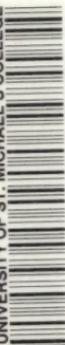


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The Burden of The Time

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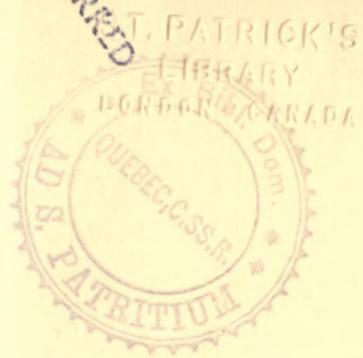
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The Burden of the Time

ESSAYS IN SUGGESTION

BASED UPON CERTAIN OF THE BREVIARY
SCRIPTURES OF THE LITURGICAL YEAR

BY THE

Rev. Cornelius Clifford

PRIEST OF THE DIOCESE OF NEWARK

AUTHOR OF "INTROIBO"



NEW YORK

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VICTORLE • FIDE • VICTRICI

TO

THE MEMORY OF

MOTHER M. EUDES

WHO DIED

SUPERIOR OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD CONVENT

IN NEW YORK CITY

ON JUNE 22, 1902

R. I. P.



“EVEN SO, O CROSS, THINE IS THE VICTORY,
THY ROOTS ARE FAST WITHIN OUR FAIREST FIELDS;
BRIGHTNESS MAY EMANATE IN HEAVEN FROM THEE,
HERE THY DREAD SYMBOL ONLY SHADOW YIELDS.”



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Preface

IN the present series of essays the author has gone once more for inspiration to the living liturgy of the Church. As in his former volume he sought to direct attention to the forgotten riches of the Sunday Introits, so in this his endeavor is to recall to the minds of his fellow-believers the profound suggestiveness for purposes of informal meditation of those Breviary Scriptures which the Roman See apportions for the consideration of her children, priest and layman alike, through all the weeks of the ecclesiastical year. If this second undertaking appears to have been less adequately attempted than the matter may be said to demand, the author can only observe that a complete commentary on the Biblical lections of the office seems neither possible nor desirable in the present state of opinion on the subject. Men must be brought to familiarize their hearts with a text, which is plain enough for all daily needs, before they can be induced to occupy their understandings with an after-gloss of practical inference to be drawn from it in the shape of further lessons. A glance at the substance of the reflections which the author has ventured provisionally to draw out in this direction will do more, perhaps, to explain his point of view than a detailed exposition by way of fore-word could accomplish. He has approached these extracts, therefore,—the *lectiones de Scriptura occurrente*,—with the limitations of a homilete. Questions

PREFACE

of criticism have not immediately concerned him. He has written in the spirit in which the Breviary was slowly compiled—the spirit of faith and enthusiasm for the most helpful portions of the Word of God and with a mind intent only on applying their present significance to latter-day Catholics. He has not aspired to logical completeness; much less has he pretended to exhaust the text. He has merely selected a few of the more striking utterances from each week's portion and discussed them according to his bent. If the erudite discover that the lines have not always fallen to him in scholarly places, if it be gathered that the hours he could snatch for composition were seldom so sessionally sweet as to tempt him to indulge the discursiveness common to all homiletes, he hopes that that very fact will commend him to the "modern" reader. It is for the "modern" reader, most of all, that he has written,—for that breathless, forward-moving public of devout but over-busy men, whether in the cloister or out of it, who are spiritual enough to find conscience-room for an idea, but not leisured enough to labor it to a poor third of its issues. *Vitam perdimus operose nihil agendo*. It is something to have set bounds to one's discretion, if only to reach that super-strenuous world; and it argues no lack of zeal to trust that it will listen.

In the application which he has made of Scripture to present needs and problems the author has only had recourse to that chastened liberty of exegesis which is part of the constructive tradition of the Breviary itself. He

PREFACE

has held preferably to the literal sense of passages wherever he could; but it will be seen that he has not been deaf to the deeper poetry of a more spiritual interpretation.

The only serious objection that can be urged against the ideas set forth in the Introductory Essay on *Catholics and the Liturgical Use of Scripture* lies, in the case of the multitude at least, in the dearth of translations. The late Marquis of Bute's admirable version supplied that want for a season; but the work has long been out of print; and were it reissued in its original form, the cost of the venture would scarcely allow it to come into general circulation. But it is not necessary—not in the case of the ordinary layman, at any rate—that one should arm oneself with so weighty an apparatus of piety. All that is needed is a portable copy of the Rheims-Douai version of the Scriptures with, perhaps, a serviceable pocket-edition of the Psalms. In these each one may mark for himself the limits of the Sunday and ferial offices. Indeed, a mere table or two of references, inserted in the form of a flying-sheet between the leaves of a Bible, would enable the least instructed substantially to keep his heart in tune with the true *Burden of the Time*, for it would enable him to follow from day to day his Mother's holiest thoughts as they are alternately chanted or murmured through all the liturgical divisions of the year.

C. C.

ST. MICHAEL'S VILLA, Englewood, N. J.

Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, 1904.

Catholics and the Liturgical Use of Scripture

i

IT is doubtless part of an inexorable instinct in morals which seems to correspond to the law of action and reaction in the material world that excesses should tend to revenge themselves in kind. Abuses appear commonly in pairs; and hardly an evil but has its contrarious way-fellow clamoring for recognition behind a specious mask of good. The rule is known to have a remorselessly wide sweep where religious practices are in question; nor is it without applicable force even in the case of those human agencies which the Providence of God in every epoch suffers to remain blunderingly at work in the Church. The rancors of the Reformation period which brought so many griefs to the collective conscience of Christendom brought likewise a portent of further sorrow in this, that it gave men's minds a new and unprecedented bias for or against the mechanically written Word of God. If the doctrine of "the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible," led Protestants for nearly three centuries to turn the sacred page into a fetich, it filled Catholics with such a counter-feeling of dismay during

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the same period and longer that millions of deeply religious hearts among them ever since have grown pathetically irresponsive to the majesty and music of all but its most ringing dogmatic sentences. The suggestive chronicles of Israel's kings, their types of religious character, their most significant victories, their infidelities, their dark defeats; the haunting melody of the Psalms with their strange and more than personal appositeness of phrase, their Catholic and every-day-like range of mood, their inspiring gamut of extraordinary and supernatural emotion; the sustaining visions of the Prophets, their rebukes, their warnings, their persuasive appeals to Jerusalem for penance and a change of heart; the less emphatic but not less illuminating incidents and sayings of the Gospels; St. Paul's ideals of religious sincerity, his teaching on the inner and sacramental life, his pictures of nascent or flourishing Christianity at Rome, at Corinth, at Ephesus, at Philippi or among the Celts of Galatia—for all these memories which were the common and familiar inheritance of pre-Tridentine Catholicism,¹ as a

¹ From the invention of printing down to the close of the fifteenth century nearly one hundred editions of the Vulgate were published; and before Luther began his career, that is, within the brief space of seventy years, some eight hundred editions of the sacred text, either in its entirety or in separate books, issued from the press throughout Catholic Christendom. Two hundred of these were in the vernacular alone; and *twenty of them, at least, were in the German tongue.* Cf. Lit. Handweiser, 1882, c. 166; Jostes, *die Waldenser und die vorluth. Bibelübersetzungen*, Münster, 1885; and Hurter, *Theol. Dogm. tom. i, tract. ii, c. iv, n. 5; § 184*, who gives the above references by way of appendix to an illuminating note on the spirit of the *Index*.

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glance at its moralities, its miracle-plays, its popular treatises, its great Cathedral Churches will show, the latter-day Catholic keeps an inhospitable and coldly entertaining mind. We do not say that his grasp on more essential truths does not compensate for these ignorances of the heart; neither do we wish to imply that his religion is on that account substantially incomplete. On the contrary, whatever views the pedant may be tempted to hold about earlier or mediæval Christianity, it is impossible to have reasonable misgivings about the religious quality of its historic derivative and heir. The Roman Catholic of to-day who endeavors steadfastly and in all conscience to obey the barest requirements of his faith is in nearer and more intimate touch with the soul of New Testament religion than the most profoundly read and God-fearing Biblicist of the sects.

And the reason is not far to seek. His assent to a great fundamental dogma like that of the Incarnation, or the Communion of Saints and Holy Things, for instance, is habitually sacramental, and therefore big with stated renewals of supernatural life. Rightly or wrongly, however, he has come to look upon devotion to the exterior aspect of Scripture as a preference savoring of disloyalty to the Creed. It is commonly asserted by the non-Catholic critic, and with more than a disconcerting foundation in practice, that our people need not, and as a matter of fact do not, betray any special enthusiasm for the Bible; that the most representative among them have but a casual and thin acquaintance with

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the New Testament, and that their knowledge of the Old is thinner and more casual still. Charges of this nature are, no doubt, too often prompted by the mere malevolence of sectarianism; yet the untowardnesses from which they spring are not entirely on the Protestant side. Is not the bitterness these commonplaces of controversy provoke not infrequently accentuated by the after-recollection that the laity have practically grown unaccustomed to the one form of prayer which should be the best answer to so pregnant an incrimination? Are they taught, we will not ask, to recite the entire Breviary, but intelligently to follow the Scriptural lessons of the same?¹ The suggested task ought to be accounted neither novel nor impossible; for not only in its seasonal scope and arrangement, but most of all, perhaps, in the mysteriously apposite adaptation of its pondered readings to the life of Our Lord and the daily needs of His Church may the Breviary be said to have become a deeper and holier Bible. If this be so, it is difficult to justify the average layman for his indifference towards it; and scarcely wise to appeal to the changed conditions of the religious world in extenuation of his neglect.

¹ St. John Chrysostom "advised his hearers to read at home during the week-days such Saturday and Sunday lessons as they knew would be expounded in course on the next Lord's day." Cf.¹) Rev. F. H. Scrivener's art. on *Lectionary*, in Smith & Cheetham, in which a fairly long list of authorities for this practice is cited; and ²) Cod. Justin. i, 3, 4, quoted by Batiffol, *Hist. Brev.*, c. i, § iii.

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THERE is, however, it hardly needs to be explained, a sense in which it would be not only illogical, but subversive of much that Catholicism has spiritually achieved during the past twenty centuries of its existence, to invite its convinced adherents to search Scripture as Protestantism has too insistently done to its own hurt on all the fundamental positions of its varying creed. There is an instinct in the trained Catholic conscience as such, deeper than any explanation that Protestants can imagine, which must save it from the irreligion, so to call it, of approaching the written Word as a challenger from without. It could never be persuaded to puzzle over the sacred page either for a supreme rule of belief, or for an infallible guide to conduct, apart from the corroborative testimony of the Church. And the reason is partly esoteric as well as theological. As Our Lord is the express Image of the Father, His Word to Himself and to all mankind, so the Church is the express, if mystical, Image of the same unseen Lord, His full human Word to Himself and to the world for all the years of time. *He is with her; His Paraclete abides with her*, His Spirit informs her as a human soul informs its proper and individual body; and, *whatsoever things she has received of Him these she declares to us*. The written Word, as interpreted by her, was, in its original idea, what she still asserts it to be, a portion, namely, of that larger message of which it is her mission to expound the meaning. The books of the Bible

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have no consecrated significance when disjoined from that mysterious context whereof she, in her many-hued experience and fortunes in an opposing world, is the only vivifying fulness. Through her does the honest enquirer, the single-hearted God-seeker, participate in the authentic deposit of revealed knowledge, or he remains until death in the outer dark. If he is to find her at all in any other saving sense, it must be through unconscious fellowship or like-mindedness with that Spirit Who is the Soul of her soul. With her is not merely the *pleroma*, but the true *gnosis*; and whether her acknowledged children learn to express her official formularies in the hearing of others understandingly or not, *they know that they know*; because the Spirit that is in her *beareth witness to their spirit that they are the children of God, and joint heirs through her with Christ that they may be glorified*. These are the *unutterable groanings of the Holy Ghost* which every sincere Catholic who meditates at all hears within his own soul, in season and out of season, *in testimony that his faith is true*. In so far forth, at least, he has *heard the larger Word of God and kept it*; and he is potentially as dear to Our Lord's Heart as though he were *Father and Mother and brother and sister in one*. To inculcate such an attitude of mind toward *the faith once delivered to the saints* is not to exaggerate the teaching office of the Church or to confound a reasonably evangelical theory of "assistance" with one of habitual inspiration. Neither Councils nor Popes have ever claimed to be inspired; though both have declared that all

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the canonical books of Holy Scripture were composed under the influence of that potent but undefined charisma *for our comfort and instruction* and "have had God for their Author." Perhaps, if one reflects upon it, he will see that "assistance," in spite of its purely negative character, may be a more merciful gift than habitual inspiration after all. It would seem to be a diviner, a more facile economy, and more in keeping with the prejudgments of the Incarnation as It was worked out in prophecy and in history. It strikes a more condescending balance than the latter could between the exigencies of faith and the demands of reason, and so leaves life at once more human in the main and more responsive to the ventures whose braveries issue resplendently in merit. It ought not to surprise the candid enquirer, therefore, to find that Catholics, whose predilections have been providentially shaped toward such a view of revelation as the one we have attempted to set forth, should look askance at all attempts to lift an inert page, however sacred its content or even its particular and imagined import may be, to that plane of spiritual influence wherein only organisms instinct with life may move and have their being. Better a personal teacher than a dark and impersonal book. The well-instructed Catholic, of course, will be far from wishing to imply that the Bible, even in its printed and most mechanical aspect, is altogether a dead thing. Even in that guise it seems to overflow with life; but private judgment and an indiscriminate license of exegesis by all orders of minds, trained or untrained, tend to clothe

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it with the inert character to which we have alluded. A living society, founded and perpetuated as Our Lord's visible Church has been, must ever signify more for the religious conscience than a written message clumsily divined through layers of alien and often remote media and personally applied by the poor farthing light of unrestricted human conjecture.

That is the case for the Catholic and his theoretic attitude toward the Bible stated at its briefest. Protestants may quarrel with the grounds of its contention, if they will; but granting the premises—and one might as well grant them; for, as principles, they are older than any portion of the New Testament itself—they can neither accuse us of superstition; nor charge us with religious obscurantism; though, as we shall see, they may tax us with inconsistency when confronted by the rubric and the textual contents of those wonderful liturgical compilations, the Mass Book and the Breviary, on nearly every page of which our forgotten Scripture reads us a daily lesson of exhortation and reproof.

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THE Church makes use of Holy Writ for two chief ends which have been sufficiently outlined by St. Paul in a well-known passage in the Epistle to the Romans. *Quaecunque enim scripta sunt* (he observes), *ad nostram doctrinam scripta sunt, ut per patientiam et consolationem Scripturarum spem habeamus—whatsoever things have*

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been written have been written for our instruction that by means of the endurance and consolation which Scripture gives we may have hope. Instruction and spiritual comfort, then, constitute, according to St. Paul, the double purpose of the Church's unwearying iterations. She must inform the general understanding of her children and steady their hearts and wills by constant reference to that Word which is described by the Psalmist as *a lamp to the feet* not less than as *a refuge in time of trouble*. At intervals the instruction is formal, solemn, explicit; as when she weaves a text into a conciliar definition, or embodies it without change as an integral element, and not merely as a logical principle, in an *ex-cathedra* pronouncement of her most authoritative see. From the nature of the case such direct teaching is infrequent and circumscribed; seeing that the number of unequivocally dogmatic texts is not large, and that *ex-cathedra* definitions are not formulated for the asking. It is by more indirect channels, rather, that her workaday mind appears; and she betrays it significantly enough in the sympathetic oversight she gives to the growth of those popular judgments on the Bible which furnish, when rightly diagnosed, an infallible criterion of orthodoxy. Certain unforgettable texts are thus fused into the imagination and conscience of her followers; and a true *sensus fidelium* is fostered on the meaning, say, of the opening verses of St. John's Gospel, on St. Luke's account of the Annunciation, on the Trinitarian significance of the baptismal formula, on the mysteriously metaphysical import of the

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words of consecration used by Our Lord at the Last Supper and repeated daily all over the world in the Mass, on the purport of the promised keys and the implications involved in the divine commission to remit or retain sin; and in a score of other instances which might be drawn out at length. In this sense the Church may be said to use Scripture as an instrument for the communication of knowledge almost without ceasing; and her pronouncements are as manifold as the media, personal or otherwise, in which these ancient and apostolic contentions appear. But, as the text which we have been considering reminds us, it is the mission of Our Lord's Church to do more than teach. Like that other Word of God of which she is the inerrant Interpreter, she has been established *for our comfort as well as for our instruction*; and it is through the lyric overflow of her incomparable liturgy that she appeases, almost from hour to hour and through all the days of the unfaltering year, this holier necessity of her life. Here, if anywhere, the *charity of Christ presseth her*. *She hath brought us forth in Him in baptism*, enduing us with life in His death, and *she is straitened until His very Self be formed in us*. *I live now not I!* Through that further mystery, that quasi-Incarnation and pleroma of derived sonship, God begins to be all in all even here and now. *Thy Kingdom come*, she cries tirelessly through her round of canonical hours; *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven!* In that will lies our essential comfort; in that freely tendered obedience is our ultimate peace. And it is, appositely

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enough, in Scripture that she discovers the *oil of gladness, the corn and the wine* of all extra-sacramental consolation, in Scripture not disdainfully searched apart from the collective understanding of the brethren, but conned and mastered in charity, as she has conned it and mastered it through nearly twice a thousand years of daily and nightly watching, until use and custom have made of it for her a thing “embalmed and treasured up” to a purpose beyond even our dearest dreams of life.

iv

THE Roman Breviary and Mass Book are doubtless not the only evidences of this accumulated and betaught insight; but as they represent approximately and in their present form the most authentic utterance of the inner mind of the Western Church on the discreeter use of Scripture, as the skeleton-plan of their arrangement can be traced back almost indisputably to the fifth century and be all but identified, under certain restrictions, with usages that obtained much earlier still, as they have been the object of at least one great conciliar revision and been saved from extravagance before and since that time by watchful and saintly Popes, it is to them that the questioning student, not less than the unquestioning worshipper, will have recourse, if he would learn to read the Bible as the Holy Ghost has probably intended it to be read from the days of the First Christian Pentecost onward. Nor ought one to object that a consideration of

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this sort tends to blur the clear distinctions that centuries of canonical usage have established between the liturgical obligations of the clergy and the lesser burdens of the laity. Time was, and that not so very long since in the history of the Church, when devout laymen followed a portion of the Breviary office every day and good women accounted it no singularity to carry a Book of Hours. Traces of the custom may be said to survive fitfully still in the waning enthusiasm for Vespers and Compline. The edifying practice of private lay-devotion to other portions of the daily office, and notably to Matins and Lauds, obtained in many parts of Europe as recently as the beginning of the last century, and vestiges of it may be found in England, in France and in Southern Germany even still. Many more things than the decay of spiritual fervor contributed, no doubt, to bring in a change. Protestantism was a force at one time that the Church had every reason to dread. Its ethos was to be popular, to be pliant, to be individual and unrestrained. A religion burdened with such minutiae of choir-service and rubric as the Breviary seemed to imply could hardly expect to meet it on any but the hardest terms. Much, therefore, was instinctively sacrificed without a thought of the consequences entailed upon later times. The gradual disappearance, too, of Latin as the indispensable language of the learned, the efforts of pastors to keep conviction alive in their flocks by newer and more intelligible forms of devotion, and, perhaps more remotely, but assuredly not less directly, the all-venturing zeal of the

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earlier Jesuits who unwittingly shaped a policy for their order, and through their order for the Church, in the almost more than Pauline breadth of compromise with which they consented to give up everything but the plainest style of preaching and insistence upon the practice of a sacramental life, if only the masses could be kept in touch with the heart of the ancient faith—these were some of the influences among others still darker and more recondite that may be said to have blunted the lay sense of Latin Christendom to the spiritual effectiveness of one of its most inexhaustible fountains of strength. In this unnoted change of spirit the laity did but treat the Breviary and its spiritual contents as they had already begun to treat the Bible at large; with this difference, however, that their mental aloofness was, in this latter instance, not due to fear. Their minds were distracted and at last turned permanently in other directions by the accepted departures of the time. The Gospels and, in a less degree, the Epistolary portions of the Missal were in happier case. Trent had held its ægis above them. The admirable discipline which re-enjoined their public reading along with a brief homiletic explanation of their practical purport from Sunday to Sunday ever since has kept them fresh in the popular heart. They are the best known and most operative portions of Holy Writ stirring in the Catholic conscience to-day.

It is no disloyalty to the actual Church to grieve over a departed good. Regretfully to sigh for the wider and greener pastures out of which they have been constrained

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to wander will hardly render the laity suspect to the shepherds of their souls whose business it is, after all, to lead them thither if they can. Especially is this true, when, as in the present juncture, the Church herself beckons so unremittingly to all her children to return. The discipline of the Breviary is as vigorous with her at the outset of the twentieth century as it was in pre-Reformation times. Why should the laity, then, not be invited to share intelligently in its delights? Rome has modified her usage; she has not altered her spirit. Carven stalls may be further to seek; there may be less choir-singing; there is, if anything, more private, but still liturgical, reading on the part of her sacred ministers. It would be well to bear that in mind before stigmatizing the attempts that are now making at Farnborough, Maredsous and Toulouse as "mere antiquarianism masquerading under the guise of orthodoxy." Surely it is a counsel to strive after the beauty of holiness? Was it not said in praise of the leaders of Israel that they were *pulchritudinis studium habentes*? And where shall we find that enthusiasm for the decorum of worship more winningly embodied than in the Scripture-excerpts, the chiming half-sentences and responds of a book whose daily changing burden of lesson, of strophe and of psalm ought to stir the understanding heart of the true believer as with the blown music of cathedral bells freighted with the memories and the raptures of all our ripest and most Catholic years?

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v

A WORD in explanation rather than in defence seems called for, when the present seasonal arrangement of the Breviary parts of Holy Writ is taken into account. There is no question, of course, of an altered text; the very idea of the Breviary is at issue with such a contingency, as a glance at the various papal bulls and other ecclesiastical documents prefixed to the present editions of the book will show. But, if there is no question of an altered text, there may be, and for many religious temperaments there must be, the difficulty of an altered context. The sacred books are not read in the order of the Tridentine canon; and their sequence in the sacred office is not an obvious one to minds unaccustomed to liturgical worship and with no feeling for the dramatic instincts of the Church. Why should the ecclesiastical year begin with Isaiah and end with Malachy? Why should St. Paul be the author for the Epiphany season and Genesis the book for Septuagesima? The reason, of course, is to be sought partly in historical precedent, but mainly in those transmitted prepossessions of corporate faith which have made of the various liturgies of Catholic Christendom a perpetually re-enacted cycle of commemorations designed to keep the fervent believer close to Our Lord. The usage of the Roman Church for the past fourteen centuries, at least, has been consistently more austere, more single-minded, and—when the *Matin-lessons* of her earliest Sunday and, later on, of her ferial hours are

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taken into consideration—more sustainingly mystical and scriptural than any other that we know. The Greek liturgy provides for no Biblical excerpts or lections in its non-eucharistic office. Rome has been familiar with them in one form or another probably since the days of the earlier Benedictine rule; some would say, conjecturally, from a much earlier period. She has laid every portion of Holy Writ under contribution, and has shown a regard for the Old Testament that the Eastern Churches, in spite of their more exuberant genius for sacred metaphor and parable, have never permitted themselves to share. If she is more restrained in expression, more cautious and reasonable in outlook, she seems to correct her reserve by being more typical¹ too. She reveals

¹ To have a feeling for types implies something more than being merely poetically responsive to recondite analogies. As not a little confusion seems to exist in the lay mind on this matter, owing to the loose employment of such terms as *literal*, *spiritual*, *figurative*, *typical*, *accommodated*, *metaphorical*, *anagogic*, *moral*, and the like, in defining the sense of particular passages of Scripture, we think it well to paraphrase some very pertinent remarks of St. Thomas which seem admirably suited to clear away the difficulties that occur in the ordinary course of one's liturgical reading. God (the Saint tells us S. T. Q. i, art. 10) is the Author of Scripture. It is, therefore, not only in His power to adapt words, as man does, to express His meaning, but he can overrule historical events and particular human actions in order to assert His will or to reveal His secret mind. This is what gives to Scripture its *mysteriousness*, using the word in its most literal and philosophic sense. It is reasonable to look for a *further message* behind the plain or obvious purport of the sacred words, where the context permits it, because the events (*res ipsæ*) that the words portray are themselves an utterance of God, and, so far, set forth the divine

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an insight into the present applicability of Old Testament sayings and events that singles her Breviary out from every other book of its kind in the Christian world. She is dignified, pointed and spiritual in her choice where

pronouncements. This *further message* the Saint calls the *spiritual meaning* of the text or passage in question ; and he distinguishes it from (but does not oppose it to) the *literal or historic sense*. This latent sub-meaning, so to call it, this divinely conveyed lesson behind the thing said or done, may be addressed to the believer in several ways, according as it ^a) leads the soul from the consideration of a type to the thing typified or in inverse wise, in which case we have the *typical sense* ; or ^b) makes of the persons or events of Scripture a guide or warning as to conduct, in which case we have the *moral sense* ; or ^c) enables one to behold in the ordinances of our present religious life a kind of sacrament, or shadow, or foretaste of what is to come in the life hereafter, in which case we have the *anagogic sense* ; a term, be it observed, which our better English writers identify with the *mystical or allegorical*. If it can be shown that any one of these particular meanings is divinely intended over and beyond the plain literal sense of a given passage, that meaning is, of course, a *true Word of God* ; and is to be accepted as such ; with this reservation, however, that *it cannot be made a medium of demonstration or proof*. St. Thomas omits to assign the reason of this logical limitation ; but he goes on to make good his primary contention that the theory of involved or multiplied meanings in Scripture need beget no confusion of mind in those who take the trouble to understand its reservations. These various spiritual meanings are not essentially opposed to the literal (which from the nature of the case is always singular and one), but are built upon it in such wise as never to nullify its content. He warns us, moreover, that *the literal sense is the only one we can hold to when there is question of verifying dogmas*. He does not mean, of course, that dogmas are not frequently referred to in a dark way under these mysterious utterances of Holy Writ, but that there is no necessary article of belief in our Catholic Creed, hinted at in any of these spiritually cryptic sayings, which is not explicitly declared in some plainer and more literal statement of the Bible. The entire

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the others are but far-fetched and fanciful at best; and in her wonderful and semi-scriptural responds she betrays an inerrant pragmatism and passion for reproof, which, even in the absence of nearly every other credential, might article, which is naturally more compact, both in thought and expression, than our logical paraphrase of it, is abundant in suggestion and will amply repay the student who endeavors, sincerely and with no intolerant modern bias, to get at its subtler meaning. We subjoin a scheme in outline which will throw light on the Saint's several distinctions.

The Sense of Scripture may be	literal, <i>i.e.</i> ,	or	conveying the plain or obvious meaning of the words taken in the natural connotation of their original utterance. This sense can never be excluded by the others. It is unique, instructive, direct. It is the only sense which may be used as a medium of demonstration. It will go into a syllogism, whereas the others will not. Great learning and some ability to get at the sense of Oriental idioms are needed in order to arrive at it.
	spiritual, <i>i.e.</i> , not apparent to the casual reader. This sense may be	^a figurative, <i>i.e.</i> , dealing in <i>divinely intended</i> metaphors, allegories, types. Cf. Hebr. vii. ^b moral, <i>i.e.</i> , enforcing, either by way of warning or of counsel, a <i>divinely intended</i> lesson in conduct, <i>v.g.</i> , the sin of Saul; the fall of David; Solomon's idolatry; Our Lord's behavior toward His persecutors. ^c anagogic, <i>i.e.</i> , prophetic of the life to come, <i>v.g.</i> , <i>Take ye and eat</i> . Many texts in the Epistle to the Hebrews and the greater number in the Book of the Apocalypse would seem to be of this character.	

N.B.—It is hardly necessary to point out that the *accommodated sense*, as Sunday preachers and spiritual writers sometimes avail themselves of it for purposes of instruction and exhortation, is not a *divinely intended sense* at all, but a purely human, if edifying, adaptation of an inspired utterance applied to the needs of the moment.

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go far to justify her claim to be heaven's unique mystagogue to the individual soul. Surely, it was not man alone, we say, who guided her in these preferences. Whether we seek an explanation for them in the initial impulse given to her thoughts in those remote days when Greek was still the language of her public prayers and a strain of healthy Hellenic tradition gave balance to the minds into whose spiritual dialect she translated the truths entrusted to her keeping, or whether we take refuge in a simpler hypothesis and account for them by the personal bent of the unknown worshippers of the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries who first gave her daily readings out of Scripture their present significant collocation, the fact remains that the Breviary excerpts as we know them to-day are strangely, most appositely, most Messianically, symbolic. They plead for the Word; they speak of Its incomings to the solitary soul. Jesus-Messiah, the Christ of our Catholic faith, is their invariable theme; and the mystery of His Incarnation the never-failing key to their inspired contents. From such a point of view the Christian year becomes but a too-brief circle of Christophanies from the days of the soul's mystical waiting at Advent down to the Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Our Lord, followed by the coming of His Holy Spirit at Whitsuntide. All that is read through the after-weeks, the burden of summer and of autumn, is but a myriad-times repeated echo of the lessons that hinge variously for the Catholic conscience upon that pivotal Life.

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To be well versed in Scripture thus ordered and juxtaposed is to be familiar with the most venerable and stimulating of prayer-books; hardly a noticeable attainment in the world's eyes, perhaps; but in the eyes of the Church, at least, a consummation devoutly to be achieved; seeing that it enables the pondering heart to realize what is best in the Bible and to possess the substance of its ever-seasonable message understandingly and from within.

It has not been thought necessary to append marginal references to the capitular quotations. Their source will be found to be sufficiently indicated by the ecclesiastical season in which they occur. As for those texts which appear in the body of the Essays, it is believed they are too classic to need identification.

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[ISAIAH i-vii, xi, xiii, xiv, xvi, xix, xxiv, xxv, xxvi, xxviii, xxxiii, xxxv, xli, xlii, li, lxiv, lxvi.]

I

“CONCERNING JUDAH AND JERUSALEM”

Give ear, O earth!

ISRAEL'S need of redemption was but the shadow of that larger need which made the whole world poor until Our Lord came to enrich it; and the world's need in pre-Christian days was, in its turn, but a melancholy parable of the soul's eternal need. The heart of man can be satisfied with nothing less than a sacramental Christ, a Christ, that is, Who is always with us. The God Who stoops to save us must be something more than a Memory; something more than a Presence; He must be an ever-living, ever-operative Force. Isaiah rightly describes Him, therefore, as *Emmanuel*. He never leaves His Church; He never abandons the individual conscience while life lasts. He pleads for its return, no matter how steeped it may be in guilt. That seems to be the attitude of mind in which the Church would have us ponder the Scripture lessons which she appoints for the beginning of the ecclesiastical year. We are to enter upon a new cycle of commemorations; and the thought of the first and most human of them, the temporal birth of Our Blessed Lord, is intended to steady the heart which has

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grown distracted with the consciousness of sin. The drama of Redemption is enacted over and over again each time that a soul passes from guilt to repentance. When the Christian conscience assumes the rôle of prophet, the burden of its message to the rebellious will is best expressed under the imagery and appeal of Isaiah. In all the pages of the Old Testament there are few lessons that have so completely taken hold of the understanding and imagination of Christendom as his. Father à Lapide calls him the “ Evangelist of the Old Dispensation ”; and when one remembers the things he revealed to his generation about the life and passion of Our Lord, the constitution of His Church, and the uplifting of the nations through her ministry, one can understand why his writings should be singled out before all others as most in tune with the instinctive thoughts of the Catholic heart during Advent-tide. Those who endeavor to cultivate seasonable-mindedness in their devotions can do nothing better during these coming weeks than refresh their memories with the religious lessons which Isaiah enforces, and bring their sacramental life, so far as they are able, into line with his teaching. They will do this best, no doubt, by a discreet and systematic use of his more striking chapters as material for devout meditation; but if that religious practice is beyond them, they can at least spend some time each week in devout preparation for the Sunday office of Mass and Vespers by reading set portions of his prophecies nightly before retiring. *Saint Isaiah, Herald and Prophet of Emmanuel, pray for us!*

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II

“GET THEE GLASS EYES!”

I have brought up children and made them rich; but they have despised Me:

FEW trials are more bitter to a father's heart than filial ingratitude. Perhaps, if the truth were known, it is a more frequent experience than the majority of us would like to admit; but, even so, it is one of those griefs that are never dulled by commonness. The most pathetic tragedy in all our literature finds its master motive in the derangement and mental chaos that the shock of such a sorrow brings to a nobly affectionate heart. The fiction of King Lear strikes home because its elements are so human and so true; yet King Lear is only a parable. A more poignant reality may be found at any time if we can but muster up courage enough to search our own hearts and take count of our ingratitude to God. He has not only brought us up; He has made us rich in Christ's Church; and *we have despised Him*. Israel's offence is pardonable beside our own. Think of the clearer light in which we have lived, the larger and braver bounty in which we have shared! We have tears for a fabled king, discrowned and dishonored by unnatural daughters; but we have no tears for God, none for Christ. That is an anomaly worth thinking about in Advent time.

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III

HALF-KNOWLEDGE

Israel hath not known Me, and my people hath not understood:

ONE of the sharpest reproaches of love is the charge it is so often compelled to make of being at best but half understood. Because its life begins naturally in intuition it is impatient of cautious scrutiny; it will brook no reserves of the understanding. To be slow in knowledge is to be dim-sighted in faith; and love lives by faith or not at all. It is through faith, and in the understanding that faith begets, that the will, which represents its fuller life, its life in action and fruition, passes into trust and becomes one with the soul of its desire. God had appointed a wonderful destiny for Israel; but Israel's dream was set on something else. It was not merely a stiff-necked people; it was an adulterous people as well; it never realized the height and depth and might of the love that had followed it from the beginning and was to follow it so unselfishly down to the end. If the great divorce took place at last it was because the final rupture between the Synagogue and Christ was the crowning act of a series of misunderstandings that ended, as misunderstandings inevitably tend to do, in open apostasy. The tragedy of Sarah and Hagar was enacted once more. God sought a

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new Bride in the Christian Church. Membership in that Church depends on knowledge just as vitally to-day as it did under the conditions of the earlier alliance in which God was cast out of the heart of the Synagogue, because the *Israel did not know, because the people would not understand*. The unfaith of nearly all perverts begins in half-knowledge. Mutual understanding is impossible where the heart will not inquire. One can never know too much, in a speculative way, about the teachings of the Church; one can never be too familiar with her past history; but it is possible to achieve distinction in such knowledge, and yet to be of those of whom God says: *They have not known; they have not understood*. The knowledge that saves us from that divine reproach is a knowledge of the heart; it is a practical knowledge; it is a knowledge acquired by living in constant and almost daily renewed touch with the sources of sacramental life. Remember that when you find the merely intellectual side of your nature growing perplexed by the difficulties of a world that does not understand, because it does not obey. It has never learned how to serve unselfishly, because it has never learned that the ministry of love is without measure.

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IV

AUTHADY AND TORPOR

The whole head is sick and the whole heart is sad:

INSENSIBILITY to divine chastisements is one of the most terrible forms of spiritual torpor. So long as a man's conscience has its waking hours there is hope; but when that part of him lies down for its winter sleep, then is there desolation in his soul, indeed. Nothing hardens the heart like wilful deafness. To try to stifle the inner monitor by advancing resolutely and with a kind of defiance to a second or a third sin, is to throw in one's lot with demons. Of them it is written, as well as of the world in which they are allowed for a time to rule, that they are hardened in wickedness—in *malignitate positi*. There are sinners who will try to encourage you to follow in their footsteps by holding out the hope that one day you will not mind. That was Lucifer's fortitude. It means that one day you will be so insensible to the idea of divine punishment that the *whole head will grow sick, and the whole heart will be sad*. Your faith will cease to have meaning for you; your conscience will forbear to protest. That state is the sure forerunner to final impenitence. It is the insensibility of the Second Death from which there is no waking up. To be forgotten forever by God is, on its objective side, the central and innermost anguish of hell.

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V

THE SACRAMENTAL CHRIST AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTER

A flower shall spring up out of his root:

THE root that Isaiah speaks of is, of course, the House of David and the flower is the *Word made Flesh*. In Christ Our Lord, the Son of Mary, our nature has reached its fullest and fairest blossom. Beyond the moral pattern He gave us man can never go. We spend our days dreaming of ideals that can seldom be realized; but here is one Ideal put within our reach by God, Who made the hearts of the dullest of us hungry for dream-stuff, and It is so real and tangible that we can apprehend It in the least of the sacraments. Our Blessed Lord is not only the *Flower of the Root of Jesse*; He is the Flower of the root of human character also. If by frequent confession and Communion we strive to achieve that refashioned Self which was born in us in baptism, if we remember from day to day that our religion is first and last a *sacramental religion*, and that Christ, to borrow a bold phrase from St. Paul, is *formed anew in us* chiefly by means of the Holy Eucharist, a new flower shall spring up out of the thirsty ground of our hearts, and its beauty shall be the measure of the manhood we have developed in Him. *I live now, not I!* It is doing no violence to St. Paul's words to

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understand them in that mystical sense. The *thanksgiving* he so often insists upon as the highest and holiest of Christian duties is in reality a *Eucharistic* service. *As therefore you have received Jesus Christ, the Lord, walk ye in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and confirmed in the faith, as also you have learned, abounding in Him, in thanksgiving!* It is good to remind oneself of these fundamental aspects of the supernatural at a time when the air is full of contrarious philosophies, theories of belief and conduct coldly at variance with the ideas which the Church has preached in every age of her history. What was sound advice for the Colossians ought not to be questionable advice for us. The deceits and traditions of the schools are not less vain to-day; *the elements of the world* are not less opposed to the *elements of Christ*. *God-head still dwells in Him corporeally, even if sacramentally.* A good Advent Communion fills us with Him *who is the head of all principality and power*. No Catholic has ever yet succeeded in developing a type of religious individualism worth an honest man's notice that was not fostered in sacramental ground. The root is faith; the flower is the Christ we are called to become.

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VI

THE SACRAMENTAL CHRIST AND THE DETERIORATION OF CHARACTER

A flower shall spring up out of his root:

SPIRITUAL growth is the inevitable result of contact with Him Who is at once the *Light and the Life of men*. Wherever you detect deterioration of character in Catholics, whether among the young or among the old, be sure that Holy Communion as an habitual practice is either misused or neglected altogether. If you are concerned, therefore, in the reform of those who are dear to you, strive gently, first of all, to bring them back to confession, or to a more frequent hearing of Holy Mass. Advice may be good; but the sacraments are better. Few characters know how to impart counsel skilfully. The unregenerate heart is impatient of being preached to. A word out of season is a goad to exasperation when it does not harden one to hypocrisy. Leave the sad business to Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist. *He is the Word in season*; and He will know better than you, better than all books or advisers in this world, how to bring the flower, which is the growth of knowledge and desire, out of the dry ground which has all but starved it.

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VII

THE INCARNATION AND THE WORLD OF THOUGHT

A flower shall spring up out of his root:

WHAT goes on in the walled garden of the individual soul has its counterpart in the general life of the Church. There are scholars who affect to believe that the best products of Catholic thought have been produced under the shock of heresy. A mere reference to the schools and cloisters of the Middle Age ought to be enough to rebut so dubious a contention. Even if one be constrained to admit, what seems open to serious question, that the finer flowers of orthodox belief are to be found in our scientific treatises of theology, and not rather in those more characteristic expressions of the Church's mind which we possess in books like the *Rhythms* of St. Ephraim the Syrian, the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, the *Following of Christ*, the *Vida* of St. Teresa, the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, and the immense collection of almost inspired hymns and mystical writings left us by the saints and contemplatives of every age, it still remains true that the greatest and most stimulating cycle of theological essays the world has ever known, the vast monument of exposition and speculation, namely, left us by St. Thomas of Aquin under the title of the *Summa*, was not, as a whole, the result of heresy at all, but the

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outcome, rather, of the devout thought of one of the most original thinkers of all time, who endeavored to foster in his own soul those roots of dogma about God and Christ which it is the mission of the Church to bring variously to flower in every generation. Faith is the prolific root of ten thousand flowers of poetry and sound devotion of which each one can best make his own private inventory. How barren heresy is of these things! The east has had no vigorous body of theological literature to show since its bishops passed into schism. Protestant Christendom has produced no à Kempis; it has given us nothing comparable to St. Francis of Sales on *The Love of God*.

VIII

HOW DEVOTION IS BORN

A flower shall spring up out of his root:

A MAN'S religion ought to grow as a plant grows. Our Lord Himself suggests the analogy in the parable of the mustard-seed. In the case of many of us faith is a small, a hardly noticeable, thing at first; but its roots are in the heart; and it is alive. The belief and profession and habitual grace of one's baptism will make themselves felt as the soul matures and the conscience, under the quickening influence of the Holy Ghost, begins to feel its responsibilities. Then the day of trial comes. The sap has pushed upward and outward until fold after fold of un-

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suspected tissue spreads itself quietly to the influences of air and sunshine, to rain and dewfall, and all the other secret feeding-channels of life. We are tested at last. The stem springs into blossom. Devotion is born; and we become something better than an unflowered growth. If interior acquiescence in the Church's teaching be the root of our Catholicism, living and enthusiastic loyalty to Our Lord as shown in the outer devotions of the faithful will be the fruit that will prove our acquiescence sincere. There are Catholics who hold aloof from all participation in the non-ritualistic and informal worship of the crowd. The exuberant popularizations of this blind instinct for variety in service, which they usually stigmatize as pardonable superstition, are no part of their creed, they say. They have little taste for "novenas," for "May devotions," for "confraternities," and the like. They seldom or never say the Rosary; they speak critically, and like men whose minds are honey-combed with doubt, when they are brought face to face with striking manifestations of the general drift of the ordinary faithful at particular seasons or places. They have never understood this saying of the Prophet that *a flower shall spring up out of the root of Jesse*. They do not suspect how wonderful and various is its life; how many-hued and pleasant-savored! Because their own roots are dry they fancy that all the trees of the wood should be barren.

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IX

PERFECTERS OF PRAISE

A flower shall spring up out of his root :

DEVOTION to Our Blessed Lady is one of the most winning flowers of faith. No man ever yet loved the human Mother of the Word-made-Flesh without entering more intimately and understandingly into the great body of the Church's teaching for that gracious instinct of his Catholic nature. The history of all apostasies, whether they be private and individual, or so general as rightly to be called racial or national, bears out the assertion. It is not among the consistent worshippers of Mary that you will find the saddest and most hopeless perverts. Love for her goes hand in hand with a spirit that is wonderfully like the spirit of Our Lord's first converts; the instinctive trustfulness of Peter and James and John; of Philip and Matthew and Nathanael. It may be hard to define satisfactorily in word; but we all recognize it, whether we meet it among the ranks of the learned, or amid the vaster millions of the unlettered in every era and clime. It is a kind of secret regard for an inner austerity of soul, a strange inarticulate passion for bodily chastity, that shows itself in an instinctive reverence for all who achieve it. Side by side with this ennobling bias there is usually

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found associated with it a tenderness and simplicity of heart that mark their owner even in old age as essentially a child, one of Our Lord's perfecters of praise, who constitute the real strength of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Cleanness of heart and simplicity of mind—are not these the very qualities of spirit which ensure that *good will* without which faith is never found? Oh, it is no uncritical enthusiasm, no sweet perversity of devotion, which is accountable for the wide-spread impression that has obtained now for so many generations in the Church of Christ, that devotion to Mary is at least one of the signs of divine election! She is the *Root of Jesse*, and out of the instinct which the wise filial thought of her invariably implants in the youthful soul there is born the perfect flower which we call sacramental familiarity with Our Lord.

There are some who prate to us about excess in these things. Let us, for her honor's sake, curb excess wherever we find it. But Mary is Christ's mother, after all; and what will you do? As we contemplate the Flower can we forget the Root? Was it reason or excess that made the woman in the Gospel cry out in her magnificent way: *Blessed the womb that bore Thee and the breasts that gave Thee suck?* The Church has never forgotten that cry. She utters it herself daily as the fittest and most satisfying epilogue to her daily round of ordered prayer and song: *Beata viscera Mariæ Virginis quæ portaverunt æterni Patris Filium: Et beata ubera quæ lactaverunt Christum Dominum!*

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X

THE RESOURCES OF THE CHURCH

Sion is the City of our Strength:

THE Church is strong in a hundred things, because Our Lord has promised to be with her in mystical wise down to the consummation of the world. She is strong in her indefectible faith, strong in the sacraments which constantly renew in her the springs of holiness, strong in her government and discipline, strong in her bede-roll of saints and intercessors, strong in her unbroken apostolicity, strong in her attitude towards unity, strong in her possession of the Word of Life. These are but some of the manifold energies which one is sure to meet with if he tries in all sincerity to know her from within. *He shall go up and down her streets; he shall make the circuit of her ramparts, her walls and outer-walls, and everywhere he shall find Salvation.* Christ is her Corner Stone and Pinnacle! He is the Measure of her impregnability. She must endure, because she is founded and builded upon Him.

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XI

AS OTHERS SEE HER

He that believeth shall not hasten away:

ALL do not see the Church from the inside. There are millions who have never capitulated to her. The sight of her open gates may fill them with wonder; but they are not drawn to enter in. What is it that compels so many of them to stand apart in awe? It is that very strength which constitutes the life and the essential peace of those who understand her. The spectacle of a hierarchical and sacramental Church, claiming to regulate the innermost wills of her children, frightens a certain type of soul. It cannot accept the divine paradox about winning one's freedom. *If the Son shall have set you free, then are you free indeed.* It is only through servitude to Christ that the higher liberty may be found. Is not this secret fear or resentment of theirs a fresh testimony to the truth of the Prophet's boast that *Sion's wall and outer-wall shall be established by God in Christ? He is set for the fall as well as for the resurrection of many in Israel and out of it.* Not that He destroys independently of our deserts;—God forbid!—but that some characters love their own independence too well to close with Him. The enemies of the Church have charged her with many counts; they have alleged many defects; but few have

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ever accused her of weakness or inadequacy. Indeed, the majority of her critics think her too strong. Her magnificent experience of good and evil, stretching back over twenty of the ripest centuries of human endeavor, only inspires these minds with the same sort of mistrust that one instinctively feels in the presence of a cynic. She has probed our nature too well not to be able to play upon it. Her appeal to the radical hunger of the heart is dismissed on the ground of its astuteness. Objections of this sort may sadden; but they should not dismay. If the conscience of man is a great deep, the judgments of Christ are deeper. Those whose fears are actuated by sincerity shall enter in some day, unwittingly or openly, as the Holy Ghost may appoint; but those whose fear is actuated by self-love or self-worship, or by secret indulgence in sins which they will not give up, will hold to their covenant of death. "It seems impossible," says Pascal, "that those who love God with all their heart should not recognize the Church, her claims are so evident. And equally impossible it is for the Church to convince those who love not God." The reason is given us in that very song of the Prophet which is rehearsed in the liturgy of the Monday of the third Week in Advent. Those who love not God have unconsciously *made lies their refuge, and under falsehood have they hid themselves. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold I lay in Sion for a foundation, a Stone, a tried Stone, a precious corner Stone, a sure Foundation. He that believeth shall not hasten away!* It is the thought of the Church's solid-

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ity, her uncompromising scorn of the merely new thing, her indifference to opinion as opposed to dogma, that wins the single-minded seeker after truth.

XII

THE INDEFATIGABLENESS OF FAITH

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee:

To be unshaken in one's Catholic faith; to hold steadfastly on one's way amid the growing obscurities that knowledge and education are reputed to multiply; to remit nothing of one's earlier fervor; to be as insistent as a well-brought-up child in fulfilling the pieties that we learned at our mother's knee or afterward from wise counsellors in our school days—this is to make *Sion the City of our Strength*; this is to achieve that personal salvation which is appointed for each one of us *in her walls and bulwarks*. It is by an almost mechanical adherence to the routine of sacramental practice that the greater part of intellectual men and women in middle life are saved from the coldness that ends in tacit apostasy. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee. . . . Yea, in the way of Thy judgment, O Lord, have we waited for Thee; the desire of our soul is to Thy Name and to Thy Memorial!*

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XIII

DISDAIN AS DISEASE

Woe to thee that spurnest, shalt not thou thyself be spurned?

SCORN is pride in anger; and though, like pride, as St. Thomas reminds us, it may have its permissible uses, yet ordinarily it is but the vicious mood of an unlovely and sinful state of heart. All, therefore, that Scripture and the writings of the Saints contain by way of warning against the one may be understood, in a qualified sense, of the other. In its reprehensible aspects it is radically a defect of the understanding. It blinds the eyes of the soul to the essential worth of the thing it suffers itself to misprize. Some vices are pleasant or tolerable to look upon. They do no perceptible hurt to one's unregenerate will at least; they may separate the conscience from Christ; but they work little apparent mischief to the aboriginal kindness of human nature. With scorn, as with pride, of which it is the ill-favored offspring, the case is notoriously different. It hurries its possessor from one excess to another. It descends by indiscretion, while it flatters itself the while that it is surely mounting to its proper sphere. Savages and ill-bred children are prone to it. If elderly folk yield themselves to its disorderliness it is because they are of the same category of the undis-

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ciplined and the untaught. The man in whom reason and will are pivoted in righteousness, moved only by the love of God and His works—better still, the Christian into whose conscience the grace of Christ has been permitted to enter like a new balancing force amid the chaos of the unsanctified passions, will never deliberately surrender himself to its whims. The various forms of its essential grotesqueness with which the art of caricature has familiarized the race—the fixed, or averted, or disdainfully downcast, eye; the lifted brow; the haughty gesture; the inhuman curl of the lip—these things, which never fail to excite the disgust or the ridicule of the healthy-minded, are only symbols, after all, of a still more revolting ugliness of the disdainful spirit within. It is not a little curious that both St. Thomas and the pagan Philosopher whose subtle power of analysis has been laid under contribution for the greatest treatise on the Christian virtues which the Church possesses, should tell us that pride is the enemy of magnanimity and that disdain and mean-spiritedness go often together. The reason is plain; both vices are the rank growth of an inordinately selfish spirit. Christ, Who is the great Gardener, will cast no precious seed into the heart in which such stuff is allowed to increase.

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XIV

AN USURIOUS GAIN

Shalt not thou thyself be spurned?

THE Prophet's denunciation finds fresh fulfilment in every life in which scorn plays an unchecked part. Misprision is sure to meet with misprision; disdain engenders disdain in return. Few characters are so friendless in this world as those that elect to *sit in the seat of the scorner*. Women in whom the original sweetness of their sex has gone sour through failure are the chief offenders. The school-child with the devil's talent for nicknames, the society woman—commonly a shrew at home and a spiteful gossip abroad—who shoots her barbed clevernesses recklessly without a pitiful thought of the hurt she is inflicting, the folk with a genius for invective—are not all these types parables and warnings in their way of the evil results of an habitual tendency toward scorn in the soul? They sow in uncharitableness; they reap in bitterness; and suffer from the life-long ill-will of their kind. If the secret history of ruined households, of parishes divided, of religious communities falling into decay, of whole churches and races set contrary to one another in churlishness, or schism, or hate, could only be set down plainly as God sees it from its roots to its Dead Sea fruit, the scorner's usurious gain would be understood better by

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ordinary Christians; and, being understood, might be met, perhaps, by a larger outlay of that whole-heartedness of speech which is one of Christ's presences in a loveless world.

XV

THE IDOLS OF THE BETTER CAVE

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf shall hear:

OUR Lord's human coming made a great difference in the world. One need not be a Catholic, or a Christian even, to see that. His power made itself felt in many significant ways; but perhaps it showed itself most illuminatingly of all in the curious insight it imparted to the human conscience. Man was henceforth to know God and think of him habitually *as in all things made like to himself, sin only excepted*. The impulse which the shepherds followed in obedience to the heavenly vision was the beginning of a new intellectual life, not to themselves only, but to all in the world who, like them, were willing *to go over to Bethlehem to see the strange thing that had come to pass*. Those that were good, and fearless, and single-minded in their quest of truth were henceforth to make their largest and most important discoveries in the moral order *in a cave*. Bethlehem was to become glorious. The Child Whom *Mary had brought forth there and enwrapped in the swaddling clothes* of helplessness was to

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lead the better teachers of His race and of all mankind. *The knowledge of God was to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.*

XVI

“THE WAY OF HOLINESS”

In the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert:

WE do not realize how ethically blind the world was before Our Lord came. Take the position of woman, the institution of marriage, the relations between master and servant, for instance; Christianity has so altered our fundamental notions of these things, that it is almost impossible for the modern mind to realize how cultivated pagans thought and reasoned about them. *The Glory of Lebanon, the Beauty of Carmel and Sharon* passed into the west. *The eyes of the blind were opened; the ears of the deaf were made to hear!*

XVII

ON “GOING OVER TO BETHLEHEM”

In the habitation of dragons . . . shall be grass with reeds and rushes:

THE miracle of the earlier Christian era is renewed in kind as often as a soul passes from long habits of sinfulness to a life of repentance. It grows in knowledge. Truths that were once dark to it become starry clear. Its

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outlook upon the world is altered for the better. It is readier to believe in human perfectibility. Chastity does not seem so impossible of attainment. Straightforwardness of belief and conduct are no longer cynically discredited in its eyes. Veracity becomes a virtue that the most commonplace may ambition. *It begins to believe in good; because it has gone over to Bethlehem.* It has been convinced of the Glory and Beauty that the spiritual creation has gained in Christ, just as one blind from his birth might be convinced of the wonders of the world of form and color by some sudden and unlooked-for mercy on the part of science. *Who, then, shall show us good?* it was wont to say; and having beheld that human aspect of Our Lord, which the Church wisely insists upon at Christmas-tide, having made experience of Him in the sacraments, it answers its own cry: *The God of Israel is good to them that hope in Him.* The arid places of the heart have been turned into pools that mirror a changed sky overhead. *The thirsty ground has broken into springs of living water!*

XVIII

ELECTION AND THE SACRAMENTAL LIFE

And thou Israel, my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen:

THAT souls are helped by the thought of a special call hardly needs demonstration. The history of Jansenism, to mention the most plausible of those more insidious forms of heretical belief which have owed their strength

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to this ineradicable instinct of man's nature, shows us at once the despair as well as the heroism to which human character may eventually be impelled under the influence of a preconceived theory of election or reprobation. Jansenism, as a tenable solution of the mystery which not even the bravest of us can ignore, is happily dead as a force for good or for evil in the Church that issued Eve-like and mother-like from Our Lord's wide-open side. No one may be sure of his' calling; yet an Apostle urges upon all of us the need of making the vocation that came to us in baptism eternally sure. How shall we do that? Not by secret pride or self-righteousness; not by overweening conceit in our own sense of the divine counsels; but rather in the constant touch of that *Right Hand of Israel's Just One through Whom we are comforted and saved*. From the standpoint of the Church Militant there is no royal road to final election but through a frequent, some would say, an almost daily, renewal of our sacramental life. *Suscepit te, Dexterâ Justi Mei!—The Right Hand of My Just One hath lifted thee up! Fear not; because I am with thee; waver not, because I am thy God! I have comforted thee and helped thee; and the Right Hand of My Just One hath lifted thee up!*

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XIX

WHEN COURAGE FAILS

Thou worm of Jacob :

No soul that aspires to an interior life, as it is called, to a life, that is, which is *hidden*—almost systematically and of set rule—*with Christ in God*, can escape the downweighings of despondency. Occasional discouragement is the inevitable lot of the bravest. Why should strugglers after perfection fare better in a world where everything goes by effort, and where constancy under trial is the supreme test of will? In proportion as one's aim is austere and high, so does the moral relaxation that depression seems to forebode bring in with it a greater waste of spirit with its consequent in-rush of shame. The soul that plays the prince or the great captain of the House of Jacob in the morning is often but a worm and an outcast in its own estimation before night. The sense of failure may overtake it at any time. Let it not lose sight, therefore, of the *Star of Jacob* and the promised gift of fortitude which His Spirit always imparts. It is impossible to lay down even the most general rules on so incalculable a matter. St. Ignatius has attempted it; and yet, luminous with insight into God's ways and the sinner's ways as his *Rules for the Discernment of Spirits* undoubtedly are, he confesses by way of a general summary of the matter, just what Our Lord lays down and no more. *Spiritus*

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ubi vult spirat. The Holy Ghost's way is the wind's way. We have no other rule but the best and most living of all rules—the example of Our Blessed Lord Who *became a worm and no man*, not so much in the contumely heaped upon Him by Herod and Pilate, as in His own sense of dereliction in Gethsemane and afterward in His expiring cry upon the Cross. *My God, my God, why hast Thou abandoned Me!* He alone has measured the infinite descent implied in that reproach. Fear not, therefore, when the Something in you—Spirit of Evil or Spirit of Good—whispers that thou also *art a worm and no man*.

