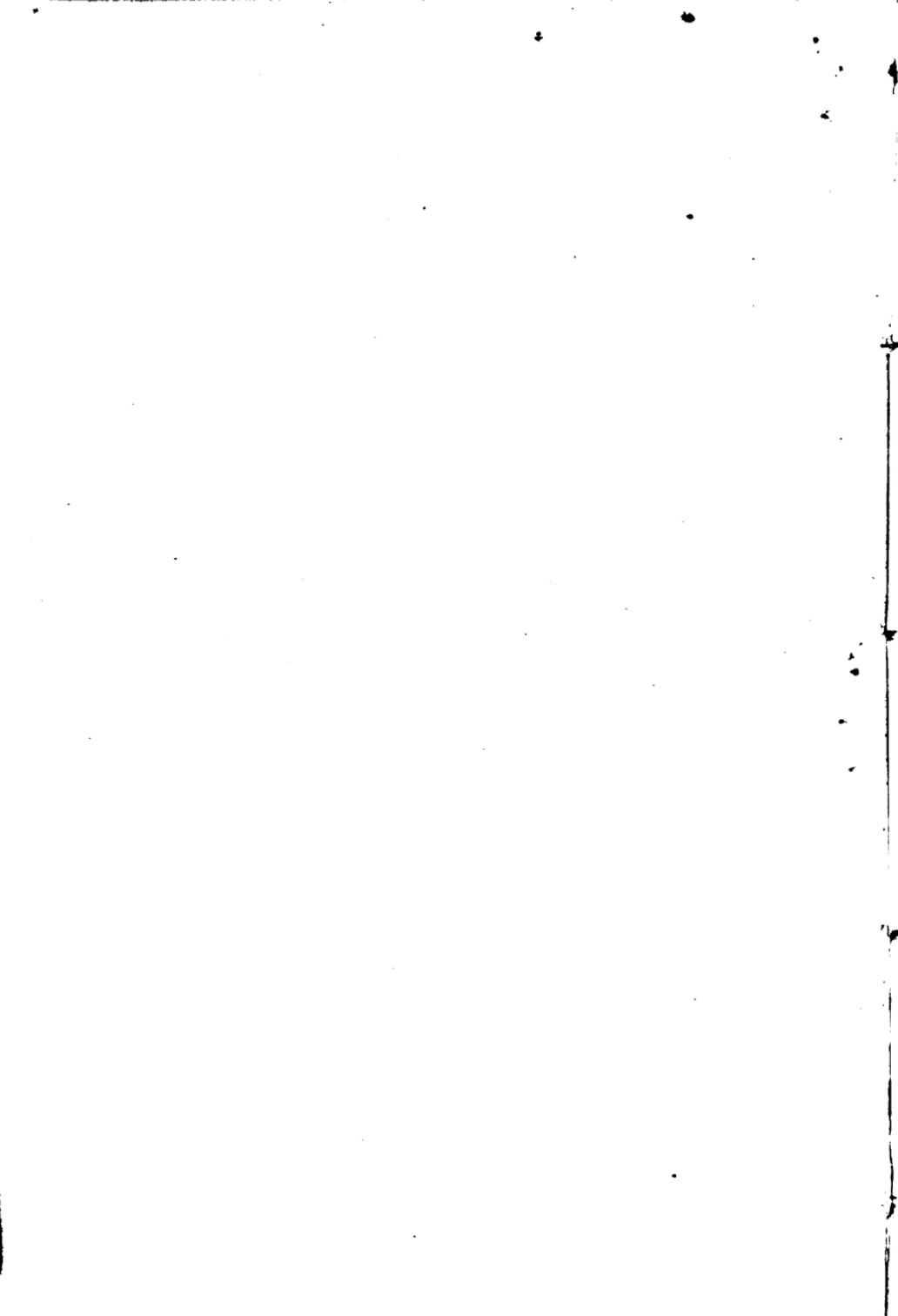
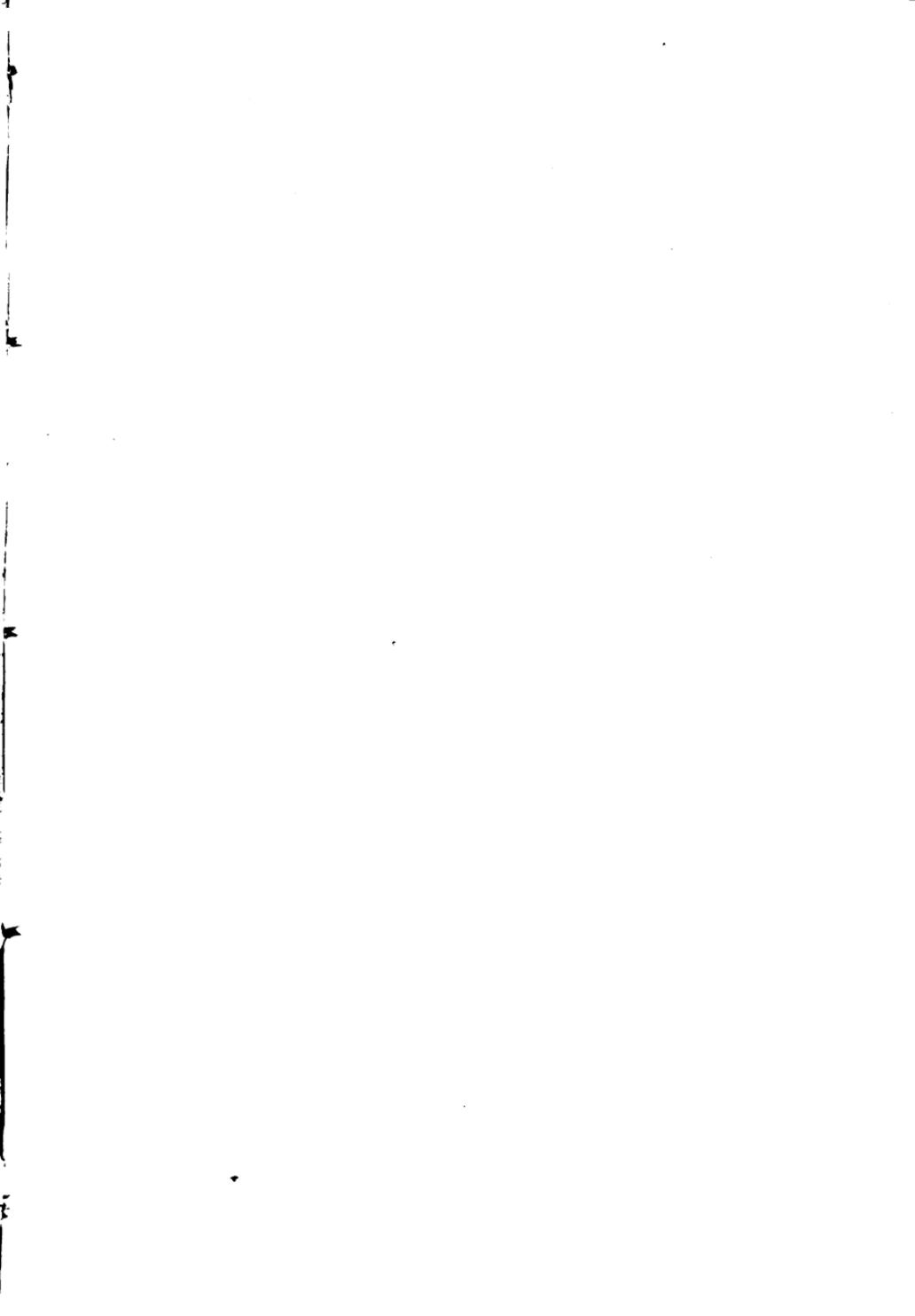


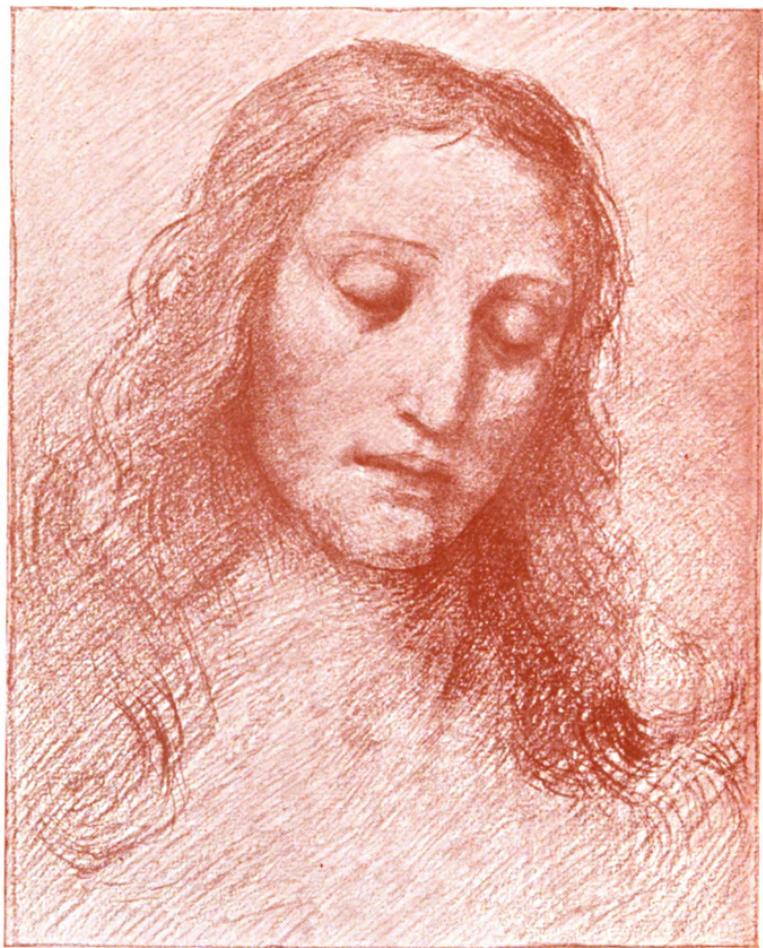
THE WATCHES OF THE SACRED PASSION

WITH

BEFORE AND AFTER







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THE WATCHES  
OF THE SACRED PASSION  
WITH  
BEFORE AND AFTER

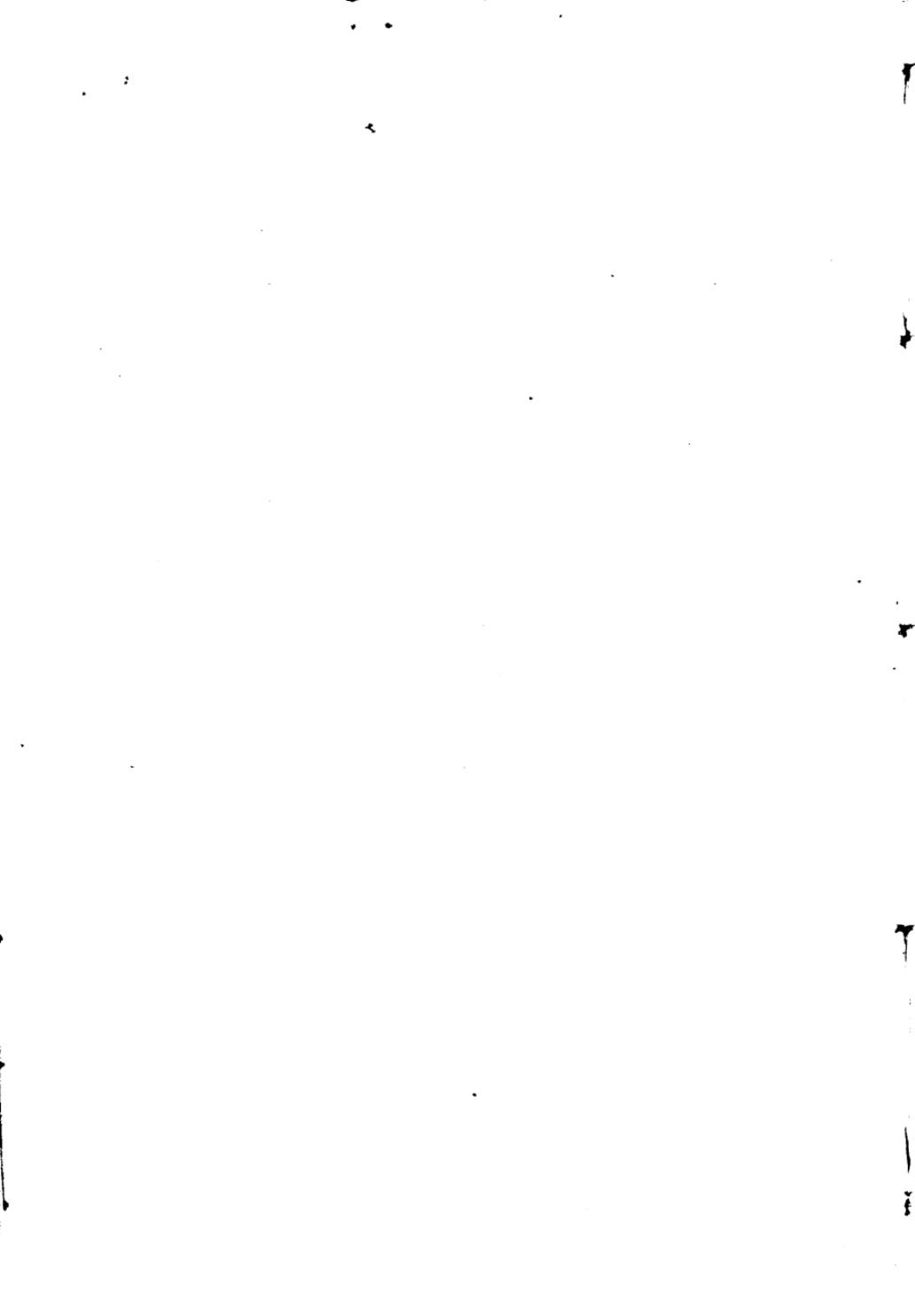
BY  
FATHER P. GALLWEY, S.J.

