UNDER HIS SHADOW
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Devotional Studies in the Sacred Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ

BY THE REVEREND FRANCIS SHEA, C.P.

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TO THE
IMMACULATE VIRGIN MOTHER
MARY,
FIRST, SINGULAR, PERFECT FRUIT
OF THE
PASSION AND DEATH
OF HER
DIVINE AND ONLY SON
JESUS

"Before her, the like was never seen nor shall there ever be such another."  (Office of the Church.)
"The breath of our mouth, Christ, the Lord, is taken on our sins: to Whom we said: "Under Thy shadow we shall live among the Gentiles." (Lam. 4:20.)

"They shall be converted that sit under His shadow: they shall live upon wheat and they shall blossom as the vine: His memorial shall be as the wine of Libanus." (Osee 14:8.)

"As the apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my Beloved among the sons. I sat down under His shadow, Whom I desired: and His fruit was sweet to my palate." (Cant. 2:3.)
# CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUBLISHERS' NOTE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDER HIS SHADOW</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;If indeed you mean to make Me King, come ye and rest under My Shadow.&quot; (Judges 9:15.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE BROKEN ALABASTER BOX</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;... an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness.&quot; (Eph. 5:2.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE ANGEL OF THE AGONY</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;... Because thou art a man of desires: therefore, do thou mark the word and understand the vision.&quot; (Dan. 9:23.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE PURCHASING OF SALVATION</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;... redeeming the time, because the days are evil.&quot; (Eph. 5:16.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOUGHT WITH A GREAT PRICE</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;... waiting for ... the redemption of the body.&quot; (Rom. 8:23.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE KING OF KINGS</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;... and the Lamb shall overcome them, because He is the Lord of Lords and Kings of Kings ...&quot; (Apoc. 17:14.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTS OF GOD</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;... to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be saints.&quot; (Rom. 8:28.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE SINLESS SUFFERER ........................................ 64
"... because it was His own will..." (Is. 53:7.)

FOR A REMEMBRANCE .............................................. 73
"... that they should make the same known to their children." (Ps. 77:3.)

THE KINDNESS OF GOD OUR SAVIOUR ...................... 85
"... not by the works of justice, which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us..." (Titus 3:4, 5.)

A THROW OF THE DICE ............................................ 97
"... making little account of having sold his first birthright." (Gen. 25:34.)

OUR LADY OF PITY .................................................. 105
"... by reason of the distress and tribulation of thy people..." (Judith 13:25.)

THE PLACE OF THE SKULL ......................................... 113
"... that He might taste death for all." (Heb. 2:9.)

THE HOLY OF HOLIES .............................................. 121
"... a new and living way which He hath dedicated for us through the veil, that is to say, His Flesh..." (Heb. 10:20.)

CROSS AND TOMB .................................................... 130
"... the Power of God and the Wisdom of God." (I Cor. 1:24.)

A LEADER TO THE PEOPLE ......................................... 137
"... which Thou hast redeemed." (Ex. 15:13.)

LEARN OF ME .......................................................... 146
"... for they shall possess the land." (Matt. 5:4.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WATCHING JESUS</strong></td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; . . . the Author and Finisher of faith . . .&quot; (Heb. 12: 2.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DISCIPLES BY NIGHT</strong></td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; . . . who at the first came to Jesus by night . . .&quot; (John 19: 39.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE DELIVERER IN BONDS</strong></td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; . . . Who brought thee out of the house of bondage . . .&quot; (Ex. 20: 2.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE TOKEN OF VICTORY</strong></td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; . . . in the day of my trouble . . .&quot; (Ps. 85: 7.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP</strong></td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; . . . Let us make him a help like unto himself.&quot; (Gen. 2: 18.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE SON AND THE MOTHER</strong></td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I will go and see this great sight.&quot; (Ex. 3: 3.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;BOWING HIS HEAD——&quot;</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;He will be mindful forever of His Covenant.&quot; (Ps. 110: 5.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;IN THE EVENING OF MY THOUGHT&quot;</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;And with Him they crucify two thieves.&quot; (Mark 15: 17.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A MEMORIAL BEFORE THE EYES</strong></td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Till the day break and the shadows retire, I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense.&quot; (Cant. 4: 6.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PUBLISHERS’ NOTE

These devotional studies in the Sacred Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ appeared originally in THE SIGN, a national Catholic monthly magazine published by the Passionist Fathers in Union City, New Jersey. They were so highly appreciated on their first appearance that it was deemed advisable to gather them together in a permanent form. In consenting to the publication of this book the author had only one motive—to increase the number of those who in thought and act dwell “Under His Shadow.”
UNDER HIS SHADOW

"If indeed you mean to make Me King, come ye and rest under My Shadow." (Judges 9:15.)

ON CALVARY our Redeemer wrought the salvation of mankind. By the sacrifice of His life He satisfied God's justice for the sins of men and gained for them the grace to attain eternal happiness. Here we have the essential fact and the chief effects of our Redemption, the great mystery of God's Mercy and Goodness. The response that springs from our hearts for such an unmerited favour should be one of lasting gratitude. But tribute must also be given to the Wisdom of God in bestowing this benefit on men. One aspect of this Wisdom is seen in the harmony that emerges from the contemplation of the scene of the Fall and the scene of the Redemption: Eden and Golgotha, a beautiful garden and a barren rock, "a paradise of pleasure" and "the place of the skull," the shade of a tree and the shadow of the Cross.

The tree of knowledge of good and evil stood in the paradise of pleasure. God had commanded Adam and Eve that they should not eat of its fruit. "For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it thou
shall die the death.’” Labour and shame, ignorance and concupiscence, disease and death waited upon their disobedience to this solemn command. These forbidding words should have made them shun the tree as they would a gallows about to bear the fruit of death. But in the branches of this tree the wily serpent, Satan, established his pulpit and began with envious cunning to deceive the human race. He incited the innocent pair to unbelief, disobedience, sensuality.

“‘And the serpent said to the woman: ‘No, you shall not die the death. For God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened: and you shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.’” Never before did the tree appear so attractive. “‘And the woman saw that the tree was good to eat and fair to the eyes and delightful to behold: and she took of the fruit thereof and did eat and gave to her husband who did eat.’” Thus did man forfeit the friendship of God, and bring on himself untold misery. A fair tree, bearing fruit delightful to behold, used as a pulpit by the devil to inspire man with his own proud aspiration to become like unto God, finally becomes a gibbet rotten with death, a gallows bearing the ghastly remains of both spiritual and physical life.

In redeeming man God reverses this scene with an admirable and adorable Wisdom. Evil must be
stripped of its fair appearance; a true way of becoming like unto God must be taught; a tree of life must be supplied. All this was done in the shadow of the Cross. For the Cross of Christ is a gibbet, a pulpit, a tree. On the gibbet hangs the Victim Who was bruised for our offences; in the pulpit is the Teacher Who has the words of eternal life; on the tree hangs the Fruit which satisfies every desire of the hungry soul. In the dark shadow cast by the gibbet the soul learns to abhor the loathsome thing called Sin which brought the Lord of Life to an ignominious death. There is born the solemn resolution voiced by the prophet: “The breath of our mouth, Christ the Lord, is taken in our sins: to Whom we said: ‘Under Thy Shadow we shall live among the Gentiles.’” (Lam. 4:20.)

In the shelter of this pulpit the soul is converted from the ignorance of the flesh to the saving knowledge of Jesus Crucified. The pure pleasure experienced in this study and the progress made in virtue find expression in the words: “They shall be converted that sit under His Shadow: they shall live upon wheat and they shall blossom as the vine: His memorial shall be as the wine of Libanus.” (Osee 14:8.) In the pleasing shade of this tree the soul is protected from the fierce heat of temptation and delights in the love of Him “Who loved me and delivered Himself for me.” There the heart overflows
in declaring how abundantly He fills the hungry with good things: "As the apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my Beloved among the sons. I sat down under His Shadow, Whom I desired: and His fruit was sweet to my palate." (Cant. 2:3.)

It is important to note that the Fall was—as every sin is—the result of a meditation. Adam and Eve stood in dangerous proximity to the forbidden tree, under its very shadow. They listened without protest to the deceitful promise of Satan that they would be as gods. They reflected on his words with a deliberation clearly brought out in the words of the sacred writer: "The woman saw that the tree was good to eat and fair to the eyes and delightful to behold." On this meditation followed the fatal consent.

No less is meditation required if we wish to share in the Redemption of Christ. It is necessary to dwell close to Jesus Crucified to acquire any adequate knowledge of the evil of sin and to gain any measure of confidence in our efforts to conquer it. We must resolve with David, "In the shadow of Thy wings will I hope until iniquity pass away." Then we can share with him also the reward of so doing: "He hath sent from heaven and delivered me: He hath made them a reproach that trod upon me. God hath sent His mercy and His truth and He hath delivered my soul." (Ps. 56.)
Mere deliverance from evil is a perilous state unless we devote ourselves to the practice of virtue. We must, then, turn to our "Teacher of justice" in the pulpit of the Cross. Under His Shadow we hear doctrines undreamed of by the philosophers who walked and talked under the trees of Athens. There theory prevailed, but no example of virtuous living was offered to eager disciples. This is not surprising when we study the chosen people of God; they too had teachers, teachers who were the lawful successors of Moses. In that capacity Jesus Himself respected them and urged the multitudes and His disciples to respect and obey them. "All things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do." But He was forced to add, "But according to their works do ye not, for they say and do not." (Matt. 23:3.)

The way of virtue cannot be learned in the shaded groves of speculative philosophy nor in the darkened cloisters of a patternless religion. We must turn in all earnestness to the Pattern shown us on the Mount. In Jesus Crucified we see all virtues, real yet beautiful, sublime yet practical. Meditation on them increases our desire to be like Him Who became Man to bring us back to the likeness of God through the imitation of His virtues.

Every soul that has turned away from evil and followed the path of virtue must sooner or later en-
counter temptation. No warrior is crowned unless he has endured the fierceness of the combat; no pilot is trusted unless he has brought his ship in safety through the storm; no teacher is worthy of a following unless by arduous study he has lessened the boundaries of ignorance. Effort is written indelibly in the laws of life. Spiritual life is no exception to these rules that govern the survival and expansion of life. Jesus on the Cross endured and came triumphantly through these tempests of temptation. Hence, those who abide under His Shadow are strong to endure and sure of success. "And there shall be a tabernacle for a shade in the daytime from the heat, and a security and covert from the whirlwind and the rain." (Is. 46.) Gratitude and courage shine out in the eyes that are directed to Him.

Happy are those who live under His Shadow and taste the delights of virtue! His fruit is sweet to the palate of those who hunger after eternal life. They cry out with David: "O how Thou hast multiplied Thy Mercy, O God. And the children of men shall put their trust under the covert of Thy wings. They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house: and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure. For with Thee is the fountain of life; and in Thy light we shall see light. Extend Thy mercy to them that know Thee and Thy justice to them that are right in heart." (Ps. 35.)
THE BROKEN ALABASTER BOX

"... an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness." (Eph. 5:2.)

SIX days before the Pasch, Jesus came to Bethany. He was on His way to Jerusalem and the Cross that awaited Him there. "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister Mary and Lazarus" (John 11:5.) and He desired to spend the last few days of His life with these friends who had often welcomed Him to their home and served His every want. Never was He greeted so gladly as on this occasion, for only a few weeks before He had raised Lazarus from the dead. Not only had He worked His greatest miracle for them but, in doing so, He had brought on Himself the wrath of the Chief Priests and the Pharisees.

While the sisters were rejoicing over the return of their brother from the tomb, and Lazarus was enjoying again the familiar scenes of life, these embittered men had gathered together in council where Caiphas delivered his inspired sentence: "It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people that the whole nation perish not." (John 11:50.) Thus did God speak through His representative who was, nevertheless, blind to the meaning
of his own words. (*John 11:51.*) From that day, therefore, they devised to put Jesus to death and gave orders that if any man knew where He was, he should tell, that they might apprehend Him. Lazarus, too, became the object of their hatred; they even thought to kill him, because he stood a living witness to the power of Jesus and ‘because many of the Jews, by reason of him, went away and believed in Jesus.’ (*John 12:10, 11.*)

It was then—because His hour was not yet come—that Our Lord retired into a place near the desert and there abode with His disciples. At last He set out for Jerusalem and on the way He told the disciples, for the third time and in greater detail, the things that would come to pass there: ‘Behold, we go up to Jerusalem and all things shall be accomplished which are written by the prophet concerning the Son of Man. For He shall be delivered to the Gentiles and shall be mocked and scourged and spit upon and crucified.’ (*Matt. 20:17-19; Mark 10:33, 34; Luke 18:31-33.*)

How slow they were to understand! James and John immediately asked that they might sit, one on His right hand and the other on His left, in His Kingdom! And the others, hearing it, began to be much displeased with them. (*Mark 10:35-41.*) And so the journey continued until it ended on Friday evening at the home of Lazarus.
The next day, being the Sabbath, was spent in bodily repose, but also in great spiritual activity on the part of the Master. It was His last day of rest on earth. The dawn of another Sabbath would find Him at rest in the tomb, His work finished. The shadow of death was over Him. Hatred was awaiting only a favourable moment to exert all its fury upon Him; around Him were ignorant disciples, far removed from any sympathetic understanding of His feelings. He seemed to be alone in a world that was deliberately cruel or ignorantly unsympathetic. But there was one there who understood, one who in long contemplative silences had learned to read in His eyes unspoken thoughts, and to interpret the meaning of His slightest gesture. For nothing can be hidden from the love that has no thought of self, that is wholly absorbed in the Beloved. Mary Magdalen saw the cloud on Christ's brow, read the whole story of distress and pain in His darkening eyes, noted the weariness and tension alternate in His gestures. She forms her own conclusions and makes her resolves.

That evening at supper in the house of Simon the Leper she took an alabaster box of precious ointment, a pound in weight. She approached Jesus and, breaking the box, poured the precious perfume upon His Head. Then she anointed His feet and wiped them with her hair. She had done what she
could to express the deep feelings of her heart toward Him Who had raised her up from a life of sin, Who had called her brother from death to life and Who was now facing some dark destiny not fully known to her. Before it was too late, she would lavish on Him the most precious thing she had—a box of perfume worth in present value about sixty dollars.

No sooner had the odour of the ointment filled the house, than Judas Iscariot, the man with the money mind, raised horrified hands and complained of such extravagance. Some of the disciples joined him in calling this most beautiful action a sinful waste. What must Jesus have thought as He looked upon the man who has wasted all the graces given him—the three years of His company, the call to be an Apostle, the friendship of the Incarnate God—and who would so soon sell for twenty dollars the Master upon Whose Person Mary was glad to "waste" sixty. But He ignores the traitor and the black deed concealed in his heart and He speaks words that show how deeply He was moved by the noble, generous act of Mary: "Let her alone: why do you molest her? She hath wrought a good work upon Me. . . . She hath done what she could: she is come beforehand to anoint My Body for the burial." (Mark 14:6-8.)

With His thoughts on death, this act of hers touched His Heart profoundly, that Heart about
which the sorrows of death were creeping, that Heart so soon to be alone with the ugly shapes of the world’s sin, that human Heart which will be pierced by the treachery of Judas and made desolate by the desertion of His friends. It was a gracious and a kindly act, a brave deed, a work of love. Never did Jesus show so much human emotion as He does now, revealing how deeply He was touched by the generous sympathy of Mary as He was entering into the shadows. Using His most emphatic words, He continues: “Amen I say to you wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world that also which she hath done shall be told for a memorial of her.” (Mark 14:9.) He never said anything about the kingly gifts given by the Wise Men, nor did He point out incident or miracle as a thing to be told. But here He solemnly commissions His Apostles to tell this. Wherever they bring glad tidings of Redemption, wherever they speak to men about Him, His doctrines and His death, they must also tell about this woman who did what she could to express her sympathy and to cheer Him on the eve of His sorrowful Passion.

And thus the story of Christ’s Passion, according to Matthew, Mark and John, begins with this memorial of her; and Catholic art, inspired by this incident as well as by the actual words of the scene on Calvary, places Mary Magdalen at the foot of
the Cross. Above is the broken Body of Christ; from a thousand rents pours the precious ointment of His healing and purifying Blood on the head of Magdalen—the woman who had loved much and who had done what she could. And there is no one there to ask, "Why this waste?" Because Judas, "having hanged himself," his broken body lies on the rocks at the foot of a gully. The despicable lover of money had wasted his life and made his memory a thing of shame.

And so today we have Magdalens and Judases—those who "waste" everything on Jesus and those who seek only personal profit from Him. Generous souls have taken their lives, broken them and poured them out upon Him. Life was their own to do with as they pleased, to use for their own pleasure or to share it with others. They might even have poured it out on others, giving them sweetness and joy; they could still keep the thing itself as a possession to have and to enjoy. But how immeasurably more beautiful it appeared to them to break it into pieces by Poverty and Obedience and to pour upon the Lover of Souls all the chaste love of their hearts. And so they "waste" their lives in convents and monasteries while the Church of God is filled with odour of their virtues. And the broken bodies of missionaries lie on the barren soil of pagan countries but there is no stench of death about them, but
rather "an odour of sweetness, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God." (Phil. 4:18.)

The world will criticize and complain in the very words of the indignant disciples, "To what purpose is this waste?" They will be ready to point out many ways in which these precious lives could have been used. These points of resemblance between them and the complaining disciples led on by Judas should make them pause. Magdalen was condemned by one who was about to perpetrate the foulest sin of treachery and by those cowardly followers who were about to abandon their Master in His dark hour. So it is with these souls. They are criticized by those who value Jesus at very little and who would sell Him for personal gain and by those of little spiritual understanding and of ungenerous heart who deny Jesus even the common courtesies of life. Well might Our Lord say to all such:

"Let them alone. They have wrought a good work upon Me. They have done what they could. They were a consolation to Me in suffering My Passion. I saw them in the reckless abandonment of love hastening to pour out their lives as a tribute of sympathy for Me. When the vision of sin was before Me in the Garden I saw also their innocent hearts, pure souls and chaste bodies, broken by the vows of religion, by labour in obscure and fruitless tasks, by the red hand of the persecutor, by penance
for the sins of the world. Hearts broken by sorrow and pouring out tears of lasting repentance soothed the Agony in which I wept blood. The kiss of Judas that seared My cheek like a hot iron was endured by the consolation I felt for so much genuine affection and deathless loyalty. When I hung upon the Cross and poured out from a broken Body every drop of My Precious Blood, ‘more precious than myrrh and all the compositions of perfumers,’ I already heard them say, ‘We will run after Thee to the odour of Thy ointments.’ In that stream of salvation, they mingle their lives and become, as My Apostle said, ‘The good odour of Christ, making manifest the fragrance of the knowledge of Me in every place.’ (2 Cor. 2:14.) Why then do you molest them? What they have done shall be told for an everlasting memorial before the admiring throngs of the elect.’

In this manner, we may imagine, would Jesus today rebuke those who look upon the religious, the priestly, the missionary life as waste, and who have only words of scorn for those devoted souls living exceptional lives of piety outside cloister walls. But the world will neither heed nor learn. It will continue to lead its self-complacent life and frown upon every generous impulse of love for Jesus Crucified.

But generous souls will continue to go to Calvary, the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense,
for "the pleasure of odour is a pleasure of remembrance...the magical appeal of sensation to countless memories." They remember—memory plays about it continually—that "Christ also loved us and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness." (Eph. 5:2.) They will always be drawn by the fragrance of that sacrifice to look upon the Body that was broken for them, on Him Who "emptied Himself," on the Blood that was "wasted" on such even as Judas, on a cold and unresponsive world. They look until they too are seized with the same Divine impulses to "waste" something precious on Him. They take Life, so full of all that is good and precious—love, wealth, pleasure, ambition—and break it against the Cross and pour its contents on Him. The Heart of Jesus is made glad, another sacrifice is added to His own, the fruits of His Passion receive increase, the odour of virtue spreads through the Church, other souls are drawn to Him. But we who will never know, except in the light of eternity, the far-reaching results of their generous act, must rest here, content only to hear again the quiet but emphatic words: "They have wrought a good work upon Me."
THE ANGEL OF THE AGONY

"... Because thou art a man of desires: therefore, do thou mark the word and understand the vision." (Dan. 9:23.)

THE instructions given by Our Lord on the subject of Prayer are among His most emphatic utterances. It was a subject to which He returned again and again. He taught the necessity of Prayer and its efficacy: He pointed out the dispositions they should have who offer their petitions to God—the state of grace, attention, humility, confidence and perseverance. He urges us to pray in His Name, to pray in common, to pray always. In the Our Father, He gave a model on which we are to fashion our prayers. Along with these instructions, He Himself set an example that excited the admiration of His disciples, for "it came to pass that as He was in a certain place praying, when He ceased, one of His disciples said to Him: 'Lord, teach us to pray.'" In the lonely deserts, on quiet mountain tops, morning and evening, before and after meals, sometimes through the entire night Jesus communed with His Father. Before undertaking any important work, He prepared Himself by prayer and on
all the great occasions in His life, He engaged in this holy exercise.

Most impressive of all was the example He gave in the Garden of Olives on the last night of His life. What He later revealed to Saint Margaret Mary leads us to believe that He suffered more in the Garden than He did through the rest of His Passion. And yet, the Church has no Mass or Office of the Agony as such. With a wisdom inspired from above, she names the Feast celebrated on the Friday after Septuagesima Sunday, the Feast of the Prayer of Our Lord Jesus Christ on Mount Olivet. It is precisely because Jesus suffered so much there that His example in prayer is all the more remarkable.

Entering the Garden, He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad; He began to fear and to be heavy. \((\text{Matt. } 26:37; \text{Mark } 14:33)\) Both Evangelists use the word “‘began.’” The dark waters of sorrow and sadness, of fear and heaviness kept creeping in on His soul, like the tides of a mighty ocean, until He was overwhelmed in their bitter depths. There was sorrow for the sins of the world by which His Father was continuously outraged—foul, disgusting, brutal sins by those whose humanity He has assumed: sadness at the thought of the ingratitude He would receive from men, of the souls who would be lost in spite of His Sufferings—of the few who would generously and whole-heartedly respond to His love:
fear of the morrow—of the terrible lash, the spitting on His Face, the piercing thorns, His blasphemous rejection; of the Cross, the sharp nails, the bitter gall, the agonizing death: the heaviness, the shrinking of His sensitive body from all this pain, the burden of all His sorrows, the heaped-up iniquities of the world. All these things grew apace in His soul, their weight on His mind and heart forcing the blood through His pores until it fell in drops to the ground.

Through all this mighty struggle, this harrowing of His soul, Jesus prayed with increasing intensity, for we read, "Being in an agony He prayed the longer." (Luke 22:43.) It is in just such circumstances that men neglect prayer most, as we see in the conduct of the disciples, for when Jesus rose up from prayer and was come to them, He found them sleeping for sorrow. (Luke 22:45.) He, in the midst of unutterable grief, prayed: they, troubled only by their own personal worries, resorted to slumber in order to escape them. He is the perfect model of those who pray; they are an example to those who neglect the Saviour's teaching that "we ought always to pray and not to faint." (Luke 18:1.)

From the Prayer of Our Lord in the Garden we learn also that God always answers prayer. Not every request is granted but an answer always comes
THE ANGEL OF THE AGONY

and that when we need it most and is the very thing we need most. Those who are tried by the ordeal of what they call "unanswered prayer" will find consolation by turning to Jesus in Gethsemani. His prayer was not an unconditional request that the chalice might pass from Him. If He had petitioned His Father in that manner, there would have been no suffering, no death for Him, for the Father always heareth Him. (John 11:42.) Since salvation for man through His Passion and Death was God's eternal purpose, why did Jesus pray as He did? Was it a waste of words, a useless occupation, a mere delay in the work of Redemption? We know that God did send an answer: "And there appeared to Him an angel from Heaven." Immediately after the appearance of the heavenly messenger, we read: "And His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground." Just before His agony reached a climax, just when the sorrow and sadness and weight of the world's sins were heaviest upon Him an answer was granted.

Who was the Angel of the Agony? Was it Michael? His name means, Who is like to God? It was he who swiftly gathered together the good angels and, raising the battle-cry from which he received his name, cast out of heaven Lucifer and his rebellious followers. He is the standard-bearer of God's armies, the terror of demons, "appointed
prince over the ingathering of souls.” (Office of St. Michael.) Was he now come to raise the old battle-cry, to inspire Our Lord to go forth and gain the final victory over the devil and break the power of sin? But Jesus had no need of a battle-cry to nerve Himself for the conflict. At His entrance into the world, He declared, “I have come to do Thy Will, O God.” Later on He said, “I do always the things that please my Father.” Again in the Supper Room He revealed His mind, “As the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I. Arise, let us go hence.” In the Garden He prayed, saying the self-same word, “Thy will be done.” He rebuked the zeal of Peter in striking the servant of the High-Priest, with his sword: “Thinkest thou that I cannot ask My Father and He will give Me presently more than twelve legions of angels?” It was not Michael, then, who appeared to Him. Besides, it is commonly believed that Michael was Our Lord’s Guardian Angel while the Angel of the Agony was a special messenger.

Was it Raphael whose name means, The Medicine God? It was he who guided the young Tobias on a long journey, saved him from the dangers of the way, brought him to a happy marriage with the holy Sara, whose seven unworthy husbands had died, and finally led him back in safety to cure his blind old father. Was he now come to guide Jesus on the
long Journey to the Cross and Tomb and back again to life, to save Him from the unnecessary cruelties leading to His death, to lead Him to a happy marriage with Humanity, to open His eyes blinded by tears of blood? No, it was not Raphael. Jesus sought death, embraced every suffering that He might be our Physician, our Way, our Guide, our Light, our Spouse.

Was it, then, Gabriel whose name means, The Strength of God? It was he who announced to Mary the glad tidings of the Redemption near at hand. From among the angelic hosts, he was chosen to convey the momentous message. Who could answer with more assurance the question of that sweet Maid of eternal predilection, the spotless human instrument of an ageless Triune Council—a question which is to us a simple, guileless confession that she is indeed a most chaste and prudent Virgin: “How shall this be done since I know not man?” He, who is called “The Strength of God,” answered: “The Power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” (Luke 1:34.) A tradition tells us that he was indeed the Angel of the Agony,—an opinion which seems to find support in the text, “And there appeared to Him an Angel from heaven strengthening Him.” It was just the grace that Jesus needed at the moment. It enabled
THE ANGEL OF THE AGONY

Him to bear the Agony at its height; it explains the calmness with which He meets His enemies and the fortitude with which He endures the sufferings which, by anticipation, caused such sadness, fear and heaviness.

There is an answer to every prayer. But we must first understand that the purpose of prayer is to enable us to do God's Will, not to make God do our will. God wills that we pray; He desires to bestow blessings upon us in order that we may do His work in this world. When the thing we ask is not expedient for us or His work, He sends us His strength—grace to endure our lot whether it be poverty, sickness, loneliness, family trials, disappointment in life's ambitions, or even the frustration of projects which seem to us to be purely for His glory. Even as Jesus received through prayer the strength to endure His Passion and to become the Saviour of the world, so we, using the same means, shall receive fortitude to bear our cross with Him and to be eternally numbered among the saved.
THE PURCHASING OF SALVATION

“. . . redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” (Eph. 5:16.)

MODERN times have seen the rise of the efficiency expert. Big business concerns employ him to see that employees of the company waste neither the time nor the goods that mean increased profits. This fact is but another illustration of the truth of Our Lord’s words, “The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.” (Luke 16:8.) Worldlings, engaged in material pursuits, waste neither time nor the goods that mean added riches, more pleasures and greater power, while “the children of light,” engaged in the Great Business of Salvation, waste much of the time given by God, in which they are to achieve success. Frequently, this waste leads to that eternal state of bankruptcy, which, in the language of Faith, is called Hell. Even when this waste of time is not such as to bring upon them this dire calamity it, nevertheless, deprives them of the possibility of laying up greater treasures in Heaven, of attaining a higher place in the hierarchy of Saints. It leads, on the other hand, to a long stay in the cleansing fires of Purgatory.
Merely from business principles and practices, such waste of time is to be deplored. But the business of salvation is not one to be coldly measured in terms of personal profit and loss. Such a viewpoint entirely overlooks the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ. Waste of time and of opportunity for merit is most impressively brought home to the believing mind when it is more truly designated as a waste of the Precious Blood and of those treasures of grace bought with an infinite price.

In order to purchase eternal salvation for us the Saviour of the world undertook stupendous labours and endured excruciating sufferings. He, Himself, lost no time in beginning this great work; for, on entering the world, His first conscious thought, the first movement of His Heart is a prayer to the Father, "Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not: but a body Thou hast fitted to Me: holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then said I: Behold I come: in the head of the book it is written of Me; that I should do Thy Will, O God." (Heb. 10:5-7.) Thus, in the first moment of His incarnate life, which was to last thirty-three years, He devoted and offered Himself to that Death which was to bring infinite glory to His Father and purchase eternal salvation for men. He would not waste one moment of the time allotted for this end.

The earnestness of His purpose is revealed by His
own ideas on waste. He condemns the unprofitable servant who, although he did not lose the talent committed to his keeping, failed through sloth to profit with it. He approves the shepherd, already rich in the possession of ninety-nine sheep, who goes in search of one that was lost. He is ready to cut down the tree which, after three years' cultivation, has borne no fruit. Above all, we have the instructive incident in St. John. Having fed five thousand men from "five loaves and two fishes," He commands the Apostles to "gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost." From all this it is easy to surmise His opinion on waste of time and that He Himself would lose none of it in continuing the work for which He entered into the world and to which He had dedicated His life.

The time of His Death approached—the goal of His life—the object of His Heart's desire—the attainment of His eternal purpose. He was to purchase everlasting salvation for men. He prepared for it by three long hours of agony and prayer. He spent a sleepless night in which He was the subject of fiendish cruelties. This was succeeded by a day that saw His Body ripped and torn by scourges, His head encircled with a crown of sharp thorns, His reputation gone, His friends in hiding, His body wracked with thirst and writhing in agony on the Cross, His soul giving expression to what seems to be the pains
of the damned, the last eighteen hours of His thirty-three years on earth devoted to sufferings beyond imagination. Almost all commentators have agreed that He miraculously prolonged His life during these excessive pains in order to suffer the more for the salvation of men.

