, thinking he would perform a miracle before him. He began to interrogate him with a great abundance of words. Jesus did not answer him any more than he did the accusers who followed him. The prince and his courtiers, wounded at his silence, treated him with derision, in imitation of the low hirelings at the house of Caiphas. They clothed him with a white robe, as one is accustomed to dress fools; he is sent back to the bar of Pilate, thanking him for his courtesy. On this occasion Herod and Pilate, heretofore enemies, were reconciled.

Throughout, the governor did not wish to put Jesus to death. Not daring to act with authority, he thought of an arrangement to propose to the Jews. "You

know," said he to them, "that I have found in this man none of the crimes of which you accuse him; neither has Herod. So he does not deserve death. I will, therefore, punish and release him."

This is the justice of Pilate! But whether this means appeared to him not sure, or he found it made himself odious, he proposes yet another plan.

At the paschal solemnity it was a privilege granted to the people to release a prisoner. But there was then in prison at Jerusalem a notorious malefactor named Barabbas, guilty of robbery, of sedition, of murder. Pilate gave them the choice of delivering Barabbas or Jesus. He had not offered this choice to the scribes and to the priests, whose hatred he was aware of, but he considered that the people would proclaim themselves in favor of the innocent. A singular circumstance strengthened his desire not to condemn Jesus. His wife sent to him, saying: "Have nothing to do with that just man; for I suffered much this day in a dream on account of him."

The hope of Pilate was promptly frustrated. On the one side, the Pharisees had corrupted, demoralized, and excited the multitude. On the other, Barabbas, a robber, a murderer, a perverter of sound morals, was not unpopular. The masses, says Origen, are easily discerned in Barabbas. Outwardly we see some disturbers of society, some murderers, some robbers; far more are such in their souls. They will always clamor for Barabbas; for whoever does evil, or wishes it to be done, demands that Christ should be bound, garroted, and Barabbas let loose. Other interpreters have observed that Barabbas signifies *son of their master*, and that the master of this world, as Jesus had told them, was Satan. When Pilate, then, had made

his proposition, the throng, to his great surprise, bellowed forth: "Give us Barabbas." "But," he replied, "what, then, do you wish that I should do with the King of the Jews—Jesus, called the Christ?" They cried out: "Away with him! Crucify him!" Crucifixion was the punishment of slaves. Slaves demanded this punishment for him who had said to them, "The truth shall make you free."

Pilate replies: "What evil has he done? I see nothing in him that merits death." And coming back to his first design, he added: "I will have him chastised, and then I shall have him released." But the Jews redoubled their clamors: "Crucify him!"—crying out always, "Crucify him! Crucify him! Give us Barabbas!"

Pilate began to fear that all this might turn into sedition, and might become for him personally a bad affair. Already in a serious matter he had had to yield to the perseverance of the Jews at Jerusalem and at Rome. He gave orders to release Barabbas and to scourge Jesus. Ordinarily, scourging preceded the execution of the sentence of death. They stripped the suffering Jesus, and four soldiers scourged him with leather thongs studded with knobs or large iron nails. This punishment was so cruel that often the condemned died under it.

When our Lord had endured this cruel torment, the Roman soldiers, of themselves or at the instigation of the Jews, wished to amuse themselves with him by gibing and mocking him, as they had done at the house of Caiphas and at the court of Herod. They covered him with a cast-off purple cloak formerly worn by some noted Roman captain, put a crown of thorns on his head, placed in his tied-up hands for a sceptre a

slender reed, and bending the head and prostrating themselves, they said to him: "Hail, King of the Jews!" This false homage was but a pretext to vent their diabolical fury on him. They spat on him. They gave him blows—buffets, and, taking the reed out of his hand, they struck him on the head with it—sinister prediction of the rage of future renegades! The thirst for smothering the Son of God with opprobrium, the derision of the wretched rabble, blown to white heat by the scribes, winked at by the powerful, is the most marked and most prophetic character of the Passion.

Jesus suffered all without complaining, without turning aside his face, mute as a lamb led to the slaughter, as his prophets had represented him.

When Pilate had judged that he had done enough to satisfy the Jews in his judicial treatment of the innocent Jesus, he went forth out of the judgment hall and said to them: "Behold, I have led him forth to you; understand, then, that I find no crime in him." He made Jesus appear, bleeding, mangled, the crown of thorns on his head, his hands tied, his shoulders covered with a cast-off purple cloak in derision, and he said to them, "Behold the Man!"

The populace were silent; the priests and scribes and the ancients of the Temple bellowed forth: "Crucify him!" Pilate, irritated, replied: "Crucify him yourselves; because, for my part, I have found no crime in him." This was the fourth declaration that he made them, and he will do it again. The Jews answered: "We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he has made himself the Son of God." For the crime of the state, which Pilate refused to admit, they substitute the crime of religion.

This word increased the perplexities and the secret

terrors of the pagan. Jesus had manifestly inspired him with respect. That Sage, of whom so many wonderful things have been said; that Hero, that innocent and pure man—could he not, in effect, have been the son of some divinity? He led Jesus back into the pretorium, and asked him: "Whence are you?" Jesus did not reply. Pilate said: "Are you ignorant that I have power to crucify you and the power to set you free?"

Jesus, manifesting his mercy for this man in worldly authority, deigned to say a word to him. "You would not have," he replied to him, "any power over me, if it had not been given to you from on high. This is the reason why the sin of him who has delivered me up to you is greater than yours."

A word of pardon by which Pilate did not profit. He was unfortunately more subdued by vain pity than converted by justice. He always sought a means of delivering Jesus, but always without compromising himself. He found it not. The Jews yelled forth: "If you release him, you do not serve Cesar; for Jesus made himself king, and whoever makes himself king declares himself against Cesar." They forthwith raised up against him an accusation of high-treason—an unpardonable crime in the eyes of Tiberius, and on which all the informers were collected.

The weak conscience of Pilate was not able to resist their last attack. Nevertheless, he continued to protest. Being seated in his tribunal outside, he caused Jesus to be led out before the Jews, and he said to them again: "Behold your king!" They cried out: "Down with him! Put him to death! Crucify him!" "Shall I crucify your king?" said Pilate once more. The chiefs of the priests answered: "We have no

other king but Cesar." They incontestably proved that the time of the Messias had arrived and that they refused to receive him. They knew well what they preferred to him, and what kings Barabbas and Cesar were.

The multitude now became boisterous; the tumult began to rage. Weak, temporizing Pilate at last gave his decision. But he wished to manifest the last proof of the innocence of Jesus, also the last attestation of his own guilt. He ordered water to be brought to him, and, washing his hands before the people, he said to them: "I am innocent of the blood of this just man, and you will have to answer for it." All bellowed out "Let his blood fall upon us and our children."

Pilate abandoned Jesus to them to do with him what they wished.

At Bethlehem we beheld new virtues bloom forth upon the world. Here new crimes surge forth, roll high—hideous types of hatred, of justice, and disregard of truth. What progeny that Judas, that Caiphas, that Herod, that throng, will bring forth! How often the concourse of traitors and apostates will cause the vile face of that Pilate to reappear whose judgment absolves the Christ, but whose cowardice crucifies him!

CHAPTER III.

CALVARY.

MAN takes delight in the sufferings of man, and when the wicked has power over the just rarely is he contented with putting him to death. As soon as Pilate had pronounced the sentence of death the soldiers recommenced the scene of the crowning of the adorable head of Jesus with thorns. A second time he, the Just One, submitted to their cruel strokes and to their insults. Then they drag from his mangled body the tattered red cloak, and put on him again his scanty clothing, and lead him outside of the city to a place named Calvary—in Hebrew, Golgotha. According to a very ancient tradition, there Adam had been interred, the first sinner. What is more certain is that Calvary was the place of executions—the place of the decapitated.

A writer of our times has paraded his impiety in the Holy Land, and he has obtained the merit of returning from it with greater impiety He wishes us to observe that Calvary must not be represented such as Christian poesy had represented it. He saw there, for his part, but a vile and miserable place. We may grant to the enemies of Jesus that Calvary was as ignoble as the cross. There was nothing wanting to the completion of the punishment that the Son of God

wished to undergo for the redemption of the world. And what can there be found infamous on Calvary comparable to the infamy of men?

Calvary was, then, the spot of all capital executions. St. John Chrysostom gives this reason for it: Ignored by unbelievers, forsaken by renegades, the Lord did not wish to suffer in the Temple nor under a roof, so that you might not imagine that he died for the Jewish people only; he suffered outside of the city and beyond the walls, so that you may know that it was a sacrifice for all, and that it was an oblation for all the earth and the purification of the human race.

Jesus, going forth out of the pretorium, carried his cross. The condemned went thus to death, loaded with the instrument of their punishment. He realized the figure of Abel, led by his brother into a field, there to be put to death; the figure of Isaac, loaded with the wood of his sacrifice; the figure of Joseph, and of his robe stained with blood. At the same time it was the fulfilment of one of the prophecies of the glory which concerned the Messias: "He will carry on his shoulder the sign of his power." Two criminals were conducted by the same escort to undergo the same punishment. Another prophecy said: "He has been put on a rank with thieves and criminals."

However, he succumbed; he had but human strength. For fear that he might die on the way, the soldiers stopped at the gates of the city a man who was passing by, and required him, according to the Roman custom, to carry the cross of the condemned. This man, named Simon, was a Libyan of the city of Cyrene, father of two disciples. Simon signifies *obedient;* Cyrene signifies *an heir*—a figure of the Gentile people, formerly strangers, now heirs through his obe-

dience. In the place of the Jew, become unworthy, he suffers himself to be loaded with this glorious ignomy.

A great throng followed, some silent, others hooting and jeering at him. Among them were women who wept bitterly. Jesus, turning around towards them, said to them: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold days shall come when they shall say, 'Happy are the barren, happy are the wombs that have not borne, and the breasts that have not given suck.'"

Arrived at Calvary, they presented him wine mixed with myrrh and gall, which was given to the condemned to stupefy them. He tasted it, but did not wish to drink it. In tasting this bitter draught he obeyed, he expiated the intemperance of men, and he fulfilled the prophecies. In refusing to drink, he denies himself the artificial comfort of a sort of intoxication; he showed that he well knew the bitterness of sin, since he underwent its entire punishment, but that he did not swallow its poison.

The soldiers stripped him. Adam, conquered by Satan, covered himself with garments made of the leaves of the trees of Eden; but the Saviour strips himself to conquer. Clothed with the splendor of his innocence, he mounts upon the cross. As the first man dwelt in Paradise, so Jesus Christ, the second man, entered into Paradise. At the threshold he lays aside the signs of mortality.

"Then they crucified him, and with him the two robbers; the one at his right, the other at his left." Thus speaks the Evangelist St. Luke. The following verse teaches the faithful of Christ that they should

entertain no feelings of anger or revenge for his executioners. And Jesus said: "My Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

One circumstance only troubled the Sanhedrim. Pilate had prepared a writing that he caused to be placed over the head of Jesus; it bore, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." Very many could read these words, because the inscription was in three languages —Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. The high-priests, considering this act an insult and an injury to their nation, clamorously expostulated with Pilate. "Do not write King of the Jews," said they to him, "but that he called himself King of the Jews." Pilate, though so importuned, did not listen to them. According to all appearance, he believed that Jesus was the Son of David; that is to say, really King of the Jews, as he had always named him during the judicial process. He replied bitterly: "What I have written I have written." "May the royalty of Jesus, therefore, be written in the Hebrew language, which is the language of the people of God; and in the Greek language, which is the language of the learned and of philosophers; and in the Roman language, which is the language of the empire and of the world. And you, O Greeks! inventors of the arts; you, O Jews! heirs of the promises; you Romans, masters of the world, come read; come see and read!"*

The Evangelists have pointed out another circumstance wherein we can perceive the mercy that desired to multiply and fulfil the prophecies, even to the smallest details, so as to aid and correct our incredulity. After having crucified Jesus, the soldiers take his clothing and make four parts of them, one for each

* Bossuet.

of them; but they drew lots for his tunic, which was seamless. The prophet had said: "They have divided my vestments, and they have cast lots for my garments." Jews and pagans, judges and nobles, doctors and people, populace and soldiers, all those who have insulted, beaten, delivered Jesus up to his executioners, all those who covered him with spittle, all those who put him to death—all have lit up so many torches that make his divinity shine out. The more they became furious to tear to pieces the flesh of the man, the more they have discovered the God.

Other prophecies spring up on Calvary, to be fulfilled in later times. The Passion of Jesus Christ was to furnish the type of the triumphant sufferings of his Church, always victorious over the roaring waves of derision.