*ELEVENTH EDITION*

*VOL. I.*  
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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

ALTHOUGH the whole of the First Edition of *The Watches* was disposed of in a very short time, yet, as had been anticipated, the cost of production exceeded by forty pounds the proceeds of the sale.

Some charitable friends kindly made good this deficit.

The expense of printing this Second Edition will be somewhat reduced. But as efforts have been made to secure better paper and binding at a lower price, and as the number of the Plates is increased and an Index added, it is still doubtful whether the income will equal the outlay. It seems better, however, for the honour of our Lord and His Holy Mother, and for the good of souls, to secure a wider circulation by keeping the price as low as may be.

Some surprise has been expressed that more use has not been made in these volumes of the discoveries of Sir Charles Wilson, Sir Charles Warren, Captain Conder, and other distinguished Explorers.

One answer to this objection is found in an article published by Captain Conder in the *Scottish Review* for January of the present year. He there tells us that in that portion of Jerusalem with which these volumes are chiefly concerned, the ground is covered with houses; and that, consequently, the Explorers have not been able there to make any excavations. He adds that much further excavation will be necessary before it can be possible to induce all parties to accept the conjectures put forward by the Explorers with regard to the site of Calvary and the Sepulchre.

May we not then delay to adopt these novel theories till the Explorers have been able to make such excavations as shall justify their most revolutionary views?

From Captain Conder's showing, the Explorers have made absolutely no excavations whatsoever in the quarter of the city where the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre now stands ; and, consequently, have nothing to offer us but conjectures and theories utterly subversive of all the old Catholic traditions. Would it not then be, at present, quite premature to give up these Sacred Traditions, and take in exchange rash conjectures, which are not as yet in any way supported by what Captain Conder calls " the logic of the spade " ?

Monuments unearthed by the spade are no doubt witnesses whose testimony might upset many traditions till now accepted. And so long as the Explorers are content faithfully to record all that the pick-axe and the spade discover, they render excellent service. But if the Explorers begin to publish, confidently, theories and assumptions which run far ahead of their spades, they may easily be changed from most valuable friends into enemies peculiarly dangerous. For the authority which deservedly belongs to them as Explorers is extended by the unwary to theories exceedingly reckless.

I venture to use the word "reckless," because the Explorers, before they have been able to make any excavations whatever on the ground so hallowed in our eyes, call upon us to believe (1) that St. Helen and Constantine knew nothing about the true site of Calvary ; (2) that the faithful ever since have been in gross error on this point ; and (3) that the honour paid to the true Cross by Holy Church and to the sacred Nails is all based on imposture ; since they never could have been found on this site.

Again, is it not quite premature and reckless, before the necessary excavations have been made, to publish maps in which Calvary is placed close to Gethsemani, on the eastern side of the city ? These maps may not be published by the Explorers themselves, but they are

at least the work of disciples who wish to propagate their doctrine. Surely the publication of such maps does not fall short of rashness and recklessness. For even the English and American writers themselves, who are combined in the attack on the old Catholic tradition, are not at all agreed as to the site to be substituted. For while some of them, as has just been said, place it on Mount Moriah, near Gethsemani, not a few among them have been anxious to raise a subscription in order to secure a site to the north of the city, near the convent of the Dominican Fathers, and there to establish an Anglo-American Calvary.

Such an enterprise is perhaps less astounding if we look at the map of the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre and the adjacent grounds, prepared by the celebrated antiquarian Mr. Schick, at the command of the Sultan. From this map we see that while the Greeks, the Latins, the Copts, the Armenians, the Russians, and the Germans have all secured plots of ground, smaller or larger, round about the Sepulchre, the English and Americans are the only ones left out in the cold. What wonder, then, if they bestir themselves?

Captain Conder and others who incline to the northern site for Calvary, adduce in its favour arguments of this kind :

First, Captain Conder has there discovered a Jewish tomb which might very well, so he thinks, have been the Tomb of our Lord. Second, the lie of the ground would make it a likely place to be selected for the Crucifixion. Third, Captain Conder adds that he found a tradition existing among the Jews that this was of old the place of execution ; and of this tradition he makes great capital.

It will be observed that none of these arguments are based on "the logic of the spade". They are not the outcome of excavations ; they are sheer conjectures. Wherefore, why we should abandon the time-honoured

Christian tradition for this Jewish tradition, now for the first time brought to light, does not appear.

There is only one thing more to be added. It is this. While Sir Charles Wilson boldly asserts that no trace has ever been discovered near the Christian Calvary of the western city wall, which must have been there if this be the true site; and while Captain Conder tells us that the Explorers have never been able to make excavations in this quarter—which fact may well account for Sir Charles Wilson's mistaken notion—the well-known architect and antiquary, Mr. Schick, to whom the Explorers very much defer, and who is considered to know more about ancient Jerusalem than any living man, assures us that he has seen undoubted traces of the wall in question.

Mr. Schick has worked as an architect in Jerusalem for forty years; and before that period served under his father, who was also an architect in that city. In the course of his long career he has often made excavations on the ground which the Explorers have not been permitted to approach; and he assured the author of these volumes with his own lips—and he has made the same statement, illustrated with careful drawings, in his printed publications—that he was able to trace accurately the Fosse that ran along this portion of the city walls. He further adds that the reason why more remains of the foundations of the old wall are not extant is this, that the materials were used for the Great Basilica of Constantine and St. Helen. He states, moreover, that the foundations of an ancient gateway, probably the Judgment Gate, are to be seen on the ground purchased by the Russians, and now covered with houses.

All this being so, would it be prudent to alter this Second Edition in conformity with the views of our new masters?

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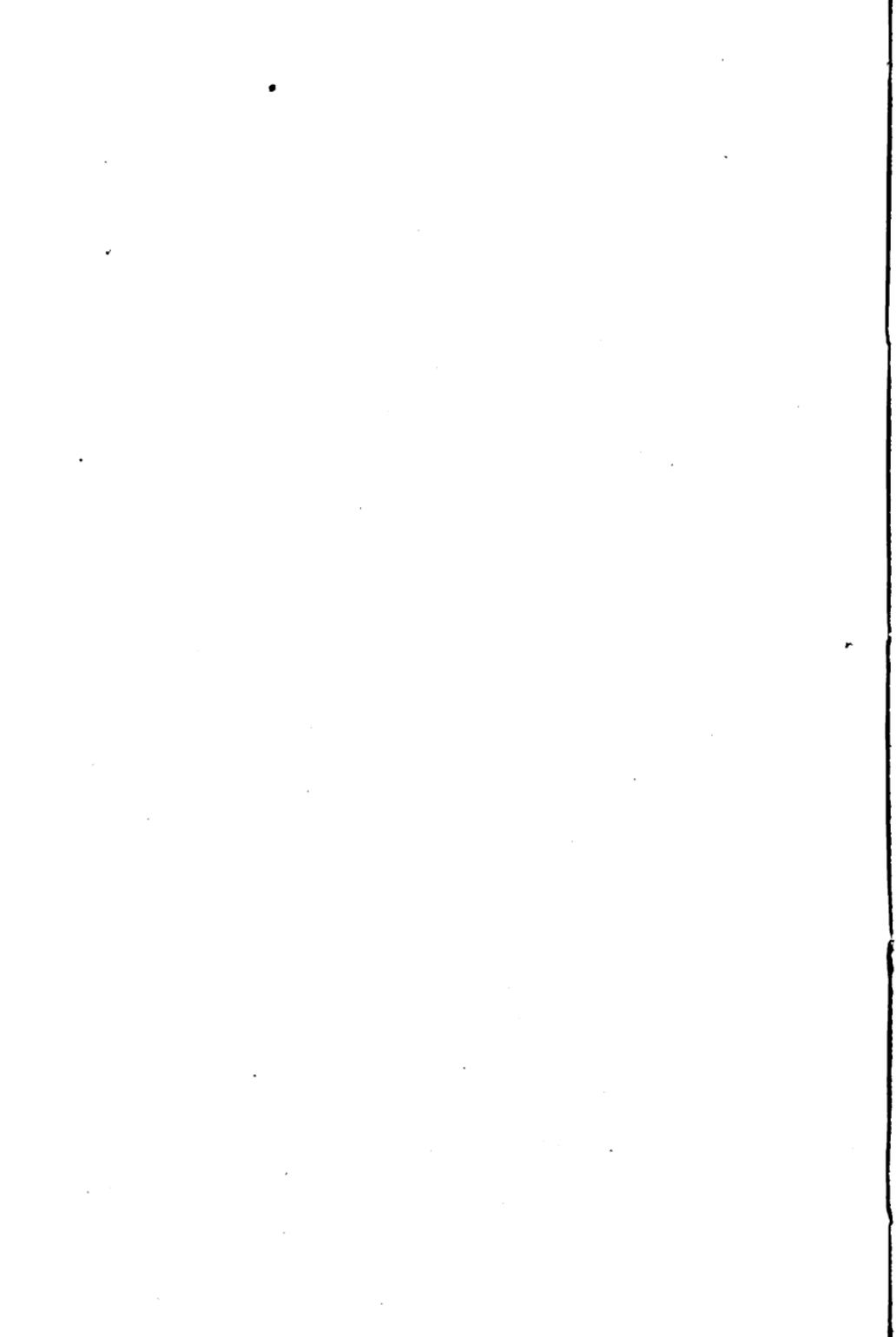
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# THE WATCHES OF THE SACRED PASSION,

WITH

BEFORE AND AFTER.

## CHAPTER I.

### PRELIMINARY.

*Do this*, our Blessed Lord said on the last night of His life on earth, *Do this for a commemoration of Me* (St. Luke xxii.), that is, do this in remembrance of Me. His dying wish, then, is to be remembered by us. His parting request to us is, "Remember Me".

The Blessed Eucharist is instituted, and the Holy Mass established, to be the *sacrifice to the Lord by ordinance, continual and everlasting* (Ezech. xlvi. 14), in order that we may remember our Blessed Lord and not forget Him.

*Forget not the kindness of thy Surety, for He hath given His life for thee*, is a word addressed to us by the Holy Ghost (Ecclus. xxix. 19).

We are touched by the pathetic appeal of holy Joseph to his fellow-prisoner, the king's chief butler, now set free and about to leave the prison: *Only remember me, when it shall be well with thee, and do me this kindness: to put Pharaoh in mind to take me out of this prison: for I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews, and here without any fault was cast into the dungeon* (Genesis xl.). Immeasurably more earnest and more moving is the appeal of our Blessed Lord to us from the tabernacle, *Remember Me, only remember Me*, for without any fault do I lie here forgotten in this prison. *Only remember Me when it shall be well with thee.* Yes, and also when things go ill with thee, *remember Me. Only remember Me.* This is the dying petition of Jesus, meek and humble of Heart. Does He ask too much of us? Is His a request too large, too bold, too hard?

It is in His Sacred Passion that our Blessed Saviour specially desires to be remembered by us. It is as a memorial of His Death and Passion that the Blessed Eucharist is bequeathed to us. So was it revealed to St. Paul: *For as often as you shall eat this Bread and drink this Chalice you shall show the Death of the Lord until He come* (1 Cor. xi.).

Why, then, is our Blessed Lord so desirous that we should remember Him in His Sacred Passion?