It is evident from His life and His teaching, and especially from His Sacred Passion, that we have not too much time to merit salvation for ourselves. Eternal salvation is no cheap article that can be purchased by a few pious prayers or be bought by an occasional act of self-denial. It must be attained by a complete use of the time given by God for this end. To waste time is nothing else but jeopardizing the souls for which He suffered so much. It is cheating Him of the victory for which He strove so mightily, the treasure for which He sought so persistently. If the Eternal Son of God, the Beloved Son of His Father, suffered so long and so valiantly to merit salvation for men, how can we imagine sinful creatures being saved—men and women who waste so much time and do so little to merit everlasting happiness.

These thoughts are calculated to produce in our minds the salutary fear of which St. Peter speaks to the early Christians: "Converse [live] in fear during the time of your sojourning here. Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things
as gold and silver.... But with the Precious Blood of Christ as of a Lamb unspotted and undefiled.'" (1 Peter 17:19.) Or as St. Paul wrote to the Hebrews: "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3.) "For if, flying from the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they be again entangled in them and overcome: their latter state is become unto them worse than the former. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of justice than, after they have known it, to turn back from that holy commandment which was delivered to them." (2 Peter 2:20, 21.)

In this manner did these two Apostles instill into the hearts of their hearers a fear of losing the salvation that cost Christ so much. And, having accomplished that, they went on to point out that they have not too much time in which to attain it. "The day of the Lord shall come as a thief.... What manner of people then ought you to be in holy conversation and godliness?" (2 Peter 3:10, 11.) St. Paul speaks more at length: "For yourselves, know perfectly that the day of the Lord shall so come, as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, peace and security, then shall sudden destruction come upon them.... But you brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. For all you are children of the light and children
of the day.... Therefore let us not sleep, as others do: but let us watch and be sober, ... having on the breastplate of faith and charity and, for a helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us unto wrath but unto the purchasing of salvation by Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us; that, whether we watch or sleep, we may live together with Him.’’ (1 Thess. 5:2-10.) With so much at stake, he warns them: “See, therefore, brethren, how you walk circumspectly [looking in all directions for possible dangers]; not as unwise, but as wise: redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” (Eph. 5:15, 16.)

In the words of one of his learned commentators, he seems to say: “Should we not be as avaricious of this priceless treasure of time, as the miser is of his hoard, for every moment of which we shall one day be called upon to account? How careful should we be to work while the day lasts, to lay up a treasure of merit against that dreary, never-ending night of eternity, in which no one can work. Knowing that there cannot be too much security when eternity is at stake, and that the most important of all concerns—the only necessary end of our being—cannot be left to mere chance, how careful should we be to have our lamps trimmed, and be ever ready for the coming of our heavenly Bridegroom, that when He shall come in the middle of the night
—the time He may least be expected—we may, after having wisely “redeemed the time,” be found worthy, with the wise Virgins, to be admitted to that marriage feast in which his friends shall join without fear of its ever terminating for all eternity. How frequently should we ponder, in the heart, on these dreadful words: *Ever, Never. Ever* to continue: *Never* to end. Oh! precious moment of time, on which depends an eternity, whether of happiness or woe.” (MacEvilly.)

The scene on Calvary illustrates all this most vividly. Two men—criminals—hung by the side of the suffering Saviour. They were both witnesses of the most momentous event in the history of the world—the Son of God dying in lingering torments for the salvation of sinners. Each knew about how long he should live. One spent that short space of time in blaspheming and mocking that Divine Victim, Who was then atoning for the sins of his mis-spent life and meriting for him the grace of salvation. In that state, he passed into eternity where only a merciful Redeemer has the right to judge him. The other thief spent his time gazing on the Crucified. He heard those Divine words of forgiveness; he was impressed by that superhuman patience; he gradually come to believe that this Sufferer was more than man. Thus step by step, he arrived at Faith, then Contrition, then humble
Prayer, and, finally, he heard those magnificent words of promise, "This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." This one wisely "redeemed the time," while the other will always serve as a horrible example of time wasted. The Precious Blood of Jesus that could redeem a million worlds was shed before his very eyes and all in vain. The Death of Jesus that appeased a just God, that atoned for the myriad sins of men, that purchased eternal salvation for the whole human race, was to him of no avail.

No subject that has relation to the Passion of Christ should end on a note of fear. It was entirely a work of Love—a Love that sought to repair the injury done to His Father's glory and the damage brought on the souls of men by sin. The Apostle who, in one magnificent gesture of repudiation, swept aside the more conspicuous and spectacular acts of religion that were not accompanied with charity, would have us work for and serve the Crucified from a motive of Love. It is his desire and express counsel: "All whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him," (Col. 3:17.)

It was the love of Christ that moved Him to begin, continue and to complete the work of human Redemption. And St. Paul believes that the same motive should characterize the service we render to
Him. He believes that, if men would think more of the sacrifice and the love of Christ, they would live their lives and use their time under that most compelling of motives—the Love of the Crucified. "The Charity of Christ presseth us: judging this that if One died for all, then all were dead. And Christ died for all: that they also, who live, may not now live to themselves but unto Him Who died for them." (2 Cor. 5:14, 15.)

To live such a life is the highest tribute of gratitude that can be paid to Him Who died for us. It glorifies the Precious Blood by gathering up its boundless and priceless merits. Such a life fulfills the very end for which Jesus came down from Heaven and suffered the ignominious Death of the Cross. "For the grace of God Our Saviour hath appeared to all men; instructing us that, denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live soberly and justly and godly in this world, looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God and Our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity and might cleanse to Himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works." (Titus. 2:11-14.)
BOUGHT WITH A GREAT PRICE

“... waiting for ... the redemption of the body.”
(Rom. 8: 23.)

Of ALL the virtues dear to the Heart of Jesus, chastity holds the first place. It is safe to say that if a man read the Old Testament with any degree of intelligence and was informed that its pages foreshadowed Christ, he would immediately conclude that the Messiah would favour this virtue above all others.

In the Garden of Eden the knowledge and the shame of their nakedness came to the guilty pair even before God passed sentence upon them. Impurity was soon to become the strongest temptation against which fallen man was to contend and the principal cause of his falling away from God. The flood in the days of Noe came because God saw that the earth was corrupted, “for all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth.” (Gen. 6: 12.) The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha was due to the vice of impurity. Numerous prescriptions of the Old Law were laid down chiefly for the purpose of teaching the necessity of bodily purity and thus lead on to that purity of heart without which no one shall see
God. Strong Samson, devout David, wise Solomon were brought low through the sin of impurity.

Not one Saint of those days, though they spoke face to face with God, volunteered to practise the chastity which Jesus later invited His disciples to embrace. We cannot censure them for this, because so great is the beauty of this virtue that it was reserved for Jesus Himself to teach it and to merit it for His followers.

He taught more by example than by word, as though the matter was quite beyond even the marvelous gift of expression He possessed. He chose to have a virgin for His Mother; on the chaste He bestowed that special affection which among men is called friendship, but which, coming from Him, was a privilege beyond utterance. There are five persons mentioned in the Gospels of whom it is expressly said that Jesus loved them. There was Saint John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" and who was inspired by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, to make this declaration five times in his Gospel. There was also the rich young man who had kept all the commandments from his youth. "And Jesus looking on him loved him." Again we read, "Jesus loved Martha and her sister Mary and Lazarus." (John 11:5.) Of the five, according to the more popular opinion, four were chaste and one had recovered her virtue. Only those seemed able
to approach Jesus who were chaste or who were inspired with a desire to become so.

The clean of heart saw His beauty and became enamoured of Him with a love that was everlasting. It was the preëminently chaste who followed Him step by step through His Sacred Passion and stood close to Him on the Cross. Among the mysteries contained in the opening of His Sacred Side we may surely include this—His desire to offer to the pure a retreat from a corrupt world and an example of a perfectly devoted love, emptied of all self-seeking.

With common accord the devout of all ages have turned to the Passion of Christ in order to be confirmed in the way of holy chastity. They have fixed their attention especially on His scourging at the pillar. Looking on Him there, they see the terrible expiation He offered for sins of the flesh; there they see bodily suffering in its most brutal form—deliberate and prolonged whipping—and they are urged by the example of Jesus to practise life-long, rigid, self-denial; to Jesus at the pillar, weltering in His Blood, they offer their petitions for the grace of purity, for they feel that the grace may be more surely obtained where Jesus suffered so shamefully and cruelly to merit it for His followers.

If Saints in solitary deserts and in secluded cloisters had need of this meditation to subdue the flesh it is far more necessary for us today. The body
with its appetites is the chief obstacle to salvation apart from the countless incentives to sin which abound in the modern world—a world in which chastity is so little regarded that a so-called Christian sect has publicly approved birth-control.

Holy Scripture tells us in one brief sentence the simple fact that Jesus was scourged: "Pilate therefore took Jesus and scourged Him." It was not necessary to give the gruesome details. Even in those barbarous times the mere mention of the scourging was sufficient to fill men with horror. And yet, in omitting all description of the actual scene of Our Lord's scourging, the Evangelists have deprived us of nothing. They have given an accurate account of the human elements that took part in it and have thus given us liberty to imagine the worst. Pilate did try to save Jesus from the death sentence demanded by the Jews. Being too much of a coward to refuse their demands once and for all, he compromised by ordering Jesus to be scourged. He hoped that one look at Jesus after that awful torture would move the Jews to cease their clamours for His death. On the other hand, the Jews, knowing Pilate's intention and fearful of losing their prey, would certainly urge on the soldiers to do their worst, even hoping that Jesus might die under the lash. It was to be a contest, so to speak, between pity and hate. The more cruelly Jesus was marked by the scourge, the
more likely He was to excite pity in the infuriated mob. In the event that Pilate should assert his manhood, follow his conscience and release Jesus, the Jews wanted the Victim to die from the effects of this savage torture.

Then, too, the Roman soldiers were to carry out this sentence. In a hostile country like Judea, where frequent rebellions occurred, it is likely that only the most fearless of the Roman army would be stationed. Trained to show no mercy to an enemy, even worthy foemen, they would be exceedingly cruel to Jews, so universally despised in those days. They knew that Jesus was accused of forbidding tribute to be paid to Cæsar, of seeking to stir up the people against Roman authority and of claiming to be a King. Here was an enemy of Cæsar, and they were delighted at the chance to punish Him and to make an example of Him for similar rebellious spirits. This was their temper as they led Jesus into the courtyard of the palace.

These pitiless men had Jesus completely in their power. The Jewish law ordained that the culprit be beaten but only with a rod and in the presence of the judges who were to stop the proceeding before the number of strokes exceeded forty, “least,” says the law, “thy brother depart shamefully torn before thy eyes.” But the Roman law contained no such humane requirements. Scourging was a punish-
ment inflicted only on slaves who, in the eyes of the law, had no more rights than a brute animal. If, as often happened, the poor slave died under the violence of the blows, his executioners were not held responsible for his death.

Stripped of His clothes, Jesus presented a Body that was extremely sensitive to pain because it was so perfectly and delicately formed. The eye is more perfectly and delicately formed than the hand and, consequently, the pain of having a thorn thrust into the hand bears no comparison with the pain of a thorn in the eye. So it was with the Body of Christ. The pain that He could feel bears no comparison with anything that we can experience of bodily suffering. Formed by God Himself in the virginal womb of His Blessed Mother, His Body was keenly sensitive to pain, all the more so, because it was fashioned for the express purpose of suffering in atonement for the sins of men.

That sacred Body is tied to a pillar and the soldiers prepare the scourges—horrible instruments of torture made of strips of leather tipped with sharp pieces of lead or bone. Over that blessed Body these scourges are raised. Wielded by brawny arms and directed by merciless hearts they fall on it, blow after blow. Red welts are raised, deep gashes are cut, and, finally, those terrible scourges are falling on raw, bleeding flesh; and still it goes on and on as
though these heartless men would strip the flesh from His bones as they stripped the garments from His Body.

It is impossible to describe the scene; we can scarcely contemplate it. The Prophet Isaias saw it in spirit and left a heart-rending description of it: "There is no beauty in Him nor comeliness; and we have seen Him, despised and the most abject of men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with infirmity. ... And we have seen Him, as it were, a leper and as one struck by God and afflicted. From the sole of the foot to the top of the head there is no soundness in Him, but wounds and bruises and swelling sores." Looking on His mangled and bleeding Body, the story comes to mind of the great Roman orator who held up before the people the robe of their assassinated Ruler. He pointed to the rents and cuts made in it by the daggers of the assassins. It was only the garment, not the body, and yet the audience was moved to tears. They paid him that tribute of affection and then they rushed in fury upon the murderers, drove them from the city and burned their houses to the ground.

The soul that contemplates, not the garments, but the very Body of the Son of God, torn by scourges, will conceive an undying affection for Him and will hasten to destroy all the works of the flesh. They will clothe themselves in chastity—a garment woven
from thoughts of Christ’s Passion and which is an invincible armour against all the fiery darts of the evil one. For St. Peter emphatically asserts, “Christ, therefore, having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought.” And St. Paul writes to those converts at Corinth among whom a terrible sin of impurity was committed and hastens to remind them that “Christ our Pasch is sacrificed.” (Cor. 5:7.) To preserve them from such sins, he declares again: “You are not your own. For you were bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body.” (Cor. 6:19, 20.) He brings forward the same motive to inculcate the observance of conjugal chastity and fidelity: “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies.”

In the contemplation of Jesus at the pillar these exhortations of the Apostles take on new meanings and chastity is embraced and practised. And it is the practice of chastity, more than any other virtue, which admits us into “the fellowship of His sufferings.” With Him we must watch and pray lest we enter into temptation. We must curb the impulses
of nature with the strong cords of self-denial. We must go in all humility before the judges of our souls in confession and accept the wise counsels which constitute a sentence of death on the unruly passion. We must submit to the scourge of mortification, lest we perish from the just way. (Ps. 2:12.) We must wear the thorns of constant vigilance to guard our thoughts. We must avoid idleness by taking up the cross of daily labour. We must endure the shame of differing from the world in a matter which it considers of little importance. We must bid farewell to those attachments of the heart which are merely carnal. We must thirst after that vision of God which is the reward of the pure of heart. We must suffer the heart to be pierced by the hard, sharp lance of chastity in order to give entrance to the Divine Lover Who endured in His virginal Body the cruel pain of a merciless scourging.
THE KING OF KINGS

“. . . and the Lamb shall overcome them, because He is the Lord of Lords and King of Kings . . .”
(Apec. 17:14.)

FROM the beginning, Jesus was set as a sign that should be contradicted. Prophetic language declared that He would be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to the two houses of Israel. Again, in Isaias, the Lord says: “I will proceed to cause an admiration in this people by a great and wonderful miracle: for wisdom shall perish from her wise men and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.” (Is. 29:14.)

Men wise in their own conceits were forever baffled when they studied His personality by the light of unaided reason, and those crafty ones who sought to ensnare Him were at every turn confounded. The first attempt on His life occurred in His own home town of Nazareth. He had lived among these people for nearly thirty years and then set out to begin His public ministry.

After working miracles in different parts of Galilee, He returned to Nazareth “where He was brought up.” “But He wrought not many miracles
there because of their unbelief.’’ He reproached them for it by showing from the Sacred Text that no prophet was accepted in his own country. Then we see the amazing spectacle: His own townsmen rushed Him to the brow of the hill with the intention of casting Him down headlong, but He saved Himself by a manifestation of His own power. The reason for this act of theirs is well expressed in their own bewildered words: ‘‘How came this man by His wisdom and miracles? Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not His Mother called Mary and His brethren James and Joseph and Simon and Jude? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Whence therefore hath He all these things?’’ (Matt. 13:54-58.)

Later, He brought confusion on His enemies by asking in effect, ‘‘How can David’s son be at the same time David’s Lord?’’ When He cured the man born blind, He made clay and spread it over the sightless eyes. Happening on the Sabbath, this miracle was considered by the Pharisees a violation of the law which forbade work. They said therefore: ‘‘This man is not of God Who keepeth not the Sabbath.’ But others said: ‘How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?’ and there was division among them.’’ (John 9:16.) He was indeed a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense.

But the most puzzling of all the conflicting elements in His life was His title of royalty. The
records showed that He was of the royal house of David. Three kings from the East came to Bethlehem asking, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and are come to adore Him." (Matt. 2:2.) They found Him at last and saw that His palace was a stable; His throne, a lowly manger; His retinue, His Mother and foster-father; His servants, an ox and an ass. There was no crown, sceptre, legions nor a kingdom. And yet in all seriousness they paid Him homage and gave Him costly gifts as tribute.

Born a King and honoured as such, He never claimed the title. When the enthusiastic people were about to take Him by force and make Him King, He fled from them into the mountain. The same enthusiasm greeted Him as He rode toward Jerusalem on the Sunday before His Passion. The people spread their garments before Him and strewed palm branches in the way as they sang, "Blessed be the King Who cometh in the name of the Lord, peace in heaven and glory on high." (Luke 19:38.) But in this royal welcome, amid this tumult of acclaim, the lonely Christ moves on blinded by tears of frustrated love.

A King by birth, by a popular election and by a public reception, He yet refrains from taking the throne and sceptre. He seems to be awaiting a more favourable occasion for accepting the dignity. But
in a few days, friendless and alone, He stands bound as a prisoner before the Roman Procurator. He is accused of many things! "We have a law and according to that law He ought to die because He made Himself the Son of God." (John 19:7.) "We have found this Man perverting our nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar and saying that He is Christ, the King." (Luke 23:2.) The first accusation meant nothing to the pagan Pilate who knew that hundreds of gods were worshipped by his own countrymen. The second he attributed to their envy of the young Teacher's popularity. (Mark 15:10.) The third he knew was a lie, for by this time the brilliant answer of Jesus to their crafty question was most likely a proverb in the country, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's." But the last engaged his attention.

Jesus was popular, spoke with wisdom and authority, performed wondrous works. All this might have urged Him to claim the title of King. Pilate put a direct question to Jesus: "Art Thou the King of the Jews?" And then for the first time He makes His claim to royalty even before the representative of the Roman Empire: "Thou sayest it—I am a King." To guide the conscience of Pilate in the conduct of the trial, He added, "My kingdom is not of this world."
THE KING OF KINGS

From that moment, the trial centered on this fact. Six times Pilate declared the innocence of Jesus and four times the Jews clamoured for His death by crucifixion. They won their case when they struck terror into the soul of Pilate first by saying, "If thou release this Man, thou art not Cæsar’s friend. For whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar"; then they added, "We have no king but Cæsar." There is here, indeed, a medley of contradictions. Pilate, who represented the Roman Emperor in Judea and whose interests he was bound to protect, insisted throughout that Jesus was the King of the Jews.

On the other hand, the Jews, who were always in rebellion against Roman authority, declared in favour of Cæsar. Pilate condemns Jesus to death, but gives as the cause of his action the simple, emphatic statement written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews." Bearing in mind that the term, "King of the Jews," meant the long expected Messiah, their royal Deliverer, we see the perfidy of the chosen people. Even if we suppose that Jesus was not the expected One, they nevertheless made a formal and public declaration before Roman authority that they had no king but Cæsar. Not only was the sceptre taken away from Juda but it was formally and explicitly renounced by the Jews themselves.
During this strife between Pilate and the Chief-Priests, Jesus stood silently by. He had in the meantime been subjected to an ignominious ceremony in which He was crowned with thorns, robed in a purple rag, offered scornful salutations and given a reed for a sceptre. Now He goes in search of a throne and a kingdom. Now He sets out to vindicate His kingly title and place it beyond dispute. For it had been decreed that "God shall reign from a tree." And Jesus Himself had confirmed the decree: "When I shall be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all things to Myself."

His was not to be the easy way. He would not be King by what seemed to be the simple accident of birth; nor by popular election since it came so soon after the miracle of the multiplication of bread; nor by the applause and admiration that greeted His appearance after His long absence, that is, since the raising of Lazarus from the dead. He was to acquire His Kingdom through conquest and purchase; it was to be confirmed to Him everlastingly by His Father. He was to be unique among kings because His reign was to begin with His Death.

He thus became King by right of conquest. Satan was the ruler of this darkness and man was his willing subject. He was the strong man armed, who kept his house and ruled it with an iron hand. But Jesus came, stronger than he, and overcame him;
He took away the armour wherein he trusted and distributed his spoils. The prince of this world was an usurper and, like all such, his rule was a hard and galling one. He was a deceiver, a liar and a murderer, until He Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life came to oppose him.

The struggle was fierce and bitter and bloody; there was no place for compromise; in the nature of the case, a truce was impossible. The conflict reached a climax on Calvary and the Captain of our salvation died in exquisite agony. But His triumph was a most glorious one. He snatched from everlasting burning and saved from eternal death those whom the Father had given Him. He took them from the power of darkness and led them into the marvelous light of His Kingdom.

He became on the Cross a King by the title of purchase. By the breath of His mouth and the word of His power, man became a living soul. But man was not duly grateful for so great a benefit and valued at very little such great condescension. By sin he contracted a debt that he could not pay. But Jesus paid the debt. For man was not redeemed by gold or silver or any such corruptible thing but by the Precious Blood of Christ—the Lamb unspotted and undefiled. (1 Peter 1:18.) Nor was the payment an easy matter. Man was in the debtor's prison and could not come out until he paid the last farth-

49
ing; but Jesus paid the entire price at the cost of infinite suffering and painful obedience and dreadful humiliations. By right of purchase, Jesus is King.

And His Kingship was confirmed by His Father, Who had said to Him: "Ask of Me and I will give Thee the Gentiles for Thy inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." On the day of His birth He could have had a kingdom as a gift from His Father; but, having preferred to battle for it against Satan and to purchase it from His Father by His Blood, He is confirmed in its possession forever: "I am appointed King by Him over Sion, His holy mountain, preaching His commandment." (Ps. 2:6.)

The Gentiles may rage and the people devise vain things; the kings of the earth may stand up in protest and the princes meet together to devise schemes, but we see Jesus, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour. Clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood, He has on His garment and on His thigh written: "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." (Apoc. 19:16.) "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death of the Cross. For which cause God has exalted Him and has given Him a Name that is above all names; that in the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those that are in heaven, on earth and under the earth and that
every tongue should confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2:7-11.)

It is from the Cross then that Jesus reigns. It is there that His true and loyal subjects are found. It is there alone that they can realize that His Kingdom is not of this world, for the Crucified Christ is a sign that is still contradicted. Derided as a fool, yet in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Dying between two thieves, He saves and sanctifies the sinful race of men. Challenged to come down from the Cross to prove His Kingship, He chooses to acquire that title by conquest, by purchase and as a reward from His Father.

The Figure of Christ the King emerges from the apparent contradictions of His life and death. So too those who worship Him in spirit and in truth, who offer to Him the homage of loyal service, will find a straight path through the crooked ways of worldliness. They will never consider business as something distinct from honesty; they will not try to reconcile purity with “broadmindedness.” It was exactly this spirit of compromise in Pilate and in the Jews that crucified Jesus Christ. And now His true subjects are those who give Him an uncompromising love and service. They alone deserve to be called His followers who follow His teachings without fear of the world or any thought of self.
ACTS OF GOD

"... to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be Saints." (Rom. 8:28.)

In olden times men were much more conscious of the supernatural than they are today. Then they lived in the presence of God; they spoke and acted while ever mindful of the all-seeing Eye that takes note of him who deals deceitfully with his neighbour or works wickedly with his hands. In this way they carried on business, and honesty was guaranteed when the transaction was done "before Him in Whose presence I stand." God had a place in the world He had created, and His Presence was acknowledged not only as something becoming, but as a matter of right. They also had the wit to see that God Who made the world is capable of ruling it wisely.

Nor was this the subservience of superstition anxious to merit a continuation of good things from a placated Divinity, as the irreligious would have us believe. The ancients saw that good and evil things come alike to the just and the unjust, and they felt no resentment toward Him Who ordained it so. They even beheld the just man overwhelmed with
miseries without rising up to question God's right to allow events to take such a course. Themselves stripped of all things, and conscious of no evil-doing that could merit such treatment, they sat with resignation in the midst of every temporal misfortune and blessed Him Who had taken away all human support and comfort.

Job is one of the many who in similar circumstances gave tribute to God's sovereignty and His wisdom by blessing Him equally for the things that He gave and the things that He took away. "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord, so it is done: blessed be the Name of the Lord." (Job 1:21.) Ignorant they were, indeed, of many things, but there was a "wholeness" to their view of God and His workings that excluded the craven spirit of superstitious worship.

It is rather against modern piety, if it can be called such, that we can bring the charge of superstition. Loud and verbose are the prayers that are directed by well-fed comfortable people to the God Who giveth good things. They speak in the grand manner and, approvingly, of the beneficent Providence that scatters blessings with a liberal hand. He alone is their God. They have demanded that His messengers bring only gifts, that His prophets announce only prosperity and peace. It is to such narrow views of God that superstition owes its rise and
increase. Thus, there are many gods to which the modern world attributes the adverse and painful things of life—hard, stony gods that see not the miseries of their devotees, that hear not their suppliant cries, and that have no feeling for the burdened ones of humanity. They bear such names as Misfortune, Bad Luck, Accident. This last is the idol to which the moderns most commonly attribute its pain, its agony, its despair—before which they kneel in that hopeless attitude which asks, expects and receives no help or consolation.

Yet there has been preserved an expression of an older day when piety was something based on a rational concept of God and man’s duties to Him. Strange to say, this surviving relic of more pious days is preserved in the rigid, clear-cut language of the law. In those books which require exactness in words and phrases in order to determine, with strict justice, rights and duties, privileges and penalties, the word “accident” has no proper place. All sudden, unforseen events are called “Acts of God,” and this, be it noted, is used to designate the untoward, the calamitous events in life. The enlightened piety of a former age knew that God was the Owner of the world and that He could do with it as it pleased Him. They knew, too, that it was not His pleasure, nay, that it was impossible for Him, to be moved by whim or to act through caprice. They
believed that every Act of God was motivated primarily with a view to His own glory and secondarily by His desire for the salvation of man.

Acts of God appeared sudden and unforeseen to the creature that lived from moment to moment and was incapable of seeing beyond; but, nevertheless, devout minds were serenely certain that His Acts could never contradict the perfection of His nature. They would never have worshipped at the shrine of Accident—that blind, blundering modern deity who is ignorantly cruel in act and powerless to avert or amend the consequences. They accepted everything in life with equanimity of spirit and looked upon the sudden disturbance of their tranquility and prosperity, not as accidents, but as Acts of a wise and loving God. The confessed, “We know that to them that love God, all things work together unto good, to such as, according to His purpose, are called to be Saints.” (Rom. 8:28.)

In this faith they lived and they walked in secure ways and came safely to the expected reward. “And though, in the sight of men, they suffered torments, their hope is full of immortality. Afflicted in few things, in many they shall be well rewarded: because God hath tried them and found them worthy of Himself. . . . He hath received them and in time there shall be respect had to them. They that trust in Him shall understand the truth.” (Wis. 3:4-9.)
They may not have understood the immediate purpose intended by God in withdrawing His temporal gifts, but by patient submission and long-suffering endurance they at last came to see that their trust was not in vain; that it had earned for them an understanding of the secret ways of God by which He has glorified Himself and provided for the eternal welfare of His creatures.

This truth is commonly understood by the devout in all the misfortunes of life, especially when they have been prepared for them by days and weeks of fearful expectation. With aching hearts they bow to the Will of God, and then seek the comfort that abounds in the simple consideration of the sufferings and sorrows of Jesus in His Passion.

But many are not so easily brought to resignation and peace. For the most part they are those upon whom trial has come suddenly, who were not prepared when death quickly snatched away a loved one; who abounded in health yesterday and are today faced with a long sickness; who saw the sunrise in the morning and are blind to the beauty of sunset; who thrilled to all the emotions born of harmonious music, but who now dwell in the stillness of unbroken silence. These are tempted to blame the great god Accident, to think of the thousand and one ways their trial might have been averted, to waste time in futile wishes that their
ACTS OF GOD

affliction might have been lessened or have taken a more bearable form.

Because of their complaints they never attain peace, and they increase the unhappiness of their lot by driving from them those who are compassionate and desire to be helpful. Human sympathy is quickly exhausted, and they are left to suffer alone. Usually such sufferers bear the heaviest crosses and are bewildered by the very suddenness with which they come upon them. But, even for such, there is deep and lasting comfort to be derived from the Passion of Christ.

True, there was nothing sudden or unexpected in the sufferings of Christ. He had foretold them through His prophets centuries before; they were present to His mind during life. Yet for the comfort of these souls He has allowed some of them to have all the appearance of being accidental. The most notable of these was the Crowning with Thorns. Pilate had condemned Jesus to be only scourged, but from his previous questioning, the soldiers gathered the impression that Jesus claimed to be a King. This appeared to them as an absurd pretension in one so friendless and so meek under injury. And they set about giving Him a mock coronation after the Scourging. Contemplating this outrage on a silent suffering Man, we feel ashamed of the humanity that makes us kin with those soldiers. It was
barbarous in the extreme to take that poor Victim of their brutal stripes and press a crown of long sharp thorns into His head. It was a more fiendish thing to take Him then and put upon Him those ridiculous insignia of royalty—the cloak and the sceptre—and subject Him to their coarse and cruel ridicule.

Yet, is it not here that the devout soul sees with the eye of faith the true royalty of Jesus Christ? How much of the appeal of the Passion would be missing without this scene! It tears at the heart—this poor, forlorn, friendless Jesus Christ, suffering so much while subjected to such treatment. Hearts that might never have acknowledged His own claim to kingship over them feel compelled to make a loving reality out of what these men made a brutal mockery and a shameful travesty. The ceremony of His degradation, that seemed to come about by accident, has marked for many the moment when they submitted with whole mind and heart to His sceptre. They have abdicated all rule over themselves in favour of this thorn-crowned King, and they have stood steadfast by His throne, never again submitting to the tyranny of those passions that formerly reigned over them. There was no accident there in the Praetorium but an Act of God by which He allowed these soldiers with their blasphemous buffoonery to make of His Son that forsaken and
pitiablc King Who wins and holds sway over countless hearts.

Neither was it an accident when Pilate wrote the title setting forth the cause of His death: "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." And it was written in Hebrew, in Greek and in Latin. Then the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, "Write not 'the King of the Jews'; but that He said, 'I am the King of the Jews.'" They would correct the error, but Pilate, till then so cowardly, declared with emphasis, "What I have written, I have written." It was the truth. Jesus died not because He said He was the King of the Jews. Rather it was the King of the Jews Who died that day on the Cross. It was no error, no accident, but an Act of God proclaiming His Son to be the true King of that perverse nation.