Four soldiers kept watch, seated at the foot of the cross. This was more than was necessary to keep off the small number of friends who might have been tempted to detach the victim from the cross or to assuage his sufferings. His enemies were free. Then, seeing Jesus on the cross, they wagged their heads and poured out on him torrents of blasphemy. They cried out to him, "Ah! Saviour, you who destroy the Temple of God and can rebuild it in three days, now, then, save yourself. If, then, you are the Son of God, descend from that cross." Satan in the desert said to him: "If you are the Son of God, cast yourself down." The voices of the children resemble that of the father. The people mock at him; the chiefs of the nation, mingled among the populace, mocked and sneered at him most bitterly. They said those things which the world continually hears: He has saved others (it was not yet dreamt of to contest his miracles), and he cannot save himself.

If he extricates himself from the cross, we will believe in him. He has trusted in God; if God loves him, let him deliver him. Furious by those clamors, the soldiers insulted him in the most brutal manner, each in his turn repeating the everlasting expression of all unbelievers: "Give us a miracle. If you are King, if you are God, let it be seen; save yourself, emancipate yourself from our clutches." Then the robbers crucified at each side of him mingled their voices with those of the other blasphemers—the last personages who were wanting to the scene, and who completed the types of unbelief, such as we shall find them again everywhere henceforth. Turning their heads toward Jesus, they said to him: "If you are the Christ, save yourself and save us."

But it pleased the outraged God that even here the world should receive the example of a confession the most perfect and of a prayer most mercifully heard. One of these thieves, changing his language, said to the other: "Do you no longer fear God? We richly deserve the punishment inflicted on us. We receive what our acts merit; but this man has done no evil." Then, addressing himself to Jesus, "Lord," he added, "when you will enter into your kingdom, remember me." Behold the humility, the deep faith, the firm hope—all that God requires of the sinner. And he who was come to seek out the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and who had said, "Whosoever will confess me before men, I will confess him before my Father"—this Jesus, the only Son of God, replied to the thief: "In truth, this very day you will be with me in Paradise."

In the centre of this indifferent, hostile, even furious multitude, at the foot of the cross, a small group of four persons assuaged the sorrows and consoled the

heart of the Man-God. Mary, his mother, had followed him thus far. She heard the clamors, the insults, the ribald laughter; she beheld the blood of her Son flow; she remained at the foot of the cross, her heart pierced with grief, broken with sorrow. At her side were Mary her sister, wife of Cleophas, mother of those whom they called the brothers of the Lord; then Mary Magdalene, the notorious sinner, now the renowned penitent; and John alone of the disciples. Peter was not to be found there; we cannot believe that fear caused him to run away, since he quitted weeping the court of Caiphas, or that love had abandoned him. Perhaps he kept away a little further from the throng, where there were other pious women; perhaps obeying the command of the Lord: "When you shall be converted, confirm thy brethren." He was engaged in reuniting the dispersed apostles and strengthening their faith. If there were here a just reason for accusing Peter, it is very likely it would have been made known by a word from his disciple, St. Mark the Evangelist—that is, from himself. Be that as it may, our Lord, seeing his mother, and near her the disciple whom he loved, said to her: "Woman, behold your son"; and forthwith he said to John, "Behold your mother." John represented the children of the Church. By this last dying will from the cross Mary was given to be a mother to all the faithful, and Christianity was enriched with a superabundance of consolation and of mercy.

Jesus had now accomplished all things except death. He remained silent, and the sun became darkened. This darkness, which began a little after the crucifixion, and continued till the moment Jesus yielded up his soul, was not the darkness of night, as the joyous

brightness of Bethlehem was not the light of day: it was a sort of mourning and the stupor of all nature; it was the sign in the heavens which the Jews had demanded. They received it without understanding it, as they would receive without understanding it the sign of Jonas.

The ninth hour had arrived, which is, according to our manner of computing, the third hour after mid-day, or three o'clock in the afternoon. When Adam had sinned, he heard the voice of God in the garden of Paradise; instantly a rumbling wind is heard after twelve o'clock, or a little after mid-day, and it was at that moment it was told him that he should return again into dust and ashes. At that same hour the new Adam, the restorer of all things, breaks silence, and exclaims with a powerful voice: "*Eli, Eli! lamma sabacthani?*"—"My God, my God! why have you forsaken me?" These are the first words of the Twenty-first Psalm, prophetic of the Passion, whose principal circumstances it describes. Jesus declares them accomplished, and at the same time, as man, submissive to pain of interior forlornness, he revealed here the deepest and most bitter agony of his soul.

In order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled Jesus again said: "I thirst." An expression similar to this was spoken to the Samaritan woman. It was the thirst for the salvation of souls. It is repeated here with the same meaning of divine love, and at the same time as the expression of physical suffering. There was there a vessel full of vinegar. One of the assistants steeped a sponge into it, fastened it to the end of a reed, and touched with it the lips of the Crucified. The prophet had written: "In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." Thenceforth nothing more was want-

ing to complete the details of sacrifice. Jesus said, "All is consummated." Then again, raising up his voice loudly, he cried out: "My Father, into your hands I commit my spirit"; and inclining the head, he yielded up his soul.

He died on the cross, the master, the conqueror of death. That freedom of will and intelligence on the cross; that attestation of the fulfilment of all the circumstances announced by the prophets; that great cry; that strength regained after so long punishment, revealed the full and perfect liberty of him who had said: "I have the power to give away my life, and I have the power to retake it." Other signs forthwith manifested the glory of the God made man. The veil of the Temple is rent, leaving the ancient mysteries to vanish; the earth trembles; the graves are opened up and the dead come to life; souls also issue forth from darkness. The Roman officer who presided at the execution exclaimed: "Truly, this man was the Son of God!"

But while the Gentile praised God aloud, the Jews were seized with fear, struck their breasts, and returned silently to their homes. Nobody confessed the crime; the most part of them regretted it only because they began to tremble that the name of Jesus did not perish. However, that those crucified with the dear Redeemer might not remain on the cross exposed during the Sabbath—and they should be taken away the same day—soldiers, sent by Pilate at the request of the Jews, broke the limbs of the two thieves to give them the finishing stroke. Seeing that Jesus had already ceased to live, they did not break his limbs, but one of the soldiers pierced his side with a sharp lance, and from the wound blood and water flowed. According to the

common opinion of the Fathers, the water was natural and elementary; the water typified baptism, and the blood typified the Eucharist. This is why the Fathers say that the Church, whose two principal sacraments are here represented, issued from the side of the dead Jesus Christ, as Eve issued from the side of Adam while yet asleep.

These circumstances fulfilled the prophecies: "You shall not break a bone of him. They shall look on him whom they have pierced." There was nothing fortuitous in this divine scene. From the beginning to the end men, in executing the nefarious and long-meditated designs of their malice, and in yielding themselves up to the quick caprices of their brutality, have only succeeded in rendering more vivid the light which they wished to extinguish, and brought glory when they wished to accumulate ignominy. Divine wisdom, which baffled them in the present time, will take care to baffle them in the future.

It was as prophet that Jesus, master of the circumstances of his death, fulfilled the prophecies. He knew well what heresy would invent to thoroughly contest the reality of his sacrifice. He regulated the circumstances of it in a manner to shelter that bread by which the world should live. From the very first ages of the Church all the sophisms that are ventilated nowadays have been invented, and the fathers have answered them by arguments which still preserve all their force. The Son of God, they said, did not suffer in his divine nature. As man he suffered, and it was necessary he should suffer. If, after having lived on the earth, he should have suddenly disappeared, he would have been taken for a spectre or an apparition. As we prove the reality and incombustibility of a vessel by

throwing it into the flames and drawing it out intact, so the Word of God proves to us that the material instrument which he avails himself of in the redemption of the human race is altogether real and more powerful than death. By yielding it up to death he demonstrates its nature; and by overcoming death and rising superior to it he demonstrates his divinity. He performs this miracle to stifle the folly that deifies mortal men, and thereby he taught that the only true God is he who in death is triumphant over death itself and bears it away vanquished among his trophies. He has not suffered death for the sake of his personal triumph, but to destroy the death of man; and this is why, in yielding up his body of his own free-will and of his own power, he nevertheless suffered a public and violent death. If his body had been subject to sickness, and if they had seen it dissolve into ashes, it would have seemed strange that he who healed all infirmities should feel their attacks and fall a prey to them. If, after death in solitude, without sickness, he presented himself anew, how could we credit the account of his death and his resurrection?—for he must die before he could rise again. Why should he have announced publicly his resurrection after a secret death? He did not wish to burden our faith so heavily as this, and give room to the lies which men would not be slow to forge for refusing to believe.

It was said that he should at least have sought a glorious death and escaped those frightful and revolting ignominies. No, no; he courted that cruel death. He voluntarily yielded his cheeks to buffetings, his brow to the crown of thorns, his face to the spittle of the rabble, his back to scourges, his hands and his feet to be pierced with cruel nails, his side to the lance, his

lips to gall, and his whole body to the cross. It was necessary that the world should know what hand afflicted him; it was necessary that those ignominies should strengthen for ever the victims of cruelty and injustice, shed a ray of light on the wounds of the innocent, and flow like a salutary balsam even on the lawful, just sufferings of the guilty; it was necessary that into the dark and dismal prison, into the very degradation of brothels, this vivifying Son of the Cross should shine for ever.

A mild or glorious death! You would have then seen human imbecility dare to suspect God of not having power against every species of death. The athlete overthrows the antagonist that encounters him. He who is the Life has overcome death as it was presented to him. The most cruel, the most shameful death, the most immemorially and most universally cursed—that death which could best cast disgrace and obloquy upon him—that is the death that he wished to annihilate, in order to annihilate with it its opprobriums and its maledictions. But he was not decapitated, like John; nor mutilated, cut to pieces, like Isaias, nor crushed to death, like others who were persecuted. It was necessary that his body should remain whole and indivisible in death, that it might not serve as a pretext for those who would wish to divide the Church. He dies, his arms extended on the cross, so as to draw to him with the one hand the ancient people and with the other the nations called, and to reunite themselves in him. He dies, raised on high, to expel the demons that hovered in the air, and to prepare for us the way that leads to heaven.

"And God was in Jesus Christ, reconciling the world to himself."

CHAPTER IV.

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

IN antiquity the cross was looked upon as a thing mean and hideous, whereon all infamies of punishment were concentrated. It bears this character in Holy Writ: "The dead body of him who is hung shall not remain all night on the gibbet, but he shall be buried the same day; because he who hangs on the wood is cursed of God." It is because of this law that Isaias, speaking prophetically of Christ, said: "He appeared to us an object of derision and the most despised of men"; and further on he calls him "the Humiliated One." The cross was not only a punishment, but a curse, a malediction: "Cursed is he who hangs on the tree." Thence the prophetic cry of the Book of Wisdom, "Let us condemn him to the most shameful death," repeated with such fury by the Jews in this sole word: "Crucify him"—that is, "Let him die and let him be accursed." They hoped that the ignominy of the punishment might destroy what death alone could not crush. It did not enter into their minds that they would behold men on earth who would declare themselves followers of him who hung upon a cross.

The Romans looked upon the cross as "a fatal tree, as an unfortunate wood"; in a word, they considered it the punishment of slaves. Tarquin ordered the

bodies of the citizens who were condemned to death to be suspended on the cross because they would not work in his sewers. Gracchus crucified on the infamous cross his rival, Publius Pompilius. Seneca said that such infamy is one of those horrors that should be prevented by suicide. Cicero in his oration against Verres, apropos of the cross of Gavianus, expresses his horror of the cross: "Frightful is the ignominy of public condemnation, frightful is banishment, frightful is confiscation; nevertheless, amid all these calamities some vestige of liberty yet remains among us, and even death itself, if it be inflicted on us, we submit to free from every trammel. But, oh! let not the hangman, the black cap for the head, the name of the cross—let not all that infamy touch a Roman citizen in his body or in his mind." Plutarch relates that even in his time they paraded with great pomp a dog attached to a cross, in memory of the surprising of the capital when the dogs had slept.

These details make us understand what St. Paul will call the scandal and the folly of the cross. Minutius Felix spoke to the idolaters of the stupidity of their gods, hewn out of the *débris* of the funeral pile or from the tree of ignominy. In their turn the idolaters reproached the Christians with the mad folly of adoring a God who died suspended on a cross; and the Jews, always attached to the nakedness of the letter, pretended that he could not be the Son of God who suffered a punishment that God had cursed.