XX

“SANCTA SUPERBIA”

Have regard to the Rock whence ye were hewn:

PRIDE of race is not bad when it inspires one to great exploits. The grace of our baptism is actually a participation of the essential nobility and holiness of Christ; and what we say of baptism is true of all subsequent graces that follow obviously in its train. The sense of racial exclusiveness that renders the Jew so strange a portent in the world ought to have a more splendid example in the life of a good Catholic. He shares in the royalty and Godhead of Christ. He renews his kingship in every good deed that charity begets in him; he is ennobled over and over again as often as he makes a worthy Communion.

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XXI

THE FECUNDITY OF HOLINESS

And I that have made others to bear, shall I Myself not bear? saith the Lord:

TRUE sanctity is fecund. Every good Catholic is a centre of influence to his kind; his example is not merely the source of inspiration to others; it is in many splendid cases the meritorious cause of their progress toward the truth, their deliverance from evil, their advancement in holiness, their fresh and daily redintegration in the very Fountain-head of Life.

XXII

THE ZEAL OF THE TIME

For behold, the Lord shall come in fire:

THE Christmas that does not beget new fervor in the heart of the Catholic is, in that sense at least, a failure. The purpose of all seasonable commemoration in the modern Church is that the faithful may re-invigorate themselves in zeal. It is more than an instinct for the poetry of devotion that creates these festivals of ours; it is the eternal hunger of our Mother that we may never grow cold in the fire of her Lord's first coming to the soul in baptism.

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[ISAIAH ix, 1-7; xl, 1-9; lii, 1-7; Acts vi, 1-14; 1 John i-ii, 6; Jer. xxxi, 15-24; Acts xx, 17-xxi; followed by the Epistles of St. Paul in the following order: Romans; First and Second Corinthians; Galatians; Ephesians; Philippians; Colossians; First and Second Thessalonians; First and Second Timothy; Titus; Philemon. During the sixth week after Epiphany the Epistle to the Hebrews is read, if the ecclesiastical calendar for the current year permits it.]

XXIII

CHRISTOCRACY AND ITS ALTERNATIVE

The principality is upon his shoulder:

NO man stands alone in this world. The freest is still in bond to others. Physically, morally, intellectually, our lives are controlled in great measure by forces outside of ourselves; and the same wide-reaching law of dependence holds good in the case of religion. Christianity affords no exception to the rule. Its proffered freedom, the sweetness and lightness of its yoke and burden, the fulness of its grace, in a word, can only be realized in *servitude unto Christ*. Absolute isolation is as impossible in fact as it is inhuman and unthinkable in theory. The nearest approach to it is in the eternal solitariness, the self-wrought sequestration of Lucifer

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and the lost. Hell is but the remorselessly concrete expression of a twofold fatuousness of mind and will; it is the last state of a restless and disjoining egoism; the selfishness that separates itself from the Word Who is mysteriously revealed as emptying Himself of Godhead in Heaven before He appears in the ignominy of the Passion, or in the apparent annihilation of the Eucharist, to empty Himself of Manhood upon earth. Our Lord is the Spirit of Sacrifice Incarnate. His slavery unto the despotism of the Divine Righteousness is the pattern of our slavery, as children of the Church, unto Himself.

XXIV

THE TEST OF ASPIRATION

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low:

A SANE man's effort is usually in proportion to his hope. It is by the worth of what he reaches out to that his present wisdom is gauged. Believer, unbeliever, and non-believer—those who have staked their all upon Our Lord's promises, and those who have staked nothing at all, because they cannot rise to the self-abandonment involved in them, or because they have never heard them clearly set forth—all these must be tested by this subtle, yet simple, law of values. They must be weighed by their capacity to understand, in the first place; and, in the second, by their capacity to endure. It is not faith

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alone that the Prophet looks for; but faith energizing into character. The fact is a significant one. It is not what we apprehend of the mystical Emmanuel, or what we conjecture, even on orthodox grounds, of His unveiled presence in the life to come, but what we suffer for the sake of our apprehension, or school our hearts to in deference to that conjecture, that makes us precious in the eyes of the Church. Not words, therefore, but deeds; not fine profession, but steadfastness. So should a man measure the height and depth of his joy at this season.

XXV

“THE CLOTHING OF IMMORTALITY”

Put on the garments of Thy glory, O Jerusalem, the City of the Holy One:

THE nature of the *vesture of glory* that Isaiah holds up as a motive for manly and unremitting effort in the practice of religion is hinted at in many a passage of the New Testament writings, and all but outlined by St. Paul. It is the glory that is born of attainment. Our very eyes must at last behold what our heart had always hungered to see. We pass from aspiration to reality. We are, to use a familiar figure furnished us by the imagination of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, as *athletes crowned at the close of a game*. We run and struggle now; we shall be glorified hereafter. The vision of heaven will refashion us. Even now its far-reaching

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light is visible in the altered physiognomy of a new life. Though we must always remain our separate and incommunicable selves, we shall never be as the ruck of mankind again. The stimulus of recognition will transform us; it will rehabilitate the naked and shivering self that has stripped its human life of all lower things, and run hopefully in the race for Christ. The splendor of His *unveiled and open Face* will make us other than we were. *We shall know even as we are known.* We make a beginning here by means of faith; we pass through death into the ecstasy of a long fruition. In heaven to know is to be. The root of our beatitude, there as here, will be in growing knowledge. We must put on Godhead, if we are to apprehend It. That is the true garment of the soul's splendor. The fulness of our divinization will overflow in the sense of union with all things, because we shall touch them and love them at their Source. This is perfect joy to touch Reality at all points, and yet to be more than ever in touch with one's own soul and with God.

XXVI

STIPENDIARY MORALITY

Ye shall be redeemed without money:

It is sometimes objected that a stipendiary theory of morality is a poor sort of gospel to preach to mankind. All the greater and more spiritual prophets of Israel, to say nothing of St. Paul, himself the most austere of

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prophets and the most unselfish of teachers, were of a contrary way of thinking; possibly because they understood the mysterious tendencies of human nature, as revealed in the coming *Servant of Israel* and His victorious Spirit, better than the puritanical advocates of religious nihilism. Not all forms of self-seeking are wrong; or how could the parable of the buried grain have been preached to us? To endeavor to realize one's life in God is the sublimest type of self-effacement, seeing that it makes room for, and takes count of, others. We are as living points in a heaven-wide circle of joy. Each of us knows that the Centre must exist mysteriously and intimately for himself, as the absolute and indispensable Source of the gladness of all. These men who protest against a salaried virtue neither understand the Old Testament nor the New; neither do they realize how illogically and childishly anthropomorphic they are.

XXVII

THEORIES OF VOCATION

Set apart unto the Gospel of God:

IN all the graver issues of the Christian life the will of God may be said to be intimate and personal. Few who have ever meditated seriously upon the economies of the Incarnation would think of questioning so deep a truth. Christ not only addresses us in the mass, as it

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were, as a great leader, say, might address an army, but He speaks to each one of us in particular. His call is to me. *He loved me; He delivered Himself up for me!* Does this appeal embrace all the more important turns and accidents of life; or does it stop short of a general invitation, made to my conscience in particular, to enter into the divine plan and work out my redemption indeterminedly, though infallibly, through the ministrations of the Church? Is there a "call" for me to be anything more than a member of Our Lord's mystical body? Is my particular place in the ranks of the faithful fixed provisionally for me beforehand, and manifested in due course by some sign or testimony of God's secret will? Is there such a thing as a "vocation" in the popular use of the term? Are all men *set apart unto the Gospel* in some definite sense, or other; summoned, that is, to be priests or religious, or relegated by a positive act of the divine will, and not merely suffered, so to say, to offer a layman's or common soldier's service in the work of the Church Militant on earth? That is a question which has bothered devout souls from the beginning of Christianity. That certain elect spirits have been personally singled out by Our Lord, from time to time, and set upon a candlestick that others might profit by their shining, seems to be a mere commonplace of Catholic belief. The Apostles were so called; and many of the greater saints are thought to have been similarly "chosen." In their loyal response to that special and personal invitation it is felt that Christ has been made manifest to millions who might

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otherwise never have heard of His redeeming Name. Again, the hierarchy, as we Catholics believe, is of divine institution; so, too, as the sounder opinion holds, is the idea of the cœnobitic life. Did Our Lord, or the Holy Ghost, Who established these things in the formative apostolic days, make personal selection, likewise, of the individuals through whom these *new creations* were to be perpetuated down to the consummation of the world? Are we to say that there is an “antecedent but conditionate will” on the part of God that each Christian should work out his salvation tremblingly along some particular pathway of ecclesiastical obedience, just as there is an “antecedent, but conditionate, will” that *all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth*? The Church has never spoken definitively on these heads. Perhaps it is part of our inevitable trial that she should never have received a divine mandate thus to speak. We have the scattered pronouncements of Scripture, some of which are found to correct, and even to neutralize other sayings that might seem, to certain intellects, to be clearly decisive on the point; we have the examples of the saints; we have, too, the curiously wide-spread conviction of the faithful that there is such a thing as a “call,” and that a soul may imperil its eternal salvation if it should turn a deaf ear to it; but the question we have asked ourselves is not determinately answered by appealing to such considerations. The truth is we do not know; and not even the wisest may presume to speak with finality until the Church shall have revealed her inner mind—if, indeed,

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an inner mind may be said to exist on this subject—with more explicitness than she has done hitherto. There is a sense, however—a very true and terrible sense—in which the least of us is *set apart unto the Gospel of God*. Baptism is often spoken of as an admission to certain ineffable privileges in Christ. Do we think of it as imposing likewise a fardel of obligations which we must carry faithfully and with *good will*, if we would not be lost? A fervent Catholic will reverence the priesthood as a profession to which only the few may aspire. He sees it set almost forbiddingly above him; he views it as a pale within a pale in the *Perfect City of his God*. It is a fastness encliffed on austerest sacrifice, a spiritual citadel walled and inner-walled by the kind of chastity that makes itself an *eunuch for Christ's sake*, whose defenders heroically mutilate themselves in will, if not in body, by the sanctity of a vow. The “religious” life, too, is rightly regarded from a similar standpoint. The men and women who have freely sworn themselves to aspire to the “counsels” could never have ventured upon so difficult an enterprise of the soul unless they conscientiously believed that Christ, Who loved the “counsels,” had called to them to come. This, indeed, is as it should be; and none but the worldly or the profane-minded would protest against it. There are some talents given by Our Lord to His Church, which the shrewd Christian can never buy at too high a figure; but the tendency to appraise them at their proper worth should not blind one to the essential value of the universal talent

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out of which they have all been marketed. The sanctity of one's baptism is not substantially less regardable than the sanctity of orders; and the vow that one takes in that initial sacrament to *renounce the devil and all his works and pomps* in order to be grafted into the *True Vine*, is infinitely more sacred than the vow that a young levite takes on his progress toward the priesthood. The Church can, and sometimes does, remit the latter; she could not, if she would, release a soul from the ties contracted in the former. For better, for worse, that vow endures; and there is no going back after the Red Sea over which it carries one has been crossed. The soul that has ventured through those waters is *set apart for all time unto the Gospel of God*. Its life is to be a perpetual testimony of the *Good Tidings* that the world learned long ago in Christ!

XXVIII

PALINGENESIS

Thou art worthy, O Lord, our God, to receive glory, and honor, and power because thou hast created all things; and for thy will they were and have been created:

THE idea of another and more perfect creation, humanly helpful and provident, where the former had seemed to be inhumanly cruel and apathetic, was inextricably bound up with the old Messianic idea of a delivered world. The Talmud abounds in passages that

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point to such a belief; and the prophets themselves allude more than once to the same mysterious persuasion. *For behold, I create a new heaven and a new earth*, says the divine Avenger in Isaiah; *and the former things shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth in trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their posterity with them. . . . The wolf and the lamb shall feed together; the lion and the ox shall eat straw; and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor kill in all my Holy Mountain, saith the Lord.*

How mysterious becomes that simple article of the creed wherein we profess our faith in the *resurrection of the body*, when read in the light of these texts. *And I saw*, says St. John in another chapter of the same Apocalypse, *a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and the sea was now no more.*¹

The Incarnation, it would seem reasonable to suppose,

¹ Compare Romans viii, 19: *The expectation of the creature waiteth for the revelation of the sons of God*: It is sometimes contended that the word in the original text which has been translated as *creature* means no more than the universe of human character, the world of souls. Origen leans to that view, and many Protestant commentators have followed him; but text and context alike are at variance with so narrow an interpretation. The Apostle evidently wished to parallel our need for final perfection in God and through Christ with the hardly less striking need of inanimate nature of such a readjustment of its forces as will put it more in tune with what may be called the *after-idea* of the resurrection. Why should one fragment of the material world be refashioned, it may be asked, while the rest of the mighty fabric is allowed to sink back to the abysmal nothingness of

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therefore, was destined to act as remedially upon the physical and inanimate world as upon the world of spirit. It may be said to do this in part even now by the sacramental system; but the sacramental system does not smooth away all inequalities. As there are shortcomings between the promise and the performance of the universe of will and love, so are there shortcomings between the promise and the performance of the universe of instinct and matter. In some way, as yet unrevealed to us, but hinted at, nevertheless, as likely to be brought to pass through the agency of Our Lord, *the crooked shall be made straight*, not in part only, but altogether. Even nature shall wear a novel human aspect. Certain highly mystical characters, like St. Paul himself, or St. Francis of Assisi, seem to have detected the premonitions of the extraordinary change, and given evidence of it in their own exuberant love of the lower creation. Even a character as remorselessly practical and soul-busy as St. Ignatius of Loyola was not without its unconscious testimony in its own day to the existence of so deep a mystery. One may see evidences of his secret mind in the curious skeleton-treatise on the *Love of God* which he has left us in the crowning exercise of his golden book. All things co-operate unto the illumination of the elect. Indeed, it is a kind of mark of election to discover vestiges of the

chaos? If our bodies are to rise again, is there anything too novel in the thought of finding no mean measure of their joy in an equally redeemed universe of matter? *We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain even till now.*

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divine Woer, where mere sense and reason find only what is non-human and hard. The water to the fountain; the flame to its own centre; and the universe to the soul that has learned to thrud understandingly through all its mazes;—that is the eternally upward drift of things; or rather, it is the swing of the pendulum between the conscience and God. *In the redemption of the body* the pendulum will finally be at rest; because in Christ and in those who have made themselves Christ's through a marriage of grace and will, *God will become all in all.*

XXIX

THE INCLUSIVENESS OF CATHOLICISM

Ye also are dead to the Law through the Body of Christ:

PERHAPS there is no note of the Christian Church so clearly insisted upon in St. Paul's writings as its Catholicity. *Christ died for all.* His Church, which is His testamentary Self, exists that He may give *Life more abundantly* to all—a sacramental life, if possible; but, failing that, a kind of double of it which is yet not substantially distinct, because it draws its power of regeneration from the soul of the great world-society which is His *Kingdom upon earth.* What the Jew had exclusively, and by way of inheritance, all mankind must share in now by way of adoption. The purpose of the Law was to safeguard the promises; but when the Gift had come,

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the provisional safeguards had no further reason for continuance. They passed away like a covenant which had fulfilled its term—like an ill-assorted marriage which could only be dissolved by death. Our Lord's religion can be neither racial nor national. Like the arms of the Cross upon which it was born, it points east and west. It offers its message to the most opposite ends of the earth. It can and must be magnificently, sometimes almost unintelligibly, inclusive; it can never be exclusive. The reason of this universality is the divine Reason Itself. The Word become visible and Incarnate and revealed to the nations in Christ recognizes all men as a kind of soil for Its new-found human eloquence. It will speak to them in a Church which is as broadly tolerant in its ministrations as the divine mercy is wide-reaching in its purposes. It will plead with them to share to the utmost the Unity of Trinity in Godhead, which constitutes Its own life in heaven, by entering into visible yoke fellowship with the mystical counterpart of Itself left here upon earth for a sign and memorial that *salvation is no longer exclusively of the Jews*. We do not realize the obligation to ethnic charitableness that an ecclesiastical theory like this entails upon all who profess it. It is easy enough to be gracious to one's own kin, to one's tribe, to one's race and country; but to the alien, to the races who are so far removed from us in their history, and ideals that we may be said to have nothing in common—who is strong enough in Christ to welcome them in all sincerity as incorporated into that mystical Body by which alone the nations may henceforth

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hope to live and work out their proper destiny? Do we never permit ourselves to speak slightly, perhaps even contemptuously, of peoples whose ways—whatever we say of their religious beliefs—are clean contrary to ours? The spread of difficult but ennobling ideas depends primarily upon the goodness of the individuals who are intellectually convinced of their force. In a country like this, and under a government which has established its outposts on the remotest confines of civilization in the hope of marshalling the most diverse divisions of the human family under one flag as the symbol of their belief in one sustaining political creed, Catholics, before all other men, ought to be on their guard against race-jealousies and the un-Christian modes of speech that race-jealousies notoriously foment. It is hard to understand why those who are proud of the Catholic name should often be chief offenders against some of the broader virtues its rightful possession so austere entails.

XXX

COLLECTIVISM AND THE NEEDS OF THE SOUL

All ye that are thirsty come to the waters:

WE live in a time of shifting ideals. The political and economic systems that sufficed for a less self-conscious state of civil society are found to be inadequate in our

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days. The various tendencies that manifest themselves, now, as associated industrialism, and, again, as commercial imperialism, and the rest, with the angry protests that these mammoth ambitions seem to awaken in the case of the many whose well-being is thought to be menaced by them, the passion for discussion and for "movements," as they are called, on a gigantic, sometimes actually on an ecumenic scale—what does all this denote but the dumb realization that somehow Mammon *has increased the nations without adding to their joy?* The peoples are still thirsty. The ancient yearning has not yet been satisfied. When the Middle Age conception of society emerged out of the welter and confusion of the dying Roman world, the Church was there to instruct, and often to direct. She secured a hearing, because she had a goodly breed of sons, who realized their opportunities in Christ. No doubt she was often enough obliged to live in opposition or in compromise; but she moved forward to victory under an occasional shadow of defeat, because her wiser children believed that with her alone were the waters that could allay the world's thirst. She has been disfurnished of much credit in these latter days, because those who imagine they can interpret the drift of things affect to see in her an institution that has survived its time. How shall those whose faith in her regenerative power has suffered no abatement, in spite of the failures alleged against her, enable her to find a social mission once more? That is a question to which it would be the merest folly to hazard an answer. Strange as it may seem, disappoint-

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ing as it may seem, to one who has steeped himself in her history, the would-be economist needs constantly to be reminded that the Church's main business on this earth is concerned with the individual soul. It is through her passion for the individual soul that she has wrought such alteration in the face of civil society. She leavens mankind in the lump by first leavening each separate conscience in particular. The thirsty heart of the individual man is her ground. That is the field in which she is called to work, and not the city mart, or the factory, or even the forum of secular opinion. She stimulates the solitary soul; she instructs it apart, as though she herself and her pupil made with God the only society a human spirit could know. Out of that first need gratified there springs another; it is the need of fellowship in and for Our Lord; and so the idea of the vast Christian family or household of Christ is born, and with it the passionate conviction that there can never be any final allayment of the world's trouble save in and through her. With her is the guardianship of the sacraments and the Fountain-head of Life. A Catholic who realizes that simple religious truth and endeavors bravely and consistently to act up to it, will do more, infinitely more, to heal the general fret and worry of the age than his fussier and more talkative brother who neglects his plain duties as an individual to assume the ridiculous rôle of censor of an institution that he does not understand, because he had never listened to the sound of its inner and sacramental voice pleading persuasively in the desert of his

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heart. Build up the spiritual side of the Church in the individual lives of men, establish it in the workshops, in the exchange, in the hovels or barracks of the poor, in the homes of the rich and well-to-do; and half the social difficulty of the time, in so far as it is a menace and a portent of disorder, will disappear from view. This is to kill the thirst for physical comfort by the holier thirst for character achieved in Christ. Nothing but the sacraments will ever accomplish that. *And He shewed me a River of Water of Life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb!*

XXXI

OUR LORD AS GUEST-MASTER

Cultivating hospitality:

THE duty of providing for the necessities of the saints is a form of religion not as carefully honored to-day as an unbiassed reader of the New Testament might expect to find. How prodigal the early Christians were in this matter! How exquisite was the courtesy of the Middle Age! We think of that latter period as of a coarse-fibred epoch; yet a stranger might knock at a monastery gate in those centuries and find entertainment for three days without so much as a disconcerting question being put to him. Was society more simple in its outlook; or have we grown too economically shrewd? Life and its

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conventions may change; but the spirit of true religion never changes. It is the spirit of true religion that enjoins a most human virtue upon every good Catholic in this curious command of St. Paul. How else are we to read the instinct that apportions this excerpt from the Epistle to the Romans to this season of the Epiphany? It is a time for gifts and favors, an hour for whole-hearted courtesies. Did not the Father give us of His best Treasure, even His only begotten Son, at such a time? And did not the Gentiles bring gifts in return? Better than gold, or frankincense, or myrrh is the tender of one's self that the courteous heart makes in a true act of hospitality. Our nature is not merely civilized, made a citizen, that is, of the world-city of all the gentle, in such acts as these, it is Christianized when it makes Our Lord the compelling motive. It takes on the character of the King of entertainers Who graciously admitted an ill-mannered world to the presence chamber of His wide-open Church, when the Magi were suffered to enter into His mother's house, *worshipping and bearing gifts*.

XXXII

CORINTHIANISM

It hath been declared unto me of you, my Brethren:

ST. PAUL'S two Epistles to the Corinthians are full of practical lessons for the Catholic whose lot is cast in the midst of an industrial and dollar-hunting world.

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Our own age, of course, has its individual characteristics, and we shall only confuse and mis-read them if we allow their significance to be interpreted for us by the pedant, or the scholar, in the terms of a civilization that had been created by other forces and other wants. Yet, in its profounder instincts, human nature seldom changes. The Christian community to which the Apostle addressed himself with such a depth of teaching and with so much vigor of phrase is not without its parallel in the twentieth century. The warnings which were intended to recall it to a sense of its newly acquired obligations in Christ may be read with profit by those Catholics who affect to find in the more complex conditions of modern life a plea for easy-going tolerance and general remissness of religious fervor. The very subjects discussed in the two letters have a disquieting note of modernity about them. They contain uncompromising answers to many difficulties that one often hears propounded even in our own days. They touch frankly upon questions of marriage and celibacy, upon the relations of the Church to the world—that is, upon the attitude to be maintained toward the intelligent and cultivated pagan, on the one hand, and the weaker brethren within the fold, on the other; upon the support of the poor, upon points of dress and ritual, upon the right understanding of dogma, upon ecclesiastical parties and shibboleths, upon Christian opinion and the duty of employing it as an instrument for the repression of certain grosser forms of sin, and the like. These are but some of the heads of discussion upon which the Apostle

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claims the right to impose his views. In most cases the answers to the difficulties proposed are not his, but Our Lord's; but when he is without authentic divine warrant for his decisions he does not hesitate to say so. Few epistles in the New Testament are so deeply interesting; and there are fewer still, it may be added, that show so essential and yet human a continuity between the Catholicism of our own time and the vigorous germ of it that already existed in St. Paul's contentious day.

XXXIII

THE SECOND ADVENT

Waiting for the coming of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

THESE words, and many similar passages which might be adduced from St. Paul's writings, make it plain that the Christians of the Apostolic age looked forward to a speedy return of Our Blessed Lord to this earth. They felt that their own generation would not pass away until the events foretold in the terrible discourse preserved for us by St. Matthew had been fulfilled. The rejected *Servant of Israel* would come quickly, and His judgments would both purge the world and re-fashion it. The prophecy was partially realized in the fall of Jerusalem; but in so far as it had been understood to include that righteous re-adjustment of things which we now associate with the Last Judgment, we know that its hour is

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still dark to the minds of all but the *Son of Man*. Where the angels of heaven are kept in doubt, even an Apostle must be content to wait. How far St. Paul himself shared in the general misapprehension it seems immaterial to decide. The point is that for him, as for all who believe that death reveals the *Sign of the Son of Man* to the individual soul, the Second Advent is a thing to be waited for with an ever-growing sense of both hope and dread. It is always near.

XXXIV

A FELLOWSHIP OF MINDS

That there be no divisions among you:

It is in the Roman Church alone that these words have been taken in their deepest and most difficult sense. The Roman Church alone tolerates no essential divergencies of belief. She has never ignored the importance of an internal unity of spirit as distinguished from an outward unity of practice and profession. She insists that the two are related more intimately than the modern mind is prepared to admit; for there can be no real fellowship of hearts in the Holy Ghost where a fellowship of minds has not gone before to give it soul and life and consistency. It matters much every way what a man believes. Conduct that is not sprung from conviction has no root of permanence in it. Steadiness is ensured by principle; and principle is the fruit of mind; it is the outcome of intellectual

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habit. The divisions against which Catholics are warned are, in the first instance, of course, the self-assertions of misbelief and those lesser pronouncements of the schismatical mind that logically lead up to heresy; but, in another and a wider sense, we are exhorted to be on our guard against cliques and factions and party spirit generally. The instinct for ecclesiastical definition has reached a point of development in these days that makes it difficult to conceive why sound-thinking men should care to range themselves into schools at all; yet, in spite of this growing explicitness of teaching on the part of her who alone has the commission to instruct *with authority*, there is a notable tendency in many to identify their own divisions with that Whole, outside of which the Spirit of God can never with certainty be found.

XXXV

CHARITY IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

Follow after charity:

FEW virtues have received fuller or more popular exposition in the Church of God than the great virtue by which alone the faithful live; and yet it is hardly a paradox to say that in practice no virtue is so grievously misunderstood. Why should this be so? *I had much rather feel compunction than be able to define it*, says the author of the Imitation. We waste ourselves

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too much in the pursuit of theory; we need to be more occupied with the world of fact. There are some verities which must be approached through experience or not at all. Charity is one of these; it is also the greatest and most elusive of them. A man must live his life before life itself can have anything but a bookish, a merely notional, and, therefore, an unreal meaning for him; and the same may be said of love. Its apocalypses are made only to the resolute—to *those who have followed after its beauty*. We must always remember, too, that St. Paul has attempted to describe charity in effort or charity in action. Charity in achievement is reserved for the other world. It constitutes the fullest aureola of glory; yet we make a beginning of it here when we occupy ourselves with God as He is found in the men and women who make up the substance of our outer lives. A good Catholic ought to read this great chapter of St. Paul frequently. He ought to make it the subject matter of at least one weekly examination of conscience down to the end of his days.

XXXVI

ST. PAUL'S APOLOGIA

We would not have you ignorant, Brethren:

THE Second Epistle to the Corinthians throws great light on the character and native temperament of St. Paul. It reveals him in the press of a difficult trial,

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when the world within and without seemed leagued together for his overthrow. If the earlier Epistle shows more mind, this latter one shows more emotion; yet he is the fully accredited teacher, the divinely chosen *ambassador of Christ* from first to last. He never loses sight of the credentials of his mission. He must be heard, because *he has been sent*. It is this fact, doubtless, more than any other, that has helped to gain so many admirers for a document, which, in its half-human, half-authoritative, yet personal, appeal, has rightly been called the Apostle's *Apologia pro vita sua*. The feeling for obedience has become so ingrained in the Catholic Church that it is hard for us to realize at this late day the kind of opposition that had sprung up against St. Paul in the interval between the several letters. Merely to run through the list of charges to which he made his indignant reply is enough to fill one with a sense of bewilderment. He was accused of being light in his judgment and vacillating in will, of being a preacher with no presence, a boaster given to intrigue, a self-seeker with a leaning toward dishonesty; worse still, he was said to be an interloper who could show no *commendatory letter* from the heads of the Mother Church in Jerusalem, a dangerous and crafty innovator, occupying a questionable position with regard to the Law. That was how presbyters and other persons of influence in the new community at Corinth could bring themselves to speak of the Apostle who had brought them *the good tidings of faith*. If it shocks us to read it, we must be careful to remember that the Church on earth can never

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be without its human element. Our Lord hinted as much in the parable of the tares and the wheat. Indeed, His revelations as to the constitution of that spiritual empire, *the government of which was always to be on His shoulder*, were germinal, rather than full-flowered; that is to say, they consisted in principles, rather than in explicit and detailed teaching. It was possible, therefore, for many who imagined they were doing Him a service to mistake the application of these divine foreshowings, and so guiltlessly to withstand His immediate purposes; just as it was necessary for the apostolic few, who had been confirmed as His viceregents, *in and through St. Peter's establishment in the Holy Ghost at Pentecost*, to fix them in the face of opposition by specific enactment, and thus to win to themselves a share in that testament of suffering by which the heroism of His passion was to be continued in a cowardly world.

XXXVII

SERVUS SERVORUM DEI

Whether we be in distress, it is for your comfort and salvation:

THE character of the true father of souls is variously outlined in Scripture. We have one aspect of him in the similitude of the *good shepherd who giveth his life for his sheep*. That is the highest and holiest view of the pastor's vocation; and it was realized to the full in Our

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Blessed Lord. We have still another aspect in the private sufferings of St. Paul, whose life was as completely lived for the "Churches" as it was, in another and deeper sense, *hidden with Christ in God*. No system of thought has conceived so austere, and—it may be added—so logically, of the parish priest, as Catholicism has done. No man is so fenced off by privilege; yet no man is so immersed in the common needs of those about him. He is not merely the father of his people; he is their servant and slave—*servus servorum Dei*. He has no withdrawn life of his own, indeed, that does not begin and end in Christ, in Christ apprehended by faith, and sought and found, both in substance and power, in the sacraments; and so far he does not seem to differ from the ordinary disciple. Yet, if the truth could be known, if consciences could only be searched, and the unerring applause of angels be overheard, the world would see that the chiefest Christ of the parish priest was the mystical Christ embodied in the hearts and minds of those who have been entrusted to his care. His life is not and cannot be as the life of the many. His joys, his sorrows, his hopes, his ambitions are bounded by the parish. In being thus pitifully circumscribed they become wider than time; they reach as far as the consummation of the ages foretold by Our Lord; they are worth the whole history of Catholicism and a peopled heaven in one; they are worth God, who, though He be no measure, is yet the self-allotted Term of such infinite though small variety. The celibate discipline, the ecclesiastical enactments, the little pomp

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and circumstance of his solitary, yet world-beset estate—how satisfactory, how almost enviable they become, when tested by the sweet unreasonableness, the dear prejudices of faith! If we could understand St. Paul's self-immersion in the foundation of the "Churches," we might be able to understand Rome's jealous providence over the minor overseers who, apostles like him, are constrained to be *in distress for the comfort and salvation of their portion of the flock.*

XXXVIII

"NOUGHT BETTER THAN TO ENJOY?"

We have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in heaven:

THERE we have the Apostle's justification for the various abstinences of the Christian life. The body is not for meat and drink merely; it is not for fornication; *it is for the Lord.* The glorified self to which we shall attain through the resurrection—that is the term to which we must look. If there were no resurrection, many things in our present discipline would seem cruelly unreasonable; but that new heaven, that new tabernacle of the soul built up for us by the Holy Ghost *who makes all things new,* that is the thought that blunts our sense of values, when the world pleads too plausibly for our perversion.

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XXXIX

TO ACT, OR TO BE ACTED UPON?

Whether in the body, I know not; or out of the body, I know not: God knoweth:

THE most active of the Apostles was not one whit behind the most interior of them in familiarity with the living secrets of the Spirit. The gifts of God are not apportioned according to our preconceived notions of states and avocations. That fact, of course, should not lead us to speak disdainfully, as shallow people are prone to do, of the contemplative life; but it ought to stimulate us to make more of the opportunities for interior vision amid the so-called distractions of the active life than we do. Men and women engaged in active careers will sometimes attempt to justify themselves for failing to reach the higher states of prayer, as they are called, with the excuse that such graces do not belong to the outer apostolate. The whole history of Christianity is an eloquent contradiction to so petty a view of the Holy Ghost and the Church of which He is the living and operative soul.

XL

TWO PRESENTMENTS

Ye have been called unto liberty:

In the bond of peace:

THE two Epistles of St. Paul which form the staple of the Church's readings during the third week after

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Epiphany are not grouped together because they happen to be related in immediate scope or purpose, but because they are found side by side in the Latin version of the Scriptures upon which the liturgy is based. The letter to the Galatians is one of the most important in the entire collection of St. Paul's writings. The personal note, which is seldom absent even from the most orderly and elaborate of his compositions, rings clear and true when he addresses himself to the converts who had once loved him so well that they would have plucked out their very eyes to serve him; nor is it wholly absent in the more deliberately didactic document which was issued, apparently, as a kind of Apostolic encyclical to the various foundations in Phrygia. If the very human appeal to the Galatians may rightly be described as the charter of our liberties in Christ, the more sober and sustained teaching found in the document addressed to the community at Ephesus may be looked upon as the codification of our manifold duties to the same Lord and Liberator, *that we may walk worthy of the vocation wherein we have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience supporting one another in charity, solicitous to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

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XLI

“ON EVIL DAYS THOUGH FALLEN”

That he might snatch us out of the present evil world:

IT is one of the notes of Our Lord's religion as outlined in the New Testament that it sets the conscience in opposition to the age in which it finds itself. That is not a pleasant truth for a certain comfortable order of mind to dwell upon; but it is a stimulating one, especially for those who wish to be honest and clear-sighted in their fundamental views of God and the Church. *It is the present age which is pre-eminently the evil one.* That does not mean that the Incarnation has left the face of society unchanged; it means simply that the many, that is, the exponents of public opinion, are for the most part contrary to those who are called to bear witness to Christ. Christianity, acting upon the corporate conscience of man, has done much for the improvement of the race. The most pessimistic need not be concerned to deny that. The Church has made life outwardly decent by removing the grosser allurements of that paganism which never lurks far beneath the surface of convention. She has compelled all to a kind of conformity which is as various as the temperament and spirit of the particular time through which it works, as it is certainly as specious as

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the vain shows that make it plausible to all save those who are in the habit of testing things by first principles. The conformity, it must be admitted, is largely outward. It is not based on conviction; it is accompanied by no free surrender of the will. It professes with the lips and affects to go forward with the moderate apologists of Christ; but in its heart it retreats backward. Every age is essentially a laggard where Christianity is involved. In this inertia lies more than half the evil against which we are warned.

XLII

THE TESTIMONY OF THE TIME

That He might snatch us out of the present evil world:

Do we need proof that the present world is always evil? Read the history of the Church. Is it not a long record of protest silenced for the most part by hypocrisy? Look at our newspapers. Are they no index to the mind at work behind the flux of things? How does society take its recreations? How does it fill up the impracticable hours? Let those same newspapers tell. Examine our laws. They may be just in a make-shift sort of way; but are they framed with the idea of giving Gospel standards of rectitude their paramount value over the consciences of possible transgressors? Our art—is it so clean that the influence of it may be said to make no *provision for the flesh and the lusts thereof*? Our literature, our schools

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of thought—are they built upon faith in the Godhead of the Word Who ought to be the *Alpha and Omega* of all our speculations? Whether we are called to be merely unworldly or frankly other-worldly is a question that temperament rather than logic must answer; but if we are to be sincere-minded in our Catholicism, we must first test our hearts, not by their hankering after, but by their reasoned and habitual attitude towards, all these separate phases of a world that is too much with us early and late, too present always in the evil from which none but Christ and His sacraments can deliver us.

XLIII

“DE TE FABULA NARRATUR”

I wonder that you are so soon removed:

PROBLEMS as to the ethnic origin of the unstable converts of the Church of the Galatians we may leave to the critics who are still endeavoring to solve them. For us it will be enough to say that what the Apostle has recorded of their fickleness is *written for our instruction*. We are all Galatians when Our Lord comes to establish the liberty and peace of the Gospel in our hearts. We barter away our newly acquired privileges for a dishonest compromise with our former selves. We are fain to go back to what we were, yet pretending the while to safeguard the grace of God. No conversion is thorough

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which is without a touch of self-cruelty in it. There are certain temperaments that need to arm their contrition with a knife rather than with a scourge. These are the true eunuchs whose praise is from Our Lord *for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake*.

XLIV

TEMPERAMENT AND CONVERSION

O ye foolish Galatians:

THERE have been commentators, as we hinted above, who have tried to find in the racial origin of this pervert community an explanation of the *foolishness* with which the Apostle taxes it so insistently. In one sense reasoning of that sort may be dangerously misleading. *Spiritus ubi vult spirat*; and Christ Our Lord, Who sends the Spirit into our hearts whereby all things are renewed there, can raise up children to Abraham out of the very stones of the Devil's thoroughfare. Yet, in the majority of cases, grace is built upon nature. Though it does not need it in any essential wise, it stoops condescendingly and refashions it. Seldom does it destroy altogether and build from the foundations afresh. Racial proclivities, therefore, native temperament and disposition, pre-acquired habits count for much in the delicate and often tedious business of a genuine conversion. It is not so much occasion, as those roots of occasion which we carry

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about in our inherited selves, that we need to study beforehand. True prudence will work warily in that direction before attempting to forecast a series of junctures that may never arrive. The *foolishness that falls away* has its origin in some culpable neglect of this primary lesson.

XLV

A FUNDAMENTAL VIRTUE

Supporting one another in charity:

MEN and women, who are called by circumstance or self-elected vocation to live together, will support one another on many grounds and up to a certain point; but they will not *support one another in charity*. It is because the foundation virtue fails, that patience, which is built upon it, fails. True charity works by patience. It is uniformly kind; because, being a gift of God—if not God's very Spirit, as has been suggested, sojourning as a Guest within the house of the heart—it is above such accidents as wind or weather, the acidity of one's blood, or the normality of one's nerves; it is like the sun, always genial and pleasant, even in winter, if only the clouds of our meaner selves will allow it to shine; it is as devoid of policy as an unspoiled and unsuspecting child; for it finds evidences of Christ everywhere in His new creation: nowhere, indeed, so plentifully as in the faults that drown judgment in a great appeal for mercy.

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XLVI

EFFLUENCE AND QUIETISM

The unity of the Spirit:

WE are alive in the Holy Ghost, we move and have our religious being in Him, while He in turn is alive in us, in virtue of our baptism and as a kind of inevitable consequence of that mysterious change which is produced in both understanding and will by the thing called *sanctifying grace*. This is the first and most fundamental of what may be called the personal mysteries in the Catholic theory of salvation. It is characteristic of life to produce life. The initial gift is never for itself alone. It must be fruitful or it forfeits its right to be. It realizes itself in transmission. If immanence is of its essence, effluence is its ordinary note. It gives; because giving is its law. Abundance, overflowingness, the need of other self-hoods through which its own death is translated into fuller existence—this is the account given of it by One Who, though He was Man, yet proved Himself the Lord and Fountain-head of Life. *I am come that they may possess life, and possess it more abundantly!* In the present economy of grace it is the Holy Ghost Who enables us to achieve such altruism. Not to rest satisfied with the seed of life as it came to us in baptism, but to move forward and upward to wider spheres of divine ener-

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gy—that is what the Apostle would exhort the meanest and most lukewarm Catholic to when he repeats again and again, as he does both in this Epistle to the Ephesians and in the preceding one to the Galatian Christians, the injunction to *guard the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit*. Too many of us are content merely to live in Him. We shall hold to what we have, we say; but we shall not be greatly concerned about adding to it. The whole tendency of Our Lord's teaching is a protest—an almost scornful protest, it might be urged—against such unheroic and every-day quietism. The law of the new creation does not really differ on this point from the law of the old. The sluggard, the sterile, and the inept are doomed to extinction. *Not to gather is to scatter*. The uninvested talent will be taken from the coward and given to the industrious and the resourceful.

XLVII

THE WORKS OF GOD

He that began in you the good work will carry it through even to the day of Christ Jesus:

THERE are many undertakings, many beginnings, in the least and most contemptible of men, which are rightly ascribed to God, *but which He does not carry through to the day of Christ Jesus*, because they are not *good* in the sense defined by the Apostle. The merely

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natural life is such a beginning. It is under the general oversight of the eternal wisdom likewise. It is fashioned with wonderful care, and has an adumbration of divinity about it. The range of its activities is practically limitless. The spaces of the physical heavens, not less than the distances and depths of earth and sea, are the spheres of its daily triumphs. If we would behold it at its best, we have only to go out into the world about us and note the alterations it has wrought upon the face of things; or we may go back to the civilizations of heathendom. All these wonders, and they are various and manifold, are the symbols of a something which each one of us carries within him. It is the *beginning* which was called *good* in the morning of creation, but which was disfurnished of more than three-fourths of its desirability, when God laid it under a *curse because of sin*. In itself we know it for neither *good* nor *bad* now, save in so far as it has to do with *the day of Christ Jesus*. Nature within us follows the order of nature. Its sequences are pitiless. They are as non-human as wind and weather, as chemical change or growth, as heat or electricity or gravitation, or any of the myriad forces which men welcome or rail at according to their mind and temperament, grouping them unwittingly under one common category of cause and effect. This is God's work indeed; but it has not yet been brought under the spell of the Incarnation. *It groaneth, waiting for its deliverance*. Every true believer can hear its cry of pain. It is a burden that will never cease until the resurrection bring in a new heaven and a

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new earth. Side by side with this *work of God* there is another. How it manifests itself in the unbaptized we know not. This, however, we do know; and we must never lose sight of the fundamental lesson implied in it: the One unchangeable Word, by which all fleeting words in every human soul are conceived and made, never leaves any man permanently in the dark. That is St. John's message. It is almost the first thing he feels inspired to tell us about the Son of God. *Christ is the Light that enlighteneth every man coming into this world.* He is at work, therefore—*My Father worketh hitherto, and I also work*—in every human heart. What He begins there He will bring to completion, *He will carry through to His own day*, if the heart will only suffer Him. St. Augustine reminds us that He will save no man against his will. His transmitted Self, the Christ that is formed in us by baptism, and renewed over and over again in penance—that is *the good work* which God will perfect within His own appointed time. It is a very sobering thought, that, when one reflects upon it—almost as sobering as it is surely comforting. The measure of growth that I acquire in the Vine into which I have been grafted, or—to vary the metaphor by borrowing a hint from St. Paul—the measure of Our Lord's growth in me, the stature that my refashioned self reaches, is arrested for all eternity at the hour of my death. *The day of death is for me the day of Christ Jesus.* So far as I individually am concerned, His good work in me will never be carried beyond that term.

XLVIII

THE PROBLEM OF CHARACTER BUILDING

God is my witness, how greatly I yearn after you all in the Heart of Christ Jesus:

HAVE YOU ever tried to build up personality in another? To save a friend, to win a kinsman from unworthy courses, to reclaim a soul and send it rejoicing like an awakened giant on a new way? Have you ever sought to form character in the young, to foster the growth of true manliness or womanliness in those who have been sent to sit at your feet, that they might best learn Christ by studying His lineaments in you? Christian fathers and mothers, priests and teachers, and the natural leaders of public opinion, whether lay or clerical, in the Church—all such are called to this difficult task. It is a work beset with anxieties; it is as full of sorrow and disappointment in as many cases as it is full of secret consolation and hope. But who can understand the height and depth of its mystery? If we could only realize its significance in another, perhaps we should be more instant in fostering the fruit of it in ourselves. The intellect must fall back on parables and similitudes, after all, unless the heart be beforehand with it in obedience to Christ. It takes a person to know a person; deep must answer deep; or there must be only a half-broken silence

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where there ought to be divine and consentaneous song. The parable by which the Apostle has so often endeavored to bring home to the consciences of his hearers the point of all his preaching is just this of life in the birth and growth. *Christ must be formed in us.* At what stage of development will His day find us? There is no such thing as a half-Christ. The full Christ lives in us, or we die. What does this import? Has not the same Apostle further reminded us that there are degrees of realization? Has he not intimated, also, that if we build foolishly with hay or with stubble, we may be saved, *yet so as by fire?* Is the divine Builder to be cheated of His will in us? Are His plans to be made frustrate because our wills were substantially "good," indeed, but not always heroically steadfast? Is it part of the divine purposes that Purgatory shall fill up in us *what was wanting of those sufferings of Christ* from which we fled so habitually here on earth? Who will answer these questions? Theologians shrink from them; and the Church will not speak. We may affirm nothing confidently. We only know that the time for merit ceases *with the day of Christ Jesus.* After death our place in His kingdom is fixed forever. Whether the growth which we are exhorted to foster by a wise economy of our opportunities here is to be arrested when the soul passes from the body, we have no means of judging, we can only say that *He that hath begun the good work in us will carry it through unto His own day, if our many minor activities are joined to His master energy in a faith that operates through charity.*

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XLIX

LOVE AND KNOWLEDGE

That your charity may abound more and more in knowledge and in all understanding:

THE knowledge which St. Paul recommends the Philipian converts to add as a desirable element to their charity is doubtless the imparted knowledge which keeps religion discreet and pure, even in the fervor of its most fiery enthusiasms. True love, though it be paradoxically described as blind, is not afraid of knowledge; on the contrary, it seeks for it early and late, for by such lore it lives. Because it is lapped in mystery it must be forever inquiring. Its questionings leave no unpleasant after-echo of doubt. It asks because it trusts. It would know even as it is known. Religion, which is love universalized, the love of a heart grown capable of ten thousand sincere attachments because it finds vestiges of its first over-mastering attachment everywhere, follows a perfectly analogous law. The theology of the Church taken in bulk is no mean evidence of the Church's charity. Heresy and the spirit of unbelief may account for much in the long progress of Catholic thought; but it is the love which the Word Incarnate has inspired in the saints and doctors of every age that best explains the phenomenon that we call the "Schools." The Apostle's injunction has been literal-

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ly fulfilled. Love has grown with pondering until it abounds in knowledge; yet even at the end of twenty centuries it is still a questioner, because the Thing it seeks, though ever ancient, is likewise ever new. This passion for reverent inquiry, this enthusiasm for the science of the Incarnation, is, if one reflects upon it, a kind of note of the Church. What did Arianism ever do for Christian thought? What has the East to show in the way of theological discovery since it threw off the yoke of obedience to Rome? What has Protestantism made of the field of knowledge but a very Sahara of negations, because its charity was of the spurious sort that hopes to live without caring to know? A good Catholic can never be too well instructed in his creed. The worst, because the most irretrievable, catastrophes to faith are those that spring from ignorance.

L

RIEN QUE S'ENTENDRE

And in all discernment:

THERE is still another sense in which the Apostle's words may convey a warning. We often fail in neighborliness, which is one of the props of charity, because we seldom take the trouble to make a nearer acquaintance of those whom we criticise. Nearness brings knowledge; and the habit of knowledge, when charity, and not mere vulgar curiosity, is its fountain-head, begets understanding. Do we not speak of the intuitions of love? Charity, as a

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theological virtue, has its intuitions likewise. A great part of its service lies in anticipation. Where men and women seek Christ, whether amid the intimacies of family relationship, or amid the hardly less sacred ties of religious or ecclesiastical association, charity, as a redeeming grace of life, will surely fail, unless this duty of mutual understanding be sedulously cultivated. The habit of striving to know and understand for Our Lord's sake will reveal itself at last in the habit of intuition; and out of intuition are tact and Christian courtesy and all that goodly train of smaller social virtues born which are intended to make the Church on earth a dear but necessary counterpart in her graciousness of the Church which is in heaven. If the comeliness of the one is described by an Apostle as that of *a bride adorned for her husband*, should we, who have the arraying of the other, reveal her by our frowardness as less winning and sweet-mannered?

LI

THE COURTESY OF FAITH

I beseech Evodia and I beseech Syntyche that they be of the same mind in the Lord:

To defer, mentally as well as outwardly, to others, to maintain an unreserved and unselfish regard for them, to be instant in the kind charities of what may be called Church-relationship, in order that *Christ may be sanctified as the Lord in every individual heart*—that is the

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burden of the Apostle's advice to Evodia, Syntyche and the other holy women mentioned in the Epistle to the Philippians. Coming, as it does, as a sort of proem to the long enumeration of those more domestic virtues upon which not a little of the life and nearly the whole of the good name of our Catholicism are shown to depend, St. Paul's plea seems to anticipate the mediæval point of view. It is nothing less than a bid for the robust courtesy as well as for the unity of faith. The meanest or most froward among us can hardly afford to be a churl, when he be-thinks him of the dignity of the vocation whereunto he is called. He is the inheritor of a blessing which is more than Jacob's; he is summoned to give witness to the truth by his *good conversation in Christ*. In other words, his conduct toward his fellow-believers is to be taken as the measure of his faith. Like-mindedness in essentials, sympathy, *esprit de corps*, mercifulness, moderation, humbleness—by these virtues is our religion tested and our profession of sacramental regularity saved from the imputation of hollowness.

LII

LITURGICAL AND PRIVATE PRAYER

Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with Thanksgiving let your petitions be made known unto God:

Μετ' εὐχαριστίας! It is by her Mass prayers, more than by her abstract formularies, vital and im-

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portant though the latter may be, that the Church has kept her children together through the centuries and *confirmed the Mercy of the Lord upon them forever*. What a depth of meaning such a consideration gives to the liturgies of Catholic Christendom! We become like-minded in essentials one with another, we deepen our instinct for orthodoxy, in other words, in proportion as we remain steadfast in our regard for public and rubrical prayer. The Church's authentic liturgy is but the expression, after all, of a vast inward machinery of discipline over which the Holy Ghost, as Our Lord's promised Paraclete and Interpreter, may be conceived to rule in the interests of spiritual unity, precisely in the same way as the ordered hierarchy of the episcopate and lesser priesthood may be likened to a vast outward machinery of discipline over which Our Lord, through His Vicegerent the Pope, may be conceived to rule in the interests of corporate unity. To the understanding believer both these unities are in reality one; and they can no more be separated than the predestinate Body and Spirit of Our Lord's mystical Bride can be separated, or than the Persons of the adorable Trinity can be separated. Does not Their mysterious Oneness in heaven find Its reflected counterpart upon earth in that indefeasible and inspiring note of true Catholicism? Looked at from this high standpoint the liturgy, as a whole, almost takes on the character of a sacrament. How reverent of it should the soul's treatment habitually be! How careful of detail! How sanely jealous of in-

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tegrity! How discreet in unintermittent observance! That is not the sole argument for a wise scrupulousness of devotion on the part of clergy and laity alike toward the Blessed Eucharist; nor is it by any means the gravest that could be alleged. The New Testament abounds in other and more far-reaching considerations; but in the sense in which we have endeavored to explain this phrase of St. Paul, few would deny that it contains matter, at least, for reflection. It is a disquieting truth, and one to which the experience of a majority of pastors will lend confirmatory witness, that the most critical step in the downward career of the average apostate coincides significantly with the first deliberate act of self-deception by which the conscience affirms itself to be freed from the obligation of the Sunday Mass. In no other way are souls so effectually alienated from the spirit and mind of Catholicism. Books and periodicals, together with other adverse associations, moral or intellectual, in an educationally heterogeneous world, will account, of course, for a great deal; but such influences are often held curiously in check by the persistence of certain lingering habits of piety which centre in and about the doctrine of the Real Presence, and which serve to keep the heart of the waverer loyally, if inconsistently, true to his creed. Deterioration may be said to be arrested so long as the living source of like-mindedness within him is replenished at stated intervals from its proper Fountain-head in the Mass. When that Day-Spring of the orthodox conscience is irretrievably quenched, the after-glow of instinct and

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inherited sentiment may continue to shine for a space in the slowly darkening soul; and to itself and its easy-going acquaintances its little world may seem to revolve as satisfyingly as before; but to the eye of faith it is an unhinged and dis-orbited planet spinning centrifugally to its eclipse. Nothing short of a miracle can ever recall it from the void; or harness it in renewed obedience to that compelling Sun from which it derived its primal gift of life, and to which it was wont to sing of old its daily morning song of joy. Although we have insisted at some length upon the need of liturgical prayer, and more especially upon the important place which the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass ought to occupy even in a layman's life, if an attempt is to be made intelligently to live up to the lesson taught in St. Paul's advice to the Philippians, yet we would not be understood as thinking lightly of more private forms of praise or petition as serviceable means to like-mindedness. It is true, they in their proper place and season lack the element of sureness that one always finds in the Church's official formularies. When they depart too notably from her set standards of phrasing and imagery there is nothing to save them from extravagance, nor even from superstitious and heretical ideas of Deity and the Incarnation. One has but to open at random some of the curious manuals which Catholic publishers sometimes permit themselves to hurry through the press in this country, and he will have experience of the evil whereof we speak. But abuses of this sort can never depreciate the enormous importance to the inner life of

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the habit of stated private prayer. Night and morning by his bedside, at least, every good Catholic lifts his heart to God; and by that uplifting keeps provisionally in tune with the general note of the Church. The time spent in that secret discipline of the soul need not be long. For many types of character, for women, for the young, for the imaginative, especially, and for all those who chafe too soon under the irksomeness of routine, it ought not to be long; but it ought to be deliberate and well-considered. Whether it be fervent or not will depend largely upon one's individual efforts acting in unison with the Holy Ghost, Who is, pre-eminently, in virtue of the Gift of Piety, which He imparts, the soul's best Paraclete, her *Spiritus gratiæ et precum*; for He is, as a Prophet reminds us, the *Spirit of grace and entreaty*; and through Him do we learn, in St. Paul's phrase, *to cry Abba, Father*. Few principles of like-mindedness are so enduring as the common pieties of a well-ordered household. It is by these morning and evening prayers that private men and women grow in the feeling for Catholic fellowship and come to realize the Church, which enforces the practice of them so unremittingly throughout the world, as, in very truth, their heavenly Father's earthly House.