Again, "... the Jews ... that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day ... besought Pilate that their legs might be broken and that they might be taken away." Having murdered the Lord of Life, they set about the observance of a holy day. This last indignity on the person of Jesus was frustrated, for He was already dead. But a soldier pierced His Side with a lance. What reason he had for doing so is difficult to see, for St. John expressly tells us, "They saw that He was already dead." But, reason or no reason, two
prophecies were fulfilled: "Not a bone of Him shall be broken," and "they shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced." From that open side came forth His Church, the water of Baptism, the Blood of the Eucharist. And all this seems to be an accident or, at most, the last thrust of a satisfied hate. So the crosses of life appear to be accidents or to come from human hatred and ill-will, yet it is impossible to say what good God will ultimately effect in our souls through our acceptance of them.

During a storm the sailors of the ship, on which the Prophet Jonas was fleeing from his duty of preaching, cast lots to see why this evil came upon them, "and the lot fell upon Jonas." What has more of the elements of an accident? He was thrown into the sea, was swallowed by a great fish and cast upon the land after three days and three nights. Thus he prefigured in his own person the Death and the Resurrection of Christ. And it was the one prophecy that Jesus emphasized as a proof of His mission: "So shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights." (Matt. 12:40.)

There are no accidents with God. All is known to Him, and all is willed or allowed by Him. The wounded soldier Ignatius was by the very tedium of convalescence led to read the Lives of the Saints. He was by that reading led farther and became a
Saint himself. Quite by accident, it would seem, John Gualbert met his nemy one Good Friday, and went from the encounter not the victor over a fallen foe, but a victor over his own passions and by further combat a glorious Saint. What is more common and less spiritual, more indicative of a life to be spent in futile vanity and less likely to show signs of high sanctity than a young girl complacently and proudly admiring herself before a mirror. Thus one day stood a Spanish girl, Catherine Sandoval. So full of vanity was she at that moment that she said to herself, "I will never marry anyone less than a king." Quite by accident, it would seem, her eyes fell upon a silver crucifix. She took in the whole pathetic figure, and stopped at the title over the thorn-crowned Head, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." Vanity was forgotten as she went down on her knees, for she had found her King. Then and there she chose Him as the only Spouse of her soul. Later she joined St. Teresa and, as Catherine of Jesus, she led the holy life of the first Carmelites. If grace comes in such abundance from what appear to be such trivial accidents, what undiscovered treasures has God hidden in those great calamities of life which afflict the body and desolate the heart.

Let a true story serve as a parable for all. "There were also two other malefactors led with Him to
be put to death.” They walked the same road with Him; they bore a like instrument of death; they hung together in the same agony and shame. All quite by accident, it would seem. One spent the time in begging Jesus to be delivered from his sufferings—"If Thou be the Christ, save Thyself and us"—and in blaspheming when his appeals went unanswered. The other rebuked him, tried to arouse in him some fear of God, endeavoured to make him see the justice of their punishment and the innocence of Christ. Having performed this office of charity toward his fellow-sufferer, he turned to Jesus and uttered one of the most admirable prayers in the entire Scriptures—a perfect blend of humility, confidence and faith: “Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy Kingdom.” And the answer came, prompt and emphatic, “Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.” (Luke 23: 29-43.) It was spoken to a man who saw nothing accidental in the sentence imposed upon him or in the sufferings he endured, but rather an Act of the merciful God by which he became a companion of Christ in His sufferings and was thereby brought close to Christ at the moment of His greatest love and mercy.

So all sufferings in life, whether accidental or actually inflicted by the malice of men, bring us close to the Crucified; they set us side by side with Him.
We then have our choice. We can be the rebellious, complaining, blaspheming sufferer who, blind to everything but his own pains, saw not the patience of Christ, and missed, saddest of all fates, the supreme moment of grace; or we can become like that other—the good thief—who accepted his lot, tried to bring his fellow-suffer to accept his in the spirit of humility and sorrow for his sins and who, out of the wreck and ruin of his like, spoke those words that won for him from his Saviour and Judge the gift of salvation.

**UPON A HILL**

Three men shared death upon a hill,  
But only one man died;  
The other two—  
A thief and God himself—  
Made rendezvous.

Three crosses still  
Are borne up Calvary’s Hill,  
Where Sin still lifts them high:  
Upon the one, sag broken men  
Who, cursing, die;  
Another holds the praying thief,  
Or those who, penitent as he,  
Still find the Christ  
Beside them on the tree.

—Miriam Le Fevre Crouse

63
THE SINLESS SUFFERER

“... because it was His own will...” (Is. 53: 7.)

ST. PAUL of the Cross spent his long life of eighty-one years in preaching to the world the Passion of Jesus Christ. So enamoured was he of the Divine Crucified that he desired his work to continue to the end of the world. Accordingly, he founded two Orders—one of men and one of women—to carry out this most ardent desire of his heart. The Passionist missionaries were to go forth from their solitude and preach the ignominies and the glories of the Cross while the Passionist nuns were to remain in their cloister at the Feet of Jesus Crucified, asking, through prayer and penance, the unction of the Holy Spirit on the preaching of the priests. This alone is sufficient to show that St. Paul was very practical in ordering the means to attain his great purpose.

Likewise, in directing the missionaries how to preach the Passion of Christ, his counsels were neither vague nor hesitating; they were eminently practical because they were the fruits of his own long experience. One of the most practical and far-reaching of his recommendations has to do with that great mystery of life—Suffering. It is the lot of
every child of Adam and, therefore, the Saint urges his priests to "exhort the people to suffer something daily for Jesus Christ." The remembrance of Christ's Passion alone throws light on the dark mystery of human suffering and supplies powerful motives for bearing it patiently in a manner worthy of a follower of Christ.

Both human and Divine law speak of suffering as a punishment, and reason recognizes the justice of it when inflicted on the evil-doer. But where there is no guilt, punishment is looked upon as the rankest injustice. Of the four sins that cry to Heaven for vengeance, three are committed against innocent, helpless victims. It is from this conviction, so deeply rooted in the human heart, that there arises the strongest objection against certain sufferings, an objection that grows at times into positive rebellion against God. A child but lately arrived in this world and cleansed in Holy Baptism from all sin must go through life a cripple, or must be forever blind to the light of God's beautiful world, or must dwell in that silence into which the harmonies of music and the voice of love can never penetrate. And reason demands to know why. Or another who has persevered in goodness for long and trying years may cry out from a bed of pain, "Why must I suffer—I who have done my best to serve God, to avoid sin and to grow in love for Him?"
These are the bitter cries frequently on the lips of rebellious sufferers and so deep a mystery is it that many have lost the Faith in an effort to solve it by human reason alone. Only in the Passion of Christ can we find an explanation that brings comfort. For there we read in letters of blood that suffering is not always punishment inflicted on the guilty. There we are brought face to face with the Divine Sufferer asking the same question so often on the lips of His brethren, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" There we see Him, whatever the answer He received in His desolate Soul, making the supreme act of filial trust, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit."

Of all the wonders recorded in the life of Jesus the most outstanding is His sinlessness. The innocence of His character, the absolute purity of His Soul, are something beyond the grasp of our sin-clouded minds. We know that His Mother was immaculate—never did stain of sin or imperfection soil the purity of her spotless soul. She was even free from those impulses to evil which are the inheritance of fallen men. Her soul was a clear, shining mirror, never dimmed by even the reflection of evil. It is difficult for us to understand all that is meant by the Immaculate Conception—the perfect sinlessness of Mary, for it is altogether outside our experience.
What notion then can we form of her Divine Son! Sin could and would have soiled the soul of the Mother had not God by a special privilege prevented it and preserved her immaculate from the very beginning. But Jesus Christ her Son could no more have been infected by the loathsome leprosy of sin than He could cease to exist. His holiness was one with that holiness which is represented as dazzling the most pure eyes of the sinless angels in heaven. At His Baptism and again on Thabor God testified to His innocence, "for He received from God the Father honour and glory: this voice coming down to Him from the excellent glory: 'This is my Beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.'" (2 Peter 1:17.) He lived ever in the serene consciousness of the complacent regard of His Father.

On one occasion He stood before His very enemies and exclaimed, "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?" These men had spied on His every action; they tried to distort every word that He uttered; they used every device of hypocrisy and devilish cunning to detect a flaw in His moral character, but their efforts were vain. In the end they resorted to lies and false witnesses, but even here their testimony did not agree. Where shall we find such sinlessness, such perfect freedom from even the appearance of sin? Even devils—enemies of all goodness—were forced to cry out through the possessed in the
presence of His surpassing purity: "Let us alone, what have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? Art Thou come to destroy us? I know who Thou art, the Holy One of God." (Mark 1:24; Luke 4:34.)

Yet it was this Sinless One Who was condemned to suffering and to death. Every torment that the fiendish ingenuity of His enemies could devise was inflicted on this Innocent Victim. We see the insults to which He was subjected: His pure Body ripped and torn by the merciless scourging, His Head encircled with an agonizing crown of thorns, His shoulders bent under the weight of the heavy Cross, His whole Body hanging in helpless agony on the gibbet of shame. Those nearest and dearest to Him, the Apostles, contributed to His sufferings by betraying Him, denying Him, and abandoning Him. Even His Father, Who had spoken from Heaven in testimony of His innocence, crowned His sufferings of Body and His anguish of Heart by a desolation of Soul that bears the mysterious, the terrible name—abandonment. Such, in brief, were the sufferings and sorrows of the Innocent Jesus.

Remarkable, then, is the fact that every step He took into the bitter sea of His Passion was accompanied by a voice declaring His innocence. Judas steps forth—the man who of all others had the greatest interest in blackening Our Lord's character—in order to give some appearance of justification
for his base treachery. He dashes down the silver pieces as though they were burning coals, and cries out, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood." This is the man, the familiar, who lived in daily intimacy with Jesus, who would gladly have grasped at any small, mean excuse to justify his cowardly crime. In the course of the trial Pilate declared six times that, after a careful scrutiny of the accusations, he found no cause why the Prisoner should be held. And as he was sitting in the place of judgment, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have thou nothing to do with that Just Man." Even the profligate Herod uttered no word to condemn Jesus, although "the chief priest and the scribes stood by earnestly accusing Him." (Luke 23:10.) The poor thief on the cross declared his belief in humble but positive words, "We indeed suffer justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man hath done no evil." And, when all nature had given its testimony at the death of the Sinless Saviour, the centurion at the foot of the Cross struck his breast, saying, "Indeed this was a Just Man—this was the Son of God."

What a difference this should make in our acceptance of suffering! Jesus Christ Who is so innocent suffers so much! Surely, then, the guilty have no cause of complaint. Jesus Himself declared this on His way to Calvary. When He met the holy women
and saw their tears of pity and heard their exclama-
tions of sympathy for Him, He said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over Me; but weep for your-
selves and for your children. . . . For if in the green
wood they do these things what shall be done in
the dry?" If He Who was sinless suffered so much,
what must the guilty deserve! We may apply here
an incident in His life. The Pharisees brought to
Him a woman taken in adultery. The law required
that she should be stoned to death. Our Saviour,
fixing on them His all-seeing eye, said, "Let him
who is without sin among you cast the first stone."
Looking around, a moment later, He saw not an
accuser in sight. So might the Sinless Saviour look
down from the Cross upon all who suffer and say,
"Let him who is without sin among you make the
first complaint."

But what of those whom we may call "relatively
sinless," of those, who, although they inherited the
guilt of original sin never committed actual sin, or
of those who have lived in great innocence of life,
far above the level of ordinary men? Why must
they suffer? Let no other than the Prince of the
Apostles answer the question. His words are often
quoted but only in part, and, therefore, their full
meaning is not grasped. But they are words that
deserve to be engraved on the walls of every sick-
room and in every home in which sorrow has dwelt.
They form an exhortation to servants to bear the unmerited punishment inflicted on them by their pagan masters: "For this is thankworthy, if for conscience toward God, a man endure sorrows, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if committing sin and being buffeted for it, you endure? But if doing well you suffer patiently; this is thankworthy before God. For unto this are you called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow His steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. Who, when He was reviled, did not revile: when He suffered, He threatened not; but delivered Himself to him that judged Him unjustly. Who His own self bore our sins in His body upon the Tree: that we, being dead to sins, should live to justice: by Whose stripes you were healed. For you were as sheep going astray; but you are now converted to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls." (1 Peter 2:18-25.)

Here indeed is a sublime doctrine. The vocation of a Christian is a call to suffer with the innocent Christ, not because of former sins but in order to become more like the Sinless Sufferer. Since He bore our sins in His Body upon the Tree, it seems only fair and just that we bear in our mortal flesh some share of His sufferings. Even the most innocent should not seek exemption, for they, like all the children of Adam, were as sheep going astray and
would most certainly have perished but for the love of the Good Shepherd, Who by His Death turned them from the path of destruction into a place of pasture near the plentiful waters of refreshment. It appears from the Apostle's words that only the innocent are worthy of suffering with Him Who was the Lamb unspotted and undefiled. They alone are worthy of the high vocation of being with Him innocent victims of expiation for the world's sins, and sinless saviours of the perishing souls of men. Well pondered, the words St. Peter are capable of changing the anguished questioning of innocent sufferers into glad acceptance of a vocation that is thankworthy before God.
FOR A REMEMBRANCE

"... that they should make the same known to their children." (Ps. 77:3)

FOR four hundred and thirty years, the children of Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt, in a land of exile and far from the country which God had promised to their fathers. They had gone down in the days of Joseph and were well received, until a new king arose over Egypt who knew not Joseph nor the benefits he had conferred on the land. Then they began to be in dire straits, compelled to work like slaves and condemned to extinction by a law which commanded them to destroy all new-born male children.

It was then that God, remembering His ancient promises, began His work of delivering them from this servitude. By ten great plagues, He finally wrung from the obstinate Pharaoh permission to let His people go. The last and deciding blow was attended with circumstances that are worthy of attention. Through His servant, Moses, God commanded every Jewish family to take a lamb and sacrifice it on the fourteenth day of the month. He then ordered them to sprinkle the victim’s blood on
the transom and door-posts of their houses. Then in the evening, dressed for the journey, they were to eat the lamb together with unleavened bread and wild lettuce. During the night the Angel of Destruction went through the land and slew the first-born in every family, passing over the houses of the Israelites because the blood on the door-posts was for them a sign of salvation. On that night, a great cry arose Egypt; Pharaoh and his people awoke to behold such an appalling calamity and they united in urging God's people to depart. By these and subsequent wonders did God deliver His people.

Now God, Who describes Himself as a "jealous God"—jealous of the affection of His children for whose benefit He wrought such terrible things—established two ordinances to put His chosen people ever in mind of His Power and His Love on this occasion. He ordained that the ceremonial Supper which they had observed on that night should be repeated each year. With lively sentiments of gratitude they were to live over, as it were, the perils and the blessings of that night, when they went forth from bondage into freedom, when they were led by a loving God from a land of exile into the delightful land flowing with milk and honey. The other observance or memorial of this event was dictated to Moses: "Sanctify unto Me every first-born among the children of Israel, as well of men as of
beasts: for they are all Mine. . . . Whatsoever thou shalt have of the male sex, thou shalt consecrate to the Lord. . . . And every first-born of men thou shalt redeem at a price.’’ (Ex. 13: 2-13.) In this manner were they to remember the mercy that had spared them when the destroying Angel, seeing the blood of the Paschal lamb, passed over their houses.

But this was not all. God did not give His commands in words of vague meaning nor did He order them to be enclosed in a sealed book to be read and interpreted only by priests. He did not merely prescribe a set of actions which in time might degenerate into meaningless gestures or an empty formula. He ordained that the significance of these actions should be explained by word of mouth to those who took part in them. The Passover meal was a family affair and, at a certain point in its prayers, one of the children of the house asked the father: “What is the meaning of this service?’’ Then the father recited the story of the Exodus, explained the meaning of each rubric, of each dish that was eaten, and concluded by leading in hymns of praise and gratitude to God for His ancient and continued mercies.

So also when the first-born son grew up, he was to ask his father the meaning of the ceremony by which he was consecrated to God and redeemed with a price. And the father was required by the law to give answer: “Thou shall answer him: With a
strong hand did the Lord bring us forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. For when Pharaoh was hardened and would not let us go, the Lord slew every first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of man to the first-born of beasts: therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the womb of the male sex and the first-born of my sons I redeem. And it shall be a sign in thy hands and a thing hung between thy eyes for a remembrance: because the Lord hath brought us forth out of Egypt by a strong hand.'" (Ex. 13:14-16.)

It is wonderful to think of this story being recited on numerous occasions during the fifteen hundred years from the time of Moses to the coming of Our Lord. How many generations of children were inspired to love God and keep His commandments by this eloquent narrative of God’s love. Year after year children listened, stored it in their minds until the time when they, as fathers of families, would pass it on to a new generation. The mind follows its recital through so many centuries thinking of its influence on the holiness of Israel’s prophets and saints, on the courage of her warriors, on the songs of her Psalmists. It gave comfort and hope to the people when they languished as captives in a strange land; it had the chief place in all their renewals of fervour in the service of God; it kept before them their obligation to holiness, for to this end were they
His peculiar people. All these holy and fruitful effects were wrought among them because in childhood they heard over and over the story of the deliverance from Egypt. Childhood’s impressions are lasting ones and in that recital they were deeply and lastingly impressed with thoughts of God’s Power and Love.

There is surely food for thought when we turn from this ancient covenant and consider the Redemption wrought by Christ in His Sacred Passion. In the former, God utters His commands and the work is done, for nothing can resist His will. He appoints Moses as the leader of His chosen people and that holy man had to bear in agony of spirit their almost unceasing complaints and frequent rebellions. What an infinite difference there is between this and the Passion of Christ! God Himself in the humanity He has assumed endures the violent opposition of His creatures and is brought through their hatred to the shameful and painful Death of the Cross. He is both the Redeemer and the Leader of His people from a worse condition of servitude than the old Egyptian one.

He too has established a Memorial of His wonderful work in a Sacrifice that is daily offered on countless altars. And still the Passion of Christ is not remembered as it should be. The reason is because the story of Love’s sacrifice is so seldom told by
word of mouth. How seldom do mothers and fathers
tell that story to their little ones. Of bed-time
stories, vapid and inane fables of fairies and talking
animals there is too much. But of Jesus Christ and
His love for children, of the Sufferings He endured
for them, there is far too little. It may be that par-
ents themselves know little about the Divine Story;
still it would be more charitable to assign the cause
to an adult underestimation of a child’s intelligence.

No one can declare the exact moment when a child
begins to reason even though the age of seven is
commonly considered the time when that process
begins. But apart from this it should not be for-
gotten that the memory begins to store knowledge
and receive impressions long before this age. One
man relates that the first religious impression he
received and remembers goes back to the time he
was four and a half years old—it was a picture with
an explanation of the Scourging of Christ. St.
Teresa, the Little Flower, tells us that when she was
five and a half years old, she went to church one
Sunday with her father. It was of this occasion and
of the sermon preached that day that she writes
these impressive words: “A sermon on the Passion
of Our Lord was the first I understood and it touched
me deeply. After that I was able to understand and
appreciate all instructions.” A holy woman, known
as Lucie Christine, writes in her spiritual journal
under date of June 8, 1884, when she was thirty-eight years old, this beautiful description of her awakening to a love that led her to great holiness:

"O Heart o Jesus, never will I forget that it was Thou Who didst awake my childish heart and imprint upon it the beat of its first act of love. I remember it as if it were yesterday. I was six years old; it was early, and I lay with my eyes open in my little bed. Was it Lent? I do not know, but my thought turned on the Pasion and I represented to myself Jesus on the Cross with His Divine Heart pierced by the lance. O how angry I was with that soldier, and what reproaches I made him for daring thus to wound the Heart of the good God! But turning my attention to myself, I told myself that perhaps my sins had saddened and offended the Heart of Our Lord Jesus Christ much more than the iron of the lance of Longinus. I said: 'See, my soul, how guilty thou art ... for, after all, Longinus perhaps did not know what he was doing ... but thou who knowest the good God so well. ... Thou to whom He has been so good. ...' I went on this strain for some time, after which I rose from my bed and with deep contrition made a sincere resolution never to cause any pain to the Heart of the good Jesus. This was the first meditation of my life, which no doubt served as a far-off preparation for my first confession."
And again under date of September 2, 1905, when she was sixty-one years of age, she wrote as follows: "During a recent prayer on August 21, Jesus opened His Heart as a sanctuary of protection, an inviolable refuge to my very afflicted soul and at the same time reminded me of the first prayer of my life at the age of six when being early awake I fixed my childish eyes upon the pierced Heart of Jesus Crucified and I meditated how the wickedness of Longinus was not comparable to mine, I, who had known the good God much better than he and who, notwithstanding, had wounded Him by my many faults. I remember that meditation as if I had made it yesterday."

And this charming memory of childhood was written by Eugenie De Guerin in her Journal under date of March 4, 1835, when she was thirty years old: "This morning I hung up beside papa’s bed a little cross that a little girl gave him yesterday, out of thankfulness to him for having placed her in the convent. It was Christine Roquier. Her pious present was very pleasing to us, and we shall preserve it as a relic of gratitude. Papa’s cup of holy water shall be placed between this cross and a picture of Calvary. This picture, torn as it is, I have a value for, because I have always seen it there, and even when a child I used to go and say my prayers before it. I remember to have asked

80
many favours from the holy image. I used to state all my little griefs to that sad figure of the dying Saviour, and always I found consolation. Once I had spots on my frock that distressed me greatly for fear of being scolded about them; I prayed my picture to make them disappear, and they disappeared. How this gracious miracle made me love the good God! From that day I believed nothing impossible to prayer or to my favourite image, and I asked it for whatever I wanted: once that my doll might have a soul; but on that occasion I obtained nothing. Perhaps it was the only one."

How well these incidents illustrate the saying of De Quincey: "Of this I feel assured that there is no such thing as 'forgetting' possible to the mind: a thousand accidents may and will interpose a veil between our present consciousness and the secret inscriptions on the mind. Accidents of the same sort will also rend this veil: but alike, whether veiled or unveiled, the inscription remains forever, just as the stars seem to withdraw before the common light of day; whereas, in fact, we know that it is the light that is drawn over them as a veil and that they are waiting to be revealed, when obscuring daylight shall have withdrawn."

These examples show the tenacity of the child-mind for retaining early impressions of piety. There are countless others, but here we must give a few
that show the part played by saintly parents in imparting to their children the saving knowledge of Jesus Crucified. In this they were true imitators of Jesus Himself. On the way to Calvary He stopped and addressed "the women who bewailed and lamented Him." He gave them an instruction on the meaning of His Sufferings which they in turn were to pass on to their children.

St. Bridget of Sweden learned devotion to the Passion from her father who was accustomed to practise many penances on Friday. At the age of eight Jesus Crucified appeared to her and said: "See, my child, how they have wounded Me!" Filled with pity, she exclaimed: "O my Lord, who has dared to treat Thee so?" And Jesus replied: "Those who reject Me and despise My love." "Up to that time," says her biographer, "she had a great devotion to the Passion, but this vision greatly increased her love so that she became as one living under the shadow of the Cross." In later years she communicated this same love to her daughter, who as a child and through life devoted four hours each day to meditation on the Passion, kneeling on the bare ground. This daughter is also enrolled in the calendar of saints—Saint Katherine of Sweden. Gemma Galgani, the holy maiden of Lucca, learned to know Jesus and Him Crucified from the lips of a saintly mother. She became in later life a living
representation of the Passion of Christ, enduring one by one all the sufferings of the Crucified.

A last example will show, not only one who became a Saint, but who established a work that has brought the Passion of Jesus before the eyes of countless thousands,—all due, under God, to the ardent instructions of a pious mother. The mother of St. Paul of the Cross gave a direction to the life of her boy from which he never deviated. From his earliest years she instilled into his heart a most tender love for Jesus Crucified. From that time to a vigorous old age of eighty-one years, He was the predominant thought of Paul’s mind, the exclusive love of his heart and the compelling motive of his every action. He attained to the highest heights of holiness, brought innumerable sinners back in repentance to the foot of the Cross and founded the Congregation of the Passion, which is the mother of a large family of saints and the foster-mother of countless souls, rescued from the death of sin, cured of spiritual disease and brought with maternal care to eternal life. Every corner of the globe gives testimony to the sanctified soul of St. Paul of the Cross; to him they offer the tribute of their answered prayers and to him they still direct the homage of their earnest and hopeful petitions. All this may be traced back to the mother who taught him to read in the Book of the Crucifix the lessons of Divine
Love. Happy the man who is given such a beginning in life. Of him we may say with Jesus, the son of Sirach: "Blessed is he that is conversant in these good things: and he that layeth them up in his heart shall be wise always. For if he do them, he shall be strong to do all things: because the light of God guideth his steps." (Ecclus. 50: 30,31.)
THE KINDNESS OF GOD OUR SAVIOUR

"... not by the works of justice, which we have done, but according to His Mercy, He saved us..." (Titus 3:4, 5.)

Jesus had a keen regard for the proprieties of life. He was most punctilious in observing them. He never caused pain to others; rather did He on all occasions save people from embarrassment. In reading the Gospel narratives we are inclined to stop short in admiration of His miracles and to pass over their attendant circumstances and thus neglect His motives in working them. In this way we fail to see many points that would give us a better understanding of His character and, especially, His sensitive regard for the feelings of others.

It is this quality of His that best explains what took place at Cana. In the midst of the marriage feast, the wine failed—an untoward event that would certainly have spoiled the festivities and very likely have made the young couple the object of all the loose, malicious gossip of the neighbourhood. The Mother of Jesus appealed to Him before the fact became known. She knew because she was one
of those who were helping to make the occasion the happy event it should be in the lives of a young married couple. As the matter thus came to the attention of Jesus, it meant embarrassment for His Mother as well as the young couple. And, although His hour was not yet come, He changed water into wine.

The purity and simplicity of children made them dear to the Heart of Jesus. But they were not angels; they, too, had feelings that could be wounded with a life-long hurt. And this might well have happened when the disciples, preoccupied with their Master’s comfort, tried to drive the children away. Perhaps, in their anxiety, they used blunt, harsh words so characteristic of them in those days before they had learned the charity of Christ. Jesus was, therefore, “much displeased.” He called the children to Him and “embracing them and laying His hands upon them, He blessed them.” Nor would they ever again be considered unimportant, for He set them, as it were, in the centre of the stage, in the first rank of those who follow Him. Even the Apostles must become as little children, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Most tender was His treatment of the daughter of Jairus, a little girl “almost twelve years old.” (Luke 8:42.) She had died after a wasting illness and Jesus had raised her to life. She was now hungry
and, childlike, dared not ask for food before such a Guest and on such a stupendous occasion. She preferred hunger rather than endure later the accusation of having been greedy and ungrateful. But before the astonished parents could utter a word of thanks, Jesus "bid them give her to eat."

It was said of Him in prophecy: "The bruised reed He shall not break and smoking flax He shall not quench." (Is. 42:3.) The prophet's meaning is that "Christ will not deal roughly and rigourously with those that come to Him but will use all gentleness and tenderness to them, passing by their greatest sins, bearing with their present infirmities, cherishing and encouraging the smallest beginnings of grace and comforting and healing wounded consciences." (Cruden).

Where can we find a more delicate regard for wounded feelings than in the incident of the woman taken in adultery. She was overwhelmed with shame—the shame of having been discovered in such a sin, the shame of having been dragged through the streets by unfeeling hypocrites, the shame of being brought before the new Teacher Whose presence breathed purity. Only one thing remained to complete her misery and that was to have those all-holy Eyes turned upon her. "But Jesus bowing Himself down, wrote with His finger on the ground." (John 8:6.) While the Scribes and Pharisees were
there, He continued in that position, rising only once to say to them, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Bowed down as she was with shame, the woman could observe the gesture by which, at the same time, He showed His contempt for those hypocrites and His unwillingness to observe her shame.

Jesus gave evidence of the same refinement of feeling in the case of Zaccheus. This man was an object of contempt to the self-righteous for he was a publican, a collector of taxes. To make matters worse, he had grown rich in office and thus became a target for the venomous tongues of the envious. As Jesus passed along the streets of Jericho, Zaccheus sought to see Him but could not because of the crowd, for he was low of stature. Running on ahead, he climbed up a sycamore tree, unmindful of the fact that the town wits would give endless caricatures of his undignified position. But the good man was never again to feel the pain of ridicule. Jesus stood before the tree and said, "Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for this day I must abide in thy house." The rest of the story shows the humble man as almost beside himself with joy. In a town where he was the butt of ridicule and an outcast, this new Prophet, the Worker of miracles, had called him by name before all the assembled people to be His host.
These incidents show the great respect that Jesus had for the sensibilities of the human heart. His mode of action was always tenderness. He was prompt to speak and to act whenever He could comfort those who suffered from the cruelties of life caused by "man's inhumanity to man." From the bashful child to the disgraced sinner, all received the healing ministrations of His kindness. Admirable as all this is we must not delay here lest we remain among those cold critics of the character of Christ who believe they have exhausted praise in calling Him "a perfect gentleman." Such acts as those appeal to their aesthetic sense. They have poetic quality or a dramatic turn that pleases these cultured souls and moves them to faint praise. They speak as though He were a minor poet or a promising actor. We must leave such company and follow the real Christ even into the dark shadows of His Sacred Passion, before we can begin to understand "the goodness and kindness of God Our Saviour." (Titus 3:4.)

There we shall see a kindness that goes infinitely beyond the code of the gentleman. There is a quality in it not so evident before. He is not defending the timid against the shafts of the scornful, the weak against the roughness of the strong, the sinner against the conceit of the hypocrite. Nor does He appear to be intent merely on returning good for
evil. There is, rather, a kindness that springs from Infinite Pity for those who are hurting themselves, who through their own fault are going down to destruction. Of all the outcasts of the earth these are the most forlorn. They are shunned by "gentlemen," avoided by the merely good, furnish food for the self-complacency of hypocrites. They go down to whatever fate awaits them to the accompaniment of an unholy chorus which is in human language the nearest approach to the rejoicing of demons over lost souls: "It serves them right; it was their own fault."

Not in this way did Jesus deal with Judas. Of all the men that ever lived, so we think, he was the least deserving of any kindly consideration. After so many centuries men still believe that criminal records of the world contain no name more infamous than that of Judas Iscariot nor any crime more detestible than his betrayal of the Son of God. He was guilty of a crime which all men hold in abhorrence—the betrayal of friendship—and such a friendship! To be guilty of such a thing points to an utter lack of feeling and all sense of shame. How, then, could he be hurt by bitter rebuke or public exposure! And yet Jesus bore with him for over a year, striving with unfailing kindness to arouse the conscience of the unhappy man. He seemed wholly indifferent to what He would suffer at the hands of
the traitor, if only at the last He might save him from irreparable spiritual ruin. Toward him Jesus was gentle to the very end. In the Garden He steps forth to greet him: "Friend, whereto art thou come?" And His answer to the treacherous kiss was neither burning invective nor scornful rejection but only the mild reproach, "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" Only then did the disciples learn from Judas himself what Jesus kept secret for over a year.