And yet, at the same time, the mystery of the cross was foreseen by the Jews and the pagans themselves. Long before Christ both the one and the other prayed through the sign of the cross. This sign of the cross is, in one way or other, the essential gesture, the very

attitude, of prayer. Jacob, type of the Messias, crossed his arms when he invoked the benediction of heaven on the two sons of Joseph, placing the right hand on the head of him who is at his left, and the left on the head of him who was at his right. Thus placed, said Tertullian, the hands of the patriarch formed the cross and announced the benedictions that would descend from the Crucified. Moses, whilst the battle was raging against the Amalechites, ascended in silence the mountain, and there standing, with open hands and extended arms, the living sign of the cross, he prayed, and the Hebrews were the conquerors. For the battle of the Lord fought against Amalech prefigured the battles of the Incarnate Word against Satan, enemy of the cross, by which he was bound to be conquered.

We know through Jesus Christ himself the signification of the brazen serpent attached to the cross in the desert, and the sight of which alone healed the bite of the serpents: "As Moses elevated the serpent in the desert, so was it necessary that the Son of Man should be lifted up, in order that whosoever believed in him should not perish, but should obtain eternal life."

The sign of the cross was made in the Temple. The priest first elevated the victim of the sacrifice; he then bore it from the east to the west. And in the same manner the priests blessed the people. The Christian priesthood had only to add the august words which are, with the sign of the cross, the abridgment of the whole of Christianity: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

In Ezechiel a mysterious personage received the order to travel through Jerusalem, sullied with abominations; he marked on the forehead with the sign ✠ those who lamented the public iniquity, and they

should be saved, and the others should be put to death. Behold the cross and its virtue. Thus, said the fathers, the man shall be saved who marks his forehead with the salutary sign of the cross, lamenting the crimes that this sign interdicts.

It was in the form of a cross with extended arms that Samson avenged Israel; that David demanded aid against his parricidal son and against his revolting subjects; and that Solomon gave thanks to God for being able to complete the Temple, saying to him: "Lord, hearken to my prayer." It was thus that all the inhabitants of Israel, in the presence of Sennacherib, the conqueror, invoked God and were heard. "Extending their hands, they elevated them towards heaven."

The pagans adored by carrying the right hand to the left and kissing it; but at first this right hand formed a mysterious sign by the crossing of the forefinger on the thumb. On the most solemn occasions they prayed after the manner of the Jews, with hands extended toward heaven or crossed on their breast. This is what Brutus did on learning the death of Lucretia; what Anchises did on the sea-shore, with extended hands invoking the great gods. There was at Rome a statue of "Public Piety," the arms extended in the form of a cross, like Moses. In the monuments of all nations we find marks and presentiments of the mystery of the cross.*

St. Augustine applies to the cross the words of St. Paul, wishing the faithful to comprehend the length and breadth, the height and depth, of the mystery of

* J. Gretser, *De Sancta Cruce*, Ingolstadt, 1616. Mgr. Gaume gives the substance of this learned work and some others in an excellent little volume entitled *The Sign of the Cross in the Nineteenth Century*.

Jesus Christ. The breadth of the cross is the extension of love we owe, without distinction of friends or enemies, to those for whom Jesus Christ died, as well as to ourselves; its length, to teach us patience in the midst of adversity; its height, the soaring upward we must take above and beyond terrestrial things to enter into eternal peace; its depth, that hidden profoundness of the secrets of God, resolved to save the world, lost by its own wisdom, and to save it by the folly of the cross.

Yet a little while, and all shall be known; men shall know why this shameful cross made its impress on so many great and essential things of life, and is offered as the natural action of the soul in the presence of God. From the foot of the cross the army of martyrs rose up to march to the conquest of the world by the sign of the cross.

"We pray," says Tertullian, "with hands extended, because they are innocent; with head uncovered, because we have no reason to blush; without our words being prompted, because it is our heart that prays. We implore for all the emperors a long life, security in their palaces, valor in their armies, fidelity in the senate, honesty in the people, peace in the world, and all that a man and an emperor can or ought to desire." The emperors sent to the Amphitheatre those who prayed thus, and their death was not the only miracle that taught the power of the cross. One day, under Diocletian, the Amphitheatre was filled with the faithful of Christ. With hands outstretched and eyes raised up to heaven, they remained immovable, without manifesting any fear, without repeating a word. The spectators trembled and the judges were affrighted. The wild beasts

were let loose. They rushed on roaring; but the whole people saw them stop as if muzzled before a young man of less than twenty years, who, standing in the midst of the arena, with arms folded in the form of a cross, gave himself up to Jesus Christ, and deigned to think neither on the ferocious beasts, nor on the people, nor on death. Another time at Rome the virgin Agnes, aged thirteen years, condemned to die by fire, mounted serenely on the funeral pile; she stretched out her arms, blessing Jesus Christ, who preserved her from the impurities of the devil, and the flames, rushing from her, threatened those who had lit them up. God wishes that many such prodigies should manifest the virtue and power of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. He multiplies them without frustrating his martyrs, through mercy for their executioners; and it was thus that for three ages the world learned to make the sign of the cross.

CHAPTER V.

THE SEPULTURE.

THE virtue of the cross, which many had already experienced, continued to manifest itself. While the apostles themselves, with the exception of John, and perhaps Peter, had yet hid themselves, the centurion spoke, and both disciples, hitherto concealed, fearlessly presented themselves.

A rich man and esteemed for his many virtues, named Joseph, of the city of Arimathea, member of the Sanhedrim, had the courage to present himself before the governor in the capacity of disciple, and demand of him the body of Jesus to inter it. Pilate gave it to him. Forthwith Joseph betook himself to Calvary, accompanied by Nicodemus, his colleague in the great council, and who, like Joseph, protested against the sentence rendered in the morning. Joseph purchased a new winding-sheet. Nicodemus brought a sufficient quantity of myrrh and balm. Without fearing the looks or hatred of the Jews, or the legal uncleanness incurred by whoever touched a dead body, they took Jesus down from the cross. It was a strange office for persons of their condition in life, and there was no greater proof of the love Jesus inspired. If we reflect on the circumstances, we will see therein the first miracle of that spirit of strength and light which the

Master had so often announced to those who believed on him.

The Holy Virgin remained at the foot of the cross, also John, Mary Magdalene, and others. From a tradition preserved by the most ancient interpreters, Nicodemus drew out the nails from his sacred body, Joseph supported the body, Mary Magdalene and John wept profusely. The mother of Jesus, without tears, offered to God what his justice required; and this sacrifice could not exceed her love. As the nails, one by one, were plucked out of the sacred body of her Son, stained with his blood, she carefully treasured them up in her bosom. When the body was taken down from the cross, she embraced it in her arms and pressed it to her virginal bosom, that had suckled him. Mary Magdalene once more covered with her kisses and bathed with her tears the sacred feet that had brought her salvation; again John reclined his head on that sacred bosom that had embraced him, and from whence his intelligence and his heart carried away what man could know of the secrets of God.

After the stroke of the lance which caused blood and water freely to flow, all those who touch the body of the Saviour belong to the Church. The enemies are withdrawn; the Church alone is present, having Mary at its head. She appropriates to herself the body of Jesus to reproduce it by the Eucharistic consecration, and always to preserve it.

Joseph and Nicodemus proceeded to inter the body according to the Jewish custom. They anointed the body with costly perfumes; they tightly enveloped it in linen bandages that they brought with them, and covered the face with a shroud. Those cares and anxieties for his burial which testify to their piety

also testify that at that moment they had but little remembrance of the promises of the resurrection, or that they understood it otherwise than in a literal sense. God permitted it to establish so much the more against the future demurrers the reality of his flesh, the reality of his death, and the reality of his resurrection. Like those who murdered him, these faithful followers, in their turn, touched him with their hands. They beheld his adorable countenance torn and mangled with long, sharp thorns; his long hair all besmeared and clotted with his divine blood; the bruises and the deep wounds; the large wound in his side. They beheld the eyes dull and lifeless; the death-coldness and insensibility of the body; the reality of life and the reality of death. In favor of weak-minded Christians who lend an ear to everything invented to destroy the efficacy or the fruit of the cross of Calvary, we must add that, if Jesus had not succumbed to the tortures of the Passion and of the cross, the disciples themselves would have put him to death (had he retained a breath of life) by the fact of burying him. Since, then, they have attested, at the risk of their lives, that he had died and had arisen, they are credible witnesses; for they have seen him and touched him. And if they had not seen him again and touched him living, nothing could be weaker or more uncertain than their faith in the resurrection. After the *consummatum est* love remains; faith is extinguished. This is what the Church expresses on Good Friday when she extinguishes successively all the wax tapers save one only, which represents Mary. In the heart of Mary faith cannot perish; but the august confidant kept the divine secret treasured up in her holy and pure heart.

When the funeral rites were terminated, Joseph, Nicodemus, and John carried the body into the garden near Golgotha. There was found there a sepulchre hewn in the rock, quite new, which Joseph had destined for himself. Jesus had not had a cradle, and they were forced to borrow a sepulchre for him. Even in death the Son of Man had not a stone whereon to lay his head. These are the dispositions of his providence and the teachings of his wisdom. Nothing proves better, on the one side, that all belongs to him, and on the other that he was born into this world and died for all mankind. Why should the ownership of the sepulchre belong to him who had control over his own death? Why a tomb in the earth for him who is everlasting in heaven? The sepulchre is the habitation of the dead; the Christ is the life. Eternally living, he had no need of the dwelling of the dead.

However, this sepulchre wherein he is placed, only to pass through, rather asleep than as one lying dead, was cut out from a rock—not dug in the earth or built with hands—so as to answer those who should and would dare to proclaim that the body had been taken away furtively from it. It was new to symbolize something of the virginity of the womb of Mary. The sepulchre that received the body of the Lord, says a father, had always been immaculate as the womb that conceived him. It was a virginal womb that begot him; it was a new sepulchre that received him. Joseph, who gave him this sepulchre, is named the Just, as Mary is called the Virgin. In the womb of the Virgin there is found no stain of sin; in the sepulchre of the Just there is no corruption. No part of this poor and suffering body is separated from purity and sanctity. True man, he accepted the humanity of its most humiliating condi-

tion; true God, he has everywhere this society of purity, alone worthy of his sanctity.

The holy women followed to the tomb, proposing to themselves to return to supply what might be wanting. All being completed, with a little precipitation on account of the hour, the men close up the entrance to the monument, rolling a stone of great dimensions against it, and go away. The stars of the Sabbath morning appear in the heavens. The women remain yet a little while, then return to Jerusalem and dwell in repose the Sabbath day, according to the law.

For the first time the Sabbath received its prophetical signification, thenceforth accomplished. What is said in Genesis, that God, having accomplished the work of the creation in six days, rested on the seventh day, is a prophecy of the labor of the Redeemer. For God was not fatigued in creating the world, he has had no need of rest and does not rest. All things were made by the fiat of his omnipotence by a word: Ipse dixit et facta sunt. And as he created he still creates, preserves, renews, and governs all. My Father acts without ceasing; incessantly laboring, says the Redeemer. But the redemption, the work of the Man-God, was a long and hard labor, which really fatigued the Divine Worker. It has cost Jesus Christ more to scatter the darkness of idolatry than to create the light, and to restore in man the image of God disfigured by sin than to form it for the first time. The Scripture, then, in relating that God the Creator rested in himself the seventh day has predicted that God the Redeemer, the God-Man, shall rest on the seventh day in the tomb after the accomplishment of the work of the redemption. This is why on Holy Saturday the history of the repose of God is read under the title of prophecy. This is also

why Saturday, the day on which this mystery was accomplished, is so solemn among the Jews; and it is accomplished in fact on the day of the great Sabbath, solemn among all. This is the reason why the sepulchre of Christ, linking together the mystery of his death and the mystery of his resurrection, proving both, is mentioned in the Apostles' Creed—*Sepultus.*

But at the same time that he fulfilled the prophecies, terminated his work, and rested, the God-Man did not cease to act. Entombed, he completed the teaching he wished to impart, and he adds a grace to all he had already given. In order to resemble man more, he assumes the inevitable humiliation of the winding-sheet and of the tomb. But through pure mercy for fallen man he turns its horrors into joy. That night through which we must pass he passed through before us. We find him in it yet. This road which we must take is one of his ways, and, like all his ways, it leads to him—it leads to heaven. He made a people that fears not sufferings, that fears not the cross, that fears not the tomb, that rather sighs for all these. With eyes fixed on Jesus, we say in the same sense, Either repose in the tomb or repose in heaven.