First for His own sake. A mother who loves cannot help wishing to live in the thoughts and in the heart of her child: and our Lord has many times impressed upon us that His Sacred Heart goes far beyond all the tenderness of mothers and fathers in the strength of His love for us. Thus when Sion said of old, *The Lord hath forsaken me and the Lord hath forgotten me*, His prompt and most earnest reply was: *Can a woman forget her infant so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in My hands, thy walls are always before My eyes* (Isaias xlix.). So, too, when urging us to confidence in prayer, He presents to us parental love as a picture; and as we gaze upon it He says, *Sursum corda*, bid your heart soar higher, far higher, to understand what My Heart feels; for from it descends *all paternity* (Ephes. iii.), and all motherly devotedness and self-sacrifice. *Which of you*, He says to us, *if he ask his father bread, will he give him a stone? or a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he reach him a scorpion? If you then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from Heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him?* (St. Luke xi.).

A legitimate, therefore, and authorised and safe way of arriving at some faint idea of the charity and love of our Lord's Sacred Heart, is to watch and note all the best and highest instances of strong and devoted love which we meet with in mothers and fathers and true friends here on earth, and when our hearts are consoled and cheered and brightened by meeting with such good things in this our prison, then to bid our souls rise upwards high and higher still, above the beauty of these created things, and hear the Holy Spirit whispering within us those words of Wisdom: *By the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby.* If men

are delighted with their beauty, *let them know how much the Lord of them is more beautiful than they; for the first author of beauty made all those things* (Wisdom xiii.). It is our Lord, our God, Who is Charity (1 St. John iv.) and *the God of peace and love* (2 Cor. xiii. 11), Who casts into the hearts of fathers and mothers and true friends some sparks of that fire which burns everlastingly in His own Heart, and which He so much desires to see enkindled in us (St. Luke xii. 49).

If, then, a good mother, a good father, a true friend, cannot help desiring to be remembered by those whom they love, we may believe most undoubtingly that the Heart of our Lord for His own sake, and because He loves us with an everlasting love, desires much to live in our thoughts and reign in our hearts, and to be set *as a seal on our hearts, as a seal on our hands* (Cant. viii.).

True love must always be so far selfish as to wish for its own sake to have a return of love. This is legitimate selfishness. *I am, I am He*, our Lord says, *that will blot out thy iniquities for My own sake* (Isaias xliii.). For His own sake, because He is the fondest of Fathers and loves His children unspeakably, He forgives us; for *His own sake* He desires to be remembered by us.

St. Paul tells us that our Saviour *having joy set before Him endured the Cross* (Hebrews xii. 2). That is to say—so some commentators understand the words—the Angel who comforted Him during His Agony in the Garden set before His mind the joyful fruits that would be produced by His redemption. Now one surely of these consoling fruits was that men would remember Him.

As He was so soon to rise from the tomb, He did not in reality need the myrrh and aloes which they brought to embalm His Wounds, but He greatly needs and much desires, for *His own sake*, that every one of His Wounds be embalmed and kept fresh in our souls by devout and affectionate remembrance. *Only remember Me* when things go well with thee; and also when things go ill with thee, *remember Me*.

But, alas! it is with us as with the chief butler, who *when things prospered with him forgot his interpreter* who had given him so much comfort. For when things go well with us we too are apt to forget our Surety Who hath given His life for us. When we are prospering, we enjoy the good

things around us and forget the Giver, and Him also Who when all was lost bought back with His life-Blood the good things for us.

*A sinner attributeth to himself the goods of his surety ; and he that is of an unthankful mind will leave him that delivered him (Ecclus. xxix. 21).*

We forget our Surety when things are going well with us, and, what is still more strange, we do not even remember Him when things go ill with us. Trouble ought by rights to draw us near to Christ Jesus. It certainly draws Him near to us, as He tells us in the goth Psalm, *I am with him in tribulation.* Since the Death of our Lord every Christian who suffers is like the good thief, sharing Calvary with Christ Jesus, and is by Him regarded with a special sympathy and fellow-feeling. But the father of lies, well knowing that the time of suffering is a time of special privilege, busily whispers into the ear of the sufferer that God is against him, and is chastising him with a heavy hand, rigorously and without pity. Whereas the truth all the while may be that the suffering sent is no chastisement at all, but a signal grace; and even if a chastisement, one inflicted not in anger but in mercy, and with much compassion: *For not from His heart hath He afflicted or cast off the sons of men (Lament. iii.).*

But there is, besides, another reason why our Saviour is very anxious that we should remember Him in His Passion and His Death, and that is *for our sakes.* For He well knows that while we are remembering Him, and thinking of Him, and looking on Him, grace, and holiness, and salvation come out from Him to us. Beneficent persons sometimes set up a fountain of pure and wholesome water in the centre of a village, that all the poor families may come to draw as often as they wish. Even so Christ crucified wishes to be set up in every Christian hamlet and every Christian home. *Behold God is my Saviour. I will deal confidently and will not fear. He is become my salvation. You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains (Isaias xii.).*

After He had passed, as St. Luke writes, *the whole night in the prayer of God,* and on the following morning selected from among His disciples His twelve Apostles, He went down into the plain, and was surrounded by the company of His disciples, and a great multitude of people from all

Judea and Jerusalem and the sea-coasts both of Tyre and Sidon; *and all the multitude sought to touch Him, for virtue went out from Him and healed all* (St. Luke vi.). We must take notice of the phrase, *Virtue went out from Him*. He used the same word Himself when the woman who had suffered so long from loss of blood came behind Him and touched Him, and was in an instant cured: *Who is it that touched Me? And all denying, Peter and they that were with Him said, Master, the multitudes throng and press Thee, and dost Thou say, Who touched Me? And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched Me, for I know that virtue is gone out from Me* (St. Luke viii.).

*Virtue is gone out from Me.* It is by contagion that some diseases are spread; that is, the poison passes from the body of one contaminated into other bodies. Even so grace comes out from the Body and the Soul of our Blessed Lord into our hearts if we come near enough to Him.

St. John teaches us that in Heaven *we shall be like to Him because we shall see Him as He is* (1 St. John iii.). That is to say, as cold iron here on earth when brought near enough to fire becomes itself fire, so when all barriers are removed between our souls and our Lord, and we are brought near to Him, and, as it were, in contact with Him, we shall at once become bright with His light; burning with the fire that lives in His Heart; wise with His wisdom, and holy with His holiness.

This heavenly work we can begin here on earth. *If I shall touch only His garment* (St. Matt. ix.), the sick woman said, *I shall be healed*. We can no longer touch the hem of His garment, but that is not needed. If it were necessary, the privilege would not be denied us, for He is the same Jesus to us as to those who then were sick or sinful. To us as well as them He says: *Come to Me, all you who labour* (St. Matt. xi.).

But it is not with our hands that we are to touch His garments, nor with our eyes are we to look on His sacred face, but our souls are to draw very near to Him and to look at Him earnestly and perseveringly, and to listen most attentively to His words. And while we do this, virtue comes out from Him to us; and we are unconsciously drinking *the waters from the fountains of our Saviour*.

All this was revealed under a figure in days long gone by, when the people of God murmured in the wilderness of

Edom. For the Lord sent among them *fiery serpents which hit them and killed many of them*. Upon this they came to Moses, and said: *We have sinned, pray that He may take away these serpents from us*. But when Moses prayed, the Lord said to him: *Make a brazen serpent and set it up for a sign, whosoever being struck shall look on it, shall live* (Numbers xxi.). The fiery serpents, we notice, are not taken away; but whoever looks at the brazen serpent is healed; and this is a *sign*. But of what? Is not the serpent the emblem of Satan? If so, how can it be a saving sign? True, it is the emblem of Satan, because Satan is the sinner, the arch-sinner. But when Jesus Christ is crucified, the Lord has *laid on Him the iniquity of us all* (Isaias liii.). He is the representative of the sinful family. To use St. Paul's language, He is for that day become sin, *Him that knew not sin, Him His Father hath made become sin for us* (2 Cor. v.). Therefore the brazen serpent was a type of Jesus crucified, and upon Him we are to look if we would be healed. Hence we read in the Book of Wisdom (xvi. 7), *He that turned to it (the brazen serpent) was not healed by that which he saw, but by Thee, the Saviour of all*.

We might shut ourselves up, as men addicted to philosophy have done, to study virtues, and vices, and try thus to find out a road to righteousness, and motives for conquering our passions; but seeing that it would not be good for a man thus to fight alone, *Come to Me*, our Lord says, *Come to Me*; look at the brazen serpent, look at your Saviour become for you a sinner and bearing all the penalties of sin on Calvary, and while you gaze on Him virtue will come out from Him and heal your wounds and substitute holiness for vice in a way that philosophers never even dreamed of.

For His own sake, then, and for ours also, the Heart of our Blessed Saviour says to us: *Remember Me; forget not the kindness of thy Surety, for He hath given His life for thee*.

It was the fond boast, the dream, if I may so speak, of His Sacred Heart, that *if I be lifted up I shall draw all things to Myself* (St. John xii.); and we remember also the prophecy and promise which long before He uttered by the mouth of Zacharias: *I will pour out upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace, and of prayers, and 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. In that day there shall be a great lamentation in Jerusalem;—and the land shall mourn: families and families apart.—In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem: for the washing of the sinner.—And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of hosts, that I will destroy the names of idols out of the earth, and they shall be remembered no more; and I will take away the false prophets, and the unclean spirit out of the earth (Zach. xii. & xiii.).

Mark well how many wonderful graces are to come in these days when we shall look on Him Whom we have pierced. What wonder that our Catholic forefathers never tired of multiplying images of Jesus crucified! They loved to find Christ on His Cross in the streets and in the squares, that the passers-by might pause a little while to think if there were sorrow like to His sorrow. Outside the city wall also, in country-places, they set up the holy rood on the hill-top that the weary traveller might find refreshment by looking on Christ crucified. On the sea-beaten rock too the crucifix stood, that the shipwrecked might turn their eyes to Jesus on Calvary. And by the graves of the dead the cross was erected, that bereaved mourners might find some rest for their breaking hearts by thinking on Christ Jesus and His forlorn Mother.

What wonder, on the other hand, that as long as Jesus was on earth Satan never ceased to urge upon his followers his blasphemous war-cry: *Cut Him off from the land of the living!* (Jerem. vi.). What wonder that now, as in all ages since the first Christian Pentecost, Lucifer's watch-word ever is: *Let His name be remembered no more!*

What should be our hearty counter-cry? *If I forget Thee, O Calvary, let my right hand be forgotten: let my tongue cleave to my jaws if I do not remember Thee if I make not Calvary the beginning of my joy* (Psalm cxxxvi.).

It will help us much to remember our Lord and His Death, if we form the habit of dividing the day and the night into the *watches of the Passion*, each watch of three hours. This we can do with less effort of the mind than if we attempt to note the clock of the Passion hour by hour. The four watches of the night and the four watches of the day are easily remembered; and the Divine

providence that overruled Satan's plans and the plans of the Jewish Priests, and arranged that the Sacred Passion in every one of its incidents should conduce to the salvation and sanctity of men, decreed, among other details, that it should just fill up and consecrate all the watches of one night and all the watches of the following day.

During the first night-watch, from sunset till nine, our Blessed Saviour is in the Supper-room.

During the second watch, from nine to midnight, in the Garden.

During the third, from midnight to the cock-crow, in the house of Annas and the judgment-hall of Caiphas.

During the fourth watch, from the cock-crow till daybreak, in the hands of the servants.

After daybreak, during the first watch, from six till nine, the Council of the Sanhedrim meet, and after condemning Him lead Him to Pilate, to Herod, and back to the Prætorium, to be degraded below Barabbas.

During the second watch, from the third hour (that is, from nine o'clock) to mid-day, He is scourged, crowned, and presented to the people, condemned, and led to Calvary, and crucified.

From mid-day till the ninth hour, the third watch, He hangs on the Cross.

From the ninth hour to sundown they are burying His Sacred Body. And so all His work is completed.

Before He died, He said: *It is consummated.* All the work My Father gave Me to do is perfectly accomplished. Among the rest, this salutary work also is done—all the watches of the day and the night are now coloured by the holy light that comes from Calvary and Gethsemani.

We often see a large apartment filled with the beautiful and softened light that comes from the lamp with its coloured shade upon it. Even so from Calvary, under its veil of darkness, there is spread over the Christian world a mellow and softened and hallowed light; sad, if you will, and mournful, but so beautiful, so consoling, so full of loveliness and heavenly grace, that it has sufficed to draw away the hearts of men from all that this world can offer. Calvary is become the home of the Christian heart. Every night and every day, from sunset to sunset, is for the faithful Christian become a Good Friday, hallowed by the night-watches and the day-watches of

our Saviour's Passion, and by the everlasting Sacrifice of the Altar, the *clean Oblation* offered from sunrise to sundown and from sunset till dawn, *to show the Death of the Lord.*

May we have the grace to adopt the resolution of the Spouse in the Canticles: *Till the day break, and the shadows retire, I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense* (Cant. iv. 6). That is to say, till my soul escape out of the shadows and darkness of this world, till the bright day of eternity dawn upon me, my resting-place, my shelter, the home of my heart, shall be on the mountain of myrrh, on the hill of frankincense; there to embalm with the myrrh of a devout remembrance the wounds of my Lord crucified, and there with the frankincense of prayer to look on Him Whom I have pierced.