The fate of Judas is beyond human conjecture; it is a secret of God's judgments. We do know that he repented, that by a sincere confession, he made known his crime, in the hope that it might save Jesus. But he confessed to men who were more wicked than himself, to pious men so blinded by pride that they drove him to death by suicide with the heartless reply, "What is that to us? Look thou to it." It was the answer that corresponds with the modern one, "It serves you right: it was your own fault." All we can hope is that, after the frenzy caused in him by these words, he still remembered before the end came "the goodness and kindness of God Our Saviour."

It was the Saviour's kindness which alone explains the miracle He wrought in the Garden in healing the ear of Malchus. This man was at the head of the band which was sent to capture Jesus. Identi-
fied by a kiss, Jesus stood forth and declared Himself to be the One they sought. At His simple words, "I am He," they fell to the ground. When He gave them permission to rise and take Him, Malchus, the servant of the High Priest, went forward to bind Him. But the loyal, impetuous Peter wielded his sword and, in the dim light, succeeded only in cutting off the leader's ear. The man, according to human reckoning, deserved to bear the mutilation through life. He had the boldness to lead such a mission and to be so eager to accomplish it, even after experiencing Christ's miraculous power. It was he—according to St. Chrysostom—who with the bravado of a coward was so soon to give the manacled Jesus a brutal blow in the face in order to win favour of his superiors. But Jesus touched his ear and healed him. Kindness, such as this, could come only from the Heart of God.

The genteel world, which has more respect for the Book of Etiquette than for the Ten Commandments, which rates respectability above charity, would have given scant attention to Simon Bar-Jona, the Galilean fisherman. And yet Jesus chose him to be the head of His Church. To human eyes, he seemed to be, of all the Apostles, the least fitted for such an office, for he was impulsive and imprudent, full of self-esteem and somewhat contemptuous of his inferiors. Disregarding repeated warnings, he
made his way into the house of Caiphas and there, in the hall before the fire, he fell into grievous sins. It was surely his own fault; there was time to consider and to reconsider before the second and third denial. What he deserved in strict justice is something that only men can guess at, for at that moment, "the Lord turning looked on Peter." In His eyes there was that which kept this boastful, headstrong man from following in the foot-steps of Judas—there was "the kindness of God Our Saviour." There were no harsh words or rebuke; there was no punishment inflicted; he was not removed from his office as chief of the Apostles. The only revenge Jesus took was to insist on a confession of love for each denial and, at each earnest protestation of the penitent, He confirmed him in office as a shepherd of His flock, as His earthly vicar and as the chief pastor of His Church.

The name of Pilate has a place in the Christian creed, along with the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost, and the Virgin Mary. For endless ages, the repetition shall go on, "He suffered under Pontius Pilate." Even writers who ignore the Gospel records use his name as the synonym for moral cowardice. The man's guilt is beyond dispute. He had ordered Jesus to be scourged while believing Him to be innocent. His soldiers had added to this terrible punishment the cruel, blasphemous ceremony of
the crowning with thorns. And yet, when Jesus appeared before him again and gave him no answer, Pilate threw out the challenge: "Speakest Thou not to me? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee and I have power to release Thee?" The kindness of God Our Saviour moved Him to answer: "Thou shouldst not have any power against Me unless it were given thee from above. Therefore, he that hath delivered Me to thee hath the greater sin." The immediate effect of His words is given in the inspired narrative: "And from henceforth Pilate sought to release Him." (John 19: 9-12.) The weakness of his own character and the pressure of mob violence made him pronounce the fatal sentence. Modern commentators are rather harsh in denying the opinion of Tertullian and St. Augustine that Pilate became a Christian. However we reconcile the conflicting stories of his later life and death, we must take into consideration "the kindness of God Our Saviour," Who, though He suffered much through the man's cowardice, was so infinitely kind in telling him that another had "the greater sin."

The goodness and kindness of God Our Saviour caused Him to utter on the Cross, after three years of pleading accompanied with miracles, after the diabolic malevolence manifested in His trial and death, the amazing prayer: "Father forgive them,
for they know not what they do.’” No immediate response was made to this plea from the Heart which was the Fount of Divine Kindness. But only a few weeks later, Peter repeated the prayer in direct address: “And now, brethren, I know that you did it through ignorance as did also your rulers.” (Acts 3:17.) And the number of believers made on that occasion was five thousand, surpassing the three thousand already converted on the first Pentecost.

Kindness is a virtue dear to the Heart of Jesus. Thinking of His Father, perhaps homesick for Heaven on that occasion, He called on men to become like to His Father: “Love ye your enemies: do good and lend, hoping for nothing thereby: and your reward shall be great and you shall be sons of the Highest; for He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil.” (Luke 6:35.) Kindness makes us like Jesus Himself, for “the goodness and kindness of God Our Saviour appeared and saved us.” (Titus 3:4, 5.) Through kindness alone can we help Him to save souls. There is hope for a Judas, a Malchus, a Peter, a Pilate, a corrupt priesthood, a frenzied mob, if they can only catch a glimpse of “the kindness of God Our Saviour.” With kindness, He met treachery, brutality, denial, cowardice, blindness and malice. He sought to save men from their own passions, from hurting them-
selves. Where He succeeded, we shall not fail. Where He failed, we shall succeed with Him in showing to men "the goodness and the kindness of God Our Saviour."
A THROW OF THE DICE

"... making little account of having sold his first birthright." (Gen. 25:34.)

THE Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary, the Stations of the Cross, the customary Lenten Sermons on the Passion bring out in bold relief what may be called the great sufferings of Our Lord. They depict His bitter Agony, His cruel Scourging, His shameful Crowning with Thorns, His labor and pain in bearing the heavy Cross and His lingering Death on that gibbet. In such meditation Christian piety finds ample reason for compassionating Him and for practising the virtues exemplified by Him,—certainly a most praiseworthy thing and most pleasing to Our Lord.

But still another impulse should be born of these considerations—a desire to know more about this great Mystery of Love. For, while certain sufferings of Our Lord were greater than others, it would hardly be proper to say that the lesser are of no importance and, therefore, may be neglected. This would be to judge suffering in terms of tears and blood and physical pain. There are sorrows that lie too deep for words, that find no outlet in tears; suf-
ferings all the more cruel in that they excite no sympathy and receive no alleviation. We cannot doubt that there were many such in the Passion of Our Lord.

There is one incident, recorded by all the Evangelists. Each of them noted it and wrote it down under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. This is an extraordinary fact, for St. John makes no mention of the Agony, and St. Luke says nothing of the Scourging and the Crowning with Thorns. What is more remarkable is the fact that, centuries before, the Prophet David foretold it in the twenty-first psalm—the psalm which begins, "O God, My God, look upon me: why hast Thou forsaken me?"—and which many commentators believe was recited by Our Lord on the Cross. In it are these words describing the incident so faithfully recorded by all the Evangelists: "They divided My garments among them and upon My vesture they cast lots." As soon as the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they knelt at the foot of the Cross and began to gamble for the possession of His garments.

To realize the cruelty of this, we must remember all that Jesus was then suffering. Experience shows that great sufferings can be borne in patience, until some slight irritation makes them well-nigh unbearable. Men have endured great pain with fortitude and courage until some added trivial circumstance
made them break out into murmuring and complaints. A light shining in the eyes, the fluttering of a curtain, the hum of conversation, the ticking of a clock, even little things done for their comfort—things ordinarily quite negligible and unnoticed—have swept away self-restraint and changed men of endurance into querulous, nerveless sufferers. Here, then, was Jesus stretched upon a Cross, drained of His Blood and His strength, and forced to look upon these inhuman soldiers gambling for His few possessions.

The cold indifference of it laid a chill upon His Heart. The feelings of common humanity should have urged them to wait, for death could not be far off,—the Victim would never descend from the Cross. But Jesus was obliged to look on and see men gloating over His Death—men who were glad that He was dying so that they might possess the only things He owned in this world. There is a comfort, an interior strength in suffering persecution for the justice's sake of justice, in being a martyr for a noble cause. Cheerfulness with sallies of humour has characterized the death of many a martyr. But no death had nobler motives, nor was to achieve such results as the Death of the Son of God. Hatred, injustice, cruelty—all the elements that entered into His condemnation—He could bear for the cause and the vision that was before Him. But
what a chilling effect on enthusiasm, what a diminution in the joy of achievement to see men who look upon His Death as only a means to satisfy their greed.

Each of the four soldiers acquired a part of Our Lord’s garments; but for the possession of His coat, they began to gamble more in earnest. This was too fine a garment to divide for it was woven without a seam from top to bottom. They saw its excellent workmanship and valued it highly. But if it was precious to them, how much more so to Jesus, for it was the work of Mary His Mother. She had worked over it; with loving fingers, she had made it a garment fit for her Son. We think of all the vestments and altar-cloths made by the pious of every age to clothe the priests and to adorn the altars of God. But all the love and devotion that went into the making of them are not to be compared with the love that moved the skillful fingers of Mary in fashioning this garment for Him Who clothes the fields with beauty and the heavens with splendour. What thoughts must have filled the mind of Jesus as each soldier in turn cast the dice for the possession of this treasured garment. What memories of those far-off happy days at Nazareth when He was alone with His Mother, when He daily received the tribute of her love, the purest and holiest love that ever came to Him from the heart of a creature. The poet

100
assures us and experience bears him out that, "A sorrow's crown of sorrow is to remember better things." So the sight of that coat increased the sufferings of Our Lord by bringing to Him memories of happier days in His home at Nazareth.¹

This garment also represented to Him His spotless, undivided Church. With the labour of His years and the pain of His Passion, He had made it a thing of beauty. As St. Paul says, "He loved the Church and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water in the word of life: that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:25-27.) As the second Adam, He was soon to enter the deep sleep of death that from His Side might come forth the Bride, "the wife of the Lamb," His one Holy Church. But in the feverish gambling of the soldiers, He saw the heretics, schismatics, and bad Catholics of the centuries to come, who would soil and tear His Church to satisfy their greed, their pride or their lust. Painful beyond words, then, were the thoughts suggested by the action of these soldiers. The same psalm that prophesied the division of His garments and the gambling for His vesture ends with consoling

¹"And the soldiers indeed did these things. Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother." (John 19:24, 25.)
thoughts of the praise He would receive "in a great Church." (Ps. 21:26.) But even this comfort was embittered by the thought of souls kept from the full fruits of the Redemption that was to be given through His seven Sacraments and the authoritative voice of Truth.

He saw also the sin of gambling and its evil, cruel consequences. The sin of these soldiers represented to Him the very thing He came to cure: the lust for earthly possessions, the insane desire for gain. The gambler, like these soldiers, would be indifferent to the affairs of his soul, absorbed in material gain while blind to the great Mystery of Redemption before his eyes. It is a selfish, brutal vice. It brings poverty on wife and children and leads father and mother in sorrow to a premature grave. It is the cause of countless quarrels and even cold-blooded murders. It is impossible to gauge the misery and the sorrow, the sins and the crimes that it has caused. All these things were present to the mind of Jesus as He looked down from the Cross and saw the game in progress.

In them, too, He saw other gamblers and other stakes: souls redeemed by His Blood gambling with the precious gifts He had bought—the precious garment of sanctifying grace, the priceless gift of Faith, His promises of everlasting life. Painfully He looked on and saw these souls gambling with such
treasures in order to possess the tinselled trifles of this world. For gambling is nothing else but risking one thing to gain another. And every soul that seeks the occasions of sin is a gambler, is taking a chance on losing the precious garment of sanctifying grace. Every man who reads books dangerous to Faith is a gambler, is taking a chance on losing that Divine gift. Souls that prepare carelessly for the Sacrament of Penance are gamblers. They have their counterpart in these soldiers who, with an indifference that horrifies us, played a game while the great Mystery of Salvation was enacted before their very eyes.

Gamblers too, are those who, offered a religious vocation, choose to risk their salvation in the dangers and temptations of the world. They may win in the end, not indeed through their own skill, but through the mercy of God. But their choice has forever lost them the richer rewards of having helped souls as zealous priests or saintly religious. Thus did the mind of Jesus look beyond the game taking place at the foot of the Cross and see things most afflicting to His Heart. Grievously tormented was He by the sight of those who would gamble, not for His poor garments, but with His Grace, His Blood. He is truly deserving of our sympathy in His sorrow. But He is consoled by those who take His Passion and Death seriously, who value the gifts of
grace purchased by Him, who use them with fervour and preserve them with care.

Not without reason, then, did those who depicted the instruments of Christ's Passion in the Ages of Faith include the Dice. They hold a place with the Pillar and the Scourge, the Hammer and the Nails. They caused no Blood to flow, they came not near His bruised and aching Body. But they brought thoughts more painful than thorns, more cruel than the scourge, and more bitter than gall. These were welcome instruments to Him; they were sought and embraced by Him in all their bruising force to the end that He might make salvation a certainty for every human soul. But the Dice showed Him all the frivolity, carelessness, rashness and worldliness by which men would risk their salvation. They would make as uncertain as a throw of the dice what He suffered to make a certainty. And He could not help but see that many would be losers in this most dangerous of games. True lovers of the Crucified should recall the painful thoughts He endured as He watched the soldiers' game in progress and they should heed the advice of the Apostle Peter: "Wherefore, brethren, labour the more that by good works you may make sure your calling and election."

(2 Peter 1:10.)
OUR LADY OF PITY

"... by reason of the distress and tribulation of thy people ..." (Judith 13:25.)

HOLY scripture records in touching language the story of a heroic mother and her seven sons. Called upon to transgress the laws of their religion, they firmly refused. The tyrant, filled with anger, put six of them to death by slow torture before the very eyes of the grief-stricken mother.

When it came the turn of the seventh and youngest, the king thought that a mother’s tenderness could not resist this trial and he advised her to persuade her only remaining son to save himself and her by disobeying the laws of God. “And when he had exhorted her with many words, she promised that she would counsel her son. So, bending herself towards him, mocking the cruel tyrant, she said in her own language: ‘I beseech thee, my son, look upon heaven and earth and all that is in them: and consider that God made them out of nothing, and mankind also: so thou shalt not fear this tormentor.’” Encouraged by this, her youngest and dearest met death bravely and, shortly after, she herself followed him.

105
The inspired writer is moved to words of praise for her courage and heroism. "Now the mother," he says, "was to be admired above measure and worthy to be remembered by good men, who beheld her seven sons slain in the space of one day and bore it with a good courage, for the hope that she had in God." (2 Macc. 7.)

Such are the reasons why we should admire and remember this mother who "joined a man's heart to a woman's thought." How much more reason, then, have we to remember and admire the heroic Mother of Jesus, who in her life endured seven times the piercing sword of sorrow. She should be frequently the subject of our meditations, because, according to the prophecy, the very purpose of her sorrow was, "that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed." (Luke 2: 35.)

Her whole life was one of sorrow. Even when Jesus was but an Infant in her arms, she became the Mother of Sorrows. Only forty days after His birth, she heard the holy old man Simeon foretell the woes that awaited her. From that moment she suffered, as only a mother can suffer, watching in fear and anguish for that fearful day to come. We can never imagine the sorrow of her heart when Herod sought the life of her Child. At every step on that journey to Egypt she dreaded the appearance of a soldier who might tear the Child from her arms and strike
all joy from her life with one swift thrust of his sword. And if this journey was so full of anguish when Jesus was, at least for the time being, safe in her arms, how much more she suffered when He was lost for three days!

Finally, the time came when the disciples told her that Jesus was betrayed by Judas, brought before Pilate and unjustly condemned to death. There is only one place for her now and that is at the side of her Son. She stations herself at the entrance to a side-street. The procession draws near; she sees the instruments of His execution carried by, next the herald who proclaims the sentence of death and at last Jesus Himself, burdened with a heavy Cross, covered with wounds and blood, faint with fatigue and pain. She sees His agony, His shame, His utter loneliness. One look and He is swept on by the fierce cruelty of the soldiers. With bowed head, she follows the blood-stained footprints of her Son to Calvary.

There she hears the heavy hammer strike the sharp nails that pierce through and fasten to the Cross His hands and feet; she sees the Cross with its living Victim raised aloft and dropped into the hole prepared for it. Jesus is hanging on the Cross and Mary draws near. There she stands, a figure of such unutterable sorrow that the Church uses the inspired words of the prophet to describe her:
"To what shall I compare thee? or to what shall I liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? to what shall I equal thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Sion? for great as the sea is thy destruction; who shall heal thee?" (Lam. 2:13.) "O ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." (Lam. 1:12.)

The intensity of her sorrow can be measured only when we recall the relations, as mother and creature, that she bore to Him. She was, first of all, His Mother. As a mother, she beheld the beauty of His Face disfigured with blood and defiled with spittle; the Eyes, that had looked into hers so trustfully and lovingly, now dimmed with blood and settling into the glassy stare of death; the Tongue, that had called her "Mother," parched with thirst and made bitter with gall and vinegar; the Head, that she had so gently pillowed on her breast, crowned with thorns and not even able to rest against the hard wood of the Cross; His Hands and Feet riveted with sharp nails; His Flesh torn in a hundred places by the cruel scourge; His whole Body hanging in helpless Agony; the slow agony of a shameful death.

Sad as all this was, it was not the climax of her suffering. It did not sound the depths of her woe. A mother at the death-bed of her loved one will busy herself about a thousand details. To the eyes of the unloving, they may be foolish; to the eyes of the
cold spectator, they may, perhaps, appear useless, but they are of supreme importance in the eyes of a mother. But all these promptings of a mother’s heart were denied to Mary. She saw Jesus suffering, she saw Him dying—and she was powerless to help Him. She could not ease His drooping Head, nor quench the awful thirst that tortured Him. And all the while His enemies stood there, jeering at Him, scoffing at His helplessness, blaspheming Him most vilely and answering His pitiful cry for water with a bitter draught of gall and vinegar. What a sight for a mother—to look upon His sufferings, to be unable to comfort Him, to behold the tireless cruelty of His executioners.

In the same circumstances, any mother would have suffered as she did. To Mary, however, there was the all-important fact that her Son was also her God and she was His most favoured creature. She was able to recall how He had singled her out, even before her birth, to be His Mother; He had created her immaculate. He gave her the joys of motherhood and, at the same time, the privilege of virginity. He bore her features, He was nourished at her breast. He grew up in ever-increasing beauty before her very eyes. From the first rapturous embrace in the cold cave of Bethlehem, her love for Him had grown with His growth throughout the thirty-three years.
She knew herself to be a Spiritual Vessel—full of grace—overflowing with the most precious fruits of the Passion of her Son and her God. His sufferings were to her the price of all her graces and privileges and joy. More than St. Paul ever did or ever could realize, she understood that “He loved me and gave Himself for me.” The love that resulted from this understanding of His Passion was the purest, the most intense that was ever directed from a creature’s heart to the Heart of God. As she loved, so she sorrowed over the insults, the sufferings, the blasphemies, that were the answer of ungrateful creatures to His gesture of all-embracing love.

As a mother, then, she grieved over the dead joys of the past and the living reality of His present pains. As the most highly favoured of God’s creatures, she suffered the pangs of a gratitude that knew how precious were the graces given her and how powerless she was to render adequate thanksgiving. As the holiest of His creatures, she was saddened beyond measure by the sins of men and their ingratitude toward the good and bountiful God. She longed to mother them and lead them to an understanding of this mystery of His love—the complete and final revelation on earth of His infinite and eternal love.

Thus meditating at the foot of the Cross, she
heard the voice that for her held all the music of
the heavenly choirs, that was to her sweeter than
the perfect harmony of the angelic chorus: "Wom-
an, behold thy Son!" She strained forward to hear
more of those celestial accents and they come
through laboured breathing: "Son, behold, Thy
Mother."

The voice was, indeed, the voice of her own Son,
but the words were the creative words of God. In
one flash of illuminating grace, she knew her destiny,
she understood the purpose of her sorrows. Until
the world dissolves in fire, she must be "the mother
of all the living"; she must be the consoler, the com-
forter, the guide of all those redeemed by the
Precious Blood of her Son. Just as her Immaculate
Conception was the proper and worthy preparation
for her sublime dignity as Mother of God, so her
sorrows were the natural and fitting preparation for
her office as Mother of the Redeemed.

Having passed through that fiery ordeal of sorrow
and suffering, she is eminently qualified to be the
Health of the Sick, the Comfortress of the Afflict-
ed, the Help of Christians, and the Refuge of
Sinners. No sinner who contemplates her sorrows
needs to be told that she is the Mother of Mercy,
full of pity for those who blindly and ignorantly
crucify her Son. No sufferer in this vale of tears
should hesitate to call on her, "our life, our sweet-
ness and our hope.’ No maiden, carrying a precious treasure in an earthen vessel, can doubt but that there is a safe and sure refuge in this Tower of Ivory. No youth, beset and harassed by the enemies of holy virtue, can be conquered if he flies to this Tower of David, there to find ‘all the armour of valiant men.’ Timid and fearful souls, who even shrink from the dazzling brightness of the Immaculate Virgin, will find that Mary on Calvary is, in truth, an Amiable, an Admirable Mother. Those who stand in doubt and perplexity before the confusing cross-roads of life can have, for the asking, guidance and direction from the Seat of Wisdom, the Mother of Good Counsel. She is ‘our tainted nature’s solitary boast,’ but in all the miseries that resulted from that original guilt, she is also the Cause of our Joy.

And all this follows inevitably on the melancholy but infallible Word: ‘There stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother . . . When Jesus, therefore, had seen His Mother and the disciple standing whom He loved, He said to His Mother: ‘Woman, behold thy Son.’ After that, He saith to the disciple: ‘Behold thy Mother.’’’ (John 19. 25, 26.)
THE PLACE OF THE SKULL

"... that He might taste death for all."
(Heb. 2: 9.)

FROM time immemorial, the skull has stood as emblem of death, more sombre, more chilling than that other, the grim Reaper. The latter pictures death as a certain, inescapable fact and his shadowy figure serves to give warning of the dread uncertainty of its approach. But the skull gives terrifying testimony to the ravages of Death the Destroyer. Swiftly and silently he came upon his victim, engaged him in a brief combat and made him that loathsome thing that men cannot bear to look upon—a putrid corpse.

Further decay, and there emerges a hideous skull. The eyes that gazed on beauty, the ears that drank in knowledge, the lips that uttered wisdom, the brain that conceived deathless projects—all are gone. There is left only the set grin that mocks at human endeavour and achievement—the stony mask that shows no human emotion—the empty sockets that stare with sightless rigidity at nothing—the silent tomb that echoes no more to commanding eloquence. It is now no more than a stone resembling the hu-
man head in conformation—the ruined temple of thought that reached to the stars and beyond—the dismantled dynamo that once made its power felt in the world of men and affairs.

Jesus was crucified on Golgotha, which, being interpreted, is the place of Calvary, that is, the place of the Skull. "And they bring Him unto the place of Golgotha which translated is 'the place of the skull.'" (Mark 15:22. West. Ver.) An ancient legend assigns as the reason for the name that it was the burial place of Adam. This may or may not be true, but the legend embodies the higher truth of the relation between the Death of Our Lord on the Cross and the Sin of the First Man—for "By one man sin entered into this world and by sin, death." (Rom. 5:12.)

Others declare that the Mount of the Crucifixion was called "the place of the skull" because it was the common place for the execution of criminals. It was situated near the gates of the city and at the converging point of several roads so that all might see the punishment of crime and its ignoble end—a fitting place, indeed, for Divine Justice to display to the world the final, unanswerable proof of His hatred for sin and the severity of its punishment. But whatever origin we ascribe to the name, it is of less consequence beside the luminous truth that Jesus Crucified stands above the awful fact of death,
illuminating its meaning, stripping it of its terrors and clothing it in beautiful garments of hope.

By the sin of Adam death with all its attendant evils entered into the world. It was a frightful sentence for God to impose on the creature He had made to His own image and whom He has just contemplated as the crown of His creative work. To condemn the most beautiful work of His hands to the corruption of the grave, one almost feels that God had to do violence to Himself. But how else, we may reasonably ask, could He impress man with a knowledge of that moral putrescence which is called sin? Thunder and the whirlwind, the darkness of perpetual night or the fearful flashing of angry lightning—these might have been employed to express the horror with which Holiness looks on sin. But these would be outside the nature that had sinned; they would not have touched the sinner himself. Deliberately he had eaten of the forbidden tree and upon him the sentence was pronounced. He must return to the earth from which he was taken for "dust thou art and unto dust thou must return." Cherubim with a flaming sword were placed before the paradise of pleasure to keep the way of the tree of life, "'lest, perhaps, he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and live forever.'" (Gen. 3.)

And so death passed upon all men, beginning in
loathsome disease, conquering in the midst of exquisite pain and triumphing in the ignominy of shameful corruption in a tomb. The generations of Adam's children came and went; they endured the inevitable consequences of their father's guilt and entered the narrow confines of putrid dissolution. The poor and the proud, the ignorant and the wise, the saint and the sinner shared the common lot and were indistinguishable under the mounds that marked their resting place.

Death became a fearful spectre, the well-spring of tears, the sword of bitter separation, a dark and gloomy mystery. By all these tokens of avenging Justice men were to know how offensive, how unsightly is sin before the most pure eyes of God. They were made to understand that if the whole world were turned into one great lazaret-house of disease and, finally, into one vast cemetery of unsightly decay, it would not be enough to make atonement to the Holiness outraged by sin.

Into this land of death Jesus came; in "the place of the skull" He was crucified and there He died. But in so doing He made adequate reparation for Adam's sin, "He blotted out the handwriting on the decree that was against us. And He hath taken the same out of the way fastening it to the Cross." (Col. 2:14.) "Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, . . . hath destroyed death and hath brought to light life and
incorruption by the Gospel.’’ (2 Tim. 1:10.) We are no longer under condemnation for in Christ Jesus we are delivered from the law of sin and of death. (Rom. 8:1, 2.) Yes, even death has been swallowed up in His victory, for the fruits of Christ’s Passion were to be more abundant than the evils wrought through sin. “If by reason of the offense of one man death hath reigned... much more shall they who receive the abundance of the grace and of the gift of justness reign in life through the one Jesus Christ.” (Rom. 5:17. Wes. Ver.) True it is that death still operates in us, but it is no longer a dreadful and loathsome thing for a good Christian. The fear of it arises from the thought of one’s sins, of the possible temptations of Satan at the supreme moment. To dispel these fears, we may consider with grateful hearts the infallible words of God.

Regarding sin, we need not go through the Gospels to recall all the instances of Christ’s mercy towards sinners, nor reflect on His many utterances that reveal His love for them. It is sufficient to look at the Cross itself and to know that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. How much more surely, therefore, being now justified by His Blood, shall we be saved from wrath through Him. (Rom. 5:6-10.) If when we were enemies, He called us and reconciled us to God by His Death, how much
more solidly founded should be our hope of being saved by Him, now that we are reconciled.

Repentance, perseverance and the final reward are but progressive stages toward the attainment of the grace of salvation merited for us by Our Lord’s Death. And the granting of one part is His guarantee that we may have the others. Thus does St. Paul bid us to dismiss the fear of death as something unbecoming those who have such firm grounds for hope. He knew that it was the thought of sin that makes death a fearful thing. (1 Cor. 15: 56.) And he laboured to expel these notions from the minds of the newly repentant by giving them abundant motives of confidence in Jesus Crucified.

More than that, he even takes them before the most fearful aspect of death—the Judgment to come—and strengthens their trembling hearts on the same sure foundation of trust. "Who shall accuse against the elect of God?" It is God Who has justified us; who then shall condemn? The Judge Himself is Christ Jesus Who died for us and Who also pleads in our behalf. So he emphatically concludes that "neither death nor life . . . nor things to come . . . can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8.)

Since we have such plentiful reasons for facing death with confidence, even when we consider our sins, how much less reason there is to tremble at the
prospect of the devil's temptations in that hour. He had a strongly established position in the dark passes of death, since the sin of Adam, but he has been conquered, despoiled and disarmed since the Redeemer's Death. He trembles at the sound of the Name of Jesus and is ready to flee before His Cross. One of the reasons assigned in Holy Scripture for the Death of Jesus is that through death He might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil. And might deliver them, who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to servitude. (Heb. 2:14.) "Death is no longer a hazardous combat in which the chances are equal between the faithful soul and the devil." The odds are all in favour of the souls that have died and been buried with Jesus in holy Baptism and have risen again to walk in newness of life. For if we have become one with Him in likeness of His Death, we shall also be in the likeness of His Resurrection. (Rom. 6.)

While we yet groan within ourselves at the prospect of death, we know that we are adopted sons of God, waiting in hope for the final gift of the Redeemer, the redemption of the body, its glorious resurrection. "Wherefore," says St. Paul writing on this subject, "comfort ye one another with these words." (1 Thess. 4:17.) We have no longer any reason to sorrow as those who have no hope. Hence-
forth, in Christian language, the dead are those "that are fallen asleep in Christ," having been sealed by the Holy Spirit of God unto the day of redemption (Eph. 4:30.) and who in heaven pray incessantly for the completion of the Redeemer's work in themselves by the resurrection and glorification of their bodies. (Apoc. 6:10.)

Thus, the meaning of death becomes luminously clear in the light of the Cross. In the midst of the dead and the dying and, while awaiting our turn, we can confidently repeat the confession of our faith and the reason for our hope: "I know that my Redeemer liveth and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth. And I shall be clothed again with my skin and in my flesh I shall see my God. Whom I myself shall see and my eyes shall behold, and not another; this my hope is laid up in my bosom." (Job 19:25-27.)
THE HOLY OF HOLIES

"... a new and living way which He hath dedicated for us through the veil, that is to say, His Flesh..." (Heb. 10:20.)

FOR the Jew the most sacred spot on earth was Jerusalem. The Psalmist, recalling the days of captivity in Babylon, composed a psalm for Jeremias whose lamentations over the destruction of the city are forever memorable. "Upon the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept: when we remembered Sion. ... And they that carried us away said: Sing ye to us a hymn of the songs of Sion." The answer of these saddened and afflicted people is full of love and tender rememberance for their Holy City. "How shall we sing the song of the Lord in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand be forgotten. Let my tongue cleave to my jaws, if I do not remember thee: if I make not Jerusalem the beginning of my Joy." So strong are these feelings that they give voice to a prayer that sounds strange to Christian ears—ears that have heard: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:23.)—"Remember, O Lord, the children of Edom in the day of
Jerusalem: Who say, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof. O daughter of Babylon, miserable: blessed be he that shall dash thy little ones against a rock.” (Psalm 136.)