Whilst the friends of Jesus, through respect for the law, the abrogation of which they did not yet understand, were prevented from gratifying their piety and giving vent to their grief, the Pharisees, so scrupulous observers of the Sabbath, were not afraid to violate it. But little encouraged by the events of the watching, and remembering what the disciples forgot, they went to seek Pilate. "Master," they said to him, "that seducer whilst he lived declared that at the end of three days he would rise up again. Command, then, that a

guard should be placed around the tomb for three days; for if his disciples steal away the body and relate to the people that he has arisen, this will be a new error worse than the first."

By dreading the designs of the disciples, the Pharisees had too well manifested their own timidity. They feared yet another thing: they feared a miracle. Pilate said to them: "Do as you think best." Then they returned to the sepulchre and sealed the mighty stone that enclosed it, and placed a guard of soldiers over it. They were not aware what a testimony they came to seal.

BOOK IX.

JESUS ARISEN.

CHAPTER I.

THE RESURRECTION.

WE are ignorant of the precise moment of the resurrection. It took place about the dawn of the third day, between the first dawn and rising of the sun. Of his own power, without other aid or intervention, without breaking or displacing the huge stone, but penetrating it by the subtility of his own glorified and glorious body, Jesus issued forth from the tomb as he issued forth from the immaculate womb of his Virgin Mother.

The guard noticed nothing. They saw not the Man-God; they were not worthy to behold him. They witnessed another spectacle. The earth trembled, the angel of the Lord descended from heaven and rolled back the enormous stone and sat upon it, his countenance brighter than the sun, and his garment whiter and purer than the snow. The guards appeared as if they were dead. But when the angel opened the sepulchre the Christ had already departed from it. There only remained the habiliments of death—wit-

nesses that he had passed out of it. During this time Mary Magdalene, Mary mother of James, and Mary of Salome, mother of John, betook themselves to the sepulchre, carrying aromatics which they had prepared. They set out early in the morning; but Mary Magdalene had preceded the other two.

Magdalene arrived before the day dawned, and saw the sepulchre open. The guards had fled in terror. She delays not, but returns to notify Peter and John. She said to them: "They have taken away the Lord." The two apostles ran. John arrived the first, looked in, saw the linens in which his sacred body was enwrapped, but did not enter. Peter entered, saw also the bandages, and the winding-sheet folded up in a spot aside. Then John began to believe in the resurrection, but with an imperfect belief in what he saw, not in what Jesus had told him. Neither himself nor Peter understood yet what the Scriptures contained, nor did they understand what they had heard: that it was necessary that Jesus should arise from among the dead. They then returned, Peter greatly astonished in himself at all this.

Mary Magdalene returns with them to the tomb, and she could not be forced to quit it. She remained there alone, and wept bitterly. While sobbing and lamenting, stooping down to look into the sepulchre, she saw two angels seated where the body of the Lord had been placed, the one at the head, the other at the feet. One of them said to her: "Woman, why do you weep?" Absorbed in her sorrow, not even regarding the angels, she cries out: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have put him." She searched through the garden, as if she hoped to find him.

At this moment a man appeared to her standing whom she did not recognize, and who thus spoke to her: "Woman, why do you weep? What are you crying for? Whom do you seek?" She thought that the man was the gardener; and, her mind bent always on the object of her love, directing her looks toward the sepulchre, she replied: "If you be the one who has taken him away, tell me now where you have put him, and I will carry him away."

What an expression! A commentator remarks how valorous and loving she was. "I myself, a woman; I all alone; I am strong enough; I will take him in my arms, and I will carry him away."

Jesus (for it was himself, whom she did not recognize) said to her, "Mary." Then she knew him. She turns about and exclaims, "My Master!" Forthwith she casts herself at his feet and clasps them in her arms. Jesus told her not to thus hold on to his feet as if she could see him no more; that he had not yet ascended to his Father—that is to say, that he would remain yet many days with his own. He adds: "Go, find out my brothers, and convey to them these words: I ascend to my Father and to your Father; to my God and to your God." By what message more tender could he reassure them or fortify them against the fear that their abandonment of him had diminished his affection for them? St. Paul gives us to understand that his goodness exerted itself to ward off and prevent another weakness, wishing especially to point out to them that, far from forgetting them in his glory, he regarded them as being yet nearer and dearer to him than before.

St. Mark adds to this recital: "Thus Jesus, having risen in the morning early, appeared first to Mary

Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils." And thus, says St. Jerome, he has shown that the sinners and publicans will precede the synagogue in the kingdom of heaven, as the penitent thief preceded the apostles thereto. But the seven devils—that is, the seven vices—are here recalled, as Bede remarks, so that no sinner, having done penance, should despair of pardon, for we see grace to superabound there where sin had abounded.

When Mary Magdalene went back to the apostles, Mary mother of James the Less, and Mary Salome mother of John, arrived at or turned back to the sepulchre, accompanied by Joanna wife of Chusa, and other holy women who had waited on Jesus. It was now daybreak. The sun had arisen. They remained, all dispirited at finding the sepulchre empty. Suddenly two men appeared clothed with brilliant robes, and in their fear they turned their faces toward the ground. But an angel (without doubt he who had removed the stone, and before whom the guards had fled) said to them: "Be not afraid. I know that you are in quest of Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. Why do you seek among the dead him who is living? He is not here; he is risen, as he said. Do you recollect what he told you, being yet in Galilee—that it was necessary that the Son of Man should be delivered up to the hands of sinners, and that he should be crucified, and that he should rise up on the third day? Behold the place where they put the Lord. Go forthwith and tell his disciples and Peter that he has risen."

Peter is the object of a special mention on account of the dignity which sets him apart, and in order that neither himself or anybody else can doubt that his triple denial has been pardoned.

The holy women remembered the words of the Lord which the angel had recalled to them. Seized with fear and transported with joy, they withdrew to communicate to the apostles this great news.

They marched in haste, saying nothing to any person on the route, when suddenly Jesus showed himself to them. He salutes them with the same expression that the Angel Gabriel addressed to the Holy Virgin on the day of the Annunciation—*Avete.* They approached him, prostrating themselves at his feet; they adored him. Jesus said to them: "Fear not. Go, tell my brothers to betake themselves to Galilee; there they will see me."

Joanna, Mary, and the others were anxious to relate to the apostles what they had seen and what they had heard. This was the confirmation of what they had learned through Mary Magdalene. But they did not believe Mary Magdalene, and they believed not the two angels; they took what they saw for untruth—as a delirium or hallucination of the brain.

The chief priests believed far more readily. After the announcement of the guard whom they had placed beside the tomb, they held a council with the ancients. As prudent men they understood all the consequences; that the safer way was to avoid any great excitement and official enquiries. They did not disturb the disciples, much less the soldiers. Quite the contrary; they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, recommending them to say that the disciples had taken away the body at night whilst they were asleep, and promising them to act so that the governor should not interrogate them about the case. The soldiers accepted the gold and repeated the falsehood. We can imagine that the fable or falsehood appeared gross and

clumsy even to those of the Jews at Jerusalem who were not converted; but it was difficult to find a better pretext, and it was necessary at any price that no enquiry should be made. The impudence and credulity of party spirit did the rest. Harbored in all the synagogues, this childish explanation of the miracle of the resurrection is even to-day credited among the Jews.

As to the obstinate incredulity of the apostles, it was something certainly mysterious and surpassing the limits of reason. St. Gregory says the cause of it was owing not so much to their infirmity as to our wants. From all their doubts on the resurrection, which required so many proofs, a brilliant light is shed that strengthens our faith. Jesus resuscitated conquered their resistance only by placing himself under their eyes, and, so to speak, in their hands. Peter first, after the holy women, received this favor the very day of the resurrection. It proves how sincere the repentance of the apostle had been. God measured the pardon according to the repentance.

Behold this miracle of Jonas, so severely and so rigidly announced to the Jews. The resurrection is the last trait of those figures by which not only the words, but the life even, of the patriarchs and the prophets form in their totality an image and an anticipated history of Christ. Jonas, the wandering dove, sent to convert the Ninivites, and living in death, is a type of the passage of Jesus through the tomb. There are those distinctions which must exist between man and God. Jonas at first refused his mission, lest the salvation of the converted Ninive might be destruction of Israel. But Jesus wished the salvation of Israel and the whole world. But Jonas, enlightened of God, asks of himself to be cast into the sea to save the ship

that carried him; and Jesus delivered himself up to the death of the cross to save the world. The ship of Jonas was saved by his sacrifice; the human race is saved by the cross. Jonas, swallowed up alive by the sea-monster, did not die, but after three days he is vomited forth alive. By a far more extraordinary miracle Jesus issues forth alive out of the bosom of the earth, into which he descended dead. Rejected among men, Jonas went forth to preach, not to the Jews, but to the Ninivites; Jesus sent his apostles to preach penance and pardon to the whole world.

CHAPTER II.

THE ASCENSION.

ON the day of the resurrection, in the evening, the two disciples were travelling from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus, distant about nine miles. They were conversing about what had occurred. A man accosts them and travels with them. He enquires of them what they were speaking about, that they appeared so sad. One of the disciples answered him: "Are you such a stranger in Jerusalem that you do not know what has happened in these days?" "What?" asked the traveller. They replied: "About Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet, powerful in works and in words before God and the whole people. Are you ignorant how the chief priests and the ancients of our nation delivered him up and crucified him? We hoped he was the one who would deliver and free Israel from the Roman yoke of oppression. But now, behold, three days have elapsed."

Having thus expressed their discouragement, the disciples related with an expression of doubt how some of the women who followed Jesus said he was living, and declared that his body was no longer to be found in the sepulchre. Then the unknown traveller said to them: "O foolish men! your hearts are slow to believe the prophets!" Was it not necessary that Christ

should endure all these sufferings, and that thus he should enter into his glory? Then, commencing with Moses, he ran through all the prophets; he explained to them what was said of the Christ in the entire Scriptures.

They came near to the spot where they were obliged to stop, and the traveller appeared to be anxious to withdraw from their company, but the disciples insisted that he should remain, saying that it was late, that the day was already spent. He then went in with them, and they sat together at table. This guest took the bread and blessed it, and, having broken it, he presented it to them. At that instant their eyes were opened, and they recognized the Lord; but instantly he disappeared. And the disciples said one to another: "Were not our hearts burning within us whilst he was speaking to us during the journey and whilst he was explaining the Scriptures to us?"

Full of the fire of charity wherewith the presence of Jesus had filled them, they immediately returned to Jerusalem. There they met the apostles, who told them, "The Lord is truly risen, and he has appeared to Simon." They themselves related what had happened. Nevertheless, many would not believe them. And as the apostles were seated at table discussing this subject, probably with some degree of warmth, Jesus appeared in the midst of them and said to them: "Peace be with you."

Peace was the promise of Bethlehem, and on the moment of quitting them he said to them: "I leave you my peace." The peace is the gift of Jesus. But they trembled and believed they saw a spirit, because Jesus was in their presence whilst the doors were closed. He said to them: "It is I; fear not. See my hands

and my feet. Touch me. A spirit has neither flesh nor bones, as you perceive I have." He showed them his hands and his feet and the wound in his side. They were transported, beside themselves with joy, but yet without being able to persuade themselves that that person was truly the Lord living in the flesh. Jesus asked them for something to eat. They presented to him a broiled fish and a honeycomb. He ate of them in their presence, and gave them what remained. Forthwith he said to them: "Recollect what you have heard from my mouth when I was yet with you. It is necessary that all things written of me by the prophets should be accomplished." And opening their minds for the understanding of the Scriptures, he continued: "It was necessary, then, that Christ should suffer, and that he should arise from among the dead; you are witnesses of those things. It is now necessary that penance and the remission of sins be preached in my name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

He revealed the truth of his real body; he manifested forthwith the unity of his mystical body, the Church, born at Jerusalem, destined to be spread throughout the world, composed of Jews and Gentiles —one and the same Church.

Having thus spoken, he said to them the second time, seeing their joy: "Peace be with you." And as he was going to confer on them a great gift, truly divine, he adds: "As my Father has sent me, thus I send you." After these words he breathed on them, saying: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."

This sufflation or breathing on them was not yet the plenitude of the Holy Ghost; it was rather a symbol

of it, signifying that the Holy Ghost proceeds from Jesus according to his divinity. Later, on the day of Pentecost, the apostles received the fulness of the Holy Ghost that had been promised to them. But the paternal goodness of Jesus hastened to communicate to them the power of absolving.

Thomas, one of the twelve, was not with his brethren when this apparition occurred. They related to him all that had happened. But Thomas replied: "If I do not see in his hands the mark of the nails; if I do not put my finger into the place of the nails; if I do not put my hand into his side, I shall not believe."