LIII

EXUBERANT CATHOLICISM

Let the word of Christ be found in you overflowing in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles, singing in grace in your hearts to God. And whatever ye do in word or work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks (εὐχαριστοῦντες) to God and the Father by Him:

THE manifold and—as it might seem to the uninstructed mind—the strangely irrelevant and almost disparate inspiration which the concrete and universal Church, as opposed to any discreet division of the same, hierarchical or ethnical, has, at various epochs appeared to derive from these suggestive words, may serve, indeed, to deepen the ordinary Catholic sense of their significance, but it has not appreciably altered their original meaning. That still reads as an exhortation addressed to all sincere believers first *to obey their creed*,—*whatever ye do in word or work do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*—and then to try systematically to realize it by devout meditation and study according to the general mind of the actual Church. *Ut possitis comprehendere cum omnibus sanctis, quæ sit latitudo, et longitudo, et sublimitas et profundum; scire etiam supereminentem scientiæ caritatem Christi, ut impleamini in omnem plenitudinem Dei.* It is an injunction to each one of us,

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in a word, to sound personally and for himself the mystery of the Incarnation, in so far as the Church sets it before us sacramentally, liturgically, ethically, or in more explicitly logical and academic forms of teaching, as the most vital truth that the heart can know. This is to cause the Word of Christ to *dwell in us overflowingly*. It is to live in ever-growing sympathy with all that is of good repute in Catholic creed and practice. It is to love Catholicism in all its manifested forms and expressions. To attempt to point out in detail how some one or other of these particular forms have dominated the conscience of Christendom at particular epochs of its history would be an inspiring task, but it would be foreign, perhaps, to the purpose of these essays, which aim at being practical, rather than speculative, and which seek to direct the thoughts of latter-day Catholics to the Scriptures, as the Roman Church has read them from week to week for over a thousand years. These outward and sometimes shifting manifestations of the Church's inner and unshaken conviction of which we have just spoken, her prejudgments, as we may call them, of the problems of workaday righteousness, have never been opposed one to another, nor have they been adequately, and much less, of course, exhaustively, representative of the fuller and always personal stimulus of the Mystery that lies behind. In this sense that Mystery may be said, not merely to be *hidden from the foundations of the world*, but hidden, too, from the foundations of the Church, so far as the individual hearts of

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too many of the faithful are concerned. The deposit, the seven sacraments, popular treatment of the Mass, current types of sound devotion, like those consecrated to the Sacred Heart, or the Precious Blood, or the mute Instruments of the Passion, or the Real Presence, or practices, again, which, like that of the Rosary, or the Litany of Loreto, translate Our Lady's share in the far-reaching economy of man's Redemption into plain, but stimulating Scriptural speech, or enthusiasm for special widely known saints whose very humanity makes the Incarnation seem that much more victorious and real to those who are not too blind to see it in such unselfish lives—what are all these separate manifestations of militant Catholicism, but *groanings, as it were, of the Spirit*, whose business it is to translate all things again into the kindred spirits of those whose *faith is rooted and grounded in love*? That, doubtless, explains, moreover, the amazing exuberance, the many-sidedness, of the Church's mind on that which is really the *Alpha and Omega* of her unchanging Gospel—that *the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us, and that we have seen His glory, the glory, as it were, of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*. In her sacraments, in her yearly completed liturgy, in her daily act of Eucharistic worship, in her authentic and conciliar pronouncements, in her discipline and general legislation, even, and, not least significantly, in her large toleration for the idiosyncrasies of private and non-official piety, she has but one prepossession, is swayed, so to say, by but one idea; that the particular

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age, namely, to which she is at present offering her eternally new message, and each individual soul, more especially, whom she aspires to deliver from the cramping bondage of that age, *may come to understand with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth* of the Secret which she alone has the wit to expound illuminatingly.

LIV

BREADTH

Let the Word of Christ be found in you overflowingly:

UNLESS we conceive of our religion as something vastly beyond our own petty, individual life, unless if we think of it habitually as an energy that dwarfs by its all-pervadingness the isolated conscience that essays to find solace in its ministrations, we shall never acquire its secret and make its majesty personal to ourselves. This it is that separates the sheep from the goats even before the final sifting in the great Valley of Judgment. Jehosaphat will reveal the true *breadth and length and height and depth* of Catholicism by revealing the hidden thoughts that men entertained of it behind the mask of custom and convention in the days when the lying *Lord of Show* ruled a too careless world. The most uncouth peasant who stands in well-instructed awe of the sanctioned punishments of the Church, is, in that measure, a deeper philos-

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opher, and certainly of a more heroic moral build, than the student, whether of her pale or out of it, who smiles at these things as anachronisms in a forward-moving age. The same law seems to hold good in the higher pathway of the evangelical counsels, as they are sometimes called. The religious soul that conceives meanly of its obligations, the monk or nun for whom there is *neither breadth, nor length, nor height, nor depth* beyond the dead letter of an antiquated rule, never really attains to that *charity of Christ that surpasseth knowledge, is never really filled unto all the fulness of God*. These are the saucer-deep souls of the House of Faith. The Word of Christ has never dwelt in them *overflowingly*. It is through such chaffering and common-place literalists, the men and women *who know how far they may go* in their evasions of the plain behest of the Rule they once aspired to keep, that religions wither and orders die.

LV

GENUINENESS

Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart and of a good conscience and of faith unfeigned:

As there is an outer life and an inner, so is there an outer religion and an inner, an outer Catholicism and an inner, an outer service and discipline and an inner; and of the twain it is ever the latter which is the more impor-

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tant; for it is through the latter that we are finally judged and condemned or saved. A Psalmist tells us that it is a note of God's dealing with the religious conscience to look for an habitual soul of sincerity in one's exterior professions of ceremonial righteousness. *Thou requirest truth*, he says, *in the inward parts*. Our Lord Himself re-enforced that austere teaching when He asserted, that it was by the heart that a man would be weighed in His kingdom. It is *out of the heart that the things come by which we are accounted worthy either of death or of life*. Is not that, too, the traditional view of Catholicism, which insists rather on an interior spirit of sacramental worthiness, on what are called the "right dispositions," in brief, rather than on a rubrical and merely mechanical carefulness, such as Pharisees, or Ritualists, or unbelieving pedants might define, in dispensing the gifts that bring us into touch with our unseen Lord? This is a large subject and a practical one. Each time that you assist at Mass, or feel impelled to confess your sins in the sacrament of penance, it is seasonable to look for *charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned*.

Septuagesima to Passiontide

[GENESIS AND EXODUS]

[N. B. On the First Sunday of Lent 2 Cor. vi-vii is read. On the Ferial Days the Lessons are made up of brief homilies on the Gospels of the time.]

LVI

FOOTPRINTS OF GODHEAD

In the beginning God created heaven and earth:

OUR most scientific age may be said to have lost sight of the idea of creation. The insensibility is more culpable, perhaps, than many of us would like to allow. Will philosophy account for it all? To minds that hate mystery, because they themselves are determined to be the measure and test of reality, it may be more satisfying to explain God as the Sum rather than the Maker of things, but to the wise man such monism wears an aspect of intellectual haziness about it; and it hints, moreover, of something worse. Not to know God as one's proper Maker, not to know the world as His handiwork, is to be what the author of the Book of Wisdom calls vain. *Vain are all men in whom there is not the knowledge of God, and vain are they who by these good things that are seen can-*

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not understand Him that is. St. Paul's indictment of the cultivated pagans of his time is based upon the same unequivocating theory. The heart that closes the inner eye of the soul to what God has written about Himself upon the outer visible world is neither consistent nor honest. Things are what they are; our explanations will not alter their aboriginal unyieldingness. If we would learn their plainest lesson, it is to the conscience we must go, and not stop short at the merely speculative intellect. That is the meaning of the opening words of Genesis. We must be on our guard against a false tolerance in these matters. The tendency to accommodate ourselves to the world's mode of speech, to adopt its gracious attitude of sympathy toward those who pretend they cannot find evidence of God in the universe that He has made, often reacts upon one's own character and weakens it in its conflict with evil. A good Catholic ought to foster a habit of "devotion" to the Apostles' Creed; he ought to say its opening clauses with fervor every morning. The morning is his *beginning*; it is the time when God, so to say, declares Himself anew. *I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth.* Three things I can never escape. There will always be God; there will always be the world; there will always be myself. These are the three fields in which I must solve the triple debt of creaturehood.

SEPTUAGESIMA TO PASSIONTIDE

LVII

THE REMORSELESS INFERENCE

In the beginning God created heaven and earth:

FEW truths are so wide-reaching in their application as the Catholic dogma of creaturehood. The whole of natural religion is involved in it; and because its enunciation is embodied in the first authentic statement of the revealed Word of God, the whole of supernatural religion may be said to be involved in it also. To realize one's creaturehood is to make one's heart ready for worship; it is to be reverent and conscience-fearing; to accept it to the full, to live up to its myriad claims, is to serve. The perfection of pure religion is in obedience inspired by love. It is a reasonable self-abasement; it is not the unwilling submission of the lost. We were not created alone. The heavens were created before us; and so, too, was the earth, which was to be the brief theatre of our trial. Many things follow from this initial truth. As there was order in our making, so ought there be order in our living apprehension of the significance of accepted creaturehood. No honest mind ever realizes all that is involved in a principle until it has furnished material for an application of the same out of its own experience. It learns to understand a law by endeavoring to live out its several enactments. The Catechism, following a tradition that seems to stretch back to the beginnings of Christianity, if not of revealed religion generally, enforces this homely les-

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son by reminding the young that God made us all, high and low alike, for knowledge and service. The universe of souls is His more intimately even than the universe of force and matter. The universe of souls He made for His own glory; the universe of force and matter He made—among many other ends not yet distinctly revealed—unmistakably for this, that we should use it for a space—*have dominion over it* is the inspired phrase—in working out our proper destiny. St. Ignatius of Loyola seized hold of a truth like that and derived what looks to many like a cruel and impossible scheme of conduct from it. The cruelty, of course, is only apparent; and the impossibility is often found to vanish before a radically “good will.” The theory of “indifference,” which is so frequently alleged as one objection against the *Book of the Exercises* by those who have never apprehended its essentially evangelical spirit, is in reality one of its most winning elements. It is a plea, not for the indifference that spells coldness to our northern minds, but for the saneness and balance, the power of self-control that we associate with the strong. It is not stoicism; for stoicism is based on a false estimate of things, and is at bottom inspired by the dread of unhappiness; it is rather the healthy equipoise of a will that reveals its manliness by a disciplined composure. The heart, the emotions may be of the most fine-fibred, quick-responsive sort; but the will is king in its own domain, a kind of vicegerent of God, panoplied in steel until the fight with the senses be over.

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LVIII

THE DIVINITY OF INTELLECT AND WILL

Let us make man to our own image and likeness:

DESPITE the efforts of a certain order of scholarship to discredit these words, they still remain for millions, who feel that they have not yet apprehended them in their full depth of meaning, a source at once of inspiration and of self-reproach. Non-rational nature may reflect ten thousand other aspects of deity, its power, its majesty, its wisdom, its omnipresence, its beauty, its passionless preferences for law; but man does all this and indefinitely more. Whatever cynics may report of his essential meanness or helplessness, he is still a true mirror of Godhead, if not inspiringly to his fellows, at least to himself. We learn more of divinity by studying its image in our own hearts, than we do by following out the footprints it has left behind it as a memorial of its passage across the chaos that became the material world. That is not the least practical of the lessons which the extraordinary cycle of narratives embodied in Genesis is intended to enforce. It is as clearly, as eloquently, put in these words, as it is later on in the Psalms:

For I will consider the heavens,
Even the work of Thy fingers:
The moon and the stars,
Which Thou hast ordained.

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But man? What is man that thou art mindful of him?
Or the Son of Man that Thou visitest him?
Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels:
Thou hast crowned him with glory and worship!

The physical universe may reflect His glory; but I—I am made to reflect His life. That life is made up entirely of one pure unchanging act which is both intellect and will in one. If I am capable of understanding, if I am capable of election and choice, it is because He has set the shadow of that act within my soul. Oh, if there were no other pledge of His oversight set before us in Scripture than this, surely, we ought to strive to give our reason its proper occupation; we ought to exercise our will in its appointed sphere. We ought to know *the things that are more excellent*; we ought to elect between good and better, and not between good and evil, or, worse still, between evil and evil, as we have hitherto done through so many years of our empty lives.

LIX

THE NEW LIKENESS OF THE SACRAMENTS

To our own Image:

THERE are degrees of divine likeness even in the natural order. Not that the natural order is, or ever has been the rule; but its mere possibility as set forth in the opening chapters of Genesis may serve as a rule to test the grievousness of our shortcomings. The real likeness to God which we are expected to realize within ourselves is

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to be found in the Christ of the sacraments, the real, though mystical, Maker, that is, who is expressed in us in baptism, and who is perfected in a new plenitude in each fresh Communion. His advances are like the birth of light. *They move forward to that perfect day, when the various acts of knowledge and will by which we have sought to achieve Him shall have been identified at last with perfect union. We shall know even as we are known; we shall love even as we are loved; judgment shall be swallowed up in victory.*

LX

THE FIRST IMAGE AND THE LAST

And man became a living soul:

THERE are dead souls, it would seem, just as there are palsied wills and dead hearts. Could not each one of us, if challenged, point out a sad dozen in his own experience,

Laborers, gnarled and splashed with mire,
And disillusioned women sipping fire?

How shall such be made alive? They must feel the breath of God. Contact with the breath of God brings energy, and energy is the pulsing note of life. One means of contact with this vivifying breath of God is through the reflective reason. It is possible to know Him and report familiarly of Him, if one is sincere. How wonderful is Plato's message! But not all men know how to use their

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reason; not all men have the opportunity to use it; and so we have the more infallible way of faith. Christ is the Prophet at Whose word *the dry bones begin to live*. Has your Catholic creed made you a living soul? Your Catholic creed rightly apprehended means Christ at work in you as His Father's Refashioner, breathing into your dead clay that He may make one more image of Himself, Who is the First Image and the Last. He is the First in that withdrawn existence which He shares with the Father and the Holy Ghost from the beginning of the ages and before them; He is the Last in that revealed existence through which *He became one of us* in the flesh. Between the two comes the story of Genesis, and slow time, and the birth of the Christian Church. She is the new creation in which He is still busy turning dead men into living souls. Shall I not find my place in her somewhere in some enclosed Garden of Delights, which I shall keep at His good pleasure? The clay that has become a living soul, though it be fenced from harm, must earn its right to dominion.

LXI

THE WITNESS OF NOAH

For I have seen that thou art righteous before Me in this generation:

NOAH fulfils a rôle in the history religious of mankind curiously analogous to that played by Moses in the case of Israel. He comes before us as the representative of

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a stage of civilization destined to disappear in moral disaster and flood through the sheer tide-sweep of its own carnality ; yet he bears in his habitually God-fearing and indomitable character the elements of a new life. The man himself is set before us as a sign *ever in contradiction, and to be contradicted*. His career is a testimony to that Spirit of Seriousness whose stirrings neither society in the mass, nor the separate units who constitute that mass, may ignore. He is the first great protester after Eden, the first articulate Echo in Scripture, of the Word heard under the trees *in the cool of the day*. In Noah we learn the austere truth, that, as Our Lord, the Word Itself become Flesh, chose to put it in a later time, there is no deliverance but *through water and the Holy Ghost*. Alone, or tribally alone, as it would seem, in his generation, he trusted the divine oracles. *He did all the things that God commanded him*. Out of his robust faith the nucleus of another Church was born, of whose durability the ark was an inspiring symbol, and of whose elect members he himself, and his sons, and his sons' wives, were the unconscious fore-types. Like Moses, Noah, too, is a Saviour and a Lawgiver. His legend is one of the landmarks of spiritual history. He comes to us out of a great deep into which a more terrible host than Pharaoh's was sucked down ; and he brings with him a world of iridescent promise as broad and as sacramentally many-hued as the bow that spans it for a parable and a testimony. Of him, likewise, might it have been written : *The sea saw and fled*.

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LXII

THE TABOOS OF GOD

The Sons of God seeing the Daughters of Men, that they were fair, took to themselves wives of all which they chose:

IF Christianity is true, there is a divine purpose in history of which the Church is in some sense the interpretation, if not the entire scope. *All things happen for the sake of the elect*; and out of millions of hearts one thought is, after ages of conflict, increasingly revealed in Christ and His saints. It is this: that all progress is through restraint. That is the meaning of chastity, conjugal or maidenly, as Catholicism, by a kind of contagious instinct, rather than by any formal pronouncement on an ineffable mystery, enforces it and keeps it alive in an always over-marrying world. The principle of selection is as much a law of the universe of souls as it is in the lower spheres of flesh and matter. It has been so from the very beginning, when *the Lord God said to the Serpent: I will put enmities between thee and the Woman; between thy seed and her Seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel*. Character must mate with its complement in obedience, not to the lust of the moment, but to the higher and more enduring needs of the type. That way only does true advancement lie; or the holiest human relationships will gravitate back-

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ward to the self-suicide of happily lost stocks and the pairing places of apes. How else could this earth have dreamed of a golden age, or ripened, in spite of eras of passing corruption, to the austere thought of a virgin-born Christ? A remnant of the Sons of God, the seed upon which the hopes of the ages hung, learned their lesson early in the flight when Noah and his sons passed terror-stricken into the ark. How that conviction has gathered and grown through the centuries! At one time it pleads with us as a kind of proud Catholic instinct for virginity; or it pricks us rebukingly, like a goad, under the guise of that involuntary regard which faith ever betrays for the few who have had the hardihood to *make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake*. At still another, it speaks more explicitly, as when it confronts us under the mask of ecclesiastical laws forbidding marriage with the outsider and the unbeliever.

LXIII

THE ECONOMIES OF THE SPIRIT

Never more shall my Spirit abide in man, for that he is flesh:

THE Spirit that God threatened to withdraw from the antediluvian world was the same Spirit that had brought life out of the face of the deep and changed Adam into a living soul. Its energies may have been exercised in dif-

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ferent orders or planes of existence; but the Energizer was one. *Divisiones gratiarum!* There were diversities of grace and benediction even then; but it was the Holy Ghost, the Life-Giver and Sanctifier of human character, Who wrought out each separate wonder and made the earth and its inhabitants a spectacle fair to contemplate. In that first morning of promise *it was good simply to be*. Those who lived under the primitive dispensation before Abraham appeared were not without the providence of God's supernatural economy. How that providence acted in detail we do not know. Afterward, in Israel's time, it became increasingly definite and overruling; it took on the compelling majesty of system and law; it adapted itself to the conditions of an elect and cloistered, yet essentially oriental, race; but in Noah's day, and before it, there was nothing, so far as we know, but the unseen rule, the personal illumination of the Witness, bearing witness to man's spirit, that the soul was more than the body, and the passion for divine righteousness a more satisfying thing to appease than the hunger of the flesh.

LXIV

"ACCORDING TO ONE'S STATE"

For that he is flesh:

THE unseen rule or dominion of the Spirit in Noah's day, as now, could be overthrown, and, in point of fact,

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was overthrown, by that contrary force, or group of instincts, which works variously in human nature, and yet is uniformly characterized in Scripture under the opprobrious, but suggestive, term of the "flesh." What the "flesh" stands for in the various narratives in Genesis, hardly needs to be explained. Everything that tends to set the merely animal impulses before the religious or the ethically progressive, whatever gives rein to appetite, or tears aside the veil that chastity instinctively draws over certain physiological aspects of life, which healthy human nature hides—not because it misunderstands them, or in its heart identifies them, like a Manichæan, with evil, but because it really reverences them as parables and penumbæ of divinity, to be guarded jealously and never, even in thought, deliberately profaned—whatever breaks down the mysterious awe with which God surrounded sex when man first became aware of the disorder of his own inner world in Eden, all that turns a means into an end, that confounds the barriers of blind desire and will-weighed volition, all that sets the ape above the angel in us—for both are surely there—this it is that sounds the knell for the overthrow of the discreet and comely *pneumatization*, or interior refinement of conscience, that God patiently endeavors to create in all climes and times and among the most sottish of the sons of men, if only He discovers good will and a heart wise enough to be in love with His ideals. St. Paul enjoins upon us *not to grieve the Spirit*; he also warns us *not to kill Him*. There are degrees, then, it would seem, in this process of deterioration. Character is

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de-humanized in the measure in which it is de-spiritualized. The most forbidding theory of the religious life ever maintained of old in the Thebaid or in Nitria, and questioned so relentlessly by the thinkers of our more secular age of the Church, will find half its justification, we make bold to assert, in the virile appreciation of the value of *chastity according to one's state* to the soul who would lay surely the great foundation-virtues of a well-balanced Christian personality.

LXV

THE WITNESS OF ABRAHAM

The Lord said to Abram:

AMONG all the greater characters of the pre-Mosaic dispensation Abraham stands alone in the duality of his suggestiveness. If it is in his seed that the nations are to be blessed, it is in his unique personality that mankind for the first time catches a fore-glimpse of that divine ancestry from which all life in the supernatural order is spiritually derived and appropriated. Catholics habitually speak of Abraham as though his shadow were projected forward, not only into the history of his race, but into the upward moving path of the ecumenic Church. His name is invoked more than once in the liturgy; the story of his trial is read publicly on the vigils of Easter and Pentecost; and he is held up as the great pattern

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instance of that submissive attitude of the heart under the divine summons to sacrifice which is more than faith, because it is actually the unquestioning obedience of love. It is in the parable of his career that the doctrine of the Incarnation is linked definitely for the first time in Scripture with the idea of a heavenly atonement. Sin will be punished and man will be schooled to bear its burden; yet God Himself will provide a Victim. Abraham is, therefore, a figure as well as a type; perhaps, in one sense, more pathetically a figure rather than a type; for he does more than suggest the after-tragedy of Calvary. In all his wanderings, in his strange provisions for the continuity of his seed, and in his hunger for the happiness of his stock, he is, from first to last, an example of fatherhood; and in his brooding devotedness we begin to realize something of the loving-kindness of Him, from Whom, through Adam, we have all come forth.

LXVI

THE GOSPEL OF SEPARATION

Get thee forth:

RELIGION, as the philosopher sees it in the abstract, may be described in many ways. It is an ascent of the more serious soul; an approach of the inscrutable ego within onetoward the holier and still more inscrutable Ego without; it is an attempt to assert that enfranchisement

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of the conscience which a man secures only by putting a yoke of righteousness upon his will; it is the incardination of my particular life into the universal life of God, according to the measure of my personal apprehension of the divine mysteriousness here and now. Religion is all this and much more; yet for every man, sooner or later in his career, it is an impulse from above, translated most significantly, perhaps, into such a rule of conduct as is set forth for us in the austere command that must have meant so much to Abraham, and, through Abraham, to the world. *Get thee forth!* That is the first step to take. Unless we are prepared to take it, our religion will probably be a sham, a kind of Pecksniffian compromise, down to the end of our barren lives. Why is it that superstitious people, and conventionally observant people, are ever so plentiful, whereas religious people are so rare? Is it not because the multitude to whom the *Call of the Word* comes not less imperiously than it came to Terah's son, foolishly imagine that they can obey it by remaining *in their own country, and amid their kindred, and in their Father's house?* They think to become Christians; they aspire even to lead a sacramental life, without sacrifices; *they hope to serve God and Mammon.* They have never made a cruel beginning with themselves. There has been no going forth, no sojourn in Egypt; how then could there be the serene visions of Mambre?

LXVII

UR OF THE CHALDEES

Get thee forth:

WE sometimes chafe at the quaint pedantries of the older spiritual masters. We reject their elaborate divisions of the soul's labor; their "purgative" and "illuminative" ways, their "climactic ascents" and the rest. Pure religion does not depend upon these futilities, we say. Yet, as Abraham follows his destiny, does he not set a relentless *sign of separation* upon all his progeny? Are they not circumcised for a token of something more than mere descent? Is not that mark in the flesh a reminder to them that they, too, have *gone forth from the nations, and are holy to the Lord* forevermore? The beginnings of Judaism—the highest and purest form of worship the world knew before Our Lord—are like the beginnings of Christianity in this, that both religions enforce an exile and sequestration of the heart. Abraham *goes forth out of his country and his kindred and his father's house*. John the Baptist sojourns in the desert, and reminds those that go out to hear him that Abraham's blood without Abraham's spirit will not save; *there can be no Israel without penance; for the axe is laid to the root*, and the spurious believer will be known in the end from the true. Our Lord Himself illustrates the pitiless teaching by His

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own life and death, and emphasizes it, as the occasion arises, by many a hard word. Is not His general message as forbidding as the wilderness in which He made His long fast? Does he not say: *Unless the grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it will come to naught. . . because He that loveth His life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal?* The command given to Abraham is a parable, then, that reaches deep and far. The austerer side of Catholicism lurks in it. Unless one is prepared to *go forth* from his lower natural self, unless he is ready to break with his sinful past, all the outwardly discreet and decorous service in the world will not save him. There will be no Israel for such a man; no after-history; no cleansing sacraments; no Christ. He will pass away as he has lived in his own *Ur of the Chaldees*, an undeveloped soul.

LXVIII

THE MEMORIALS OF FAITH

And he built there an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him:

WE read of Abraham what we have already read of Noah. His is a remembering heart. He never forgets the divine condescensions. His outer life is ordered henceforth with reference to these first inward glimpses of the spirit. *He erects an altar to the Lord who had appeared to him.*

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It is good to keep the memorial days of the Church with a glad alacrity. They help one to renew one's self. It is good even to have one's private and personal calendar—the accustomed anniversaries that mark the unfolding of the divine purposes in one's regard; one's baptism; one's special Saint's day; one's First Communion; one's marriage; one's religious profession; one's priesthood. The memories that these celebrations serve to hoard up become part of the better wealth of the soul. They tend to become in time the true altars of the heart, the enduring tokens to the conscience of our steadfastness in faith and well-doing. But over and above these husbanded remembrances there ought to be room, too, for other and more withdrawn festivals; days or even hours sacred to the recollection of some signal favor—a great illumination of the religious understanding; some strong and unprecedented movement of the will toward higher and holier paths; some profound abasement that wrought a change in us; some deep and quiet conversion, noticed only of the Spirit and ourselves, when we felt suddenly emancipated from the tyranny of some ignoble habit, knew that we were delivered from some original meanness of nature, made whole from some inherited crookedness of disposition, and bidden henceforth to walk upright in more seemly praise of our God. Is there not many a crisis of that sort to recall in the most commonplace of lives? Search them out and make a list of them. *This is to build altars in the promised Canaan of the heart.*

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LXIX

THE GREAT DIVIDER

And they could not dwell together in common:

THE reason that Scripture gives for the tribal schism between Abraham and Lot is a strangely modern and tell-tale one. *Their substance was great.* It was a schism of ownership that first divided the infant Church; it was the same schism of ownership, reappearing later in altered forms, that begot the spirit of resentment against the older religious orders, and even set them contrarily and un-Christianly at issue among themselves; it is the schism of ownership to-day that keeps kinsmen and entire families apart, who ought otherwise to be united in the tenderest and purest of relationships; it is the schism of ownership that prevents many a nascent intimacy from ever ripening into the piety of frank Catholic affection. To have great substance is to have great ground for contradiction and to walk ever on the edge of doom. It is to dwell always within call of a fresh exile of the soul.

LXX

MELCHISEDECH

Offering bread and wine . . . he blessed him:

THE existence of this strange King of Righteousness has been called in question and his very name explained

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away as a chronicler's "attempt to make sense of a badly written text"; but the significance of the lesson conveyed by the mysterious embassy that met Abraham on his return from the overthrow of Chedorlaomer is not really weakened by the alleged discoveries of scholarship; nor is the use made of the incident in the Epistle to the Hebrews so much "empty rhetoric," as has been profanely suggested. The germs of our mystical after-beliefs already exist in the Patriarch's victorious career; and the offering of the Bread and Wine becomes, through its suggestive symbolism, eloquent of a holier peace than any earthly prince could celebrate. What is Melchisedech's name or his place in history to those who have been taught to read his legend aright? As Abraham joins hands in this embassy with the august minister of an unnamed, but clearly typical, rite; so does Judaism, ages afterward, in the Supper-room of St. Mark's house, link itself through Our Lord's Eucharistic Gift of His own Body and Blood to the purer worship of the Mass. It is there that the spoil-laden soul finds its true King early in the morning of each day of the week, and makes with him a glorious interchange of tokens. *As the broken loaf and the proffered wine upon which Abraham looked had been sown broadcast upon the uplands as good wheat and grapes before being gathered together into one, so were the Elect who were to spring spiritually from his loins to be gathered together from the ends of the world into a Kingdom, over which the Royalest of his sons was to rule.*

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LXXI

THE SPIRIT OF RESTRAINT

Behold, now is the acceptable time:

THE immediate ideal that God set before Abraham in the summons to go forth and separate himself from his environment and kindred, the ideal that Abraham in turn handed on as a heritage to the race to which he had given a name and a destiny of circumcision as distinct as the bodily mark that denoted it, did not differ in aim, hardly differed even in methods, from the more explicit commandment afterward enforced by Catholicism at every stage of its development. Sound religion has its negations as well as its affirmations. The soul must be stripped bare before it can be clothed with divinity. That is doubtless why we are taught to turn aside and fast almost before we are taught to pray; to keep ourselves, as St. James reminds us, *unspotted from the world*; or, as St. Paul puts the same sobering lesson, *to present our bodies a living sacrifice, to be fashioned, not after the spirit of the age in which we live, but to be transformed by making our minds new, and so winning experience of the good, the acceptable, and the perfect will of God*. Once, at least, in the week we are called upon to bear witness that *in an acceptable time hath He called us*. It is by the various abstinences of the year, the Friday observance, the many

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vigils, the Ember celebrations, Lent, and Advent, that fervent believers *commend themselves* to that austere Influence, that mysterious Spirit of restraint, which speaks to them almost with the authority of a personal note in the ecclesiastical enactments on fasting. Like St. Martin in the legend, we recognize the glorified Christ only by the scars of His crucifixion. In like manner the Christ that abides with us mystically as an extra-sacramental Presence may be said to be challenged in all the ordered *watchings and fastings* of Catholicism. The Church that ignores this seasonable service and discipline of faith tends to become a mere husk of Christianity; just as the soul that disobeys it tends to become a withered branch, fit only for burning. *In vigiliis, in jejuniis, in castitate, in scientia, in longanimitate, in suavitate, in Spiritu Sancto*—does that not read like an invitation to keep Lent worthily?

LXXII

THE VOICE OF THE ABYSS

That ye receive not the grace of God in vain:

THE grace of God, in the Apostle's use of the word, may be said to be conterminous with the supernatural order, and to be as wide as the enfolding arms of the divine Mercy from which we can never escape unless we deliberately make our bed in hell. In this sense the Incarnation itself and its great counter-mystery, the actual and

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present-day Church, with all their conjoint opportunities of sanctification for me personally, may be a gift of God which I am receiving hourly in vain. We often ask, who lives up to his faith? Who lives up to his individual chances of moral aggrandizement? It is not that we choose to be cynical, or incredulous of human nature's essential decency, but that we are bewildered by the profusion of means to accomplish what looks like so poor a result. The prodigal exuberance of the natural world is a very inadequate symbol of the more divine wastefulness that goes on hourly in the redeemed and refashioned world of spiritual character. If the splendors of the visible Church dazzle certain devout believers like Father Faber, so that they are prone to maintain that hardly a soul within its borders will be lost, what shall we say of the invisible Church and its chaos of uncovenanted pieties? Oh, that, surely, is too vast for our limited ken! The mere thought of it leaves one silent with awe—silent, too, with the sense of dumb indignation at those that would set bounds to its loving-kindness, so marvellously analogous is it, in the dim sweep of its possibilities, to those other unmapped fields of starry light whereof astronomers report to us—system upon system in a universe that seems to widen without end; more suns, more whirling orbs of cooling fire, more harbingers of hope, and life, and supra-terrestrial beautifulness; more mystery, more movement, more tides of planetary song, and a primal force perpetually drawing the beholder to peer trustfully through one abyss to the confines of another in

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search of that "divine event" which surely awaits him beyond the utmost barriers of the dark. The instinct to probe and speculate in faith is not a profane one where the physical sciences are in question. Why, then, should it be wrong in that highest of sciences whereof the Incarnation is the first authentic fact, and God's untiring love of the race that has been deified through His Son's birth and death the first and mostly fruitful principle of ratiocination? *Righteousness and peace have kissed each other*, not only in Christ, but in the world which was established long ago in the morning of creation by the might of His all-prescient Word. The stars that sang together then have never ceased their burden for the ear of faith. When we shall have laid that inspiring lesson to heart we shall understand, perhaps, those *unspeakable groanings of the spirit* which are more potent than logic, those cries of the human deep within us which are like an answering echo of the supra-human and vaster deep without, telling us that, where power and law are so magnificent, goodness and mercy must be more magnificent still.

My little worlded self! the shadows pass
In this thy sister-world, as in a glass,
Of all processions that revolve in thee:

For all the past, read true, is prophecy,
And all the firsts are hauntings of some Last,
And all the springs are flash-lights of one Spring.

And this is but half the mystery. That grace of God which exists objectively and apart from us—though not

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without reference either to the holiest or to the most degraded of us—which has been preached to us as the Incarnation and its quasi-double, the sacramentally operative Church, has its inevitable counterside in the ten thousand particular favors whereby these two, which are mystically one, acquire a further and more indefinable unity in the sanctification of the individual soul. Not only in its exterior and objective sense is grace offered to mankind at large; but, what is much more to the point, it is bestowed, pressed almost, it might be said, upon the inner life and consciousness of *every man born into this world*. That is the explicit teaching of Scripture. *God wills all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth*. It is the explicit teaching of the Church likewise. Does not the unlovely history of Calvinism and Jansenism show that? He that imposes the sweet yoke of His law upon all has cut off no life from the possibility of salvation. That is the real purport of the once famous axiom: *Facienti quod in se est Deus non denegat gratiam*. God never refuses a grace to the man, be he sage or savage, who substantially uses his opportunities. Whatever be the origin of the consoling dictum, it is Scriptural in its derivation, and more than patristic in its spirit and use. The higher soul of Catholicism cries through the rhythm of its phrases. Without being versed in the language of the schools at all, one has but to look back upon the sacramental discipline of at least fifteen centuries to realize that, as St. Thomas of Aquin reminds us, “God, on His part, reaches a hand through the dark to everybody; and

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what is more, He not only draws the hand of the man who submits to Him, but He draws to Himself the unwilling, too—*aversos ad Se attrahit.*” He compels the churlish and the undeserving; and will strain courtesy even with the slow-witted and the foolish. It is precisely in this magnificent condescension and affability of God-head that the danger against which the Apostle warns us so commonly lies. For one man that will not scruple to transgress the divine will openly you will find a hundred who think it a small matter to lag behind the opportunities of the soul. Yet a wasted grace is more than a lost juncture in the tides of occasion. It means shutting the eyes of the understanding to a vision that purifies as well as instructs. It means closing the ears of the heart to its Lover’s most insistent and personal call. Half-taught consciences, souls that rely too much upon logic in the affairs of the spirit, are sometimes prone to think, that, because there has been no deliberate sin in such a rejection, the evil is, therefore, a farthing debt which a little after-trial or an hour of two of Purgatory may remove. That is a grave mistake from which a more intimate acquaintance with the Catholic doctrine of merit might save one. Even in the case of a soul that is ultimately saved a lost grace may be said to project its shadow into eternity. It cannot entail grief, indeed, because that final act of union in which God becomes *All in All* to the redeemed is not compatible with regret; and there can be no felt inequalities in a hierarchy upon which Love has established its throne; yet it remains true that the degree of glory corre-

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sponding to the misprized opportunity, the accrete happiness of it, gleaming afar off like a radiant and empurpled leaf in the Rose of Beatitude, must be apprehended in heaven as merely a part of the essential Charity of Godhead, whereas it might also have been subjectively shared and enjoyed as an element in the personal blessedness of one who had loved and labored early as well as late. To insist on considerations like these is, no doubt, to treat the Apostle's warning on its less forbidding side; but it would be foolish to infer on that account that its darker aspect can have no meaning for the conscientious believer. Hell is always a possibility until our time of proving is over; and a neglected grace is a sign of one of those states of will which tend to bring that possibility within reach of the perverse heart. *Forty years long was I nigh to this generation and said: They do always err in heart; and I swore to them in my wrath they should not enter into my rest.*

LXXIII

A PLEA FOR PEACE

Giving no offence to any man:

It is a charge commonly brought against Catholicism that it is too conservative; its official leaders are too cautious; its spokesmen—so it would seem—too cynically self-contained in descanting upon the plain evils of the hour. If one reflects upon it, he will see, that, so far from

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being a proof of worldliness or cowardice, this tendency is an evidence rather of a form of apostolicity which none but the unspiritual are likely to forget. Our Lord, it is true, came to bring a sword; and the Christian who is not prepared to draw it when the need arises can have no claim to be accepted as a serious follower; but it may be questioned whether, for Christendom at large, the naked sword really symbolizes the normal attitude of the Church toward the world that she was sent to convert. Civic peace she looks upon as one of the most desirable of boons. The thought of it never leaves her. She prays for it night and morning and at every stage of the ecclesiastical year; her sense of its blessedness runs like a silver thread through all the texture of her liturgy. At the most solemn moment of her Eucharistic celebration, just before the Sacred Elements are to be distributed and consumed, she repeats her petition for it here and now thrice and four times over. *Da propitius pacem in diebus nostris*, says the celebrant in secret at the close of the *Pater Noster*—*mercifully grant us peace in these our days*. Again, as he mingles the broken Particle with the consecrated Wine in the chalice, he cries aloud that all the congregation may hear him: *May the peace of the Lord be ever with you*; and at the end of the triple invocation for forgiveness: *Bestow on us thy peace*; and finally in the first of the three ante-Communion prayers: *Have regard to the faith of Thy Church and, according as Thou hast willed, deign to give her peace and unity*. Indeed, the pregnant Latin words would seem to bear a meaning that no English

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paraphrase can adequately cover: *pacificare et coadunare digneris*;—*make peace for her and bring her scattered members together.*

Whether the form of these petitions can be traced further back than the days of the great St. Gregory matters very little; the spirit that underlies the form is as old as the Church that worshipped discreetly and in quiet for a brief space under the Antonines. Ancient or modern, she proclaims her mission at all times to be one of peace and general good-will. She is persuaded that *the early rain is better than the late*, that joy in the long event begets a truer blessedness than sorrow, that her most enduring conquests in the field of character, her daily victories over the average man, can be more abundantly achieved in long periods of repose than in passing hours of stress. It is then, when grounds of offence are few, that truth gets a hearing and prevails. Misunderstandings can be lived down and calumnies blown away by the sheer might of charitableness, when Catholics become broad-spirited enough to rule their outer lives with reference, not to their own particular needs, whether of race or hereditary usage, but in loyal sympathy with the holier demands of the universal Church. *Ut non vituperetur ministerium nostrum!*

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LXXIV

THE PARABLE OF THE STOLEN BLESSING

Is he not rightly named Jacob?

THE story of Jacob and the stolen blessing must be read for its typological, not for its ethical significance. Its value, which is as profound to-day as it was when the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews saw in it a forecast of *things to come*, lies rather in its suggestiveness as a whole, not in its separate details of semi-barbaric and unfilial deceit. Understood in this larger and quasi-prophetic sense, it becomes, as St. Augustine reminds us, not a tale of cozenage, but a mystery. It is the pre-adumbration of the great substitution which took place in Christ, Who, by a stranger disguise, won for us His Father's blessing and secured something more than the forfeited inheritance of Lucifer for all who were to be born to Him from the womb of His Church. It is well to insist upon this wider aspect of the story; because sensitive souls too often boggle at the repulsive particulars of the episode, and are at a loss to know how to fit them in with other and not less inspired lessons of Scripture, such as the command to honor one's parents, or the prohibition against speaking or acting a lie. The whole transaction is, moreover, a kind of parable of the omnipotence of destiny. Men work out their plots and counter-plots; they

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entrap; they overreach and think to enjoy their questionable gains as in their lawlessness they first dreamed of them; but God is in heaven patiently devising His own plans. He shapes even human wickedness to His remote and mysterious ends. *His gifts are without repentance*; His elections are unaccountable, awe-inspiring, infallible and not to be gainsaid. When the struggle is over and its record is docketed in the illumined conscience of faith, it is found that somehow good has once more come out of evil and the sweep of the divine mercy is wider than man's capacity for guilt.

LXXV

SELF-INTEREST AND SELF-DECEIT

Now Isaac was old and his eyes were dim:

ISAAC's dimness was more than physical. Twice had it been intimated to him that the blessing of the first-born was to be reserved for the younger of the twins. *The elder shall serve the younger!* Such had been the express answer of the divine oracle; and the pre-election implied in it had received an almost tragic justification when that same elder son, now grown up, proved himself a profane person and surrendered his birthright for a mess of pottage. Yet, as old age crept upon him, the Patriarch seems to have forgotten these earlier proofs of the divine will. He loved Esau beyond Jacob, because, as the

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Hebrew text graphically puts it, *the venison of Esau was in his mouth*. Nothing blinds the inner eye of the soul like self-gratification, whether the gratification take the form of appetite or mere whim. Isaac no doubt could have made out a good case for himself—we can all do that when our own interests are in jeopardy. Passion can be prolific in subterfuges when the taste of irreligious meats is in its mouth. The venison of Esau is too often a plausible bait. It begins by inducing a spiritual dimness of vision which is more terrible than that of years; but it ends in our being overreached. For the meanest infidelities of the heart God seems to reserve His most unrelenting irony; not to destroy us, but to bring us back conscience-smitten to the worship of His will.

LXXVI

JACOB AND CHRIST

The fragrance of his garments:

GOODLY odors have their associations. They lay a spell upon the remembering spirit which is not seldom as subtle in its influences as the power of unforgotten music or of song. A violet will recall a buried summer; the sprig of rosemary within the folds of a treasured wedding-garment will plead for steadfastness and purity where more commonplace marriage-reminders might fail; an incense-breathing vestment in an old church will impart a new depth of meaning to the religious rites and

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pieties of a workaday age like our own. There are things that defy justification and are yet sacred and human, because they have their roots in the unseen universe out of which the nobler side of our nature is sprung. Life is more than mere growth, more even than action, just because it is life. It reaches backward as well as forward, and holds the present in fief to the past by its abiding emanations, its aromas, and its thousand secret springs of sentiment. All of which is a parable with its applications to that supersubstantial world in which the Catholic prays daily for his portion of bread. The raiment of Esau, in which Jacob was clothed for a double ruse, was, as the Hebrew text describes it, *desirable*. It won for its wearer a grace that hinted darkly of a mystery beyond its present blessing. The divinity with which our churlish nature was sealed in Mary's Son was as a pleasant-smelling garment bringing down a benison upon all who can trace their baptismal descent to the *Water and the Holy Ghost* whereof Our Lord spoke to Nicodemus. The Incarnation has its compelling fragrances that only the initiated may understand. In some inexplicable way Our Heavenly Father was appeased by the strange spectacle of suffering humanity approaching Him in the guise of Godhead. An inheritance was won for us in that extraordinary substitution; and we, too, walk now in the holiday gladness of a new attire. By the sacraments that transmit these mysteries to us, tactually, it might be said, we are become *the good odor of Christ*. The fragrance of *the dyed garments of Bosra* is about us.

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LXXVII

THE BLESSING OF THE FULL FIELD

Behold: the smell of my Son is as the smell of a full field which the Lord hath blessed:

THE sanctifications wrought through the sacramental system of the Church are not substantially different from the sanctifications achieved by Our Lord Himself in the days of His visible ministry. He and His Church are *one, even as the Father and the Son are one*. He abides with her; His Spirit lives and breathes in her. By the Church is the Word interpreted to us, just as through the Word the Father is sufficiently declared; though *no man of us hath seen Him at any time*, save in and through the mystical Christ Who is apprehended by faith and living membership with the visible and audible and hierarchical body of believers. *Philip, he that seeth Me, seeth the Father*. This identity of apprehension reaches further than the historic Christ. It underlies all the activities of Catholicism. *My Father worketh hitherto and I also work*. It is by such tillage that the Church more than justifies her claim to be called Catholic or universal. She is the *full field that the Lord hath blessed*, not merely in the sense that every nation under heaven finds a home within her borders, but in the sense also that every type of character finds its most congenial soil for growth in cul-

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tivating her gracious precepts. How a thought like that should chasten our habitual view of what is sometimes rancorously called ecclesiasticism! No doubt there are misunderstandings and injustices; the tares must grow along with the good wheat until the ears whiten to the harvest. *It must be that scandals will come*; but are they not too often fomented by those who seem to be insensible to the mystical and fecundating side of things? Try to think habitually of the actual Church about you, the community, or diocese, or parish in which you live, as a kind of veiled Christ. His odor is in the midst of it so long as the sacraments are duly dispensed and His doctrine preached. His presence makes the true Israel. The pleasant savor of His daily Sacrifice is *as the smell of a full field which the Lord hath blessed*.

LXXVIII

JACOB AND I

Art thou my son, Esau?

ISRAEL'S pilfered blessing was long in its fulfilment; but its realization meant a victorious Christ at the last and the whole of heathendom made new.

Therefore, God give thee
Of the dew of heaven,
And the fatness of the earth,
And abundance of corn and wine:

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Let people serve thee,
And tribes worship thee:
Be lord over thy brethren,
And let thy mother's sons bow down to thee:
Cursed be every one that curseth thee,
And blessed be he that blesseth thee.

Was the spiritual significance of the promise clearly apprehended from the beginning? It would be difficult to maintain that view; yet we must remember that God never left Himself without witnesses to His deeper purpose. After the Vision of the Ladder in Bethel, and the still more wonderful prize that he secured out of his night-long struggle with the Word, Israel understood that he and his house were sealed mysteriously unto destiny. There are still traces of the old overreaching spirit; but there is also the new mark of *the shrunken sinew of his thigh*. The man is no longer what he was. *He had seen God face to face, and his life was preserved.* It is not without meaning that the sacred record adds: *And straightway as he passed over Phaul the sun rose upon him and he went lame.* Every honest change of heart must leave a man halt and maimed in the members that once served him unto iniquity. It is God's way of balancing things.

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LXXIX

THE TALE NOT SOON TOLD

God give thee of the dew of heaven:

BUT what of Jacob's after-fortunes and the effect of his father's blessing? There is hardly a portion of Scripture, Old Testament or New, that does not afford an answer; yet it is out of Scripture altogether and in the wider annals of the Christian Church that we must study the full consequences of that magnificent promise. Adequately to do so is impossible. It would require what can never authentically be written until the books are opened on the last day; it would need a personal history of the sacraments, a secret journal of the individual triumphs of the mystical Christ. *Night unto night showeth knowledge*, it is written. In silence, in darkness, in the repose of the individual conscience, the Church's myriad-times-repeated message of *the Word that was made Flesh and dwelt among us* has fallen like dew upon the mown grass through the centuries and made a new heaven and a new earth for the strong believer in whom will and conviction have gone hand in hand. Who shall dare write of these harvestings? Who can trace the changes wrought primarily in human character and afterward in the texture of civil society by the mysterious regenerations of faith conceived and nurtured sacramentally? Who shall give us

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a wise and candid psychology of the saints? Who shall give us an impartial but reverent history of the unheroic and commonplace Christian, the soul that has ignored the higher counsels and yet walked with substantial carefulness along the clearly charted way of the commandments? To every class and condition of the "saved," from the Jah-worshipper who groped dimly in Isaac's day to the righteous handful who would not consent to the counsel of Caiaphas, to the God-fearing among the *Goim*, to the obedient among the countless hosts of the formal and hierarchic Church, to the least instructed as well as to the profoundly read, to high and low alike in every age, the doctrine of the Incarnation, the tradition of the *Emmanuel*, of *God visiting and comforting his people*, has been like *the dew of heaven*, just as the assured hope of it has proved the fatness of what were else a parched earth, a land starved of its eucharistic *abundance of corn and wine*.

LXXX

GOD'S AFTER-IRONY

Blessed be he that blesseth thee:

ONE other remark would seem to be in point here. We often hear it said that grace works swiftly; that its operations, being sudden, unaccountable and divine, partake of the nature of thought or of volition in the spiritual order, follow the analogy of light and force, or even of

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the wandering wind in the physical world. The Word speaks; the will answers; and the new heavens are made. The record of God's covenanted mercies contains much to justify that blessed persuasion; but it contains not a little, too, that argues the other way. Jacob is not changed all at once. *Only a remnant* of the chosen nation ripens at last to the consciousness of its spiritual destiny. Israel endures; *the peoples serve him; the tribes worship him; he lords it over his brethren; his mother's sons bow down*; but how appalling, in spite of its essential continuity, is the contrast between the dream and its tardy realization! *His dominion to-day stretches, indeed, from sea to sea and to the world's end*; but it is in the guise of a Church which eleven millions of his descendants scowl at with ill-concealed hate. Is this, then, the fulfilment of Isaac's too confident threat:

Cursed be every one that curseth thee
And blessed be he that blesseth thee?

Learn, then, that grace is as silent and slow-moving as it is often lightning-like and sure. Do not chafe at its apparent fruitlessness in others. Be not angry or clamorous because it has failed to keep pace with your imagined times and seasons. Above all things, be pitiful and do not judge. *What man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God. That Spirit, we have heard it said, breathes where It will.* It also breathes how It will and when It will. Learn, too, that behind every

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tender of grace lurks a dreadful possibility of after-irony. *Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh.* Tremble at that irony and flee from the foolishness and self-seeking that invariably provoke it. If we only understood things aright we should see that, after the pain of loss, God's laughter is the most spiritual of the terrors of hell.

LXXXI

JOSEPH AND CHRIST

Hear ye the dream that I have beheld:

It is significant to note that Joseph, who is commonly held up to us as the great pattern of manly chastity and conscientiousness in Scripture, is set before us in the Breviary Lessons rather as a misprized dreamer and son of destiny. The sacred narrative stops short with the account of his sale to the Madianites. The story of his fortunes in Egypt, his temptation and subsequent rise to influence—all this is ignored, and we have instead a detailed series of visions which seems to end in unnatural defeat and overthrow. He is his father's favorite son; and that fact excites the envy of his brethren; but he is something more than this. He is Israel's secret comfort.

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Events make it evident that he is one day to be his people's prop and mainstay. The boy believes in himself. His dreams are to come true; *he must go down into the pit before he can hope to rise to greatness*. He will never be able to redeem his misunderstanding and envious brethren save through a discipline of undeserved sorrow. Is not the parable a transparent one? What is Our Lord's career in its main outlines but that of One Who comes to instruct His own with a story of dreams and visions and parables? Parables of a higher business than wheat-harvesting or sheep-shearing; dreams of a newer kingdom over which He alone shall rule; visions of an opened heaven and the righteousness by which, as by a kind of violence, its citadels may be won! Think of Joseph in his individual destiny as a forerunner and type of Christ, and his strange life will not be without meaning for you. There are minds that are bothered by what they call the questionable morality of some of the patriarch's actions. That is not the point, however. It is the significance of his life as a whole that we must consider. He will help us to understand at once the pathos and the relentlessness of Our Lord's mission. It is foolish to withstand so supreme a lesson. The claim that lies behind it is the claim of a Person. Christ will be King, He will rule, whether you accept Him or not. You may ignore Him, or mock at Him, or crucify Him, but *He will rise. He will come in His glory*. One day you will be glad to buy wheat from Him. Happy you, if you are found to be of His kin. Kinship with Christ is the only substitute for the

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purchase-money that all of us are too poor to furnish; and kinship with Him is secured only through faith in His Person and trust in the ordinances of His Church.

LXXXII

CONCERNING ENVY

And they could not speak peaceably to him:

UNKIND speech is the first-born of envy and the busiest of the devil's satellites. It works more mischief in the world than open anger or than lust; because it knows how to hide itself under a show of injured justice and is cunning to mask its rancor under a face of indignation. It is essentially a petty vice, even when it urges its possessor, as in the case of Joseph's brethren, to violent crimes. It is a spreading evil; yet the root of its mischief is not so much in the irrevocable word as in the envy out of which it springs. Envy has been defined as grief at another's good, and the definition is a fair one. It is a grief that feeds sedulously upon lies. The lie of its self-reputed excellence is its daily bread; the lie of the imagined excellence of others, one day to be appropriated by some ill-natured trick or turn of fortune, is the wine of its present hope. Lies, lies, lies; it begins and ends in lies, being true only in this, that it must prove its kinship with the devil, who is the father of lies, because it was his envy that peopled hell, the final resting-place of all them that love leasing. The evil it wrought in the

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souls of Joseph's brethren was but a poor symbol and portent of the disorder it has worked everywhere in elect households ever since. Wherever men are gathered together for a joint purpose, be that purpose commonplace or high, its corroding ugliness may be looked for as a solvent against which the noble must be ever on their guard. Not merely in the offices of the secular state, but in those several centres of spiritual force which we know as the Christian family, the parish, the diocese, the religious orders, the Church at large, it is ever silently at play, and he that would realize his dreams of a rising sheaf for Christ must be content to suffer much from its venom, must be ready even to be lowered into the pit or to be bartered away unnaturally by his kind and sold scornfully to Egypt, if he would not fail to realize the visions that come to him chiefly *for his brethren's sake*.

Do we take an extreme view of a small vice? Have we magnified a common meanness into a crime? Gather up, if you can, and weigh one by one the remarkable sayings of the wise on the disorderliness of envy and its power for evil in a too ill-natured world. The sweetest tempered and sanest of the doctors of Christendom, the unruffled angel of the Schools, the great St. Thomas of Aquin, has in more than one passage of his writings drawn out a sort of map of its domain in the unchecked heart, and this is the substance of what he says:

Envy is a true sickness of the soul, manifesting itself in a kind of inhuman grief over another's good, in so far as

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that good is thought to lessensome glory of our own, . . . for repute and one's proper sense of his own excellence seem to constitute the bulk of the matter upon which this capital vice preys. The mean-minded (pusillanimes) and those who affect distinction groundlessly are most prone to its outbreaks. It acts in them like an evil eye, blighting what they gaze upon; hence they are rightly said to look askance at their rivals (invidere) It is a prolific vice. When Envy takes up her abode in the house of a man's heart she is brought to bed there of five daughters; and their names are: Secret-Hatred, Whispering, Detraction, Boastfulness, and Repining.

That is a great saint's account of the matter. If you think he betrays a saint's propensity to exaggerate a common fault, hear what the balanced mind of Menander has to say about it:

Of all the ills of life, he declares, the very worst is envy. Past, present, or to come, there is no mischief that it has not accomplished. It is the base flunky of an evil heart.

Pagan and Christian alike, then, define it as a detestable thing, a spreading thing, an indefatigable and energetic thing. Has not the Holy Ghost summed up all its repulsiveness in a phrase? *Envy is a growing death*, He implies; *it is a rottenness in a man's bones, just as a quiet heart is the secret of the body's health*. No wonder that Our Lord likened its effect in the soul to the work of *the enemy, who came by night and sowed cockle in a man's field while he was asleep*.

While he was asleep! Perhaps that is the most dis-

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quieting thing ever told us about envy. It steals into the heart and begins to spawn there unnoticed. Against all vices, indeed, but most of all against this, are we called upon to be wakeful. How shall our religion be pure, if we foster such a breeder of wickedness in the soul?