Jeremias himself “sat weeping, and mourned with this lamentation over Jerusalem and, with a sorrowful mind, sighing and moaning, he said. . . . All they that passed by the way have clapped their hands at thee: they have hissed, and wagged their heads at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying: “Is this the city of perfect beauty, the joy of the whole earth?” (Lam. 2:12.) In such sorrow and desolation is he that he cries out for comfort and consolation, “O ye that pass by the way, attend and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow.” (Lam. 1:12.)

These were no mere sentiments of patriotism. They were the sincere expressions of devoted hearts for the city, beloved of God,—the city that contained the temple, and, in that temple, the Holy of Holies. To us, these ardent prayers, these sorrowful lamentations may seem strange but we see the reason for it all when we remember that the Holy of Holies contained the rod of Aaron, the instrument employed in those mighty miracles wrought to deliver the chosen people from the land of Egypt and which later “bloomed blossoms” as a vindication of Aaron’s right to the priesthood: in it were also the tables of the Law given on Mount Sinai and some of the
manna with what the Jews were fed for forty years in the desert. Even this ungrateful people might well be desirous of preserving these remembrances of God’s loving-kindness and of His special providence over them.

To foster and preserve this reverence, God Himself commanded that the Holy of Holies should be covered with a heavy veil and that only once a year the High-Priest alone should enter and this only that he might sprinkle on the Mercy Seat the blood of the sacrifice.

At the death of Jesus on the Cross, the Scripture says, “And the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom.” (Mark 15:38.) The “figure of the good things to come” was no longer necessary. For about the same time another veil was rent, no other than the Sacred Humanity of Jesus. A soldier approached, lance in hand. With one quick thrust, he lays bare the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Holy of Holies, the dearest treasure of Catholic love and devotion. One look at that Heart reveals the mighty miracle of Redemption from a bondage worse than the Egyptian and His right to that “everlasting priesthood whereby He is able also to save forever them that come to God by Him.” (Heb. 7:25.) It clearly points out the Law of Love that is henceforth to prevail, and it shows the origin, the source of that marvelous work of feeding His
weary people on His most precious Body and Blood. The Redemption of Christ was no mere deliverance from "hard works in clay and brick." (Exodus 1:14.) It was not wrought by the omnipotent word alone that afflicted and desolated Egypt with the ten plagues. The poverty, the obscurity, the ignominy, the sufferings of Our Lord's thirty-three years on earth were the price of that gift—a gift surpassing human understanding and infinitely beyond the promptings of human gratitude. The gift itself is worthy of eternal remembrance and everlasting gratitude because it reveals such condescension on the part of the Eternal towards the temporal, ephemeral creature that was the object of His deliberate, creative action. "It was God's eternal purpose that we should have redemption, the remission of our sins, through the Blood of His beloved Son." (Eph. 1:4; 3:9.) It becomes infinitely more precious in our eyes when we realize that it was "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:9.)

Miracles are too often thought of in terms of power—power that overcomes material obstacles established by Power Itself for the government and guidance of the universe. Love performs greater works when, by a display of kindness and condescension, it forces free but rebellious creatures to submit to its sweet invitations. The Crucifixion, the
Death of Jesus on the Cross, the revelation of His Sacred Heart that carried out the plan of Redemption, were a miracle of Love that forever compels the love of the human heart. This was His purpose and intention in laying down His life; it was His solemn prophecy as to the result of His sacrifice. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself." (John 12:32.) The Heart that was pierced by the soldier's lance must forever be associated with the Cross. It is rightly pictured surmounted by a Cross because the whole meaning of His shameful and painful death is Love.

The blossoms that grew from Aaron's rod "which, spreading, the leaves were formed into almonds" (Num. 17:8.) picture but feebly the beautiful flowers, the rich fruits of Christ's Passion. Isaias, the Prophet of the Passion, uses richer, more varied figures to describe the benefits of Redemption. He speaks first, with a touch of envy it would seem, of those who "shall draw waters with joy from the Saviour's fountains." (Isa. 12:3.) Then in poetical terms he sings of the blessings that will come to men from the Heart that loves them so much: "The land that was desolate and impassable shall be glad and the wilderness shall rejoice and shall flourish like the lily, ... Strengthen ye the feeble hands and confirm the weak knees. Say to the fainthearted: Take courage, and fear not: behold.... God Himself
will come and will save you. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened and ears of the deaf be un-
stopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart and the tongue of the dumb shall be free: for waters
are broken out in the desert, and streams in the wild-
erness. . . . And a path and a way shall be there and it shall be called the holy way: the unclean shall not
pass over it and this shall be unto you a straight way, so that fools shall not err therein. . . . And the
redeemed of the Lord shall return and shall come into Sion with praise, and everlasting joy shall be
upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and mourning shall flee away.”
( Isa. 35.)

Through the open Side of Jesus, in His Sacred Heart we can see also the New Law of Love. His
whole life on earth was a startling series of con-
trasts with the dreadful scene about Mt. Sinai. His
first recorded appearance as a Teacher took place in the synagogue at Nazareth “where He was
brought up.” On this day “He rose up to read. And the book of Isaias the Prophet was delivered
unto Him. And, as He unfolded the book, He found
the place where it was written: ‘The Spirit of the
Lord is upon Me, wherefore He hath anointed Me
to preach the Gospel to the poor, He hath sent Me to
heal the contrite of heart: to preach deliverance to
the captives and sight to the blind, to set at liberty
them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of reward.’ And when He had folded the book . . . the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them: ‘This day is fulfilled this Scripture in your ears.’” (Luke 4.)

The rest of His discourse is not given, but only enough to proclaim the beginning of the New Law of Love. In His later discourses, especially the Sermon on the Mount and the Parables, He reveals still more the infinite Love of God for His sinful creatures. He emphasizes also the fact that those only are deserving of love and merit forgiveness who love their neighbour as themselves. The burden of the Commandments, the paralyzing fear of God are changed into a burden that is light and a yoke that is sweet. “There is now therefore no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus who walk not according to the flesh.” (Rom. 8:1.) “For they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the vices and concupiscences.” (Gal. 6:24.) The law of the life, the motive of all conduct, the principle of every action is to live in the faith of the Son of God Who loved men to the extent of delivering Himself to the Death of the Cross.

Having delivered His people from bondage and given them the Law by which they were to be guided, the Heart of Jesus conceived the idea of feeding
them on Bread from Heaven. He instituted a Sacrifice as a Memorial of that deliverance and a Banquet that is a perfect summary of the New Law of Love. The Mass is the Sacrifice of our Ransom, "the same sacrifice that was offered on the Cross." Holy Communion is the receiving of the Body that was broken and the Blood that was shed for the remission of sins. The Mass is an eloquent reminder of our Redemption from bondage. Holy Communion is the bond that unites the Redeemer with the redeemed and these fortunate ones with each other.

Thus we see that the Heart of Jesus can be compared to the Holy of Holies. But we also see how infinitely it surpasses the ancient one in the benefits conferred, the Love that inspired them and the permanence of the gifts themselves. For the rod of Aaron there is the Cross: for the table of stone, there is a Heart of flesh: for the corruptible manna, there is the incorruptible Flesh and Blood of the Son of the Virgin Mary, the Son of the Eternal God.

It is no wonder, then, that after centuries of coldness and neglect, He broke the silence of the Tabernacle and revealed the Heart that was pierced on the Cross. Love can bear all things, endure all things but it cannot endure coldness for benefits given, nor forgetfulness of sacrifices made in the interest of those loved. "Behold the Heart that has loved men so much and which is loved by them so little." This
is a call to remember His sufferings, a complaint that even the Sacrament instituted to remind men of His Love was being forgotten, that He was dying again in the memories of those who should remember. The nation of rebellious ungrateful, “stiff-necked” Jews treasured and reverenced the Holy of Holies, because it contained the rod of Aaron, the instrument of so many miracles; the law that was to guide them; the manna that had fed and strengthened them in their forty years’ journey through the desert. How much more grateful should Christians be who have received the reality of which these were the figure. Redeemed by His Death on the Cross, instructed in the New Law of Love, fed on His Precious Body and Blood they should return the only proper and adequate thanks, which is Love. For “Love is the end of the Commandment, the bond of perfection, the fulfilling of the Law.”
CROSS AND TOMB

"... the Power of God and the Wisdom of God."
(I Cor. 1:24.)

It is the duty and privilege of every Catholic to
profess faith in the Divinity of Jesus Christ.
St. Peter gave emphatic expression to this be-
lief on that memorable day at Cesarea Phillippi
when, in answer to Our Lord's question, "Whom do
you say I am?" he exclaimed, "Thou art the Christ,
the Son of the living God." (Matt. 16:16.)

The Church in her struggles with heresy has ela-
borated this into the stately words of the Nicene
Creed: "I believe... in one Lord Jesus Christ, the
only-begotten Son of God and born of the Father be-
fore all ages; God of God, Light of Light, true God
of true God; begotten not made, consubstantial with
the Father; by Whom all things were made. Who
for us men and for our salvation, came down from
Heaven; and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the
Virgin Mary; and was made Man." Nor does she,
"the pillar and ground of truth," shrink from de-
claring that "He was crucified also for us under
Pontius Pilate, He suffered and was buried." For,
on these very facts she bases her belief. Asked for
a reason for the faith that is in her, she merely points to a glorified Cross and an empty Tomb. In making this gesture she is supported by the very words of her Founder; for when "they understood not that He called God His Father, Jesus, therefore, said to them, When you shall have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall you know that I am He."

(John 8:28.) And when they asked of Him a sign, He said, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh a sign: and a sign shall not be given it, but the sign of Jonas the Prophet. For as Jonas was in the whale's belly three days and three nights; so shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights." (Matt. 12:39, 40.)

This may appear obscure to Catholics of the present day, because they do not realize what it means to have triumphed over the extreme humiliation of the Cross and the absolute finality of the Tomb, as they appeared to the people of that day.

To the Jews, the life of Jesus meant the uttermost failure; it was full of the most humiliating incidents; to their way of thinking, He was destined to be as completely forgotten as if He had never lived. He was born at Bethlehem in circumstances of extreme poverty. He grew up in Nazareth, a small village in the despised province of Galilee. His occupation of carpenter, while an honourable one, prevented Him, on account of His poverty, from attend-
ing the schools and there acquiring the learning and title of *rabbī* or master. This fact was so well known that, when He began His ministry, the effect of His discourses was considerably lessened: “And the Jews wondered, saying: ‘How doth this man know letters, *having never learned.*’” (John 7:15.)

All these things were cast up to Him by His enemies during His life. Even those who hung on His words of Divine wisdom and gazed astonished at His works of Divine power must have been secretly influenced by these facts. Being Jews, they possessed the current idea of a Messiah who would be in his origin, his life and the circumstances of his life all that Jesus was not. When the storm of His Sacred Passion broke—a time, they thought, to employ His marvelous gift of eloquence and to exhibit His astonishing gift of miracles—they beheld Him deliberately silent and strangely powerless. He was as a man from whom the Divine *afflatus* had gone, if, indeed, such was the influence under which He spoke and worked.

He became, in their eyes, a mere man to be judged by his deliberate utterance before a jury that would not be influenced by persuasive words or confused by startling miracles. It was a serious matter, a matter of life or death. Clothed in the majesty of the Law, the High-Priest asks Jesus in words that make an equivocal answer impossible, “I adjure Thee
by the living God, that thou tell us if thou be the Christ, the Son of God.’” As clearly and emphatically Jesus answered, “I am.” (Matt. 23:63; Mark 14:62.) Then and there, He is branded as a blasphemer, who, before the Romans reserved to themselves the death penalty, would have been immediately led forth and stoned to death. For so it was written in the Law: “And the Lord spoke to Moses saying: ‘Bring forth the blasphemer without the camp... and let the people stone him.’” (Lev. 24:13-16.) This incident was not only the first step into the deep waters of humiliation before the Jewish law, but it also shows that Jesus died because He claimed to be the Son of God.

There follow in quick succession the scene before Pilate, where He is accused of being a common demagogue, exciting the people to rebellion, and the scene before Herod where “Herod and his army set Him at naught.” (Luke 23:11.) What these words convey in terms of ignominy and disgrace, ridicule and contempt, it is impossible to imagine. We know only the climax of the affair when Jesus was sent back to Pilate clothed in a white garment—the distinctive garb of fools and idiots.

He goes back to the Antonia and to ignominies sufficient to blacken His name forever. Declared innocent by Pilate, He is strangely condemned to be scourged—not the Jewish scourging presided over
by the kind-hearted judge, but the brutal Roman scourging inflicted only on slaves.

The lowest depths of shame and disgrace are sounded when Jesus is actually nailed to the Cross. “For he is accursed of God that hangeth on a tree.” (Deut. 21:23.) Nothing could more completely signify failure to Jewish minds; nothing could be more disgraceful than to fall under the curse of the Law given them by God; nothing could be a clearer indication of the oblivion to which, they believed, His name and His person were destined. To triumph over such humiliations and such a curse would be to them the greatest miracle of His career. They said as much while He hung on the Cross: “If He be the King of Israel, let Him come down from the Cross and we will believe in Him.” (Matt. 27:42.)

There is a greater miracle than that. To be victorious over death, after such disgrace, would be to the outside world a miracle beyond dispute. The Jews believed in the resurrection from the dead. To the pagan world, with only the vaguest ideas about immortality, it was an impossibility. When St. Paul broached the subject to the Athenians, they laughed him to scorn and mocked him. (Act 17:32.) So far were they from understanding his words, that they actually thought he was proclaiming two new gods, “because he preached to them Jesus and the Resurrection.” The Cross among the Jews and the
Tomb among the pagans were the very symbols of failure, disgrace and oblivion. There was no triumph to be expected for One Who had hung on a Cross and no victory for One Who had been sealed in a Tomb. The final word on the career of Jesus of Nazareth would seem to have been written into the very Creed of His followers: "He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried."

Then, through the gloom of Calvary appears a ray of glory; from the silence of the Tomb is heard a voice: "Be not affrighted; you seek Jesus of Nazareth Who was crucified: He is risen, He is not here." (Mark 16:6.) The ignominious Cross has failed to brand its Victim with everlasting infamy and the relentless Tomb has failed to hold the Victor over a shameful death. Jesus, the crucified Victim of human hate, the dead Enemy of human vice has triumphed. The Cross is stripped of its shamefulness and the Tomb is no longer the final word of death over life.

The Cross is henceforth to be the symbol of the truths that He taught; the Tomb is ever to serve as a proof of their verity. The Cross is the standard of His moral precepts and ascetic counsels; the Tomb is a justification for the severest maxims and a guarantee of the reward for their observance. The Cross solves all the perplexing riddles of life; the Tomb lights up the dark mystery of death. And
all this because the glorified Cross and the empty Tomb prove that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. They make it possible for millions of believers to sing with voices, tuned into unison with the Holy Catholic Church, that grand confession of Faith, that paean of victory which overcometh the world: “He was also crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, He suffered and was buried. And He rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures. And He ascended into Heaven, sitteth at the right hand of the Father. And He is to come again with glory to judge the living and the dead: of His kingdom there shall be no end.”

On earth, that kingdom consists of those who answer the touching invitation of the poet;

You that weep, come to this God, for He weeps. You that suffer, come to Him, for He heals. You that tremble, come to Him, for He smiles. You that pass, come to Him, for He abides.¹

In heaven that kingdom is made up of those “thousands of thousands, out of every tribe, and tongue and people and nation” whom He had redeemed and who cry out incessantly: “The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and benediction.” (Apoc. 5.)

¹Victor Hugo: Lines written beneath a Crucifix.
A LEADER TO THE PEOPLE

"... which Thou hast redeemed." (Ex. 15:13.)

The Scribes and Pharisees were the religious teachers among the Jews. Yet on one occasion our Divine Saviour spoke about them to His Apostles in these words: "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in the chair of Moses: all things, therefore, whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do; but, according to their works, do ye not; for they say and do not." (Matt. 23:2.) It was a sad state of affairs—these men teaching the people what to do, laying heavy burdens on them, while they themselves lived hypocritical lives of self-indulgence.

Jesus Christ changed all this. He, indeed, taught us what to do in order to obtain eternal life, but He did not stop there. It was part of His love for us that He Himself should go before us and show us how to put into practice His commands and counsels. He forgave His enemies, He prayed without ceasing, He lived a life of poverty, chastity and obedience. Consequently, He could say to each one of us: "If any man will be My disciple, let him take up his cross and follow Me."

The same thing is true of the trials of life. Jesus
saw that the life of each one of us would be filled with trials in one form or another; and, therefore, He shared them all, "giving us an example that we should follow in His footsteps." Since these trials and sufferings abound in the life of every one, it will be profitable to meditate often on Our Saviour's journey to Calvary, for it was along that sorrowful way that He met and endured patiently the chief pains of the present life. A little reflection will cause us to say with Moses: "In Thy mercy Thou hast been a Leader to the people which Thou hast redeemed." (Ex. 15:13.) If we meditate on this painful journey we shall find that Jesus endured the keenest sufferings in His honour, in His Body and above all in His Sacred Heart.

Never before was humiliation so heaped upon His honour and dignity. Out in the open streets of a city crowded with pilgrims from every known quarter of the globe, He is branded as a criminal and esteemed even worse than the criminals by His side. The Cross on His shoulder stamps Him among the Jews as one cursed by God and among the Romans as a contemptible slave. All eyes are shamelessly turned upon Him, some gazing with cool indifference, others with open contempt, while still others fix upon Him looks that blaze with fierce hatred. Tongues, poisoned with hate, hurl at Him the most insulting epithets and the most atrocious calumnies.
And Jesus, the meek Lamb of God, drags His weary way along, each step taking Him deeper and deeper into the depths of shame and disgrace.

Yet we must not measure His humiliation by the number or malice of these insults, but rather by the exalted dignity of His Person. A mere man, conscious of his dignity as a creature of God, would be profoundly humiliated by such outrageous treatment; but Jesus is the very Son of God. He was at that very moment surrounded, adored and praised by marvelous choirs of Angels. He has in the palm of His hand the lives and the eternal destiny of those wretches who insulted and mocked Him. Who can measure, then, the depths of His humiliation or the galling bitterness of such public unmerited disgrace! What mind can fathom the inexhaustible patience of Jesus, Who had it in His power to escape such treatment either by hiding Himself or by annihilating His tormentors! He goes on His way as a meek Lamb, Who as St. Peter says, “when He was reviled, did not revile; when He suffered, He threatened not, but delivered Himself to him that judged Him unjustly.” (1 Peter 2:23.)

Turning, now, to the bodily sufferings of Jesus on the way to Calvary, we must first recall His state of fatigue and pain, even before the Cross was laid on His shoulder. Not only was the preceding night a sleepless one for Him, but it was also one long
period of pain, of mockery, of spitting and buffeting inflicted by the servants of the High-Priest. Then, in the morning, He was dragged from one tribunal to another, delivered up to the horrors of a Roman scourging and, finally, crowned with sharp, piercing thorns. After all this, we wonder that He was able to stand, to say nothing of walking any distance with that heavy burden. But it was the Roman custom that the criminal must bear his own cross and the Cross is accordingly laid upon His raw bleeding shoulder. Out into the burning heat of the sun He is led, and then pushed in the direction of Calvary.

Perspiration trickles down His face; His breath comes in gasps, the Cross, rocking to and fro on His shoulder, cuts into the raw flesh and strikes repeatedly against the crown of thorns; His tottering steps grow weaker and weaker, until He falls heavily forward into the dust of the road with His burden upon Him. But there is no heart there to pity Him, no tongue to plead for Him, no hand to help Him. He is dragged to His feet and pushed forward, with perhaps frequent, savage strokes of the whips to hasten Him on. Again and again He falls with the same pain to His bruised and exhausted body, meeting with the same brutal treatment from the soldiers who grow more impatient and cruel at each delay. Think of all these sufferings heaped upon the Body of Jesus and remember that not once did He com-
plain. The words of the Prophet Isaias were fulfilled in Him: "He was offered because it was His own will and He opened not His mouth. He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter and shall be dumb as a lamb before His shearer and He shall not open His mouth." (Isaias 53:7.)

The sufferings of the Heart of Jesus on that sorrowful journey are best described in one word. He was alone. Perhaps it would be better to describe them by saying that He was alone with only His thoughts for company—thoughts that only emphasized His loneliness.

For a poor sufferer, the saddest word in any language is the one word, alone. Alone, without the sympathy of loving friends; alone, counting the minutes as they drag by; alone, feeling without any distraction every throb of pain. Jesus Christ had a human Heart and He felt in all its bitterness the loneliness of that painful journey. It is a suffering frequently mentioned by the Prophets: "I have trod the wine press alone and of the nations there is not a man with me. I looked for one that would grieve together with me, but there was none, and for one that would comfort me and I found none. I am become as a man without help. I looked on my right hand and beheld and there was no one that would know me."

Such was His loneliness and, painful as it was, it
was intensified by the thoughts that were His only company. He remembered the journeys He had made throughout Judea and Galilee scattering benefits with a liberal hand. Where now are the sick that He healed, the hungry that He fed, the dead that He raised to life, the Apostles whom He had called? Many of these persons were in the crowd that lined the street and not one came forth to help Him or to cheer Him with a word of sympathy. It is dreadful to think that some of them might be among that jeering mob, joining their voices in the chorus of insults hurled at Him. Well might He say in the words of holy Job: "They that knew Me have forgotten Me and he whom I loved most is turned against Me." Alone in the midst of such public humiliation, alone in the midst of such intense pains, He marks out the *Via Dolorosa*.

A keener suffering is in store for His afflicted Heart. At a turn in the road, He comes face to face with His sorrowing Mother. At another time and under different circumstances, His Heart would have thrilled with joy on meeting His perfect, sinless Mother, but now that Heart is pierced with grief when He sees her tears and anguish. He once shed tears and worked one of His greatest miracles on seeing the widow of Naim weeping over her only son. How immeasurably greater was the compassion He now feels for His own Mother, since His love for her
immeasurably surpassed His love for any other creature. He had created her, immaculate, endowed her with every gift of nature and of grace, chosen her to be His Mother and destined her to be the Queen of the Universe.

Now, in order to save sinners, even the very wretches who are actually hounding Him to death, He must allow her heart to be pierced with a sword of sorrow; He must die and leave her in this world a lonely and desolate mother. Why does He not leave sinners to perish and spare her this sorrow? Why does He not spare His own tender Heart the grief of seeing her distress? To ask these questions is to be ignorant of the inexhaustible patience of Christ. No humiliation, no bodily suffering, so now, no anguish of heart will turn Him from the patient bearing of His Cross. Long ago, He said: “If any man will be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow Me.” And now, on the way to Calvary, He experiences every form of human suffering and He bears all with unfailing patience.

He was humiliated beyond measure; His body was racked with pain almost beyond endurance; His Heart was afflicted as no heart ever was before or since. He was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with infirmity; He had, indeed, become like to us in all things, sin alone excepted. How unlike the Jewish teachers of old is this Teacher of ours! Conse-
QUENTLY, since the disciple is not above the Master, we must try to imitate His example of patience.

In the life of every one of us trials and sufferings abound. Christian piety has called them "crosses," in memory of the burden that Jesus bore to Calvary. They come to us at various times and under different forms: humiliations and insults, sickness and pain of body, sorrows that pierce the heart. Where shall we find the courage to bear them or the patience to endure them, except in studying the example of Jesus bearing His Cross. He was sinless, He was God, and shall we who are sinners complain? He bore all human sorrow in that one journey, and shall we who have much less to suffer, a mere splinter of His Cross to carry, grow impatient and rebellious?

Rather let us turn to Him and study attentively His sufferings and His patience. Not only will our complaints die on our lips, but we will be glad to suffer something in union with Him. No matter what suffering comes, we will know that Jesus experienced it also and that He alone can console us. We will have a sure proof of His friendship, for St. Teresa says: "What stronger proof of His friendship can you have than to choose for you what He chose for Himself?" Our Holy Mother, the Church, has permanently fixed to the walls of the churches the scenes of this sad journey. She knows that her children need that example, not only during Lent, but all the
year round. Therefore, she says to us in the words of St. Peter: "Christ suffered for us leaving you an example, that you should follow in His footsteps." In so doing she is but echoing the words of Jesus Himself: "If any man will be My disciple, let him take up his cross and follow Me."

If we patiently follow in the blood-stained footprints of the Son of God, our journey will end where His ended—in heaven. Let us, then, ever turn our eyes to those scenes of Our Saviour's last journey, that we may derive from them courage and patience in bearing our cross. For it was out of a merciful regard for us that He not only became Our Redeemer but also Our Leader in the rough and thorny way that must be trodden if we are to attain the reward which He has purchased for us.
LEARN OF ME

"... for they shall possess the land." (Matt. 5:4.)

Our Lord has been pleased to reveal to us the beauty of His character under a variety of titles. He called Himself Friend, Father, Bridegroom, wishing to give us from every angle, as it were, a complete picture of the Divine, yet human, love of His Sacred Heart for each one of us. He told the story of the prodigal son and then pictured Himself as the indulgent Father who joyfully received him back. He pointed to Himself as the perfect Friend Who was to lay down His life for His friends. He declared Himself to be the Bridegroom of our souls, wedded to our human nature and sharing our common life of many trials and much suffering.

All these title seem to reveal love alone,—His tender and all-embracing love. There is yet another title that sums up all the others and gives a hint of something more. He calls Himself the Good Shepherd. In this beautiful allegory, we see the fondness of a Father in His care of the sheep; the love of a Friend, Bridegroom and Saviour in His willingness to lay down His life for them. But there is
also this: "When He—the Good Shepherd—hath led out His own sheep, He goeth before them: and the sheep follow Him, because they know His voice." He had already said: "If any man will be my disciple, let him take up His cross daily and follow Me." It is evident that we are His disciples, "His own sheep," only on condition that we follow Him. And the motive must be that love of His by which He shouldered His own Cross and laid down His life for us.

In a sense the task is appalling. The virtues that adorned His Soul were the most perfect and heroic. They were the virtues of a God-Man. This difficulty He Himself has considered and provided for. Lest we be overcome by the magnitude of the task, waste our efforts or scatter our energies, He has chosen and pointed out, from the countless virtues He possesses, only two for our imitation. "Learn of Me," He says, "learn of Me to be meek and humble of heart."

Examples of His meekness and humility abound in the story of His Life, but particularly in His Sacred Passion does He give shining examples of them. Then it was that His meekness was tried beyond merely human endurance and His humility sounded depths which St. Paul calls "annihilation"—"He emptied Himself." (Phil 2:7.) One scene in that Divine Tragedy is particularly worthy of
consideration by those who desire to follow Him, because it contains all the elements that require the exercise of both meekness and humility.

When the soldiers had bound Jesus with cords and ropes after His Agony in the Garden, they led Him through the streets of Jerusalem at that midnight hour to the house of Annas. This deposed High Priest—this wolf in sheep's clothing—had plotted for three years to ensnare Jesus and to bring about His Death. Now, at last, he has Jesus in his power and he loses no time. Our Divine Saviour is put on trial and questioned concerning His disciples and His doctrine. The proceeding was altogether illegal; first, because it was not lawful to hold a trial before morning and, secondly, because Annas had no right to preside at such a trial. His son-in-law, Caiphas, was High-Priest for that year and only the High-Priest could lawfully assemble the Jewish court. Nevertheless, Jesus ignored the illegality of the trial and respectfully answered the questions put to Him. And, then, one of the servants standing by, pretending to see a lack of respect in the answer, gave Jesus a resounding blow on the Face.

If we consider all the circumstances of this scene in the court-room from the viewpoint of human reason, we become convinced that some awful punishment should quickly overtake the man who struck that blow.
Of all forms of insult that can be offered to a man the most shameful and brutal is to strike him on the face. No matter how low his state or condition in life, he will feel keenly and resent bitterly such an insult. The horrible murders that sometimes result from such an indignity are sufficient testimony to this fact. But it is even a greater insult when inflicted on a man who has obtained a high place in the minds of his fellowmen either by his moral worth or by some noteworthy achievement. Now, Our Lord Jesus Christ could and did stand before His very enemies and ask, "Which of you shall convince me of sin?" They had watched Him and spied upon Him for three years and yet, such was the perfection of His moral character, not even the bitterest of His enemies could pick a flaw in it.

Moreover, there was not at that time in all Palestine anyone who stood so high in the estimation of the people. They followed Him in crowds, charmed by the wisdom that fell from His Divine lips; they cried out in admiration at the power He wielded over inanimate nature, diseased bodies and even the icy grip of death; they loved Him when they saw Him mingle His tears with those of a desolate widow or when He took to His Heart in a fond embrace their innocent children.

Through His moral worth, His Divine powers and His loveable human qualities, Jesus had attained
such popularity that, only a short time before His death, the Pharisees said, "Behold the whole world is gone out after Him!" Those who thus spoke saw these words literally fulfilled a few days later. Jesus appeared in Jerusalem and the people came in crowds to welcome Him. They spread their garments in the way before Him while they chanted their hymn of welcome: "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!" But now, standing before His cruel enemies, surrounded by common soldiers, He is publicly humiliated by a cruel blow. Consequently, judged by purely human standards, Jesus must be avenged and His honour upheld.

On the part of the soldier who struck Him, it was a cowardly act. Jesus stood with His hands tied, friendless and alone in that gathering of cruel enemies and brutal soldiers. It was moreover, an act directed by the basest ingratitude; for it is a tradition of the early Church that this wretch was Malchus, the soldier whose ear Jesus had healed in the garden after St. Peter had struck it off with his sword. This fact also reveals the ingratitude of that soldier, shows us also the boldness and insolence that actuated him. Twice that night he had witnessed the effects of Our Saviour's miraculous power; once, when, by a mere word, He cast to the ground the whole band of soldiers; again, when Jesus by a
LEARN OF ME

single touch restored and healed his ear. Yet he dared to raise his hand and smite Jesus in the face in such a brutal, cowardly, ungrateful manner.