Eight days after the apostles were in the same house, and Thomas was also present. Jesus came again, the doors being closed, and appeared in the midst of them. He said to them: "Peace be with you." Then, addressing himself to Thomas, he said to him: "Put here your finger, and see my hands; bring your hand near, and put it in my side; and be no longer incredulous, but believing." Thomas exclaimed: "My Lord and my God." Jesus said to him: "Thomas, because you have seen you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe."

After these events the apostles and the disciples returned into Galilee, where the Lord had prepared for them a place for meeting. Simon Peter, the two sons of Zebedee, and Nathanael were assembled on the shore of the lake of Genesareth. One evening Peter said to them: "I am going a-fishing." They entered the bark with him, but that night they caught nothing.

The next morning Jesus appeared to them on shore, and the disciples knew him not. He said to them: "Children, have you anything to eat?" They answered: "No." Jesus replied: "Cast out the net to the

right, and you will catch some fish." They did so, and they could not draw in the net, so loaded was it. Then John said to Peter: "It is the Lord." Peter, understanding these words, threw off his tunic, girded himself, and threw himself into the deep waters. The other disciples came in the fishing bark, drawing the filled-up net. It contained one hundred and fifty-three large fishes, and it did not break carrying them.

This fishing, where the net is no longer cast out at random, but to the right, is a figure of the Church arriving at the eternal haven whereunto she conducts her elect. There were seven fishermen to represent the universality of the Catholic priesthood. The number of one hundred and fifty-three, according to the interpretation of St. Augustine, expressed the unity of God, the trinity, and humanity. The net did not break because then there will no longer be schism to be dreaded. All is brought to land, to the firm shore, to repose, to peace.

Then they landed on the beach. The disciples saw the fire lit up and the fish dressed on it with a little bread. Jesus said to them: "Come and eat." None of them dared to ask him, Who are you? They knew well that he was the Saviour, the Lord. The Evangelist says that they *knew*, not that they *saw*.

Now they know and believe without seeing. After they had eaten Jesus said to Simon Peter: "Simon, lovest thou me more than these?" Peter answered: "Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus said to him: "Feed my lambs." He said to him again: "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me?" Peter answers a second time: "Yes, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus says to him: "Feed my lambs." He said to him for the third time: "Simon, son of John,

dost thou love me?" Peter, afflicted at this third interrogation, answered: "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus said to him: "Feed my sheep."

These three avowals of Peter, three times provoked by Jesus, expiated his three denials. He must not, says St. Augustine, show less of love than he had shown of fear. It must not be that he should use more words to conjure death than to invoke life.

After the first two answers Peter is confirmed in his dignity of apostle. After the third he is invested with the supreme dignity of pastor of pastors. This is the last touch to the great work which Jesus never ceased to construct—his Church. The words that he added assured Peter of his future firmness, and pointed out to him at the same time the glory of his death: "Verily, verily I say to thee, when thou wast younger thou didst gird thyself and didst walk whither thou wouldst. But when thou art old, thou wilt stretch forth thy hands, and another will gird thee and lead thee whither thou wouldst not." And Jesus said to him again—to him alone—"Follow me," so as to mark by one trait more his supreme dignity, and to cast a sort of mourning over the particulars of his martyrdom.

Forthwith the eleven returned into Galilee. On the mountain, where Jesus told them they would see Him, we are of the opinion that that was the place where more than five hundred disciples saw him at one and the same time, as St. Paul testifies, and adored him. Some, nevertheless, remained in doubt, which cannot be understood of the apostles. Approaching the eleven, Jesus said to them: "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Going therefore teach ye all nations: baptizing them in the name of the Father, and

of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." He said again to them: "Go, therefore, into the entire world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He who will believe and be baptized shall be saved; but he who will not believe shall be condemned. Miracles will accompany those who believe. In my name they shall cast out devils, and they shall speak new tongues, and they will seize serpents; and if they drink any poisonous drink, it will not injure them; they will impose hands on the sick, and they shall be cured."

Nine apparitions of the Lord are mentioned in the Gospel. What follows is related as the tenth and last, which took place at Jerusalem, where the apostles were assembled. Eating with them, Jesus commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but await there the fulfilment of the promise of the Father, which they had received from his mouth; and he announced to them anew the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Then again, preoccupied with the temporal reign of the Messias, they put to him this question: "Lord, is this the time wherein you will re-establish the kingdom of Israel?" The Holy Ghost must very soon disabuse them of this idea. Jesus condescends to reply to them: "It is not for you to know the times and the moments that the Father has marked out in his almighty power. But you will receive the truth from the Holy Ghost, who will come upon you from on high; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the utmost parts of the earth." This was taking possession of the entire world.

After having spoken thus to them, the Lord Jesus led them outside of the city on the way that leads to Bethania. Then with his hands, that were pierced with nails, he gave them his benediction; and as soon as he blessed them they beheld him rising up and ascending into heaven. Forthwith a cloud hid him from their view. And as they continued to look up, two men clothed in white garments were instantly at their side, who said to them: "Why do you remain thus looking on? This Jesus whom you have seen ascend up to heaven from your midst will one day return as you have seen him ascend."

CHAPTER III.

THE APOSTLES—PETER.

ASSIDUOUS in prayer, the disciples awaited with faith the fulfilment of the promises of the Lord Jesus.

The tenth day after the Ascension (the fiftieth after the Pasch) the Jews celebrated the Pentecost—a feast commemorative of the advent of the law, promulgated the fiftieth day after the departure from Egypt; and during this feast they offered to Jehovah the first-fruits of the harvest. The apostles and disciples being assembled, quite suddenly there was a great noise as of a rushing wind that came from heaven. At the same moment there appeared flames that divided themselves into tongues of fire and rested on the head of each, even of the women, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. John the Baptist had announced this baptism of fire. Whilst the Jews become unworthy to celebrate the ancient law, the new law is promulgated. To those who brought him the first-fruits of their field God declares that he wishes henceforth other harvests—the harvests of souls.

The apostles began to speak in divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost inspired them. Attracted by this wonder, the Jews of all nations came in great numbers around them. Every one was astonished at

hearing them, and everybody understood them, speaking in their own peculiar language. But the Jews of Judea said "they were drunk." Then Peter, standing up in the midst of the eleven, made them see that he had become another man. He said to them: "You remember Jesus of Nazareth and the miracles that God had wrought through him in your midst. He has been delivered up to you, and you have crucified him, and you have put him to death. But God has resuscitated him, and we are witnesses of his resurrection. For after he had been taken up into heaven, and had received the promise the Father had made to him to send down the Holy Ghost, he has poured forth this Holy Ghost, whom you now hear. O house of Israel! know, then, and understand well, that God has made Lord and Christ this Jesus whom you have crucified."

Thus spoke Peter in the midst of Jerusalem, in the face of priests, scribes, and Pharisees, and of the people, less than two months after the Passion and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. It may be said that this was the first form or the first paraphrase of the *Credo*, which was thenceforth to resound without ceasing throughout the entire world by the mouth of the apostles, and which was bound to reach us, who re-echo it, repeat it, and will transmit it to our posterity intact.

Among those who had heard Peter, many said to him and to the other apostles: "Brethren, what must we do?" Peter said to them: "Do penance. Let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise has been made to you and to your children, and to those who are afar off, and to all those whom the Lord shall call."

Having finished instructing them, he exhorted them to save themselves from that corrupt race. That day about three thousand received baptism. It was the first haul of the net of the fisher of men. These new disciples of Christ, whose number daily augmented, were united by the strongest bond of charity.

The apostles astonished Jerusalem by the number of their miracles. One day, as Peter and John went to pray at the ninth hour, they beheld at the porch of the Temple an infirm man, born a cripple, who implored alms of them. Peter said to him: "Gold or silver I have none, but I will give you what I have. In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk." Then he took him by the hand; and the cripple, walking forth with joy, accompanied them into the Temple. This man was more than forty years old. Everybody knew him. A great throng eagerly pressed around the apostles. Peter said to them: "Why do you wonder at this, or why do you look on us as if it was of ourselves we caused this man to walk? The God of our fathers glorifies his Son Jesus, whom you have denied before Pilate. When Pilate judged him innocent, you denied the Holy and the Just One. You desired that a murderer should be delivered up to you. You put to death the Author of life. But God resuscitated him, and we all are witnesses of it. It is he who, through faith in the name of Jesus, cured this man, born a cripple, whom you see and know."

The apostle, attributing to ignorance their crime against Jesus, pressed them to embrace the faith, since it was to them that God had first sent his Son.

Whilst he was speaking the priests and the officers of the Temple, accompanied by a strong force of Sad-

ducees, raging furiously on hearing him announce the resurrection, rushed upon him and arrested him, as well as John. Up to this moment the murderers of Jesus had avoided annoying or persecuting the disciples. They feared to persecute them—not that they dreaded their strength, but for fear of arousing the remembrance of the Master. They calculated that they could no longer blot from the memory of the people the miracles of Jesus by silence and forgetfulness. What transpired on the day of Pentecost; that splendid new miracle; that second preaching in the Temple; the visible dispositions of the multitude—all forced them to change their opinion.

Peter and John, cast into prison, appeared the next day before the tribunal that had judged the Saviour. Annas and Caiphas presided. They demanded of the apostles by what authority and in whose name they had cured the born cripple. Peter answered: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom you nailed to the cross, and whom God raised up. Nor is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven whereby men can be saved."

At this response the judges of Christ were disconcerted. They saw no means of denying the miracle, and they had no desire to yield. Silence appeared to them as yet the better part. Thinking that poor, illiterate, and ignorant men, such as the apostles were, would not resist their menace, they forbid them, under the severest penalties, either to teach or to speak thenceforward, in any manner, in the name of Jesus. Peter and John replied: "Judge you yourselves if it be just to obey you rather than God. For our part, we know not how to keep silence about the things we have seen and which we have heard." These are

words that the human conscience can add to the number of those that kept it from perishing.

The judges multiplied their threats, but without being able to punish; they suffered the resolute and determined men to depart. That was the first trial the Church had to undergo. She celebrated its happy issue by a canticle, wherein poetry and the enthusiasm of the new world are pre-eminently reflected. If we wish to recall what she then chanted among men, we will see what a victorious race was about to be borne from the cross of Calvary.

All with one accord lifted up their voice to God, and said: "Lord, thou art he who didst make heaven and earth, the sea, and all things that are in them. It is thou who through the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of our father David, thy servant, hast said: 'Why have the Gentiles raged and the people devised vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes assembled together against the Lord and against his Christ.' For it is true that against your holy Son Jesus and your Christ were leagued together in this city Herod and Pontius Pilate, the Gentiles and the people of Israel, to accomplish what your power and your counsel had decreed should be done. And now, O Lord! behold their threatenings and give to your servants strength and courage to announce your word, and stretch forth your hand to grant cures and wonders and miracles, through the name of your holy Son, Jesus Christ."

After they had thus spoken the house wherein they were assembled shook. God gave them this sign that he was always there, and that he could destroy the Jews and the world itself.

Full of the Holy Ghost, the apostles continued to

spread the Word, as if they had nothing to dread. About five thousand persons were baptized after this second discourse.

Peter was not only the spiritual chief, but even the judge, and in a certain manner the king, of this new nation. Miracles without number confirmed his authority. They placed the sick in the streets on his way, and his shadow, resting on them, effected a cure.

The chief priests and their party—that is, the party of the incredulous—saw that it was necessary to take some other measures to silence what they called the "sect of Jesus." They had the apostles again arrested. But an angel appeared to the prisoners and threw open their prison-doors, and said to them: "Go forth and preach boldly and fearlessly."

The next day, as soon as the Temple was opened, they began to preach in Solomon's porch. It was there they were arrested, after the curing of the man born a cripple. Meanwhile, the judges were assembled. They were informed that all was in order in the prison, the gates closed, the guards at the doors, but that the prisoners were not there. Their astonishment increased when they learned that those whom they sought were preaching freely under the galleries of the Temple. They caused them to be brought to them, but without violence, for fear of the people. The high-priest demanded of them, after the prohibitions they had received, why they dared to proclaim that name. "You have," he adds, "filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and you wish to render us guilty of the death of that *Man*."

Peter and the apostles answered: "We must obey God. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you caused to be put to death by nailing him to

the cross. He is the Prince and the Saviour whom God raised up to give to Israel penance and remission of sins; and we are witnesses of this, and the Holy Ghost, whom God has given to those who obey him, is witness of this with us."