## II.

### ST. IGNATIUS' METHOD OF CONTEMPLATING THE PASSION OF OUR LORD.

When you, devout reader, and many other persons meet together in a lecture-hall, or at a concert, or for an evening entertainment, there are three things, among many others, which you often do.

I. First, *you watch with your eyes* some person who enters, or comes near you. You study his face, his dress, his gait, his manner; and, through his outward appearance, make guesses and conjectures as to his age, his position in life, his inward dispositions, his character, his mental qualities, or his present frame of mind; and after some time you come to some conclusion: "This man, I think, is amiable, or he is stern. He is mild, or he seems haughty and harsh."

If you know the person already, then your conclusions or judgments are merely about his present state of mind: "He seems to be in trouble to-day; or he is in a good humour; I think he must be unwell; or he seems in much better spirits than usual".

Or again, your thoughts may take a turn of this kind: "How pleasing it is to find a man of such high position so simply dressed; or one of such eminent abilities so

unpretending ; or one whom I know to have such sorrows of his own so thoughtful of others ”.

So that sometimes you are engrossed with a study of the outer man ; sometimes attending more to his inward qualities.

After this study of the person to whom your attention has been drawn, you then often *turn upon yourself, or reflect upon yourself*, and ask yourself some question of this kind : “ What shall I do ? Shall I make acquaintance with him, or not ? ” Or, if I know him already, “ Shall I go to speak to him, or keep out of his way ? There is something that I want to get from him ; does this seem to be the right moment ? Is he in a good humour ? ” and so on.

II. After a while this person whom you have been studying goes away out of your sight. Your occupation is gone. What, then, are you now doing ? “ Are you studying some one else with your eyes ? ” “ No, I am not. ” “ What, then, are you doing ? ” “ *I am listening with my ears*. Two or three friends are around me, and *I am listening*, and I have just heard one say that there was a fire yesterday in the East End, in the very street where my uncle possesses many houses. ”

“ Well, what then ? ” “ Why, when you came up I was thinking about myself, that is, *turning upon myself*, or reflecting upon myself, and asking : What I ought to do ? I am my uncle’s only nephew, and a great favourite with him. This fire may concern me more than a little. I am thinking whether I ought to go down to the East End to see after things ; to find out whether he has suffered, and whether I ought to wire to him, and the rest. ”

At another time when you are listening, what impresses you may be that the speaker is so high-minded ; that his principles are so good, his advice so sound ; or that he sees deeper into the subject than others do ; or that he weighs his words carefully ; and you afterwards find yourself considering what sort of things he praised and valued, and what were the things that he disliked and condemned.

Or, on the other hand, it may be that you perceive a tone of exaggeration, a spirit of harsh criticism, which scares you, or you hear some oracles uttered which you mistrust.

After listening in this way, *you turn on yourself* to see whether you shall avoid this speaker, or try to have him as a friend.

III. Half an hour later, when this point has all been settled, some one comes and asks: "What are you doing now? Are you studying any particular person with your eyes, as you were an hour ago?" "No, I am not." "Are you listening to any news?" "No, there is no one speaking to me." "What, then, are you doing?" "I am looking at what is going on in that corner. There is movement there. There is a crowd gathering, and some disturbance there. I think I saw some one fall down; and I heard a cry, and I then saw some one run out of the room, holding a cloth which seemed to be stained with blood."

"Well, what then?" "Why, I was just thinking about myself (*turning back on myself*): considering what I ought to do. Can I be of any use? Shall I go and see whether they want some brandy, or some bandages? or whether a doctor should be sent for?"

Here, then, are three ways in which we occupy our minds on these occasions when we are in the presence of other persons.

1. *We look with our eyes and study some particular person, some one individual*, and after gazing and studying for a time, we turn back or reflect on ourselves, and think what we ought to do.

2. *We listen with our ears*; and if we hear something that strikes us, we *turn, or reflect, on ourselves*, and consider what we ought to do.

3. *With our eyes* again, we watch, not now *some one person quiescent*, but some movement, some action; as, for instance, one striking another, a policeman leading away a prisoner; or some one stealing from another; or some persons buying or selling; and thus after watching actions we *turn again or reflect on ourselves*, and think, "What shall I do?"

We may, doubtless, safely say that all persons are very frequently occupied in one or other of these three ways. No great ability is required for any of these exercises. The work of studying an individual with our eyes, and then making up our minds whether we shall go up to him or not, requires no special cleverness. We are all capable of this effort.

So, too, we have all ability enough to listen to what a neighbour says, and then reflect and consider, "What shall I do?"

Lastly, it is no less easy to watch some movement, some action, an assault, a theft, some bargaining, and then reflect as to what course we shall take.

Well, our Lord for our sakes chooses easy methods. He promised by Isaias (c. xxxv.) that in His Church the path to truth should be so plain that a fool could find it. And in the cave at Manresa it was shown to St. Ignatius that the simple method here described is the best for contemplating the Life and Death of our Lord. It is supposed that our Blessed Lady was his teacher there, and made known to him that she herself while on earth followed this method of gaining more and more knowledge of her Son, and more and more sanctity for herself. She was nourishing her own holiness by studying carefully every Divine gift and grace poured out on His Sacred Humanity: *The spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of godliness* (Isaias xi.).

She sometimes in silence *with her eyes* watched His features, His looks, His gestures, and through His external deportment tried to read the beauty and loveliness and holiness of His Soul within, and of His Divinity. Or again, she was contrasting the majesty of the hidden God with His outward littleness; His infinite wisdom with the fool's garment put upon Him by men; His boundless *charity and goodness* with the little love shown to Him. *Then she turned back, or reflected on herself*, and considered what she could imitate, how profoundly she ought to adore, how intensely she ought to love Him.

At other times, *she listened most attentively to His words*, and laid them up in her memory, and, as we read, compared word with word in her heart, and when she had industriously studied all their hidden sense and meaning and also noted well the tones of His voice, the earnestness, calmness, and gentleness with which He spoke, then she again turned or reflected on herself, and thought what fruit these Divine seeds ought to bring forth in her soul.

Lastly, with her eyes she watched *His movements, His actions*, how He walked, how He did His carpenter's work, how He ate His food; and, later on, how men struck Him and bound Him with cords, and crucified Him, and what was the action of His Sacred Heart towards them. After this, turning or reflecting on herself,

she considered what increase of sanctity and love she could gather from this spectacle.

This is the simple method of *contemplation*<sup>1</sup> which St. Ignatius proposes to us.

But first he teaches us what to do by way of

#### PREPARATION FOR OUR CONTEMPLATION.

*Overnight.*—I. As a preparation for our next morning's contemplation he directs us to select overnight from the Gospel, or some suitable book, the scene that we wish to contemplate, fixing well in our minds that part of the Gospel narrative which seems to us to contain good food for our souls, and *especially noticing the words of our Lord or our Lady, or any other words* which we select as the heavenly manna out of which we shall try next morning to draw refreshing nourishment. We must, I say, carefully note the words; because it is not sufficient to know in a loose way the sense of what our Lord says; for there is a grace and virtue and food for our hearts in the very words that come from His mouth. *Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God* (St. Matt. iv.).

*Overnight.*—II. In the next place, as St. Ignatius' method of contemplating is, we may say, realistic, we must also overnight try, as well as we can, to picture to ourselves the place where the scene selected for tomorrow's contemplation was enacted. St. Ignatius would have our representation to be as true and real as may be. He directs us to think whether the roads be level or hilly, narrow or broad, etc. He went himself to the Holy Land to note carefully all the different places where our Blessed Saviour worked or suffered. He marked carefully the height, the length, and breadth of the cave or grotto of the Nativity. He nearly lost his life in an attempt to ascertain the direction of our Saviour's footprints on Mount Olivet. Any such representations as the Passion Play, or a good panorama of Jerusalem—if correct and faithful and reverent—would be a help to contemplation

<sup>1</sup> *Contemplation*, as distinguished from *meditation*, has to do, according to St. Ignatius, with scenes of our Lord's Life. Some commentators on his *Spiritual Exercises* have elaborated much detail as a development of his simple methods. "*Omnis spiritus laudet Dominum*" (Psalm cl.).

according to the method of St. Ignatius. He knew that virtue comes out from our Lord to us, and that as we cannot now see Him with our bodily eyes, we ought to employ the eyes of our imagination, which have often done us so much harm, to help us to gain more knowledge and more love of our Divine Master.

We shall value this method of contemplation more highly if we call to mind how prone we all are to imitation. The Prophet Isaias tells us that we all go astray *like sheep* (Isaias liii.); that is, by following a leader. Children imitate their parents, servants their master and mistress.

If, then, the Holy Family were now living near us, and a mother took her children to visit our Lady just when they are in the full glow of youth, they might possibly begin to give her in a loud voice and with much excitement the news of the day, the account of the last race or the late great wedding. She would listen kindly, and answer gently; but before long the loud voice of the young visitors would certainly begin to be toned down to hers. At the end of the visit, they would probably say to their mother one of two things—either, (1) “Do not bring us here any more, it is so dull”; or (2), “Do please bring us very soon again to see this Holy Mother; she is so kind and so gracious”. If they come often, gradually they will unconsciously imitate her tone of voice, her gentle manner, perhaps her simplicity of dress. They are beginning to *know*, to *love*, and to *imitate*.

As we cannot now find the Holy Family on earth, we go back *in spirit* to the scenes of our Saviour's Life and Death, and try, as far as we can, to gain the fruits that would have come through our eyes and ears were they present to our senses.

St. Ignatius, then, considers it of much importance that we bring these sacred scenes before us in an easy and natural way; and therefore, because he knew that too constrained a position of body might hinder our endeavours to gaze familiarly on the pictures of our Lord's Life and Death, he tells us that we must not think it obligatory always to kneel, but can choose that position in which we find it most easy to represent to ourselves the sacred scene.

As few have travelled to the Holy Land as he did, we can only help ourselves with books and pictures, and fashion

for ourselves the Garden, or the Supper-room, or the other sacred places, as best we may.<sup>1</sup>

*Overnight.*—III. After we retire to rest, St. Ignatius would have us recall before we fall asleep, *for the space of an Ave Maria*, the scene we are to contemplate in the morning, in the hope that it may be the last image on our minds.

*Morning.*—I. When we wake in the morning, he bids us turn at once to the scene selected for our contemplation before other distracting thoughts gain an entrance; and while washing and dressing, we are to try, by ejaculations or by reciting favourite vocal prayers, or in any other way that suits us, to keep congenial thoughts in our minds and shut out thoughts and images that would distract. We know by sad experience how much an annoying letter or the remembrance of some imagined insult might hinder a contemplation.

*Morning.*—II. *At the time of contemplation.*—When the hour of our contemplation is come, he would have us, if we are in private in our rooms, before we kneel down or take our position, do something like what visitors occasionally do before they enter into a room filled with distinguished company; they pause a while to see if their dress is all in good order. Even so, the Saint directs us to halt at a pace or two from the place in our room where we intend to contemplate, and there standing, make an act of faith in God's presence, and, if it helps us, make some outward act of reverence, such as a genuflection or bowing of the head. This is to secure a good beginning, which, as the proverb says, is half the work.

*Morning.*—III. *At the time of contemplation.*—In the next place, the Saint directs us to take that position which we judge most suitable to our work; kneeling, standing, sitting, prostrate on our face, as our Lord prayed in the Garden, or lying on the ground on our backs—in fact, choosing honestly and sincerely that position in which we think we can best gain *id quod volo*—"the fruit I desire";

<sup>1</sup>Overnight, then, we do not begin to make our contemplation, but merely fix clearly the subject, the fruit, and the composition of place; we are not to begin to eat our dinner, but only to prepare the dishes carefully. Though at the same time it is true that if, during the day, we read about our Lord's Life, and are interested in it, and become full of the subject, it will be more easy next morning to fix our minds on the scene selected for contemplation.

that is to say, that position in which I can best use my natural powers and win the graces I wish for.<sup>1</sup>

Evidently, we must be honest and sincere; for if we choose a position simply because it is more comfortable, the result might be merely drowsiness, not contemplation. Note also, that if we choose an unusual position to which we are not accustomed, it may prove not helpful, but a hindrance.