All this fills us with astonishment, but we have now considered it as an insult to Jesus in so far as He was Man. What shall we say when we consider the sacrilegious effrontery of that man to strike such a blow on the very face of God! We are told that Angels veil their faces before the majesty and purity of that face. In Holy Scripture we read that on one occasion, when the Ark of the Covenant seemed about to fall, Oza, the priest, put forth his hand to steady it and he was struck dead by the Lord God for his lack of reverence. On another occasion a priest put fire that was not blessed in the censer and he also was struck dead. Again we read that Core, Dathan and Abiron set themselves up against Moses and Aaron whom God had appointed as His representatives over the people and they were swallowed up alive into the earth. What punishment, then, should be inflicted on the man who, with sacrilegious boldness, clenched his hand and struck His God on the face?

Think of it, Jesus Christ the all-holy God accused of disrespect and for that brutally struck in the face by a vile servant! How the Angels must have looked at each other in amazement at the sight of such an insult offered to the God of Infinite Majesty by a
vile worm of earth. We can imagine them veiling their faces in dread expectation of the chastisement that must surely follow. If lightning fell from heaven upon him or if the earth opened and swallowed him up, we would think that he was mercifully dealt with. But what is our astonishment when we see Our Lord Jesus Christ turn to that soldier with unruffled calmness and say in tones of meekness, “If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou Me?”

What an example of humility and meekness! His reputation before the world, the act of this soldier, so brutal, cowardly and ungrateful, His dignity as the Son of God—three powerful motives to urge Jesus to take immediate and terrible revenge on that man. He had every right to do so and, what is more, He had the power. But the only revenge He takes is that gentle rebuke, “If I have spoken evil give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou Me?” And, according to St. John Chrysostom, this soldier found in the meekness and humility of Jesus a motive for becoming a Christian. (1)

In contemplating such a scene and such an example, human reason is confounded and human pride is rebuked. In this age and country we see on all sides pride, anger, revenge, rebellion against author-
ity, independence and disobedience—vices condemned by Christ and entirely opposed to His example. This were bad enough, but we find those guilty of them calmly and in the light of mere reason call them virtues. These they describe as strong, manly, American virtues, and boast that they possess them and teach them to their children. They ignore the teaching of Christ and shut their eyes to the example of His humility and meekness.

And yet, in the Sermon on the Mount, His opening words were, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: Blessed are the meek." He gives utterance, in the very beginning of that wonderful discourse, to the regard He bore toward these virtues. Later, when the Apostles disputed as to who should be the first in the new Kingdom, Jesus took a little child, set him in the midst and said, "Unless you become as this little child, you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Even Apostles to whom the devils were subject could not enter that Kingdom unless they became meek and humble of heart.

Consequently those with a trained ear, so to speak—the sheep that know His voice—will hearken to those words that come from His Sacred Heart: "Learn of Me to be meek and humble of heart." It should be impossible for those for whom He suffered so much to refuse the one thing that He asks. It is not that He wishes us to pay dearly for the Re-
demption that cost Him such a price, because, in issuing His invitation to imitate the meekness and humility of His Heart, He merely wishes us to share more completely in the fruits of that Redemption. "You shall find rest for your souls" is the first promise to those who imitate Him. They will no longer be tossed about by storms of anger, pride, rebellion against authority; instead, they shall have the priceless treasure of possessing their souls in patience. They shall come into possession of that peace which surpasseth all understanding and which shall keep their minds and hearts in Christ Jesus, Our Lord.

Further, they shall be able to extend to others the fruits of Christ’s Passion. This fact is best illustrated by the story of a missionary in China. He was preaching to a gathering of pagans. One man in the audience was deeply impressed. Just then another man left the crowd, went up to the preacher and spat in his face. "Now," said the former, "I will see what this preacher does." The missionary calmly took out his handkerchief, wiped his face and went on preaching. But he had made his first convert. The man who was so impressed by his preaching was completely won over by such humility and meekness. So it will always be, because it is Our Lord's own method of dealing with men. It was by the humility and meekness of His Heart that He
drew souls to Himself, from the publican who became the Apostle Matthew to the poor thief on the cross.

Those who contemplate the meekness and humility of Jesus in His Sacred Passion will soon become like unto that Divine Model; they shall possess a peace that the world cannot give and their influence and example will be the means of bringing to Jesus Crucified those souls for whom He suffered and died.
WATCHING JESUS

“. . . the author and finisher of faith . . .”
(Heb. 12: 2.)

EVERYWHERE the Gospels testify to the personal attractiveness of Jesus. The Divinity within Him was a magnet that drew all eyes to gaze on the beauty of His Sacred Countenance. One look at the Infant in the Crib was sufficient to convince the shepherds of the truth of the angel’s message: “And seeing they understood the word that was spoken to them concerning this Child.” (Luke 2: 17.) The Magi came seeking a king in a palace and they found a Child in a stable. And yet, falling down, they adored Him and offered Him royal gifts. Holy Simeon, after a long life of eager watchfulness, was rapt into ecstasy and was ready to depart this life because his eyes had seen the Salvation of God.

Thirty years later, when John the Baptist saw Jesus coming to him, he recognized Him instantly and exclaimed, “Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who taketh away the sin of the world . . . . The next day again John stood and two of his disciples. And, beholding Jesus walking, he said, ‘Behold the
Lamb of God.’ And the two disciples heard him speak and they followed Jesus.’” (John 1:29-37.)

When Jesus appeared for the first time in the synagogue at Nazareth and read the Holy Scriptures, He completely absorbed the attention of His audience. “And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on Him.” (Luke 4:20.) One day in Jericho, Zachaeus, chief of the publicans and a rich man, being of small stature, so far forgot his dignity as to climb into a sycamore tree that he might see Jesus as He passed along the way.

His beauty and attractiveness are everywhere proclaimed in the Gospels, but what brings this fact before us most vividly is the conduct of Mary Magdalen. She is never described but at the feet of Jesus listening to His Divine words and looking with rapt attention upon His face. Jesus Himself vindicated her conduct when, at the complaint of Martha, He pronounced her enduring praise, “Mary hath chosen the best part which shall not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:42.)

“The many things of earth that absorbed the troubled attention of Martha will pass away when the earth is folded up as a garment. Medicine ceases at the grave. Astronomy fades when the stars fall from heaven. Geology melts with the rocks on the last dread day; the naturalist must feel the earth slip through his fingers. Even Moral Theology
ceases its inquisition when the hydra-headed monster, Sin, is no more, and Dogma needs not its formulas when Truth appears Divinely simple; but the Face of Jesus that held the gaze is eternal and it shall not be taken from her.” (1)

This may appear obvious to those who know that the prophets had foretold that He was to be the most beautiful among the sons of men. Yet it was during His Sacred Passion, when He appeared “as it were, a leper and as one struck by God and afflicted,” that He exercised the greatest attraction for men and the greatest influence over their minds and hearts. And this, too, was strictly in accordance with the words of the Prophet Isaias. He who described in unforgettable words the shame and the sufferings of Jesus later cries out in admiration at the vision before him: “Who is this that cometh from Edom with dyed garments from Bosra, this Beautiful One in His Robe, walking in the greatness of His strength.” (Isaias 63:1.)

Another prophet foretells that it is particularly to Jesus on the Cross that all eyes would turn and in the beholding of Him become fountains of tears. These are the touching words of Zacharias: “And they shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced: and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for

(1) Quoted in Devotion to The Holy Face. By E. Seton. p. 33.
an only son and they shall grieve over Him as the manner is to grieve for the death of the first born.’” (Zack. 12:10.) And Jesus Himself confirmed these prophecies with His own solemn declaration: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself.” (John 12:32.) On Calvary itself those who looked on Jesus Crucified were attracted to Him with feelings that varied according to their relation to Him and in watching Him were wonderfully and lastingly changed.

Foremost among them was His own Mother, watching Him through a mist of tears and noting every pain and humiliation that made Him the very Man of Sorrows. She saw deeply, more profoundly than any human mind ever will, into the Mystery of His Passion. She knew herself to be the recipient of its most precious fruits. His wounds, His woes, His sorrows were but the slow and painful payment for her matchless privileges—her Immaculate Conception, her spotless Virginity, her Divine Maternity. No heart ever beat with the exalted sentiments of gratitude that stirred the most pure heart of Mary at that moment. Counting each wound, measuring each drop of blood, she sought some way of rendering thanks and—she sought in vain.

She already belonged to Him, she was totally and absolutely His. Nor could she ease the pains that He suffered. That was part of her sorrow and of
His sacrifice and she was still the handmaid of the Lord, obedient to His will. Only when the voice of Jesus broke the silence were her anxious thoughts calmed. "Woman," He said, "behold thy son." Here was proposed to her a work of gratitude, a labour of love,—to be a Mother to all the sinful Sons of Men, to be the Advocate and the Refuge of Sinners, to cherish with maternal affection the precious souls redeemed with the same Blood that was the price of all her own joys and glories. From watching Jesus on the Cross, Mary accepted with joy and gratitude the office of being the tender Mother of Men.

With her on Calvary was John, the beloved disciple. He, too, watched Jesus and beheld with sentiments of grateful love the Wounds that were the cost of his vocation. To follow Jesus, to be His priest, His Apostle—what a privilege! Not all can take this word but only such as are called by God as Aaron was. He remembered one upon whom Jesus had looked with eyes of tenderest love, to whom was given the same sweet invitation, who might even have supplanted himself in the affection of the Sacred Heart, but who turned away sad. There were others, too, who "went back and walked no more with Jesus." And here was he, John, privileged beyond all the other Apostles to be "the disciple whom Jesus loved," to be present at His
Death and to receive His Mother as his own. The personal love of Jesus for him became so embedded in his mind, so inflamed his heart that he spent the rest of his long life in preaching that love to others. “In this,” he says, “we have known the charity of God because He hath laid down His life for us.” (1 John 3:16.) And this, too, he insists, is the reason why we should love also the brethren. “My dearest, if God hath so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” (1 John 4:11.)

Not always had John been of this frame of mind. An ambition to rule over the other disciples in the new Kingdom at one time possessed him and caused him to take part in childish disputes over the matter of precedence. He even went so far as to employ his mother to ask Jesus that the first places in the Kingdom be given to him and to his brother James. Again, there was the occasion on Our Lord’s last journey to Jerusalem, when the Samaritans refused to allow Jesus to enter their city. John and his brother James, filled with that anger which masquerades as zeal, desired to call down fire from heaven on those surly people. But Jesus rebuked them sharply, saying, “You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of Man came not to destroy souls but to save.” (Luke 9:52-56.) On Calvary he came to understand the full meaning of the New Commandment, “that you love one another as I have
loved you.’” Even in his extreme old age, when he had to be carried into the church, he found the strength to utter only this short sermon, “My little children, love one another.” His people, wearied by the repetition, begged him to speak on some other subject. But he who had seen with his eyes, who had looked upon the Word of Life dying for sinners and praying for His executioners, only repeated with greater emphasis, “My little children, love one another. It is the precept of the Lord and, if you do this, it is sufficient.” By watching Jesus on the Cross, he was changed from “a son of thunder” into the Apostle of Love.

The repentant Magdalen, too, raised tear-wet eyes to the Cross, to Him Who came to seek and to save that which was lost, to Him Who had changed her from a sinner into a friend. She had washed His Feet with her tears in token of her grief and she was in turn cleansed anew in the Precious Blood that flowed upon her. At the same time she saw the terrible sufferings that Jesus endured on account of sin and that sight made a profound impression upon her. Never before did she see the malice of sin as she sees it now in His open Wounds. She who had been possessed by seven devils, who had been an object of loathing and a thing to be shunned by the pure, who had come so near to losing forever the companionship of Jesus, now grown so dear to her,
had an intimate and personal experience and conviction of the evil that sin is.

Now her knowledge goes beyond this and her sorrow arises from more perfect motives. She sees the malice of sin in the brutal and shameful sufferings inflicted on her Beloved. Sin alone has caused the fairest of the sons of men to become like "a leper and as one struck by God and afflicted." And sin alone required that God’s only Son, in Whom the Father was well pleased, should suffer so much in atonement for it. All these things were written in Blood on the fair page of His Humanity which Magdalen read and studied on Calvary. So well did she learn the lesson that she spent the last thirty years of her life in a cave with a rude cross before her in the practice of the greatest austerities. By watching Jesus on the Cross she persevered in penance till she became a glorious Saint.

Among others on Calvary was a condemned criminal undergoing the sentence of execution. A few hours, at most, of his reckless, mis-spent life remained before he was to face the Judge from Whose sentence there is no appeal. There seemed to be little hope that the verdict would be a favourable one because he was spending his last moments in blaspheming the Saviour, the Judge Himself. Then he too began to watch Jesus. Gradually, he went from admiration to pity; he defended Jesus and pro-
claimed His innocence; he rebuked his companion-robber and confessed his own sins.

Humility, sorrow, hope grew apace in his soul. Finally, he gave voice to the most humble and trustful prayer: "Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy Kingdom." He was not long in waiting for an answer. The calm, judicial voice of Jesus sounded in his astonished ears: "Amen, I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise." The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob never spoke to His chosen servants in kindlier tones nor gave them a greater promise. Of him alone among the elect friends of God does Holy Scripture record in explicit words that he received the promise of paradise while still able to behold the light of day. And the only explanation of such an extraordinary grace is the fact that he watched Jesus.

St. Matthew tells us that when the soldiers had crucified Jesus they gambled for the possession of His garments, and then he adds these significant words, "And they sat and watched Him." If these four soldiers under their centurion had charge of the execution from the beginning there was no pity or compassion for the Sufferer to be expected from them. They had wielded the scourge that made the fairest of the sons of men like unto a leprous outcast. They had taken part in that fiendish ceremony of a mock coronation—the most horrible exhibition
of human brutality that this world has known. Now they sat and watched Him—the Victim of their cruelty. For three hours, while Jesus prayed and suffered, while He forgave His enemies and dealt mercifully with the poor thief, they watched Him, until "Jesus, again crying with a loud voice, yielded up the Ghost." St. Matthew completes the story he began: "Now the centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake and the things that were done, were sure afraid, saying: 'Indeed, this was the Son of God.'" (Matt. 27:54.) Four hardened, mercenary soldiers and their leader who began the days routine work of executing three criminals ended it by confessing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. And it came about simply because "they sat and watched Him."

The word of Jesus cannot be denied nor be of no effect. Lifted upon the Cross, He will draw all things to Himself. St. Luke, going beyond individuals and the small group of soldiers, supplies a still more amazing fact. "And all the multitude of them that were come together to that sight and saw the things that were done, returned striking their breasts." (Luke 23:48.) That fickle, disloyal, ungrateful mob which had clamoured for His Death, a supposedly religious people who had forced the pagan Pilate to condemn their long-expected Mes-
siah to the shameful and painful death on the Cross, had come out to taunt their Victim and to see Him die. They watched Him and the words of the prophet were verified: "They shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced: and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for an only son and they shall grieve over Him as the manner is to grieve for the death of the first born." They had come "to that sight" and departed with sorrow and contrition in their hearts. A few weeks later St. Peter had only to remind them of "Jesus of Nazareth. . . . Whom you by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain." (Acts 2:22, 23.) In two days eight thousand people sought and found the way of salvation in the Church of Christ Crucified.

Watching Jesus is a holy and fruitful occupation. And yet it will surprise many to know that it is nothing else but Meditation. Saints have urged the practice of meditation, have pointed out its advantages, have outlined the manner of making it. Many have been moved by their arguments, have been desirous of reaping its fruits, but have been repelled or discouraged by the unfamiliar, psychological terms employed to explain the exercise. Meditation on the Passion can be defined in its simplest terms as, "Watching Jesus" and asking oneself the question: "As I am now, as I feel at present, what does that mean for me?" Thus, watching Jesus in His
Agony will inspire one to utter an heroic "Thy Will be done" in time of trial, and another to pray more perseveringly for necessary grace. Viewing in detail His awful Scourging one will be moved to the practice of self-denial and another to a greater love of holy purity. The sight of Jesus so labouriously and patiently bearing His Cross will give to one the courage to bear the crosses of daily life and to another the resolution to follow Him in the religious or priestly state when He calls and invites.

Examples abound to show that the salutary effects of watching Jesus were not confined to Mount Calvary, that this practice had influenced many to embrace a life of extraordinary sanctity. St. Teresa of Jesus in her own words tells us her experience. In the midst of her tepid advances toward holiness, "It happened one day that I went into the oratory to see a picture which had been brought there for a certain festival which was celebrated in the house and when I looked upon it I was much affected; it was Christ, Our Lord, all covered with wounds; and, being devoutly made, it represented very well all that He had suffered for us. The sense of the little gratitude I had shown to Our Lord for all these wounds was such that I thought my heart would break. And so I cast myself down near the picture, shedding floods of tears and beseeching God to strengthen me once for all that so I might never offend Him again.
... It seems to me that I then told Him that I would never rise from that place till He granted my petition; and I am firmly persuaded that this did me good, for I have gone on improving much ever since that time."

In the Little Flower the Passion of Jesus was equally potent. She was the spiritual daughter of St. Teresa. Not only was a sermon on the Passion the first she ever understood, but, as she tells us, "after that time I was able to understand and appreciate all instructions." This happened at the age of five years and a half.

Later, when she was fourteen, a still more remarkable instance occurred. "One Sunday, on closing my prayerbook at the end of Mass, a photograph representing Our Lord on the Cross partly slipped out from between the pages, just showing one of His Hands pierced and bleeding. On the spot I experienced a new and indescribable emotion. I was cut to the very heart to see that Precious Blood falling to the earth without anyone troubling to gather it up. I resolved to remain ever in spirit at the foot of the Cross so as ever to be at hand to receive from Him the Divine dew of salvation and forthwith to shed it abroad on the souls of men. From that day forth the cry of Jesus in His death agony, 'I thirst,' was ever sounding in my heart and ended by enkindling in it a hitherto unknown and lively fervour. I
would fain have given my Beloved to drink; I, too, was consumed with thirst for souls and I wished, at any cost, to snatch sinners from the eternal flames." Who does not see in this incident the beginning of that heroic sanctity to which she attained!

These instances are chosen from among many to show the almost sacramental virtue of the Passion of Christ. They convince us that fervent meditation on His sufferings is one infallible means of attaining holiness. One day Jesus appeared to St. Gertrude and, to confirm her in the devotion she had to His Passion, He said, "Behold, my daughter, if in the few hours during which I hung on the Cross, I so enabled it that the world had ever since reverenced it, how shall I exalt that soul in whose heart and memory I have been constantly present for many years!"

There are countless others to show that watching Jesus brings to the sinner repentance, to the repenant hope, to the tempted strength, to the irresolute courage, to the religious fervour, because to all it will bring love and to love nothing is impossible. Love rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; it beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. "Whether prophecies shall be made void or tongues shall cease or knowledge shall be destroyed," love will abide. It will remain lively and active in those who watch
Jesus Crucified on earth. It will never be taken away from those admitted into that "great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues who gaze with adoring wonder at "the Lamb standing as it were slain."
DISCIPLES BY NIGHT

“... who at the first came to Jesus by night ...”
(John 19:39.)

THE Crucified Jesus began His conquest of hearts on Calvary itself. From His own Divine lips came the words which form a declaration of His fixed and definite purpose to conquer through suffering and death: “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself.” (John 12:32.)

Raised upon the ignominious Cross, He became “a sign of salvation” to all who looked upon Him. Whosoever turned to Him, even though they had fallen victims to the deadly bite of the infernal serpent, were healed. The first of an endless procession to gaze on Him and to find “health in His wings,” in the arms outstretched on the Cross, was a poor criminal, a convicted robber, suffering the due reward of his violent deeds. Next came the centurion and the soldiers under him, confessing that indeed this Man, for Whom all nature mourned, was the Son of God. Even the people, who came together “to that sight” perhaps to mock the Victim of their treachery, returned to their homes, striking their
breasts, there to await Peter's Pentecostal preaching and their conversion to the Church of the Crucified Christ.

On Calvary, others are soon to make their appearance and to feel the attractive power of Jesus Crucified. St. Luke tells us that "all His acquaintance and the women that had followed Him from Galilee stood afar off beholding these things." (Luke 23:49.) There is nothing to forbid the belief that among "His acquaintance" stood Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus.

We learn from the Evangelists that Joseph was rich, a good and just man, high in the councils of his nation, being a member of the Jewish supreme court, one of the most honourable of its seventy members. He "had not consented to their counsel and doings" because he was a disciple of Jesus, but, secretly, for fear of the Jews." Nicodemus belonged to the sect of the Pharisees and was by profession a Scribe or a lawyer. Like Joseph, he was also a member of the Sanhedrim. At the very beginning of Our Lord's ministry, he had come to Jesus at night and offered to Him a simple, sincere confession of faith. "Rabbi, we know that Thou art come a teacher from God; for no man can do these signs which Thou dost unless God be with him." (John 3:2) He was so spiritually enlightened that Jesus ventured to impart to him on this first visit a knowledge of the great Mys-
tery—the Mystery which He could reveal only gradually to His disciples and which they never fully grasped until the coming of the Holy Ghost. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish but may have life everlasting. For God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son." On one occasion, this timid man, this disciple by night, dared to raise his voice in a feeble protest against the plots of his colleagues: "Doth our law judge any man unless it first hear him and know what he doth?" But they silenced him with the withering retort, "Art thou also a Galilean?"

Moral cowardice was the one flaw in the character of each of these prominent and exemplary Jews. And yet who shall blame them when even the friends, the Apostles chosen by Jesus Himself, failed Him? They had wealth, social position, learning, honoured places in the highest Jewish court. They had everything to lose by espousing openly the cause of the new Teacher. "For the Jews had agreed among themselves that if any man should confess Him to be the Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue." (John 9:22.) Those who are inclined to judge them harshly should remember that "many of the chief men also believed in Him but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him... for they loved
the glory of men more than the glory of God.” (John 12: 42, 43.)

The most charitable thing is to believe that they stood among “His acquaintances observing these things,”—the sufferings of Jesus and the prodigies that accompanied His Death. Then we see the transformation as awe-inspiring as any miraculous upheaval of nature. “Joseph of Arimathea... went in boldly to Pilate and begged the Body of Jesus.” (Mark 15: 43.) Having Pilate’s permission, and taking the fine linen he had purchased, he was joined by Nicodemus “bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.” Together, “they took the Body of Jesus and bound it in linen clothes with the spices” and they laid it in Joseph’s “new sepulchre wherein no man yet had been laid.” What bitter tears they shed in the performance of this sacred task, in this tribute of their belated love, is a matter best left to the pious imagination. It is of importance to remember only one thing: they made this sacrifice of their wealth and their worldly fears—they threw away honour and ambition—they esteemed the reproach of Christ greater than all earthly riches—because they stood among His acquaintances in full view of the suffering Christ “observing these things.”

Today there are too many who are indeed believers in Christ but only secretly and, as it were, by
night. They fear and flee from the prospect of being cast out of their "synagogue," of losing the advantages they enjoy by their learning, social position or wealth. There are many who possess one or another, even all three, of these worldly possessions but they are never known to be disciples of Jesus until the announcement of the Funeral Mass. They never spoke or acted,—at most they did so timidly—in the interests of the Christ Who died for them. At the end, they sought the Everlasting Arms, receiving the Sacraments of Redemption and leaving a few dollars to charity. We can only hope they received His saving embrace, but we know that the building of a new church, the erection of an orphanage or a hospital—no more than Joseph's "new sepulchre"—brought no sweetness into their bitter and wild regrets when they stood before "the Lamb that was slain," and offered these gifts of their timid and tardy love. How different it would have been if in life they had stood before Jesus Crucified "observing these things."
THE DELIVERER IN BONDS

"... Who brought thee out of the house of bondage ..." (Ex. 20:2.)

ORDINARY Christians are easily moved by the thought of the sufferings of Jesus. When they hear or read of His awful scourging, the terrible crowning with thorns, the weary, painful journey to Calvary and the three hours of lingering Agony on the Cross, they are moved to compassion. These are sufferings of His Sacred Passion that they can understand and, in the light of their own experience in suffering, they can fully sympathize with Jesus in His.

Such people deserve encouragement and help in continuing a work so pleasing to Our Lord and so beneficial to their own souls. But it would be a sad thing if they stopped here. After all, would they not feel similar sentiments even if a mere man were the subject of such sufferings? Devotion to the Passion should go beyond the mere externals. We must enter into the mystery of the Passion, which is, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Victim of these sufferings.

It is this thought, this truth, that will keep our
thoughts from degenerating into mere sentimentality, a purely human, sterile emotion so easily evoked from the human heart at the sight of pain and blood. Moreover, a realization of this truth will lead us on to consider frequently scenes of His Sacred Passion which, although lacking in external horror, have a deep emotional appeal in the light of this truth and offer to us many lessons necessary for our spiritual development. Such a scene is the Divine Saviour being bound with ropes in the Garden. Let us first of all reconstruct the scene so that, with our whole attention on it, we may learn its lesson.

When the terrible Agony had swept over His Soul—that Agony which would have left Him lifeless were He a mere man—Jesus arose and went to His sleeping disciples. "Arise," He said, "he that will betray Me is near at hand." After three hours of intense prayer and heroic struggle in an agony that terminated in a sweat of blood, Jesus had mastered His fear and had arisen to sublime heights of peaceful conformity to His Father's Will.

And now the gloom of the Garden is pierced by numerous torches and the stillness of His sanctuary is rudely broken by the tramping of soldiers, led by the perfidious, black-hearted Judas. When they were within speaking distance, Jesus asked them, "Whom seek ye?" They answered, "Jesus of Nazareth." To which Jesus replied, "I am He." The Gospel
narrative then adds, "As soon, therefore, as He had said to them, 'I am He,' they went backward and fell to the ground." Again he asked them the same question and, receiving the same answer, He said, 'I have told you that I am He. If therefore you seek Me, let these [My disciples] go their way.'” Then the soldiers and servants of the High Priests took Jesus and binding Him led Him away. And thus, we see Our Lord Jesus Christ giving Himself up to His enemies, sacrificing His liberty—a sacrifice that was voluntary, complete and lasting.

All through His public life, He had impressed on friend and foe alike that no one could take away His life, that He had the power to lay it down and power to take it up again. On one occasion His enemies had actually led Him to the brow of a hill, intending to cast Him down, but He turned and calmly walked through the midst of them.

It could not be otherwise. He, the Son of God, had all power in heaven and on earth, and the only law He ever acknowledged as being above Him was the Will of His Father. No earthly power could shackle or restrain the power of God’s only Son. No matter how His enemies raged and planned and plotted, they could not lay a finger on Him unless He voluntarily allowed it. Here in the Garden He rebukes Peter for his intemperate zeal in defending His Sacred Person. He declared that He had only
to ask and twelve legions of angels would have been there to do battle for Him, if force were necessary. That He did not need to resort to this is abundantly proved by the fact that, at His mere word, these men fell back helpless before Him. Then with calm authority He gives His order. They are obliged to hear what He wishes and He commands them to leave His disciples go unharmed. With all these facts before us, we see how voluntary was the sacrifice of His liberty. Only when He had given proofs of His power to escape, and had made sure of the liberty of His Apostles did He give Himself up. Both in word and deed He showed how deliberate, free and voluntary was His surrender.

His sacrifice was also entire. He did not parley. He entered into no agreements. He did not say, "So far and no farther." He gave Himself up without reserve to their will. This is all the more amazing to our minds when we consider His knowledge of the future. He saw to what extent they would abuse the power He gave them over His Person. He saw Himself cast into a dungeon, insulted, outraged, ill-treated by the servants, the soldiers, the mob. He saw himself bound fast to the pillar, scourged, wrettering in His own Blood, dying on the Cross. In sacrificing His liberty, He sacrificed also His honour and His life. Not one detail in the brutal, humiliating, shameful death on the Cross
was absent from His mind. And yet, rising to the majestic heights of God-like sacrifice, He freely and deliberately chose it when He delivered Himself into the hands of His enemies.

Besides being voluntary and entire, Our Lord’s sacrifice of His liberty was lasting. It was to last from the moment He gave Himself up till the moment He commended His spirit into the hands of His Father. Not only that, but He prolonged His life that his enemies might work their will on Him, that they might do with Him what they would. A mere man would have died under that fierce scourging alone, or the crowning with thorns alone. But Jesus prolonged His endurance miraculously until fiendish ingenuity would fail to devise new torments.

It fills us with amazement to see how deliberately, how completely and how lastingly Jesus Christ sacrifices His liberty for us. He, the Son of God, Whose word is law, Whose power is infinite, Whose wisdom is fathomless. Whose dignity is one with God in heaven, submits to the will of His creatures, to whom He gave whatever power, wisdom and life they possess. He could have blinded them, paralyzed them or struck them dead. But no! He gave Himself up freely and gladly for our salvation. He held out His hands to receive those cords and ropes and allowed Himself to be led away captive, completely in the power of His merciless enemies. Only once during
that long night and a day, did He free Himself from those bonds and then only that He might be riveted hand and foot to the hard wood of the Cross.

There is food for serious thought here. Here is a lesson especially suited to this age and country. The Constitution of these United States guarantees to each individual the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This is no new doctrine; the Catholic Church believed and taught it long before America was discovered. In fact, she teaches that Jesus Christ, by His teaching, freed us from the darkness of pagan error; by sacrificing His liberty He freed us from the slavery of the devil; by His death on the Cross, He gave us true and more abundant life; and, by the plentiful grace flowing from His sufferings and death, He freed us from the slavery of our own evil passions and made it possible for us to attain happiness here and hereafter.

To Jesus Christ, therefore, and to Him alone and not to any man-made document do we owe what is best and most precious in our lives. In other words, our real Declaration of Independence was written in characters of blood on the mortal suffering flesh of the Son of God. This is the charter of our liberties sealed with the Sign of the Cross. No document so clearly expresses the fact that we are free men and women and yet no writing so forcibly points out how we are to use this liberty. Failure to know
this has always been the crying evil of democracy. St. Paul tells us that we are free by the freedom therewith Christ made us free, whereas men have made liberty to mean license and lawlessness, a total breaking of all restraints. They have become guilty of luxury, disobedience, of fostering dangers to purity, of breaking the marriage tie and wrecking home-life, of being indifferent to the true religion or the practice of the true religion; in a word, guilty of all those evils in modern life which all sane people see and deplore.

This is not freedom. It is rather a return to the very condition of slavery and abasement from which Christ freed us. He freed our minds from the darkness of error in giving us the light of His Gospel; are we, then, free when we turn back to error, when we read books that generate doubts against the Faith, when we cram our minds with the filthy sex-stuff of our modern novels and magazines? He freed us from the slavery of the devil when He broke the chains of sin which bound us to that master.