The judges counselled together to know how they could put them to death. A very respectable Pharisaical doctor, named Gamaliel, who taught the Holy Scriptures, and who afterwards was converted, persuaded them to wait awhile; "for," said he, "if the work of these men proceed but of themselves, it will vanish of itself; but if it be the work of God, you cannot destroy it, and it is to be feared that you are warring against God." Such were the words already permitted to be pronounced in the council that condemned Jesus, and to rally the majority under the presidency of Caiphas and Annas. The miracles performed must have spoken after a powerful manner! Nevertheless, the council caused the apostles to be scourged, and renewed their prohibition against speaking by any means to anybody of the name of Jesus. They went forth joyful for having been judged worthy to suffer contumely for the name of Jesus, their Master, and they continued to preach Christ, and him crucified, boldly and fearlessly in the Temple and everywhere. The conversions increased; a more violent persecution is organized.

After the Ascension the Apostolic College was completed by adding to their number the disciple Matthias, designated by lot to replace the Iscariot. Later on, in order to discharge themselves of the material care of the community, they instituted the order of deacons, and established seven deacons, chosen among the disciples and elected by them. The first deacon, named

Stephen, had studied under Gamaliel. He was a man full of faith, of knowledge, and courage, who had performed great miracles. The Greek Jews, having had a public controversy with him, whose result did not turn out to their advantage, accused him of blasphemy and dragged him before the council, where they produced false witnesses. When Stephen stood in the presence of the judges, his enemies saw his countenance radiating like that of an angel. The high-priest interrogated him, and he defended himself. His discourse was masterly. He demonstrated how the Jews had always persecuted the prophets; how, faithful to the evil mind of their fathers, they betrayed and put to death him whom the prophets had announced—the Messias prefigured by Moses. His discourse gave them to understand that the knowledge of the holy Scriptures had departed from their schools and passed over to the disciples of Jesus. They became furious; but whilst they were gnashing their teeth with rage against Stephen, this glorious man, raising up his eyes to heaven, exclaimed: "I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

Instantly the members of the council began to clamor; they rushed on him and dragged him out of the city to be stoned. According to the law, the witnesses were compelled to cast the first stone at him, so as to testify that they executed the judgment. They put their clothing at the feet of a young doctor of the law, also a pupil of Gamaliel, who was there as delegated by the judges. Stephen, whilst they were stoning him to death, said, "Lord Jesus, receive my soul"; and kneeling down, he said again, "Lord, impute not to them this sin." Having pronounced these words, he dies. The Scripture says, "He slept."

He was the first martyr—the first who received in this world the fulfilment of the first promise made by Jesus to his first disciples: "You will see the heavens opened."

The Jews consoled themselves for their new crime by saying to themselves that at least "the sect" could not easily replace a man so full of knowledge, and of eloquence, and burning zeal for God's glory as he whom they stoned to death. But this same young doctor at whose feet the murderers of Stephen had deposited their garments, and who consented to his death, was named Saul; one day he shall be named Paul, and he will be the one whom every tongue shall call by excellence *The Apostle.*

The martyrdom of St. Stephen was the signal of a great persecution, in which Saul did not remain inactive. He made unheard-of ravages in the Church, entering into the houses and dragging off by force to prison both men and women. All the disciples were scattered. Nevertheless, the apostles, although more menaced, obeying the order of Jesus Christ, did not quit Jerusalem. Other faithful souls were courageous enough to bury with honor the body of Stephen. For the rest, the persecution and the dispersion had the effect that the world is accustomed to see them produce; and the effect was that the Gospel was more promptly spread. Samaria was the first to profit by them. Philip the deacon, by the example of the Master, breaks through the barrier of the Jewish nationality, and reaps where Jesus had sown. St. Peter and St. John, tenderly united by the bonds of charity went from Jerusalem in the name of the Apostolic College to administer confirmation to those whom Philip had baptized, and communicated to them the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

But there also the first heretic manifested himself, almost at the same instant the first martyr was about to be crowned with eternal glory.

Seeing the miracles of Philip, a Samaritan named Simon, trafficking in magic, had demanded and received baptism. As he had witnessed new graces which followed the imposition of hands, he offered money to the apostles, so that they might give him also the power to communicate the Holy Ghost. Peter said to him: "Let your money perish with you, who believe that the gift of God can be bought with money. You have nothing to expect in this work; you have not a right heart. Therefore do penance for your impiety and pray to God; perhaps he will forgive you." The magician, terrified, implored the apostles to intercede for him; but he remained engaged in his crime, seeking to obtain the grace of God, or, feigning that he had obtained it, to sell it again. This is the principal character of heresy.

The baptized of Samaria, half Jewish, were the first-fruits of a conquest, far more extensive, which the Gospel of Jesus Christ should very soon undertake. The prophets had announced that the kingdom should be opened even to the pagans. Jesus said: "Teach all nations and baptize them." Humanly speaking, it seemed impossible to call the pagans without imposing on them at the same time the whole of Judaism, or without excluding by the same stroke all the Jews. Hitherto the Gospel had been preached but to the children of Abraham, and they were the more devout who embraced it; they were more assiduous in the Temple and nearer to the law; they had no idea that the circumcision could be abolished. In their eyes all the uncircumcised were impure; they would neither

drink nor eat nor hold any communication with them. How remove this barrier? How impose on the Gentiles both circumcision and the privation of meats declared impure? How admit into the Church, composed only of faithful Jews, men in contact with whom they considered themselves stained? A divine revelation was necessary to accomplish this, and Peter received it.

There was at Cesarea a centurion commanding an Italian cohort, named Cornelius, a religious man—one of those men of the future whose sole desire was to implore and obtain the favor of God. Uncircumcised, he made himself, like many others, a Jew as much as it was possible for him to be one; because the worship of Israel afforded at least something to the aspiration of the soul. He prayed fervently and devoutly, gave alms, and feared God; and all his family were like himself. One day an angel appeared to him. It was about the ninth hour—the hour of the apparition to Zachary; the hour the infirm man, born a cripple, was cured at the porch of the Temple; the hour of Jesus' last sigh.

The angel, then, appearing to this man, said to him: "Cornelius, your prayers and your alms have ascended up before God, and he is mindful of them. Send forthwith into the city of Joppe, and make Simon, surnamed Peter, come and converse with you. He lodges at the house of Simon the tanner; and do you what he will tell you." Immediately Cornelius despatched to Joppe two of his servants and one of his soldiers who feared God.

The next day, when the messengers of Cornelius had already approached the city of Joppe, Peter ascended to the upper part of the house to pray.

Afterwards he asked for something to eat, continuing in prayer whilst they were preparing for him a repast. He was entranced in ecstasy. The heavens were opened; a large sheet, tied at the four corners, in the shape of a vessel, was lowered toward the earth, and this sheet contained all sorts of beasts, among which there were the unclean and forbidden by the law. At the same time the apostle heard a voice, which said to him: 'Peter, arise, kill and eat." "Far be it from me, Lord; I have never eaten anything unclean." The voice replied: "Do not call unclean what God has purified." The vision is renewed three times; then the sheet in the shape of a vessel was drawn up to heaven.

The unclean and savage beasts represent the pagans, sullied with impurities and subjected to all brutal passions. They appeared to descend from heaven, because the divine election gave them to Peter to receive them into the Church. "Kill and eat; make them die to the old man, and incorporate them into your unity." The sign was given three times, so as to convince the Jews more strongly of the mercy of God towards the Gentiles.

Peter did not immediately comprehend. Whilst he was reflecting on the meaning of his vision the messengers of Cornelius enquired for him at the gate, and at the same moment the Spirit said to him: "Come down and go without fear with those men; for I have sent them." Having then received the messengers, Peter the next day followed them, the servant of the servants of God. Some of the brethren at Joppe accompanied them. Peter did not go alone and did not act without witnesses.

Cornelius awaited him with his parents and best

friends. As soon as he saw him he cast himself at his feet. Peter made him rise and enter the house. "You know," said he to Cornelius, "how much the Jews hold in abomination the intimacy of a stranger; but God has shown me that I must not look on any man as unclean, and without hesitating I came. Let me know what you wish of me."

Cornelius related to him what the angel had said to him, and he added: "We are in your presence to hear what the Lord has commanded you to say to us."

Peter, admiring the grace God had bestowed on men in announcing to them peace through Jesus Christ, the Lord and Saviour of all, commenced forthwith to instruct the Gentiles, so miraculously called; and during his discourse the Holy Ghost visibly descended on all those who heard him. To the great surprise and astonishment of all the circumcised faithful, they began to speak divers tongues and to glorify God. Then Peter said to his companions: "Who could refuse baptism to those who have received the Holy Ghost?" And he commanded that they should be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

On his return to Jerusalem the apostle was, nevertheless, subjected to some severe investigations on the part of the faithful for having entered the houses of the uncircumcised and eaten with them. He defended himself by relating to them what had happened. "When I saw," he added, "that the Holy Ghost descended on those Gentiles, I remembered that saying of the Lord: 'John baptized in water, but you will be baptized in the Holy Ghost.' Since, then, God has given them the same grace as ourselves, who am I that I should oppose God?" These words and the already

acknowledged authority of Peter, who had received the keys to shut and to open, appeased the Judaical scruples. Those who had murmured conceived a holy joy. They said: "God be praised and glorified, who also has given the grace of repentance to strangers, that they may obtain life everlasting."

CHAPTER IV.

THE APOSTLES—PAUL.

THE wall of separation commenced to give way, to crumble. Peter, chosen to strike the first stroke, had largely opened up the breach. The battering-ram that was bound to achieve the work was already in the hands of Jesus Christ.

After the death of Stephen Saul had continued furiously to persecute the faithful—not, it would seem, without some interior gnawing of conscience; but he endeavored to smother the qualms of conscience by redoubling his efforts for the defence of assaulted Judaism. By origin he was a Pharisee, brought up at Jerusalem in the school of Gamaliel. Educated, eloquent, and perhaps ambitious, he had undertaken, as the object of his life, to demonstrate his zeal more than the wonted zeal of the Pharisees for the traditions. Born at Tarsus, he belonged, without doubt, to the synagogue of the Hellenists, whose wrath against the victorious polemics of St. Stephen had lit up the first persecution which caused blood to flow. Saul consented to the murder of St. Stephen. He participated in it; but the prayer of the martyr ascended up to heaven for him.

Nevertheless, at the end of a year he breathed but menaces and death against the disciples of Jesus Christ

at Jerusalem. He demanded of the high-priest letters to the synagogue of Damascus, so as to arrest those whom he found in that city and drag them into prison. He was on his way, near to the city of Damascus. Suddenly he saw himself enveloped in a wonderful light of a heavenly hue; he was prostrated to the earth, and a voice said to him: "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" He exclaimed: "Lord, who are you?" "I am Jesus whom you persecute; it is hard for you to kick against the goad"—an expression that shows that the grace of God had already moved his heart. Terrified and trembling, the persecutor no longer resists. "Lord," said he, "what do you wish me to do?" The Lord replied: "Rise up and go into the city. There it shall be told you what you must do."

Those who accompanied him were stopped on the way, hearing the voice without any person appearing to them. Saul had seen the luminous visage and the glorified body of the Saviour. His eyes were blinded in the presence of that dazzling splendor. When he opened them again, he could not see. His companions took him by the hand and led him to Damascus. For three days he neither ate nor drank, and his eyes remained deprived of sight. The third day a disciple named Ananias heard the voice of the Lord, that said to him: "Go into the street named Strait, to the house of Judas, where you will find a man named Saul of Tarsus; for, behold, he is praying." And at the same moment Saul saw in spirit a man named Ananias, who imposed hands on him, so that he might recover his sight.

Nevertheless, Ananias answered, "Lord, I have heard that this man has cruelly persecuted your saints in Je-

rusalem, and also that he had the power from the chief priest to arrest here all those who invoke your name."

But the Lord said to him: "Go; I have chosen that man even to bear my name before the Gentiles and to carry it before kings and the children of Israel."

Ananias set out without delay to find out the persecutor. He imposed hands on him and said to him: "My brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who has appeared to you on the road you were travelling on, has sent me, so that you might recover your sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost."

Instantly from the eyes of Saul fell the scales. He saw, rose up, and received baptism; and after a few days, passed with the disciples of Damascus, he entered the synagogue, proclaiming that Jesus was the Son of God. Having made this public confession, he retired into the desert all alone to converse with Jesus, who had converted him and who instructed him. He passed many years in a sort of retreat, violently hated by the Jews, yet half suspected by many of the faithful. He returned to Jerusalem at the end of three years, to see Peter and stay a little while. His great virtue was not yet known, yet less his genius. Nobody, excepting himself, foresaw his special vocation for the conversion of the pagans. He commenced to give proofs of his great sanctity and wonderful genius at Antioch, where St. Barnabas, who, like himself, was an old disciple of Gamaliel, had charge of a church chiefly composed of converted pagans. Very soon this church became as flourishing as that of Jerusalem. It was at Antioch that the faithful, accepting the popular mockery, assumed the name of Christians.