*Morning.*—IV. *At the time of contemplation.*—Our position chosen, we are to make the following Preparatory Prayer, which never varies: *Grant me grace, O God my Lord, that all my intentions and (bodily) actions and (mental) operations may be directed purely to the service and praise of Thy Divine Majesty.* The Saint knew that we might come to contemplate with any one of many different intentions—possibly, for the pleasure of a mental study, or to obtain some sensible consolation; or, if skilled in painting, because we wish afterwards to paint the scene; or because we are going to preach about it; or because we are properly desirous of gaining some spiritual good for ourselves. These motives might be good, but he wishes to teach us *a more excellent way.* If we contemplate purely *in order to serve and please the Divine Majesty,* our work is changed from copper or silver into good gold.

By our *intentions,* he means the aims and desires of our hearts. By *operations,* the work of our mental faculties, the memory, understanding, will, affections, and imagination. By *actions,* our bodily movements, change of position, etc.

*Morning.*—V. *During the contemplation.*—*The Preludes.*—After this Preparatory Prayer, which, as has been said, does not vary, he recommends, as helps to the coming contemplation, *three Preludes,* which vary with the matter of our contemplation.

*First Prelude.*—*The subject.*—Shortly, for a minute or thereabouts, we recall *the subject* prepared last night. In a picture-gallery, if we meet with a striking picture never seen before, we at once ask, What is the subject? So in the beginning of the contemplation, if we wish to proceed in an orderly way, we naturally for a moment set before our minds the story and the points selected the night before.

<sup>1</sup> St. Ignatius does not mention *walking* as one of the suitable positions for contemplation; because, except for privileged saints who can pray *always* and in all circumstances, to contemplate while walking is extremely difficult.

*Second Prelude.*—*The composition of place.*—We recall for a moment the picture or place arranged the night before—the room or garden which we fixed upon.

*Third Prelude.*—*The petition for the fruit desired.*—Before beginning the contemplation, we are to pray earnestly, for a short while, for the special grace we wish to draw from this present contemplation. This petition varies with the subject. In ordinary contemplations on the Life of our Lord, my petition, according to St. Ignatius, must be for “an inward knowledge of our Lord made Man for me, in order that I may love Him more, and more closely follow Him”.<sup>1</sup> St. Ignatius means an intimate knowledge of our Blessed Saviour that brings with it a great relish for all His thoughts and words and works.

Some one has expressed this petition in rhyme :

To know Him more clearly,  
To love Him more dearly,  
To follow Him nearly.

When we are contemplating the Passion of our Lord, St. Ignatius directs us to pray in the third prelude for *sorrow, feeling, confusion*, that my Lord is going to suffer, or is suffering, for me ; sorrow with Christ sorrowful ; crushing prostration with Christ crushed and prostrate ; tears and internal pain on account of the pain my Saviour is suffering for me.

It would be a mistake to seek in the Passion only for tender emotions. This would not be true *compassion*. Compassion means suffering with Christ, sharing what He is enduring. “Passion of Christ, strengthen me.” The valiant woman, we read, puts out *her hand to strong things* (Prov. xxxi.). So must we desire strong things : strong hope against difficulties, and strong love willing to suffer for our Lord, not merely passing nervous emotions.

<sup>1</sup> *To know Him, to love Him, to follow Him.* Observe the order. It would be hard to imitate our Lord if we did not love Him, and His yoke would then not be sweet nor His burden light, but very heavy and oppressive. Moreover, we cannot love our Lord unless we know Him. The poor people who followed Him and saw His character loved Him so well that they went without food in order to stay with Him. It is very important to acquire by correct and careful contemplation true ideas concerning our Blessed Saviour. For the same purpose it is highly useful to read Lives of our Lord that have been prepared with much care and study and prayer, such as the Life by Ludolf and that by Father Coleridge, and others.

*The Contemplation.*—After the three preludes we now come to the contemplation, the method of which has been already explained :

1. *Look at the persons.* We look at our Lord or His Mother; consider their outward demeanour, and try to read their inward thoughts; and *then reflect on ourselves*, and see if we can gain any fruit.

2. *Listen to the words* spoken. We weigh them well, and reflect on ourselves and see what spiritual fruit we can gain from them.

3. *Watch the actions.* We watch what is done to our Lord or by Him, and reflect on ourselves to see what we must do, etc.

IV. These three *topics or points: Persons, words, actions*, are like three dishes set before us at a meal. We are not obliged to partake of all. We can select any one, and if there we find the nourishment we want, we need not go further.

Neither is it essential that we take these three points in the order in which they here stand, we may sometimes find it more convenient to begin with *words* or *actions*.

But observe well, that it is an essential part of St. Ignatius' method of contemplation to look carefully at the scene selected, and to listen to the words spoken, before we begin to reflect upon ourselves. If instead of looking at our Saviour and listening to Him, we begin at once to look at our miserable selves and brood over our wretchedness, virtue cannot come out from Him to us. Some books which profess to follow the plan of St. Ignatius, do not sufficiently present the scenes, but rather propose a meditation on humility or poverty or some other abstract virtue.

*N.B. Additional points when contemplating the Sacred Passion.*—In order to help us to stay longer on the Sacred Passion and draw more fruit from it, St. Ignatius adds *three other points or topics*, or, to keep to the comparison which has been already used, he sets three other dishes before our souls, to be used if we consider them more suitable.

*A. Fourth Point.*—Sometimes we may spend our time most profitably in trying to understand and realise *how much and in how many different ways our Blessed Saviour is suffering*; e.g., in His head, His eyes, His mouth, etc. ;

in His honour, in the feelings of His Heart; from His enemies; from weak friends; from strangers; from His own; from the devil, etc., and then try with great earnestness to rouse ourselves to grief and sorrow, and to lament with Him.

*B. Fifth Point.*—Or we may spend the time in thinking *how voluntary our Lord's sufferings are; how His Divinity is hidden in the background* in order that He may suffer; how He could instantly set Himself free and destroy all His enemies, and will not; *but allows His Sacred Soul and Body to suffer so cruelly.* This thought brings out the courage and strength of our Lord's love. For many holy persons when enduring pain, though they are resigned, yet if they can by any lawful remedy get relief, gladly do so. Our Blessed Saviour goes much beyond this. He chooses and prefers to suffer, when He could at once deliver Himself.

*C. Sixth Point.*—Lastly, we may fix our minds and hearts on this great and overwhelming truth, *My Lord is suffering all this for me and for my sins. What ought I to do and suffer for Him?*

*He loved me and delivered Himself up for me* (Galat. ii.). A spiritual writer has said that the day on which I begin to believe firmly and realise that our Lord loved me personally, and suffered and died for me, is a very blessed day in our Calendar, a new birthday. And yet it ought not to be so difficult to believe and realise this truth, for the Blessed Eucharist brings home to us how our Blessed Saviour gives Himself and all His Life and Death to each of us:

Sumit unus, sumunt mille,  
Quantum isti, tantum ille.

A thousand do not receive more than one.

As He is in the Blessed Eucharist whole and entire for each of us, so in His Sacred Passion, it is all for me. *He loved me, and delivered Himself up for me* (Galat. ii.).

*For me*—to atone for my sins, to move His Father to forgive my sins.

*For me*—to rescue me from all that would come upon me in eternity if I were to give myself up to be the slave of Satan.

*For me*—to make it clear to me what an evil sin is, and to move me to do penance for past sins, and strive earnestly to avoid future sin.

*For me*—to give *me* great hope and courage; seeing that He has redeemed *me* abundantly, and that all His Sacred Passion is added to *my* poor prayers and weak desires.

*For me*—to draw *me* to thanksgiving and to love for Him and His Sacred Heart and His Blessed Mother.

*For me*—to open my eyes as to the worth of a soul, to rouse within me a zeal to help poor sinners.

*N.B. Points.*—Observe here that St. Ignatius gives the name of *Points* to these topics—*persons, words, actions, and the three other topics* just mentioned above.<sup>1</sup>

Whatever scene, therefore, of the Passion we may be studying, these *six points*, or, as they have been already called, these *six dishes* are presented to us. We may confine ourselves to one of them, or use more, as we find ourselves disposed.

In many books of meditation which profess to follow the method of St. Ignatius, the word *point* is used in a different sense, namely, to signify one of the parts into which the story of the scene is subdivided. For instance, in proposing the contemplation on the Nativity, they call the journey the *first point*; the *second point*, what passed in the stable; the *third point*, the apparition of angels to the shepherds.

This use of the word in two senses may produce some confusion.<sup>2</sup> As therefore in the Way of the Cross, we call each division of the story a *station* or *halting-place*, this word has been borrowed and used all through the following chapters, to point out to the reader any sentence or incident at which they might halt to contemplate and gain some spiritual fruit. So that the story will be divided into *scenes*; and the scenes subdivided into stations for the use of those who wish to contemplate.

*Colloquy 1.*—This remains to be said with regard to contemplation, that when we are, in ordinary social life, contemplating, in the familiar way already described, at an entertainment or any other assembly of our neighbours, *studying some person, listening to his words, or watching some action*, we often break silence ourselves, and address some

<sup>1</sup> A painter teaching his pupils might direct them to notice in all paintings—no matter what the subject—the *drawing*, the *shading* and the *colouring*. So St. Ignatius teaches us to notice in all the scenes of our Saviour's Life the *persons, words, actions*.

<sup>2</sup> Some spiritual masters obviate this difficulty by calling St. Ignatius' topics *points of method*; and the historical scenes *points of matter*.

words to those near us. So we must also do in our contemplations of our Lord's Life and bitter Death. We must speak from our hearts either to Him or to our Blessed Lady, or to our Father in Heaven; at times also to some of the saints whose help we desire.

*Colloquy 2.*—In these colloquies we may speak, St. Ignatius says, sometimes as a friend to a friend, sometimes as a servant to a master—*sometimes reasoning* with our Lord as to the difficulties we find in our weakness; *sometimes begging for grace*, the grace that we see to be most necessary; grace to overcome some bad habit and acquire this virtue or that; grace to know how to dispose of ourselves and set our lives in order: *sometimes confessing our sins* and blaming ourselves; *sometimes asking counsel*.

The colloquy naturally varies according as we find ourselves in consolation, or in desolation and tempted; or again, according as the scene we are studying suggests joy or sorrow.

*Colloquy 3.*—We may make colloquies whenever so inclined during the contemplation, but we ought never to omit a colloquy, at least at the end.

*Colloquy 4.*—We can either make *one* colloquy to our Lady or to our Lord, or to God our Father; or, if we desire any grace very earnestly, we may use a *triple colloquy*, addressing first our Lady, and ending with an *Ave Maria*; then our Lord, and ending with the *Anima Christi*; lastly the Eternal Father, ending with the *Pater noster*. So that the contemplation ordinarily closes with the *Pater noster*.

*Colloquy 5.*—St. Ignatius adds this most useful advice with regard to colloquies, that whenever we find ourselves reluctant to make some sacrifice, we should ask of God earnestly not to yield to our reluctance, but in His mercy to require the sacrifice from us. We are not telling a lie by making such a prayer; we are only saying to God, "With my lower nature I dislike exceedingly this sacrifice, but still I have, through my faith, sense enough to see that what Thou wishest, O my God, is better than what I wish, and therefore, if it is Thy will that I make the offering, I say with our Lord in the Garden: *My Father, not as I will, but as Thou wiltest*". And we ought to persevere in this cry till we can mean it thoroughly; for it is a terrible calamity if God in His displeasure allows our will to prevail against His.

*After the Contemplation, Reflection.*—St. Ignatius prescribes after the contemplation a little time for *Reflection* (during retreat, fifteen minutes; out of retreat, if we can get even five minutes, it will be useful).

*Reflection 1.*—is simply turning back to see whether we have done our work well or ill. A tailor sewing looks back occasionally to see if the stitches are all rightly made. A painter turns back to see if the drawing and colouring is all well done. A careful man, after writing an important letter, turns back, and reads it over again to see if the wording and spelling and punctuation are all correct.

Even so it is well worth our while to turn back at the end of a contemplation to see whether we have done our work well, if we have followed the method carefully, the preparation overnight and in the morning, the *Preparatory Prayer* and *Preludes*; if we have contemplated rightly the *persons, words, actions*; if we have availed ourselves in contemplating the Sacred Passion of the other three points; (4) *how much He is suffering*; (5) *how entirely voluntary His suffering is*; (6) *how this is all for me*.

We must also examine whether we have during the contemplation turned back upon ourselves, and tried to gain some fruit for our souls; whether we roused our will to good resolutions; and whether we have made fervent colloquies.

*Reflection 2.*—If we find that by God's blessing we have done all carefully and gained fruit, we must *take care to give God thanks*, and resolve to follow the same method faithfully the next time.