Moreover, Jesus Christ has merited by His sufferings all the graces that we need to free ourselves from the tyranny of our evil passions; are we, then, free when we reject that grace and remain slaves to lust, anger, pride, revenge and all the other enslaving passions of flesh and blood? Are we free men and women when we allow human respect and dic-
tates of fashion to rule over us and lead us to violate the laws of modesty and the observance of our religious duties? No! By any or all of these things we forfeit the liberty which Christ Our Lord has purchased for us. Only in obedience to the law of Christ do we possess and enjoy true liberty. All else is but a service, a slavery to the devil, to our own passions, to the fickle world and its enslaved votaries.

How different we would all be if we took to heart and realized more how voluntary, entire and lasting was Our Saviour's sacrifice of His liberty for us. If our liberty cost Him so much, we should not so lightly regard it or misuse it. When St. Paul the Apostle was made prisoner and bound with chains in a Roman prison he dictated a letter to the Christians of Colossa. This epistle is distinguished from all other letters of the Apostle by the length of his exhortation to the practice of all the moral virtues.

He gives general advice to all and then singles out wives, husbands, fathers, children, servants and masters, urging them to an exact fulfillment of their duties. Finally, he stops and taking the pen from his secretary he writes these words: "The salutation of Paul with my own hand. Be mindful of my bonds." What appeal could be more touching! "Be mindful of my bonds." He seems to say: "Remember how I have worked and laboured and struggled
for you. I have braved Jewish hate and Roman prisons. I have endured spiritual agonies and physical tortures—and all this that I might announce to you the charter of your liberties—that you are no longer in bondage to the devil, no longer burdened with the exacting observance of the Jewish religion, that you are now free children of God and co-heirs with Jesus Christ."

If St. Paul could make this appeal, how much more touchingly and persuasively could Jesus Christ make it. "Be mindful of My bonds." He seems to say to us, "Remember how voluntarily I sacrificed My liberty for you, how completely I gave Myself into the hands of My enemies; I did not free Myself from their bonds, until I willed to be fastened more securely with rivets to the hard wood of the Cross. Be mindful, then, of My bonds. Think you of My nail-dug Feet that you may not stray from the path of salvation; of My nail-pierced Hands that you may not reach for forbidden fruit; of My thorn-imprisoned Head that you may keep your thoughts from sin; of My spear-rent Heart that you may open to none save Me. Be mindful of My bonds, for they gave you a liberty that you must not lose, for the loss would be eternal slavery." (1)

Let us heed His voice. He is the Good Shepherd

(1) Adapted from Rev. Francis P. Le Buffe, S.J.

184
and we are His sheep. Does the Good Shepherd put restraints on His sheep to deprive them of pleasure? No. He is too good for that. He Who sacrificed His life for us on the Cross would never be so small. Only when He sees danger for us does He lay down a law. And if we hear His voice and walk only in the pastures He has appointed, we will always be free from poisonous pleasures, we will spend our days in peace and contentment, enjoying the liberty of true sons of God.
THE TOKEN OF VICTORY

"... in the day of my trouble ..." (Ps. 85:7.)

The Royal Prophet prayed for a token, a sign from God—one so convincing that the sight of it would confound his enemies. "Show me a token for good, that they who hate me may see and be confounded." His request occurs in a psalm that is described as "a prayer for God's grace to assist us to the end." He entitled it simply "a prayer for David himself." Many and fierce were the combats that he had gone through, for practically his whole life was one of warfare. One enemy was scarcely conquered when another began to attack. In the midst of this ceaseless conflict, he sought from God a victorious end of it. "Show me a sign of Thy favour, that they who hate me may see and be brought to shame." He was grateful for the help given him thus far, but now he wishes only for the sign that will give him peace and perseverance to the end.

Like David, we also are in the midst of a ceaseless warfare, but a spiritual one—against the powers of hell, the relentless cohorts of Satan, the enemies of our salvation. Day after day, week after week, year 186
after year the struggle goes on, and we must fight valiantly if we wish to persevere to the end and gain the final victory. It would be a gloomy prospect, a hopeless, losing battle, if we merely considered their powerful army and our own weak powers. But God in His goodness has given us a token of victory; He has given us a sign of His favour, a guarantee of superabundant help; one that can inspire courage in the most timid; more strength in the weary, and new life in the wounded. We have the Cross of Christ; we have

"for Captain, Him Whose thorn-wreathed head Smiles from the Cross upon a conquered world."

He battled with the hosts of hell, broke their power and brought them into subjection under His feet. His blessed Passion is the terror of demons, and His holy Cross is the weapon by which they are put to flight. The enmity that began in the Garden of Eden between the Satan and the Seed of the Woman has terminated in a decisive battle, and the head and the power of the serpent have been crushed. Feebly he tries to renew the conflict and actually acquires dominion over some, yet they are only the cowards who forget to raise their eyes to the Sign of Victory, and the deserters who have placed themselves far from the inspiring presence of their Leader. He has no power over those who gather
around their standard, who fight from the vantage ground of Mount Calvary, and who, contemplating the Wounds of their Commander, refuse to suffer less than He did. Courage in the actual struggle and confidence in the final outcome belong to those who contemplate the Passion of Christ.

In the fourteenth century there lived at Norwich, England, a holy recluse named Dame Juliana. God made to this chosen soul certain revelations of His love, to the number of sixteen. In the fourth revelation, she beheld "the Scourging as thus: the fair skin was broken full deep into the tender flesh, with sharp, smiting all about the sweet body. So plenteously the hot blood ran out that there was neither seen skin nor wound, but, as it were, all blood." She saw that the Blood was as plenteous as it was precious; "The dearworthy blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ as verily as it is most precious, so verily it is most plenteous. Behold and see! The precious plenty of His dearworthy blood descended down into Hell and burst her bands and delivered all that were there which belonged to the Court of Heaven. The precious plenty of His dearworthy blood overfloweth all Earth, and is ready to wash all creatures of sin, which be of good-will, have been, and shall be. The precious plenty of His dearworthy blood ascended up into Heaven to the blessed body of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and there is in Him, bleeding and pray-
ing for us to the Father—and is, and ever shall be as long as it needeth. And evermore it floweth in all Heavens enjoying the salvation of all mankind, that are there, and shall be—fulfilling the number that faileth.”

When the vision passed, she heard these words, “Herewith is the Fiend overcome.” “These words,” she goes on, ‘said Our Lord, meaning His Blessed Passion as He showed it before.” Then begins the fifth revelation, full of comfort indeed to all her fellow-Christians. “On this showed Our Lord that the Passion of Him is the overcoming of the Fiend. God showed that the Fiend hath now the same malice that he had before the Incarnation. And as sore he travaileth and as continually he seeth that all souls of salvation escape him worshipfully by virtue of Christ’s Precious Passion. And that is his sorrow and full evil is he ashamed; for all that God suffereth him to do turneth for us to joy and for him to shame and woe—for his might is all taken into God’s hand. . . .

“Also I saw Our Lord scorn his malice and naught his unmight; and He willeth that we do so. For this sight I laughed mightily and that made them to laugh that were about me and their laughing was a liking to me. I thought that I would that all mine even-Christians had seen as I saw and then would they all laugh with me. . . . For I understood that we
may laugh in comforting of ourselves and joying in God because the Devil is overcome.’ A merry sight, indeed, and full of joy for all who are beset by this enemy of their souls. Nor did this holy soul forget her vision. Later the Fiend came to tempt her to despair. And this is how she met the attack: ‘My bodily eye I set in the same Cross where I had been in comfort afore that time; my tongue with speech of Christ’s Passion and rehearsing the Faith of Holy Church; and my heart to fasten on God.’ The temptation lasted all night till the hour of Prime when the devil left her. ‘And thus was I delivered from him by the virtue of Christ’s Passion; for therewith is the Fiend overcome as Our Lord Jesus Christ said before. (1)

In truth, the devil must stand ashamed and confounded before this Sign of God’s favour towards us; and he is routed and overcome by those who stand in the steadfast beholding of Jesus on the Cross. Those who contemplate Him can use with greater confidence, with a larger understanding, the words of David in the same psalm, wherein he asks God to make with him ‘a sign for good,’ wherein he prays for God’s grace to assist him unto the end. It is hard to believe that his words were not actually written at the foot of the Cross:

(1) Revelations of Divine Love. Edited by Dom Roger Hudleston, O.S.B.
THE TOKEN OF VICTORY

"Incline Thy ear, O Lord, and hear me: for I am needy and poor. Preserve my soul for I am holy: save Thy servant, O my God, that trusteth in Thee. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I have cried to Thee all the day. Give joy to the soul of Thy servant, for to Thee, O Lord, I have lifted up my soul. For Thou, O Lord, art sweet and mild: and plenteous in mercy to all that call upon Thee. . . . I have called upon Thee in the day of my trouble; because Thou hast heard me. There is none among the gods like unto Thee, O Lord; and there is none according to Thy works. . . . Conduct me, O Lord, in Thy way and I will walk in Thy truth: let my heart rejoice that I may fear Thy name. I will praise Thee, O Lord my God, with my whole heart and I will glorify Thy Name forever: for Thy mercy is great towards me: and Thou hast delivered my soul out of the lower Hell. O God, the wicked are risen up against me and the assembly of the mighty have sought my soul. . . . And Thou, O Lord, art a God of compassion, and merciful, patient, and of much mercy and true. O, look upon me and have mercy upon me: give Thy command to Thy servant and save the son of Thy handmaid. Show me a token for good; that they that hate me may see and be confounded because Thou, O Lord, has helped me and has comforted me." (Ps. 85.)

There are in the Old Testament many things that
foreshadow the Cross and Passion of Christ. All these happened in figure but they were written for our instruction. And it is remarkable how many of them point to victory over Satan by the power of the Cross. God gave to Moses a rod, and told him to use it in effecting the liberation of His people. When Moses stretched forth the rod, there came one of the ten plagues which ceased only when he reached out the rod again. Having thus secured their liberty, he led them forth and brought them as far as the Red Sea. By this time Pharaoh had repented of his permission to let them go and, after a hot pursuit, he had them trapped against that barrier. Moses extended the rod and the Red Sea divided, allowing the Israelites to pass through. When they reached the opposite bank, their cause again seemed lost, for Pharaoh and his army were bearing down upon them through the same passageway. Moses calmly held his rod over the piled-up waters which came together with a rush, covered chariots, horses and men and swept them all to destruction. “They sank as lead in the mighty waters.” (Ex. 15:10.) There is here not only a picture of our Redemption by Christ through the Cross, but a vivid illustration of the power of the Cross to destroy our spiritual enemies.

Shortly after they began their journey through the desert, the Jews were attacked by Amalec. Moses
appointed Josue to gather an army and go out and fight while he himself would stand upon the top of the hill, "having the rod of God in my hand." He went up and, with the rod in his hand and his arms extended in the form of a cross, he saw his army "put Amalec and his people to flight by the edge of the sword." (Ex. 17.)

Again the Brazen Serpent teaches the same lesson. By looking upon it, the people were cured of the bites inflicted by the fiery serpents which God sent among them as a punishment for their murmuring. How truly this represents the Cross of Christ which cures the wounds of our souls inflicted by the malice of "that old serpent which is called the Devil and Satan." (Aρocz. 12:9.) Jesus Himself referred to this when, speaking to Nicodemus, He said: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish."

Many pious commentators find the same meaning in the combat between David and Goliath. David was a mere boy, while Goliath was a giant. He was about nine feet tall and, with his weapons and armour, was a terrifying sight. But David chose five smooth stones for his sling and, with his staff in hand, went forth and slew the monster. Christ, the Divine Conqueror, with His Cross and His Five Wounds went forth and destroyed the power of
Satan who had the empire over death and delivered them who were all their life-time subject to his service. (*Heb. 2:14, 15.*).

Many more incidents could be cited from the Old Testament, but these alone suffice for our purpose. We marvel that although these things were only types and figures of the Cross and Passion, yet deeds of power and conquest were effected through them. And they were written for our instruction—to make us realize that the weakness of God is stronger than man. If these weak elements, then, were the means of achieving such victories, what triumphs over our spiritual enemies may we not expect if we go to battle with the Cross as our weapon, and the thought of the Passion as our armour. "Christ, therefore, having suffered in the flesh, be you also armed with the same thought." (*1 Peter 4:1.*)

Let us pause for a moment amid the din and the dust of battle. Let us take our stand beside St. John as he looks upon the eternal mysteries of God through the open heavens. With our earth-bound vision we cannot see what he saw, but we can hear what he was able to tell us in the feeble words of human speech. He saw Michael and the Angels fight with the dragon, who is called the devil or Satan and cast him out of heaven. He heard a voice ring through the vaults of heaven saying: "They over-came him by the Blood of the Lamb." (*Apoc.* 194
THE TOKEN OF VICTORY

12: 7-11.) (1) He saw a vast multitude, clothed in the white garments of conquerors, with palms of victory in their hands. He was told that "these are they who are come out of great tribulation." On earth, they bore on their foreheads the Sign of the living God, and they washed their robes and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb. Now they stood before the throne, eternally rejoicing in the triumph that they achieved through the Cross and Passion of Christ. (Apoc. 7.)

Again, he looks and speaks: "I saw heaven opened and beheld a white horse and He that sat upon him was called faithful and true, and with justice doth He judge and fight. An His eyes were as a flame of fire and on His head were many diadems and He had a name written which no man knoweth but himself. And He was clothed with a garment sprinkled with Blood and His Name is called, THE WORD OF GOD. . . . And He hath on His garment and on His thigh written: KING OF KINGS and LORD OF LORDS." (Apoc. 19.)

We have now seen through the eyes of the Apostle the heavenly reward of those who overcame the enemy by virtue of the Blood and the Cross of Christ; first, the Angels; and then our brethren,

(1) In the beautiful words of Fr. Faber: "It was the vision of His Sacred Humanity which was at once their trial, their sanctification and their perseverance (Bethlehem, chap. 4. p. 174.)
the Saints. We have caught a glimpse of the everlasting glory of our King. Once He was derisively called the King of the Jews. He was given thorns for a crown, a reed for a sceptre, a bloody garment for a robe and a gibbet of shame for a throne. He meekly accepted the title (John 18:37.) and, with these ridiculous trappings of royalty, He went forth to destroy His enemy and to extend His Kingdom. Deserted by His own friends, suffering a thousand wounds, He died. But the victory was won. His army of Angels overcame the hosts of evil; His Kingdom was extended to embrace every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

Strengthened and encouraged by these visions, let us turn again to the warfare before us. Weak, wounded, soiled, despised—we may be any one or all of these. It merely sounds like a description of the instruments of the Passion before He took them and made them glorious by contact with Himself. By virtue of His Suffering and Death, we can have the strength and the courage to do battle with Him against the enemies of our souls, and we can leave the battlefield of this world to enter among the number of those who wear the white robes of conquerors and who carry the palm of victory.
OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

"...Let us make him a help like unto himself." (Gen. 2: 18.)

SELFISHNESS is so rooted in the human heart that many allow it the chief place even in their worship of God. There are many people who never praise God either for what He is in Himself or for what He has done. They never offer to Him "the sacrifice of praise,"—that outpouring of a heart confessing with joyful lips the sovereign greatness, goodness, holiness and power of the most high God.

Nor are they animated by the spirit which acknowledges that "it is truly meet and just, right and availing unto salvation that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to the Father Almighty, the everlasting God." They express no gratitude for the life He has given them, the food that they eat, the sun that warms them and lights their way, the sleep that restores their bodily strength. All their prayers consist in asking God for temporal blessings.

It is not surprising then that the same spirit predominates in their devotion to Our Lady. They
turn to her only as to a powerful Advocate. They honour her only at those shrines and under those titles which reveal her power to grant favours. Seldom, if ever, are they found looking with compassionate eyes on the image of Our Lady of Sorrows.

It is difficult to see how anyone can have a true devotion to her or pray to her with any degree of confidence without taking this title of hers under consideration. All other titles were conferred on her by God Who delights to exalt "the lowliness of His handmaiden" and to do great things for her. They all show the power He has given her to help us. But Our Lady herself chose to become the Mother of Sorrows—a title that reveals her love for us, her willingness to use that power in our behalf. Power alone is a fearful thing and it repels the timid unless it is accompanied by that love which inspires confidence. It is because Mary became Our Lady of Sorrows that she is and always will be Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Even those, then, who are animated by a more or less selfish spirit, who are moved only by motives of personal gain in their devotion to her, cannot afford to lay aside the consideration of her Sorrows. Everything that Mary is—all her high prerogatives, described in such glowing terms by Saints and theologians—dates from the moment that she
consented to become the Mother of God. At that moment God truly waited on her consent, for He forces grace on no one. He waited while Mary took in with her sinless mind the full significance of the grace offered to her. She was asked to become the Mother of the Incarnate God; she was to "call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

How He was to save His people was surely more immediately understood by the Queen of Prophets than it was by those who through long centuries foretold the sufferings of the Redeemer of Israel. The Man of Sorrows, wounded and bruised, despised and the most abject of men, Who was to appear more like a leper and as one struck by God and afflicted, was no other than the Son Who was to be born of her. In less time than it would take us to read all the predictions of the prophets, Mary, who was familiar with them all, grasped the meaning of the Angel’s message. With a clarity of mind and a fullness of consent that excluded any selfish consideration, she said: "Be it done unto me according to thy word!"

But to act intelligently there must be a motive. What influenced her in a choice so full of grief, so repugnant to nature? God alone filled her mind and occupied her heart and satisfied her soul. It was His Will, His eternal purpose, and so with all
the ardour of her sinless soul she gave herself to its accomplishment. At the same time she knew better than St. Paul that it was God’s eternal purpose that we should have redemption, the remission of our sins through the Blood of His Beloved Son.

Our misery was before her, our need, our hopeless condition. Without the shedding of His Blood there was no hope for us in this world, no happiness in the next. The compassionate Heart of Mary was touched by our plight. Pity moved her to help us and charity caused her to do so. In one swift act of love for God and for man, expressed in one brief sentence, she signified her consent to coöperate in the work of Redemption. The two-edged sword of love entered her heart and divided it. All her sorrows, all the pains of her long martyrdom were but the turning of that sword and the consequent rending of the most tender feelings of her maternal heart.

On the one side was her love of Jesus, the most beautiful, her treasure, her life, her all. On the other was her love of us, outcasts from the Father’s house, clothed only in the filthy and torn garment which was once the robe of original Justice. Calm language cannot depict the contrast. No words can describe the contrast as Mary saw it. It was clear to her mind at the Annunciation; it grew under the caresses she lavished on her Child at Bethlehem; it stabbed her to the heart as she bowed her head
under the prophetic words of Simeon in the Temple; it was a spectre of unutterable horror that pursued her all the way to Egypt; it made the three days and nights of her search for Jesus through Jerusalem contain some of the indescribable misery that is called eternal loss.

These things she experienced in the early days of her sorrow when we might believe that Jesus filled her whole life, when He engaged all her thoughts, when, so to speak, the thought of us was less explicit. The sword was there, but the edge that pierced and wounded her was the love of Jesus—the same, though immeasurably greater, which caused so many Saints to express their ecstatic love in terms of exquisite pain.

Had all the children of Adam inherited original justice from a sinless father, they could not have taken the place of her one and only Jesus. Between us in the ragged raiment of a fallen father and the Incarnate God, her Son, in the seamless robe of perfect humanity woven from her virginal flesh, there was a contrast that words cannot describe.

If sinless man presented to her an image infinitely removed from the perfection of her Son, what language can give even a feeble idea of the contrast between sinful man and her sinless Son! In happy contemplation of His unfolding human perfections during the uneventful years at Nazareth, in behold-
ing the gradual manifestation of His Divinity during the public life, the contrast widened into an immeasurable abyss, so much so that we wonder—we, without her knowledge or love—how her mind could bridge a chasm so wide. And yet the love of Mary extended across this gulf and embraced with more than motherly affection poor fallen man. She never wavered from the consent given to God, through the Angel, that her Son should be sacrificed to save His people from their sins. And as she had grown to love Jesus as no other creature ever could, so much the sharper was the sword in her heart.

But there was another edge to that sword—her love for man. We have till now considered him merely as an unfortunate one, an outcast from paradise, the unhappy inheritor of a father’s guilt. Living in the ragged poverty of spiritual destitution, he was such as well might cause the sinless Heart of Mary to feel the sharp pang of pity. To think of her as willing to sacrifice her only Son for such a one reveals to us a love that is more than heroic.

Man was no mere unfortunate, “for the imagination and the thought of man’s heart are prone to evil from his youth.” The wickedness of the human heart and all the works of evil which man has wrought, who can know but the omniscient God alone? But it was Mary’s unhappy lot to be present at the unveiling of that heart when it perpetrated
the crime that must have inspired horror even in Hell. During the Passion of her Son she saw the heart of man in all its naked ugliness, the depth of its malice, the height of its pride. Hypocrisy and spiritual conceit, treacherous betrayal and cowardly denial, lying injustice and savage cruelty, course mockery and brutal indifference, absence of gratitude and lack of pity, hardened sensuality and frigid worldliness—all the evil in man's nature, coiled together, struck with the fury of a serpent at her Son. It fastened on Him, enfolded Him, dragged Him down, and crushed Him to death. What must have been Mary's feelings as she looked on this terrible spectacle of unbridled passion!

Does the keen edge of compassion for man still urge her to help him? Is any mother's heart capable of such fortitude as to bear the sight of her son's murderer? Is there a creature possessed of such Divine charity? The answer is inspired by the Spirit of Truth: "And there stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother." The edge of the sword, which was her love for man, was turned and twisted in her heart; it was plunged deeper and cut into the innermost recesses of maternal affection, but through it all she stood by the Cross, the altar of her sacrifice, completing the offering she had made in the beginning. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to thy word!" She chose to become
Our Lady of Sorrows that we might "draw waters with joy from the Saviour's fountains." She wanted us to know something of that which she experienced when she said: "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

This is what all should remember who kneel before Our Lady, seeking her intercession. Here is the deep, firm, wide foundation of confidence. Mary loved and pitied fallen man; she chose bitter woe and piercing pain that the endless Mercy of God might reach him through His Incarnate Son, raise him up and clothe him anew in the shining garments of grace. So great a love burned in the Heart of Mary that even the seething passions of men, raging like the billows of a tempestuous sea against her Son, failed to extinguish it. "Many waters cannot quench charity neither can the floods drown it." If she had never set foot on the soil of France, never worked a miracle at Lourdes; if her celebrated shrines showed no token of answered prayer, possessed no ex-voto acknowledgment of her power; if God had not exalted His humble handmaiden as to glorify her before the world by so many marvels, men would still kneel at her feet, confident that such love could somehow, by some power inherent in love itself, find a way to come to their assistance and relieve their distress. The love for us that made her Our Lady of Sorrows, a love so unselfish and so heroic, so
prompt and so enduring, declares her to be now and always, while the world lasts and men are in need—Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

If men seek relief at the shrines where she dispenses her favours with a liberal hand and maternal affection, they should pause, however briefly, before the image of the transpièred Heart of Mary. Present need should not urge them on in a selfish way so as to forget her grief. The favour they seek cannot be compared to what Mary has already given when she offered the Joy of her heart on the altar of the Cross. To delay there awhile in grateful remembrance, to utter some heart-felt words of gratitude, will lead them to present their petitions with confidence. And whether Mary grants them or not, they will know that both the giving and the refusal can only come from love.

The sacred writer, in describing the origin of things, lifts the veil a little and gives a brief but beautiful view of the loving Heart of God. In a human way, in the language of man, he records the perplexity of God after He had completed His work in the creation of Adam. Something was still needed to make His work perfect. There is a little hesitation in Him Whose eternal happiness was in the contemplation of His Word and in His union with Him in the Holy Spirit. Man's need is recognized in deliberate council: "It is not good for man to be alone:

205
let Us make him a help like unto himself.’’ But the plan is not immediately brought into execution. Adam is given the task of naming “all the beasts of the earth and all the fowls of the air.’’ Yet the problem returns again: “But for Adam there was not found a helper like himself.” (Gen. 2.) It is then that God creates woman, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, a helper of the same nature and condition that he was.

So God, in the supernatural work of man’s Redemption, about to receive His Son back into the bosom of His eternal love, authorized the giving of Mary to His new-born creature as a helper like unto himself. Wholly human, experienced in the ways of sorrow, and yet associated with Divinity, she is and ever shall be man’s compassionate and powerful helper.
THE SON AND THE MOTHER

"I will go and see this great sight." (Ex. 3:3.)

THE love of Jesus for His Mother is burning wonder that moves us to approach in order to study it; it is a sacred mystery that makes us desire a clearer revelation. It is holy ground indeed, and our earth-bound minds are unable to enter within nor can our weak eyes look upon the glory that surrounds it. Yet, if we kneel in the darkness of Calvary, we are close to the heart of the mystery, we are in the centre of the sacred enclosure; there even the eyes of the blind are opened and can gaze steadfastly upon "this great sight."

It is there that the love of Jesus speaks in its clearest tones and utters its fullest expressions; there is spoken the complete and final word of Love. There the Son of God died for love of man and there we must look if we wish to know more about His love for His Mother. We must surely see there a love for her that surpasses His love for the whole human family. At that moment He must surely love her more than all else. This is made clear by a story from Holy Scripture.

Assuerus, a powerful monarch who reigned from India to Ethiopia over a hundred and twenty-seven
provinces, sent out letters commanding the destruction of all the Jews within his vast domain. Esther, his queen, herself a Jewess, went in to plead for the life of her people. At first she saw in his burning eyes only the wrath of his heart against a people whom he was led to believe were plotting against him. But when the queen paled and fell down in a faint, he leapt from his throne, in haste and in fear and, holding her up in his arms until she came to herself, he caressed her with these words: "What is the matter, Esther? I am thy brother, fear not. Thou shalt not die: for this law is not made for thee but for all others.'" He made her understand that she was not originally included in the decree. Could he have expressed his love better? In effect, he says that he could calmly and coldly watch a great people go down to destruction but he never even thought of her as included among them. He now gives her a tender assurance that such is the case and he further proves his love when at her request he cancels the edict against her people.

If such is human love, what shall we say of the infinitely greater and holier love of Jesus for His Mother. It must be of such a nature that it is sharply and emphatically distinguished from the love He has for all other creatures. His love for her must be such that even if the whole human race were to perish, He would have continued to love her, He
would be ready to suffer and die for her alone. She was first in His mind from all eternity. He left a kingdom and a throne to come to her and esteemed all else as nothing in comparison with her. He gave Himself to her and in such wise that He lived of her life, and gave her a love that He could give to no other—the love of a God-Man for His chosen Mother.

Heart to heart they were in the beginning and that seal of love was unbroken to the end. And on that day when the mystery of Eternal Love was revealed to the world, when Incarnate Love died on the Cross for all men, He died principally for His Mother. Not only did He die with the same eternal love for her in His Heart, but it may even be said that He died because she wished it. Time was when the matter was wholly in her hands. She was asked to become His Mother and told that this would be His Death—painful and shameful and desolate. Torn by her own feelings for us and her Son-to-be, she gave her generous consent. She doomed her Beloved to die; she brought into the world a Victim and He obediently came and lovingly went to do her will.

Let us approach nearer to "this great sight," this Heart that burns with such love for His Mother and is not consumed. Out of the infinite treasures of grace merited by His sufferings, there must be some jewels that are exclusively hers. When Jesus wept
at the tomb of Lazarus, some of the Jews said: "Behold how He loved him." Others, more critical, said, "Could not He Who opened the eyes of the man born blind have caused that this man should not die?" It was a question that cast doubt on the genuineness of His love for Lazarus and the sincerity of His grief. He gave a great gift to a total stranger and refused a less to a close friend. But Jesus worked a greater miracle and raised His friend from the dead. All of which makes us believe that He Who by His Passion "brought gifts to all men," gifts of exalted holiness to many, Who even sanctified John the Baptist in his mother’s womb—He certainly would bestow on His Mother graces that she alone could claim as her own. He would not leave open to doubt the fact that He loved her above and beyond all others and that He would do for her what He would not do for anyone else. And so she is blessed among all women and she alone is greeted by a messenger from Heaven as "full of grace."

Every gift and grace and virtue that a mere creature can receive adorned the soul of Mary. It will delight all her true children to enumerate the particular and most precious graces which the Church and Sacred Theology ascribe to her alone. Twelve in number, they form the starry crown of this Queen who is clothed in justice and stands upon the highest
pinnacle of created holiness. They are: (1) Her Immaculate Conception. (2) Her exemption from concupiscence. (3) Her confirmation in grace. (4) Her entire fidelity to grace. (5) Her Divine Maternity. (6) The miraculous birth of her Son. (7) Her perpetual Virginity. (8) Her holy death. (9) The incorruptibility of her body. (10) Her Assumption into Heaven. (11) Her coronation as Queen of Heaven and Earth. (12) Her appointment as Dispensatrix of all grace. What a beautiful diadem! What tongue can speak of its magnificence!

Now all grace is merited by the painful Passion, the shameful Death of Jesus Christ. Without the shedding of His Blood no sin is remitted, no grace is given. If, using Scriptural language, we consider the Precious Blood as the price of all grace, how dearly He paid for the exalted graces and matchless privileges with which He beautified the soul of His Mother. He suffered for her as He suffered for no one else; He gave her graces and gifts that no other can claim because He loved her more, infinitely more, than all those who will share in the fruits of His Passion. The first fruits, the most precious of all, are for her, “chosen out of thousands.”

Nor have we penetrated far into the mystery of the love of Jesus for His Mother. Tradition tells us that Mary on the eve of His Death was nearly fifty years old. From the beginning she was Immaculate,
she grew in grace, she was raised to the incomparable dignity of Mother of God, she remained a spotless Virgin—what mind can enumerate the countless graces of those years? She possessed and enjoyed all these before the price of these heavenly treasures had been paid, before the Precious Blood had begun to flow, before the Victim had been offered. What does this mean except that Jesus in the very giving of these graces obligated Himself to die. If there were no other reason, He would have died for her that the rich ornaments of grace that He had given her might adorn her soul forever. Drop by drop His Blood trickled down from the thorny Crown and gushed from gaping wounds; pain racked every member of His blessed Body; His Heart was full to bursting; the thirst was agonizing, the taunts of His enemies most blasphemous, but through it all, He gazed down with complacency upon the most pure soul of His Mother. “I will pay thee my vows which my lips have uttered and my mouth hath spoken when I was in trouble.” (Ps. 65:13.)