The conversion and instruction of St. Paul, due to

the visible interposition of Jesus Christ, was the last work that the Lord did, so to speak, in his own person. By this miracle, more astonishing than a resurrection, the Son of God gave to the Church, not only the greatest of her doctors, but the most unexceptionable of his witnesses. The highest human intelligence can bring forward nothing to contradict the testimony of St. Paul touching the whole truth of the Gospel history. St. Paul was not an unlettered and ignorant man, who could be deceived by the semblance of prodigies or overcome by the charm and ascendency of a superior nature; nor was he a man to rely willingly on what he was told without thorough, deep investigation; nor was he a philosopher that the seduction of thought or language could lead to compose a myth to make the world receive the ideas he had conceived. He was a contemporary, a savant, a doctor of the law, a Pharisee, an enemy. He resisted the miracles and the cordial and candid word of St. Peter, the eloquence and the lofty intelligence of St. Stephen; he opposed the workings of his own great and generous heart. Neither the blood of martyrs had converted nor the tears and virtues of the faithful could move him. Humanly speaking, he had nothing to gain, he had everything to lose, by becoming a Christian. He is overcome; the glorified beauty of Jesus passed before his eyes like a flash of lightning; he saw what he wished to ignore; he arises from the earth the contrary, the opposite, of what he had been; he is engaged among those whom he came to persecute

The enemies of Christ have invented words which give an account of those interior revolutions of which St. Paul was the first example, and which all ages and all nations have seen since himself. It was a freak of

madness, it was a fever, it was a "hallucination." Paul had seen the brilliant light pass before his eyes; he thought he saw the face of Jesus, and a flash of lightning and a thunder-clap made him believe he heard his voice; he fancied he had learned what he had already known. It is thus that they explain the conversion of St. Paul, his life, his labors, his doctrine, his martyrdom, without giving themselves trouble to inculpate his sincerity.

But, praise be to God! the figure of St. Paul is perfectly known to us. Before that figure reason cannot prostitute itself to the degradations that totally blind it. If Jesus Christ had not lived, he would not have died, he would not have arisen from among the dead. If he had not been the Son of Mary, the Son of David, the Son of God; if the learned of Israel had not discovered in him all the traits of the Messias announced in the Scriptures; if he had not been both man and God whom the Gospel presents to us, assuredly it would be of very little matter for St. Paul's mind whether it was a thunder-clap or madness that struck him on the road to Damascus. Three years of quasi-solitude under the double pressure of the furious hatred of the Jews and the long distrust of the Christians gave him sufficient time to know himself. The first essay of apostolic life would be sufficient to afford him good sense. The apostolic life has never been mild or gentle, according to nature; it has never been ruder than in the first days of the Church; nobody has ever borne its weight more heavily or more rigorously than St. Paul.

The Lord had said to Ananias in sending him to Saul: "I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." When St. Paul wrote his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, in the year 57 A.D., about ten years

before his death, he had already been scourged by the Jews and three times whipped with rods by the Romans—punishments often mortal. At Lystra the Jews stoned him and left him for dead. He had been three times shipwrecked. Before he was decapitated he was chained and put in prison seven times. "I have made many voyages; I have been in peril on rivers, in peril by falling into the hands of robbers, in peril from those of my own nation, in peril on the part of the Gentiles, in peril in the city, in peril in the desert, in peril on the sea, in peril on the part of false brethren. I have been in affliction and sorrow; in long watchings, in hunger and in thirst; in much fastings, in cold, and in nakedness. Besides the outward afflictions, I suffered those of the spirit."

This was the life which the man designed to become the chief of the powerful party of the Pharisees had embraced; and he commenced it immediately after Jesus Christ had made known to him, through Ananias, that he would point out to him how much he should suffer for his name.

In the midst of this life, in this chain of trials, fatigues, separations, and tortures, having before his eyes the spectacle and weight of this world of Satan, wherein he saw successively reign Caligula, Claudius, Nero, he superabounded in peace, hope, and joy. He himself had said it, in words all-resplendent, from the joy of his heart. Four times at least since the apparition of Damascus the visible presence of Jesus Christ brought to him the heavenly consolations of the cross, the peace of the persecuted, the hope of the condemned, the joy of the forsaken. Once the ecstasy carried him up in the presence of Jesus Christ, the Son of Man reigning in heaven in immediate proximity to God,

and he heard the things that human tongues knew not how to express. He was so full of God and of his love that he could have said: "I live no longer; it is Jesus Christ that lives in me." The life of Jesus Christ manifested itself in him by the wisdom of his apostolic career; a simplicity and a charity surpassing even the grandeur of his revelations and of his genius. He revealed the secrets of grace; he threw divine light on its mysteries—the mystery of predestination, the mystery of the Incarnate Word, the vocation of the Gentiles, the sources and effects of the principal sacraments of the new covenant and of the new priesthood, of the abrogation of the law, and of our true liberty in Jesus Christ; he scattered lights with a hand as prudent as it was vigilant, with a heart always humble and meek. All the great lights and intellects who have taught in the Church honored him. God praised him far more. He wished that this model of the new priest and of the new man might be personally known, so to speak, to the human race. The book of the Acts of the Apostles was inspired to consolidate the rights of the apostolate, to prove incontestably the primacy of Peter, and to leave us a history and an everlasting portrait of Paul, apostle of nations, chosen, conquered, and formed by the Lord Jesus.

St. Paul suffered death at Rome by the sword in the year 67 of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that was about his age. He was beheaded on the Ostian Road, which was the great thoroughfare whereby the world entered Rome, which the sojourn of St. Peter had already made the capital of the Catholic Church.

The same year, probably the same day, Peter, bound hand and foot by the same executioners, was nailed to the cross. God had drawn him from the hand of the

Jews, so that he might live at Rome, and that the tree of the cross might take root in the city of the Cæsars.

Rome, therefore, was and still is the second Calvary and the second cross. They planted it on the Vatican, where the garden of Nero extended—a soil already thoroughly watered by the blood of martyrs. It was there that the faithful of Christ, covered with the skins of wild beasts, were delivered up to the teeth of furious lions; whilst others, daubed over with pitch, chained to each other, were burned as torches to give light to the orgies and diabolical sports of the emperor. Nero was then surrounded by Jewish soothsayers and magicians, who centred in him all their hopes of the Messias. The Empress Poppæa was a proselyte. These influences were not strangers to the persecution. Peter was crucified in a particular manner: the feet that Jesus washed turned toward heaven, the head turned to the earth downward, as if to let the crown fall from it. On the Vatican to-day is erected the basilica dedicated to the Prince of the Apostles; there resides, after more than eighteen hundred years, his two hundred and fifty-fourth successor. "Thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

CHAPTER V.

THE APOSTLES—ST. JOHN.

ALREADY many of the apostles had undergone martyrdom. James, son of Zebedee, and James, son of Alpheus, were put to death at Jerusalem, the first by order of the political power, the second at the instigation of the high-priest. Andrew, brother of Peter, after having evangelized the Scythians, suffered death on the cross in Achaia; others awaited the same recompense in far-off missions where their zeal had dispersed them. Although the end of all may not be positively known, there is room to believe that, with the exception of St. John, who died a natural death after having conquered martyrdom, all had given to Jesus Christ a testimony of their blood.

Counting Matthias, designated by lot, Barnabas, elected by the apostles, and Paul, chosen by a direct and particular occasion, there were fourteen apostles; and of these fourteen, specially called and specially sent to preach the Gospel by Jesus Christ, John, about forty years after the death of the Saviour, remained, if not the only living one, at least the only one as on evidence, in the circle of Roman civilization. God preserved for a long time this aid to the successor of Peter, the sole and only head and chief of the Church.

John established himself at Ephesus, the capital of Asia Minor, the centre of great intellectual activity. The fickleness of the Greek mind seemed to be touched or moved by Christianity only, as it were, by a goad that pushed it into subtlety and chimeras. It conjured up systems in which paganism and Judaism, covered with a Christian mask, accorded in denying the human and divine reality of Jesus Christ and destroying completely his moral doctrine and his revelation. The watchfulness of an apostle was necessary thereto. No person could better provide for this necessity than he whose head had reposed on the breast of the Lord, and who had afterwards been the companion and the most intimate friend of St. Peter. Some traits in the life of St. John portray his charity and his firmness. Exhausted by age, quite incapable of preaching, he caused himself to be carried into the assemblies of the faithful, and there he did not cease repeating: "My little children, love one another; for," he added, "all is said when *that* is done." His apostolic vigor is attested by the persecution that the pagans caused him to endure. Led to Rome under Domitian, and plunged into a large caldron of boiling oil, but coming out from it safe and sound, he was banished to the Isle of Patmos till the death of the persecutor. During his captivity, or immediately after, he wrote the Apocalypse, a book full of mystery and of beauty, always luminous and always obscure; whence doctrine and prophecy gush forth as if from an inexhaustible source, and which, unceasingly interrogated, delivers to the world only at epochs the truths that it contains.

A perpetual prophecy of the destinies of the Church, a divine tableau or picture of the government

and power of Jesus Christ, the Apocalypse is also the song of triumph. It is the cry of the martyrs who subjected the world to the Son of God. The apostle and prophet relates the combats that Satan will be engaged in; he celebrates the fall of his empire when he thought himself master for ever: "And I, John, saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, which came down from God and descended from heaven like as a bride adorned to meet her betrothed. There will be no more any malediction there, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be there, and his servants shall serve him. They will behold his countenance, and they will have his name written on their foreheads. There will be no more night, and they will have no need of the light of the lamp nor of the light of the sun; because the Lord God will enlighten them, and they shall reign for ever and ever. . . . Happy those who wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb, so that they may be able to enjoy the tree of life, and that they may enter the city through the gates. Outside are dogs, sorcerers, the unchaste, murderers, idolaters, and all those in whom the truth is not. 'I, Jesus,' says Christ, 'have sent my angel to testify to you those things in the churches. I, who have sprung from the stock and blood of David—I, who am the bright, effulgent, shining star, the bright star of the morning, the spirit and the spouse—say come. And he that heareth let him say come. And he that thirsteth, let him come; and he that will, let him take the waters of life gratuitously. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.'"

Thus spoke the apostle, prisoner of the cruel Domitian, to those who shed as they wished and as much as they wished the blood of the martyrs. Domitian formerly gave himself the title of God, and

exacted it of all, whether writing or speaking to him. He caused his statue to be placed in the holiest place in the Temple. He headed his letters thus: "Our Lord and God commands." The world obeyed Domitian. The Christians died under the most cruel torments. They washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, in their own blood, to enter through the eternal gates, through the doctrine of the apostles; to enter into the city closed against idolaters, against the unchaste, against liars. From Stephen's time even till that moment of Gospel history what torrents of blood had already flowed to attest this word of Jesus: "Have confidence; I have conquered the world"! St. John wrote: "Whoever is born of God is victorious over the world; and what obtains the victory over the world is our faith."

A little while after having published the Apocalypse the apostle published his Gospel. The three other Gospels were already known. Matthew, the first, wrote what he had seen. Mark, disciple and companion of Peter, wrote what he gathered from his master. Luke, disciple and faithful companion of Paul, wrote what he had learned with much care, both from the apostle and from faithful witnesses whom he had so many occasions to consult. Through the urgent request of both the priests and the faithful, at the moment of quitting this world, John wrote in his turn to demonstrate that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that all who believe in him may have eternal life. Without naming the heretics already expert in spreading false doctrine touching the person and the divine character of the Saviour, he refuted them. At the same time he bore testimony to and completed the Gospels anteriorily published.

Isaias, favored with the sublimest vision that was granted to the holy men of the old law, beheld "the Lord seated on a throne, elevated and sublime, and his garments filled the enclosure of the Temple, resplendent with his majesty." St. John, relating the words that Isaias heard from God in this vision, applies them to Jesus: "Isaias saw his glory and spoke of him." That was, say the fathers, the subject of St. John's Gospel. The other Evangelists speak more of the humanity of Christ. John is properly the Evangelist of his divinity. The lion, the man, and the bull, symbols or figures of the others walking on the earth, tell us especially what the Christ has done in the flesh, and record chiefly the precepts that he left to those who carry the weight of the flesh. John is typified by the eagle. He takes his flight far above human infirmity; he soars above all altitudes: he soars above all that has been created to reach to him who has created all things, and on that Sun of immutable truth he fixes his piercing and undaunted gaze. St. Chrysostom does not fear to say that there are many things which the angels have learned from the revelation of St. John.