If we find that we have committed faults, or made mistakes, and not been successful, *we must be sorry*, and beg grace to do better.

*Reflection 3.*—St. Francis Xavier used to advise those whom he trained to keep a little diary of their contemplations, noting briefly some thought that made impression.

This practice has these advantages:

1. By writing down a thought in this way, we impress it on our memory, and it may remain with us during the day, serving much the same purpose as a little lavender which we carry with us out of a garden. The morning contemplation or meditation often gives a colour to the rest of the day. It puts new life into Holy Mass and Holy Communion; and the thought that we have laid

up may help very much to recollection during the day, and prove a good antidote against temptation. The Psalmist says: *Thy words I have hidden in my heart, that I may not sin* (Psalm cxviii.).

2. In after time, if the eye chances to rest on the entries in such a diary, a valuable thought that has been quite forgotten is brought back to the mind; and thoughts that have once impressed us in time past may more easily affect us now than a new thought.

3. Moreover, if in looking back we find that our contemplations used heretofore to succeed better than they are doing now, the discovery may act as a salutary stimulant.

4. The very fact of examining each day whether we have gained some fruit, and taking a note of it, helps to keep us alive to the necessity of getting some profit every day out of our contemplation.

## PART I.

BEFORE.

## CHAPTER II.

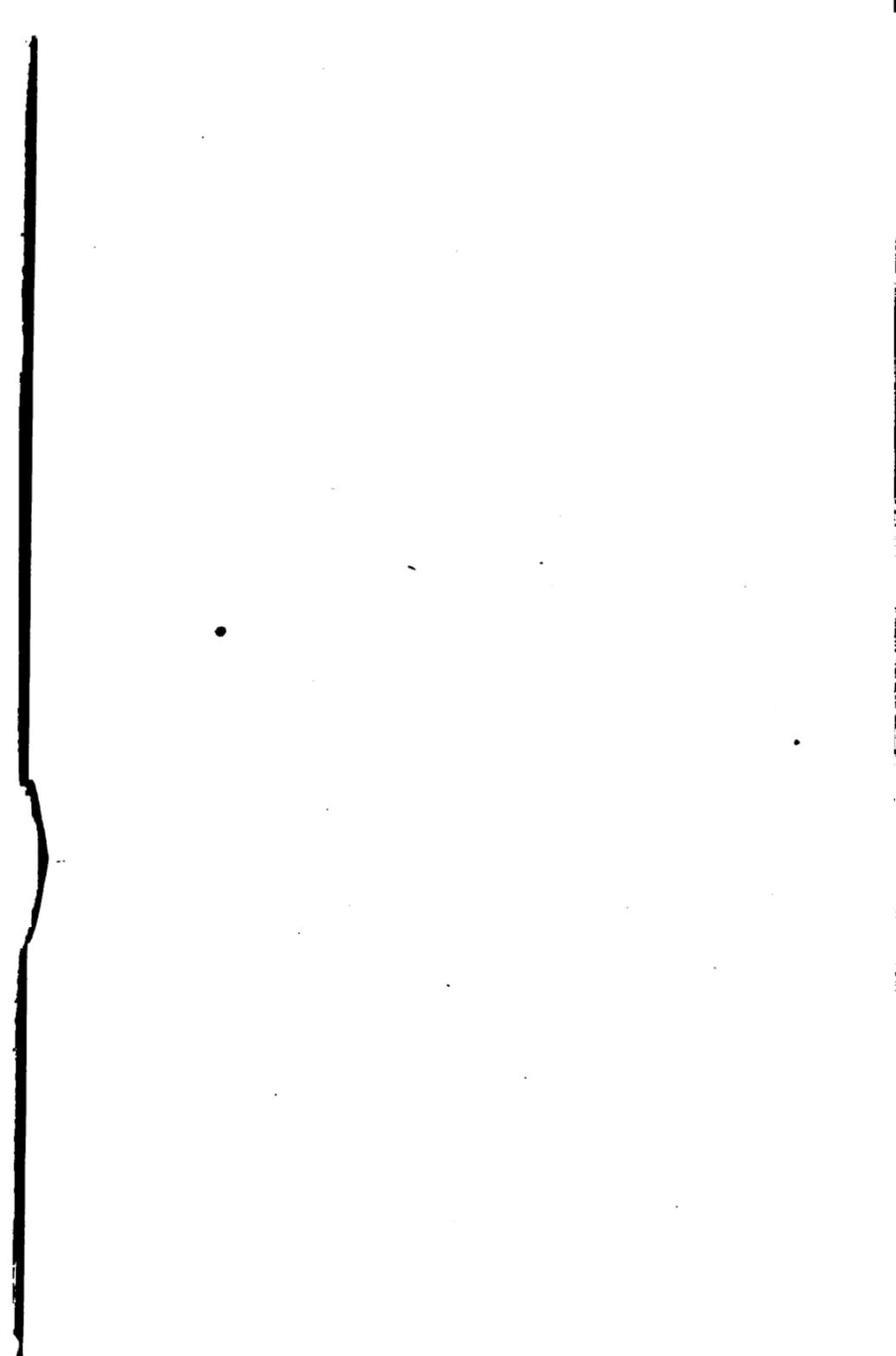
*THE EVENING OF OUR LORD'S LIFE ON EARTH.*

From Mid-Lent to Passion-Week.

## THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

THE raising of Lazarus was, to use a familiar phrase, "the beginning of the end" of our Blessed Lord's career on earth, and therefore we may fitly commence our study of the close of our Saviour's life from that wonderful miracle. If we adopt the commonly received tradition that the Crucifixion took place on Friday, the 25th of March, then we may either follow the opinion more generally held, that Lazarus was raised to life about three weeks earlier, that is, in the week before our Mid-Lent Sunday; or we may prefer a theory advanced by some modern English scholars, that this great miracle was wrought two months earlier, that is, in the week before our Septuagesima Sunday. We shall adhere in these pages to the more wide-spread tradition, because such traditions may fairly claim to be left in possession till really strong arguments are brought against them; and there do not seem to be any valid arguments against either the date assigned for the Crucifixion, or the date more commonly accepted for the raising of Lazarus—that is, two or three days before our Mid-Lent Sunday.

1. Against the day assigned to the Crucifixion, March the 25th, the strongest argument that is commonly alleged is, that according to the Law (Levit. xxiii. 10—15, and Deut. xvi. 9), *on the morrow after the (Paschal) Sabbath*, the first-fruits of the harvest were to be offered in the Temple. In Deuteronomy the time is specified as the day *wherein thou didst put the sickle to the corn*. Now, so certain critics argue, the earliest crop, which was the barley, was never ready for the sickle in Judea before the middle of April. Therefore, they conclude, the Paschal Sabbath could not be before the middle of April.





A very eminent Biblical scholar of the present day answers this difficulty by observing that when Moses wrote Leviticus and Deuteronomy, he was not in Jerusalem, or in the hill country of Judea, where the climate is colder and the harvest later; but on his way from Egypt, in warmer climates where the crops ripened early; and he moreover adds that if later the Priests in Jerusalem were bound to the letter of this Law, they would do as we do when we want palms for Palm Sunday. We get them from more favoured climes: so could the Jewish Priests have sheaves ready from warmer lands or from the sunny plains round Jericho or Joppe, in order to fulfil the precept of the Law.

2. Those who place the raising of Lazarus before Septuagesima do so because they wish to prove that after this miracle our Saviour made a last solemn progress through Samaria and Galilee, and then returned to suffer in Jerusalem. They consider that St. Luke is the only Evangelist who tells the story of this last solemn progress, and that the parables of the Prodigal Son, and the Rich Man, and the Healing of the Lepers, and other incidents which he alone records, belong to this last journey. What gives some colour to this theory is, that on the Good Friday the Jewish Rulers advanced this charge, among others, against Jesus: *He stirreth up the people, beginning from Galilee to this place* (St. Luke xxiii.). This accusation, the holders of this theory maintain, would have much more foundation and more weight if our Saviour had just been making His public progress through Galilee.

Whatever may be said in favour of this opinion, there is one argument against it to which we find no satisfactory answer. In St. Luke ix. we read that our Lord *steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem*, and sent messengers into a city of the Samaritans to prepare for Him, but the Samaritans would not receive Him, *because His face was of one going to Jerusalem*.

The words seem to express very clearly that our Saviour was at the time travelling from Galilee southward to Jerusalem. Whereas they who believe in this last solemn progress are obliged to assume that He was then really travelling northward with His back to Jerusalem; but, they add, it was publicly known that He intended to come back to Jerusalem, and therefore the Evangelist writes that *His face was of one going to Jerusalem*. It seems more easy to adhere to the common opinion than to receive this strained interpretation.

We may therefore suppose that we are commencing our study of our Lord's last days on earth about three weeks before the first Good Friday.

All are, I think, agreed that the raising of Lazarus was "the beginning of the end"; as it was immediately after this great miracle that the Priests and Ancients adopted the ruling of Caiphias, that *one Man should die for the people* (St. John xi.), and began in good earnest to compass His Death.

## SCENE I.

## LAZARUS SICK AT BETHANY.

*There was a certain man sick named Lazarus, of Bethania, of the town of Mary and of Martha her sister (St. John xi. 1).*

1. There were two towns called Bethany, one beyond the Jordan, the other, the home of Lazarus, situated about two miles, by the high road, from Jerusalem, on the eastern slope of Mount Olivet. This hill, therefore, which lies along the eastern side of Jerusalem, hides Bethany from the Holy City. The high road goes round the southern base of the hill. A shorter, but exceedingly rough bridle path leads from Gethsemani over the Mount of Olives to Bethania. By this path a good walker could go in about three quarters of an hour from the eastern gate of Jerusalem, commonly known as St. Stephen's gate, to the home of Lazarus. Our Blessed Saviour sometimes went by the high road, sometimes over the Mount of Olives.

STATION I.—*In the Sick-room at Bethany.*

*There was a certain man sick named Lazarus (v. 1).*

A. *It is good for us to be here, in this sick chamber. It is better to go to (this) house of mourning than to the house of feasting: for in this (house) we are put in mind of the end of all, and the living thinketh what is to come (Eccles. vii.). "O vos omnes"—O all you who go by the way, stay a little while in this sick-room, to see with your eyes, and to listen with your ears.*

*Look upon Lazarus, languens—weak and languid and weary and pale, with the signs of coming death upon him—but very patient. Listen: you hear no complaint from him. Watch his sisters Mary and Martha, how they nurse him most carefully, and from time to time turn away to hide from him their tears. St. Augustine writes: "He sick; they sorrowful; all beloved". St. Paul forewarns us that in the latter days there will be men without affection, without kindness (2 Timothy iii.). There is no want of affection or kindness in this blessed home.*

Listen to the words which Mary and Martha so often whisper to each other—"Would that He were here!" "Would that the Master were here!" "If the Master were here our brother would not die." Mark how all the while Jesus is with them unseen, hearing every sigh, giving heed to every wish of their hearts, pitying every tear. *I am with him in tribulation, I will deliver him, and will glorify him* (Psalm xc.).

B. How great a blessing it is to have round our death-bed true friends, full of the spirit of Christian faith and charity, who take better care of our poor souls than of our bodies! Alas! they who forget God end by forgetting themselves also. They make no provision for the evil day. In life they choose to have a worldly and an un-blessed marriage, and now at death they are surrounded by nurses, by physicians, and by relatives who cannot possibly understand the spiritual requirements of a dying Catholic. There is not one to pity their souls in the hour of extreme need, nor one to say when all is over, O God, may eternal light shine upon him!

*Lazarus of Bethania, of the town of Mary and of Martha her sister* (St. John xi. 1). It is worth notice that where we have in our version the same word twice, *of Bethania, of the town of Mary and Martha*, the Greek text uses two different words, ἀπό and ἐκ. And though some eminent Greek scholars attach no importance to this change in the words, yet there are circumstances which, if brought together, seem to make it probable that our version would be more correct if it also had two different words, and ran thus: "*Lazarus of Bethania, from the town of Mary and Martha*". The sense would then be: Lazarus, now of Bethania, but originally from the town of Mary and of Martha.

If this be the correct reading, where was the town of Mary and of Martha?

We find a clue to the answer in St. Luke's words, *Mary who is called Magdalen* (St. Luke viii.). Why was she called Magdalen? A very natural answer presents itself. Because she was a native of Magdala, a fishing village in Galilee, on the north-west side of the Lake of Genesareth, below Capharnaum and Bethsaida,

If these surmises be correct, then Lazarus was originally a Galilean from Magdala, but subsequently settled in Bethania; or probably had a home in both places. There are many words in the Gospel narrative which fit in well with this supposition.