LXXXIII

MOSES AND THE NEW ORDER

I will go and see this great Vision:

WITH the entrance of Moses upon the scene of the Old Testament narratives the tale of the patriarchs is closed and that of the prophets and lawgivers of the chosen seed is begun. Israel's religion takes on a national character. Its qualities are no longer those of the cult of a particular family or group of families; its law and its spirit, its curiously symbolic ritual and all its code of enactments denote the conscience of a people vaguely stirred by the promise of its peculiar destiny. Whatever view we may be compelled to take of the diversified contents of the Pentateuch, one thing is abundantly clear to the mind that realizes how human in its condescension is God's method of dealing with mankind. Moses is the prophet of a new order. The salvation which the divine mercy works out in Israel's behalf through him is not merely the type and forerunner; it is an actual and most significant stage in the progress of a holier and more

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universal deliverance. Moses is a divinely chosen instrument in a scheme of which we can never aspire to understand the scope or the importance until we find Christ and make Him our own through the sacramental ordinances of Catholicism. The outer facts in the career of so great a prophet can never be without their interest for those who hold fast to that divine continuity of things which it seems to be one of the many aims of Scripture to enforce upon the thoughtful mind.

LXXXIV

“FROM FOLLOWING THE SHEEP”

Now Moses was pasturing the sheep of Jethro, his father-in-law:

SOME of the most remarkable calls of which Scripture takes account have the note of unexpectedness about them. The elect soul is immersed, to all outward appearances, in the business of the hour. It is absorbed in its daily work. The summons of the divine Visitant is sudden, almost unseasonable, one might say, were it not that all hours are God's hours, and that our times are ever in His hand. Saul the son of Cish, David, Simon Peter, Matthew the Tax-Gatherer, and Saul with his letters from Jerusalem—how unlooked for is the command that hurries them away from their untoward surroundings and clothes them with the dignity of a mission! God, of course, trains His own workmen in His own way; so

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that mere merit has little to do, has sometimes, so far as we can see, absolutely nothing to do, with His most significant elections. Not only can He raise up to Himself a new generation of believers from the worn stones of the unspiritual street, but He can create a newer and a greater Abraham from even less likely materials. If the apostasy of Judas shows us how mysteriously far a human will may go in resisting Him, the conversion of the Good Thief shows us how mysteriously masterful His mercy often is for ends that we may not yet hope to understand. All this is quite true; but it is equally true to say, none the less, that between these two extremes the divine forethought appears to work with a certain measure of regard for what is sound and attractive in human character. It is curious to observe, in the most striking instances that we have named, at least, that each one of those who seems to be so unexpectedly called has put the whole of himself into the business in hand. God is no lover of apathy; nor can He be said to be a rewarder of half-heartedness. It is a favorite ground for devout complaint with certain types of religious soul that they would do greater things for the Church if they could only be set down in the midst of a more congenial environment. That is one of the worst of delusions. There is always need for radical thoroughness, for content in the service of Our Lord, whether the Demon of Circumstance have placed the misshapen peg of your character in a square hole, or in a round. *Unto the faithful Israelite the pasturing-ground of the sheep of Jethro the*

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Egyptian may always be the starting-place of mercies as vast as the Incarnation itself. What a value a theory like that gives to the dead commonplaces of our everyday existence!

LXXXV

THE BETTER SOLITUDE

And when he had driven his flock to the withdrawn places of the wilderness he came to Horeb, the Mountain of God:

WHAT we have said elsewhere about the unaccountableness of God's ordinary calls in no wise contradicts the strange preferences which His Providence seems to show for souls nurtured in solitude. We make our own desert. A wanton imagination will run riot even in the wilderness. It will people its inner world with the hosts of its proper desires, its lusts, its dreams of ambition, its hoarded experiences of the past. A disciplined spirit, on the other hand, will discover a true Mountain of God in the tranquillity of its own conscience. Its Horeb rises for it out of a quiet and well-instructed mind. Since Pentecost the divinest solitudes have ever been those of the unworldly heart. The oracles uttered long ago as Our Lord went up and down Palestine, the secrets committed by the Holy Ghost to the Apostles and their disciples in the upper chamber of Mark's house and elsewhere before the destined deposit was finally sealed—it is in the recesses of the undisturbed Catholic conscience that the full, personal,

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and individual meanings of these original apocalypses, their particular and practical significations for me, are most fruitfully imparted. Cultivate these periods of quiet, these fractional times of withdrawn meditation, when you can. Do not neglect them if they are thrust suddenly upon you while on a journey, or when you are sojourning among strangers. If it is thought, amid other forms of a discreet *askesis*, that adds principally to one's inward stature, may we not hope that such methodical reflection, by creating a kind of appetite for the soul's more mystical food, as found in the Blessed Eucharist, will bring us by sure degrees to the full measure of our growth in Christ? *So shall we be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inward man; so shall we be able to comprehend with all the saints, with our Catholic brethren, that is, in every land, who live their faith, rather than make boastful or idle profession of it, what is the breadth and length and depth and height; so shall we know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge, and be filled at last with the very Pleroma of God.*

LXXXVI

THE UNCONSUMING FIRE

And he saw that the bush burned with fire and yet was not consumed:

It is characteristic of all the revelations of God that they do not destroy the natural growth of unspoiled

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nature, but perfect it, rather. They edify, they build up, they reveal common things to our lower sense in a transfigured light. Look at Catholicism in the lump, as it were, and contrast its effects upon the world and upon all the nobler instincts of the race with those of Stoicism, say, or even with the spurious offshoots of our ancient faith that pretend to give the heart of man an unadulterated—by which is really meant a dry and undeveloped, a merely abstract—Christianity. Are we the better for that fierce individualism in trade, in politics, and in social economy, which owes so much of its relentlessness to the consuming force of the revolt of the sixteenth century? Shallow philosophers sometimes appeal to the condition of Catholic countries to-day in refutation of this idea; but the appeal is an irrational one. The equilibrium of modern society has not yet been fully restored. It is as though one should cry out against the stark empty riverbeds of some once prosperous country-side when nature or man had been busy in changing the course or tapping the current of its principal stream. A century or two may reveal much that is hidden to our present knowledge. And what may be claimed in a large way for society in the mass may be asserted in more consoling measure of the individual soul. Its experiences of Deity, whether they be extraordinary and extra-sacramental, or simply seasonable and covenanted, are always of the sort that illumine without withering up. The heart burns, but it is not consumed. We become more, we do not become less, in the scale of being. We attempt greater things for God,

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we climb more difficult heights. Without realizing it in any particular way, we become leaders and apostles. Men see the light of our new countenance from afar; and it is a harbinger of deliverance to their toil-weary eyes.

LXXXVII

FAITH IN MIND AND WILL

And Moses hid his face:

THERE are certain processes of the glorified understanding for which mere logic and inferential assent will be found unavailing. Faith, doubtless, may be defined as a function of the intellect moving in spheres not wholly connatural to it; but a truer account of the matter would probably suggest that it was a new and transfigured phase of the will. *Corde creditur!* The heart, which is the recognized Scriptural metaphor for the whole of the interior man, seems to be identical with all that is effective, as well as affective, in him; it is the dynamic part of the soul, in a word; it is the very central core of his unique personality, the self that can be surrendered with impunity to no law but that of righteousness; the deep of the will calling to the deep of God. *Abyssus abyssum invocat.* Moses did well to hide his face. Faith may use reason to secure a hearing, but it never justifies itself by the debatable word. *It knows Whom it has believed.* In that act of knowledge all the daily ceremonies of its

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lower being drop away from it, and the naked soul is alive only to God. It needs a will to meet and brace a will. *Inclina cor meum, Deus!*

LXXXVIII

BEING AND BECOMING

I am Who am:

LIFE with us is a becoming; with God it is a complete and eternally sufficing act. We are never at any time the whole of ourselves. Even in that supreme moment of self-realization, when charity and knowledge have kissed each other under the compelling touch of the last anointing and what is death in me is swallowed up in what is Life, it needs, as St. Thomas and the Schoolmen are careful to remind us, an actual participation in Godhead, of which the Incarnation of the Word is at once the price and the mysterious symbol, before we can be said *to know even as we are known*. The striving to be makes the pain of living so long as we are on earth; it constitutes, too, under other conditions, the very heart of the pain of waiting, so long as we are detained in Purgatory; the Beatific Vision is the Answer to the night-long struggle. The present condition of the soul is like that of Jacob wrestling with the Angel. When the morning breaks our purged eyesight will behold a changed landscape. We shall give the place a new name. For us

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Phanuel will not merely be the Face of God; it will be surcease from struggle; and for intelligent finite creatures whose grief it is to long to be in each separate act of becoming, that is the Beginning of the End, which is no end. Through the Word, in the faith of Whom we have wrestled all through the despairing dark, we shall find what it is simply to be. We shall live our life without let or hindrance from time or space; and we shall live it altogether. That is eternity, Boethius tells us—*interminabilis vitæ tota simul et perfecta possessio. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. . . . And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of Life freely. . . . Whosoever will!* The Fulness of Being, which we achieve in Christ, is secured only by those who will; for to will is to love.

Love, all day long and every day
Time works this mystery;
Let fools explain it as they may,
'Tis plain to Thee and me!
Love's living lips breathe Life away,
And I am breath of Thee!
Yea, all day long and every day!
Oh God! 'Tis good to be!

Passiontide to Easter

[Jeremiah]

LXXXIX

JEREMIAH, THE AUTHOR FOR PASSIONTIDE

The Word of the Lord came to me:

AS we enter within the shadow of Our Lord's culminating sorrow it is to the *Prophet of the Full End* that we naturally turn to find a voice for the thoughts that are too wonderful for us. He shall speak while Israel, in very truth now, and no longer in type or figure, drinks his last draught of folly and reels blindly to his doom. Other prophets forecast other aspects of the Passion. They describe its scandal, its abasement, or the ruin it seems to work to Israel's most cherished ideals; they insist upon its martial character; they call attention to its rush and fury; they paint for us the *dyed garments of Bosra*; they show us the very form and feature of the Captain Who comes *glorious in His apparel, marching in the greatness of His strength*. They all but make us hear the sound of the chariot-wheels that *move like a whirlwind*, while *He lifts up His Ensign to the nations that are afar*. We read these things and are stirred according to the measure of our faith and its sensibility; but

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such thoughts are not the thoughts for the majority of us at an hour like this. They are good for other times and seasons; but as the eclipse of defeat, portending the failure of a race, creeps up the sky, we feel in the bewilderment of our self-rebuke that we need another interpreter. It is hardly human to behold such events unmoved. Even while I condemn the children of Abraham I must mourn for them; for the Israel upon whom this fate is fallen is none other than my unrepentant Self. The instinct of the Roman Church, therefore, which finds an outlet to the thoughts of Passiontide in the words that the Holy Ghost put long ago into the mouth of the *Man of Anathoth*, is as satisfying as the expression of it is ancient, theologically far-reaching, and profound. Other prophets, as we have said, give us other aspects of the Passion; but Jeremiah puts the pity of it into our hearts. Nor is it merely because his poignant utterances are so charged with meaning that the liturgical spirit of the Church makes use of them during Passiontide; the seer himself from whom they were wrung by disappointment, is, in his private and individual history, too startlingly a forerunner of Our Lord to allow us to be insensible to the application of his reported sayings to a time like this. Like Our Lord, he received a mission to recall Israel to an original sense of values. He was sent to persuade the men of his race to return to a purer type of religion, to put faith in God rather than in politics, and to wear the badge of His service in their hearts, while carrying it with such a show of bravery in the outer flesh. *Let*

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him that glorieth glory in this, that he loveth Me, that I am the Lord who exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness on the earth; for in these things I delight.

Jeremiah's religion, therefore, is interior and spiritual. All the mechanical service in the world will not compensate for the loss of that soul of belief out of which sincere worship invariably springs.

Such in its main outlines is the message that the Prophet seems to enforce; and because he maintains it steadfastly in the teeth of powerful opposition, he is condemned to suffer imprisonment, contumely, stripes. He is smitten on the mouth by Phassur. He is exposed like a common malefactor in the stocks. He lives solitary and alone, with tears for drink, and with the consciousness of ultimate failure as the daily food of his growing despair. At the end—so tradition avers—he went to his death in a dark land, a victim of the ignorant fury of the people whom he had labored to deliver. Time, working as an instrument of the divine irony, accomplished in his case what it has brought to pass for so many martyrs of his kind. His memory came to be treasured as that of a true lover of Israel. Centuries afterward, when the Machabees attempted to re-assert the ancient independence of the stock, he was believed to have come to them in a sustaining vision and to have fired the hearts of those who fought to re-establish the purity of Jehovah's covenant.

One element in his character, as it is described for us in the prophecies collected under his name, reveals a

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curious kinship in temperament and disposition with what is recorded of Our Blessed Lord. Jeremiah shrank for a while from the too great burden of sorrow laid upon him by Jehovah. He would refrain from drinking the bitter chalice, if he could; but he loved his people; and *not his will, but the will of Jehovah*, braced him for the great struggle in which he became *as one accursed* for the sins of his race.

These considerations ought to make his inspired utterances dear to the Catholic heart during the fortnight that precedes Good Friday. They will help us in a general way, at least, to understand why he, and not Isaiah, should be singled out as the Herald of our Mother's yearly renewed grief.

XC

A MARK OF ELECTION

Before I formed thee in the womb I knew thee:

THERE is no mark of predestination so infallible as sorrow. Great trials and great destiny go together in the kingdom of heaven; and God is never so surely our Familiar as when He lays a cross upon us for the sake of those whom we are called upon to renew in righteousness. All the truer prophets of mankind have been sealed as with stripes of pain from their birth up. In this, as in many other things, is Our Lord *the First Born of many brethren*.

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XCI

UNACQUAINTED WITH GRIEF

Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child:

THE soul can have no manhood unless its virility come to it from Christ. It is by trial, by the discipline of pain, by the consciousness of past failure, that we learn, at last, the word of power that proves us, not children, but ancients in the service of Our Lord. Success keeps too many of us young. To be unacquainted with grief is to be a mere prattler when the deeper lessons of life are to be explained to our fellows. We reverence the tried teacher; we uncover to the master who has himself endeavored to live the problems he undertakes to solve. The better wisdom can never be gleaned from books. It is, as St. James reminds us, *from above; being chaste, then peaceable, modest, easy to be entreated, consenting to the good, full of pity and good fruits.* It is acquired by insight, by disillusionment; and there is no disillusioner like faith in the grip of pain. When sorrow is sanctified it becomes the most persuasive preacher in the world. Its best sanctification, however, comes to it from the sacraments; for the grief that is not soothed by those heavenly anodynes may be holy, indeed, and pathetic to look upon; but it can never become efficiently apostolic either to ourselves or to the *Goim* who stand without, until it has been

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touched upon the mouth and turned into Christian penance. That is a great mystery. Only those who are insistent in regular confession know how far it reaches in a man's inner life.

XCII

A SUPPLANTER OF THE NATIONS

Lo, I have set thee this day over the nations and over kingdoms, to root up, and to pull down, and to waste, and to destroy, and to build, and to plant:

WHAT the Prophet was commissioned to do in part, as between Israel and its alliances with Egypt and Chaldea, Our Lord was sent to do by His Father for all the kingdoms of the world to the end of time. It is through His Church that He works out this terrifying apostolate; and the history of that Supplanter of the nations is—to those who reflect upon it—the most illuminating commentary on the Prophet's words. Catholicism can no more avoid being a disturber of secular peace at certain grave crises in the affairs of men than it can help being a witness to the austerer aspects of Our Lord's teaching. And the panic fear it creates in the outer world is only a parable of the more awful dismay it occasions in the inner citadel of a man's heart when its message is found to run counter to the ambitions already established there. In this sense it still remains true that Our Lord is come *not to bring peace but a sword.*

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XCIII

THE PARABLE OF THE ALMOND ROD

*I see a branch in blossom:**

THE great Event of which we have so clear a premonition in the note of the liturgy on Passion Sunday seems to throw its shadow over all the intervening time. Soon there will be the Day of Palms, and then there will be the After-Day of Rejection and Retribution. First the white blossom, then the hard and bitter fruit of the blossom—the sign and its fulfilment. Is it not always so with God? Early and late the conscience of man knows Him as the great Hastener. His promises, we are told, *are without repentance*. If He binds Himself to bless, we shall be blessed; if He threatens, He will perform. The fruit does not more surely follow the flower in the ordinary sequence of nature than His judgment the sign in which it was first foretold. He may seem to wait for a season. The white glory of the swaying branches may be misread by fools and scoffers, but the petals will fall one by one; the leaves will inevitably

* St. Jerome has translated the Hebrew phrase literally; but the meaning undoubtedly is: *I see an almond-rod in flower*. The almond-tree, as being the first to blossom in Palestine, was taken as the symbol of God's haste to make good His promises. *Shakèd*, the word for almond, signifies in its most literal sense: *the watchful one, or, the waker*. Cf. Hasting's Dict. in verb.

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sprout; the outer shell will harden round the kernel of enclosed life or death. Summer will wear away to autumn; and *we shall know*. There are certain consequences of our acts that we can never hope to escape. The Passion, which is the great evidence of God's inexhaustible mercy, is the evidence likewise that He is swift and impersonal in some of His revenges. Though the dead hopes of the worst of us be incarnadined in that overflowing sea of pity which we call the Atonement, though we emerge on the further bank, changed by His sacraments to something other than we were, yet we come out of the sundering flood feeling that we are not changed altogether. The physical consequences of our acts must linger with us. We must carry that fardel down to the grave. That is the fruit of which the *rod in blossom*, the sin in its first careless moment of delight, was the watchful harbinger. But *Shakèd, Shakèd*, the conscience cries. Oh, we can never utter that warning too often in this world! As often as we are brought face to face with temptation, whether in ourselves or in others, it is good to have a prophet's insight. *What dost thou see, Jeremiah? And I said: I see an almond branch in blossom. Then said the Lord to me: Thou hast well seen: for I watch over my word to perform it.*

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XCIV

THE CONTRARIOUSNESS OF PALM SUNDAY

Be astonished, O ye heavens at this:

WHAT the ceremony known as the Blessing of the Palms is to the Mass of the day in the present arrangement of the liturgy, that is the event commemorated at the beginning of Holy Week to the Tragedy that darkens its close. Laughter and then tears; unlooked-for triumph and then the mute agony of defeat! For a few victorious hours the Captain and Saviour of Israel gathers together the remnants that had seemed to be scattered. He comes unto His own, and His own affect to receive Him. Out of the stony hearts of a disloyal generation He raises up children to Abraham. The world strews branches in His way, and sings Hosannah to the kingship that descends to Him as His inheritance through David's line. Here, indeed, we say, is a *joy that cometh in the morning*; but, alas! as we prepare to open wide the gates of our souls to receive it, we discover that it is but the ironic forerunner of a grief that will wrap the thoughtful heart in something worse than night. All the potentialities of Good Friday are treacherously concealed in this royal progress toward Sion. It is the most pathetic instance in history of that pitiless law of contrasts which appears to overrule the best, as well as the

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meanest, outgoings of the actual conscience of mankind. We scatter our wayside omens of peace; and before the leaves are withered we take counsel with our lower inclinations how best to kill the good that we have welcomed. We shall never be able to understand the puzzling contrariousness of Palm Sunday until we make trial of ourselves and see of what sorry and contradictory ingredients we are compounded. Holy Week is the most searching week in all the ecclesiastical year. Its lessons bring us face to face with the two deepest things we shall ever know. It gives us a glimpse into the heart of the sinner, and it opens up for us the Abyss of the Heart of God.

XCV

HEDONISM IN PRACTICE

They have left Me, the Fountain of living water, and they have dug for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water:

SIN cannot satisfy. That is the concurrent testimony of pagan, Jew, Christian and infidel. The thirst begotten by the quest of happiness outside of the law of right, as interpreted by conscience, is a thirst that no novelty of experience will appease. It leaves the heart feverish, even when its fires seem most completely to be assuaged. Each separate age of the world has borne its own witness to the relentlessness with which God, either

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directly in His own Spirit, or working more remotely through nature and nature's ineradicable instincts, seems to delight in asserting that law. If you make mere pleasure your end you are digging for yourself a reservoir that will hold no true delight. That is, indeed, the strong drink that makes a mockery of the soul's dreams. It cheats us with a false satiety that brings an unquiet sadness in its train. That is the admission of one who certainly knew; and he did not stand alone. God seems to be so jealous of the deeper foundations of the moral order that He forces those who tamper with them systematically to confess. The prophets that have called wrong right, the kings that made evil their sole good, the men and women in private station that have chosen defiantly to be their own rule of living—are their names not blazoned for warning in all the more serious literatures that we know? It is always the tale of the Ecclesiast over again: *I said in mine heart; Go to now; I will prove thee with mirth; therefore enjoy pleasure; and, behold, this also was vanity!* What the Hebrew teacher testifies to, Lucretius corroborates in a later time. The restlessness of the Roman noble about whom he has sung so dispassionately is a parable not less than a history. We all *drive abroad in furious guise*, when the absence of God makes the hours slow and impracticable. The halls which the do-nothing soul builds for itself are curiously void of satisfaction, however costly or comfortable their furniture may be. The Jews of Jeremiah's time, who turned away from the pure worship of their fathers to *bow them-*

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selves to Baal upon every high hill, and under every green tree, have their melancholy counterparts in that small group of writers of our generation, novelists, poets, and critics of name, some of them, who have attempted to erect refinement above principle, and who have affected to discover in dilettantism divorced from decency the secret of happiness that the many miss. But out of their own mouths we know how pitilessly they have been self-condemned. The secret admissions that may be gleaned from the diaries and biographies of those who have already passed away reveal how hollow, after all, how almost tragic, was the pretence of their unhealthy school. These, too, have dug for themselves and their deluded followers cisterns that will hold no water. They have abandoned the living fountain of right; they have grown weary of the old ideals of purity; they have cared more for the corrupting influences that come forth, than for the inspirations that were made to enter into, the general heart of unregenerate man. No wonder that their work smells of sickliness and decay. One who came close in his lifetime to the most representative of these literary cistern-diggers, and who turned away in deep disgust from the draught of stale water they had offered him, has uttered words of rebuke that many of us may take to ourselves and apply to other pastimes of the spirit than those of learning or art:

At this moment (he writes) we are witnessing among French men of letters a refined and comely decadence, which

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invites religion to the banquet, where self-indulgence has exhausted the bill of fare. Symonds, in rending himself with sharp words, which he often did, talks of the "putrescence in his own soul." Not a little of it came from the inversion of means and ends, which is a consequence when Hedonism shuts man up within the cell-walls of feeling. With all the resources of intoxication these new-born gods cannot hold out. Their diaries and poems abound in the sunless pleasures of weary people, and their artificial composite existence passes into stage-play. . . . Had there been no Pagan Renaissance, Europe might have spared itself a Puritan Reformation. It was the men who despised religion that ruined art, and furnished an excuse for banishing innocent joy. The same danger, and a not unlike dilemma, threatens now.

The lesson that the history of criticism so gravely enforces will be confirmed by all honest searchers of their own hearts. Let a man ask himself from what secret fountain-head of the spirit the waters of joy within him well up, and he will know in what class he moves. There are those who dig cisterns for political power, or for mere social position; there are those who dig them for the greed of getting, or for lower forms of delight. These are the avaricious, the double-hearted, the servants of the flesh, who are without saving faith in Him Who *sends the rain and watches over the fall of a sparrow*; but, however much they may vary in the world's judgment, they are all alike in this, that they never know an hour of true internal peace, and dare not, in consequence, live much at home with themselves, but must be ever abroad, immersed in the things that arrest without

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satisfying, getting nothing for all their labor but a sense of vanity, and the feeling that *there is nothing profitable under the sun.*

XCVI

FALSE CONTENTMENT

They have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns:

RICHES, undeserved credit, worldly estimation, forbidden pleasures, selfish industry, politic or unhallowed friendships, illicit love, unearned repose—these are the cisterns in which men vainly try to imprison for a while the turbid waters of a false contentment; but for each separate form of unwisdom God mercifully kindles in their hearts in times of quiet or of trouble, according to His will, the thirst that only He Himself can allay.

Blessed is the man that has not walked in the counsel of
the ungodly,
Nor stood in the way of sinners,
Nor sat in the company of scorners!
But in the law of the Lord is his delight,
And on His law will he meditate day and night!
He shall be like a tree
Which is planted by living waters,
Which shall bring forth its fruit
In right season!

That is how the unknown author of the first psalm puts the truth we have been considering; and Jeremiah's imagination seems to have been struck by the apposite figure. He refers to it in one of the boldest of his pro-

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tests against Israel's alliances. But our Lord's appeal is incomparably more telling—is it not? *He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture said, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water; and this He spake of the Spirit which they that believe in Him would receive.* There we have one of those great practical principles that come home with such force to the Catholic conscience in these days of over-activity. No cistern-digger can be an interior man; no follower after false joy can have a share in the exuberant gladness of the Holy Ghost.

XCVII

THE HIGHER FREEDOM

Is Israel a servant? Is he a house-born slave? Why is he become a spoil?

Most men prize their liberty. It is the condition of their ultimate self-achievement. Put shackles on the limbs of a man's body, and his soul, if he have one, will feel more than half the hurt. The burning conviction of that first of human truths, which shone like a star when the balladist of the Odyssey sang, really lay at the root of all the civilizations that we have known as Greece and Rome, however selfishly or distortedly its consequences may have been misunderstood by them. The sense of it is keen and living still. Our governments are built upon it. States thrive in the measure in which they are faithful to the conscience it infallibly creates. It has been,

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after Christianity, or rather working as a leaven in the same mass with Christianity, the greatest and best of educators, the fashioner of the finest types of men. Yet, as it is commonly conceived, it is but a halting friend. It goes lame, because few of us dare to give it such room as Our Lord willed. Has He not said: *If the Son shall have made you free, then are ye free indeed?* There is no liberty but in His yoke; and His yoke is not felt definitely until we give our loyalty over into the keeping of His Church. That is the greatest of paradoxes to the man who has not yet surrendered his will to her reading of the law of righteousness; but it is the most obvious of truths to the handful in every generation who have been brave enough to face it. What, after all, is civil liberty and the social opportunity that springs from it worth to the man who is enslaved to the secret despotism of an evil or whimsical will? Is the thrall of habit free? No; we reply, if the habit tend to his undoing or to the undoing of society; but if the habit be good, if it be edifying, if it enable him to reach his full stature in Christ, then is he most a man when he is most the servant of his Lord, Who is also his Ideal. The true Israel can never be a servant. The elect brother of the King's Son who was sealed unto eternal fellowship with Him in baptism must be something better than a house-born slave. The heart that has known Christ in the Eucharist must never become a spoil! If the story of the Passion does not teach us that lesson of holy pride this week, we shall have read our Charter of Freedom in vain.

Easter to Ascension Day

I.—The Octave and its Lessons

[St. Mark xvi, 1-7; St. Luke xxiv, 13-35; St. Luke xxiv, 36-47; St. John xxi, 1-14; St. John xx, 11-17; St. Matt. xxviii, 16-20; St. John xxi, 1-9]

XCVIII

THE EVANGEL OF THE RESURRECTION

They come to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen:
THE first week of Eastertide is the only octave of the year in which the Church appears to find comfort in a short office. The prophecies and narratives of the Old Testament seem to carry no burden for her; they afford no insight into her present spirit, which is one of purest exultation and hope of victories to come. For instruction she turns exclusively during seven whole days to the various Gospel accounts of the Resurrection. These "women's tales" have become the most precious portion of her Holy Writ. She shows us a new Scripture in the making. A better Covenant is set before us in the events with which she would have us occupy our minds. It is the week of

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the greater apparitions. Upon the reality of these mysterious and inspiring appearances does the entire structure of our creed, moral as well as dogmatic, depend. Few of us, it must be admitted, know how to read the strange story with profit. We imagine that when we have taken the facts that lie behind it and built reverently upon them a kind of rational apology for our supra-rational faith, we have done all that can be expected of us. We permit the spiritual significance of Our Lord's victory over the grave to be lost in its doctrinal importance to a disputatious and sometimes cavilling world. Perhaps it is inevitable that it should be so. Yet the risen Christ, if we did but realize it, is incomparably more to the actual Church than the toiling and suffering Christ could be. The one includes the other, indeed, as the joy of the day of spoils includes the bleeding anxieties of the hour of combat; but, as the *risen Christ dieth now no more, as death has no further dominion over Him*, so the suffering Christ suffereth now no more. Earth and matter, with their mysterious relentlessness of pain, have no further dominion over His broken and yet transfigured Heart. The sorrows of the pit shall compass Him no longer. Because He has *led captivity captive* and become an acknowledged conqueror of the empery of spirits, He must work out His unrevealed destiny in peace. Souls will reach up to His altitude. He will renew Himself over and over again in types of character which will prove Him a greater Wonder-Worker in His present guise than the miracles of

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life and healing did that denoted Him the Supreme Want of mankind in the days when Israel knew Him only according to the flesh. If His winning and palpable Humanity was our consolation then, His glorified Humanity is our more than consolation now. If it is the bruised or toil-worn Christ by Whose stripes we are healed, it is the risen Christ by Whose sacramental touch we are sanctified. *He was delivered up for our offences*, says St. Paul; but, as though to offset the mystery of the Cross with the more baffling mystery of the Resurrection, the Apostle straightway adds: *He rose again for our justification*. What abysses of mystical theology lie in the words! Our acceptance of Our Lord's Resurrection, then, ought surely to stand for something more than the middle term of a syllogism. It ought to carry its own appeal. Have we ever tried to translate its message into action?

XCIX

"TAKEN AT THE TURN"

Very early in the morning, the first day of the week:

TIMELINESS in one's good resolutions is as important in the religious life as it is in the secular affairs of the soul. We are perpetually missing our opportunities, because we do not take the thoughts of the heart at their full tide. God is merciful, no doubt, and He will often give His ample day's wage to the eleventh-hour hireling, if it please Him; but woe to the belated comer who pre-

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sumes upon such bounty! All that one can learn of the secret laws of the spiritual universe, as they are partially revealed in Scripture, justifies the belief that the divine Awakener has His hours and seasons, and that few men may with impunity compel Him to wait upon their sloth. Count up, if you can, the still-born progeny of your own will, the better selves that never came to the birth, because you knew not how to be beforehand with occasion. Occasion is God's midwife and the wise heart seeks her *early in the morning*.

C

WITHOUT FALTER

Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

IT is not wrong to forecast difficulties; the mistake lies rather in not going forward in the full faith of overcoming them. Every obstacle in the spiritual life is a kind of stone between us and a newer Christ. Our main business is to go steadfastly on and never to falter. The plain duties that the conscience sets before us, the super-erogatory service that love inspires, the sweet spices and ointments for the Christ that we have known, perhaps misunderstandingly, up to this hour—it is by such little fidelities that faith is often rewarded by the sight of the *stone rolled back* and the bewildering vision of the empty sepulchre that pre-denotes a new order of knowledge.

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CI

THE LIVING CHRIST

He is risen; He is not here:

THE empty tomb! That is the first saving fact in the chain of evidence that should win a hearing for our creed whenever it is preached to men of good will; but it is not the chiefest, nor is it the last. It is no dead Christ that holds us. He Whom, not ignorantly, we worship is alive and with us now in influence, in sacrament, in the daily *breaking of bread*, a constant strength, an hourly inspiration or rebuke, a staff for our comfort forevermore. The taunt is sometimes thoughtlessly flung against us that Catholicism seems to care little for history. Our theology begets few antiquarians. In a sense, the objection may be admitted as being true in the main; but we observe: *It is not there that Catholicism affects to find Him. He is risen. He is an ever-present Christ; He abides in no dead past.* The empty tomb is not an apocalypse for us; it is the introduction rather to a series of apocalypses which await us, if we listen to the voice of the Church, who is His discoverer as well as His interpreter to the outer world. *She is the Woman who knows; and her testimony is true. He goeth before you into Galilee. There you shall see Him as He told you!*

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CII

WAYSIDE QUESTIONINGS

And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus Himself drew near and walked with them:

FAITH has its logic as well as unbelief; but curiosity stirs contrarily at the heart of both of them. How vast is the difference when the results are appraised! The inquiries of the one end in blank negation. Star after star goes out, until love itself fails and all is dark. The inquiries of the other bring a veiled Christ, it is true, but He is a Christ Who walks with us in our communings and shows us the eternal necessity of things that seem so difficult to sight. We may even know Him in high moments of fervor; we may recognize Him *in the breaking of bread*. There is a kind of curiosity, then, which is neither irreligious nor barren. Its fruits are best seen in the livelier speculations of what is known as the Theology of the Schools. There are Catholics who affect to show scorn of such theorizing; but scorn is no necessary derivative of orthodoxy, which has its own processes of understanding. While faith is active it never wearies of the problems inspired by charity. Approach these discussions in reverence, then; for it is by such wayside questionings that belief is quickened and the individual purpose of Our

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Lord's life is made partially plain. *Fides quærens intellectum!* The history of Catholic thought is summed up in those three words.

CIII

A TABLE LESSON

And they told . . . how they knew Him in the breaking of bread:

WAS the bread that Our Lord broke for these disciples a Eucharistic gift? Did He bestow His Blessed Body upon them in sacramental wise? We should like to believe it, if we could; but it is impossible to speak decisively. From the earliest times there has been a school of commentators who have leaned to so inspiring a view; and they have never lacked the prestige of great names to support them. One of the most clear-sighted and independent scholars of the earlier Society of Jesus, the robust-minded Father John Maldonado, has made out an extremely ingenious case for the reasonableness of such an opinion; and even among Anglican exegetes of note one could instance the authority of a reviser like Wordsworth and others of his devout class to confirm it. It might be urged, also, that the phrase to *break bread* seems, in the later New Testament use of it, at least, to connote a marked liturgical sense; and no valid argument can be adduced for refusing to accept that interpretation of it here. In this reading of the mysterious incident how

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personal and intimate to every true lover of the Blessed Sacrament does the lesson become! Our Eucharistic Guest is the wisest of wayfaring counsellors. Never is the soul so wide-eyed as when it sits at His table and allows Him to speak in the *breaking of bread*. Carry your problems and difficulties at all times to the altar, and *your heart will burn within you as you discover how it behooveth all these disappointments to be*. There is no entering into glory but through the Cross. Easter Sunday is really linked to Good Friday, though a dead Sabbath of doubt and uncertainty seem to lie between. It needs the Mass with the Gift it contains for each one of us to teach the troubled conscience that. Have you ever tried to learn the lesson?

II.—The Weeks before Ascension Day

[Colossians iii; followed by the Acts of the Apostles, the Apocalypse, and the Catholic Epistles both of St. James and St. Peter.]

CIV

“SURSUM CORDA”

If ye be risen:

THE message of the apparitions commemorated during the Easter octave is summed up for us in a saying of St. Paul, which the Church will repeat daily about this season at the office of Prime, until the feast of Our Lord's Ascension turns her thoughts to other mysteries. *If we be risen with Christ we ought to seek the things that are above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. We ought to have a relish for the things that are more excellent, preferring them to the gifts that the world has to offer us.* Neophyte, penitent and confirmed believer alike, we are all exhorted to learn a heavenly, but difficult, parable. The white garments of gladness that all new creaturehood has worn in spirit, if not in fact, during the more solemn commemoration of the mystery of Our Lord's Resurrection are laid aside now. We are in touch with the more

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every-day-like spirit of the Sunday known anciently as *Dominica in albis depositis*. If the significant ceremony of the doffing of the baptismal albs is no longer celebrated, Our Lord's fruitful Bride will not suffer her children to forget the deep ghostly lesson, at least, that once gave meaning to the mysterious rite. From to-day until Ascension Thursday we shall pass the time in Our Blessed Lord's company. We shall listen to Him as He *expounds the Scripture* and explains to us the constitution and spirit of His age-long Church. In and through her He established a kingdom of God upon earth. She is the living symbol of His eternal rule, the voice of His authority, the ark of His New Covenant with men. Low Sunday ought to remind us that we have already entered upon a second quadragesimal of which the note is insight and joy. We shall follow our Teacher as He justifies the old sorrows and points out to us their necessity as well as their exceeding worth. He will speak to us upon the seashore, as we gaze wistfully into eternity; He will reveal Himself in the *enclosed chamber of a thoughtful heart*, if we only treasure up His words there in secret prayer, and attempt to interpret them in the light of His sacraments. He gives Himself to us as food; but He also asks for food in return. *Children, have ye anything to eat?* The glorified Christ, Who brought Thomas to his knees by the glimpse of His opened side, makes a no less stirring appeal to each one of us in the Blessed Eucharist. It is the eternal invitation that God makes to the soul to be *not faithless, but believing*.

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Whether He shroud His divinity under the veils of our human nature, or hide Manhood and Godhead alike under the accidents of meat and drink, that is His one desire. He is hungry for our love. We must trust Him; and trust is an act of the will proving the hidden quality of a man's heart. To secure such allegiance Our Lord will plead with us, argue with us in ten thousand ways of which His dealings with His re-united followers amid the first fresh wonders of the Resurrection were but a mere parable and a foretaste. As He showed to those disciples out of Israel's diversified past *how it behooved all the scandals of the Passion to be, in order that He might enter into glory for their sakes*, so He shows us, the disciples of a later time, while using the new Israel's past for an example, how all sad things and glad conspire together *for the good of those who love Him*. In one sense it is a general lesson in fidelity to certain high ideals of which He alone is the full Expression. *Quae sursum sunt quaerite . . . quae sursum sunt sapite!* In another sense it is a particular lesson in concrete examples, held up to us, sometimes for warning, sometimes for comfort and inspiration. He wishes us to be steeped in the history of His Church. Through her we have access to Him. Even on her human and puzzling side she has much to impart to us that will steady a mind nurtured on seriousness. And so we may glean a kind of initial wisdom for guidance during the weeks to come from the inspired story of the Acts. All the Church's future history is foreshadowed in those pages—her glory and ignominy, her sun-

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shine and shadow, her tales of endurance, her instances of individual defection, her ever-spreading victory, her periods of apparent defeat.

CV

THE NEW IDEALS

Seek those things which are above . . . set your mind on those things which are above:

THE full round of a disciplined life may be said to be outlined in this apostolic injunction. To seek an object is not quite the same thing as to set one's mind on it; though the acts, of course, are closely related. Men are often described as seeking a thing for which they have no inclination; they school themselves to a policy, or a line of conduct, for which they have no native relish. To set one's mind upon a thing, in the Greek sense of the word, is to give one's inner and completer self to it. That is what is really implied in the Latin original, also, of the phrase, as we have it in our own Vulgate. We set our affections upon the things that we understand, because they answer to a secret leaning or preference of the soul. It is no abstract or speculative stirring, therefore, to which we are exhorted. *The things which are above are the things of Christ*, as He wills them, or yearns for them, in my regard; His commandments, His counsels, His ideals of character, His particular providences, and whatsoever else I may conceive Him as praying for

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at this instant at the right hand of His Father. I am to make these things my aim; I am to follow them with enthusiasm; I am to give the best thoughts of my heart to their realization; I am to cultivate a kind of zest for them. It is as though Our Lord and His secret and hourly renewed teaching, through my own individual Catholic conscience, were to become a sort of sustained passion with me. *Principium qui et loquitur mihi!*

The outer life and the inner are comprised in the Apostle's appeal. *We seek the things which are above* by keeping ourselves free from the world's guiltier contagions and building up within ourselves a healthy type of character as we have apprehended it in Our Blessed Lord and the saints to whom we feel instinctively drawn. The exterior demands of religion, the services we owe to the household of the faith, our sacramental obligations, our duties liturgical, or social, or merely domestic, the kind charities of relationship, as they have been happily styled—these are the things that make up the bulk of our seeking, as it may be gauged from without; and they prove whether our profession be substantially sincere or only an element in that elaborate system of hereditary convention and habit which make up so much of the apparent complexity of life. It is within, however, that the real test may be found; and it is to that part of ourselves that the Apostle addresses the exhortation to seek the *things which are above*. If we feed our interior sense, our imagination and

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intellect, and, most of all, our heart by assiduous thought on the nearness of the glorified Christ to us, and by stated intercommunion between His will and ours in the highest sacrament of His love, then in very truth may we be said to have a relish for Him, *to taste Him and feel that He is sweet. Gustate et videte*—to justify that command to one's self is the assured fruit of this exterior and unremitting seeking. The Resurrection is no longer a mere memory, but an ever-present fact to the soul that schools itself to find Christ by such apostolic methods. Wise reading counts for a good deal in such a life; but the discipline of daily meditation counts for very much more. It is my own thought, after all, and not another's, as St. Ignatius of Loyola sturdily reminds me, which will translate the Mystery, which is the Father's Word made human, to the soul that knows Him as risen, and yet longs, like Mary Magdalene, with its touch of frank human passion, to clasp the feet over which it once wept bitter tears.

CVI

DEVOUT NESCIENCE

It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath established in His own power:

OUR LORD has pledged Himself to keep His Church from irretrievable error; He has not promised to endow her with all knowledge. There are Catholics, usually of

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the half-read and over-argumentative sort, who forget this hard limitation under which the wisest of us must be content to labor. They allow themselves to speak as though the inerrancy of Popes and General Councils were almost tantamount to inspiration, a kind of positive charisma, to which recourse may be had at all seasons, and in deference to every possible whim of a self-righteous curiosity. That is not the temper of faith, which is meek and long-suffering always. Because it loves, it is content not to know. It cultivates a grave but expectant nescience on things not yet defined. We have the gift of the Holy Ghost; we have the daily mystery of the Mass; we have the seven sacraments for our sanctification; we have the living tradition of the teaching Church safe-guarding our understanding of the original deposit. Are not these things enough? Let us not endeavor to be *wise above that which is expedient*; but cultivate rather the wisdom whose very note of apostolicity is its sobriety, a kind of manly but devout resolution to be content not to know.

CVII

THE LAY TYPES OF THE ACTS

And a cloud received Him out of their sight:

It is no arbitrary distribution of instances to say that in Ananias, Simon Magus and Cornelius the Centurion we have those marked types of religious character in

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which the laity of every age may find matter for reflection. Ananias is not merely the unhappy exponent of a rash and sacrilegious untruthfulness; he is a portent and a warning to all classes of lay help in the Church not to attempt to cajole the divine Overseer of souls by circumventing their too confiding or unworldly pastors. Selfishness and deceit are poor makeshifts in the open market of Our Lord's kingdom; for the simple reason that God is never mocked with impunity.

In Simon Magus we have a more ignorant, but surely a not less blasphemous, intruder. His self-seeking is of a piece with the wretched shortsightedness of the prevaricating believer, though it seems to work differently. He imagines he can buy out God and turn the graces of religion into commercial profit. His folly gives an unhallowed name to a form of cozenage which is not less revolting in that it often succeeds in escaping ecclesiastical censure in our days. There have been veiled Simons in every period of the Church's history. Not a few of them have managed to thrive in these more wary times, because they have been shrewd enough to traffic in influence without wearing the mask of orders.

Cornelius the Centurion, on the other hand, is the abiding pattern of the man that fears God and practises such religion as his conscience enjoins. He knows that if *a cloud has received His Lord out of the Church's sight*, He is still very near; and *will come again in Judgment*. Upon converts of this stamp the hopes of Catholicism are built in a civilization like ours. Let us multiply his

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opportunities while we can. He is the emblem of our Lord's wide-mindedness, the earliest recorded instance, apart from Philip's eunuch, it would seem, of His victory over the Gentiles, the first fruits along with his exemplary household of our Mother's essential breadth of heart. His attitude toward St. Peter, and St. Peter's attitude in turn toward him, should be a lesson to us latter-day Catholics who have been entrusted with the human fortunes of the Church in a land where many diverse races are met, and where many alien prejudices have graciously to be overcome, if Christ and His law are to be made all in all to the households that fear God.

CVIII

THE BELATEDNESS OF SAINT MARK

And John departing from them returned to Jerusalem:

THERE is every reason for assuming that the "helper" whose defection is recorded in these words was identical with St. Mark, the Evangelist. That is the opinion which seems to have dominated Catholic tradition, in spite of the opposing testimony of the "old church teacher" (*πρεσβύτερος*) quoted by Papias; and it is supported by all that is best and weightiest in recent Biblical scholarship. If we accept this view of the case, we shall find ourselves in the presence of one of those perplexing problems of supernatural ethics of which

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Scripture affords such striking and often contrarious examples. It is the difficulty of justifying the conduct of those who are all but described in Holy Writ as having a manifest call, and who yet appear at times to act as though they were out of touch with it without bringing upon themselves the marks of the divine disfavor. What induced this co-worker to abandon St. Paul at so critical a stage in his journey is not openly stated in the inspired narrative; but it may be gathered from scattered bits of evidence, which have come down to us from other sources, and which enable us to supplement the veiled meaning of a number of dark passages in Scripture. Elsewhere throughout the Acts this Mark is styled John Mark; and if there is reason for believing, as we have already suggested, that he is none other than the Evangelist who is said to have composed the second Gospel at St. Peter's instigation, his checkered career is found to be full of instruction for us. In such an hypothesis he is discovered to be one with the Mark mentioned so frequently in St. Paul's letters. He is the cousin of Barnabas, and we can tell his mother's name. We are even able to point out the position of influence which his family appears to have occupied both before Our Lord's death and during the stirring months that followed upon the miracle of the fiery tongues. It was to the house of his mother, who was called Mary, that St. Peter returned after his unexpected release from prison. It was in that same house, as a venerable tradition asserts, that the Paschal feast was celebrated on the first Maundy Thursday.

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It is likewise claimed that he is the man whom Our Lord described to His two disciples as the *bearer of a pitcher of water* when He sent them to prepare the supper-room. Still another legend, recorded by Epiphanius, makes him one of that unhappy group of the original seventy-two who *went backward and walked no more with Our Lord* when He foretold at Capharnaum the institution of the Blessed Sacrament. It is this latter story, no doubt, which lends a pathetic interest to a still more recent conjecture that the young man described in St. Mark's account of the Passion as running away in naked terror and leaving his garments in the hands of the temple police was actually the Evangelist himself. Out of these separate data, legendary though some of them undoubtedly are, we are enabled to bring the real Mark before us as he must have appeared to the Apostle who took his defection so much to heart, that several years afterwards he broke indignantly with his friend Barnabas rather than give the deserting cousin a second trial. Few characters are consistent; and we must beware of supposing that even a New Testament saint, not yet confirmed to his full stature in Christ, is likely to be a miracle of completeness. Men fail to be of a piece with themselves for many reasons. Sometimes their disparateness is attributable to an unrestrained will, sometimes it is explained by native cowardice; though in the majority of instances it is the outcome of their incapacity for sustained vision. The eye of the soul loses its keenness. The insight and penetration born of the first rapture of their

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conversion grow dull as the prosaic round of common, everyday cares presses in upon them once more. St. Mark's is not obviously a fighting spirit. In the apostasy at Capharnaum there is no evidence of an attempt on his part to take sides openly with the few who dared to stand faithful. Yet he did not *go altogether backward*. The incidents connected with the choice of his mother's home for the farewell meal and all that it implied seem to make that sufficiently plain. He was possibly a half-convinced follower, one of the "scatterers" whom Our Lord denounced, half in pity and half in scorn. His was a heart that needed the fuller appeal of the Resurrection to awaken a direct response in it. He was not of St. Peter's generous impulsiveness; though the great Apostle seems to have loved him all along and in later years affectionately alluded to him as "his son." During the excitement of Our Lord's arrest in Gethsemane he is described by his own hand as an interested on-looker, having some common cause with the Prisoner, yet timorous in his anonymity to the point of panic terror. He was among the first to run away. It was to be part of the irony of his general vocation that he was fated to come so close to Our Lord's side at three great crises in the foundation and establishment of the Church and at each crisis to be found wanting; not through lack of good will, but through a certain shyness of disposition that ever kept him from avowing an unpopular cause. He failed at Capharnaum; he failed at Gethsemane; he seems to have failed at Antioch. There is good reason for believing

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that he was among the Judaizing malcontents, the first race-schismatics, who viewed St. Paul's larger policy with grave mistrust. At any rate, he was not yet in active sympathy with that particular aspect of the Church's Catholicism, which it was the Apostle's glory to vindicate *by journeyings often, by shipwreck, by imprisonment, and by death*. He could not rise above his original bent, which carried him weakly with flesh and blood, and made him a voiceless supporter of the many.

It is not necessary to hold that in any of these critical defections St. Mark was guilty of grievous and flagrant apostasy. We cannot say what his initial measure of faith was; we have no means of gauging his insight. God does not seem to have dealt compellingly with him. He leaves him to the slow, shaping force of time and circumstance. He is infinitely patient with the bruised reed. The smoking flax of this diffident youth's heart will one day break into a flame that all the ages may read by. The deserter of to-day will be revered as the Evangelist of to-morrow. In this is St. Mark an inspiring type of the soul that wakes late, but not too late, to its squandered opportunities in Christ. He retrieved himself in the end, and won the commendation of those who had seemed to be hard in their judgment of him. St. Paul was reconciled to him, and made him his co-worker once more. The Gentile Church grew to trust him. And Our Lord set the seal of victory upon his slowly perfected character by the supreme grace of martyrdom. He is

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said to have met a violent death as Bishop of Alexandria. Has his career no lesson for the modern Church? Let us learn to be patient with all souls who move slowly and who seem to be timorous of sanctity. Our Lord is the best of character-builders. His ways are not as ours; nor are they always the ways of His saints with their circumscribed outlook and their sometimes intemperate zeal. Better than rule or discipline, better than reasoned theories of perfection, His grace can mould the unlikeliest of the sons of men to its own separate ideals. It will wean them from their weaknesses, and make them strong to bear all things for His sake. It will transmute the cowardice of their earlier recruit-season into the tested heroism of a heart that has learned to bear age wisely and bravely; if need be, even to the shedding of its disillusioned blood.

CIX

REALIZATION

Men of Israel and ye that fear God, give ear:

ST. PAUL'S discourse to his fellow-Israelites in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia was primarily an appeal to the religious annals of the race. Christ Our Lord was their great Realizer. He was of the line of kings through whom the nation in times past had sought to achieve itself, the long-prophesied David of their hopes. His rule, however, was to be a spiritual one. Under His

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captaincy they might accomplish for themselves more than corporate redemption. Each separate heart among them that hungered vaguely for a change would find it in the *Man Who had been crucified, but Who had risen for his particular justification*. Personal forgiveness of sins is the first step towards establishing a *new assembly of the people*. The Church in every age is built in measure upon the faith and good will of those who have individually won deliverance in Christ through her ordinances. That is a thing to remember when a too consuming interest in the debates of the time makes one grow discontented with his ecclesiastical environment. "Reforms" are secured, great ideas are realized, within the religious conscience before they can be spoken of with effectiveness to our fellows.

CX

SAINT PAUL THE PATTERN PREACHER

And Paul rising up commanded silence with a gesture:

ST. PAUL, addressing himself to Israelites, is full of the history of Israel. He speaks to their prejudices, to their pride in their fenced-off past, to their expectations for the future. Yet the paradox of a slain but risen Messiah is the sum of his matter. It is not wrong to play upon passion, to deal with your hearer as though he must be permissibly a mind isolated and apart, if Christ be the

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conclusion of your discourse, whether in private speech or in public argument; but it is wrong to leave your hearer in such unsaving separatism. Our Lord ought to be the end of all preaching, however diversified or particular in its experiences the race may be to whom you translate His message. All barriers are broken down in the wide kingdom that He has erected; and there is but one continuity—the continuity that leads to Him and centres in the Church of His love.

CXI

INVERTED OBSCURANTISM

Ye that fear God:

THE Jew recognized the position of the sincere enquirer, and took grave account of him always. The Proselyte of the Gate claimed his reverence as well as his attention. Do we, who glory in our broader faith, make a like wise provision? There are apologists for Catholicism who set forth its teachings as though prejudice were a negligible obstacle in the pathway of the honest-minded. They recognize no difference between Israel and those who have but a half-acquaintance with Israel's transmitted lore. They delight in the startling paradoxes of their creed, and they show scorn of the investigator who misunderstands them. They look for full minds where they should look only for full hearts. This

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is to promote the devil's cause with pedantry; a foolish proceeding always, seeing that the Lord of Error is oftenest helped by ignorance or lack of learning, when faith is in question. This surely is a kind of inverted obscurantism; for it does hurt to souls by its very affectation of a privileged excess of knowledge.

CXII

A DARK BOOK AND ITS INTERPRETERS

The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ:

AT various periods in the history of Catholicism popular interest in the Book of the Apocalypse has suffered from two opposite classes of interpreters. There have been those who have seen in its cataclysmic imagery a minute forecast of the trials of their own particular time, and who have allowed their fancy in consequence to piece out in detail a disquieting application of its progressive parables to every smaller scandal in their experience. On the other hand, there have been those who have confessed themselves unequal to the task of reading any definite message into the book at all, and who have preferred to maintain an attitude of reverent agnosticism in the face of its clearest vaticinations, rather than jeopardize the Word of God by seeming to reduce it to the level of a mere catch-puzzle in hermeneutics. If the vagaries of Abbot Joachim of Fiore may be said fitly

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to represent the excesses of the first of these schools, the affected and learned obtuseness of the devout Cardinal Cajetan may be taken as a fairly good instance of the counter perversity that sometimes characterizes the other. The one discovers everything in the Apocalypse; and so becomes the forerunner, if not the natural parent, of a line of illiterate exegetes, to whom the Apocalypse is valuable as furnishing an authoritative storehouse of scarlet epithets to fling at St. Peter's successors in the Roman See. The other pretends to find nothing definitely instructive in its pages; and leaves it, with a touch of pedantic irony, to the investigations of those who think they can. Between these two extremes we have a saner and more scientifically orthodox group of expounders who first make their appearance soon after the rise of the Society of Jesus, and who issue, for the most part, from the ranks of those who have been trained by the great masters of her Spanish schools. It is from these men that the latter-day Church, and, indeed, the modern extra-ecclesiastical world generally, have learned how to read this *Revelation of Jesus Christ* with true insight as well as with profit. It is hardly more than five years since one of the best known of non-Catholic biblical scholars had the candor to make this admission. Professor Bousset of Göttingen, writing on this very question in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, said:

The history of a strictly scientific interpretation of the Apocalypse . . . must be held to begin with the learned

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commentaries of French and Spanish Catholic theologians. They meet the Protestant polemic with conspicuous, and indeed, often astonishing erudition, and going back to the point of view of the earlier Church fathers, lay the foundation of a cautious, and for the most part, purely eschatological interpretation.

The names of the greater exegetes whom the Professor cites in proof of this statement ought to serve as a rebuke to those discontented Catholics who habitually refuse to drink of the wells of orthodox erudition and who endeavor uniformly to slake their thirst for the *word of knowledge* at the cisterns of unbelief. How many of those who lightly take upon themselves to be the champions of an unadulterated faith can show a first-hand acquaintance with the researches of Luis ab Alcazar, with Ribeira, with Cornelius à Lapide, with Bellarmine, with Pereyra, with Viegos? Yet these are the supposedly old-fashioned commentators to whom this Protestant scholar pays his tribute. Science, of course, is science, whatever be the creed or the morals of the investigator; but many of us are too prone to forget in these wide-reading days that science, too, like every other human product, carries its aura or atmosphere of influence along with it, and that the half-taught are pathetically clumsy in their efforts to mark the delicate line that separates them. Amid the disarray of confident statement, and the confusing cackle of alleged discoveries, it needs a balanced mind and strong brain to discriminate between mere opinion and established certitude.