It was his privilege to know the mystery of Christ, by which the Son is in all things equal to the Father; and he communicates its light to human intelligence in as far as it can be received. Like Isaias, he had seen the Lord on a throne, elevated and sublime, because he had seen the Christ in the kingdom of his divinity. He saw the Temple, which is the universe, animated and resplendent with his majesty. He expresses this when he says that all things have been made by him, and that without him nothing was made that was made, and that his light enlightens every man coming into this world. He has seen the mysteries of

his humanity filling his Temple—that is to say, his Church. "And the Word was made flesh; and we have seen his glory as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth." So the vision of Isaias contains the whole Gospel of St. John. "That this ignorant, this illiterate man," continues St. Chrysostom, "should so speak and so say what no one among men had ever heard, is in itself a great miracle; but the most powerful proof of the divine inspiration is that all in all ages understand the truths he has revealed and are persuaded of them. Whence came this virtue or power in him?" "He poured forth," replies the Bishop of Hippo, "what he imbibed." The Holy Ghost, in his own Gospel, says of him that during the Last Supper his head reposed on the breast of the Lord. "He drank in mysteriously of that source, and what he imbibed in the mystery he solemnly poured forth."

The miracle of St. John's Gospel terminates the age of Jesus Christ. Last gift of this era of grace, he left to the new world an echo always living of that Word which brought it forth; or rather, it is this Word itself which always remains luminous and fruitful. It has placed beyond all attacks the knowledge of God, the love of God for men, man's obligation to love and serve God and to love his fellow-man—obligations that they could not fulfil but through Jesus Christ. In the efforts which the spirit of negation, which is the spirit of Satan, has made for ages to subvert Christianity, the most ardent and the most subtle have been directed against the Gospel of St. John. They were all vain and futile efforts; they will be always so. They may and have shaken some weak souls; they will never overthrow the conscience of the human race. The reason of their im-

potency St. John himself has made known to us. "I have written," said he to us, "so that you may believe that Jesus Christ is God, and that in believing you may have life."

CHAPTER VI.

THE CONCLUSION.

JESUS CHRIST is the only Son of the One True God. He is the Power, the Wisdom, and the Uncreated Splendor of the Uncreated. He is the God of heaven and of the earth; the Eternal King, all powerful as his Father, and being but one with him in the undivided Trinity. By a mystery that surpasses all understanding, and which satisfies all reason, God gave him to the world, and in giving him he has given himself. This Jesus thus given is the Son of Man and the Son of God—man and God at the same time: man born under the law, God to consummate and accomplish the law; man to serve, God to set free; man to bend under the yoke, God to conquer; man to die, God to triumph over death. And such is this marvel that the eyes of our spirit can see the divinity through the humanity—the power that created the world and conquered hell in that weakness that man's iniquity nailed to the cross. For Jesus Christ is a divine being composed of two natures quite different, the one divine, the other human; the one uncreated, the other created; the one eternal, the other temporal By this work, by this miracle, the Divinity lives in man and man subsists in God; the man and God continually subsist in Jesus Christ. He is born, but born

of a Virgin. He is but a poor infant in a borrowed crib; but a star announces him; the angels salute him with a canticle of heavenly praise which contains in two words all wisdom; the saints bless and praise him; the learned kings come to adore him; tyrants fear him. He flees, but surrounded with an invisible guard; he lives in humility, though Sovereign Master; in infirmity, but his word cures all maladies; he resuscitates the dead, casts out devils, arrests the growth of plants, commands the elements; he pays the tribute by rendering the sea tributary; he suffers on the cross, but it is at the predicted hour and as he wished it; he expires, but the centurion acknowledges him on the infamous wood on which he expires, as the shepherds and magi acknowledged him in the crib where he was born; he died, and was entombed; he put back himself the stone of his sepulchre, and he issues from it alive.

Is this God? Is this man? Where is the God in those humiliations, in those sufferings, in those miseries? Where is the man in those wonders? Neither the God nor the man is alone in any part. Jesus has so well blended his divinity and his humanity that any division or separation would render him inexplicable. If he is not God, he is but an impostor. If he is not man, the work of God can no longer be conceived or understood, and the Deity itself disappears; God alone can account for the man, and man alone can account for the God; and he is in all Man-God. Everywhere he surpasses human reason, and he does not violate it in any part; he incessantly confounds it, but he never terrifies it.

Pope St. Hormisdas, resuming the teaching of Pope St. Leo, gives to an emperor a beautiful explication of

the mystery of the two natures in Jesus Christ: "God is trinity—that is to say, Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost. Notwithstanding, God is one. But hear, O Israel! the Lord thy God is one God only. Any other doctrine either divides the Divinity and admits the foolish, pagan impiety of a plurality of Gods, or attributes suffering to the essence itself of the Trinity, and supposes grief in the impassible divine nature. The Holy Trinity is one God only, who is not numerically multiplied; who receives no increase or addition of any sort; who undergoes no division. This mystery of the eternal substance is inaccessible to the most elevated of invisible natures; we will not undertake to submit its depths to the laws of human things. Let us adore the incomprehensibility and the ineffable substance of the Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—wherein distinction subsists in indivisibility, wherein unity prevents all division of the essence, although the persons introduce number; and let us take care to leave to each Person what distinguishes it, without taking away from any of them the divinity, without ascribing to the essence what is the property of one or of the other.

"God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost trinity without division—incomprehensible mystery! We know, however, that what is proper to the Father is to engender the Son; that what is proper to the Son of God is to be born of the Father and to be equal to the Father; that it is proper to the Holy Ghost to proceed from the Father and the Son, in the unity of the same substance. What is written, that in the fulness of time 'the Word was made flesh, and that it dwelt among us,' is also proper of the Son of God. So that in the womb of the holy Virgin Mary,

virgin Mother of God, the two natures were united without any confusion. He who, before all time, is the Son of God, became the Son of Man. He was born in time, of a mother, like other men, but without opening the womb of his mother, and leaving intact the seal of her most holy and her most perfect virginity—a mystery quite worthy of the birth of a God. Ought he not to be born preserved from all human stain—he whose conception took place without any intervention of man, and who preserved what he had held from the Heavenly Father while offering to the eyes of man what he had taken from his blessed mother?

"While couched in a crib he was at the same time in heaven. While enveloped in swaddling-clothes he was adored by the heavenly army. While yet an infant he taught a superhuman doctrine and manifested his power by divine prodigies—God and man at the same time, not by any addition, but because he was himself the Son of God. God and man—that is to say, strength and weakness, humility and majesty, servant yet redeemer; nailed to the cross, yet giving the kingdom of heaven; clothed with our infirmity to the degree of undergoing death, yet possessor of the divine power to the degree of restoring life. Because he wished to become man he was buried; because he remained like to his Father he arose from the dead. Being one among the dead, he has reanimated those who were mouldering in the tomb; without quitting the bosom of his Father, he descended into hell; having rendered up his soul according to the law common to all men, he assumed it again by his power as God.

"In all this he proves himself both God and man. Lest the spectacle of the suffering of his body might lead us to believe that he was not God; lest

the splendor of his miracles should force us to think that he was God only, and that he was not man, he has instructed us by the opposite conduct of two of the apostles. The faith of Peter convinces us that the Christ our Lord was God; the doubt of Thomas that he was man. When he demanded of his disciples what men said of him, what did he wish, if not to provoke the response of St. Peter, "You are the Christ, Son of the living God"? And the praise given to this confession, inspired of God the Father, produces in us the faith in the truth that it reveals. In the same way, when, after the resurrection of the Lord, the Saviour appeared to the apostles, why the absence and afterwards the doubt of Thomas? It was that the world might believe what the incredulous disciple verified, and that the universality of the faithful might know what Jesus was through the testimony of him whom he commanded to touch him. For the meek and beneficent Saviour did not thus give us evidence of the incredulity of Thomas for the confusion of his holy apostle, but for the instruction of posterity. Thus, too, the Lord joined the two disciples who were on their journey to Emmaus, and conversed with them. They had learned of the resurrection through the report of the holy women, and yet they remained in doubt. But their incredulity served to strengthen the faith in ages to come. Jesus, interpreting Moses and all the prophets, demonstrated to them that Christ was to suffer, so as to enter into his glory; and he established, by multiplied testimonies from the Holy Scriptures, that in him were found at once the two natures—the human nature, which his Passion testifies to; the divine nature, which reveals his glory."

In the designs of Jesus Christ over the world the

same mystery manifests itself by the same appearance of opposition between those designs and the means that he employs to accomplish them. He wishes to establish an empire on earth, a prey to might and force. He holds that force in his hands; he breaks it into atoms. He wishes to draw the world to himself, and he takes quite the reverse course to what the world looks for. He is, and he is called, the Crucified. He bequeaths to twelve ignorant men that cross as an inheritance, and he enjoins on them to present it to the human race. They do it, and they triumph; and that is done in less time than the most powerful empire could succeed in stifling the nationality of a conquered colony. Idols fall and a new humanity rises up; the word alone of Jesus Christ operates such a miracle. This word that he gave to the apostles, and which they did not understand till he pronounced it—this word that was revolting to the Jews, which is revolting to the first instincts of every man—is nevertheless, as the apostles now call it, the "word of reconciliation," which disposes all in order and in peace—man with God, man with man, man with himself. It changes all, in society, in minds, and hearts; it illuminates every darkness; it makes barrenness fruitful; by it the stupefied Jew sees clearly into the Scriptures, whose profound depths desolated his intelligence; the pagan escapes from the labyrinth wherein sophism devoured his reason.

What a life, what a light, even in the first Christians! What holy joy and heavenly peace! Man henceforth knows where he is going; he feels himself master of his route; he is sure of his end. The word of the Creator made man but a man; the Incarnate Word made of man a god; it made him "a sharer in the

divine nature." It was St. Peter who said this immense thing, and man believes it, comprehends it—man, who adored the fetich and the Cæsar; and on this lofty height whereon he ascends he becomes humble and meek, and the sublime faculty of adoration, till then so deplorably abused, develops itself according to its nature, and crowns the earth with a brilliant army of saints.

It is objected, nevertheless, that all are not converted. They show, with a homicidal joy, how many, on the contrary, detach themselves and go off. Without doubt, God does not do what he has not wished to do. Free will remains. "He who has created you without yourself will not save you without yourself," says St. Augustine. You do not wish to save yourself; you do not wish to aid Jesus Christ in the work of your salvation. You will not be saved; you shall die.

We must adore either in heaven or in hell. It is for man to choose. There is all your free-will; and let not the pride and stupidity of man think of making it a divine dignity by calling it liberty. God alone possesses liberty. Man has free will, and that is a good deal; but he cannot dispense himself from exercising it. He chooses between good and evil, heaven and hell. It is impossible for man to refrain from so doing, and to do that is to admit that he has made a choice.

This free choice, always left to the individual, is sometimes proposed to the whole human race. A decree of God compels it to give its decision between Jesus and Barabbas. Modern civilization, founded on the divinity of Jesus Christ, undergoes one of these dreadful crises. It inclines to and favors Barabbas. It willingly listens to the language that bids it drive from society the remembrance, the love, of Jesus Christ—to

drive him from the world. What will happen if Jesus Christ is driven from the world?

To remove Jesus Christ from the world is impossible; the very tomb preserves him living. He may permit them to take away the throne from him, to nail him again to the cross; but the spirit that meditates this great crime against God and the human family does not so much wish to rob kings of their crowns as to give them the tiara, the triple crown, of the three concupiscences—the tiara of Satan. The epoch that will see again Jesus Christ on Calvary will see again Tiberius at Caprea, and the god Tiberius shall have his temples again. But such a divinity shall have but an hour; and yet the Church shall live and flourish during this hour of trial, and the general order of the redemption shall be maintained. The secrets of Christ's mercy are unfathomable, like those of his power. All that ought to belong to Christ shall belong to him. Even to the very last hour of the world the redemption will profit, in some degree, the whole human race. It is like that torrent of liquid fire that flows from the regions of the sun, and which courses through the icy waters of the sea in their vast extent. Without doubt, the whole ocean is not warmed by it—frozen regions yet remain; but if this beneficent flood did not exist, all would be frozen, all would perish. It is its heat that preserves life wherever it is found in any degree; and where life is most abundant it works enterprises, it incessantly realizes conquests over death.

And there are no dead regions which the inhabitants of the regions of life do not reach—those living ones who chant the *Credo* of the disciples of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

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