1. For in the first place Mary Magdalen was not poor. She was one of those who with *Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, and many others, ministered unto* (our Lord) *of their substance* (St. Luke viii.). Therefore it might well be that, like others, she and her brother had a home in Galilee, and one also near Jerusalem. Tradition tells us, for instance, of St. Joachim and St. Anne that they had a home at Sephoris in Galilee, a home also at Nazareth, and also a home in Jerusalem. The Fathers who belong to the Congregation founded for Africa by Cardinal Lavigerie, and who are known in Jerusalem as *les Pères Blancs*, claim to have in Jerusalem the sanctuary in which the Immaculate Conception of our Lady took place, and where Holy Mary was born. There is also a tradition that some part, at least, of the farm, or garden, at Gethsemani belonged to St. Joachim and St. Anne, and afterwards to our Lady, and that the family sepulchre was there where the church now stands.

2. Again, in St. Luke viii. we find St. Mary Magdalen coupled with Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, and ministering to our Lord in Galilee. As Herod was Tetrarch, or King, of Galilee, this points also to the inference that Mary was one of the devout women who followed our Lord from Galilee.

3. Again, it seems tolerably clear from St. Luke vii. that Magdalen's forgiveness in the house of Simon the Pharisee took place in Galilee; at Magdala, as some think, or, according to others, at Naim. For in the same chapter we find our Lord at Capharnaum, and at Naim, and again, in St. Luke viii., crossing the Lake of Genesareth. We also find the messengers arriving who had been sent by John the Baptist, who was at that time imprisoned in Galilee by Herod.

4. Then, too, we twice find St. Mary Magdalen anointing our Lord's feet at a banquet; and we moreover find Martha serving at the supper in the house of Simon the leper. All this would be more intelligible if the owner of the houses were a kinsman of Mary and Martha; and accordingly we find Theophylact, early in the seventh century, recording a tradition to this effect: "Some say the leper was the *father* of Lazarus". And as this Simon also was evidently a man of some substance, there is no improbability in the conjecture that he too had a home in Galilee and a home near Jerusalem, and that in fact, Simon the Pharisee, whose house was in Galilee, was no other than Simon the leper of Bethany, who had been cured by our Lord, and was therefore grateful not only for the raising of Lazarus, but also for his own cure.

5. Again, this conjecture, or theory, fits in well with the known fact that our Lord's disciples were drawn mainly from

Galilee. It is said that Judas Iscariot (or of Kerioth) was the only one of the twelve Apostles who was a native of Judea. All the others were from Galilee, four of them, if not five, cousins of our Blessed Saviour. In an essay written by the late Cardinal Wiseman, we read that our Lord spent two of the three years of His Public Life in Galilee, either on the Lake of Genesareth, or on the shores of that Lake, which, with its storms and its fishermen, was to His mind a picture of His future Church.

6. Lastly. One more circumstance which supports this view is that the house where Martha was busy about many things while Mary sat at the feet of her Master, was apparently in Galilee; for in the same chapter we find our Saviour apostrophizing as present, the villages of Bethsaida and Corozain and Capharnaum, which are all in the neighbourhood of the Lake of Genesareth.

*And Mary was she who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair* (St. John xi. 2).

We, Catholics, commonly take it for granted, and with Holy Church's sanction, that the penitent who washed the feet of our Lord with her tears in the house of Simon the Pharisee and anointed them with her fragrant ointment (St. Luke vii.), was no other than this Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who, soon after, a second time anointed our Lord in the house of Simon the leper in Bethany. Some critics in this country and elsewhere hold that we have no good ground for our opinion. If it were certain that St. John was here alluding to the first anointing in the house of Simon the Pharisee, this passage would end the controversy; but the adverse critics contend that it is not likely that St. John is alluding to a scene which he himself does not record in his Gospel, and which is only found in St. Luke. They therefore hold that in these words St. John has before his mind the second anointing at Bethany, which he has not indeed as yet mentioned, but which was described many years before in the Gospel of St. Matthew. As St. John did not write till thirty years after the raising of Lazarus, it is quite possible that he is alluding to the second anointing, which was perhaps better known among the disciples than the first. However this may be, the sense of the faithful is, and has been, that St. Luke's penitent, who was forgiven in the house of Simon the Pharisee (St. Luke vii.), and St. Luke's *Mary who is called Magdalen, out of whom seven devils were gone forth* (St. Luke viii.), and St. John's Mary the sister of Lazarus and Martha, are all one and the same holy person, and we would rather think with all the faithful so long as we may, that is, until their judgment is proved erroneous. The mind of Holy Church on this point seems to be clear. For the Saint Magdalen honoured by the Church is doubtless the Mary of Bethany whose devotion, our Lord foretold, shall be preached wherever His Gospel is preached (St. Matt. xxvii.). But, in the Mass for St. Magdalen's day, the Gospel read is St. Luke's story of the conversion of the

penitent. This surely implies that Holy Church considers Mary the sister of Lazarus and St. Luke's penitent to be the same person.

*His sisters therefore sent to Him, saying, Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick (St. John xi. 3).*

Where was our Lord when this message was sent to Him? We can answer this question from the preceding chapter of St. John's Gospel. We are now, according to our reckoning, in the beginning of the month of March. In the previous December Jesus was in Jerusalem. *It was the feast of the Dedication at Jerusalem: and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the Temple in Solomon's porch (St. John x. 22).* In the course of His preaching on this occasion He uttered the words, *I and the Father are One. Whereupon, the Jews took up stones to stone Him. Our Lord reasoned with them mildly to show them that He was not blaspheming; but when He said, If I do (the works of My Father) though you will not believe Me, believe the works: that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father, they sought to take Him; and He escaped out of their hands (x. 39). And He went again beyond the Jordan into that place where John was baptising first; and there He abode. And many resorted to Him, and they said: John indeed did no sign. But all things whatsoever John said of this Man were true: and many believed in Him (x. 42).* Our Blessed Lord is therefore about forty miles distant from Bethany, beyond Jericho and beyond the Jordan, at a small town, as commentators tell us, called Bethabara, which is supposed to have stood near the eastern bank of the Jordan, opposite that Monastery of St. John on the western bank which the schismatic Greeks occupy at present.

Here, then, our Blessed Saviour is teaching and converting many, when the messengers are sent to Him from Bethany.

It may be worth while at this point to interrupt the narrative for a little while, in order to understand why our Saviour thus takes refuge beyond the Jordan.

After the short and glorious career of Judas Machabeus and his brothers, their descendants, known as the Asmonean princes, struggled in vain against the enemies who surrounded Judea. At length the Romans, called in, probably, by one of the contending factions, gained a footing in Judea under Crassus and Pompey the Great. From that time Jewish princes were carried off as hostages to Rome and there educated, and were at times advanced to greatness by Roman favour. Lineal descent and legitimate title was not always respected. Through the influence of Mark Antony, Herod, who was not a Jew, but an Idumean, and had no title whatever to royalty, was declared King of Judea and Galilee and the country beyond the Jordan. This clever and most unscrupulous man became famous in Jewish history as Herod the Great. In his greatness he was not unlike our King Henry VIII. He was great in his crimes as well as in other ways. He had more wives than our King Henry. One

of them, the unfortunate Mariamne, he murdered; and then consoled his grief by building a tower in her honour in Jerusalem. With her he also murdered her two children. He was drawing near the end of his life when he ordered the Massacre of the Innocents. He had also planned, it is said, a wholesale butchery of the Jewish nobles in order to make sure that there should be much mourning at his death. To compensate in some way for his enormities, he strove to win popularity by adorning and enriching Jerusalem. On the west side of the city he built the gorgeous palace known as the Palace of Herod the Great. On the eastern side he rebuilt with great skill, and rendered well-nigh impregnable, the old fortress of the Machabees called Baris. He changed its name to Antonia, in honour of his patron, Mark Antony. Here it was that Pilate afterwards had his Prætorium. Herod also enlarged and rendered far more magnificent the Temple that stood on Mount Moriah, close to the fortress Antonia.

It is a disputed point whether he survived the Massacre of the Innocents only a few months or about four years. At his death he left behind him four sons, by three different mothers. Of these four sons one he disinherited. To Archelaus he left Judea; Galilee to Herod Antipas; Iturea and the country of Trachonitis to Philip (St. Luke iii. 1). Archelaus inherited his father's thirst for blood, and in consequence of his cruelties was deposed by the Romans, who thereupon seized his kingdom of Judea and annexed it to their province of Syria. Herod Antipas also inherited a large share of his father's wickedness. He it was that seduced Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip,<sup>1</sup> and to please her put St. John the Baptist to death, and afterwards mocked our Lord.

At the time, then, when Lazarus was sick, the kingdom of Herod the Great had been dismembered; and so, by crossing the Jordan, our Lord was out of the power of the Jews, and under another government.

## SCENE II.

BEYOND THE JORDAN WHERE JESUS IS PREACHING.

### STATION I.

*His sisters therefore sent to Him, saying, Lord, behold he whom Thou lovest is sick (St. John xi. 3).*

A. "*Attendite et videte.*" Stay a little while, you who pass by, to see and to listen. See our Lord surrounded by His Apostles and disciples when the messengers arrive

<sup>1</sup> Not Philip the Tetrarch, but the other Philip, the disinherited son.

much tired, for they have come in haste. Listen attentively to the words of the message, and, though our Blessed Saviour seems to hear it in calm tranquillity, try to realise how the humble prayer fills His compassionate Heart with tenderness and a most earnest desire to give speedy help to His suffering servants.

B. *He whom Thou lovest is sick.* Consider these words. The sorrowing sisters could have said, "He who loves Thee so well is sick," but theirs is a better prayer. Our Lord's Heart loves Lazarus infinitely more than Lazarus loves Him, though Lazarus is so faithful. There is always sure footing—the very surest—when we rest our hopes on our Lord's love for us.

C. And this is a prayer which we can all safely make. We cannot all say, with St. Peter, *Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee* (St. John xxi.), but each of us can say most truly of himself, *Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick.* Often and often we ought to renew our faith in this glorious truth: *He loved me, and delivered Himself up for me* (Galat. ii.). So too there is not one of us who cannot say with our Lady, *He that is mighty hath done great things for me* (St. Luke i.).

D. Even when I have sinned, I can still say, *Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick*—or, is dead. For *Thou, O God, art gracious and true, patient, and ordering all things in mercy. For (even) if we sin we are Thine* (Wisdom xv.). It was, as St. Paul tells us, when we were sinners, *when we were enemies, that Christ died for us* (Romans v.). Therefore St. John, who so well understood the Heart of our Lord, writes: *My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. But if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just.* Every one looks out for chances of exercising his own calling. Physicians make haste to houses where there is some one sick; undertakers only go to homes where one lies dead. Our Lord's special calling is, *to seek and to save that which was lost* (St. Luke xix.). It is by saving sinners that He earns His name of Jesus, which to Him is *a name above all names* (Philipp. ii.).

E. *He whom Thou lovest.* What a title! Where can I find one so full of hope and consolation? If, O Lord, my God, I am indeed he whom Thou lovest, well may I say to my soul, "*Quare tristis es anima mea?*" *Why art thou sad, my soul? why dost thou trouble me?*

O yes, blessed St. Mary Magdalen and blessed St. Martha acted most wisely to shape their prayer as they did: Had they said, "We have loved Thee well, O Lord, and Lazarus our brother has been devoted to Thee," this would have been a good prayer; but He was with them by the sick-bed, and was prompting their petition according to His own Heart. "Thou lovest our brother, dear Master, and for Thy own sake Thou wilt be good to him." In that prayer which had such power in Heaven, Daniel, the man of desires, makes his strong appeal in the same way. *O Lord, hear; O Lord, be appeased; hearken and do: delay not for Thy own sake* (c. ix.).

F. Observe too how they ask for nothing. They would say to one another as they were framing their message, "We have no need to ask". For their thought concerning their Master was the one that St. Augustine expresses: "Our Lord Jesus does not love and forsake".

G. Contemplate the intense compassion of our Saviour's Sacred Heart, while He is listening to the message; the consolation that His faithful servants give Him by their trust in Him; and how He yearns to grant them instant help, though He seems for the time to do nothing.

#### STATION II.

*And Jesus, hearing it, said to them: This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God; that the Son of God may be glorified by it* (v. 4).

A. He said to them—that is, to the messengers from Mary and Martha—*This sickness is for the glory of God.* The sick and the sorrowful and the suffering so often jump to the conclusion, "This trouble is sent me as a chastisement," and they despond. So too we are apt to judge of other sufferers. Thus, when the disciples saw the man born blind, they at once asked: *Rabbi, who hath sinned, this man or his father, that he should be born blind?* (St. John ix.). We come into the world with a disease, or

insanity, upon us which inclines us always to believe without doubting that riches, honour, and pleasures are great blessings, and marks of God's special favour; and on the other hand, that poverty, sickness, pain, and disgrace, are always curses, and a chastisement of sin. It takes a long time and much labour, and a strong grace, to convince us that if for Himself and His Mother our Lord selected poverty and pain and the bitter chalice, these things must surely be something better than curses.