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CXIII

THE SCOPE OF CATHOLICISM

The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ:

THE revelation which St. John makes is not his own; it is Our Lord's. The entire scope of Catholicism is to declare Christ, as Christ declares the Father—to declare Him, not speculatively as a Schoolman might be supposed to do, but practically as the Church does from day to day in her appeals to the heart of man. She lays bare the old truths in new guise. Her mission is always to edify, to build up character. Scholasticism, science, research—these have their place, and a most important place it is, in the general scheme by which she arrives at her mysterious results; but they are as nothing to the inspired Word of Scripture and the influence of her sacraments. These are her true engines of conquest; and their conjoint action upon the world constitutes that bewildering product which we call ecclesiastical history. This, too, in its degree, when sifted by faith, is a kind of revelation. It is the hourly renewed *Apocalypse of Jesus Christ which God gave to Him, to make known to His servants things that must shortly come to pass.*

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CXIV

THE CONCRETE CHURCH

The Apocalypse of Jesus Christ:

WE must be ever on our guard against unsound conceptions of the Church's intellectual mission. She, more than any abstract statement embodied in a defined dogma, is the *Revelation of God in Jesus Christ*. The Catholic Church is a living Apocalypse. She does not add to what was once delivered; because, neither in her Popes nor in her ecumenic Councils, can she lay claim to be inspired. She teaches; she instructs, year in, year out. At certain critical periods she safeguards her treasure of doctrine by an explicit definition; but the general effect of her *conversation, which is always in heaven*, is to lift a kind of veil, to reveal the Christ Who is with her. Her habitual demeanor and her acquaintance with mankind, in a word, enable her to emphasize the great Apocalypse which is God speaking through His Word. That is how it comes to pass that the mere catechist of one age can often answer confidently where the doctors of an earlier time seemed to hesitate or stammer. One can never understand the evolution of our cycles of dogma without reference to past history. It is the concrete Church always that must engage the attention of the

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inquirer. If we lose sight of that principle, we shall fall into the errors of those untaught fanatics who were once wont to wrest the meaning of the *Book of the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ* to the setting forth of a low and narrow creed of sectarianism, to disunion and blasphemy against Our Lord's Vicar and the saints who adhere to Him. If we know little or nothing of the ecclesiastical events of the first three centuries we shall misread one of the most consoling prophecies in Scripture.

CXV

“COMING WITH CLOUDS”

The time is at hand:

THE revelation made to the “Churches” in the series of visions accorded to St. John at Patmos, was a definite and particular one; as definite and particular, it would seem, as the tale of works and days, the remembered tepidities and remissnesses, the list of hypocrisies and positive offences, which the divine Watcher, Who *holds the seven stars in His hand and who walks in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks*, recalls by way of warning to each cited “angel.” Yet the message has an evident note of universality about it also; for it appears to inculcate the need of something over and beyond the salutary repentance or even the steadfastness of the hour.

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It is not the least mysterious of the many functions of faith, when living and active, at least, that, along with its gift of insight, it fosters a sort of growing knowledge. The consistent believer walks in a larger and diviner air. *He beholds Jesus Christ coming with clouds.* Every gladness, every trial, be it great or small, in his eyes, is part of a protracted and never faltering apocalypse. Viewed in this sense, the individual spirit becomes a sacred microcosm. One may decipher in its experiences the fortunes of the Church in miniature. *The time is always at hand; and Our Lord is, indeed, the Almighty One, who is, who was, and who is to come.* Out of the clouds of our separate distress a clue is always emerging; and the clue is Christ. He is the Word from the beginning. Is He not plain to see? All sorrows and abasements, all victories and elations of the heart—He is their proper meaning from first to last. We gauge them aright when *we perceive the pierced hands and feet* in ourselves. This is to know Him as *Alpha and Omega*, to read Him Who so long has read us!

O Lord, Thou hast searched me out,
And known me:
Thou knowest my down-sitting,
And mine up-rising;
Thou understandest my thoughts
Long before!
Thou art about my path,
And about my bed:
Thou spiest out all my ways.

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For lo! there is not a word
In my tongue:
But, Thou, O Lord, knowest it
Altogether!

. . .
. . .

Such knowledge is too wonderful
And excellent for me:
I cannot attain unto it.

. . .
. . .

Try me, O God,
And seek the ground of my heart:
Prove me and examine my thoughts!

CXVI

THE SENSE OF NEARNESS

The time is at hand:

THINGS are near or remote in so far as we realize them. The medium of computation is of little importance; for factors are mere ladders of the mind. They enable us to mount to an eminence from which we can see and comprehend; but of themselves they neither add to nor take away from the reality of that which they seem to alter by their endless divisions. What does it matter in the last resort whether I reckon the term of life in minutes or in years? It is all one in the end. To be incessantly concerned with process-wisdom is hardly a proof of insight.

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It is as though an alleged enquirer after truth were to dwell complacently on the premises of a syllogism without taking thought of its conclusion. How should such an one save his credit for honesty, or be in repute among the serious? There is an infinity of threads by which death may be found to be in touch with the actual hour. That ought to be enough for a shrewd heart that has learned Christ as an ever-present Person and not as an abstraction. To realize Him, rather than to have frigid notions about Him, is to realize that His hours are always at hand. Grievings, derelictions, momentary scourgings, daily dyings, the pain of the many little deaths, and the sharp agony of the last and greatest—in none of these is He far off; and He is a thief only to the careless.

CXVII

ST. JAMES AND PRACTICAL RELIGION

James, a servant of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes that are in the Dispersion:

THE Epistle of St. James may be called an Apostle's plea for practical Catholicism. Addressed originally to no particular division of the Church, it still enforces upon all of us the consideration of those fundamental aspects of the Christian faith which believers in every period of the world may be, and often are, too prone to forget. Its author is primarily concerned with the

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irreligious who lurk within, rather than with the careless who walk without, the visible pale of salvation. He reminds us that the peril against which we must be ever on our guard is the tendency to over-estimate the advantages of our privilege of sacramental nearness to Our Lord. He would have us reflect now and then upon those hardly less essential virtues that are rooted in sincerity and that show themselves in fruits of outward practice; for without them sacramental nearness cannot be secured. Faith without works will not save us—that is the burden of the Apostle's preaching—for there is a false faith which begets false consciences; and out of a false conscience flow the twin evils against which the Christian heart must ever strive—the evil of superstitious service and the evil of double-mindedness, both of which make us hateful to God.

CXVIII

THE ECONOMY OF TEMPTATION

Count it all joy, my Brethren, when ye fall into various temptations:

CHARACTER which has neither been confirmed by grace nor fire-tried by solicitation is open to almost endless possibilities of evil; and it is the business of religion, which aims at forming character for the personal service of God, however variously apprehended, to make provision for turning these possibilities into actual strenuous good.

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Our Lord's doctrine has made no change in the essences of things. Faith in its power to uplift does not do away with the necessity for sharing in the eternal conflict between right and wrong, which goes on, amid such an infinite array of disguise, in every separate human heart. The difference between Catholicism and other and less complete forms of Christianity becomes evident with singular distinctness when we try to understand the metaphysics of temptation. One feels that the completer, the more uplifting, and, on the whole, the more merciful, view has ever been the theory of St. James, which the Church has frankly carried out to its remotest individual conclusions in the constant practice of the confessional. No man is directly tempted of God. Trial is not provocation. To test, or to watch carefully under test, is not to solicit. Men are proved by the hereditary forces at work in their own nature, by their opportunities and the subtle grip of environment, and by the occasion they sometimes foolishly give to the ministers of wickedness in spiritual places, the hosts that St. Paul describes as *powers of the air*. Over against all these there is conscience and grace, and the faculty of choice. Things, no doubt, are right or wrong in the abstract, and independently of our ethical appreciation of them; but they are altered so incalculably when they enter into the hidden sphere of the isolated will, as conditioned by the factors we have named, that a wise director of souls has often no other course of appraisal open to him but a confident appeal to the divine pity, and an act of faith in that

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human Embodiment of it of Whom it was written that *He knew what was in man*. And yet, when we have painted the disquieting side of the Church's traditional view with every possible regard for candor, we shall be obliged to admit that St. James rather under-states than over-states the case, when he urges us to look upon temptation in all its several varieties as matter for joy. It is not necessary to fall back upon halting metaphors taken from the experiences of the battle-field in order to bring this aspect of the mystery home to the frightened conscience. Few souls are really helped by such borrowed imagery in our industrial and over-economic days, when the many are calculators and fighters are all too few. It is in the Catholic doctrine of merit, rather, that we shall find a consoling clue; and it is upon this ground, curiously enough, that St. Ignatius of Loyola bids the doubting heart take hope. Elsewhere in his *Book of the Spiritual Exercises* he dares to make an appeal to the chivalrous instincts of human nature such as can hardly be paralleled for simplicity and nobleness of phrase outside of the pages of Scripture itself; but, when he is endeavoring to make self-knowledge easy and helpful to us by a recommendation of the practice of weekly sacramental confession, he reminds us how trial of this sort is intimately bound up with future happiness in heaven, through the far-reaching efficacy of supernatural merit upon earth. No small victory goes unrecorded, as it meets with what might be called an immediate reward. My will is not only so much the stronger, naturally speaking, for hav-

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ing resisted one single incitement to evil with success, it is radically, is supernaturally, the stronger, likewise, in having so many more degrees of merit laid up to its account in Our Lord's great book of deeds done loyally for His sake. Merit is not the same as grace, which belongs to an entirely diverse category of things spiritual; but, if it is rightly understood, it is found to be closely akin to it, on this score at least, that it fits the soul for a larger measure of ultimate vision. In that strange miracle of divine insight, which shall be wrought deifically in the meanest of us in glory, we shall understand, as part of the more general problem of pain and evil, what few of us have ever understood in the days when we *searched Jerusalem so blunderingly with a lantern*. We shall discern why character, namely, needed to be tested and formed by giving it a power of choice upon this earth and allowing it to hew out its own destiny in Christ Who went before it steadfastly in a path *beset with pitfall and with gin*. To realize that to the full may well be accounted not the least of those benedictions of *the open face* which we shall share in when so many earthly things shall be *transformed along with ourselves*; to realize it in measure now, as part of the discipline of faith, is all the joy that an understanding heart will care to possess. Surely, it is not straining matters to contend, that, viewed under this aspect, both the doctrine of merit and the theory of temptation are stripped of half their supposed unloveliness. The former is found to merge its apparent individualism in the unselfishness of an act of final knowl-

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edge by which Father, Son and Holy Ghost become more and more; the latter is found to lose its crying terror, not only in the thought of the other-Christ ultimately to be achieved, but in the readiness for sacramental confession in which the possibility of occasional failure will inspire the faithful watcher habitually to live.

CXIX

THE WISDOM THAT LINGERS

If any one of you is in need of wisdom let him ask it of God:

MANY recognize the need of Catholic knowledge and toil long and painfully to amass it. But how many recognize the need of Catholic wisdom, which is the divine salt whereby knowledge is saved from losing its savor? Learning, indeed, will do much. In these days of popular and diversified instruction it is hard to see who is excused from the labor of acquiring it; but of itself it will achieve nothing for Christ. It will not soften the soil of the heart to His seed. It will not even clarify the inquiring mind, if humility be absent. Have we not known profoundly read apostates? Have they not in some notably sad instances turned their treasures of erudition, which were often real and stimulating to the orthodox, into a kind of argument for casting out Christ? The Church does well to insist upon the need of

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piety as a corrector of knowledge. Piety is one of the bestowals of the Holy Ghost and may be said to be the gift of wisdom in action. Prayer will infallibly secure it. What insight many an unlettered peasant or simple workingman will show when his faith is seriously in question? He has learned to *ask wisdom of God*. Not reading or fine argument, therefore, is what many of us need, but prayer; and prayer calls for quiet of mind and leisure, the last things that the modern scholar seems to be able to obtain. The religious orders, with their old-fashioned standards and their scientific and almost mechanical devotion to spiritual exercises, have done better. They furnish us with a precedent which might be followed wisely in our over-enquiring age.

CXX

INCONSISTENCY

The double-hearted man is inconstant in all his ways:

ST. JAMES seems to have in mind the sort of Christian who has not yet learned Our Lord's lesson of keeping the eye of the spirit single. His religion is not the master concern of his soul; and he is rightly said to be double-hearted in consequence. The charge is a serious one, for it seems to point an austere finger at many who get credit for religious sincerity from a world that reads little of a man's real motives in these conventional and

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very soft-treading days. In this business, as in everything else, *he that is not with Our Lord scattereth*. Inconsistency is not commonly adjudged a grave offence; yet it betrays a disease of the spiritual life worth noting. When St. Ignatius of Loyola averred that he could re-convert the world, if he could but find a handful of teachers who had thoroughly grasped the significance of his theory of the *Foundation*, and who would show, moreover, the courage of their convictions, he was only indulging in a saint's quiet irony on the scarcity of the virtue which St. James preaches, when he says that the *double-hearted man is inconstant in all his ways*.

CXXI

LOOKING-GLASS GLIMPSES

The same will be compared to a man considering his natural face in a glass:

THERE are looking-glass Christians in the world and there are looking-glass Christians in the cloister. They are the scatter-brains of orthodoxy, and they make up the majority of those who gravely call themselves Our Lord's followers, but who never take time to bring the multitudinousness of their idly busy lives into captivity to the singleness of His. They take little leisure for thought and none at all for resolution. A wise book, a passing mental picture, a preacher's stirring appeal, a chance

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word from the violent of the kingdom of heaven, shows them the lineaments of their own features for a moment. They look at the disquieting counterfeit and wonder whether that really represents *the face of their nativity*. Is that the natural self? they ask; and straightway they return to their idly busy round of hours, until all memory of the picture is blurred by the dust of the world's ways. There is a double lesson in the Apostle's parable. It conveys a warning against religious heedlessness; and it implies a suggestion as to the real purport of all effective exposition, whether in speech or writing, of the Word of God. It is in Scripture that the thoughtful reader is most likely to get a glimpse of *the face of his nativity*. Wise is he, if he remembers all his life long what manner of man it reveals to him.

CXXII

THE MESSAGE OF THE ASCENDING CHRIST

Whom, not having seen, ye love:

FROM Ascension Day until the close of Advent, the worshipping soul may be said to know Christ liturgically *no more according to the flesh*. *He hath ascended on high; He hath led captivity captive; He hath given gifts to men*. It was through those gifts and in the power of the Supreme Giver of them all—*Dator Munerum*—that the Apostles learned the full purport of

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the angelic warning. Religion on this earth can never be a mere *looking up into heaven*. What the inspired annalist records as a characteristic of Our Lord's mundane life is found to be the characteristic likewise of His Apostles. *They began to do as well as to teach*. Their ministry was as sacramental as it was evangelical. After they had been *clothed with power from on high, they went forth to their work and to their labor unto the evening; they baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus; they broke Bread for a memorial of Him; and they spread abroad the Good Tidings of the Word of Life*. Their successors do the same to-day. Catholicism, as a divinely authentic religion in the world, relies as much upon its sacraments as upon its teaching.

CXXIII

A NOTE ON THE PRE-PENTECOSTAL SEASON

Unto the sanctification of the Spirit:

THE apparently diverse lessons of our Lord's suffering and glorified existence are summed up and co-ordinated into one conjoint and final gospel. It is the evangel of the Spirit *through Whom it is given to us to know Jesus*. The Paraclete is the Church's habitual Adviser. Not less is He the Adviser of the questioning soul. Every faithful heart is made certain of that voice, *which containeth all things*, when it recalls in secret what it has

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learned of God in and through the *magisterium* of the Church. The most illiterate layman and the profoundest thinker of the orthodox schools, provided they live in charity, share this unique privilege in common, that they apprehend the *Risen Christ*, as something more than an actual historical Personage. They feel Him as a living and individual, yet strangely mystical, Presence, a kind of higher and divinely enfolding Self, which is somehow not themselves; because It is acquired and renewed over and over again in measure sacramentally, while Its indwelling at each instant of life connotes more than any grace-giving symbol by which the heavenly Visitant or His separate bestowals are multiplied unto them. It is the Holy Ghost Who works out this mystery in each separate supernatural existence. He is the Life of all transfigured life; and in Him are we *born again of water*. He broods over us and we live. *Spiritus Dei ferebatur super aquas*. That initial wonder was only a parable of another and greater one, which goes on hourly within the teeming womb of the Church. Nowhere are such winning types of manhood or womanhood formed as within her pale. As it took time and sorrow for a truth as far-reaching as that, however, to flower to the full in the conscience of Nicodemus, so time and sorrow would seem to be needed for its full effect upon each of us individually in whom the larger promises have already been fulfilled. The centuries with their cycles of explicit and conciliar teaching have left the majority of believers strangely dull. Who among us now ventures

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to talk familiarly of the Spirit? Yet He is not less operative, nor are His intimacies less charged with joy. Though He be with us always, it is good, nevertheless, to appoint a season of particular preparation for His festival day. Scripture and tradition alike justify us in the seemly custom. The liturgical note of the days that intervene between Ascension and Pentecost is one of expectancy; and the supernatural virtue which would appear most fitly to express it is hope. There is a curious significance, therefore, in the Scripture readings which the Breviary puts before us at that time. They are taken from the two general or encyclical epistles which commonly go under the name of St. Peter. Their author, doubtless as being the great *Confirmer of his Brethren*, is rightly called the Apostle of Hope; just as St. Paul is called the Apostle of Faith, and St. John the Apostle of Charity. *I have prayed for thee, Peter, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art confirmed, confirm thy brethren.* Curiously enough, the confirmation of which there is abundant evidence in these inspired and comforting exhortations, which have survived in the Church under her Chief Apostle's name, takes the form of discourse upon the office of the Holy Spirit in the development of Christian character and the sanctification of souls.

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CXXIV

THE SAVING ASPECT OF A DARK MYSTERY

Chosen in accordance with the foreknowledge of God the Father:

THE divine foreknowledge may be likened to a mirror in which created things are seen in their term. All uncertainties are focussed to their issues there. They are expressed in judgments from which there is no appeal. *And He showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.* What the inexhaustible Mercy of the Word secretly reads in that never resting flow of tendencies we shall not know until the last day; but meanwhile we are not wholly in the dark. He that described for the "Churches" the vision of the outgoing waters has also written down the terrible words that he heard falling like the cadences of a psalm of vengeance from the Angel of Retribution:

He that hurteth, let him hurt still;
And he that is filthy, let him be filthy still;
And he that is sanctified, let him be sanctified still.
Behold, I come quickly and my reward is with me,
To render to every man according to his works.

God punishes or rewards, therefore, in accordance with His previsions; but His previsions neither constitute the

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whole of His thought, nor do they alter the essential relations that created things have among themselves. Our wills remain free and chargeable, though their deliberate elections of right or wrong be present to His understanding from eternity; for there is a form of divine foreknowledge, which, in its logical content, at least, presupposes actual creaturehood. It is by such previsions that God must be conceived to determine the individual rewards or punishments of His spiritual world. In this sense, and this sense alone, so far as we have any means of deciding, is predestination true; and the thought of it ought to inspire us with just as much terror as the consciousness of our power of choice does; no more, no less.

CXXV

PREDESTINATION AND THE MIND OF THE CHURCH

Unto a lively hope:

It would be insincere to pretend that no difficulty is suggested to the devout mind by St. Peter's explicit reference to the divine foreknowledge, as well as by a score of parallel passages in the New Testament, bearing upon the problem that Calvin and his followers have answered with such feebly evasive blasphemy. Those followers have been found, paradoxically enough, within the bosom of the Church, as well as without it. Some of them have

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borne great names and taught without molestation in the Society of Jesus. But, while we make the disquieting admission in all candor, we must not forget that the one authentic rule of faith for the bewildered soul in this world is not Scripture as any particular mind, or group of minds, may read it, but Scripture rather as tradition has understood it, and treasured it up in the general mind of the indefectible Church. And that mind has spoken clearly enough on the sense of the dark words we are considering. The ultimate fate of mankind, taken individually, is not determined without reference to their freely acquired merits, whether of mere seemliness or indefeasible right, in Christ. We can be sure that salvation is tendered to all men; because Our Lord's Blood was freely shed for all men. If we fail to close with the merciful offer, the fault is in ourselves. It is in our *evil heart of unbelief*; it is in our perverted wills; it is not in God; nor is it in His Christ. That truth, together with the revelation of God's essential and universal Fatherhood, as declared in His Son, and, through His Son, in us, is so obviously implied elsewhere in Holy Writ, that, unless we choose to conceive ignobly of the divine nature, we shall be constrained to make the clearer and more consoling sayings in which it appears the key to our interpretation of the obscurer and less comforting ones in which it seems not to appear. Had there never been a controversy with Jansenism the instinct of our gracious Catholic faith, to say nothing of the common sense of natural theology, would surely have helped us to formulate a saving rule.

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The pieties of orthodoxy are instinctively wide-armed. Where God's character for goodness seems to be in question they point east and west with the Cross. If we will only remember that humanizing truth in season, the conscience need never take alarm at the sound of those words which were once of such sinister import in theological controversy, but which have now happily lost more than half their forbidding significance, since the Church suffered an obscure nun to preach from her narrow convent cell, for Jansenist and wavering Jesuit alike, the *breadth and length and height and depth* of the Charity of the Sacred Heart.

CXXVI

ON WAITING FOR THE HOLY GHOST

But ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence:

THE thought of the Ascension seems to urge the mind forward. It impels us to fix our hopes upon that other and not less wonderful event to which the mystery of the Word's departure is but a prelude. *It is expedient for you that I go away*, says Our Lord to His disciples in the Supper Room on the night before He suffered, *for unless I go away the Paraclete will not come to you*. It would appear that we can only purchase the higher consolation in the Kingdom of Heaven at the cost of the more obviously human one; for faith soon discovers that the

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palpable and present joy is not the whole of its destiny. There are deeps within deeps. Every crisis in the outer and visible life of the Church's Head is but the forerunner to the baptism of Whitsuntide; as Whitsuntide itself is but the forerunner to the baptism of eternity. This is what St. Thomas means by the anagogisms of Scripture.¹ We must be immersed in Godhead before we can aspire *to know as we are known*. That immersion is begun here in the seven-fold river of sacramental holiness to which we have access, variously and according to the soul's need, in the waiting Church. The wonders of Pentecost, the flaming tongues, and the intruding Spirit Who fills the visible House of Faith as with the strength of a mighty wind and the gladness of new wine, have not ceased merely because the outer senses of the world are no longer capable of noting them. Every day is the day of the Holy Ghost now; and no sanctification is accomplished without His transforming fire. It is in virtue of His continued and hourly renewed Presence in individual hearts, as well as in the body of the faithful at large, that the Church of Christ has become and is known in history as One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. Unless His Voice had spoken, the Voice which *containeth all things*, the whole cycle of Our Lord's truths, that is, with the key to all race dialects and brotherhoods under heaven, neither pastors nor peoples *of so many divers tongues* could have held together through the centuries; unless His cleansing

¹ Cf. S. T. 1, Q 1, art. 10 and note on Introductory Essay at the beginning of this volume.

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had been applied to them in fire, they could never have transmitted Our Lord's peace and holiness to men of good will; unless He had sent them forth authentically from that upper chamber, even as He Himself had been sent by Christ, there could never have been a visible and indefectible apostolate to the nations. These are the marks by which honest minds are brought to know His mission. The *magnalia Dei*, the wonders of the Church's Spirit, which is the Spirit of the first Pentecost, are still eloquent and compelling.

CXXVII

THE NEW SENSE

Ye shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you:

OUR LORD had said, when trying to bring home to the troubled hearts of His Apostles a kind of hunger and thirst for that Consoler Whom He was to send as substantial and personal Righteousness into the Church of His love, that the work of the Paraclete upon earth would be made evident to the dullest in three separate, but fundamental, convictions. Under His influence the conscience of humanity would wake up to a new sense of sin, the blighting *wilfulness* of unbelief, as it had known it in itself; to a new sense of justice, or holiness, as it was to be found in a sacramental Christ; and to a new sense

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of judgment, as already pronounced upon the Prince of this world in the uplifting of the Cross. St. John, who records the words, seems to have been impressed by this view of the Holy Ghost as constituting the three-fold energy of the Christian Church; for he returns to the idea in the Breviary Epistles which are read by way of preparation for Whitsunday. Writing as an old man to the Churches, he reminds all classes that *in this do we recognize the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error*; the One impresses upon us the consciousness of sin and applies to us the *Propitiation of Christ by means of candid confession*, giving us thereby *fellowship in Christ and in the Brethren through charity*; whereas the other dissolves Christ by blunting us to the sense of sin, and separating us unto schism. The three Epistles which are read in the liturgy about this time make a remarkable commentary upon Our Lord's account of the Paraclete's mission; and whatever we may say about the force of individual statements in them divorced from their context, it is impossible to read the three documents as a whole without feeling that here we have an Apostle's testamentary advice, showing us how to put our religion, our Catholicity, in a word, to the supreme test. Do we try the spirits that sway us? If they are of God, they will make us sensitive to sin and give us a craving for the *Propitiation which is Jesus*. It is the business of the Holy Ghost, we often say, to build up types of Christian character in the Church. That is but a vague description of His office. St. John's philosophy is a more definite

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and practical one. The Holy Ghost builds up types of Christian character in the Church of God, because He works upon the individual soul. He deepens in it that three-fold conviction which has helped to mark a forbidding line of separation between Catholicism and that unregenerate and dark-haunting part of mankind with which it is fated to be always in enmity.

CXXVIII

SEEING AND BELIEVING

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life . . . we declare unto you:

It is the soul of an Apostle's conviction that speaks in this assertion. It is more than an echo of the great Fourth Gospel-proem. The phrases almost have the ring of evidence about them; but the witness that they offer is still the obscure and trying witness of faith. They have nothing of the palpable quality of sensible knowledge. Sight and touch of themselves can bear no witness to Godhead. The heart sometimes cries in the excess of its bewilderment: *Oh, if I had but lived in Our Lord's day, things would have been so different with me!* But we do live. Do we realize that it needed as much faith to *believe unto salvation* in the Christ that walked through

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Galilee, as it does to believe in the Christ of the Eucharist? *God, no man hath seen at any time. The only begotten of the Father, He hath declared Him!* And the Sonship of the Declarer is still a baffling mystery, being of itself the object of faith, even while its testimony to an unbelieving world remains so forebodingly true. St. John, who makes his very assurance catching to the clean heart, St. Philip, who looks trustingly into the face of the Christ, and beholds there *the face of the Father*, St. Peter, who will not *walk backward*, because he has found in the Eucharistic promise *the words of the Master of Life*, St. Thomas, the valiant doubter, who thinks he has discovered a sign which will compel him to be *no more faithless, but believing*, because he has been invited to thrust his faltering finger into the open side of the risen Christ—all these are witnesses, indeed, true witnesses, to the message they declare; but the sum and substance of their testimony reaches no further than the testimony of the Church, through whom they are made present to us in this far-distant age. They prove that it is incumbent on a wise man, who is sincerely hungry for God, to make an act of faith; and they prove, further, that that faith is made fruitful and life-giving *to those only of good will. I believe, O Lord; help Thou mine unbelief!* We sometimes allow ourselves to speak and think of the Apostles as though they had walked by sight. *Blessed were they*, we say, *because they had seen*; but the inference is an unwarranted one, in so far as they were *prayed for, and tested, and found not wanting*

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by Our Lord in the Accuser's hour, they walked by the spirit; *they had not seen*. They were the witnesses of divine wonders; they received the high vocation to treasure up and transmit to us Our Lord's unfailing words; but neither the wonders nor the words compelled their assent. They still gave Him their free service. They were acceptable in His eyes, because they had good will.

CXXIX

COLLECTIVISM

That ye may have fellowship with us, and that our fellowship may be with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ:

GROWTH in fellowship is the final end of all preaching. We declare an Incarnate Christ that His visible Church, which is in the world, but *not of the world*, may be more and more. Even the conversion of the individual sinner ought to be subordinated to that divinely imperial end. If we would be made one with Christ, it can be only through unity with His brethren; and unity with the brethren, in St. John's reading of the words, is inconceivable without an organized Church. We are saved one by one, indeed, but not that we may remain in our isolation. The separatism, the spiritually uncouth foreignness of conscience out of which we have been delivered, either through the penance of baptism or through the penance of confession, must give way, then, to the col-

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lectivism through which Our Lord continues His mystical Presence among men. Our ultimate citizenship is in the Church triumphant in heaven; but we make a beginning of it, even here and now, in the Church militant upon earth. Catholicism deals with its subjects as with a prentice people. In this sense the oldest and most orthodox communities must never forget that they are a tributary folk—a true *populus acquisitionis*—to be welded by secret and sacramental influences, as the separate forces and elements in a growing vine are welded, into a unity of which the Holy Trinity can alone furnish the most fitting and most inspiring example. *I am the true Vine and My Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh it away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He cleanseth it that it may bear more fruit. . . . He that abideth in Me and I in him the same beareth much fruit; for apart from Me ye can do nothing. . . . Holy Father, keep them in Thy name which Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, even as We are One.*

Schism, whether it be merely petty and local, or affectedly patriotic and national, is a great sin. It is more than an offence against the elders of the Church; for it seems to be a kind of selfish disregard in action of the eternal lesson of the Holy Trinity.

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CXXX

LATTER-DAY GNOSTICISM

God is Light:

THERE are unwitting Gnostics even in this age; and St. John's declaration needs to be repeated in their hearing. Pastors and people alike, we can never have too much knowledge, if only piety go along with it. Esoteric Catholicism is unthinkable. The Church may have had her reservations of sacramental discipline in the past; she may possibly have them again. Under conditions, which we are unable at present to foresee, she may have to guard her treasures once more from the profane meddlesomeness of the outsider. He may come prying on behalf of the State, or he may be an unlovely amalgam of mystery-monger and scholar on his own account; she will keep him discreetly at a distance; but she will never encourage a cryptic theology. All her wealth of doctrine is offered unsparingly to *those who have ears to hear*. She shows an ordered and autocratic hierarchy in intention, indeed; but she is Christ's Commonwealth in the Catholic profusion of her tendered opportunities. *There are divisions of graces* within her; but not of preaching. The timorists who advocate a reasoned silence on certain New Testament topics, hard to understand, which, it is feared, the simple laity may wrest to their hurt, have no

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inner perception of what *the Spirit is ever saying to the Churches*. These alarmists are grown crass with lack of faith. They must be reminded that the City, *wherein is neither sun nor moon, because the Lamb is the Lamp thereof*, is none other than *the City wherein the nations walk*. Though it be built upon *a mountain great and high*, it has the roots of its prosperity upon this lower earth. *God is Light* here and now, as well as there and hereafter. The indefectible See, which is the living Interpreter of the divine message to mankind, is, in its own order, the shining reflex of that same Light unto a world ever spinning blindly to one phase or another of supernatural eclipse. Why should we fear when such a Cor-rector has been established within reach of the most extravagant of us?

Whitsunday to Trinity

The Seven Gospels of the Spirit

[S. John xiv, 23-31; iii, 16-31; x, 1-10; vi, 44-51; S. Luke ix, 1-6; v, 17-26; iv, 38-44. N. B. There is but one nocturn daily during this Octave.]

CXXXI

ST. JOHN AND THE PARACLETE

If a man love Me he will keep my word; and my Father will love him; and We shall come to him and make our abode with him:

THE coincidences of Scripture are, in their original divine intention, at least, premeditated. To hold such a view is not only not unreasonable in itself, but is almost a necessary inference from the unity which the sacred books acquire when viewed in the light of their inspired authorship. It may be allowed us to suppose, therefore, that it was not without design that the Evangelist who was elected in the counsels of God to be Our Lord's intimate and chosen friend should be the one permitted to record likewise the greater number of those wonderful statements in Holy Writ in which

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we are admitted before our time *to gaze darkly as through a glass* on the inner and divine Life. Beyond other writers of the New Testament St. John is an hermeneut of divinity. If he is the Word's human champion and advocate, not less is he the advocate of the Word's interpreting Spirit. Whenever the other inspired authors refer to the Holy Ghost at all, they are content to do so in passing. They describe His operations in the individual soul; or they enumerate in detail the fruits that spring from the new life of which He is the Principle. They imply His Godhead; they take it for granted; they do not formally assert it; much less do they dwell upon it, or draw inferences therefrom. St. John is more explicit. With a boldness, which was doubtless born of that human love under whose influence his heart had ripened swiftly to fuller and more unhesitating knowledge, he almost essays the impossible. In his pages the Paraclete is set before us as essentially and numerically identical in nature with the Father and the Son; He is described for us there as Our Lord preached Him, especially on the never-to-be-forgotten night before His Passion. He is the great *Sanctifier and Truth-Teller*; He is the one unfailing *Suggester to the Church of things needful*; her *Teacher*, her *Comforter*, her *Advocate*, her indefectible *Apostle of the risen and victorious Christ*, the Last of the Sacred Triad, the crowning Revelation of God's Epiphanies to mankind.

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CXXXII

THE EVER-PRESENT MYSTERY

He will bring all things to your mind:

It is no bare commemoration that the Church keeps at Whitsuntide. That season is not as other seasons of the year. It is not like Christmas; neither is it like Easter or the Ascension. Our minds are not wholly turned to the past, nor are they carried forward merely to contemplate the future. We are occupied chiefly with the present; we are concerned with our own selves. *We stand still and see, not the salvation of God merely, but the sanctification of God as well*—God making His holy elect, God speaking *His own wonderful things through the Voice of His Spirit*, crying aloud to the heart in the heart's own dialect, addressing our inner and real selves with all that variety of personal accent and idiom, which never fully finds its way into speech, but which each man uses and understands, when communing with himself in the inner sanctuary of conscience, or in that further stronghold of the soul to which no one is ever admitted but one's self and God, Who cannot and will not be kept out. It is not the upper chamber of Mark's house in Jerusalem that chiefly engages our attention at this time, therefore, but our homes and our parish churches, and every spot in the wide world, where Our Lord's ministers are at work, and the mystery of justification is going on.

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CXXXIII

THE UNCONSIDERED GIFT

My Peace I leave you:

WE are so accustomed to think of the last night which Our Lord spent with His disciples before His Passion, as the night of God's superabundant Gift, the night of the Blessed Sacrament, the mysterious night of the first Mass, that we are in some danger of losing sight of another Gift, not yet given but promised, which is, in a sense, not another but the Same; for it is God given to His own. If the night of Holy Thursday is Our Lord's night, it is the night of the Holy Ghost as well.

It is a night full of mysteries; a night of memories and marvels. It is the night of the great abasement, when God become Man for very love, by a new refinement of that love, stoops lower still, and veils even such poor majesty as He has left under the appearances of our daily food. The night of Holy Thursday is all this, indeed; but do we not too often forget that it is the night of the great exaltation likewise? Out of the beggarly elements of a disjointed world, *sick and in bondage until that hour*, the Lord will make for Himself *a new creation upon the earth*; He will make of every heart that will not cast Him out, Jew and Gentile alike, *a new tabernacle of God with men*. *I will no longer call you servants, He says, but*

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friends . . . And I will ask the Father and He will give you another Comforter to abide with you forever—the Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him, but ye shall know Him, because He shall remain with you and shall be in you. I will not leave you orphans. The promise of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, which was made on the night of the first Eucharistic celebration, was the promise of another and not less wonderful Presence, a second Real Presence, a new indwelling of God in His people, which was to be at once the cause and the consequence of their sanctification. To be sanctified is to be made holy; and there is no holiness but in God and from God. To be sanctified is, in the language of Catholic theology, to put on Godhead. We are speaking of supernatural sanctity, of course. What natural sanctity may be, if such a thing is conceivable in a mere creature, it is not our business to enquire. We are dealing with that order of which the Incarnation is the beginning and the coming of the Holy Ghost the fulfilment. And to be sanctified in that order is to share in God's ineffable holiness, as a ray of light shares in the luminous source from which it takes its rise. It is to have that mysterious gift that we call sanctifying grace. It is to be enriched with a created bounty of God which makes us holy and acceptable to Him by a kind of divine necessity. It is to be endowed with participated divinity as a kind of habit of the soul; it is to possess it in ourselves, personally, and not by any mere theory of imputation which accounts us other than what we are.

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CXXXIV

THE SIGNS OF HIS COMING

Jesus spake to Nicodemus:

ST. JOHN in recording Our Lord's description of the Spirit to Nicodemus draws attention to one of the marks peculiar to Its visitation; and St. Luke has recounted for us in the second chapter of the Book of the Acts some of the more striking details of the accomplishment of that prophecy. The days of Israel's Pentecost were over and the Holy City was full of strangers. It was the month Sivan in the still early summer, the time for honoring one of the greatest feasts of the Jewish year. From every quarter of the then civilized world, from Asia and the provinces of the south, from Greece and the far west, and even from Rome, the children of Abraham, Believers and Proselytes of the Gate, were gathered together in the mother city to celebrate with due annual rites the first in-bringing of the harvest, and to commemorate the promulgation of the Law delivered to Moses long ago, before Israel began that checkered career of service and revolt which was destined eventually to culminate in so unlooked-for and mysterious a portent. It was the season of the year when the air in those regions even now is known to be unusually motionless and clear. The almond trees were ripe; the grapes were beginning to darken along the terraces; in the upland districts the wheat harvest had begun.

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Every devout family was ready with the offerings commanded in the Law: *And you shall count unto yourself from the morrow after the seventh Sabbath, wherein you offered the sheaf of the first fruits, seven full weeks; even unto the morrow after the seventh week be expired, that is to say, fifty days; and so shall you offer a new sacrifice unto the Lord. Out of all your dwellings two loaves of the first fruits, of two-tenths of flour leavened which you shall bake for the first fruits of the Lord.* It was a time of plenty and of great calm. If the wind blew at all, it came from the northwest in the shape of showers; or it started suddenly at rare intervals with the parching blasts of the *Kahmseen* that swept like a sirocco from the deserts of the south. In the upper chamber of the house of St. John Mark in Jerusalem the Apostles and their disciples, with Our Blessed Lady, as St. Luke notes, were gathered together in prayer. What were the thoughts of their hearts at that hour we cannot know. Who shall follow the thoughts of an Apostle, or enter into the mind of the Mother of Our Lord? But in the *Book of the Resolution of the Doubts of the Law*, written by Rabbi Moses Ben Maymon, we are told, that, from the Passover to the end of the fifty days, devout Jews were wont to gather in the synagogues:

like men waiting for the sight of the face of the friend that they loved, counting the days until they beheld him; and he adds that after prayer and blessing given at its close, one of their number stood up and cried aloud: This is the first, or the second, or the third day of the fifty.

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Something like this may have taken place in that blessed assembly where the hearts of all cried out in the words of the psalm:

Unto Thee have I lifted up mine eyes,
O Thou that dwellest in the heavens.
Behold, as the eyes of the servants
Are upon the hands of their masters,
As the eyes of the handmaid
Are upon the hands of her mistress,
So are our eyes unto the Lord our God
Until He have mercy on us.

Or in that other psalm, so full of memories of the exile:

When the Lord brought back the captivity of Sion
We became like men that were comforted.
Then was our mouth filled with gladness
And our tongue with joy.
Then shall they say among the Gentiles:
The Lord hath done great things for them.
The Lord hath done great things for us:
We are become joyful.
Turn again our captivity, O Lord,
As the streams of the south,
As the streams of the land of Negeb.

What actually took place at the moment of the divine visitation can never adequately be told, save in the inspired language of St. Luke:

And suddenly [he says] there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting, and there appeared to them parted

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tongues, as it were, of fire, and it sat upon every one of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost; and they began to speak in divers tongues as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.

There were some in that little company who, not so long before, had heard Our Lord conversing with Nicodemus, the devout Jew that came to Him secretly by night. They must have remembered now the curious illustration He had used in speaking of the Holy Ghost. *His way was the wind's way.* Is there no significance in the fact for us? *The Spirit breatheth where He will and thou hearest His voice; but thou knowest not whence He cometh and whither He goeth: so is it with every one that is born of the Spirit.*

CXXXV

THE THEORY OF ASSISTANCE

I am the Door:

So long as Our Blessed Lord was on earth, both before His Passion and after, He was the Teacher and Trainer of His Apostles. Whether the great body of revealed truths, the deposit of revelation, as we call it, was, so to say, completed and sealed up on the morning of Our Lord's passage to the Father, or whether the visible and temporal mission of the Holy Ghost, either in itself or in its after-effects, while the Apostles were yet alive, enriched that first deposit by successive accretions, we have

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no certain means of finding out. Scripture will not greatly help us; and the Church has never spoken. It would seem to be more probable, indeed, that the whole body of distinctively Christian revelation came first from Our Lord's own lips. He plainly alludes to many things which He has still to say to His followers, but their minds are not yet ripe for them. He will reserve them for those mysterious interviews of the next forty days, when He shall hold frequent discourse with them on the Kingdom of God, that is, on the Church, the creation of which He speaks of as His own work. This view not only detracts in no way from the august character of the office and work of the Holy Spirit in the Church, but it actually clears up many difficulties that other views find it hard to answer. It also acquires a very high degree of probability when we remember the importance attached to oral tradition in the infant Church, and the frequency with which the earliest non-Scriptural writings of the Apostolic age repeat the formulary, *Jesus saith*, or the *Master saith*, and not *thus saith the Spirit*. Considerations like these make us fain to believe, that, not the institution of the Church only, but the original deposit of her doctrine also, the central core of that teaching from which the body of her theology has developed, was Our Blessed Lord's human work, and that the Holy Ghost was sent on the day of Pentecost to do for the first believers what He has been doing for the Church ever since. His business was to enlighten, to instruct rather by recalling to their minds than by imparting what was new, to broaden the

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perceptions and expand the hearts of teachers and of taught, to show them the full significance of Our Lord's life and doctrine, to feed, not the speculative intellect, but the practical conscience of the Church, assisting, vivifying, bearing testimony to Jesus, *in Whom were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

CXXXVI

THE FIRST TRANSFORMATION

Why do ye think in your hearts?

WE know in part how the Holy Ghost began His mission; how He entered into the Apostles, lifted them, changed them, transformed them, literally making them other than they had been. We know, too, how His presence in the Church *made new the face of the earth.* In her *He set His tabernacle as in the sun; and from her He went forth as a Bridegroom coming out of his bride-chamber.* Slowly, surely, imperceptibly often, but inevitably, the mysterious alteration went on. *First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.* He revived a dying world; and the Apostles and their successors were His covenanted instruments. *Day unto day uttered speech, night unto night showed knowledge; there was neither dialect nor speech of strange folk where their voices were not heard. Their sound went forth unto all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world.*

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It was through them chiefly that He worked. And what a work it was! At their feet lay Israel, sullen and hardened in its unbelief, asleep for very weariness, still dreaming dreams, clinging with stubborn folly to its old ideals of earthly greatness, while its alien princes paid the yearly tribute to the hated *Goim*.

Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem;
Thy light is come,
And the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee . . .
The gentiles shall walk in thy light,
And kings in the brightness of thy rising.
Lift up thine eyes round about and see;
All these are gathered together,
They are come to thee,
Thy sons are come from afar,
And thy daughters shall rise up at thy side.

One Who wept over the Holy City has told us: *She would not know the time of her visitation*. As of old her answer was drowsy and uncertain, as of one loath to awake. It was: *Watchman, what of the night?* and again: *A little more sleep and a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep*. And so the workmen went forth into the outer *darkness that was upon the earth*, into the mist that the prophet saw *lying upon the people*.

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CXXXVII

“POSITUS IN MALIGNITATE”

And the demons went forth out of many:

It is easy to draw pictures of that old pagan world into which the Apostles were driven by the power of the Spirit. The scattered remains of its once vigorous but unregenerate life are still preserved to us. The monuments of its superstitions, its art, its literatures, its wise polities, even the vestiges of its workaday existence are enshrined in our Houses of Knowledge. It was a varied and complicated world, with some good and much evil, and hardly a trace of divine life. When the imagination of scholars endeavors to reconstruct it in its habit as it lived, we may be dazzled for a while, *fascinated by the witchery of its vanity*; but we shall not gaze long, before we turn away in horror and in shame. St. Paul, who was familiar with its philosophies, who could quote its poets, who had seen its cities and men, and known somewhat of their ways, has told us in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans what manner of world it was; and his catalogue of its offences reads like the indignant cry of one of the prophets of his own race, a transcript from that scroll which was written over with *lamentation and mourning and woe*. It was a world, he tells us, *delivered up by God to a reprobate sense to do those things which are not con-*

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venient; being filled with all iniquity, malice, fornication, avarice, wickedness; full of envy, murder, contention, deceit, malignity, whisperers, detractors, hateful to God, contumelious, proud, haughty, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, foolish, dissolute, without affection, without fidelity, without mercy; not knowing the justice of God; not understanding that it was worthy of death.

It was a world born of the first lie and honey-combed through and through with nameless lusts. Everywhere there was error engendering false appreciations of God and of human destiny. Ignorance covered the earth *as the waters covered the sea*. Yet, as in the beginning, the Spirit of God was to come down upon the waters and *brood over them*. He was to enter into the world, *convicting it of sin, of justice and of judgment*. The Apostles were to labor in it, preaching the one Gospel that *God so loved it as to give His only begotten Son to redeem it*. Out of such untoward elements *a new creation was to issue*, peopled with a goodly host of martyrs and confessors and virgins, whose lives are at once our glory and our confusion, as showing what the Holy Ghost will do, if only we do not close our hearts to His influence.

Trinity to Midsummer

[Isaiah vi, for the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity; followed by the four Books of Kings which are read continuously until the First Sunday in August.]

CXXXVIII

THE OLD TESTAMENT AS HISTORY AND PARABLE

Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come:

THE Church of Christ is God's Kingdom of the Supernatural upon earth; it is the visible and hierarchical assertion of His unseen empery in the sphere of intellect and will; it is a true *government laid upon the human shoulders of His Son*, Who is known in time as *Israel's Servant*. All human things are tributary to Our Lord's foundation; for, while established as a witness against the world, the abiding seat of its authority is set up, nevertheless, in the world's innermost heart; and in a perfected brotherhood of all the tribes and races of mankind, who are to be brought laboriously to acknowledge one day their adopted sonship to the Father in Christ, is the

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Church's final and fullest glory to be eventually worked out. The Kingdom of Christ, then, is the *New Israel*, and its children are the chosen seed of a new order. The elder dispensation, doubtless, had its own meaning, glad or tragic, to those who lived under it; but beyond the meaning was a parable; its history had the mark of deferred prophecy upon it; and since the coming of the Paraclete at the last authentic Pentecost the sense of the original forewarning has grown increasingly clear. The *Voice that holdeth all things together, the Spirit that maketh both Testaments one*, the Holy Ghost, in a word, *who instructs us by bringing all things to our mind*, inspires the faithful Catholic to look backward as well as forward. All the past is ours; and in Israel's history we may interpret the deeper significance of our own story. The selection of the four Books of Kings, from which the Breviary lessons of the eight weeks that follow upon Trinity Sunday are taken, as the daily staple of the Church's special Scripture meditations, may possibly be ascribed to human accident; but, read in juxtaposition to what the annals of the Christian Church have to tell us of the first beginnings and the rapid hierarchical growth of her wider and more ecumenic dominion, they become eloquent with a profounder sense. We shall trace the slow emergence of Israel's ordered worship, together with the development under due ritualistic safeguards of the collective conscience of his followers, from the disordered days of the Judges down to the stately but misguided policy of the last of those Kings who ruled over

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an undivided and unyoked people, and in the human note of the inspired tale our bewildered ear will catch the key that will best enable us to interpret some of the perplexing situations of apostolic and even of later Christianity. The Acts of the Kings will foreshadow the Acts of the Apostles. The faithfulness of Samuel, which was heralded from Dan to Beer-Sheba, will be recognized as a type of that stewardship which the first generation of bishops extended unselfishly *from sea to sea and to the world's end.*

CXXXIX

VESTIGES OF THE TRINITY

And they kept crying out to one another: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, the whole earth is full of Thy glory:

THE better instincts of orthodoxy have ever been mistrustful of processes of reasoning that affect to establish evidence of the Trinity in creation. More than once in her long career of teaching, even as recently, indeed, as the time of the Vatican Council, has the Church lifted her voice to inhibit loose modes of speech in dealing with this ineffable Mystery. Whether prompted by unsound systems of thought, as seems to have been the case with the modern Germans, or inspired by that lawlessness of self-opinionated piety, which seems ever to spurn discipline in proportion as it fails in necessary knowledge, learned

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and ignorant alike, all schools, Nestorian, Joachimite or Socinian, have fallen under Our Mother's ban the moment they have presumed to overthrow the difficultly-erected barriers of Tradition, and pretended to discover vestiges of the Sacred Three in the material universe. God has written the record of what one may call His rational Self, the Self that reason discovers, upon the world over which His omnipotence has brooded; He does not seem to have written the record of His supra-rational Self, the Triune Self, that is, or Trinity of Personalities as that Triad was revealed to us in the ministry of the Word. Even if the vestiges of such a divine procession were there, it would still remain true, that, for us, and in our present order, at least, they would still be non-existent. Our Lord has given us no clear hint of their presence; and faith, from the very nature of the case, can hardly be spoken of as a faculty proper to their unveiling. Its discoveries are in an altogether different sphere. Over and above this visible world, which acts as a mirror to but one side of the divine nature that framed it, there is another and a more miraculous creation. The world of grace to which the Incarnation has introduced us is like the world of nature in this, that, *it, too, is full of the glory of its Fashioner*. Yet it is replete with more than His glory as well. The Triune Self is there. *Under the trees of the Garden, which is His Church, the Three go ever walking early and late through all the hours of the day*. We may hear their Voice when we will. In their Name

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were we baptized; in Them are we sanctified through the sacramental ordinances by means of which we all but lay hold of Them. The Holy Trinity Itself has promised to impart such contact. *This is life eternal that They may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent!* And again: *If ye love Me, keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever, the Spirit of Truth whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, nor knoweth Him; but ye shall know Him; because He shall abide with you, and shall be in you.* And, most significantly of all, Our Lord and His mystical interpreters, the saints, also aver that from such indwelling will the sincerer world be convinced of His mission: *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 may all be one, as Thou, Father, in Me and I in Thee, that they may also be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.* Good Catholics sometimes speak of the mystery of the Holy Trinity as though It were a matter only for the devout speculation of the more instructed intellect. There are those who will grant at the utmost, that, as a dogma, the revelation of this more wonderful aspect of Deity rebukes the too implicit faith most of us are prone to give to the unaided faculties of the natural understanding. In all problems in which we may choose to exercise our inherited gifts we may trust

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the positions of the normal reason; but Our Lord has taught us, among other things, that even in such fundamental concepts, as nature, unity, identity, and relation, our intellects are not the absolute measure of truth and that the life to come has much in store to disillusion us. Suarez and Vasquez seem to have drawn daring and curious inferences from that fact; but their speculations as to the limits within which a supposedly universal truth like the principle of contradiction can be validly applied need not detain us now. Faith helps us to keep an open mind even amid the claims of metaphysics. In this sense we may accept Isaiah's *Trisagion* and confess that the Church, which is God's new creation, is full of a pre-saging cloud of the divine splendor, and that, through her ministrations the earth, on which we are condemned to live, is stirred by the Father's glory, as revealed in the *Word made Flesh* and in the Paraclete who is His unfailing *Interpreter of the things most needful to us*.

CXL

A MARK OF THE UNPARDONABLE SIN

Blind the heart of this people . . . lest they see . . . and be converted and I heal them:

GOD deals with nations, it would seem, as with individuals. He does not cast them off until they have committed the unpardonable sin and *transgressed against the*

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light. They must throw off the yoke of the holiest and best, whether in actual human leadership, or in inherited ideals, before they are suffered to wander out upon the *broad way that leadeth to destruction.* The instincts of the majority are seldom a safe guide; for the instincts of the majority point to commonness; and commonness is the canker of the new life, a disease full of dire possibilities to all, to priest, religious, or so-called "secular," in Christ. The world is so constituted that it is always true to say, that the mass of mankind *loves darkness rather than light.* The many are inevitably on the side of evil. It was from this point of view that St. John could write: *The world lieth in wickedness;* and it was from this point of view, likewise, that there was a world for which Our Lord did not and would not pray. Not that His Blood was not shed for all men; but that with His divine foreknowledge He saw that all men would not strive to enter in at *the narrow gate,* that many would be guilty of the irremediable sin, the *sin that should not be forgiven, either in this life or in the life to come,* the sin against the Holy Ghost, which was final impenitence. Our Lord's acquiescence in that terrible inrush of vision, His readiness to act upon the disillusionment it must have occasioned to the pathetically tolerant love that seems to fill His human soul at sight of every other form of sin, can only be explained on the hypothesis that the worst offence and the commonest which the conscience of man can be guilty of is to turn away deliberately from the light through a

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selfish dread of reform. *I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest me; and they have received them. . . . I pray for them; I pray not for the world.* There we have a New Testament commentary, if one be needed, on the similar threat that seems to be implied against Israel in Isaiah's denunciation of its faithlessness. Repeated infidelity of that sort blunts the sensitiveness of the heart and leaves the eye of the spirit blind. What is worse, it seems to be the sin of the multitude. *Because their works are evil, the majority will love darkness rather than light.* It will need hell to reveal them to themselves. When the last word of theology is uttered it still remains true, that faith depends upon the will, rather than upon the understanding. And it is the will, rather than the understanding, that accounts for the spiritual condition of the many. *Corde creditur ad salutem. With the heart is belief made unto salvation!* St. Paul warns us against an *evil heart of unbelief*; and St. John says that the Jews of his day would not receive Our Lord because *their hearts were not right*. He also tells us that *to as many as received Him He gave power to be called the sons of God*. It is the Persons of the Holy Trinity, as we know, Who are the divine co-Agents, acting mysteriously and inseparably as One, in this spiritual birth and its consequent sonship in and through Christ. Even of us is it true to claim that *the Holy Ghost comes upon us; the Power of the Most High overshadows us*, unless we have first provoked Him to blind the heart by making its religious perceptions gross.

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CXLI

“WHO ONLY STAND AND WAIT”

And Phenenna had children; but Anna had no children:

THE devout are not always the most favored upon this earth; and the same ironic rule seems to prevail in the kingdom of grace. The two contrarious worlds appear at times to be strangely similar in their unevenness, and almost as similar in the only compensation by which the sting of the unevenness can be taken away. *Levius fit patientia!* If the suggested remedy be commonplace, so is the evil; though success in mastering it lifts the winner out of the commonplace and seals him with that strong mark of the elect, the power of patient suffering and the endurance that schools itself to wait. Where the higher order has the manifest advantage is in the infinite resources that faith opens to it in its capacity for prayer. Anna's barrenness teaches many a brave lesson to those that miss the sweeter prizes of life. Samuel is an argument for unshaken belief in the divine graciousness. Be steadfast in hope, even though the happier world sneer at your failure and the keepers of conscience misinterpret your tears. The springs of pity flow fuller for having been long deferred. The dry womb will one day become a fruitful witness that *God's name is with them that invoke It, because by Him are the heart's actions weighed.*

CXLII

THE MYSTERY OF MARRIAGE

Am I not better to thee than ten children?