What though He suffered, He could look at her and say, “Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee.” Was there not a vast comfort for Him, an incentive to suffer when He regarded this masterpiece of His redeeming Love? Men could now spend on Him their ingratitude, turn deaf to His appealing voice, blind themselves to the Salva-
tion He offered and trample upon His Blood, because now He could rest His eyes on her and say, "My perfect one is but one." We may well believe that the only drop of consolation for Him in the bitter sufferings of His Passion was found in the sinless perfection of His Mother.

In ages to come poets, painters, sculptors and orators would labour to express their ideal of Mary by means of their art in measured words, in glowing colours, in life-like stone, in burning phrases, but they would fall far short of her perfection. Only Eternal Wisdom could conceive the perfect creature that Mary was to be and by the labours and sufferings of His Passion He made her the complete embodiment of His idea. His joy was such as only a God-Man can experience in contemplating the perfection of His work.

This joy is admirably set forth in the revelations He made to Dame Juliana of Norwich. To her He had revealed the pains of His Passion and now He began to show "the manifold joys that follow the Passion of Christ." "With a glad cheer Our Lord looked unto His Side and beheld rejoicing. With His sweet looking He led forth the understanding of creature by the same wound into His Side within. And then He showed a fair delectable place, large enough for all mankind that shall be saved to rest in peace and in love. And therewith He brought to

213
mind His dearworthy Blood and precious water which He let pour all out for love. And with the sweet beholding He showed His blissful Heart even cloven in two.

"... And with this our good Lord said full blissfully: 'Lo, how that I loved thee,' as if He had said: 'My darling, behold and see thy Lord, thy God that is thy Maker and thine endless joy, see what pleasure and bliss I have in thy salvation; and for My love rejoice now with Me.' This showed Our Lord for to make us glad and merry. Then with the same look of mirth and joy our good Lord looked from the Cross down on the right side where Our Lady stood in the time of His Passion and said: 'Will thou see her?' And in this sweet word it was is if He had said: 'I know well that thou wouldst see My blessed Mother! for, after Myself, she is the highest joy that I might show thee and most pleasure and glory to Me; and most she is desired to be seen of my blessed creatures.' And for the high, marvelous, singular love that He hath to this sweet Maiden, His Blessed Mother, Our Lady St. Mary, He showed her highly rejoicing as if she heard these sweet words: 'Wilt thou see how I love her that thou mightest joy with Me in the love that I have in her and she in Me.'

"... And in that word Jesus showed me ghostly sight of her: just as I had seen her before little and simple, so He showed her then, high and noble and
glorious and pleasing to Him alone above all creatures. And He willeth that it be known; that so all those that delight in Him shall delight in her and in the pleasure that He hath in her and she in Him. And, to more understanding, He showed this example: As if a man love a creature singularly above all creatures, he will make all creatures to love and to like that creature that He loveth so greatly."

Thus did Jesus reveal to a chosen soul how ardently He loved His Mother, how joyfully He died for her, how delighted He is to contemplate the beauty and holiness wrought in her soul by His Precious Blood. And does it not give a new and deeper meaning to His words, "Son, behold Thy Mother." They are words that breathe a Divine satisfaction in a perfected work. They take us back to the beginning when "God saw all the things that He had made and they were very good." So Jesus looked on Mary, the masterpiece of His redeeming Love, and called the whole world to come and admire His handiwork. It is only when we have looked and admired that we are able to appreciate the greatness of His Love in giving her to us as our Mother. "Wilt thou see in her how thou art loved?" He asked Dame Juliana. "For thy love I made her so high, so noble and so worthy; and this pleaseth Me and so will I that it doth thee." "For after Himself," adds the holy recluse, "she is the most blissful sight."
"BOWING HIS HEAD—"

"He will be mindful forever of His Covenant."
(Ps. 110:5.)

MEN filled with the vital energy which is called genius stand above their fellows not only because of what they have done but also because of the manner in which they achieved their ends. A gesture by Demosthenes contained more eloquence than many speeches by common orators. Brilliant victories have been won by military leaders but only after painful study and careful strategy and strict discipline. How much they differ from a Napoleon who saw his plan of campaign in a flash of understanding, went straight for his objective and with a nod and a smile made millions of men glad to fight and even to die for their peerless leader. In this way does genius differ from talent in every line of human endeavour.

Genius has a vision which awakens every latent faculty into creative activity and seems to bend its materials into obedient conformity. Talent has an image merely which it labouriously strives to copy in materials that seem stubbornly resistant. Genius emerges from its absorbing labour and gazes with
love on a finished masterpiece. Talent, finally, stands amid the ruins of many attempts to imitate another's creation with a copy that inspires no ecstasy. And yet the finished works of genius and talent may mingle in common admiration. Copies have often been mistaken for originals even by experts.

Such confusion could not exist if men saw genius and talent at work; their manner would proclaim the difference. Giotto once called at the studio of an artist friend who happened to be absent. An attendant inquired the name, but for reply Giotto took a brush and in one stroke drew on the wall a perfect circle. When this was told the artist on his return, he knew that Giotto had called, for he alone of all the artists in the city could have done that. And yet a draughtsman could have imitated it perfectly. It is the manner that proclaims the man.

Jesus was more than genius, for Divinity Itself dwelt within Him. He had more than that transient spark of creative ability which produces an image from existing materials. From all eternity He was the Word and "all things were made by Him and without Him was made nothing that was made."

In His incarnate life, the Divinity shone through in His every action and was manifest in every word. There is more than genius in the brief words He spoke to the disciples when they returned to Him, rejoicing in the power He had given them over evil
spirits: "I saw Satan like lightning falling from Heaven." (Luke 10:18.) No mere man could deal such an effective blow to the pretensions of spiritual pride; only One Who saw the fall of Lucifer could so pithily describe it and with such brevity inspire horror for so subtle and respectable a vice. Or again, take the simple narrative: "And Jesus . . . saw a man sitting in the customhouse, named Matthew; and He said to him: Follow Me. And he arose up and followed him." (Matt. 9:9.) He makes no explanation of His purpose, uses no arts of persuasion, grants no time for delay, but issues one compelling word and Matthew abandons his business as Peter and Andrew, John and James had done previously. (Matt. 4:19-22.)

It was the same in His actions. The Evangelists record stupendous miracles, but they seem to have been more observant of the manner in which Jesus wrought them than in the thing itself. In the case of the leper, they observe that "Jesus stretching forth His hand touches him . . . and forthwith his leprosy was cleansed." (Matt. 8:3.) Two blind men came to Him to be cured. He touched their eyes and they received their sight. (Matt. 9:29-30.) On another occasion one who was deaf and dumb was brought to Him. "And taking him from the multitude apart, He put his fingers into his ears and spitting He touched his tongue and looking up to
heaven, He groaned and said to him: Ephpheta, that is, Be thou opened: and immediately his ears were opened and the string of his tongue was loosed and he spoke right." (Mark 7: 32-35.)

Then there is the vivid account St. John gives of the raising of Lazarus from the tomb four days after his death. We should expect the Evangelist to dilate on the marvels of so great a miracle but instead we receive an account of the tender words of comfort addressed to the sorrowing sisters and of the actions by which Jesus showed His sympathy for them: "Weeping, He groaned in spirit and troubled Himself." When He arrived at the sepulchre, again groaning in Himself, He lifted up His eyes and prayed to His Father. Then He gave the brief command that brought Lazarus back to life. These observations, it should be noted, were made by the disciple who prefaced his Gospel with a sublime confession to the Divinity of the Word.

It is this narrative that leads us to believe that, among the four Evangelists, it was John who saw most clearly the Divinity of Jesus in what seemed commonplace actions and every-day gestures. This may explain the fact that he alone makes no mention of the darkness that covered the whole earth from the sixth to the ninth hour; he says nothing of the veil in the Temple that was rent, of the rocks that were split, the earthquake, the return of the dead.
And yet his omission of these things is strange; for he alone of the Apostles was present on Mt. Calvary. He alone was in a position to see everything and he alone, after the lapse of sixty-three years during which he heard and knew all that occurred on that tragic day, was able to relate all that took place on the first Good Friday. Perhaps, these omissions are due to the fact that he alone saw the last action, the final gesture of the dying God-Man. A year later, in writing the Apocalypse, the Holy Spirit gave him the ability to write of heavenly mysteries in sublime language, but the same Spirit Who guided him in the writing of his Gospel dictated only one sentence to describe the Death of Jesus. It is sublime in its simplicity. Volumes of theological lore and devotional commentary cannot exhaust the profound meaning of these simple words: "And bowing His Head, He gave up the ghost." (John 19:30.)

In one word we are brought to realize that the Death of Jesus was wholly voluntary. No power on earth or under the earth, neither human craftiness nor diabolical cunning, could take His life from Him. Long before, in declaring Himself to be the Good Shepherd, He said: "I lay down My life that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me: but I lay it down of Myself and I have power to lay it down and power to take it up again. This
commandment have I received of My Father.’” (John 10:17, 18.) The words are His own commentary on the prophecy: “He was offered because it was His own will.” (Is. 53:7.) There is ample proof for His assertion in the scene that took place in the Garden: “Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth and said to them: Whom seek ye?” (John 18:4.) As soon as He disclosed Himself to be Jesus of Nazareth, they went backward and fell to the ground. Only when He gave the word were they able to take Him. Then and all through His Passion more than twelve legions of Angels were His to command. But He put aside all miraculous power “that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” Only when all things were accomplished did He bow His thorn-crowned head and give up His soul into the hands of His Father.

How well does the last gesture of His life bespeak the attitude of veneration and obedience towards His Father that was manifest through His entire life: “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me that I may perfect His work.” (John 4:34.) “I seek not My own will but the will of Him that sent Me.” (John 5:30.) His discourse at the Last Supper is full of such expressions of filial love and obedience; it even radiates a holy joy that He is soon to glorify His Father by His Death. He even anticipates the moment and looks upon it as a fin-
ished work: "I have glorified Thee on earth; I have finished the work Thou gavest Me to do.''
(John 17:4.) The same spirit sustained Him in His Agony, in those three hours of mortal anguish, for St. Matthew tells us, He prayed, "saying the self same words, My Father, if this chalice may not pass away but I must drink it, Thy will be done." (Matt. 26:42-44.) And when the last moment had come, He chose to die with a gesture that summed up His life of perfect obedience: "Bowing His Head, He gave up the ghost.''

He might have held His Head erect with His eyes fixed on heaven for was He not the Victor over pain and shame? He had triumphed over human wickedness and forever broken the power of Satan. He had redeemed a fallen world and given infinite glory to His Father. He had just declared the fulfillment of all Scripture and confided His soul into the Father's hands. The dauntless courage He possessed in the midst of such suffering, the filial trust that sustained Him through such desolation of soul, the glory that was soon to be His for the suffering of death—all lead us to expect a different ending to a life so full of achievement, so worthy of reward.

But He had determined to become like to us in all things, sin alone excepted. His feelings at the approach of death were infinitely more painful than
"BOWING HIS HEAD—"

ours could ever be. Every faculty of His sinless humanity shrank from it. But, bowing His Head, He humbly submitted to the law that is upon us all—an eloquent expression of the perfect humility that made Him like unto us in all things and a cordial invitation to embrace death with the same humility and filial trust. For, though we walk in the valley of the shadow of death, we need fear no evils for He has gone before us and will be with us at the end.

Bowing His Head was a gesture Divine. It recalls the work of God on the sixth day of creation: "And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth: and breathed into his face the breath of life and man became a living soul." So Jesus bowed His Head and breathed upon humanity that was dead through Adam's fault and it lived again. It reminds us of Ezechiel's vision of the plain that was full of bones, and "they were exceeding dry." The prophet was commanded to prophesy concerning these bones: "Thus saith the Lord to these bones: Behold I will send spirit into you and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you and will cause flesh to grow over you and will cover you with skin: and I will give you spirit and you shall live and you shall know that I am the Lord." And when the prophet gave the command, God breathed spirit into them and they lived: and they stood up upon their feet an exceeding great army." (Ezch. 37.) So Jesus at the
last bowed His Head toward the home of a race that was slain through the malice of the devil and the sin of Adam. Stripped of supernatural gifts, they had but the bare bones of existence until Jesus "sent forth His Spirit." (*Emisit Spiritum.*) Again clothed with Divine grace, strengthened in every faculty, they began to live in the sight of God—"a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues."

"Bowing His Head—sublime gesture of a dying God-Man! He came to give testimony to the truth, to lead man through the darkness of error and the fogs of superstition into the light of knowledge and faith. He was believed by some and contradicted by others. The forces of evil overcame and brought Him to His Death. He became a Martyr—a Witness unto death of the truth of His doctrines. "And bowing His Head," He gave a Divine affirmation to each and all the truths He had spoken. "You seek to kill Me," He had said, "a Man Who had spoken the truth to you which I have heard of God." (*John 8:40.*) "They understood not, that He called God His Father. Jesus therefore said to them: When you shall have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall you know that I am He and that I do nothing of Myself, but as the Father hath taught Me, these things I speak." (*John 8:27, 28.*) "And bowing His Head," He affirmed with Divine emphasis the
truths He declared. In writing to confirm the faith of the wavering Christians of Corinth, St. Paul set down these vigorous words: "The Son of God, Jesus Christ . . . was not now ‘Yea’ and now ‘Nay’, but ‘Yea’ alone was in Him. As many as are the promises of God, in Him they find their ‘Yea’." (Cor. 1: 19, 20.)

Moreover, looking upon Him bowing down His head, we sinners find the answer to all our hopes and prayers and aspirations. To every anxious query about salvation, to every earnest petition, to every forlorn hope there is an answer—a Divine "Yes." He had given solemn promises to those who pray; He had answered with a Divine affirmative the timid appeal of the dying criminal. Now He bows His head—an everlasting confirmation of His words, an irrevocable answer to all who seek salvation. "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven and return no more thither, but soak the earth and water it and make it to spring and give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be, which shall go forth from My mouth: it shall not return to Me void but it shall do whatsoever I please and shall prosper in the things for which I sent it." Neither will the Head that has bowed in death turn away from us nor shall He hide His face from the eager eyes that look up to Him.

"Bowing His Head—the last token of the undying
love of the dying God-Man! Towards us He bent His Head—the last movement of His suffering humanity, for He loved us unto the end. It was at the same time a farewell from the Sufferer and a welcome from the Redeemer. He was going to the Father and yet He would ever abide. His spirit would take flight to the throne that awaited Him and yet He would ever remain turned towards earth,” for my eyes and my heart shall be there always. “My eyes also shall be open and my ears attentive to the prayer of him that shall pray in this place.” (2 Par. 7:15.)

Bowing His Head, He turns upon all who kneel at His feet those eyes in which shines the light of Divine compassion; bowing His Head He speaks and His words are those of Divine forgiveness; bowing His head, He inclines His ears and He hears even the faintest sighs of His suppliants; bowing His head, He not only “gave up the ghost” for the Redemption of the world, but He also gave Himself in the most intimate manner to each and all the redeemed. And when the story of Divine love is told in the Kingdom of Heaven there will surely be a pause before, and a longer one after, that sublime sentence: “And, bowing His Head, He gave up the ghost.”
"IN THE EVENING OF MY THOUGHT"

"And with Him, they crucify two thieves. . . ."
(Mark 15: 27.)

Great soul-tragedies are scattered throughout the pages of Holy Scripture and are recounted in vivid, dramatic words. There is Cain and his despairing cry; David and his repentant sobs; Solomon and his world-weary voice. But none of these can compare with the dark figure that hung on the third cross on Calvary. He was present at the Tragedy which was planned from all eternity, foretold through long centuries of time and which millions would look upon with adoring wonder for endless ages to come.

With his own eyes he looked on the fulfillment of centuries of prophecy; he beheld the wide-open arms of Eternal Love ready to embrace the world; he gazed upon the stripes and wounds that atoned for the world's iniquity, and yet he felt no sentiment of wonder, no emotion of corresponding love, no pang of repentant grief. At three o'clock the Saviour died but he lived on, unmoved by the upheaval of nature, by the conversion of the centurion, by the repentance of the people. In the evening the sol-
diapers came and broke his legs and took him away. He had lived through the day of days, missed its meaning, added to its crimes and was left at the end untouched by its grace.

The black night which decended on the first Good Friday only faintly pictures the impenetrable darkness of that soul into which the light of the world could not shine. In the evening of his life he went forth into the deepest shadows that lie beyond this world; he went without the lamp of Faith to light the way before him and without a single ray of hope to dispel its awful gloom.

Recently there died in France a world-figure—Georges Clemenceau. He had had a long day of 88 years, from 1841 to 1929. Toward the end, he wrote and published a book, "In The Evening of My Thought." In it there is nothing of an assured Faith nor of a cheerful hope, but only the repetition of the rationalism, the anti-clericalism that ruled his life. It is such a book that a correspondent could say in describing his funeral; "only a few women from the farm braved the anger of his spirit by crossing themselves;" Between the closing of the book and the opening of the grave no change came into his thought. On his death-bed he gathered what remained of his failing strength and made known his last Will: "Let no cross be raised above my grave." And yet, it is safe to say that no man ever lived
who was so surrounded by the wonders wrought through the Cross of Christ and who failed to profit by them unless it be that nameless one who hung on the third cross.

It would require a volume, and a very large one, to give merely a good outline of the spiritual marvels that took place in France during the Nineteenth Century. For the entire century France led the world in Foreign Mission work. Over 7,000 religious men and 9,000 religious women went to pagan lands to spread the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. Two societies at home—the Propagation of the Faith (1822) and the Holy Childhood (1898)—were founded to second their efforts with generous means. Many of these missionaries died martyrs for Christ and some have been raised to the honours of the altar—Blessed Jean Gabriel Perboyre (1840), Blessed Peter Louis Chanel (1841), Blessed Theophane Venard (1861), and others are already beatified.

In France itself vocations to the religious life increased remarkably and they were voluntary, in contrast to the Eighteenth Century when families for worldly reasons placed their daughters in convents. Many new religious congregations were founded: the Little Sisters of the Poor (1840), the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament by Blessed Peter Julian Eymard (d. 1868), the Society of Mary (Marists) by the Ven. John Claude Colin (d. 1875), the Sisters of
Notre Dame by Blessed Julie Brilliat (d. 1816), the School Sisters of Mercy by Blessed Mary Magdalen Pastel (d. 1846), the Madames of the Sacred Heart by Blessed Magdeleine Sophie Barat (d. 1865) and many others—all founded by holy men and women who are now candidates for canonization.

It was in this century that Lacordaire (d. 1861) preached and that the Curé d’Ars, Saint John Baptist Vianney (d. 1859) heard confessions for sixteen hours a day. It saw the conversion of many brilliant, wondering sons of the Church, like Ferdinand Brunetiere, and the edifying example of good Catholics like Leon Papin-Dupont, “The Holy Man of Tours” (d. 1876). It held the beginning and the development of the St. Vincent de Paul Society founded by Frederick Ozanam. It came to a brilliant close when the Little Flower died in 1897.

Most marvelous of all, the Holy Mother of God herself came down from Heaven and set her virginal foot on French soil. This was in 1858 when Clemenceau was seventeen years old. And yet all these heroic works, saintly lives and Divine favours left him untouched. In the evening of such a splendid day he could say to a Sister of Charity: “I want you to promise that no cross will be raised above my grave.” How terribly ironical now appears the title he was given in life, “The Father of Victory.” No man perhaps was ever laid in an unblessed grave
who had witnessed so much of the power of the Cross of Christ as Georges Clemenceau unless it be the blasphemer who died on the third cross. But then there is the difference between a day that lasted 88 years and a day of only a few hours.

"Five red roses," writes a correspondent at the funeral, "were dropped on his coffin in its narrow grave." How futile and inane a gesture for a dead man who, during life, had put from his sight the Five Bleeding Wounds of Christ. Over his grave is a block of granite with Minerva carved in bas relief. According to mythology, she is the goddess of wisdom who leaped forth in full maturity from the brain of Jupiter. How puerile an image to stand over a man who would not believe that the only-be-gotten Son of the Father came into this world "for us men and for our salvation." At the end he had fading roses and a mythical Minerva when he might have had the enduring Cross and the Eternal Christ.
A MEMORIAL BEFORE THE EYES

"Till the day break and the shadows retire, I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense." (Cant. 4:6.)

MANY of the numerous observances of the Jewish Law were appointed by God to remind the people of their deliverance from Egypt. Sacrifices and ceremony, precept and counsel were to be performed while remembering the Lord their God Who with a strong hand and a stretched-out arm brought them out from that land of bondage and conducted them safely through the terrible wilderness.

While reading the Law, the pious Jew could renew his memories of that great work of God's mercy toward His chosen people, he could revive his confidence in God's power by which He triumphed so signally over the enemies of His favoured children. But the Lord was not blinded by His regard for them; He was not unaware of their fickleness and obstinacy. Only the prayer of Moses had saved them many times from being destroyed, and the holy leader himself, worn out by their rebellious and incredulous attitude, became guilty of the fault that
caused his exclusion from the land that God had promised to his people.

Knowing their inconstancy, the Lord gave a command that was to bring the memory of Him into their daily life. "The Lord also said to Moses: Speak to the children of Israel, and thou shalt tell them to make to themselves fringes in the corners of their garments, putting in them ribands of blue, that, when they shall see them, they may remember all the commandments of the Lord, and not follow their own thoughts and eyes, going astray after divers things but, rather, being mindful of the precepts of the Lord, may do them and be holy to their God. I am the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that I might be your God." (Numbers 15:37-41.) And thus it was ordained that the Jew should remember God and His mercies, not only when reading the Law in the quiet of his home or when hearing it expounded by the rabbis in the synagogue, but even on the streets and in his place of business. St. Jerome tells us that the more devout among them put thorns in their fringes or tassels so that they might often receive sudden sharp reminders of the Lord God Who brought them out of slavery and gave them His Law to observe.

It was these devout souls, no doubt, who began the custom of wearing the Tephelin or Phylacteries—Tephelin, a Hebrew word meaning "prayer-straps"
and Phylactery from a Greek word meaning "to guard." These were pieces of parchment inscribed with texts of Scripture, which, when literally interpreted, made the strict Jew consider the wearing of them as part of the Law itself.

The custom followed was this: Two small leather boxes were made—one to be worn on the forehead between the eyes; the other on the left arm near the heart, both being attached by leathern thongs. The one on the forehead had four compartments; the one on the arm only one. The purpose of this was to point out that the mind should leisurely and carefully meditate on each part of the four texts and that the heart should embrace and observe them all. At first they were worn only at morning prayers, reminding us of the morning meditation of the religious of our own day. But later they were worn throughout the day.

Remembering certain words of Jesus, the careful but uninstructed reader of the Gospels may dismiss this custom as useless and even hypocritical. But it would be wrong thus to regard the beautiful example of grateful and devout Jews through many centuries. What Jesus condemned was hypocrisy or rather the hypocrites who with great pretentions neither meditated on nor loved the Law. What He condemned was only one of their forms of hypocrisy. The italicised words give His true meaning: "and
all their works they do to be seen of men. For they make their phylacteries broad and enlarge their fringes.” (Matt. 23:5.) He condemned here only the pride and ostentation of the Pharisees who strove to appear holier than others. Jesus Himself wore the fringes or tassel, as the Law required, and it was probably one of these that the Gentile woman, troubled with an issue of blood, touched and thereby obtained the cure of her infirmity. (Matt. 9:20, 21.) It is most probable also that Jesus Himself wore the phylacteries, for they pointed only to a greater Deliverance, to be brought about by His Death, and they foreshadowed a more perfect Law, to be observed, not only through gratitude but, more especially, through love.

Here are the Scripture texts that inspired the devout among the Jews to originate the Phylacteries. The first is taken from the Book of Exodus: “And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Sanctify unto me every firstborn that openeth the womb among the children of Israel, as well of men as of beasts: for they are all mine. And Moses said to the people: Remember this day in which you came forth out of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage, for with a strong hand hath the Lord brought you forth out of this place: that you eat no leavened bread. This day you go forth in the month of new corn. And when the Lord shall have

235
brought thee into the land of the Chanaanite, and the Hethite, and the Amorrhite, and the Hevite, and the Jebusite, which he swore to thy fathers that he would give thee a land that floweth with milk and honey, thou shalt celebrate this manner of sacred rites in this month. Seven days shalt thou eat unleavened bread: and on the seventh day shall be the solemnity of the Lord. Unleavened bread shall you eat seven days: there shall not be seen any thing leavened with thee, nor in all thy coasts. And thou shalt tell thy son in that day, saying: This is what the Lord did to me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be as a sign in thy hand, and as a memorial before thy eyes: and that the law of the Lord be always in thy mouth, for with a strong hand the Lord hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt. Thou shalt keep this observance at the set time from days to days.” (Exodus 13:1-10.)

The second follows immediately from the same chapter: “And when the Lord shall have brought thee into the land of the Chanaanite, as He swore to thee and thy fathers, and shall give it thee: thou shalt set apart all that openeth the womb for the Lord, and all that is first brought forth of thy cattle; whatsoever thou shalt have of the male sex, thou shalt consecrate to the Lord. The firstborn of an ass that shalt change for a sheep: and if thou
do not redeem it, thou shalt kill it. And every first-born of men thou shalt redeem with a price. And when thy son shall ask thee tomorrow saying: What is this? thou shalt answer him: With a strong hand did the Lord bring us forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. For when Pharaoh was hardened, and would not let us go, the Lord slew every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of man to the first-born of beasts: therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the womb of the male sex, and all the firstborn of my sons I redeem. And it shall be as a sign in thy hand, and as a thing hung between thy eyes, for a remembrance: because the Lord hath brought us forth out of Egypt by a strong hand.” (Exodus. 13:11-16.)

The third is taken from the Book of Deuteronomy: “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart. And thou shalt tell them to thy children, and thou shalt meditate upon them sitting in thy house, and walking on thy journey, sleeping and rising. And thou shalt bind them as a sign on thy hand, and they shall be and shall move between thy eyes. And thou shalt
write them in the entry, and on the doors of thy house." (Deuteronomy 6:4-9.)

The fourth is from the same book: "If then you obey my commandments, which I command you this day, that you love the Lord your God, and serve Him with all your heart, and with all your soul: He will give to your land the early rain and the latter rain, that you may gather in your corn, and your wine, and your oil, and your hay out of the fields to feed your cattle, and that you may eat and be filled. Beware lest perhaps your heart be deceived, and you depart from the Lord, and serve strange gods, and adore them: And the Lord being angry shut up heaven, that the rain come not down, nor the earth yield her fruit, and you perish quickly from the excellent land which the Lord will give you. Lay up these my words in your hearts and minds, and hang them for a sign on your hands, and place them between your eyes. Teach your children that they meditate on them, when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest on the way, and when thou liest down and risest up. Thou shalt write them upon the posts and the doors of thy house: that thy days may be multiplied, and the days of thy children in the land which the Lord swore to thy fathers, that he would give them as long as the heaven hangeth over the earth." (Deuteronomy 11:13-21.)

We can see what a beautiful custom this was and
what a help it was to the really devout in remembering God and in keeping His Law. These texts brought to their mind thoughts of their redemption from the land where they were slaves, the fidelity of God in so wonderfully fulfilling His promises to their fathers, their obligation to tell their children of all God's mercies, the great commandment of the love of God and the rewards given to those who remember Him, love Him and serve Him.

To recall all this to Christian minds is equivalent to a reproach to those among them who have neither in their homes nor on their persons a Crucifix. The image of Jesus Crucified should be a memorial before the eyes and a sign in the hands for a remembrance of our Redemption—that work of His love of which the deliverance from Egypt was but a shadowy figure. It holds forth the most solemn promise of God that He will lead us to a better land than this. We have already passed from the state of bondage to the Devil through the Red Sea of His Blood. Having this Sign of Salvation to put us in remembrance of the commandments of His Law (Wisdom 16:6.), we can go forward with confidence on our journey through the wilderness of this world. If we look upon Him, all bitter things will become sweet (Exodus 15:25.), and even that serpent the Devil, will be powerless to bring us to irremediable death. (Exodus 21:8.) In this desert land we
shall draw waters with joy from the Saviour’s fountains and the most barren life will bear fruit. The Crucifix—this memorial before the eyes—will indeed be a safeguard, a guard against evil and a guard in the keeping of His holy law.

The Jew with only the “shadow of the good things to come, not the very image of the things,” (Heb. 10:1.) was moved to invent a way of keeping in mind all that went to make up the very soul of his religion. In the painful rite of circumcision, he was made a child of Abraham. As a disciple of Moses, he wore the fringes on his garments and devised the use of the Phylacteries, while he looked forward to Him Who was to “wash His robe in wine, and His garment in the blood of the grape.” (Gen. 49:11.) In these observances generations of devout Jews lived and died, “not having received the promises, but beholding them afar off and saluting them, and confessing that they are pilgrims and strangers on the earth.” (Heb. 11:13.) They held to these things with a firm faith and an unshaken hope.

In the Crucifix, the Christian beholds the fulfillment of these ancient mysteries. But he, too, can see in the same holy image the shadow of a great event to come. On one awful day,—a day of sore distress and of all wretchedness, a great and exceeding bitter day, the most dreadful of all things.
will take place — the Crucifix will become alive! “Behold, He cometh in the clouds and every eye shall see Him and they also that pierced Him.” (Apoc. 1:7.) Even the inspired Word can give only a faint reflection of the anguish that shall possess the minds and overwhelm the souls of men when this wounded but majestic Figure shall stand forth. The Seer of this Vision has laid down in sober but impressive words the sentiments that shall possess the souls of men when the Lamb Who was slain shall appear to demand an accounting from every soul. “And the kings of the earth, and the princess, and tribunes, and the rich, and the strong, and every bondman, and every freeman, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of mountains: and they say to the mountains and the rocks: Fall upon us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?” (Apoc. 6:15-17.) Even the Spouse of Christ, the Bride of the Lamb, stands in dread of His appearance. Through the muted mouth of each of her children, she utters the tremulous words:

What shall guilty I then plead?
Who for me shall intercede,
When the Saints shall comfort need?
Who then shall be saved? Whose works shall stand examination? Who shall hear the comforting, the thrilling words: "Come ye blessed of My Father, and receive the kingdom which was prepared for you before the foundation of the world"? Without presumption it may be said that those who in life looked constantly and lovingly on the Crucifix will receive an affirmative answer to the question which expresses the greatest fear and the ultimate hope of the soul on probation:

Think, kind Jesus, my salvation
Caused Thy wondrous Incarnation—
Leave me not to reprobation.

Faint and weary Thou hast sought me,
On the Cross of suffering bought me;
Shall such grace be vainly brought me?