ONLY clean conjugal love, sensible of no disloyalty in its heart, could have made a boast like that ; and the boast, because it was religious and true, met with a divine reward. Samuel, together with the five later children, of which he was the beginning, was the fruit unto Anna of Elcana's faith, not less than of her own prayers. Even in the natural order lawful marriage is a pledge of the world's stability. In the higher and supernatural order of which Our Lord is the Sign and living Principle, marriage is more than a pledge of the world's stability ; it is the love-fed fountain of the Church's perpetuity. There could be no perpetuation of the Kingdom of God upon earth, unless every husband sincerely believed himself to be in all bravery and trustfulness *more than many children* to the wife of his troth. Matrimony, which was all in all to the Synagogue, is still all in all to the Christian Church. The Blood of the Cross has crimsoned it beyond any dream of mere earthly passion, and made it a grace-giving symbol of Our Lord's charity for the universe of elect souls, the sign of His undying love for the humanity *which He makes fruitful unto sanctification in and through His Church*. If the Jewish mother longed

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for children, much more may the Christian mother pray for the same large blessing upon her womb. Her plighted body has been turned by Our Lord's consecration of matrimony into a figure of the teeming fecundity of the Church. Souls, souls, and more souls! She is Christ's instrument for the regeneration of a world only too prone to make love barren by degrading it into a legalized engine of selfishness and lust. *Sancta sanctis!* To them that have shared through baptism in Our Lord's holiness and had experience of His Spirit's indwelling, even the mysteries of the body's legitimate worship become *a savor of life unto life*. Never permit yourself to adopt the world's standards in these matters. Be zealous for the sanctities upon which the Church of God, no less than the universe of God, is built. Honor Christian motherhood, wherever you find it, as a reflex and a co-agent of that holier motherhood which daily peoples Our Lord's kingdom with regenerated souls. Honor fatherhood as the awful derivative of God's love for His own divine Son, and the symbol of Our Lord's unappeasable passion for the race for which He died. Is not all fatherhood on earth named, in a sense, from such ineffable self-productiveness? Longer than Jacob wooed Rachel did Christ woo the Body of Mankind, winning it first in the mystery of the Incarnation and marrying it to Himself in the end upon the royal bridal bed of the Cross. As He is more to the Church than myriads of souls, so is every faithful spouse unto the wife of his bosom more than the children for which her chaste heart pines. This

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is, indeed, a great sacrament; an ordinance to be understood only of them who think and speak habitually *in Christ and in the Church!*

CXLIII

THE ABUSE OF A GREAT GIFT

*When you are met together:*¹

IF the disorders of Corinth no longer obtain in the Christian Church, the Mass is still in danger of being abused, because too many of those who come weekly, or even daily, to its celebration have no adequate sense of its purport, no feeling for its sacrificial significance, as re-enacting mystically the death of Our Lord. They fail in spiritual insight, and give proof of their failure in this, that, *in eating, everyone taketh beforehand his own supper!* Think of the unseemlinesses arising from mere inattention, from lack of due preparation; the extraneous and often unworthy thoughts, the distracting images, the remembered noise of our part in the world's business, the false, hurried prayers, the spurious pieties, the devout futilities to which the ill-instructed habitually resort in order to eke out the most precious half-hour of worship that man can conceive of outside of heaven! Instead of concentrating the mind upon the one central idea of the Sacred Action, as it is set forth for us in the

¹ From the lessons for Corpus Christi.

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Roman Missal, nearly every one dissipates the powers of the spirit by an unintelligent service that St. Paul would be the first to condemn, were he to come back to earth to-day to renew mankind in devotion to the Mass. These may be minor offences, if you will; but they do incalculable hurt to the Church at large, as well as to the individual soul that commits them.

CXLIV

THE LARGER PARABLE OF PHILISTIA

And it came to pass in those days that the Philistines gathered together for fight:

To be ever on one's spiritual defence is a true, if negative, note that religion is not wholly dead with us. Church or institution, chosen race or elect soul, each divinely called witness has a border-trial to endure. Warfare, not less than vigilance, is the price of all genuine liberty; and character is never achieved without a struggle. That is Israel's parable; simple enough to interpret in its thousand impersonal applications, but hard to realize when one's private conscience is in case. Philistia is but naturalism speciously masked. It is the eternal type of two unappeasable antagonisms that the righteous are habitually called upon to face in living out their peculiar destiny. It is the symbol of the weariless opposition of the uncircumcised to those who bear the spiritual

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mark of Jehovah's over-lordship, and the sign that flesh and blood can never be long in sympathy with faith. These two antagonisms are one to him who realizes that the true God must be invoked as *the God of Battles*, before we can essay to honor Him as *the God of Peace*. What has Our Lord said? *I am not come to bring peace, but a sword.* And again, when the nucleus of His Church reclined about the modest altar-table upon which the first Eucharist had been celebrated, was not the invigorating reminder once more renewed? *And He said unto them: When I sent ye forth without purse, and wallet, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said: Nothing. And He said unto them: But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise a wallet; and he that hath none let him sell his cloak and buy a sword.*

CXLV

THE PHILISTINE AS FORERUNNER

Now the Philistines came into Aphek and put themselves in array against Israel:

THE *Pelishtim* of Samuel's day were neither Semites nor Egyptians. They seem to have been the descendants of an earlier invading folk, who have been themselves identified in turn with the "sea-peoples" of Merneptah's monuments. The southern coasts of Asia Minor and the islands of the Ægæan were their original home. The soul of the west was in their blood; and there is reason

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to believe that men of their doughty stock mustered in the ships of which Homer sang. They were a fighting race; eager, brave, resourceful, of a higher civilization than Israel had as yet achieved; but they had the one natural defect that has done more than anything else to prejudice the world against the spirit of Jehovah's worship, and keep east and west eternally apart. They had no real perception of inward religion; no deep stirrings of conscience, no turn for mysticism, no hunger for God. They were a fact-loving breed; disdainfully tolerant of Israel, until Israel showed signs of a wise passion for unity; then they gathered in thousands upon his borders, determined, if possible, to bring him under their yoke. Their instincts were rugged but true. A united Israel would have meant the curtailment, if not the absolute death, of the easy-going animalism upon which their own more sense-flattering civilization was built. They felt blindly what it was, even while they pathetically misunderstood *Who it was*, that they were attacking. In this they became the forerunners of Godless state-enslavers for all time.

CXLVI

THE WARNING OF SILO

Let us fetch unto us the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord out of Silo:

THE little Ephraimite town that lies on the road from Bethel to Sichem seems to have been destined at one time

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in Israel's history to become the capital city of the race. It was there that Joshua set up the Tabernacle and instituted the tribal allotments; and it was there that public worship was carried on under the Judges; yet in Samuel's time it is spoken of as a place somewhat remote from the every-day life of the people. *Jehovah is still their Ruler; but they go seldom to His court.* For the sin of their neglect God will take terrible vengeance on them. The very memory of the place will be all but blotted out; and its name will become a heavenly by-word of warning. The threat uttered later in the person of Jeremiah carries one a long way backward in the annals of divine retribution. We see the first shadows of Jehovah's displeasure here and now in the dismay felt at the near presence of the Philistine. This attack is, for Silo and all that it stands for, the beginning of the end.

Go ye to my place in Silo where my Name dwelt from the beginning: and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel. And now, because ye have done all these works, saith the Lord, and I have spoken to you, rising up early, and speaking, and you have not answered, I will do to this house, in which my name is invoked, and in which you have trust, and to the place which I have given you and your fathers, as I did to Silo. And I will cast you away from before my Face, as I have cast away all your brethren, the whole seed of Ephraim.

As I did to Silo! Silo is a lesson, then; the most terrible of all lessons; being a sign of the strength of the divine anger, rather than a monument of Israel's faith.

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There is no irony like God's irony. Is not many an ordinance of Catholicism, remembered too late when disaster overtakes the forgetful soul, as dreadful in its inverted significance?

CXLVII

SAVING RETROGRESSION

So the people sent to Silo and brought from thence the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of Hosts sitting upon the Cherubims:

THE Ark was more than a palladium to Israel; it was the perpetual reminder of the race's obligation to faithfulness. *God had visited His people under Moses, and made a covenant with them.* That they should look upon it as a token, likewise, of the perpetual presence of Jehovah among *those whom He had chosen*, was, perhaps, inevitable; but we have no right to conclude on that account that the reverence in which the sacred treasure was held was necessarily vitiated by superstition. The wonders it had wrought for the Children of Israel in the past amply justified their trust in it now. The Mercy-Seat between the Cherubim may well have been more than a sign; but it did not save them from immediate disaster; and none knew better than themselves the reason why. They had failed in fidelity. In this sense one may fairly charge them with presumption, or even with vain observance; but one cannot say that they were as the wor-

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shippers of a fetich. However unwarranted their confidence may have been in principle, in its further issues it was wholly sound. Jehovah remembered and had pity. Even if one has not uniformly lived up to the austere professions of his heroic, because hopeful, youth, he is still acting wisely in going back to the reminders of that time in the hour of trial. God is still substantial Love, and Our Lord's Heart is nobly human. The door to deliverance may lie through initial defeat. To bear such overthrow becomingly is to transmute sorrow into the Passion of Christ. Defeat may fix the soul's regard upon its catalogue of offences. It may inspire it, in other words, to take counsel with its conscience before again invoking its Defender. In many lives to retrograde is to rise. *Stand ye in the way and see, and ask for the old paths; where is the good way, and walk therein!*

CXLVIII

A PARABLE APPLIED

So the people sent to Silo:

HAS Israel no fond imitators in this age of purer faith? When we were children in wickedness, religion, it is safe to say, counted for much in our lives. We clung to its appealing symbolism, its stated devotions, its various private pieties, its unavowed, but delightfully human idiosyncrasies, its pictures, its medals, its scapularies, its

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furtive crossings and prostrations, its pathetic extravagances. These things were the soul's paraphernalia, the heart's peculiar marriage-portion wherewith it came blithely to the espousals of the Word. We knew their value, we thought; for we were shrewdly instructed. We had been trained in the way in which we should go. We were resolved to hold to these practices for the term of our lives. But, alas! the world's judgments prevailed with us. The wider, and not always wiser, education, that goes on for most of us when the days of our pupilage are over, helped us to forget. The *naïvetés* of our childhood and youth fell from us with its pastimes. Silo was afar off; Israel's Judges, the keepers of our conscience, were easy-going, and the Ark was but a gilded chest, after all. God was in His heaven; all would be right with our emancipated world! Then the Philistine appeared upon our borders. We that had been pledged to the austerity of our earlier and more careful Catholicism engaged too confidently in battle with the uncircumcised. Was it to be wondered at if the Ark of our Covenant was taken? True religion, no doubt, is primarily a service of the heart; and that sacramental use of it which we are called upon to take up in Christ is, on its most significant side, a perpetual discipline of the will; but neither will, nor heart, nor sacramental worship itself, will ever endure for long in the average life, unless it be further hedged about by a deliberate devotion to some form of externality in faithfulness. This is what many paradoxical directors of souls evidently mean, when they insist—and who is

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unfamiliar with the sweetly perverse contention?—that a certain leaven of objectively debatable superstition is necessary to keep the majority of mankind steadfast in the essentials of their creed. A Quaker-Catholicism is unthinkable for most men.

CXLIX

SOOTHSAYER, OR SEER?

Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the entrance to the gateway, and said: Tell me, I pray thee, where the Seer's house is:

WE know too little of the conditions under which the true prophetic office was exercised in the earlier history of Israel to be able to pronounce confidently on the nature of the service that Saul intended to ask of the mysterious *man of God*. To our modern way of thinking the entire episode may wear an aspect of superstition about it; but that is only because we find it difficult to realize all that may be involved in Israel's close subjection to Jehovah as Over-Lord, or King. There is a terrifying trivialness about the religious instincts of a people, chosen as the Jews were to carry out the supernatural designs of God by way of preparation for the advent of His Son. In spite of their lapses heaven is very near to them. Institutions that may seem to savor of ignorant and degraded notions of Deity become

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charged with spiritual meaning, when one recalls the divine over-sight, the special and frequently miraculous providence, required to induce an elect nation to move freely along its destined path. Samuel was more than a soothsayer. Whatever the function of a *ro'eh* may have been in other Semitic stocks, we are justified in believing that, in his case, at least, it was but part of a larger cycle of *charismata* which served to reveal the daily near Presence of Jehovah among the tribes that He had *redeemed with an outstretched arm*. Seer, prophet, and man of God, alike, witnessed, in a homely way, to the abiding character of the Covenant established under Moses.

CL

SAUL'S OPPORTUNITY

And Samuel made answer unto Saul, saying: I am the Seer:

UNEXPECTEDNESS is a note of the divine mercy all through Scripture. The Spirit of God is described in the Psalms as *free*; and Our Lord warned Nicodemus that the divine visitations were as unaccountable as the wind, which might be felt, indeed, but could never clearly be foretold, in its comings or in its goings. Saul had been sent upon a comparatively insignificant quest. While in a half hesitating mood about continuing it, the chance word of a servant brought him into extraordinary rela-

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tions with the last of the Judges of Israel and made him an elect King. Was there any secret unfaithfulness in the response? His latter state was yet to belie the consoling promise of this initial favor; but as we behold him on this eventful evening, standing in the covered gateway leading to the *High Place of Sacrifice*, he seems the very embodiment of Israel's uncertain dream of royalty, and the hope of the purest and most disinterested prophet of the time. *And there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he; from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.* Saul has the mark of supernatural destiny upon him. His career is worth studying by all those in whom native wilfulness works as a counter-tendency to the secret designs of the Holy Ghost.

CLI

THE CALL TO KINGSHIP

And thou shalt deliver His people:

It is hard to conceive a vocation accepted selfishly for its own sake. All things are Israel's; Israel is Christ's; *and Christ is God's*. We are bound to be altruistic from the fount up. What else is signified by the chrism of our baptismal anointing? Over some district or other of Our Lord's wider domain, household, circle of friends, parish, or diocese, we are called to rule. Kingship

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is laid gratuitously, often unexpectedly, upon our shoulders. Each of us has his sphere of influence. If our subjects are not to be numbered literally in the shape of other and distinct selves, they may be counted equivalently in the shape of lower and identical selves. There is always an Israel to be established, always a border-foe, a scoffer of circumcision, an Anti-Christ, to be driven back. It needs character to work out such deliverance—character which is strengthened hourly by will, and ruined only by wilfulness. We are debtors to the Church, chosen and anointed diversely according to our station in the Congregation of the Elect, to bring peace to God's people. For their sakes we are bound *to obey the Lord's word by the mouth of His Prophet, and be humbled in season under His mighty hand*, if we would not be altogether as Saul.

CLII

DISINTERESTEDNESS A VIRTUE OF THE PRIESTHOOD

And Samuel said to them: The Lord is Witness against you, and His Anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand? And the people said: He is Witness:

THE most requisite virtue of the priest in a true Israelite's eye was not so much purity as disinterestedness. The priest could neither live nor labor unto himself. *The*

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Lord was the portion of his inheritance and the chalice out of which his heart should drink. It was an austere ideal; yet, in spite of the melancholy defections that nearly every age could show, types like Samuel appeared from time to time to recall to men's minds that Moses had set no impossible standard, and that not the least of Jehovah's many witnesses in Israel's world was the order which was said to be *clothed with the perfection of power*. The Christian Church was not remiss in fostering the hieratic instincts that had survived the synagogue. Early in her career she attempted to surround Our Lord's newer and holier institution with safeguards as awe-inspiring and as helpful as any that the older dispensation had conceived. Her priesthood was eminently an order of men set apart; a caste to be supported out of the gifts of the Altar, if you will; though, as in St. Paul's case, and in thousands of other instances since his day, she has never affected to see any incongruity in less ecclesiastical sources of livelihood, provided they come from legitimate and decent effort, and are not plainly at variance with the essential sanctity of the office. That has been the principle of her canonical procedure, whether we study it in the fifth century or in the twentieth. The priest is to be a pattern of disinterestedness. He must live by his profession, if he can; he must not use it as a cloak for private aggrandizement, or bring religion into disrepute, as the sons of Heli did, *who took to themselves all that the flesh-hook brought up, being children of Belial, not knowing the Lord, nor the duty of the priesthood in regard of the*

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people. It is the glory of Catholicism to have realized, on the whole, her earliest ideals in so difficult a matter. The austerity of the priesthood, into which the present law of celibacy enters as but one among many possible forms of discipline, has become so completely a commonplace with the laity that there are portions of Western Christendom where the mere mention of any other state of things fills both learned and ignorant alike with pious dismay. To attempt to explain a persuasion as widespread as that by deriving it pedantically from ecclesiastico-political instincts is neither philosophic nor devout. Catholic laymen do right, therefore, in thinking austere of the Christian priesthood. In this are they wiser than the sects who have dealt meanly with their ministers in proportion as religion has lost its sacrificial savor in their own minds, and become identified with a theoretic acquiescence in certain vague views of an historical but never very present Christ. Priests themselves can hardly think too highly of their estate—provided they be rooted like Samuel in habitual self-effacement and humility. Each age has its own standards. The substance of things must remain the same. Our sense of their significance in action may vary, as the Church's sense of them has undoubtedly varied through the centuries; yet the change is but accidental. The shadow moves with the circling sun; the Rock that casts the shadow endures. From first to last the characteristic note of every priest of God in the Old Law, as in the New, is this that Samuel appeals to: *Ye have not found anything in my hand!* Such an appeal

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can be based only on the unworldliness that comes of strong faith; yet it does not necessarily unfit a man for consort with the highest or the courtliest. *Samuel is still an anointer of Kings.*

A brilliant layman, the author of a pamphlet, published, now nearly a score of years ago, under the title of "We Catholics," gave expression to the essential attitude of every sincere believer on this point, when he wrote the noble words which we venture to append as a gloss to the considerations upon which we have been insisting:

I hold this certain, that every faithful priest, wherever his cradle may have been rocked, is on his own ground, in the strictest sense, a gentleman. It is when in mistaken kindness he wanders away from those sacred precincts for which his training has perfected him, and descends to the smoking-room, throwing aside the cassock to compete with other shirt-sleeves at billiards and at baccarat, that he, acreless, challenges comparison with worldlings on their own estates, and risks being measured by the miserable foot-rule of the flunkey who hands him his cigars. O Priests, when you aspire to be merely good fellows, I tell you you forget what gods you are. You who have sacrificed so much, surely it is easy for you to sacrifice a little more? We laugh with you; we welcome your condoning good nature, when you are hail-fellow-well-met at dinner-time and after; but when we want to confess, we turn not to him with whom we have discussed twenty courses and twenty characters, but to some retiring pastor whose voice is never heard outside the pulpit and the confessional, who belongs in some sense to a caste, and remembers it in the very way he walks upstairs to bed. If we smile at his limitations, I think we smile half envious-

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ly, knowing that those very limitations are the evidence of expansion in another and a nobler direction. Of such as these it can never without miserable infirmity be asked in social disparagement, whence they come and what their origin. They came from God and they are His sons. They are the fathers of their people and their inheritance is in heaven.

There are tens of thousands, thank God! who reach this layman's ideal in the Church to-day. They are of Samuel's descent; and they owe their influence largely to their many-sided disinterestedness. *No man has ever found anything in their hand.*

CLIII

GOD'S IRONY

Now, therefore, your king whom ye have chosen and asked for is before you:

It was a critical moment in the history of the Hebrew race when Samuel presented them with their first king. Its sons were emerging from pupilage. The restless among them felt the instinct of nationality stirring strangely within their hearts. They would borrow a political device from surrounding peoples; they would be led by a man of their own blood, as Over-lord and Captain of their fortunes. The prophet's acquiescence in this act of self-will on the part of the tribes was sincere

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enough. He saw in the elevation of a Benjamite prince an avenue of escape from present difficulties. As the righteous champion of the people's claims a king would still be the visible symbol of God's unyielding empire over them; and mere human majesty would not necessarily dim the majesty that covered Israel as with a shield of glory from heaven. *If ye will fear the Lord, and serve Him, and obey His voice, and not provoke the mouth of the Lord to anger, then shall ye and the King that ruleth over you be followers of the Lord, your God.* The choice of a king was no part of the original destiny of Israel; and there is a touch of unconscious irony in Samuel's practical effacement of himself in this grave departure from tradition. *I have hearkened to your voice in all that ye have said to me, and have made a King over you. But now the King goeth before you; and I am old and grey-headed.* The after-history of the nation offers a strange commentary on the events done in this hour of permitted wantonness. God would not cheat them of their ambitions. He would allow the earliest of their hopes to become in time their heaviest scourge. In spite of the portent of the thunder upon wheat-harvest day there is an ominous silence of heavenly protest, when protest of some sort seems most to be needed. Is not that the way of God as outlined in Scripture generally? And is it not paralleled by the bitter experience of all who have tried to bring Him over to their side, when mere passion or cold self-interest ruled the heart? We are whipped by our own deeds; stripped naked to our consciences, and

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scourged without pity. We Christians are not accustomed to think of irony as a weapon of the divine vengeance; but Scripture hints at it as a characteristic of God's dealings with a large portion of the offences of mankind. Does not St. Paul warn us that God is not mocked? *Deus non deridetur*. What does that mean but that *vengeance is His*? He will repay in kind. It was the function of irony, as the Greek mind conceived it, to affect a transparent ignorance for a goodly purpose. It rebuked most effectively by a kind of significant silence. It chastised the vanity of all wilfulness, by suffering it to run headlong to its ruin. It was a laying bare of the remorseless sequence of things—a belated glimpse of the logic that held the universe together as a sane and reasonable Whole. The sight of it was like the laughter of God Who rejoiced in the world that He had made. The view of the Psalmist was not essentially different; and in its tamer presentation it was a thousand times more concrete and sobering. God will scoff at the self-blinded evil-doer. *Et subsannabit eos!* We shall never understand, either Saul's career, or the meaning of Israel's protracted parody of it as a warning to certain human elements at play in the Church at large and in every individual soul, until we remember that there is room in God for that temper of mind which we recognize under many guises as the irony or vengeance that compels us to repay ourselves in kind.

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CLIV

THE MODERN GOLIATH

And there went forth a bastard from the camp of the Philistines whose name was Goliath of Geth:

THE instinct of the Church has always seen in the champion of the Philistines a type of the anti-Christian spirit. The giant of Geth is the majesty of the world arrayed against the simplicity of Christ. He stands at one time for arbitrary and irresponsible power; at another for wealth and influence; at still another for the pride of imaginary knowledge. That last would seem to be the aspect under which the educated Catholic of our own days can most profitably view him. Never before in the history of Christian thought has the science of this world been so confidently appealed to in the hope of destroying the people of God. In the eighteenth century, and through the early years of the nineteenth, the typical unbeliever was an encyclopedist, vain, shallow, irreverent and pretentious. He was unmasked and put to flight by true learning. He had presumed to test Christ by what he had called the wider knowledge, by logic and insight and by each several test of his own choosing, he was confounded. What anti-Christian teacher would stoop to the methods of Voltaire or Holbach to-day? The modern Goliath wears a heavier and more imposing armor. Are

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there not Catholics who are overawed by it? Are there not thousands of young men, tainted by the unconscious secularism of the something which they arrogantly refer to as the scientific method? In history, in Biblical criticism, in philosophy, does not this method, as they understand it, for the most part, essay to run counter to their most cherished beliefs? Let them not deceive themselves. True knowledge can never militate against Our Lord or His Church. Half of the strength of Goliath lay in Israelitic credulity about his reputed prowess, his wonderful helmet and greaves and breast-plate, his unchallenged superiority. If half-taught young Catholics fill their minds with the world's imaginary estimate of its own strength, if they read nothing but infidel books, infidel periodicals, and a mundane press, how can they hope to avoid sharing the Philistine's scorn for the soldiers of the true Israel? It is not necessary to be ignorant in order to be a staunch Catholic; but it is necessary to have the candor and the humility of genuine science. We must be ready to sacrifice some of our fastidious philosophic leisure in order to make acquaintance with the heroes of our own camp, if we are to keep our place in it. Our captains are not so contemptible when understood in their true character. Their accoutrements may be pathetically old-fashioned—in too many instances, alas, they are—but then the battle of faith is not to be decided by such tests. It is good to be learned; but it is better to be wise. Wisdom and knowledge have never yet been accounted convertible terms. We shall become true think-

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ers, indeed, when we learn that faith is beyond all secular changes of fashion, whether in positive science or speculative philosophy, or the radically weak method of research that acquires vogue in virtue of a great name. Goliath is a bastard as well as a braggart. *Et egressus est vir spurius de castris Philistinorum!*

CLV

THE PEBBLES OF GOD

And David chose him five very smooth pebbles out of the brook:

THE shepherd-boy of Bethlehem was the type and forerunner of Our Lord for more reasons than his long career of trial. He symbolizes for us the true believer's method of attack on the champions of error. He could not fight in the armor of Saul. He must be his own intrepid self, sincere and unafraid, even in the presence of a giant. *He chose him five very smooth stones out of the brook.* If we are to help the Church by our scholarship, let us be learned in God's name. We can never know too much. But let us also understand that it is not by knowledge alone that we shall win. *Nostra opinio, et noster sensus, saepe nos fallit, et modicum videt*, says the author of the Imitation. With all our conjecture and all our perception we often go astray. Man gets but pinhole peeps of the Infinite—*modicum videt*—if he trusts to mere logic. The

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five very smooth stones out of the brook are his living faith in Christ, and the testimony of a clean Catholic conscience. With these he is stronger than in the armor of Saul; stronger than Goliath. Men are not won by controversy. God has not put His best things out at pawn. The most fortunate of us is not likely to be better equipped with the learning of this age than St. Paul was with the learning of his own. And what did he think of it all? *Jesus Christ and Him crucified!* He would make no other boast. Faith has, indeed, its scientific side; but how many of our modern apologists know it? Worn pebbles in a dried torrent-bed—that is how too many of us account the works of our Catholic Fathers and masters—the Davids of an earlier time.

CLVI

THE SIN OF SAUL

Saul saw that David behaved himself very wisely; and he was afraid of him:

SAUL'S career is a curiously instructive one. He had great gifts of character, and seemed destined by nature for command. Through sheer force of personality he out-topped his fellows, and won the notice of the prophet whom God has sent to search for a king. For a while he honored the oil of his anointing. He lived up to his vocation. He was outwardly true to God. Then an

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evil spirit of melancholy entered into him, and his downward path began. What was his sin? Why was he cut off? Was he not fighting for his own? Was not David an actual supplanter, a rival, as the shade of Samuel afterward called him in the cave at Endor? It is impossible to read the story of Ben-Isai's gradual rise to influence, his extraordinary popularity, his pact of comradeship with Jonathan, his marriage with Michol and consequent adoption as the King's son-in-law, without realizing that it would have been easy for Saul to have accepted these manifestations of God's providence and yet to have kept his place with David at his side in Israel. He made his election vain, however, because he would serve Jehovah in his own half-measure way. Ambition made him stoop to compromise. With all his natural gloominess of disposition, his impulsiveness, his passion for resentment, he was a double-hearted man; that was his sin. His call had never been final. Like the salvation that comes to all of us in Christ and through the ordinances of the Church, it was not absolute. It depended on his own co-operation. He never really surrendered himself to the divine plan. He was too self-willed for that. He was, therefore, thrust aside. The consequences of his own acts became his heaviest scourge. Long before he dared to take his fate in his hands and seek counsel from the lips of a witch, he had felt the sting of the divine irony. Instead of being softened to repentance by it, he went perversely to his doom.

In this he was a portent and a warning for all after-time; not to kings and rulers merely, but to every soul

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conscious of a "call." There is no destroyer of character comparable to self-will. No wonder that David is uniformly contrasted with the man whose episcopate he was to receive as a youth of essential meekness of heart. It is the Old Testament's preparation for the holier lesson we have since learned in the profounder meekness of Christ. The ill-will from which we pray to be delivered in the Litanies is at bottom mere self-will, if we only knew it. *From envy, anger, and all ill will, deliver us, O Lord.* That is the prayer that Saul's defection should put upon our lips; but we shall never say it sincerely until we first dare to say—it needs courage like David's to say it—*Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like unto Thine!*

CLVII

REGARD FOR RULERS

And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?

It seems at first sight hard to understand why Saul, who had proved unworthy of his trust, and who died fighting against the manifest will of heaven, should yet be spoken of as the *Lord's anointed*. Did the unction he had received from Samuel's hands imprint a kind of sacramental character on his soul? We are face to face with a real difficulty here. But in order to solve it there is no need to take refuge in questionable theories of kingship, or to maintain, as was once confidently asserted, that be-

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cause *all authority is ordained of God* the depositaries of it remain, under every contingency, sacrosanct. David, it is true, seems to have felt an habitual reverence for Saul's person, even after the turn of events and the assurance of the accredited messenger of Jehovah had made it plain to him that the man was a divine outcast. More than once, it happened to him to find the King unexpectedly in his power; and yet he would not kill him, though he knew that Saul had himself come out to slay and spare not. It was something more than magnanimity that inspired such forbearance. Without having recourse to indefensible hypotheses, we may see in the indignant question to the Amalecite the sense of awe which David ever entertained for those upon whom the marks of the divine election had rested at any time. Meekness was a kind of religion with him; but regard for the holiness which a King of Israel seemed to share, as being God's vice-gerent over His chosen people, was, if possible, something more sacred still. In this attitude of his he becomes an example to Catholics, whose creed teaches them to pray unceasingly for rulers and for all that are in high place, that the Church may work out her mission in peace. That is a duty that some of us are in danger of forgetting in a democratic age which cares little for individuals and magnifies an office at the cost of the man who may be summoned to administer it, which exalts an impersonal abstraction and clothes it with majesty, and which often grovels to an un-Christian law as superstitiously as ever its fathers bent the knee to a king.

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CLVIII

ON MAJESTY

The Lord's Anointed:

THOUGH kings have gone, the sanctities that kings were elected to safeguard have not departed. Do we reverence these? Have we taken no taint of churlishness from an envious time? Are we ready to belittle the new servants of the Commonwealth, to misjudge them, to speak grievous things of them on slender evidence, following a mere hue and cry, and surrendering our conscience to the oracles of a press which is not obviously wise, and certainly not Christian? And yet men in office have as much right to our good will as men in private life.

CLIX

“MAXIMA DEBETUR PUERIS REVERENTIA”

The Lord's Anointed:

APART from the Church and its consecrated ministers, which belong to an order of excellence bafflingly above the mere civic dignities of life, there are a hundred other things which have been touched variously with Jehovah's Messiahship, and if we have King David's instincts at heart, we shall fear to mistreat them. They have a consecration which is all their own, because the oil of sinless-

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ness and gladness has been poured upon them. The innocence of children, the simplicity of the illiterate, the artlessness of youth—conscience and chivalry alike should combine to make us regardful of these. In the case of children we have Our Lord's own warning as to the heinousness of scandal. The unction He has laid upon their souls He would save from all unholy handling; He would protect it by angels who are made zealous for their work, inspired to it, by the sight of the King's face in heaven. When one remembers the sanctity of baptism it is surely no exaggeration to say that these young charges of Christ are, beyond David himself, the true anointed of God.

CLX

TIME-SERVER OR TRUTH-SERVER?

Abner, Son of Ner, Captain of the Army of Saul:

It is not easy to understand Abner's character. His name and his fortunes were inseparably linked with those of Saul, to whom he was closely related in blood. He sat next to the King at table; and it was to his offices that David owed his first introduction to the man he was to supplant. The shameful charge that Isboseth brought against him does not seem to have had any real foundation in fact. Indeed the wording of our own Vulgate seems to lend color to the theory which has been advanced in support of another reading of the Hebrew; and we are

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justified in thinking of him as one who *showed himself strong for the house of Saul*. Whatever view we take, the entire earlier career of the man makes it hard to believe that there was any ground for the insinuation. He seems to have been consistently unselfish. He threw in his fortunes with the house of his fathers, and only changed his allegiance under the sting of a great injustice. Could his conduct be defended? Was he at heart a shifty character? It is difficult to say. David thought well of him. He regarded his death as a great calamity. *Know ye not*, he said, *that a prince and a great man is fallen this day in Israel?* The story of his career brings home to us the human side of those divisions among the people of God, which are such a bewilderment to the faithful soul watching their progress in history. Cannot one detect an admonishing parallelism in many an analogous juncture in the affairs of the Church of Christ? There were good men, saints, even, who have since been canonized, among the followers of the Anti-Popes. Even in our own day there are upright souls, unselfish and single-minded, among those who are often accounted disloyal to the Church. We must not be too ready to pass final judgment. Of course it is easier to recognize schism in these latter times; and true sons of the Church will never allow themselves to be over-awed by the reputation for character, learning or sanctity arrogated to the chiefs of any schism that may arise. One is our Master, even Christ; and St. Peter's legitimate successor is His authentic spokesman.

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CLXI

A SINNER'S PROGRESS

And David sent and enquired after the woman:

WITH the exception of Mary Magdalen's life story, perhaps no other narrative in Scripture is still so fresh in the memory of Christendom as the account of David's fall. In its frank betrayal of emotions and motives, in its unconscious revelation of the ways of lust in a man's heart, it might be a tale of yesterday, instead of the inspired history of a Jewish King who lived in the childhood of the religious world. It is to no purpose to contend that the offence could not be a particularly heinous one in a petty oriental potentate who counted his concubines by hundreds. To a Catholic who reads the sad series of transgressions that arose out of that first unguarded look the more shocking offence will doubtless be the awful injustice done to an innocent man who was unsuspectingly fighting the battles of his betrayer; but the unseemliness of the act of unrestrained desire that gave occasion to it all is not one whit abated by considerations about climate or racial temperament. Even in David's time, as indeed from the very beginning of their history, the Jews revered conjugal chastity almost as religiously as ourselves. There was a multiplied malice, therefore, in the King's offence; and the official murder by which it was crowned

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can be traced along with the woman's fall—for neither was she blameless in the matter—to an unguarded look of sensual curiosity on an empty afternoon. There is a dismal sameness in the progress of every sin of lust, whether we study it in other times and among other peoples, or nearer home. The ease of bodily comfort, an unchecked liberty of the senses, and the opportunity to consummate the guilt that the heart conceives—when one finds such a devil's trinity of instigation arrayed conjointly before the outworks of the soul, how should capitulation not follow unless the fear of God be like a sword to avert it?

CLXII

HOW INIQUITY BREEDS

Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house:

IN spite of the mercy that lay hidden behind Nathan's message the denunciation it contained was terribly fulfilled. Evil was raised up against David, the sinner, *out of his own house!* His offence became a scourge that wounded him seven times over. It was a heavy penalty to pay for an initial transgression, but not too heavy for the injustice that had been crowned by the Hittite's death. Preachers in every age of the Church have called attention to the seven separate strokes that fell upon David's sensitive heart. First, there

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was the death of the child, whose life he had been so keen to save, as being the token both of his love and of his repentance. Then there came the second stroke in the incestuous violation of his daughter Thamar. His eldest son had profited too readily by his father's example. Amnon's sin bore fruit in Absalom's revenge; and thus a vendetta in the King's own house came to be the third blow by which God would bring home to him the terrible truth that guilt can never go unscathed. Then came Absalom's open rebellion. That was the fourth blow. The fifth came when the same unnatural son dishonored his father in the sight of all Israel by the infamy of the scene upon the palace-roof. The sixth blow came when the father's love, stronger than the King's sense of honor, made that bitter moan over the palace-gate: *Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!* The seventh stroke fell years afterward in the unseemly petition made by Adonias to his brother Solomon after David's death, that he might be allowed to marry Abisag, who had been their father's concubine.

These were the sons of the *King who had sinned*, and repented, and become *a man after God's own heart*; and what a brood of evil they were to him, one is tempted to cry! Modern Catholics, if they read them at all, are variously affected. Some of us are puzzled; others are bewildered and shocked by the turpitude they reveal. Is it out of such stuff, we ask, that God tried to build up for Himself a people of election? Is it from

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loins like these that the virginal body of Our Blessed Lady and the ineffable Fruit of her pure womb are one day to spring for the world's healing? Let us not be dismayed. It is only *the enemies of the Lord who will blaspheme* in the hearing of these recitals. Though the evil multiply, good will yet come of it; meanwhile let no man shut the eyes of his heart to the terrible lesson the story conveys. We say that sin is barren, and we say true. Death can bring forth no seed of life. But in another sense sin is fearfully prolific. That is our judgment of it in this world, at least. It is prolific, not merely of retribution in the form of pain, but of fresh guilt in others, in the form of moral inheritance. Let the sinner think of that when weighing the consequences of his first deliberate transgression. His offence will find him out. He will never be able to say: *I have sinned, and what evil has befallen me?* Any evil or all evil may be his portion. To learn that lesson is to enrich one's soul with a great good!

CLXIII

HOW REPENTANCE HEALS

And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord:

DAVID is a sinner removed by a thousand years of morning twilight from the full day of knowledge and righteousness that beamed from the face of Christ, and yet

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how modern is the note of his repentance! It might all have happened on the eve of the Passion; it might have happened in the Middle Ages; it might have happened yesterday; so familiar is it, so inspiring, to the Catholic heart. This is Our Lord's most blessed prerogative as the Saviour of mankind, that, being God and pursuing sin with such remorseless rigor, He can still draw good out of the evil of it, can still breathe life into its *body of death*, can turn His most forbidding ban into a benediction. *O felix culpa!* In nothing else is His loving-kindness so evident; nowhere is He more convincingly a *personal God*, a God, that is, Who has regard even unto the least of us, Who knows *our down-sitting and our rising up, who understands our thoughts from afar*. Though there be much wrong in the world, none of it is absolutely irremediable; and our worst offences may yet find mercy, if only our wills be not hardened in guilt. David is the type and forerunner of Our Lord. No wonder that the Word Who speaks darkly through his prophetic career should have a care over him! He is the pattern of all true repentance to the world of the New Dispensation, just as consolingly as he was to the Old. If he is foolish and revolting in his fall, he is royal in his contrition. There are no disguises in his confession. His sin henceforth will be ever before him. He will bear the physical burden of its consequences like a man; but he will be a child in the simplicity of his sorrow until his place knows him no more. No tale out of the Old Testament tries the fibre of a man's religion like this. If you find yourself fascinated by its divine

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aspect, if you are drawn by the pathos of its contrition to stimulate yourself to a like sorrow, if you think only of sacramental confession, and life-long satisfaction after reading it, your Catholicity is true, because your heart, your essential manhood, is true. If you fasten pruriently, under a hypocritical plea of scholarship, on any other element of it, know that you have not understood. You have read the story only to blaspheme, and are, in instinct, *an enemy to the Lord.*

CLXIV

MEEKNESS AN ELEMENT IN CONVERSION

Let him alone and let him curse:

No lasting contrition is ever possible without an element of meekness in it. Such an attitude of soul does not imply loss of manliness; on the contrary, it connotes the very highest form of courage, and is rooted in perfect self-control. We can be meek enough with the impersonal forces of the world; we can bow our heads to sickness, to loss of goods, to neglect on the part of kinsfolk and friends; but let opposition in the guise of personal affront overtake us, and how quick we are to resent it! Here is where David's story becomes valuable to the new convert. It requires living faith as well as fortitude to say in the face of such trial: *Let him alone and let him curse, in so far as the Lord hath bidden him!* All sin is at bottom a misuse of the gifts of life to assert some form

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of false egoism; repentance, on the other hand, is the right use of our own wills in order to set that original crookedness of nature straight. As such it implies effort. No doubt God's grace must go before; but our own wills must just as infallibly follow after. *He that made us without taking thought with us will not save us without the will to co-operate on our part.* That is a great saying; and it gets wonderful point when understood of such a resolution as David showed to be meek, that is, penitentially submissive, in the presence of such a reviler as Semei. The King was never so truly a man as at Bahurim.

CLXV

GOOD AND EVIL

Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bethsabee, the mother of Solomon, saying: Hast thou not heard that Adonias, the son of Haggith, doth reign, and David, our Lord, knoweth it not?

DAVID'S history is full of paradoxes. No other character in the Old Testament can compare with him in spirituality; and yet the story of his life is over-shadowed by two peculiarly revolting sins. The triumphs and failures of no other Captain in Israel had so completely adumbrated Our Lord's; and yet he goes down to his grave, a decrepit old man, puzzled and heart-stricken, because the nearest and dearest of his kinsfolk are engaged in an un-

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natural intrigue against his dying will. Nobody ventures to speak the truth to him. Nathan, who had ever been the best and most disinterested of his counsellors, must stoop to a courtier's trick to carry out the designs of God; and Bethsabee, the well-beloved partner of his earlier shame, must become a minister of grace to him by assisting the prophet in a dark cabal. *Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the King, I also will come in after thee, and confirm thy words.* What a problem this story raises; and yet what a lesson of submission it enforces, too! How meek one should be with the instruments of Providence! How ready to accept the human element in Israel's career! How slow to judge the issue because of a mere juncture in the process that our miscalculating reason cannot altogether understand! If David was a forerunner of Christ, his elect people, for whom he toiled and fought and suffered, were the forerunners of that wider and mightier kingdom in which Christ still fulfils Himself and His Father's purpose for the sake of a world which He has died to save. Twilight and dark must bedim the face of things for those whose eyes are partially holden. Good and evil must work obscurely beneath the surface of the soil out of which the flower of human character grows. At some time or other we must awake to the problem of the tares in our own circumscribed corner of God's wheat-field. We can endure scandal afar off. We are puzzled, but not dismayed, at the unseemlinesses of the New Testament; we grow sobered in thought at the accounts of the various apostasies in belief and

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conduct that have come down to us from other times; but when we discover traces of a similar evil close at hand, how do we behave? Oh, if we are, like David, men after God's own mind, we shall not lose our peace!

CLXVI

A PHASE OF MANLINESS

Be thou strong and show thyself a man:

MANLINESS is the note of David's outer life. In every turn and circumstance of fate his courage never deserts him. This is what one would look for in the King who, more inspiringly than any other individual ruler of his race, was to set the thoughts of Israel to Christ-ward. Manliness, he hoped, was to be the virtue of Solomon and all his line, until it should shine resplendent in the Son of his loins, Who was to *establish his throne in righteousness forever. Behold the Man!* The thought of David's manliness makes us think of the manliness of Christ. What David's dying charge was to Bethsabée's son, that is Our Lord's charge, renewed in every age of the Church to each one of us. *Learn of Me, for I am meek and unassuming of heart!* There was little pretence in David; and there was none at all in Christ. That is the first lesson of manliness always—to dare to be one's purer self, not in any clamorous, self-assertive way, but in all simplicity and self-control, with the meekness, not of a coward, but

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of a man who knows how to endure and how to wait. Look at David's career, whether as a shepherd lad, as a court minstrel to Saul, or afterwards as a Captain and King in Israel; how true to his higher self he is from first to last! How patient he is with destiny; how careful to keep the *charge of the Lord his God, to watch the watch*, as the Hebrew phrase has it, to *stick to his post like a sentry on duty! Show thyself a man!* It is the charge of the ablest fighting King in Israel to the most peaceful; because peace has its strenuous side which is not less ennobling than war. Always and in all places to show courage, that is the true believer's duty. To do that is to be a man. What stature one needs to achieve it! We never reach up to that full moral height until we put on the character of Christ which is implanted in us like a seed of growth in baptism. If you would be such a man as David enjoined on Solomon to be, dare, first of all, to be true to your Catholic creed in public and in private life. Be a man in your secret heart, and you will not find it difficult to fulfil the inevitable outer rôle. Some of us foolishly invert the order. In deference to the world's judgment we associate manliness with a sort of showy audacity. In the majority of cases we are illogically right; yet we need to remember, as a certain great philosopher has reminded us, that mere boldness is often "the child of ignorance and baseness." True courage springs from within. In the Catholic it is a gift of the Holy Ghost to the trusty soul; it is the spontaneous stirring of the higher manhood in us, the pulse of

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Christ in the clean heart—the heart that has cast out sin, and begun to achieve itself through a sacramental discipline in the holier Heart into which it has been engrafted. Such courage ought rather to be identified with sincerity and simple-mindedness; and there is room for its play in all the by-paths of life. We make much of men and women who are said to be “genuine” and “true,” in whom we detect an habitual instinct of self-possession. Our reverence rightly goes out to such personalities. Why? It is because we are in love with manliness, and feel, somehow, that it is removed by the whole height of the moral scale from mere sham assurance and the ease of habitual make-believe. The kingdom of heaven has its analogies in this matter, as it has in most others; for nature and grace are not mutually exclusive of one another, but rather grace and sin. Which are the souls that win us and hold us—the souls that become fathers and mothers in Israel? Are they not those that have really made their own the derived manliness of Christ? That is the secret of their strength. *Be thou strong, and show thyself a man.*

CLXVII

INTUITIVENESS

Give thy servant an understanding heart:

INTUITIVENESS is a *charisma* to pray for early and late. Each time that the world, the devil, or the cun-

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ning of our own flesh, tempts us to be false to the teachings of the Church, whether in matters of belief or in problems of conduct, the Word within us is really making a tender of the gift that Solomon received in Gibeon when the great choice was offered to him in a dream by night. *An understanding heart!* A heart, that is, that knows how to discern between good and evil, between Christ and Belial! We are all bound to think with the Church. So do we cultivate *that mind which was in Christ Jesus*; but our discrimination will never be finely inerrant until we mould our secret character to the pattern of Our Blessed Lord. *Learn of Me!* This, also, is a note of manliness; and the true well-spring of the courage of which we have spoken elsewhere is this initial bravery of *the understanding heart.*

CLXVIII

EXTERNALITY IN WORSHIP

I have heard thy prayer and thy entreaty:

It was under Solomon's rule that the religion of Israel was fittingly housed. He gathered together the treasure that his father had amassed and built with it a temple which was associated ever afterward with the glory of his name. He enabled his people to discover the poetry that lay hidden in their worship. He added to the outward

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splendor of their ritual, and taught them to be proud of their state church. Jehovah was their true King. The daily service of the temple was to be an abiding memorial of that divine over-lordship as well as an enduring symbol of the race-destiny it implied. There are Catholics who affect to care little for the outer forms of their religion. They speak impatiently of long services. They have no taste for the greater solemnities of the Mass. It is in Protestant countries that one often hears narrow and ignorant criticism of this kind from people who hope to acquire some credit for inwardness of faith. The truth is they have never understood the essential significance of their creed; and their faith is seldom of the kind that generates a holy pride in the possessor of it. Adaptability may be a note of wisdom, but it is just as often a note of cowardice, too. To become all things to all men, in order to win all to Christ, is a good policy, if Christ be truly alive in us—alive and militant, as we know He was in the great Apostle whose authority is so often cited for liberties that leave the Catholic worshipper dumb with sorrow. God blessed Solomon for his extreme carefulness in ritual. He blesses all souls who have a like zeal, if the zeal be only grounded in knowledge, and rooted in interior conviction. St. Teresa, who had the broadest of hearts, and whose courage inspired her with a man's way of thinking on the thousand little problems of mere cloistral etiquette, was nevertheless so uncompromising a rubricist, that she declared herself ready to die for the least ordinance of the Missal. She knew the value of that magnifi-

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cent inheritance of ceremonial, which the Church has offered to every age, and with all her passion for "common-sense" she was not one of those who would lightly give it up. She had a power of appreciation in these matters, delicate beyond the capacity of most minds, and her soul was hungry for the blessings invoked upon their scrupulous observance. The inspired writer who has left us the record of King Solomon's achievements in behalf of the corporate worship of Israel has really ministered to an instinct which lies at the heart of all healthy human nature. If we love our religion we shall not suffer it to hide away in a corner. We shall set it up in honor and surround it with all the holiest pomp of art and life. What the new King did for the nation over which he had been called to rule, the wise Catholic conscience does for the soul which enters into its spiritual patrimony with the full dawn of the instructed reason. Its religion becomes discreetly ritualistic, because it is compelled to be social. We reach Christ through His Church, or not at all. Intolerant as that view seems, it is the only view insisted upon throughout the pages of the New Testament. We belong to a kingdom which cannot afford to ignore forms and ceremonies and sacred pageantries, any more than it can afford to ignore the human aspect of the Incarnation of which these externalities are as surely the legitimate expression as they are historically the consoling and obvious sign of the same. God blesses us and hears us when we pray to Him through the Church's consecrated forms of entreaty. Let us make much,

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therefore, of the ritualistic sweetness of worship. Let us train up the young committed to our care to have a reverent enthusiasm for the stateliness of Catholicism, to be present as often as possible at the public offices of the Church, and to make personal sacrifices that all this outer service of the elect Bride of Christ be carried on with dignity and devotion.

CLXIX

THE QUIDNUNCS OF THE KINGDOM

Now the Queen of Saba, when she had heard of the fame of Solomon, came to ply him with dark questionings:

THERE are Catholics who look upon the teaching office of the Church as a sort of communicated omniscience. They come to her with all manner of speculative doubts, and are troubled if they do not receive an immediate answer. They think they possess in the pronouncements of General Councils and in the utterances of Popes an inexhaustible well of sacred knowledge, more valuable, in one sense, because more definite and modern, than Scripture itself. They do not like to be told that in their impatient zeal they are confounding the gift of inerrancy with the *charisma* of affirmative inspiration. They do harm in spite of their generous belief; for after all we must take the constitution of the Church as Our Lord has framed it for us, and not as our too curious minds would have it be. And yet one must not be angry with these

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inquisitive hearts. They have their type in this *Queen of the South* who comes to make a woman's trial of the King's wisdom by propounding riddles to him. They are fore-shadowed likewise by those disciples who approach Our Blessed Lord with points of etiquette, with "cases" and questionings on the constitution of His Kingdom and the time of His Second Advent. It is not wrong to raise difficulties and then to look to the Church for an answer to them. Such "contentions," if carried on in the spirit of a true teachableness, end always in more light, if not altogether in finality.

CLXX

SANCTA SANCTIS

Now King Solomon loved many strange women:

FEW things need to be preached more resolutely in these times than the Church's intolerance of mixed wedlock. It is through laxity in that quarter that death will come up more insidiously than through any other. The conscience that has not understood Our Lord's religion as inexorably involving a claim to regulate every affection of the heart by the thought of the general good of the Church has not learned the primary lesson of Catholicism. Our attitude in this business of marrying and giving in marriage is often spoken of as a hateful tyranny;

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and indeed it is, if Christ be not Captain and King. No other authority would dare to make so large a claim upon human nature. Our Lord is rightly jealous of the heart over which His sovereignty has been once established, and He grieves to see it delivered over to an embrace that He cannot and will not sanctify. He has turned marriage into a *Great Mystery*. He has made it a living and grace-giving symbol of His own over-passing hunger for the world of souls of whom He is more truly Father than Brother. The believer who gives himself up to the love of a *strange woman* jeopardizes the hope of Christ's archetypal matrimony with that Bride *without spot or blemish* whom He wooed and overcame through the austere chivalry of His cross. Should not love be all in all? men ask. Yes, we answer, if it be the legitimate issue of that first union. Every true marriage is ordained henceforth in heaven, because it was mystically foreseen in the awful espousals of Mount Calvary.

CLXXI

DIVIDED ALLEGIANCE

Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab:

God exacts an undivided allegiance from all those whom He honors with a call. This is true of states as well as individuals; it is true likewise of religious orders and particular churches. There is but one

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source of enduring power in the kingdom of heaven, and that is personal and unhesitating service. If our alliance is with Jehovah our work will abide; His covenants are like His gifts—*true and without repentance*. If they are vitiated by meaner entanglements they will bring nothing but disaster in the end. Three-fourths of Achab's wickedness lay in his habitual readiness for compromise. He thought to serve God and Mammon. He had been entrusted with royal power and made a vice-gerent of Jehovah in order to safeguard the national religion; and yet he tried to popularize the worship of the Tyrian Baalim and of Melkart in especial among the people of his kingdom, while professing to be piously regardful of the Law of Moses. *Hear, O Israel, and understand: the Lord thy God is one God*. Achab never understood that warning; nor does the Catholic understand it when he affects to strike a truce between Christ and Belial, between his religion and the world. The props he has leaned upon will fail him in the shadow of death. His alliances will come to naught. *Moab will rebel*.

CLXXII

ON BEING HOSPITABLE

Let us prepare for him, therefore, a small upper-room:

THERE is an apostolic precept enjoining on all Christians the duties of hospitality; but too many of us, alas,

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have lost sight of the significance of the command. To be hospitable, in the better sense of the word, is to take a stranger from without and admit him to the intimacies of the family table. It is to make a quasi-kinsman of him, to feed him, and treat him almost as a brother. That was how the Greek conceived of this most human of virtues, even while he was but a tyro in most of the amenities of civilization; and the attitude of the earlier Latin races hardly differed in substance from this frank tribal charity of which their sons had had frequent experience over seas. Gifts and tokens were exchanged, rings and seals were broken, as among plighted lovers, and the divided halves were religiously handed down from father to son through long generations in evidence of ancestral and hereditary friendship that had been covenanted for amid the sacred privacies of those who had *sat at meat together*. Our blessed Lord's example, doubtless, did much to sanctify a usage as venerable to the Jew as it was to the Gentile. He went often as a guest to houses of those who delighted to do Him honor. He suffered Matthew to entertain Him; He sat with Simon, the rich leper; with Zacheus, with Mary and Martha; and so assiduous was He in these divine courtesies that He actually exposed His good name to the malignant gossip of Scribes and Pharisees who could not understand. His religion was to be eminently a social religion; and those who had known Him most intimately in the flesh felt that the Eucharistic Act of Worship which He had taught them to perform as a *Memorial of*

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His Death could not be more meetly observed than as part of a love-banquet to which all His followers were bidden. The seal of baptism became the earthly half of the tessera, by which the true believer was ever to be known; and the altar-stone was to be the Table at which he was henceforth to be joined in fellowship with all those who were one in Christ.

And if the Mass is destined to become, for mankind at large, the divine Antepast, which yet contains the Substance and the Sweetness of the Banquet at which all the elect are invited to sit down in heaven, may we not believe that each private family-meal of the devout Catholic is intended likewise to take on a semi-sacramental character? Ought it not to be a kind of type and symbol of the Eucharist? Should it not be shared in a sincere spirit of brotherhood with those whom ties of kindred, or the acknowledged charities of relationship, or the general urbanities of civilized life, have drawn to the same board? Christ Our Lord did not come to be a Light and a Pattern to the inward man only. He instituted His Church in order to sanctify the entire round of human existence. No element of life is without its special unction. The multiplied benedictions of the later *Rituale Romanum* already exist in germ in the pages of the New Testament in which we are exhorted to *bring every creature into captivity to Christ*. Is it straining a text too far to insist that when St. Peter bids us be *lovers of brotherhood, courteous, hospitable*, and the rest, he is

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only pleading for a place for Christ Our Lord at the tables of the Christian world? Hospitality fills a very large space in modern society; is it foolish, then, to invite Christ, the true Wine-Giver, to be the Master of our feasts? The practice of entertainment is not generally associated with sound religion; and yet the Church has attempted from the beginning to lay a blessing rather than a ban on all such distinctly human joys. The essential saneness of Catholicism, which has never tolerated extreme views on either side of Our Lord's golden mean, is in few things more apparent than in her attitude toward the feast days of her religious families. It is there that we see her true mind on such problems. She blesses these discreet relaxations of the spirit with the same large-heartedness that characterized her Head and Master when He sat as a willing guest at the tables of the great. Churlishness is no part of Christian duty; and if our hospitalities were administered in Our Lord's name and for His sake—*as gifts of His right hand*, as one of the oldest of our Latin formulas for "Grace before Meat" puts it—life would gain enormously in comeliness; and the scandalous and wasteful parade that marks so much of the feasting of certain well-to-do Catholics would disappear altogether.

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CLXXIII

NEGATIVE ACCEPTANCE

And Jehu said: It is the word of the Lord:

How shall we understand an utterance like Jehu's? To pretend that no difficulty is created in the choice of such a man to safeguard the destiny of Israel is to run counter to all that is revealed of the divine character in other books of Holy Writ. He is a usurper, a deceiver, and a man of blood. He slays his own king by an act of treachery, and yet poses as the minister of Jehovah. Even if we look upon him as the instrument of the divine vengeance in the shocking treatment which he deals out to Jezabel, we shall never be able to approve of his conduct in the slaughter of the seventy young princes of Achab's harem, or in the treatment he accords to the kinsmen of Ochozias, or again in the dissimulation he employs to accomplish the wholesale butchery of the followers of Baal in the great temple in Samaria. There is a ruthless combination of frankness and cunning in the man from which the modern spirit turns away in horror and disgust. No doubt it was necessary to root out the impure cult of the Phœnicians from the confines of Israel; but surely this champion of the Lord gives few proofs of his "election" beyond the promptness with which he commends himself to those who would re-

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store the ancient worship. And yet when we have made all these protestations, it will still be possible to see the Divine Hand in the confusing welter of events. God does not force our wills. He brings His own designs to pass whether we co-operate to the full or no. The whole history of His providence over Israel is but an intensely human commentary in illustration of that terrible law of His dealing with mankind in the mass. He seems to brood over races and types with a predilection that is just as unaccountable to our shallower wisdom as it is in the case of those rarer individuals whom He saves, one is almost tempted to say, in spite of themselves. It would be mere blasphemy to pretend that He approved of Jehu's pitiless ways. The man was useful to His servant Eliseus. He met, therefore, with a kind of negative acceptance in the dearth of more exemplary ministers. To affirm that the prophet himself or the better hearts in Israel acquiesced in Jehu's moral shortcomings is to misunderstand the significant reticence of the sacred chronicler, to say nothing of the explicit condemnation implied in the remark that *Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart*. He was one of the worst of self-seekers; and Israel was punished for his sins not less than for those of Achab. When the word of the Lord afterwards came to Osee it was accompanied by a threat of vengeance for the gratuitous cruelties committed at Jezrael. We may learn from all this not to suffer scandal at the anomalies of sacred history. God's law is not abrogated, nor are its eternal

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sanctions weakened, because those who are allowed to be the witnesses and instruments of His righteousness themselves fall short of His ideals in many things.

CLXXIV

JEZABEL'S OFFENCE

Who is that woman?

THE popular impression of Jezabel does not seem to be the deepest or the most significant one. On the strength of a verse in Scripture, which will bear quite another construction, she is commonly thought of as the shameless and unlovely original of the *painted woman*. When Jehu drew nigh to the palace she *put pigment of antimony on her eyes and tired her head and looked out of the window*, not to tempt him, but to defy him. With all her faults she was a woman of spirit; and she was resolved to show the usurper that she could die like a queen. *What peace can there be with a Zambri who slew his master?* she cries. Her character is one to excite fear rather than loathing; and it is impossible to avoid the inference that she is held up as a portent, not so much of lasciviousness, as of evil influence over the feeble-hearted. She is the Lady Macbeth of the Old Testament. St. John Chrysostom sees in her the counsellor of ill, "the originator of the whole wicked business of Naboth's murder," and as such was she con-

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demned to pay the more terrible penalty. Doubtless there was much in her conduct and in the impure rites of the worship she had introduced to lend color to the severe impeachment of her chastity that we find in the inspired narrative of her triumphs and her fall; but the master-deed for which she was tried and condemned by God through the mouth of His prophet was, that through her devices Achab had sold his conscience *to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord*. She was one of those characters of whom we meet many instances in history, and of whom even our own times are not without melancholy examples. She thought she could use God's people to accomplish her own political ends. She aimed at making an alliance in which the religion of Jehovah would tolerate the religion of the Tyrian Baal on a footing of equality. She stood for that spirit of compromise in principle, that easy condescension to the radical incontinence of human nature, of which these latter ages afford so many shameful illustrations. That is her true offence in Scripture; and for that was her body *given to the dogs*. Her memory was long kept alive in Israel; and when the early Christian Church was brought face to face with the irregularities which disturbed the peace of the first believers in Thyatira, the "prophetess" or priestess of the Chaldean Sibyl who seduced them, was denounced in terms that still read like an echo of the condemnation uttered eight centuries before against the Jezabel who had *stirred Achab to wickedness*.

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[The Sapiential Books, sc. Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus.]

CLXXV

·TIMOR REVERENTIALIS

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom:

THE fear which the inspired writer commends is an attitude of the soul ethically far removed from that superstitious dread with which the uninstructed too often confound it. Even in the common business of life we recognize an analogous distinction. There is a fear that ennobles, and there is a fear that proves one base. Do we not unwittingly insist upon the contrast when we confess that we fear those only whom we love? *Je ne crains que ceux que j'aime*, says a well-known French song; and the sentiment embodies a profound principle. It is that great love begets great awe; and religion and reverence go meetly together. In the very earliest annals of his race the Hebrew is unconsciously described for us as a religious man, chiefly because *he fears God*. In the dispute between Jacob and Laban over the stolen tera-

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phim Jacob swears by the *Fear*, that is—having regard to the Hebrew idiom—by the *Religion* of Isaac. Again, when the cairn and the pillar of testimony are set up, Israel once more seals his oath by a reference to his father's God: *And Jacob swore by the Fear of his father, Isaac.* When Moses binds his people to their corporate part in the divine covenant, and God on His side promises to send His Angel before them in the way, the Messenger of guidance is stated in so many words to be none other than that same august Presence that had accompanied Jacob when he went up to Bethel. As the *Terror of God* had been then upon the cities that were round about the sons of Jacob, so was the *Fear of God* to go before them now and destroy the hostile tribes to whom Israel should come. All through the after-history of this favored race, from David's time down to the captivity, there recurs again and again from priest and prophet the solemn warning that to fear Jehovah is *to refrain from evil and to worship Him*, and that religion will be pure and sound so long as it is rooted in that primary and most wholesome sense of awe.

CLXXVI

THE FOOL IN ISRAEL

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom:

RELIGION for the Hebrew is essentially an internal thing, and not chiefly a matter of forms and ceremo-

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nies, as is sometimes so confidently asserted. It is a habit of the soul, a force constantly stirring in the heart, and producing the temper that we call *God-fearing*. Yet it works outwardly and in a spirit of patriotic tribalism, too. If the heart should lose this inward awe; if it should dare to speak, even to itself in secret, the reckless word of defiance that there is no one beyond this visible show of things to fear, then should we have the unnamable treason that marks a man as disloyal to the one King Whom the race has sworn to follow. For we must always remember that the ideas of kinship and brotherhood, which were inextricably bound up with the beginning of Israel's worship remained with it down to the time of Our Lord's coming, and the *nabhal*, or impious one, —the "fool," as our Western versions call him,—*who says in his heart there is no God*, is, in reality, a disrupter of the Synagogue, and a rebel against the *Congregation*; he is a *son of Belial* who destroys the peace of the *assembly of the elect* upon whose interior steadfastness of faith the outer fabric of the nation's life of righteousness depends. Anarchy was as big a sin with Israel as it is with us. It was the extreme of folly to which a man, who was not utterly irresponsible, could go. What wonder, then, that wisdom, or the sense of the true relations of men and things, should be looked upon as taking its start in the habit of religious fear that made consistent lawlessness impossible?

CLXXVII

THE WISE MAN IN ISRAEL

The beginning of Wisdom:

THE etymological instinct is not always a safe guide in deciding problems of conduct; for etymology is fixed, and problems of conduct vary with varying circumstances; yet it tells us something about a word that one meets quite as often in sacred as in profane literature. The word of the inspired text in the Hebrew original is not an easy one to parallel by expressions taken from western modes of thought, which are never quite as religious, and seldom as mystical, as those of the east. *Hokmah* may mean the power of judgment; but it connotes just as inevitably and primarily the gift of insight into that sort of upright dealing that fortifies the conscience and wins us the favor of God. The translators of the Septuagint rendered it by *Σοφία*, and in the Vulgate we find its equivalent given as *Sapientia*. Yet *Σοφία* is a word of ethical rather than of religious color; and *Sapientia* in its more classical usage hardly suggests anything more than the Greek synonym. The quality itself is one that man loves to talk about. In its wider acceptance it stands for an inspiring combination of the highest moral qualities along with the better intellectual gifts. Like all the greater human virtues, it is difficult to isolate, even in intention; and if we at-

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tempt to describe it in outer action we shall find ourselves employing terms that belong to a score of diverse moral excellences. One of the greatest of the Greek philosophers looked upon it as the culmination of every noble gift of mind and heart.

It purges the soul from error; it effects her conversion from darkness to light; it enables her to behold *pure being*; it is not a matter of habit, but the gift of God of Whom it is the peculiar attribute and prerogative.

And as Plato attempted to define it, so has the better intellect of the western world understood it since his day. It is recognized as the most priceless prerogative in a ruler, the true majesty of kings and governors, and the root of all steadfastness and progress in their people; it is the flower of the youthful heart, the well-head of reverence that keeps the growing life fresh and pure and strong; it is the glory of woman and the safe-guard of her chastity; the secret of the good man's pre-eminence above his fellows; the staff of middle years and the crown of old age in whatever sex it makes its life-long habitation. It is a thing to labor for early and late; and, so highly do we prize it, that the affectation of its possession is in reality responsible for half the conceit to which mankind is prone from its cradle up. With the early Mediterranean folk it was a kind of subtle power of discrimination, a sort of sixth sense which enabled them to appraise, as by a spiritual palate, the true savor of things; with the northern Teutonic races it was accounted

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a more spiritual grace, a gift shared in by old men, by seers, and bards and prophets, and those who had the habit of insight into the values and distinctions that escape ordinary mortals. With the Hebrew it was all this and more; but antecedently to it, and perhaps as explaining it in a measure, it was *a sense of God* and of God's unassailable rights in the world of men. Was it not an obvious reflection, then, to remind Israel that its roots were twined about that consciousness of divinity that marked his children off from the rest of mankind?

CLXXVIII

RELIGION IN ISRAEL

The sense of God:

WHAT is it that makes religion, as authentic Catholicism conceives it, such an ever-present irritation to the lukewarm and such a robust joy and source of courage to the devout? Is it not this abiding claim to keep God forever in the foreground of the mind? Once a Catholic always a Catholic! We bear the seal of our baptism ineradicably; we may try to forget our faith and the lessons of our infancy; but the sense of God's rights is there; the root of the Wisdom He bestowed upon us as a Gift in Christ; and oh, the hunger and the unrest, and the folly it will drive us to, unless we allow it to burgeon and flower as He wills. The Sapiential Books of the Vul-

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gate are a veritable storehouse of thoughts for self-examination. They contain practical lessons that bear significantly on many of the problems of our complex, latter-day life.

CLXXIX

AN OLD TEXT AND ITS MODERN PURPORT

Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity:

PROBABLY no other text in the Old Testament has appealed so powerfully to a certain order of temperament in the modern world as the one put into the mouth of the cultivated Ecclesiast who describes himself as having been *King over Jerusalem*. Other ages have appreciated its truth; and some of them have, it must be admitted, distorted its real significance; but it is to our own times that we must look for the readiest response to whatever dissatisfaction with life lurks beneath the pathetic Oriental metaphor of one who called himself, paradoxically, *the Great or Ideal Preacher*. Questions of authorship need not detain us now. It is enough to know that the book in which it is found has been accepted by the Church as part of the inspired message of Scripture; and the practical thing for a twentieth-century Catholic is to ask himself what meaning it can have in his everyday existence. Is life altogether the illusory thing these words would seem to show? Has it no solidity? Is there *no*

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sure standing for the soul that ventures upon its treacherous surface? Whether we view the results of human effort in the mass, or confine our attention to the sincerity displayed in much individual energy, we shall be forced to the conclusion that some things are not vanity, and that the *powers of this world* have dissolved not a few pearls of price in the wine wherewith some of us seek to allay the thirst that the spectacle of Vanity Fair always excites in us. However much we may affect to depreciate them there are many successes to which the children of this world may point with assurance; and if we search our own hearts we shall be ready to confess that the results were in proportion to the difficulty of the achievement. There are the triumphs of scientific skill, the discoveries based on the new sense of elemental forces in chemistry and electricity that have enabled us to put a human girdle round the earth; there are the distinct advances made toward a wiser and more unselfish civism born out of a study of economic laws that our forefathers were wont to ignore; there is better, because more responsible, government for all classes and conditions of men; there is a keener desire to know, and a readier disposition to place the results of knowledge at the service of man, than was ever before experienced in the history of the race. Surely these things have not been *vainly conceived*; and so far as we are able to lay our finger upon them in the concrete, they beget no feeling of futility and none of that vexation of spirit to the existence of which the Ec-

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clesiast testifies. How, then, shall we adjust ourselves to these changed conditions of life and yet bear loyal and intelligent witness that all finite things are still empty, and that none of them can satisfy the heart of man?

We must distinguish between the individual and the race; between the solitary member of Christ's spiritual kingdom and the great mystical body which is His Church in this world. It is to her ultimate well-being, after all, that these apparently unrelated progresses most contribute. The visible and hierarchical organization, which we style the great Church militant and Catholic, was founded in its tangible aspect for this earth. Its invisible and spiritual life, made up of many living units, energetic and ever growing souls, each with a particular destiny to be apprehended by the conscience as its own divine "call," is intended for the after-world where Our Lord reigns supreme and where *God is all in all*. If we fix our attention too absorbingly on the present stage of progress as contrasted with the past, many things become satisfying which are really vain and of small account; but if we turn our eyes to where our goal is centred in the divine purpose of the Church Triumphant, then all things acquire their true value, and we are ready enough to leave them behind as mere *vanity, and the very vanity of vanities*.

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CLXXX

“NON PLUS SAPERE”

All things are perplexing: man can not unravel them by speech:

It is only shallow minds that are without difficulties. The heart that has no capacity for wonder will never make a good believer, and religion will hardly take root there. Even in the case of mere human learning we mistrust the intellect that claims to know all there is to be known about a thing. Your wise man is ever humble and thinks of ascertained knowledge as but a ground line and a bit of color to map out the boundaries of his explored ignorance. How much truer, then, is the same law of appraisal found to be when we come to discuss the mysteries of faith. We must ever remember, that, however succinct and definite the cycle of revealed dogmas may be as we have them in Scripture and Catholic Tradition, the full sense of them has not yet been exhausted by the Church on earth. Fathers and Christian philosophers, saints and theologians may tell us not a little. If we are wise we shall store our minds with their devout speculations. We can never know too much about our Catholic faith; but let us be wisely on our guard against being puffed up. There is a pride of imaginary knowledge in the mysteries of heaven, just as there is a pride of imaginary knowledge in the mysteries

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of earth. If this latter sort of vanity acts as a real barrier to progress, how can we hope to fare better if we allow our hearts to be inflated by the former? There is more science in St. John's Gospel, more certainty in a single pronouncement of the Church, than in all the pages of the theologians. This thought ought not to deter one from study; but it ought to save the disputatious from the folly of endeavoring to *unravel all things by the futilities of speech.*

CLXXXI

HEDONISM IN RELIGION

And whatsoever mine eyes desired, I did not deny them:

It is not good to have all one's wishes gratified. It does not need the solemn lessons of the Bible to drive a wholesome truth like this home to the heart of a wise man; it is taught us every day by the excesses of the modern world in which we live. Few things lower the moral tone in one more inexorably than the habit of self-indulgence. Most of us are willing to admit that in the case of the coarser gratifications; because they write the story of their havoc across the face of the fool who has immersed his heart in them; but the law is just as rigorously true in the case of the good things that are justly held in better repute. There are students who give unrestrained indulgence to their appe-

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tite for barren knowledge; spiritual Sybarites who spend themselves on others for the secret self-laudation they find in the consciousness of doing good. Better exceed in these directions than in lower pathways; but the man who has learned the Wisdom, which is Christ, will regulate all the desires of his heart by the Love which is Christ also.

CLXXXII

ON NAMES AND VALUES

Better is a good name than unguents of price:

EVERY child of the Church knows that the only good repute worth having is the good repute he acquires *in Christ* and before his fellows in the kingdom of Heaven. It is that his name is written there in the *Book of Life*, the great bede-roll of the elect; and yet how foolish, not to say contemptible, are the poor transparent devices that so many of us resort to in order to acquire repute of another kind! We wish to be known as “philanthropists,” forsooth, or as “patrons of education,” we aspire to be leaders of form and to move in the sets that are supposed to issue the laws of mode. And so we suffer ourselves, we who might be *clothed in scarlet* as becomes *princes who sit at the king’s table*,—we suffer ourselves to become in all things like the Egyptians and the Assyrians, among whom we delight to be enrolled. Oh, we do not see how ridiculous we make ourselves

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in the sight of our supposed betters to whom we thus prostitute our good Catholic name. We are lovers of the precious unguents of Babylon, and we fail of our reward, both in this life and in the life to come. There is nothing so vulgar, nor, to the clear-seeing eye of faith, so terrible as the position of those ill-instructed devotees of fashion, who aspire to make Catholicism respectable by wearing its mere outer badges before the children of Baal, while their hearts are slowly debauched by the uncleanness to which they are compelled to give a kind of tolerance as the price of their admission to the gilded House of Mammon; which, in too many instances, alas, is the House of Moloch, as well.

CLXXXIII

THE MOOD OF THE TRIALIST

He is found by them who do not make trial of Him:

THERE are many ways of reaching God. The reason may discover Him; the heart may feel Him; history is eloquent in the testimony it brings as to His concern for the sons of men; and yet one finds many an atheist in the world. What are we to say to this? Shall we accuse such men of dishonesty? Our forefathers were wont to be outspoken on the point; but the instinct of this later age disposes us to be more charitable. Atheist is a hard word, and we shrink from using it. The writer

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of the Book of Wisdom hints at the existence of a curious psychological law, of which many a priest has pathetic experience in his dealings with souls. He reminds us that all speculation about God must be accompanied by an original sweetness of temper. *We must look for the Lord in simplicity and directness of heart. Sentite de Domino in bonitate*, he says, *et in simplicitate cordis quaerite illum*. It is an austere, and perhaps, on the whole, an unwise philosophy that enjoins us to take no account of moods when grappling with the great problems of thought. These things go deeper and reach further than many of us suppose. Have we not evidence of the fact in the ordinary business of life? Accident, environment, and the bias of early education have a great deal to do with the shaping of such opinions as do not run counter to our own interests; but where the issues are more vital and personal the dominance of emotion is felt. Mood enters in and cheats or supports the reason by the subtle influence it can exert over the will. That is what the inspired writer seems to mean. He warns us against unwisdom, against the impiety of beginning the search for God in a self-opinionated way. Prejudgment is always a sign of folly in human problems; but when Divinity Itself, or some particular aspect of It is in question, the folly becomes mere lawlessness of conscience, and issues in that sham form of thinking which is characterized by Scripture as *perverse*. These are the thoughts that separate one from God. *Perversae enim cogitationes separant a Deo*. There are men whose attitude in this

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matter can be described by no other phrase than that employed by the Hebrew teacher, half in irony and half in pity; they *tempt God*; they lay down conditions for Him; they presume to put Him, as they imagine, to the test. They say: If God would only work some clear and unequivocal sign, I would believe in Him. And then they proceed to fix the barriers within which omnipotence must move. Some years ago a scientist of repute challenged his opponents in a religious controversy to a trial of this sort. He dared them to erect what he derisively called a "prayer-ward" in a London hospital. If better results should be attained by such a plan than by the ordinary resources of modern scientific skill, he would become a Christian, forsooth! Here in our own country, a few years later, a popular lecturer, with scanty claims to intellectual notice, but with a charm of speech that the half-educated mistook for serious argument, dared to stand one evening upon a public platform, with a watch in his hand, arrogantly defying the God Who was supposed to punish open blasphemy with a swift and condign punishment. He would give this avenging Deity so many minutes to strike him dead. The hands of the watch moved on, and the audience waited breathlessly. The man was not struck dead; and, of course, the latter-day Scriptural fools who thought an exhibition of that kind impressive were more than ever convinced that the unknown Being who shirked so simple and so traditional a test could not possibly exist. What **was** that but to tempt God, to make trial of Him, to demand,

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in fine, that He should meet the expectations of the little minds who thought to discover Him by the makeshifts of their own devising? Not so is God found out. When Our Blessed Lord stood before Herod we are told that the King was glad, because, for a long time previously, *he had hoped to see a sign*. The sign was not worked. Was Christ careless of Herod's salvation? No; but the more obvious answer is that Herod himself was not looking to be saved. Salvation, like the faith that brings it, is a thing of the heart and not of the inquisitive mind.

But atheists, honest or insincere, are not the only "trialists," as they may be called, who fail to find God. Good people often tempt Him, too. There are Catholics who will make conditional promises, as though they would bind the Almighty to a bargain in which they themselves shall reap all the profit. They engage themselves to certain courses of conduct, pledge themselves to certain difficult forms of devotion, watching eagerly the while whether God give tokens of a readiness to close with them or no. Sometimes it happens that chance or the play of perfectly natural causes of which they have no cognizance will bring their desire to pass, and they will look upon themselves in consequence as special objects of the divine bountifulness. They will preach the peculiar form of prayer or the devout practices which they imagine have won them favor, and become, for a while, very good apostles in their way. But let their hopes be dashed, and what becomes of their "religion"?

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They will nourish a secret resentfulness in their hearts; they will gradually abandon their devotions; they will permit themselves to speak slightly of "novenas" and the like. And so it turns out that whatever piety they possessed is found to be mere selfishness and disguised fetichism. They have not loved and served God for His own high sake. They have sought Him rather for His gifts; they have presumed *to make trial of Him, tempted Him*, in a word; and they have met with their reward. That particular manifestation of His goodness, that devout and personal experience of Him, which they might have acquired had they gone their way trustfully, solitary and alone, is withheld. Sound religion impels us to an unreserved obedience. There are no half acceptances with God. The most terrible punishment He can inflict upon us in many cases is to repay us in kind. *With the froward He will be froward*, it is written. Devotions of any approved pattern are good; and prayer is the one wise practice that the sincere Catholic will never forego, however distressing his occasional lapses from perfection may be. But deep down in his heart there will always be this rooted conviction of God's absoluteness in all things; and complete resignation to His adorable Will is the noblest as well as the more difficult duty of true religion. *Thy Will be done!*

CLXXXIV

"SCIENTIA SUBEST"

Foolish are all those men in whom there is no knowledge of God:

ST. PAUL speaks in condemnatory terms of those pagans who ignored the evidences of Deity that might be gathered from a study of the physical world. They were inexcusable, he said; because their evil ways had blinded them to τὸ γνωστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, or *that which could be known of God*, had they but cleared the eyes of the soul of the unnatural lusts that blinded them. It has ever been the belief of the Christian Church that God can be found if only He be sought in the right spirit. The fathers of the Vatican Council bore explicit testimony to this persuasion of Christendom, when, in condemnation of certain tendencies in the Catholic schools of their time, they anathematized the pretension that the divine existence could never be made clear by logical argument. The vestiges of God's presence are plain upon the face of the material universe; plain upon the face of the soul, some would add; for conscience is still His most austere witness. Those who strive to keep it habitually clean will never be far off from Him at any time. *Scientia subest!* The sense of His nearness lurks there like the cloud of His Presence in the inner place

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of Israel's temple. If we serve Him as the elect of that chosen race served Him throughout its history, the cloud will at last grow clear, and we shall discern the lineaments of Christ. If you have friends or acquaintances who come to you in the guise of inquirers about the claims of the Church, urge them discreetly to be more careful of the pronouncements of the conscience than of the specious reasonings of the mind. Salvation comes by that path and by no other. *Subest!* It is there, waiting unsuspected for the encouragement of a *good will*,—that is, of an upright will—to enable it to be born.

CLXXXV

ALPHA AND OMEGA

The Fountain of Wisdom is the Word of God on high:

JESUS BEN SIRACH, the author of the Book of Ecclesiasticus, reminds us that there is nothing so bracing to the religious understanding, or so fortifying to the heart, as the assiduous thought of those great truths out of which all healthy devotion takes its rise. There is much in his point of view that suggests the atmosphere of a cultivated and literary age having points of resemblance to our own. His very phraseology, coming down to us, as it does, through the sacred medium of an almost inspired translation, has colored the speculations of fathers, and schoolmen, and Catholic

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apologists for well-nigh sixteen hundred years; and it has served, in addition, to enrich the vocabulary of the untrained, but orthodox, mind with words and turns of expression of which they could hardly disfurnish themselves without doing violence to their creed. No scholar would pretend, of course, that the dogmas which we are accustomed to associate with these inherited formularies were even remotely apprehended as distinct mysteries by the original writer. Like many another inspired teacher, he delivered his message under the impulse of the Holy Ghost without a clear perception of its wonderful significance to a holier and more illuminated *Assembly of the Saints* than even his Israel could know. The words remain, and their original content remains: we shall take few permitted liberties with the text in which they are imbedded, if we venture to read them, as the Church surely wishes us to do, in their larger application. *The Fountain of Wisdom*, we are told, is none other than *the Word of God on high*. Its source is that only begotten Son Whom we have known as Christ, the Father's Increate Image to Whose likeness we are in turn conformed in virtue of the grace that wins us His favor and brings us His divine indwelling. *All things were made through Him*, says that proem to St. John's Gospel which we read at the close of Mass daily—*all things were made through Him, and without Him was made no created thing at all*. If there are vestiges of reason upon the face of things, evidences of an ordering purpose, an inevitable advance onward and upward from

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what is more removed to what is nearer and closer to Godhead, more spiritual and more divine, if there are traces of wisdom anywhere in this visible creation to excite our wonder, it is because *with Him is the fountain-head of it all.*

The world of matter and force, the world of thought and sanctification, earth and heaven with their elect souls, are full of Him Whose one business, whether as God or Man, whether as Philip's Teacher or Mary's baffling Son, is still *to show us the Father*, and in that theophany to dispel the dark in which we are otherwise condemned to move. We are mere blunderers and fools, fated to grope aimlessly to a second death, unless we find Him. *Apud Te fons vitae!* With Him, indeed, is the well-spring of Life; and *in His Light shall the blindest of us see light at last!* For what does Catholic tradition tell us of this *Word of God on high?* He is the Second Person of the adorable Trinity, the Father's first and fullest Expression of Divinity. Through Him is the ineffable Will made known which constitutes our peace. It was revealed to us when He became flesh and taught us that *the way to Wisdom was through obedience*—obedience to His law as written clearly upon the old creation, as written more clearly still and with added grace upon the new creation to be found in the heart that had accepted Him unreservedly through His Bride and Witness, the inerrant Church. In this latter sense His in-comings into the world of His redemption are renewed every day, and

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they bring with them the commandments that are from of old. *Fons sapientiae Verbum Dei in excelsis, et ingressus illius mandata æterna.* When His Wisdom becomes part of us after years of effort, we understand how those multitudinous precepts, which we sum up vaguely as the duties of our holy religion, are in reality but so many phases of His eternal Will. They are love in action, one and manifold in their tireless variety, unchangeable as Himself in purpose, yet new as the commandment which He enjoins upon us as the sweetest and wisest epitome of Himself. Catholicism is not hard to understand; the enactments of ecclesiastical authority are not hard to understand; if we first make it our business to live them. *This is the Wisdom that crieth aloud in the streets; its entrances into the heart bring us into touch with eternities: its commandments are the myriad voices of Love.*

CLXXXVI

A MOOD OF FAITH

Among the treasures of Wisdom are understanding and a knowledge that is reverent-minded:

BETWEEN the shrewdness of this world and the wisdom of Christ a great gulf is fixed. The two have little in common but the name; in all things else, in intention, in ethical quality, in results, they differ irreconcilably; and none but a Laodicean would endeavor to fuse them

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in the crucible of the heart. The shrewdness of this world may wear a mask of disinterestedness, wear it bravely and inspiringly through years of effort, but its leering ego will be found grinning behind it on the day of the last dread apocalypse when every man's work will be tried so as by fire. The wisdom of Christ, on the other hand, is known always by this mark, that it has no personal triumphs to score; it never looks to itself. It is keen-eyed for Our Lord or for His Church. On all other matters it is disconcertingly blind. It realizes the worth of poverty, of weakness, of suffering, of misprision endured for its Master's sake; it *understands*, in a word, and passes on where mere worldly shrewdness *walks in a vain shadow and disquiets itself in vain*. It must be so; for the goals of the two are as far apart as the finite self and God. Nor is this all. Secular shrewdness is opposed to Christian wisdom in the very quality of its moral fibre. We rightly admire the "good men," as they are called, of cultivated heathendom. As a class they have not ceased utterly from the face of the earth. Our own time has furnished abundant instances of them. Are we not asked every now and then to contemplate the shining examples of integrity, of purity of motive, of cleanness and sobriety of living, of humaneness and love of their kind, which mere "naturalism" as a philosophic creed is able to produce? And is not the hint often delicately conveyed that our Christian Saints are poor creatures in comparison? It is not necessary to vilify what is

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naturally noble and of good repute in order to defend the claims of Christ to be the best of character-builders. Grant that these virtuous ethnicists are all they are affirmed to be; do they not fall short of the heroic standards of the "Beatitudes"? The world may admire them; but has its admiration ever turned involuntarily to worship? Judge them by their works, by their influence upon their kind; will they show us finer moral achievement, more enduring steadfastness, more persistent robustness of will, more inspiration, more of the quality that edifies, that builds up character, and the things that make up character in others, than the saints do? Are faith, hope, stability, energy, truthfulness, sincerity, and an unrestricted love of their fellows as prolific an incentive in their case, as they are admitted to be in those other types that have elected to ground their manliness on the rock of the living Christ? How is a candid man to explain the divergence? Is it not due to radical differences of outlook, to opposed standards of judgment, to an essential contrariety of *understanding*? Their minds move in almost utterly unrelated planes, and they seldom cross. The *understanding* of the one is not as the *understanding* of the other. *The wisdom which is from above* is beyond the ken of the wisdom which is from below. And as it is with the *understanding*, which is not the least of the treasures that wisdom always brings, so it is with the *knowledge* which is one of the dearest of those added endowments. The wisdom *which is chaste* is also reverent-minded—perhaps *rever-*

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ent-minded because chaste. This is a large subject and one not easy to treat in a popular essay. Let those who are learned in the wisdom of profane letters say how far it may carry one. For the present it is enough to remark that faith and sanctity have their psychology just as surely as opinion and merely natural character have; and it tells us of the curious inter-play of vitality which exists between purity of heart and robust belief. There are some intuitions that are possible only to chastity. There are certain phases of Catholicism that only the *clean of heart* can adequately grasp. Recall what the Apostle says about the *natural man*. In this sense there is a true *disciplina arcani* still at work in the Church, and it is only the *reverent-minded* who realize how discreetly it should be unveiled. There are many things of which we shall always be poor apologists until we shall have first grappled with them in our own consciences. Evangelical poverty, virginity, chastity, love of Gospel-rule, obedience to the overseers of our souls and to the least enactments of the Universal Church—these are but some of those esoteric doctrines of Catholicism that the many within the pale of orthodoxy and without can never hope to understand until they shall have acquired that knowledge which springs only from essential nobility of heart, and which the Holy Ghost describes as *reverent-mindedness*. *In thesauris sapientiae intellectus et scientiae religiositas!*

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[Job, Tobias, Judith, Esther.]

CLXXXVII

THE PROBLEMS OF THE MAN OF HUS

And that man was simple, and upright, and fearing God, and avoiding evil:

THE Book of Job deals frankly—we might almost say, exclusively—with a problem which has exercised the religious conscience in every age. How are we to behave in the presence of those forces which seem to reveal Nature, or the Power behind Nature, as careless or cruel? Are the laws of the physical universe harnessed in some mysterious way to that unseen world of which the Incarnation is the central fact? So do the speculations of this comforting book seem to run, and the answer implied throughout does not differ substantially from that given by Our Lord. *Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents!* On the one hand, it is true to say that God does punish evildoers even in this life; on the other, it is equally true that not all misfortune is evidence of the divine vengeance. Meanwhile, we are

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bound to practice hope and patience; and we are exhorted by the parable of Job's example to cultivate above all things the habit of faith which manifests itself in serenity, or quietness of mind. Though the heavens fall, still must we be steadfast. It is a hard doctrine, but it is a bracing one. It makes men.

But there are other lessons to be learned from the story of the *Man of Hus*, and they are hardly less practical than this primary one of belief in the divine goodness and bravery under trial. Job is described as *simple and upright, as fearing God and avoiding evil*. It is not easy to fix his race and nationality, though scholars have attempted it. One thing, however, seems clear from the curious reticence of the narrative. The man is no son of Israel, save in that larger sense hinted at afterward by St. Paul, that all those who *walk by faith are children of Abraham*. Job's religion contains just those essential elements of service which mark the true believer wherever we find him. It is a lamp in darkness; and it enables its possessor to move forward to the larger day. He is obedient to the light. In that light he sees the underived Light; *In lumine tuo videbimus Lumen*; he feels the *nearness of God* which is the soul of all supernaturalism. Job is something more than a virtuous pagan. He is a servant of God. *Hast thou considered my servant, Job?* The point to remember in all this is, that this child of the alien secures the marks of the divine predilection, not because he ignores, or is

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ignored by, those who sit in the seat of Moses, as has sometimes been maintained, but because *he has done what he could*. *Facienti quod in se est Deus non denegat gratiam*—that is how Catholicism has always formulated the mysterious law of the distribution of grace. Doubtless that is not a final account of the matter; but it is a true one, as far as it goes; and in our dealings with others who seem to live conscientiously without the visible pale of orthodoxy, we must never lose sight of the promise of mercy it entails. An attitude of that sort will save us from much unnecessary bewilderment of soul. It will keep us also from foolish and unprofitable speculation, and stimulate us to prize more than we do the inestimable grace of recognized fellowship with the outer and visible Church. She is the centre of things, the centre of actual history, just as her Master and Founder is the Light that gives to all the dark occurrences of time their ultimate meaning. All souls are called to sit at her table; but not all of them are enabled to come, even when they are unmistakably “elect” as Job was. Yet they are not unprovided for. The sphere of God’s “uncovenanted mercies” is infinitely wider than the charted sky that we know as the indefectible Church. Indeed, the Church herself has her invisible side, corresponding in every way to the mercies of which we speak. In that divine shadow millions are ministered to, really become her children, in fact, though we shall not share in the joy of their membership, until we sit down with them in Our Father’s house in heaven.

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CLXXXVIII

A RARE TYPE

There is none like him in the earth:

THAT saying would seem to imply that Job's type is a singularly rare one—rare, not in so far as he belongs to the “uncovenanted Israel,” but rather in so far as his religion seems to be whole-hearted and complete. The best of men have their reserves with God, their little *rapines in the holocaust*. They avoid evil, it is true; they fear the Lord; they may even be upright; but they are not *simple in their service*, as Job was. The word used in the Hebrew text seems to point to something unique. Job is described as *perfect*. He was what might be called in familiar parlance “an all-round man” in his conscientiousness. He fulfilled in the supernatural order, and for his own environment in the world, a place analogous to that of the ideal man portrayed by Aristotle. His was no three-cornered character; he stood four-square; and on every side, Satan, the great searcher of men, found him unassailable and complete.

CLXXXIX

THE UBIQUITY OF TEMPTATION

I have gone round about the earth and walked through it:

THE Satan who is represented as moving in and out among the Sons of God is none other, it would seem, than the Prince of Darkness—the Destroyer of Souls, the Enemy of Human Nature, as St. Ignatius of Loyola calls him. *He goes round about the earth and walks through it.* No class or condition of men escapes him. Temptation will meet us everywhere, not merely because we can never escape from ourselves, but because we can never escape from the devil. The world is his field. He knows every nook and corner of it. The holier it is the more familiar it becomes to him. He plies his trade in the cloister just as busily and as craftily as along the crowded thoroughfares of men. There are souls who grow faint-hearted when they think of these things. The idea of religious seclusion seems to them to become a bitter mockery, if it must be confessed that evil which is Satan-sown thrives even in convent gardens. But such characters need to remember that the devil's power is never at any time wholly unrestrained; and since the Incarnation has been realized it may be said to be almost visibly weakened. It is terrible enough, however, even as it is; and, if we are wise, we shall draw daily

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upon the sacrament of our confirmation for strength to meet his attacks. Confirmation like baptism imprints a character upon the soul and lifts us to a newer and higher state. It is a sacrament which is always with us operatively when needed, if we are only free from grievous sin. For the hundred who are taught to be "devout to their baptism," as it is called, not ten are trained to think as sustainingly of their confirmation. Why should this be so?

CXC

THE INSCRUTABLE GOD

If He should come to me, I should see Him not:

INSENSIBILITY to the divine visitations is not always the result of sin. It may be intended as an instrument of trial; or again it may be part of a larger economy than we have means of estimating in our present state. Job's testimony to God's unsearchableness, even with regard to the just, is corroborated by innumerable passages of Holy Writ, and especially by Our Lord's treatment of His friends during the mysterious manifestations of the Forty Days' sojourn before His final return to the bosom of His Father. St. Paul, too, is another witness. The moment we begin the work of our sanctification we have to do with a hidden God Who adjusts His own times and seasons without reference, it would seem, to our imagined need of them. That is a

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great truth in the spiritual life; and it is not necessarily a discouraging one. Until we realize it in our own inner selves, we shall never acquire fortitude in the divine service, or persistence in well doing.

CXCI

A FORM OF FOOLISH SPEECH

My lips shall not speak wickedness, nor my tongue utter deceit:

THE wickedness against which Job pledges himself is the unbelief implied in accepting the narrow theories of his accusers. It is in no spirit of self-righteousness that he declares his resolution. Evils of the worst possible kind had befallen him, but he still refuses to admit, either that God is not good, or that the misfortune has other than a beneficent purpose; impossible though it be for a candid mind to see it. Job is pledged to uphold God's defence of him. He will not yield to neighborly clamor. In this he is a pattern to many who fail under trials much lighter than his. There is a kind of unbelief into which your commonplace Christian is prone to fall. It may be called provisional or tentative unbelief. The sky looks so dark; so many of one's religious principles are found to be apparently untrustworthy; they are all but proved false. The soul in its dismay, and in the anger of its little overthrow, begins to ask itself whether,

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after all, the world is not right. God, if He dwell behind the cloud at all, does not seem to care. If the world's theory may be justified, what then? That is how a certain class of half-educated souls sometimes permit themselves to argue in secret. Then they grow afraid. The old truths re-assert themselves; but meanwhile they feel themselves perceptibly weakened in faith, and they are full of an unavowed misgiving. The very ignorant seldom fall into these sins of the heart; neither do the well-instructed. It is that large, half-trained class who give themselves up unrestrainedly to discussing the mysteries upon which all election must ultimately rest—it is these, we say, who sin foolishly in this respect. *They permit their lips to speak wickedness and their tongues to utter deceit.*

CXCII

WISDOM AND SELF-EFFACEMENT

Where is wisdom found, and where is the place of understanding?

IT is the everlasting question which each age answers in the terms of its own philosophy. In Job's day there was evidently a widespread belief, to which he testifies in the words we are considering, that your wise man sets up before himself, as the main business of life, the getting of money. But money will not buy understanding, we are reminded, and the gold of Ophir cannot be

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weighed in the same scales with wisdom. God, Who knows absolutely and altogether, without hint of effort or possibility of increase, the partial truths that men gather painfully from experience in the pursuit of wealth, has told us where to search for it. *Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.* This tendency to identify a wise life with a good life, and an understanding heart with the heart of a saint, is characteristic of all that group of Old Testament writings which are known as the *Sapiential Books, Wisdom, or Hōkmāh*, and it finds one of its noblest expressions in this story of the man whom Satan considered and could not overthrow. We have already dwelt upon the thought. Might we not add now that there is a further reason for identifying one's sense of religion with wisdom in this, that the fear of the Lord is likewise the beginning of self-abasement, and so of humility, without which, as Our Lord avers in the parable of the Righteous Pharisee, religion tends to become a vain pretence, a mere mask of formalism and legal carefulness?

CXCIII

THE HIGHER CHASTITY

I entered into a covenant with mine eyes that I would not so much as think upon a maid:

HERE we have a clear premonition of that higher and more austere code of conduct which Our Lord pro-

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claimed as binding upon all of us, when He spoke of *the man who looks upon a woman to lust after her*. The adulteries of the heart are not less heinous in His eyes than the adulteries of one's outer members. Men of the world often reveal by their speech how lightly they account these sins of desire. Honor erects a barrier against the outward act; and such honor is good; it creates a "sensibility of principle" which is one of the firmest bulwarks of life; but of itself it is poor and weak compared with the keener sensitiveness begotten of the inner covenant that the heart of a good Catholic makes with his eyes and all his senses, that he may keep them *captive unto Christ*.

CXCIV

REVEALED UNTO OURSELVES

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind:

SELDOM does God speak so clearly to the soul as out of the whirlwind of trial. We speak of temptation as a fashioner of character. By its buffetings we are beaten into divine shape. But it is more accurate to speak of it as a revealer of character. In the stress of its searching we learn at last what we are. Such knowledge brings understanding in its train. It is the voice of God that instructs us. Even when we have not *girded our loins*, as Job did, even when we have failed to

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quit us like men, we can yet bring good out of evil. We can listen to the rebuke of conscience. It is the *Voice of the Lord out of the tempest*. Job is a better counsellor than Elihu. We do know God, and *we can understand the spreadings of His clouds and the noise of His tabernacle. Behold He spreadeth His light upon it and covereth the roots of the sea. For by them judgeth He the people; He giveth meat in abundance.* The wisdom that one acquires painfully after many falls, the self-knowledge and the self-control that come through many a sudden and unpremeditated yielding—these are the forerunners of His peace; they are as meat to the soul. *The Wind of His Spirit passeth and cleanseth us. Fair weather cometh out of the north: with God is terrible majesty.* It is good to pray to be delivered from temptation. *Lead us not into temptation*, we say, *but deliver us from evil.* But even so, when the evil has come, let us not lose heart, but pray then to understand that *with God is terrible majesty.* The sense of that majesty is the most wholesome and most manly of fears. *It is the beginning of wisdom.*

CXCV

THE TALE OF TOBIAS

The way of truth he forsook not:

THE Book of Tobias puts before us the story of an Israelite of the tribe of Nephthali who is faith-

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ful to his religion under very trying circumstances. Few narratives of Sacred Scripture seem to have been so popular among the Jews, as the number of extant versions shows; and few, it may be added, are so modern in spirit. To live up bravely to the austere requirements of one's creed when all one's fellow-believers are falling away, to shape one's conduct by conscience and the revealed law of God, and not by the easy-going interpretations of worldly compromise, to be generous in almsgiving and full of an unflinching piety toward the dead—such is the type of religion set up for imitation in the career of Tobias; and, surely, if we read the edifying tale in the right spirit we shall find it as pertinent to a latter-day Catholic as to a Jew of the Captivity. The Church is always at variance with the world; and she is always bearing witness against the world's wisdom. The most tolerant-minded among us, if we are to be perfectly sincere, therefore, must dwell, for the most part, in a sort of perpetual protest. We must pass our days among an *alien people*; we must live like men in exile. How few like to be reminded of that thought! The Book of Tobias is a good mirror in which to study ourselves. Take just those three notes in which the character of its hero is described for us, his plain old-fashioned loyalty to the Law of Moses with its accompanying delicacy of conscience, his devotion to his fellow-captives, his care of the dead, what a contrast they offer to the general worldliness of view in which so many believers of our time are content to live! We too have

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a Law—the Law of Christ—and if one tries to keep it without gloss or subterfuge, he will find himself out of touch with nearly everything that the age admires. Our politics are notoriously non-Christian, where they are not, as in France and so many other Latin countries, flagrantly anti-Christian. Our art is hardly of the kind to foster New Testament ideals of purity, and our literature is manifestly out of sympathy with all robust belief in the supernatural; the tone of our newspapers is deplorable, and the society of which it is a kind of subdued echo, more deplorable still. How is a Catholic to adjust himself to such an environment? Adjust himself and find a working code of morals, he must, if he is not to forfeit his right to be called a child of God. Too many, alas, give up the attempt and sacrifice their faith altogether. Some of them, indeed, patch up a dubious death-bed peace at the last; but there are thousands who meet the final crisis as they have lived in the heyday of their strength, apostates and renegades, *reaping as they have sown*. A still larger number try a middle course; and it is these who are mostly responsible for the curious front of inconsistency that our venerable religion must wear in the concrete to many a sincere student who observes it from without. They have gone into bondage to the Spirit of lukewarmness; and they wear the badge of his lieutenant, the *Angel of the Laodiceans*. They pretend to *serve God and Mammon*. They speak hopefully of their Father's House, but their hearts are tethered to Vanity Fair, and

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to the gilt gingerbread substitutes for the *Bread of Angels* to be bought there. They often go for years without fulfilling the Easter precept; and the duty of hearing Mass on Sundays and holydays is one that fashion and social considerations prompt them to keep rather than a decent regard for the Will of Christ, as manifested in the word of His Church. They ape the way of worldlings, acquire their unreal accent, learn their mode and their form. If they are reproached with infidelity to the Catholic cause they will look at their rebuker in pained surprise and recite an edifying list of their benefactions to orthodox charities. The truth is, their religion has never become part of them; they think they have mastered its personal problems, because they have learned to speak its formulas. If one were to explain their curious attitude in the psychological jargon of the day, he would account for it by saying that they had acquired two sets of habits, those that bespeak the comfortable worldling and those that suggest the ideals and hopes of one who realizes his baptism and has *hidden his life with Christ in God*. If there is one thing that needs to be insisted upon with souls like this, it is, that half-measure religion is often worse than no religion at all. We must be all Christ's. Every day at Prime the Church bids us pray to Our Lord God, *who is King, that is, Ruler, of heaven and earth, that our hearts and bodies, our thoughts, words and acts, may be guided by His law amid the works of His Commandments—corda et corpora nostra, sensus, sermones, et actus!* How com-

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plete an obedience that prayer aspires to! How absolutely it rebukes the miserable makeshift service that so many endeavor to substitute for it!

CXCVI

CONCERN FOR THE DEAD

He was wont to take the bodies of the slain and hide them in his house and bury them at midnight:

BECAUSE the religion of Tobias was so true and whole-hearted within, it was steadfastly unselfish without. He observed *the law of the dead*. He gave them decent burial. We, too, have our *law of the dead*. Are we careful to observe it? Does our piety toward the faithful departed smack of unadulterated Catholicism; or does it savor rather of vain show and mere family vanity? If we spend large sums on funeral trappings, if we aim at display in those last sad rites, if we make poor provision for Masses for the souls of those who had some claim upon us in life, our religion is so far a failure for which we shall one day be called to account. It is something more than a privilege to be allowed to make commemoration of the dead at the altars of the Church and to secure them a share in the suffrages of the Morning Sacrifice. It is a duty which, if not always of strict justice, is binding at any rate in charity. It is impossible to witness the funeral pro-

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cessions that wend their way daily into our cemeteries in this country without feeling that many Catholics are in danger of forgetting what is best and most comforting in their religion. Some are too selfish to make provision; others are too thoughtless; other some are too proud. They prefer to exert themselves in a display of sombre pomp rather than have recourse to intercessory prayer with its attendant obligation to greater purity of conscience. To give alms is not easy when the heart is sordid and narrow; and to make adequate provision for Masses seems wasteful and superstitious excess. What mean hearts there are in this world; and how deaf they can be when faith grows cold!

CXCVII

AIEN APIΣTETEIN

Speak not so. We are children of the Saints:

Noblesse oblige is good philosophy to act upon in purely mundane matters. Why should it be any the less inspiring when faith is in question? It is good always to remember a noble past. For certain types of soul it is the best pledge of the future. We smile in these levelling days at the pretensions of men and women who look for a more than ordinary share of the world's regard, because, forsooth, their forefathers were people of repute in their time. We insist, rightly enough, that

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one's proper manhood or womanhood should make a show of its own metal, and that character and virtue are the best titles to notice. That is quite true; but it is truer still that in religion descent ought to count for a great deal. It is one of the subtle spiritual forces operating in the *Communion of Saints*; though we do not fall back upon it to insist upon vain precedence. We remember it, however, as an incentive to high things, and as a constant and holy drag-weight to keep us from crooked paths. It is a great grace to be the child of God-fearing Catholic parents. The man who is proudly conscious of that privilege ought not to be rebuked for referring to it, if he makes an honest endeavor to live up to what it implies. There is a pride that saves. Tobias felt it. Every good Catholic who recalls his stock, whether of natural descent or spiritual ingrafting, is, unconsciously or not, of the same way of thinking. There are some courses we can never turn to, just because we are *children of the Saints and because Christ is the First Born among all our brotherhood.*

Sancta Superbia,
Hominem occupa!
Discat in quantas
Creatus sit spes.
Discat a corpore
Mentem discernere:
Animal, Anima
Duae sunt res.

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CXCVIII

JUDITH AND ESTHER

Thou hast given salvation through the hands of a woman:

IN the books of Judith and Esther we have two very dissimilar and yet inspiring types of womankind set before us for our imitation. In Judith we have the strong woman, who is more than the living embodiment of the traditions of Israel, a kind of later and more civilized Deborah, the forerunner of Our Lord's Mother in her victory over the foes of the people of God, the pattern in her fortitude of all that line of saintly maids and widows who have been the hope and mainstay of the Church in so many critical junctures of her history. In Esther, on the other hand, we have the foretype of success found faithful, the woman who uses her natural gifts in time of peace to save her race from injustice and overthrow. There is much in both stories which cannot fail to excite bewilderment, even if it does not raise a problem in ethics on which the modern Catholic conscience would instinctively refuse to admit that there were two debatable sides. We are not concerned with answering such difficulties here. It might be suggested in passing, however, that some of them would entirely disappear, if we could know more of the conditions of Oriental life amid which this pair of faithful souls were obliged to play their separate parts.

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CXCIX

A BRAVE WOMAN'S CITADEL

In the upper part of her house she had made herself a secret chamber:

JUDITH'S interior aloofness of character is one explanation of her bravery. She had nursed within her outer life an inner and more withdrawn existence. She did not give herself wholly to those about her. She dwelt alone and apart with God, seeking to renew her interrupted converse with her dead husband by being austere faithful to his memory, and by feeding her desolation on the better life of frequent communion with God. She might have returned to her father's people and looked for a fresh and honorable alliance; she might have used her great social position to fill a conspicuous place in the popular eye, as a kind of well-beloved lady bountiful; suitors she might have had in plenty; the sacred history implies as much; but she is true to one thought; she prefers to dwell with God and memory. Souls like hers acquire stature in secret. The world never knows how great they have become until a crisis reveals them in their true proportions. They may be accounted whimsical and self-centred; their reserve may be set down as mere pride; but God understands; and meanwhile their conscience bears testimony to its own steadfastness. They stand

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and wait. Only those who have lived such a life of secret expectancy through many years can realize how awful, if unneighborly and forbidding, is the joy that keeps them strong and pure. Just as there are two kinds of pride, the pride that betrays us as children of Lucifer, and the pride that reveals us as the sons of God, so are there two kinds of selfishness. There is a selfishness that is the root of all grossness; crafty, repellent, snakelike, cruel, the source of all deterioration, the poison clinging persuasively about every form of sin, and justifying it as good to look upon and needful even if the Ego within one is to live. And there is another selfishness that is as a seed of divinity in the loyal heart; hungry for Godhead, thirsting hourly for new tokens of It in the human love by which it was first summoned paradoxically to the birth, crying to it, reaching out its straining hands to it, making it with a kind of sweet perversity the centre of all its activities, even while it realizes that each fresh possession means a fresh dissolution of itself, one more dying in an interminable death, until the husk of its former being perish, and out of its broken heart a shoot mount upward in a stalk begemmed with uncounted ears of Life. This is the selfishness by which we are saved, the selfishness that discovers itself only when it has *put on Christ*. It is the secret of all noble and individual character. Only the soul that achieves it can truly say: *I am I*. The secret of its achievement lies in withdrawal, in other-worldliness, in widowhood endured bravely for God.

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Judith in her widow's retirement is the type and pattern of all such souls. Women like her are called upon to save, because they have first nourished in their own hearts the strength by which their weaker and beleaguered kinsfolk, men and wives and virgins alike, in religion and out of it, are saved from capitulating to the world.

CC

WOMAN AND THE BUSINESS OF REDEMPTION

This will be a glorious monument for Thy Name when the Enemy shall fall by the hands of a Woman:

WHAT Judith foreshadowed in her day was enacted in a more wonderful guise by Our Blessed Lady in the mystery of her Immaculate Conception. That is a thought that hardly needs enlargement now. What we need rather to think of is the barrenness of womanly influence in the new Israel of God, when such examples as those of Judith, and Esther, and Our Lord's own Mother, plead so eloquently with us out of the pages of Holy Writ. The Church has never made light of woman's part in the scheme of extending through human society the benefits of Redemption. On the contrary she does her best to emphasize it. She calls woman out of the stifling environment created for her by prejudice and custom, and treats her almost as man's equal in the outer business of the Church. If she is not made the conse-

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crated instrument of the greatest and holiest Sacrament, she is allowed, at any rate, in extreme cases, to administer baptism along with men; and in the mysterious symbolism attached to the matrimonial tie she is set winningly before her husband's gaze as a perpetual type of the Church. Through her and in her does her lawful spouse earn the right to new graces day by day. Her unflinching response to his appeal is like a series of theophanies; he enters into fresh pacts with God, is made subject to graver responsibilities, and is taught that henceforth he can neither live, nor labor, nor suffer, nor know a man's ambition, for himself alone. If she is his, he is also indissolubly hers, until death remit the covenant, because she has become for him a new sacrament of the love of Christ for human souls. Her body is a sacred and holy thing in his eyes—the blessed seed-plot of a harvest, of which the Holy Ghost is the Husbandman. And what is so noteworthy in the order of operative grace is hardly less striking, when one stops to consider the Church's attitude in the economy of her jurisdiction and in the government of her religious orders. Woman here may well be looked upon as a helpmate rather than an inferior, as the age-long history of Christendom shows. Wherever it has been found useful the treasures of sacred and profane science have been thrown open to her without a hint of mistrust. There are no divisions of knowledge created in her despite, as was done long ago in the days of her pagan bondage, and as the modern age has seen renewed until very recently, whenever there was question of admitting

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her to a share in the intellectual riches of the race. We have no "woman problem" within the borders of the ancient Church; though we have, and always have had, a Woman's cry! It is the cry of zeal for the divine glory, when error, or sin, or human wrong in any shape, is righted by a daughter of the faith. If the enemy is routed by the hands of a woman, every Catholic, so far from sneering, or making sport of it, thinks instinctively of Mary and her wonderful line. He thinks of Helena, of Catherine of Siena, of Teresa of Jesus, of Jane de Chantal. Protestantism may emancipate, because Protestantism first enslaved; but the Church's business is to urge woman always to live up to the ideals that were foreshadowed in Judith and in Esther, and fulfilled so gloriously in Mary, the Mother of God.

October

[First and Second Machabees.]

CCI

A BOOK AND ITS VOGUE

In those days:

THE story of the Machabees carries us over some very affecting incidents, which the devotion of the Christian Church has helped to keep fresh and inspiring in the memory of the faithful; and it contains, beside, the record of one of the most heroic rebellions ever undertaken in the long history of the Jewish people. The narrative in which it is unfolded has enjoyed a great popularity from the very earliest times in the Church. The note of authentic canonicity, which was definitively affixed to it in the sixteenth century, seems only to have deepened the regard in which Catholics always held the sacred story. Indeed, it might be contended in a certain sense, that this latter fact, especially when viewed in the light of the testimony which the tale is supposed to offer to the belief of the Jews in the efficacy of prayers for the dead, almost gives its inspired teaching something of a

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New Testament character. Few historical books of Holy Writ, at any rate, are so familiar to modern Catholics; and, if it were right to apply to them the standards that we employ in justifying our preferences in the case of merely human literature, few historical books, it might be added, better deserve the ecclesiastical vogue they have won.

CCII

CONFORMITY

Let us go and make a covenant with the heathen that are round about us:

THE writer of the story of the Machabees speaks of the movement to bring Israel into touch with the triumphant Hellenism of the time as the persuasion of wicked men. And yet the proposal had a plausible air about it. There seemed to be much in the sad conditions of the time to lend it color. It could be described as a "plea for sweet reasonableness." Israel was merely asked not to block the way to the inroads of a civilization which seemed to carry with it a higher promise than his own. Hellenism meant light and progress and the march of ideas. There were philosophers who affirmed that the Jehovah of the Prophets was only a Jewish conception of the more humane and equally righteous Zeus of the West. Is not that the specious argument of worldliness at all times? It seldom asks us to apostasize altogether.

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It will be content with half concessions. It offers to make covenants with us; it will bargain for compromise. That is how it drew away souls in the fifteenth century of our own era. It showed how good and fair to the outer eye a refined paganism could be. It held out the bait of the New Learning, and offered to exchange Christ for Plato. We know, of course, that there need never be a true anti-nomy between what is of good repute in the unregenerate world and what is enjoined by the teaching of the New Testament or enforced by the broadest spirit of the Church; but not all minds are quick to see the saving points of contact. Many a soul went down in the general corruption of belief and morals that lay hidden behind the Revival of Letters, just as many a soul perishes to-day in the flood of novel opinions. It is not that any true philosophy, however original, will be found incompatible with Catholicism in the long run; but that so few intellects in a superficially educated age are capable of judging for themselves. In general, it may be said that all compromises, where one's faith is admitted to be in question, are dangerous. Only too often they mean *the abomination of desolation in the Holy Place; they mean the defilement of the Catholic conscience.*

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CCIII

PATRIARCHALISM

I and my sons and my brethren will obey the law of our fathers:

THE pledge of Mathathias is a significant one. It implies a principle which the Church can never suffer to be forgotten. The head of a Jewish family makes open and explicit promise that, so far as he can secure it, his kinsfolk shall not fail in the religious spirit. The highest and most indispensable service that one can render to God is, of course, personal and individual; but there is another kind hardly less sacred. It is the altruistic sort. There are circumstances in life in which this form of obedience may be the only one that God will ask from us. Our personal religion will be merged, so to say, in that of others. We may be called upon to keep others faithful. These obligations do not fall upon all men. Not all men are fathers in this world; not all men are fathers in Israel; but woe to the man who, having freely assumed ties that leave him no longer to himself, yet chooses to think and act as though he stood alone. The sense of the family spirit was very strong in the earlier ages of Christendom. It saved more souls and built up finer types of individualism than many of us can understand with our latter-day prejudices, our worship of manumission and our impatience of control. Do we not need something of that ancient

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patriarchalism now? Are children taught to reverence their parents as of old? Are they encouraged to cultivate that discreet deference to elders of all sorts, which is one of the most noticeable charms of well-mannered youth? Who is to blame for this relaxation of tone that exists among us? Is it the feeble fathers and foolish mothers altogether? Oh, it needs courage as well as wisdom to be a true head of the household to-day! If reform is to come from any quarter, it must come first of all from manlier and more robust ideas of fatherly assertion. That does not mean hardness, or tyranny, or mistrust. The only way to secure it is to be found, paradoxically enough, not in the household, but in the school. It is the school system of America, Catholic as well as secular, which is so largely to blame for the lack of family spirit among us. One sees it in the friendship that boys and girls are allowed to contract, in the avocations they are encouraged to take up, the foolish and un-Christian alliances, the entanglements even, they are suffered to drift into, because fathers and mothers have lost the art of ruling wisely.

CCIV

THE MANLINESS OF THE MACHABEES

And Judas said: Gird yourselves and be valiant men and be ready against the morning:

ONE of the most stimulating things about the story of the Machabees is the appeal it makes to one's manli-

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ness. That is why the Church has always loved to set before her persecuted children the examples of fortitude it contains. It is said that during the dark hours of Cromwellian persecution in Ireland not a few faithful leaders and counsellors got comfort from its pages. The lessons that were enforced in that awful period of distress still live in the hearts and imaginations of the peasantry of the south, and you will hear many an Irish mother to-day endeavor to instil a spirit of loyalty to the old faith into her boy's heart by reminding him of the Machabees. When the Catholics of Germany began their sturdy resistance to the Falk Laws of thirty years ago—a resistance which was surely not the less martial for being carried on under a show of parliamentary forms—the theme that was oftenest on the lips of the pastors and political chiefs who led them, was the career of this Jewish Captain, who is remembered to-day by millions, because he dared to be a man. *Be valiant men and be ready against the morning!* That call comes to all of us; it comes in times of peace no less than in times of open trial. More and more will the good Catholic be put upon his mettle as the world moves doggedly forward to realize those ideals, whether of economics or social refinement, which are insidiously opposed to the standards of Christ. How shall one keep one's self apart and unstained unless he be inspired by some such resolution as that? *Gird yourselves and be valiant men and be ready against the morning!*

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CCV

A PACT AND ITS IMPORT

THERE are four chapters in the History of the Machabees, which ought to engage the attention of present-day Catholics. They are those that deal chiefly with that assertion of religious freedom and consequent restoration of worship which followed on the great victory won by Judas over the Syrians in the year 165 B.C. We shall see this *great Captain of the hosts of Israel*, who had been selected for the leadership of his people by his father, Mathathias, because he had been *strong and mighty from his youth up*, gradually constituting himself the champion of his nation in something more than a legal sense. We shall follow his restless career of conquest against all the surrounding tribes, until, having vindicated the virtual independence of his race, he sought to give visible proof of it to all the world by entering into an alliance with the Senate and People of Rome. These chapters should have an especial meaning for those who think it strange that the Roman See should be compelled to resort to the dubious arts of diplomacy in order to assert the claims of Christ's Kingdom before the world. We live in a time when many of the political supports on which the Church once prudently relied are beginning to fail her. Her one problem as a world-wide kingdom, existing only for the sal-

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vation of individual souls, is to maintain her independence unimpaired as national boundaries shift and civic ideals vary among the sons of men. We need to keep that thought constantly in mind, if we would not misread her past or her present history. To fall out of touch with her, to stand coldly aloof, to refuse our loyal sympathy, or, what is harder still to understand in one who affects to be a fervent Catholic, to assume a critical or censorious attitude toward her Supreme Pontiff when he is compelled to deal in secret with presidents, or parliaments, or peoples, is fraught with more perils to the individual conscience than many who allow themselves these liberties are willing to admit. If we cannot all be *born captains* like Judas Machabeus, we can, at least, cultivate assiduously that sacred fire of enthusiasm for God and His cause in a selfish world, which marks a man off as a true patriot in Israel. Such an attitude of loyalty is the more to be inculcated in a country like ours, where opinions shift weekly as newspapers veer, and where politicians are unscrupulous enough to use religion as a cloak for their dishonest enterprises. We can seldom be seriously wrong if we persist in following St. Peter's policy; however much it may seem to interfere with views or prejudices we ourselves had formerly maintained. This is not to give up one's liberty. It is to safeguard it, rather, by insisting that it shall wait upon the holier liberty that good Catholics have first of all in Christ.

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CCVI

THE PARABLE OF BETHORON

Behold, our enemies are discomfited: let us go up now to cleanse the Holy Places and dedicate them afresh:

A WISE commander does not give himself up to indolence when the battle has been secured. He turns the field of victory into a vantage ground for some further achievement. The war of the Machabees was essentially a religious war. What had been gained at Bethoron, therefore, was not to be accounted an end in itself. The work of purifying the Holy Places was to be accomplished, while Lysias was planning new campaigns at Antioch.

The lesson thus enforced by Judas at Bethoron has its application even in the warfares of the private conscience. There are thousands of souls in the modern Church who take periodic advantage of the mercies of her relaxed discipline, but who never think of using a single victory to entrench themselves against subsequent overthrow. Like many a Hebrew in the army of Judas, they look upon a victory in the field as an end in itself. They imagine themselves made finally secure by the mere material act of confession; forgetting that this sacred ordinance is but one of a laborious series. They do not go on to purify the Holy Place. They do not use fre-

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quent Communion as an instrument for *new dedications*. They never dream of acquiring new sets of counter-habits which may be as *living stones* in a reconstructed altar. We ought to be built up afresh each time that we go to confession. The courage that brings us to overcome the inertia of former habits in the tribunal of penance may reveal us as victors at Bethoron; but the diligence that hurries us thence to set about making a new and re-ordered life is as a summons to *go up to Jerusalem*. It is the habit of regular Communion which will prove to the enemy that the *Holy Place is purged* in good earnest. Israel will no longer be tributary. *He will build up Mount Sion with high walls and strong towers round about, lest haply the Gentiles should come and tread them down as they have done aforetime.*

CCVII

LIVING STONES

And they took whole stones according to the law:

IN a passage which the Roman usage embodies in the Breviary by way of practical commentary on the story of the re-dedication, as told in the Book of Machabees, St. Augustin reminds us that we are the living stones of the New Jerusalem which God is forever building in His Church. The idea, of course, is a familiar one to readers of the Apocalypse; but we may borrow

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a hint from this method of reading our personal needs into the language of Holy Writ, and understand by *living stones* also those acts of the assisted will without which our repentance is in danger of being aimless and barren. Few men put themselves into their supposed contritions. They will put their intellects; because they see they ought to reform; they will put their imaginations; because they believe they are in earnest; but they will not put their wills. The will is a man's whole self. If he brings that to the work of his re-dedication to the service of Christ, he brings a *living stone*. It is by many such stones that the Temple of God in each separate heart is slowly built up.

CCVIII

UNWITNESSED MARTYRDOM

And they beheld the multitude of the host, that they were many:

THERE is a passage in the *de Officiis* of St. Ambrose, which the Church inserts among her Breviary commentaries in order to deepen our sense of the inspired story of the Machabees; and it may serve to bring home to the minds of some of us how very far we have drifted from the practices of earlier days in the use we make of Old Testament standards of virtue. Fortitude, the Saint tells us, is tested by adversity quite as much as by

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success. Does he mean to imply that success offers the wider field for its exercise? We seem to have shifted our ideals since Ambrose wrote. If we have gained something in the interval, it is also true that we have lost. We are not altogether as our fathers were; and few of us can show their bravery. The contrast, no doubt, may be explained satisfactorily. The world has changed a good deal in fifteen centuries; and its hostility to Christ is accounted for on other grounds than those of reverence and concern for the established order of things. There are few exhortations to fortitude now; because martyrdom, among civilized nations, at least, has all but become an anachronism. That is how a philosopher might justify the change; but faith reckons differently. There is always room for courage; because every soul upon which the Church has set Our Lord's holy seal is summoned to do battle for Him. We are called to bear witness to our own personal conviction of His claims upon our allegiance; and whether our religion is of the stuff that seeks for it or no, we are all expected to bear testimony. Every individual Catholic whose faith enables him to triumph over the world as he meets it and knows it is one more proof that Christ has not died and risen again in vain. The possibilities of martyrdom are not exhausted by the shedding of blood. For the one champion whose evidence is corroborated by the sharp red lightning of a single dissolution, there are a thousand whose witness must be made good by the tedious prolixity of a multitude of deaths. These are martyrs

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in interior spirit and in will, if not in visible achievement. They live to Christ by their daily dyings, and *so to live is gain indeed*. It is as idle to compare merit in the kingdom of heaven as it is to compare the saints, whose essential nobility for us, apart from the indwelling God-head that makes them worthy, lies in such right to recognition, and whose glory that right of recognition ultimately ensures; yet there is a sense in which it is permissible to say that the witness which is borne by living is often more heroic than the witness which is borne by death. To minds that are persuaded of these paradoxes St. Mary de Pazzi's cry will not appeal in vain. *Non mori; sed pati, Domine! Not death, but endurance, O Lord!*

CCIX

THE TEST OF LAISA

'And many slipped away out of the camp, and there were not left of them more than eight hundred men:

THE condition of Judas at Laisa was desperate, indeed, but not more so than that of the elect at any great crisis in the history of the faith. Our Lord reminds us that the many are bad. *Few will go in at His gate*. The multitudes will be always against those who dare to be consistent in their private reading of the duties of religion. If your conscience troubles you on any point, and you have no better defence than the

example of the many, it is time to think of that forlorn hope with Judas at Laisa. We have Our Lord's express warning that mere public opinion will afford no ground for excuse on the last day. Public opinion is not, and never can be, a safe substitute for the personal and secret conscience. Is it not the conduct of a multitude of Catholics in various quarters of the world to-day that proves so effective a barrier to the spread of Our Lord's kingdom? Even in the cloister, where one might surely expect to find the influence of the majority on the side of what is high and heroic, is it not only by the most constant vigilance of a few that the spirit of the general body is maintained? What does the history of the great Catholic "reforms" teach? What do the protests of St. Jerome mean? Or the testimony of saints like Anselm and Bernard, or Ignatius of Loyola? Could one find more melancholy reading on this point than in the *Memoriale* of Blessed Pierre Lefèvre?

The pressure of human respect is strong; and many a soul that might otherwise be minded to remain and do its duty by the *picked hosts of the Lord* will steal out secretly on the heels of the deserters, until the Captain discovers that He has but eight hundred left. This law of deterioration seems to be all but universal; and the fear of its subtle influence would alone have sufficed to create a "religious life" had there been no Gospel counsels to commend it. Yet even in those strongholds of the elect, the approved orders and dedicated families of Christendom, it is to his "rule," and to the living example

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of his Lord that the monk must be taught to look, if his sense of the eternal truths is not to lose its keenness or his passion for what is of perfection is not to be allowed to cool in an atmosphere which the shortcomings of the many must inevitably chill. "Nowhere are we safe from the danger of following the example of the majority," writes a learned and devout author of the Society of Jesus of our own time; and he goes on to offset the disquieting statement with a rider that conveys a discreet note of warning to religious men and women of every sort in spite of the loyal reticence of phrase in which his meaning is darkly wrapped up.

If there could be found a place in the Church, [says Father Coleridge,] in which the weight of this great influence is turned in the direction of good and of what is most perfect, it would be in the holy houses of the religious life, which are set up for this especial purpose among others, that there, at least, the influence of example, companionship, public opinion, and common practice may be on the side of what is not only very good, but perfect in the service of God. We may thank God that it is always so in a very great degree, and that the fruit of it is seen in the comparative ease with which many a weak soul is helped along a lofty path to which it would not otherwise aspire.

Every vocation has its Laisa, then; and in no corner of the Church can the loyal soul hope to escape this insidious trial.

CCX

THE INDEFEASIBLE TRUST

And Judas saw that his army slipped away, and that the battle pressed upon him; and he was broken-hearted:

THE temptation of Judas was a sore one; but he met it like a man. At least he could die facing his enemies. He could be true to the ideals of his race. If he could leave nothing to Israel but an example, the example would be a thing to remember for all time; and it would steal nothing from his former glory. Was there a touch of despair in his proposal? The counsel to flee before such terrible odds did not come from disloyal hearts. It was the honorable dissuasion of brave men who saw that further resistance meant something like self-murder; yet Judas is unshaken; not only unshaken, but his influence still amounts to inspiration. He can rally that doubting remnant and score one more victory before he dies. There are junctures in life when nothing but a like temper will save us. We must cast worldly prudence aside and stake everything, wealth, honor, friends, life itself, on being true to our faith and conscience. That is the twofold trust we can never betray. To the world it may wear an aspect of folly. Some may call it the heroism of despair. It is nothing of the kind. Despair has no place in it. Men who are

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beaten in life will sometimes go calmly to meet a permissible form of self-immolation. They will volunteer lightly for dangerous enterprises. They will nurse the sick in a great pestilence, or expose themselves in battle. There is fortitude of a certain kind in these attempted descents into the abyss; but between such a temper and the attitude of mind with which Judas led his eight hundred up to Azotus a great chasm is fixed. It is the gulf that separates the martyr from the Stoic; Christ from the philosopher or the patriot. The Church has need of martyrs always; and in every age do they come to her. She needs them to-day when a greater than Bacchides is arrayed against her—needs them the more sorely that those that witness to her may fall unnoticed; with no inspiring remnant by them to tell their fellow-believers how they went forth daily to their slow death.

CCXI

A NOTE ON SECOND MACHABEES

To the Brethren:

THE Second Book of Machabees deals with a brief but stirring period in the history of the Chosen People. The events narrated in it hardly cover a space of sixteen years; yet they were glorious years for Jerusalem and for all who loved her ancient worship. In spite of the fact that the main thread of the story runs

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parallel with the first seven chapters of the **First Book**, a little reflection will convince the reader that in their general character and in their contents the **Breviary lessons** which the **Roman usage** has adopted from it differ appreciably from those that we have already meditated. They are more detailed for one thing, and abound in those illuminating phrases, which the imagination of the Church loves to seize upon; because they help us to remember our own past, while they point a moral and afford an instance in present necessities. What we have already suggested elsewhere may well be repeated here. Mere difficulties of chronology ought not to make us insensible to the deep religious lessons of a book which the Church has declared to be an integral part of the **Word of God**, and from which our fathers in the faith have drawn instruction and comfort in every generation.

CCXII

ON PROVINCIALISM IN RELIGION

To the Brethren that are throughout Egypt:

FROM the very earliest epoch Egypt has stood for a symbol of much that was dark and foreign to the understanding of the Jew. He had made alliances from time to time with its mysterious people; but contact with them was always looked upon as a peril to the purity of Jehovah's worship. Abraham, it is true, had sojourned for a space in their pasture lands and seemed

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to prosper; and later on Joseph rose to eminence among them as Pharaoh's wisest minister of state. But from the days of Israel's escape from bondage the Egyptians were uniformly looked upon as a *barbarous folk* with whom the loyal House of Jacob could have little in common. What was it that broke down the barriers of this hereditary mistrust on Israel's part and sent his sons thither to dwell in the *cities of the stranger*? It was greed for political power in some instances; but for the most part, it was the mere lust of wealth. The fact is a significant one. It would be ridiculous, of course, to affirm that God never meant Israel to learn the great world's ways. Though He had made His seed a cloistral people, shutting it off by mountain walls and deserts from all other divisions of the Semitic race, yet He had given it a commission to make itself heard among the heathen, had actually promised it *the heathen for its inheritance*, and had added, moreover, the divine blessing of fruitfulness. *It was to increase and multiply and fill all the earth.* Its sons were not to abide forever at Jerusalem. All this is true, indeed, and it would be an un-Christian plea for intolerance to attempt to ignore it; yet the fact remains that it was not the missionary spirit, but the craft and enterprise, rather, of the commercial instinct that filled Egypt with God's sojourners. There were good men among them, faithful Jews who looked to Jerusalem as their true home and to the religion of Jerusalem as their sole philosophy of conduct. In every age a nucleus of these could be found.

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These loyal sojourners and expatriates have their equivalents in the Church of the New Israel. After so many centuries of history secretly overruled by God to His own high ends, though counter-crossed on man's side by error and perversity, it is not possible so to shape one's life as to be always in the company of our kinsmen in the faith. Whether we will or no, we must often *go down to Egypt*; we must dwell in the heart of an unbelieving world. If the sense of our origin is strong in us, we shall never lose touch with Jerusalem. The interests and ambitions, the hopes and dreams of our creed will sway us in whatever business we engage in. If the earthly Jerusalem as a visible centre of religious activity has passed away, a fairer and a holier city still calls for our allegiance. We shall live ever with the thought of it before our minds. Whether we think of it as the reward of our faithfulness, or look yearningly towards our translation thither as to the term of *the day's burden and its heats*, the desire of it will be the master impulse of our lives. Its *living stones*, the saints and the souls of the just, will call to us; and the great *Voice Itself that issues forever from the throne*, the appeal of Our Lord, uttered persuasively to our own individual conscience in every responsible act that we do, will be heard from hour to hour like a kind of subtle and memorable music, intended solely for our personal and inner ear.

Coelestis urbs Jerusalem,
Beata pacis visio,

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Quae celsa de viventibus
Saxis ad astra tolleris,
Sponsaeque ritu cingeris
Mille Angelorum millibus.

Jerusalem, thou City blest,
Dear vision of celestial rest,
Which far above the starry sky
Built up with living stones on high,
Art as a Bride encircled bright
With million Angel forms of light.

Nor in our daily concern for this City of our hopes shall we forget the obligations to loyalty and actual service that the Rome of St. Peter's successors lays upon every fervent Catholic. We cannot undo nearly twenty centuries of history. The providence of God and of His Christ has made our holy religion a visible and almost a tangible thing by ensphering its social and political activities and all its solemn round of ecclesiastical professions and ordinances in this world to so majestic a centre. Dull must the Catholic be who can contemplate Rome's thousand claims to our obedience without endeavoring to respond to them. Because we are magnificently and irreformably Catholic we can never cease to be Roman.

¹ Caswall's translation.

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CCXIII

WHERE MIND AND WILL FUSE

That ye may do His behest with a great heart and a willing mind:

LOYALTY is not a matter that concerns the understanding only; it embraces the whole man. Religion, which is nothing else but the sum of those loyalties that the conscience owes to God, proceeds on a like principle. It has its intellectual duties, its prerequisite apprehensions; but its larger life is in the will, or better still, in the heart. *The willing mind!* How much there is in that phrase! Intellect alone will never save us. Intellect alone never yet made a redeeming act of faith. *Corde creditur*, says St. Paul. *It is with the heart we believe*, because it is by the heart that a man lives. Christ will not be satisfied with a dead or withered soul. He became Man that He might win us as men—heart and brain together. *The willing mind!* Oh, never let the will within you grow relaxed through mere routine; or perish utterly through habits of sin! So long as you are master of your own acts so long is your mind worth God's conquest. He loves it so well that He actually cares for its assents; but He will not have them without the heart to give them human warmth and life. *The willing mind!* Out of such a habit of soul is magnanimity begotten; and magnanimity is the mother

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of great-heartedness in the service of Our Lord. Recall what St. Ignatius hints at in the *Meditation on Two Standards*. Christ Our Lord calls all of us to salvation and helps us to achieve it in Himself; but He summons the high-spirited alone to be His lieutenants in that divine work. If you are only *great-hearted* in His service, you need not be clothed with a priest's character in order to win souls. Your apostolate will make itself felt whatever your office or station in the Church of God.

CCXIV

TWO FIELDS

But he, welcoming a noble death rather than a shameful life, advanced of his own accord to the instrument of torture:

THERE WERE noble examples under the Old Dispensation before Eleazar; but St. Gregory Nazianzen compares this champion of Jehovah to the protomartyr Stephen; because his death so strikingly illustrates the temper of soul that will not bargain or chaffer with the apologists of a compromising world. Wrong is wrong, and conscience must protest against it, even though my most loyal friends call me a fool for my pains. Eleazar could have saved himself by a subterfuge. He was hardly asked to dissemble; he was entreated merely to be passive. Others would utter the lie which would

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enable him to live. Seldom has an honest heart been tried by a more insidious temptation. Is there not a parallel crisis in the career of every good man? Is the will not often called upon to decide between the plain commands of the Gospel, as interpreted by our Catholic creed, and the counter-exactions of a semi-veiled public opinion, which is fastidious only when the offender is caught? Look at the situations that an upright conscience is called upon to face in political life in most countries to-day. Think of the ill-gotten money that passes from hand to hand, in order that a particular faction may be continued in office. Will it do to say that both sides are corrupt, and that the matter is largely a choice of evils? That is how many good men affect to justify themselves for a silence which allows the evil to prosper and wax strong. They dissemble; because they are not made of Eleazar's fibre. Few men are strong under the widely diffused pressure of civic disorder. But what does our religion mean, what do all its sacramental helps mean, if our natural weakness is not to be braced by an infusion of supernatural fortitude?

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that political life affords the only field for religious courage. Innocent girls faring forth from school or convent to make the acquaintance of the world of mode, wives and mothers struggling to reach an assured haven of affluence or unquestioned social recognition,—these, too, have

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their choice to make from time to time. They are expected to find a place in Jerusalem for the decorous unrighteousness of Hellas. Sion must welcome its *Zeus Olympios*, Gerizim its *Protector of the Strangers*. Toleration must be stretched to the point of acquiescence. The old ideals of Catholic purity and womanly reserve must give way to conventions never contemplated in Scripture. In speech, in reading, in dress, in modes of polite intercourse, in the regimen of the family and in the hitherto unassailed sanctities of wifely relationship, liberties must be taken from which the true woman of Israel might be expected to shrink back in dismay. Soul-impoverishing is the price which must be paid for the amenities of existence, when the Catholic conscience is taught to accommodate itself to the code of Vanity Fair. No doubt good women are summoned to serve God in society, as it is called; and they must not go out upon their apostolate in the habit of a nun; but the feeling for Our Lord and His standards of conduct must be stronger than their regard for the tone of the world, or they will suffer loss where they had hoped to meet with gain. "God deliver us from such women as desire to serve Him while always thinking of their own selfish regard," says St. Teresa. "That is a most unhappy preferment, seeing that honor itself is often lost by seeking it." Christ and my own conscience must be first always. The Church and her sure instinct as to what best befits a wife or a maid,—these are the preferences that must color our understandings and give impetus to

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our wills, if we are not to turn traitors to a sex that was lifted heaven-high beyond the power of theorists or emancipators to assoil it, when Christ was born of Mary for our regeneration and lived for thirty years in a Son's companionship with her, to show the world what He loved most in woman.

CCXV

AGE AND INSIGHT

It becometh not our years to dissemble, said he:

AGE, which brings a reduced pulse-beat, brings also disillusionment; and disillusionment is the forerunner of wisdom unto those who have trusted to the shows of things and found them vain. A rooted instinct in human nature expects an old man to have insight. As the outer world of sense grows dim to him the inner world of spirit looms large. That is the accustomed way. Eleazar spoke well. A sin in a mature mind is worse than a sin in a child; even though both transgressions be committed with sufficient advertence to create guilt. One would imagine that the thought of these things would check the disposition of the elderly to sin, making them more God-fearing, as the years draw to a term. Does experience bear out the prejudice? What a sad disparity the life-record of the best of us would reveal, if it could be told without gloss or comment! The cause of the

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inconsequence lies with ourselves, with the "flesh," that is, quite as much as with the "world," or the "Evil One," who is bent on thwarting God's handiwork by turning the majority of us into fools. *The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God:* There is a kind of imbecility which is the result of arrested development. The brain stops growing too early in its career. A like process seems to take place in the spiritual order; and, for all our experience, we remain children down to the end. How deep and how full of rebuke is that saying of Scripture: *The wisdom of a man is his gray hairs: Cani autem sunt sensus hominis!* To grow is to resist the law of decay, and so increase in stature, in virtue of a native principle of energy that we call life. Since Christ Our Lord died and rose again spiritual growth is utterly impossible, wisdom is utterly impossible, maturity is utterly impossible, save *in Him and through Him*. His life is transfused into us by means of the sacraments, and chiefly by the great Sacrament of His Body and Blood. If we would be wise, if we would win a true crown of old age, and acquire perfection in a short space, let us try to reckon our years by our good Communions, and not—as too many, alas, are content to do!—our Communions by our years. Certain apostasies become morally impossible to the soul which has grown old by frequent Communions, just as this shameful apostasy against which Eleazar set his face was made impossible by his four-score years and ten. *Lord make us to grow in Thee!*

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CCXVI

RESPONSIBILITY

It becometh not our years:

ELEAZAR had another reason for steadfastness in the thought of the possible consequences of his act on the youth of Israel. When all rightful concessions have been made to the sanctity of individualism it will still remain true that we can neither think, nor speak, nor act; neither live nor die, in disregard of our kind. We may be units; but we belong to a moral whole none the less. That Whole is the Universe of Souls; it is the Church of Our Lord's Creation. Each one of us is his *brother's keeper*. If we lived and labored in a moral void with no connecting medium to transmit the subtle influence of our initiative, we might live as the lost souls may be conceived to live in hell; but God has made us in His own Image with the obligation in charity to live up to that Image—as we possess it—an original self always occupied with other selves, divinized in Christ, co-ordinated in His Church, made one by the *Bread in which we have Communion* with that *Body which was broken* to make us sound and whole. The law of the indestructibility of motion in the physical universe has its analogy in the law of the illimitable consequence of human action in the universe of souls. Every Catholic

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heart is a veritable wave-centre with circles of influence reaching as high as God or as deep as the nethermost pit. One needs to remember that in order to understand much that is otherwise arbitrary and inexplicable in the history and actual constitution of Catholicism.

CCXVII

THE BRAVERIES OF DIVINE HOPE

For they, said he, put their trust in their arms and in their daring; but we in the Lord Almighty:

CONFIDENCE in God is the best armor of a Christian; by confidence, it might almost be said, we shame heaven to be on our side. It is impossible to enter into the spirit of Our Lord's teaching unless we first lift ourselves by good-will, that is, by absolute self-surrender, to the plane of His hopes. What faith He exacts of us! What love He would have us ambition! He has pledged Himself to level away every mountain wall of difficulty that stands between the soul and its vision of the land of promise, if only it will set no small or mean horizon to its expectations. Sickness, bodily deformity, the tyranny of past habits,—all will be removed if we put our trust in Him *who is the Lord Almighty*. Look at the history of the Christian Church; look at the history of the regenerating movements within her borders, the progress of the religious families that have

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made new the face of the earth! How many of us stop to consider the poverty of their beginnings when we behold them in what seems to us the day of their pride? They were once poor in resources; but they have become far-reaching and influential; because their hopes were brave. Hope is usually the measure of a man's faith; it is the measure of an order's faith; it is also the handsel of its charity. Mean hearts have mean hopes; but great hearts are big with them; and it is great hearts that carry on Our Lord's work always.

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[Ezekiel, Daniel, and the Minor Prophets.]

CCXVIII

THE MESSAGE OF EZECHIEL

I saw visions of God:

THE prophecies of Ezekiel carry us back to the opening years of the sixth century before Christ. If the period is a discouraging one for religious human nature to contemplate, we must remember that the story of the Chosen People is intended as a portent and a warning, not less than as a record of those personal dealings of God with mankind which culminated in Christ and His visible Church. It is a tale of shameful and perpetually recurring apostasies. The salvation of a race destined to typify in its history the experiences of the individual soul, struggling to achieve that attitude of full obedience without which it will never find Christ, must, in the nature of things, be a slow and laborious process. God can do many things quickly; but He seldom wills to do them. He prefers to wait upon our disillusionment. He allows our transgressions, through

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the sorrow and the hunger of heart they beget in us, to make us wise. He suffers the need of Himself to grow insistent before He satisfies it. Yet His prophets are at hand to protest against each new unfaithfulness. Conscience utters its rebuke. His official teachers utter their rebuke. Because God is merciful, our acts, whether we have committed them as isolated individuals or as members of His Church, must follow us like shadows. They must reveal us to our adult selves one day, when the Divine Reason, as opposed to the human reason, wakes up in us and bids us behold what we have been. Yet the self-knowledge so obtained ought not to discourage us; neither should it fill us with dismay. Over against the prophet's indictment there is set the *Vision of the Rolling Chariot*. The God Whom we have forsaken speaks to us in Christ.

CCXIX

THE YEARS THAT SHAPE A YOUTH

It happened in the thirtieth year:

WAS the thirtieth year with which Ezechiel dates his initial message the year of his natural life? Origen maintains that it was; though there are difficulties against the view. It was not customary for the prophets to reckon a vision or call in terms of their own age; they preferred rather to fix the date by reference to some po-

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litical or national event. St. Jerome seems to be of this way of thinking; and he accordingly suggests the discovery of the Book of the Law prior to the great restoration of worship under Josiah as the starting-point for the prophet's mysterious chronology. But there are just as good considerations to justify the more obvious sense of the words as Origen understands them. If, as Josephus reminds us, Ezechiel had been "a mere boy" when the "Transmigration" took place, it is natural to suppose that he would have had a sufficient motive in that fact alone in fixing the chronology of his visions with reference to his own career; because, in that hypothesis, the divine summons would have come to him at a critical period of his life. The thirtieth year was full of meaning and solemnity for one of Jewish blood. It was the year of full maturity. It was the year in which the young Levites entered upon their duties. It was probably the year of the priesthood likewise. St. John the Baptist received his call at that stirring age; and St. Luke is careful to tell us that Our Lord felt impelled to take leave of His Mother and begin His public mission *in His thirtieth year*. The greater complexity of modern life and the changed conditions of a world growing daily more commercial and overcrowded have tended to alter modern ideals on this point. We start a young man on his career and burden him with responsibility at a much earlier date. Are we careful to compensate for the anticipation by a more scrupulous oversight during his formative years? We

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can never be too conscientious, of course, in our regard for the young; but we can be too meddling. We may wrap our souls about them; but not our arms. We must begin early to foster ideals in their hearts; but the ideal should be left to adapt itself to its new habitat. Let the Holy Ghost be its Gardener; and conscience working under the inspiration of religion may prove a more efficient helper than you can ever hope to be. Nothing so pleases the young as to feel their powers. Why should they not be taught, then, as soon as possible to realize the greatest of all powers, the power of initiative and choice? These are the things that shape a soul and reveal it to itself. It is by such wise discipline that men and women are formed to Christ.

It is as idle to lay down rules for the government of the young as it is for the government of men at large; but this in general may be said; that a child searches in after-life for the "delectable mountains" shown it in its earlier years. Our manhood is tested by the visions that were vouchsafed us as we stood contemplating it from afar. Look to a boy's dreams; get the key to those, and see that Christ be set as a Reality in the centre of them; and you will not have cause to mourn self-disquietingly over his future. It is the child's inner religion that counts. In outer service it may satisfy the conditions we impose upon it; but no discerning elder will fancy that all is secured by such mechanical compliance. Feed the heart; feed the imagination; but feed most of all the will by schooling it to reach up manfully to the things

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which the Christ-fed heart has revealed to it. You can never be assiduous enough in studying a child's inner spirit. Everything that modifies that should be a matter of vigilance—the sights it sees, the words it hears, the companionships it is allowed to cultivate, the servants that wait upon it, the books and tales that color its dreams. If God be not in these things we are cheating it of the *Vision of the Rolling Chariot*.

CCXX

ON FAMILIARITY WITH THE GOSPELS

And in the midst thereof the likeness of four living creatures:

AN instinct, not universal indeed, but sufficiently widespread in the literature of devotion and in works of Catholic art to compel the thoughtful mind to take note of it, sees in Ezechiel's picture of the *four creatures carrying the Likeness of the Glory of the Lord*, a prophet's dream of what the Evangelists were to do in making known the good tidings of salvation to the world. We do not always realize our debt to the saints who were inspired to write the record of Our Lord's career. There may be difficulties in St. Paul's Epistles that the *unlearned and the unstable* may well shrink from handling; but the Gospel story makes its appeal to the simplest as well as to the most profound. We can never

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grow too familiar with the sacred incidents enshrined there. They are the facts from which our religious life as Catholics must largely derive its enthusiasm; largely, we say; for we must never forget that the word of the living Church is both Gospel and commentary in one, and no enthusiasm is safe which is not inspired by devotion to her. Is she not Our Lord's mystical Bride and His best Interpreter? Through her were these things written. How the Sermon on the Mount will rebuke our worldliness and stimulate our drowsy faith! Catholics have always been exhorted to a reverent familiarity with the Gospel. They are counselled, not merely to read, but to meditate, its extraordinary narrative; they are asked to regulate, as far as may be, their daily life by its theory of perfection. It is a wise practice to set apart a portion of an hour each day for reading of this sort. A few verses before bed-time will make a wonderful difference in one's inner life. The devout reader will be borne up to the *Vision of the Glory of the Lord*, as that Vision is made near and human in Christ. He will move forward with the *Rolling Chariot*; his body will become *full of eyes, like the eyes that are round about the four*; he will view the problems of the day from an ever-new standpoint; he will grow in the mind and spirit of the Church.

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CCXXI

WITHOUT SUBTERFUGE

Every one of them went straight forward:

SIMPLICITY and directness of motive are supposed to constitute a child's charm; nor are they without their attractiveness in maturer folk; though the world affects to laugh at them to-day, as being out of keeping with a self-occupied and over-refined age. Yet the injunction to be *as little children for the kingdom of heaven's sake* loses none of its point for those who read and understand. To go straightforward in one's thoughts, in one's prayers, in one's speech, in one's outer habit of life; to be habitually without subterfuge, to face one's own sins courageously, to appraise them and confess them without attempting to gloze their petty meanness or ugly moral drift—that is the habit of mind engendered by familiarity with the *four living creatures*. Those who read the Gospels often and with a faith that leaves moot points of curious scholarship and criticism outside of the closet-door will not be devious or crooked in their ways. Make the experiment; and see with what strides you will go forward and away from your ancient self. Oh, we waste so much of our strength in making elaborate schemes of perfection; and perfection all the while is not elaborate. It is a thing of the *Rolling Chariot and the Vision of the*

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Heart that goes riding there! *Learn of Me*, it says. It is not a Rule we follow, but a Man! Wise is the soul and peace-endowed that learns that!

CCXXII

THE SONG OF THE SWORD

A sword, a sword is sharpened, and also furbished:

It is not difficult to understand why God should threaten to cut off the wicked; but why does He hew down the unoffending and the righteous in His general slaughter? That is a very ancient difficulty. When Abraham stood before the Lord to plead with Him for Sodom and Gomorrah, the strength of his plea lay in this reproach: *Wilt Thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? . . . Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* It is a far cry from Abraham to Ezechiel; and though the sin is different, less revolting to human decency, at any rate, the divine attitude is unchanged. *Thus saith the Lord God: Behold I am against thee, and will draw forth my sword out of its scabbard, and I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked.* They shall all die the death! What is more perplexing still, Ezechiel seems to find no trial for his faith in such a mystery. He records the threat, and merely insists upon its universality as an added motive for repentance. Unbelievers of a certain shallow class

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love to dwell upon the problems involved in these divine pronouncements. Hardly a catastrophe can befall in which their note of mockery is not heard. An epidemic makes its appearance; and the innocent go down before it along with the guilty. A flood or an earthquake comes; and the just are swallowed up in thousands, as though godliness made no difference in this world. What is the man of faith to reply when confronted with these paradoxes. What can he reply save that the *Judge of all the earth cannot but do right?* Our Lord knew that the devout believers of His time were secretly distressed by such questionings. He touched lightly on them; and then passed to more personal teaching. He insisted upon the necessity of faith until the larger vision should justify all the ways of His Father in dealing with mankind. *Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that ye may know——!* It is our half-knowledge that makes considerably more than three-fourths of the mischief of the world. That is why we have spoken of the class of unbelievers whose stock in trade lies in difficulties of this sort as shallow men. They assume to have more knowledge than the wisest may lay claim to. God often punishes for sin in this life. Scripture makes that plain for those who have faith. He hates iniquity; and He does not dwell far off from a world which He could not leave wholly to itself, even if He had never dreamed of an Incarnation. His providence, which reaches so bafflingly, but consolingly, far in Christ, would still be wider than the world's moral needs, even if Christ

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had not come. It might not be part of His reckoning, or how could the just be said to live by faith? God punishes for sin in the present life. That is not a hard doctrine to accept. The difficulty arises rather when we think of *the sweep of His vengeance*. If it is Ezechiel's *Song of the Sword* that terrifies, it is in Ezechiel's general denunciation also that we shall discover a possible clue.

Neither the just nor the unjust are described in Scripture as reaching their full stature here. As the Jew existed, and still seems to exist, as a thing apart in human history—intelligible only if viewed in relation to the capital city of his race, but an unlovely scandal and a menace, if considered without regard to that age-long tie,—so the individual soul must be judged apart from the standards that link its well-being with the fortunes of this or that particular institution, or tribe, or family, and be studied in the light of its destiny as a citizen of the *Jerusalem which is above*. Man becomes intelligible in his sorrows only when he is understood as one for whom Christ Our Lord laid down His life. No righteous Jew thought himself hardly dealt with if he suffered *for Jerusalem's sake*. He gloried in his citizenship, and welcomed each rebuff that gave him his opportunity of witnessing to it. In like manner, in that wider and holier citizenship which has come to all those who have accepted the Church's view of the accidents and griefs of time, the just man will welcome each separate sorrow in his own case as proof of Our Lord's over-sight, and he will learn to

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look upon the trials of his more righteous neighbor as the price that heaven secretly exacts for the ultimate salvation of many who are known now as unrighteous. The *Song of the Sword* is one of the melodies in which his heart will be constrained to find comfort when God visits His people in anger:

O sword, O sword,
Come out of the scabbard;
Come out to kill;
Be furbished to destroy and to glitter!

.

Return into thy sheath,
I will judge thee in the place wherein thou wast created;
In the land of thy nativity.

CCXXIII

THE UNBURDENING OF GOD

He shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast unburdened thy soul:

THE divine scourges are, in intention, at least, remedial. It is only as a kind of after-thought that they are changed, and then primarily by the sinner himself, into something remorseless and hard from which there is no escape. God does not desire the death of the transgressor. The burden of that truth runs like a golden thread through all the dark woof of Ezechie'l's teaching. It is as

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the message of an evangelist uttered before its time. We are slain that the Church of the elect may be saved. Such killing does not mean death, but life. There is a first denunciation and a second; but it is the second alone which is irretrievable. A preacher or prophet may unburden his soul in the first warning, which is of earth; it is God Who unburdens His soul in the second warning, which brings judgment. That *word of fury* is final. From the second death there is no deliverance. The sword that inflicts it is never sheathed. In such a thought we have a ray of light amid the darkness. The ultimate ruin of the soul is its own work. We are damned because we neglected the threat of the divine vengeance. We chose the second death, which is death indeed, rather than the first, which meant life indeed! Hell is, in a very true sense, an eternal unburdening of the Soul of God.

CCXXIV

THE BOOK OF DANIEL

Now among these, of the children of Juda, were Daniel, Ananias, Misael, and Azarias:

HOWEVER recent criticism may have essayed to lessen the value of the story of Daniel for the defenders of the more stubborn and old-fashioned school of apologetics, it has not touched the spiritual significance of the Book as a whole. That remains, for Catholics, at least, just what

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it was before, a true *Scripture of God* entrusted to the Church's keeping *for our comfort and instruction*. The most compelling authority that the enquiring conscience can know on this earth assured the religious world long ago at Trent, that the prophecies associated with the name of the *Man of Desires* were part of its inherited wealth in Christ, and that the Holy Ghost, in some mysterious way not yet explicitly defined, was primarily responsible for their composition. To those who are content to *seek God in trustfulness*, knowing that *every word of His is nigh unto them, even in their mouth, and in their heart, that is, the word of faith which is preached*, who believe bravely, moreover, that in the affairs of the Spirit more than sufficient for the time is the knowledge thereof, a pronouncement like that will be sufficient likewise. No loyal follower of Our Lord will reject the authentic findings of scholarship; he will welcome them rather, as beams of light amid the darkness, flashes of insight upon those *judgments* which *pure religion* ever recognizes as *a great deep*. If he is wise as well as loyal, he will not theorize overmuch or seek to trace the flower of the new discoveries in the mysterious matter and substance of the old tradition. He will leave these high speculations for the masters in Israel whom they most concern, and meanwhile wait patiently and with an open mind for an authoritative dictum of the Holy See. Faith moves in one plane; human learning in quite another. Argument is profitable to both—as witness the century-widening spheres of Catholic theology;—but to

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be disputatious before the time is to render poor service to the *Ecclesia docens* and become an ungracious rock of offence instead of a *living stone* in the ever-growing and indispensable edifice of orthodox erudition.

Daniel is put before us as something more than a prophet. He is that *Man of Desires* in whose career the aspirations of Israel grow startlingly circumscribed, local and personal. In his inner life he is all steadfastness, passion and enthusiasm; a white, unwavering flame of faith burning upon the altar of a heart whose one resolution is *never to be defiled with the portion of the King's meat, nor with the wine which the King drank*. In his outer life he is the paradoxical embodiment of tact and considerateness; his very concern for the purity of his conscience makes him rigidly yet persuasively single-minded with royalty, while it clothes him with a graciousness of insight into the ways of believer and non-believer alike that acts as an unchallengeable pass-word to place and success. His character seems to embody the opposed qualities of seer and restorer in one. He is a dreamer in whom the exaltation of desire issues overmasteringly in sweetness and longanimity rather than in zeal. Though he is so consistently uncompromising he has nothing of the zealot about him. Power of sympathy is his most distinguishing gift at the outset of his career; and he employs it early and late in the service of that *Messiah-Prince* whose cutting-off from Israel he foretells.

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CCXXV

THE POWER OF SYMPATHY

Now God gave Daniel winsomeness and a heart of favor in the sight of the chief of the eunuchs:

How shall we define the virtue of which so human an apostle as Daniel is at once the unconscious defender and the exponent? Definitions are traditionally elusive things; and in the problems of the spirit they count for very little, when every allowance is made. Sympathy is hardly a virtue, in the strict sense, at all. Perhaps it would be better to describe it as an unnamable grace which betrays itself in its affinities. Daniel's is an instance in point. In a character like his shall we best see it and understand. It is the immediate source of his strange attractiveness for all those who stand inevitably apart from him in morals and in creed. It lies at the very root of all pure religion; it is the base and crown, likewise, of Our Lord's religion; for it is the living principle of the Golden Rule upon which that religion heroically builds, substituting an interior and sacramentally known Christ for the old, forbearing, philosophic self. No one who is instant in frequent confession and Communion can long be barren of that catching grace. It is half-sister unto Charity; though it derives more than three-fourths of its charm from the native seed of kindness and insight, without which Charity itself will

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be constrained to a cold and cloistral existence in the solitary heart. Being so mysteriously akin, it recalls its sister's comeliness in face, in bearing, and in gait; and becomes her cheerful handmaid, her out-door lay-helper, in carrying alms to all mankind. To vary the figure, this grace of sympathy may be spoken of as neighborliness or altruism in solution; or, in the case of Our Lord's religion, more appropriately, still, it is the fine, prismatic medium, the soul's rich crystal, through which the white light of Christ's participated love is mercifully scattered into seven, yea, into seventy times seven original and idiosyncratic tints, in which each child of the faith sees its own particular heaven in the sunset color to which it is most effectually drawn. That is one way of looking at sympathy, and it seems to be the wisest way. In the case of the Catholic it ought to be, and frequently is, Ambassador and Spokeswoman to the Queen-Virtue of the heart. It causes Our Blessed Lord, Who is the true Emmanuel, or divine Sympathy Incarnate, to be seen in His native attractiveness; and what more need be said? Its mission is as diversified as the vocations of His saints; and as broad as the Church that they glorify. Not suffering only, but joy is its meat; for it is Christ's unconscious high-way Herald, His glad Compeller to the Feast for which *His beeves and fatlings have been killed*. Its apostolate is none the less glorious for being common, everyday-like and undenoted, as it was in Daniel's case. We pay it our unconscious tribute here on earth by yielding our churlishness to its charm; but our fullest tribute will

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be paid when we sit down with it as a long-bidden guest to our own Marriage-Supper at the King's table in heaven.

CCXXVI

THE UNFAITHFULNESS OF GOMER

He went and took Gomer, the daughter of Debelaim:

THE story of Osee is at once a history and an allegory. That seems to be the only reasonable view to take of it; and it is a view which the understanding heart will find large with meaning, if it will only translate its significance into the terms of its own inner life. There is nothing in the sacred text to warrant the assumption, which one often hears made, that the prophet was commanded by God to take to wife a woman who, he knew, would be unfaithful to him. The words, *Go take unto thee a wife of fornications*, when read in the light of the idolatrous celebrations on Mount Ephraim, convey no more than a command to marry among the people who attended those festivities. The event proved, however, that the woman thus singled out was no better than her kindred or her class. She proved unfaithful to her husband; and Osee was obliged to submit to one of the most difficult trials that can ever befall a good man in this world. What was harder still, Gomer seems to have become openly and unblushingly profligate. She bore her

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husband three children, to each of which he gave a symbolical name, thereby turning his personal and individual sorrow into a parable that all Israel might read. Of all the lessons of the Old Testament none is quite so touching in its tenderness as the appeal that Jehovah makes to his apostate people under the guise of Osee's dealings with his adulterous wife. As this prophet whom He had called to be His witness dwelt solitary and disgraced in his house of sorrow, too manly to endure his shame without a husband's protest, and yet too full of love and tenderness for the woman he had once trusted to cast her off forever, so God Who is the divine Husband of His elect people sits apart in awful isolation, full of anger and threatenings for the sin committed against Him, yet full of a consuming pity, too, which it needs the larger revelation of Christianity to understand, if only the careless spouse for whom His heart is still hungry will enter into herself and return.

CCXXVII

THE WANTON SOUL

For the land shall commit grievous fornication, departing from the Lord:

THE sensitiveness of love may be gauged by its capacity for pain. It is a force poised in equilibrium. A word or a thought may send it spinning through un-

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dreamed-of grooves of change. It has as many possibilities of sorrow as the horizon of its holier expectations is limitless with joy. Its arcs measure from hell to heaven; and only those who *are taught of God* can fix its distances, or translate the sweep of its emotions into language that the unspoiled soul may understand. When it is absolutely unspurious, that is to say, when it is wholly free from the lust of self-seeking, whether in wordly vanity or in unchecked carnal desire, it becomes titanic in its ventures. It will sound all deeps, scale all heights, gaze unblenched into the stoniest face of despair. Into one gulf alone it can never bring itself to look. It cannot contemplate the possibility of unfaithfulness. It is rightly persuaded that death lurks in that direction—death, and night, and chaos, and the blasphemies of the nethermost pit. To know that the body of its worship has profaned its plighted chastity by an alien and disloyal joy—that is the one ineffable wound in the house of its beloved from which it begs ever to be spared. The thing is not to be thought of; to name it is a scandal and an evil omen in its ears. So are good wives and husbands fashioned in a world in which Christ walked. All Christian spouses are pledges and symbols of the eternal union which exists between Our Lord and His Church. To violate the sacrament of their own personal and covenanted tenderness is like tearing asunder the embrace in which He holds the universe of elect souls. Here is where the grief of a pure man comes nearest to the grief of God. Earth can have no tragedy like it; yet Jehovah suffered it in Israel's case, making

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of Osee's bitter experience the parable in which He revealed the height and depth and width of His love. He suffers it over again in Our Lord's Person, when He beholds the soul turn from Him like a wanton and go back to the shame of the *daughters of fornication* from among whom He once wooed and rescued her. He is a patient Husband and a forgiving one, when the wedded conscience is in question. He mourns over its lapses from fidelity, even as the prophet mourned over the sin of Gomer. Poignant and passionate as the tale is, the imagery it affords is too poor to portray the salvific will as we know it in Christ and in the ordinances of His Church. A mortal sin sets the divine Bridegroom at nought. It is an adultery of the redeemed and espoused spirit, an offence against that marriage of the heart in which we were dedicated to His delights, when He claimed us body and soul in baptism. And yet the love that inspired Him to stoop to our low estate is willing to stoop once more, if we but seek Him in repentance. Our frowardness shall be made fair. We shall come forth out of the desert of an uncomely past *leaning upon His arm, as in the days of our first espousals*, made glad, as a bride is gladdened, by the bravery of *the dyed garments of Bosra*. The Passion which was the proof of His first love is the proof also of His second; the Blood that redeems us in baptism is the Blood that saves us when we seek Him in tears in the confessional. *I will speak to her heart; and I will give her vine dressers out of the same place, and the valley of Achor for an*

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opening of hope; and she shall sing there according to the days of her youth, and according to the days of her coming up out of Egypt. And it shall be in that day, saith the Lord, that she shall call Me: My Husband, and she shall call Me no more Baali. . . . I will betroth thee to Me forever; I will betroth thee to Me in justice, in judgment, in loving-kindness, and in tender mercies; I will betroth thee to Me in faith; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord.

CCXXVIII

THE TRUE CENSORSHIP

Let no man judge: let no man be rebuked:

FEW of us know how to take correction well; not because fewer still know how to administer it *in the spirit of meekness*; but because the consistently spiritual—*οἱ πνευματικοί*—are so rare to find. St. Paul says: *If a man be overtaken in any fault they who are spiritual should instruct such an one in the spirit of meekness:* The point of the advice seems to be quite as much in the restriction which is placed upon the character of the censors as in the caution which is added with regard to the fulfilment of one of the most difficult duties of the Catholic life. Christianity is not really at issue with Judaism in this matter; nor is St. Paul as a teacher opposed to Osee. The Prophet's warning against judgment and re-

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buke was based upon the unspiritual character of the generation to which he addressed himself. St. Paul's advice, on the other hand, is a kind of corollary to the view he everywhere asserts as to the privileges of the *πνευματικοί*. Many of us are, indeed, *alive in the Spirit*; but how many of us *walk also in the Spirit*? These last alone seem to justify their right to be described by the bold epithet that the Apostle employs; because these last alone have *first crucified their own flesh with its leanings and its more definite lusts. They have proved themselves Christ's.* The spiritual, or *οἱ πνευματικοί*, therefore, who are best fitted for the work of correction in a parish, a religious community or a private household,—all these are Israels in miniature—are they in whom familiarity with the Holy Ghost has begotten a habit of *charitableness, of joy and peace and patience, together with a long-suffering mind; in whom gentleness, good nature, faith, meekness and sobriety of temperament have usurped the place of impersonal law.* What wonder that such souls succeed when the more iron-hearted fail! They not only represent, they are, in a sense, the New Dispensation before which the terrors and rigorisms of the Old, as it is put before us in the denunciations of Osee, tend to disappear. They embody the fruits of the Spirit in their own mysterious individualism.

They are censors by the suffrage of the Holy Ghost; they have a right to plead; they have a right to pass sentence—is it not written that *the spiritual man judgeth all things?*—but they are never ill-natured; never cyni-

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cal; never fore-vouched to condemnation. Their pronouncements are as irresistible as Our Lord's. They judge; and their rebuke is without hurt. The lapsed saint in us bows instinctively to the sweet reproach of a look which is as a candle thrust suddenly into our gloom. The gaze that converted the too-protesting Peter is renewed. *Deep calls to deep!*

Through such souls alone
God stooping shows sufficient of His light
For us in dark to rise by; and we rise.

CCXXIX

MULTIPLIED SIN

For three crimes of Damascus, and for four I will not convert it:

THE danger of multiplied sin lies chiefly in this, that it makes the way of repentance more difficult. We speak of case-hardened transgressors and we speak of weak transgressors; but in one sense both classes are akin. It is habit that fortifies the natural repugnance of the Christian conscience to a course of guilt. A beginning of final impenitence lies always in the second and the third sin.

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CCXXX

THE FOOLISHNESS OF EDM

*Behold, I have made thee as a child among the heathen:
thou art greatly despised:*

RELIGION sobers character and lends gravity to it. In the measure in which Christians forget the responsibilities of their creed and consent to become like the worldlings about them, in that measure do they deteriorate and take on anew the frowardness and whimsicalities of unrestrained childhood. They fail, too, in the very prize for which they have surrendered their birthright. They hope to acquire the respect of the non-believer; and they succeed only in winning his secret scorn.

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