B. *This sickness is not unto death.* Even when sickness is sent as a chastisement, it is not always God's wish that it should be unto death. If the sick man would make haste to have recourse to God, and beg for absolution and the holy anointing, the sickness would oftentimes not be unto death. For as soon as sin is forgiven and the cause thus removed, then, as St. James tells us, *the prayer of faith shall save the (anointed) sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up*, and, as Holy Church prays, he will be restored safe and sound to his former duties in all that prosperity which he desires, and his friends desire for him.

C. *This sickness is not unto death; but for the glory of God.* What a golden lesson for the sick! This sickness is sent *that the Son of God may be glorified in you*. You would prefer health; but you will give great glory to your Creator and your Father in Heaven if you reverently say, *Father, not my will, but Thine be done*.

Fix well in your mind how very much our Lord is glorified by the patience of the sick and the charity of those who nurse.

### STATION III.

*Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister Mary and Lazarus*  
(v. 5).

A. That is with a special love. His love for us all is so unbounded and so far beyond our imaginings that none of us need be envious. But still, how blessed are

they who attract a special predilection from the Heart of Jesus!

Innocence attracts His Sacred Heart. So, too, does loving contrition.

Innocence has been compared by an ancient Father to a white robe; contrition to a robe rent and disfigured, but beautifully repaired with precious jewels.

The merciful who judge not also attract Him strongly.

Those, too, who abound in almsgiving are specially loved by Him.

Of St. Magdalen, our Blessed Lady told St. Bridget that the devils said of her: "How shall we win her back? We have lost a rich prize. She washes herself so thoroughly with the water of her tears that we dare not even fix our eyes upon her; and she is in the service of her God and in holiness so fervent, so inflamed, that we have not courage to go near her." What scares away the devils is precisely what attracts the Heart of our Lord, a loving and fervent contrition.

B. How good an ambition it is to desire to be loved by this special love of our Saviour! not to be content with being merely absolved, but to determine with Zacchæus to restore four-fold to all whom we have wronged, and if many sins have been forgiven, not to rest till we love much.

#### STATION IV.

*When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He still remained in the same place two days (v. 6).*

A. "*Attendite.*" Pause a little while and note how calm our Lord seems outwardly; and yet He is doing great violence to His Sacred Heart, which is longing to give those whom He loves speedy comfort. A spiritual writer has said that God, being all charity, is infinitely more anxious to give blessings than a mother in labour is to bring forth her child. Mary and Martha did not think

it necessary to say, *O Lord, make haste to help me.* They knew that He needed not to be urged. His Heart is burning with desire to dry up their tears.

He is the same now; the same *Jesus yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever* (Hebrews xiii.). He is on fire with a most vehement wish to help sinners on earth and the Holy Souls in Purgatory, and to make haste to help them. And yet, much to His sorrow, He is often constrained to hold His hand, because we, not from having trust like Mary and Martha, but from apathy and sloth, neglect to importune Him, and so do not by our earnest prayers, or by some alms, or some act of penance, or by having the Holy Mass offered, give Him the necessary plea that enables Him to satisfy His compassion and loving mercy. To use our human language, He is counting the hours and the long minutes till that blessed moment shall arrive when to each suffering soul in Purgatory, He will be able to carry out His promise: *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more; nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow, shall be any more; for the former things are passed away* (Apoc. xxi.). At all hours of the day and night there are in Purgatory holy souls very near their moment of deliverance. One short, fervent, indulgenced ejaculation may complete their work of purgation. If it only cuts off but one minute of their time, yet how intense their gratitude will be! For one minute in Purgatory does not fly by as our minutes do here in this world.

B. Whenever, then, our Blessed Lord seems to be slow in sending us the help we ask Him, we may be sure that His Sacred Heart is constrained by reasons of mercy. He delays, only to give later greater gifts, and He says to us: *What I do you know not now, but you will know hereafter* (St. John xiii.).

STATION V.

*Then after that, He said to His disciples: Let us go into Judea again. The disciples say to Him: Rabbi, the Jews but now sought to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again? (vv. 7, 8).*

A. Contemplate the persevering constancy of our Blessed Saviour in His work of love: how, again and again, He faces danger for our sake. We say that a burnt child dreads the fire: and assuredly, if we ourselves meet with some sufferings in the service of Christ, we are apt to turn faint-hearted and abandon our good work. Note how even Pagan masters reprove this cowardice, and say to us:

*Tu ne cede malis, sed contra audentior ito—*  
Do not basely run away,  
Stand your ground and win the day.

St. Paul and St. Francis Xavier were men of our weak flesh and blood, but the grace of Jesus Christ so strengthened them, that when crosses were set before them, their response was: *Amplius, Domine, amplius*—"Yet more, O Lord, yet more".

B. On the other hand, there is a wise and holy timidity. Our good Angel, if he could win a hearing, would sometimes say to us: "Child of God, Satan but now overthrew you, are you going again so soon into that same terrible danger?"

STATION VI.

*Jesus answered: Are there not twelve hours of the day? If a man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world: but if he walk in the night he stumbleth (vv. 9, 10).*

A. Words akin to these our Blessed Saviour had said before, when about to cure the man born blind (St. John ix.): *I must work the works of Him that sent Me whilst it is day: the night cometh when no man can work.*

During the time appointed by His Father, our Lord can work safely, as men do in the daylight. His enemies plot in vain: *Evil shall not come near Thee* (Psalm xc.). But when the hour appointed for the Passion arrived, He said: *It is your hour and the power of darkness* (St. Luke xxii.). The night was now come and He was in danger. So can God well protect us also during our allotted working-day.

B. *The night cometh when no man can work.* In health it is easy to pray and to do penance. When sickness comes and death is near, prayer and penance are much more difficult. Father Nieremberg advises us, in his book on *Adoration in Spirit and in Truth*, not only to pray while in health for present wants, but also to lay up then a store for the time when we shall not be able to pray.

C. *The night cometh when no man can work.* In Purgatory we can earn no more. Our suffering there is sterile. It pays our debts, but wins no increase of grace or merit; while here on earth every little act of penance or charity is a good seed that bears much fruit. *If you know these things, blessed shall you be if you do them* (St. John xiii.). Mother of God, pray for us sinners.

#### STATION VII.

*These things He said, and after that He said to them: Lazarus, our friend, sleepeth, but I go that I may wake him out of sleep* (v. II).

A. *Lazarus, our friend.* Stay a little while to think of the loving spirit of our Lord: how He identifies Himself with His Apostles and has all in common with them. His friend is *our friend*. The same loving spirit we see afterwards in His message: *Go to My brethren and say to them: I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God* (St. John xx.). For He is the real good Father Who says to each of His children who will stay with Him: *Son, all that I have is thine* (St. Luke xv.). My friend

is your friend, and your friend is My friend. Whoever is not a friend to you, cannot be a friend of Mine.

B. Some profess to have much love for our Lord, but a strong dislike for men. We hear them say that dogs and horses are more loveable than Christians. Against such thoughts we must have ready the words of St. John, who so well understood all about love: *He that loveth not his brother whom he seeth, how can he love God Whom he seeth not?* (1 St. John iv.). The love of God and love for men must both come down from Heaven; and the ordinary rule is, that it is by loving men we grow in love for God.

C. Again, some who profess to love our Lord are very kind to one priest, to one church, to one nun, or to a very small select party of lay people, but cold and indifferent, if not harsh, to those outside this narrow pale. One whose heart is becoming more like the Heart of our Saviour will, on the contrary, say: *I am partner* (O Lord) *with all them that fear Thee and keep Thy commandments* (Psalm cxviii.). St. Paul's heart became much like to our Lord's; he therefore could weep with all who wept, and rejoice with those in joy. *Who is weak and I am not weak? who is scandalised and I am not on fire?* (2 Cor. xi.).

Fac cor amans Jesu mei,

Fac ut nos amemus Te.

Make us, loving Heart of Jesus, love Thee, and for Thy sake all whom Thou lovest. Grant us some share of Thy true and wide-reaching love, that we may be able to say humbly and in simplicity, *All Thy friends, O Lord, are my friends.*

#### STATION VIII.

*Lazarus, our friend, sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. His disciples, therefore, said, Lord, if he sleeps, he shall do well. But Jesus spoke of his death, and they thought that He spoke of the repose of sleep* (vv. 12, 13).

A. Why does our Lord so often use words that may mislead, and do mislead?

One reason is to teach us all not to trust too much to the first hasty impressions on our short-sighted minds. How many false religions, and what numberless blasphemies against revelation, have their origin in the prevailing habit of pronouncing hastily and oracularly, "My judgment must be true. I think this text means black. Therefore it must be so." "But have you studied Holy Scripture much?" "No." "Have you gone through an education in order to understand God's Word?" "No." "Have you collated book with book? Have you consulted masters?" "No, nothing of all this." "Then, is there not at least a possibility of your being mistaken?" If once a man can be brought to modesty of mind, and will say humbly, "I may be wrong," he will scarcely become a heretic or sceptic.

Moreover, when our Lord speaks He always speaks truth; but He has told us by His Prophet, *My thoughts are not your thoughts* (Isaias lv.). With God words have often a true meaning which we do not at once discern. Thus what our Lord calls "peace" is not what this world calls peace. So too time with us, and time with God, are things widely different. *One day with the Lord is as a thousand years; and a thousand years as one day* (2 St. Peter iii.). One night of pain here is exceedingly long to the sufferer. Whereas St. Paul, who had seen a glimpse of the eternal home, speaks of present tribulations as *light and momentary* (2 Cor. iv.).

We continually give to things names which God does not give them. *You that call evil good and good evil, that put darkness for light and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter* (Isaias v.).

So therefore, as the dead shall rise again, the death of a just man, such as Lazarus, can only be in the mind of our Lord a short sleep.

STATION IX.

*Then, therefore, Jesus said to them plainly: Lazarus is dead*  
(v. 14).

A. From these words we learn that though He is beyond Jordan, His eye is seeing all that goes on in the sick-chamber at Bethany, and He hears every word. The message brought to Him was, "Lazarus is sick". Jesus now says, without any fresh tidings, *Lazarus is dead*. We must try to believe more and more firmly, and to rejoice in our belief, that our Lord sees every work and every thought of ours. *If I ascend into Heaven, Thou art there: if I descend into Hell, Thou art present. And I said: Perhaps darkness shall cover me. But darkness shall not be dark to Thee, and night shall be as the light of day: the darkness thereof and the light thereof are alike to Thee. . . . My bone is not hidden from Thee, which Thou hast made in secret. Thy eyes did see my imperfect being, and in Thy book all shall be written* (Psalm cxxxviii.). Again, when the sinner says: *Darkness compasseth me about, and the walls cover me, and no man seeth me. Whom do I fear? For the Most High will not remember my sins, the Holy Ghost answers: And he knoweth not that the eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun, beholding round about all the ways of men, and the bottom of the deep; and looking into the hearts of men, into the most hidden parts. For all things were known to the Lord before they were created: so also after they were perfected He beholdeth all things* (Ecclus. xxiii.).

STATION X.

*And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, that you may believe, but let us go to him* (v. 15).

A. We now see the reason why our Blessed Saviour, notwithstanding the pleadings of His Sacred Heart, tarried two days before setting out for Bethany: in order to help forward the imperfect faith of His disciples. He would

raise the dead rather than heal the sick. He intends this to be a very great and striking miracle which shall arouse men's minds and bring grace to many. Therefore, for the good of many, He permits Mary and Martha to suffer for a little time longer; but no doubt speaks meanwhile words of comfort to their hearts in secret. *Who is like the Lord our God?* (Psalm cxii.). *The Lord is faithful in all His words, and holy in all His works* (Psalm cxliv.). *Yet a little, and a very little while, and He that is to come, will come, and will not delay* (Hebrews x.).

#### STATION XI.

*Thomas, therefore, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow-disciples: Let us also go that we may die with Him* (v. 16).

Thomas was called Didymus either because he was a twin, or the descendant of some one who was a twin, and so the name was handed down as a family name. A holy writer observes that on this occasion he showed for our Lord a strong affection, as of a twin brother; for the others, as we see in verse 8, were alarmed at the idea of our Saviour's going again into Judea.

A. *Let us also go, that we may die with Him.* Thomas did not then realise how strong a grace is needed to strengthen a martyr for death. He afterwards learned the truth of our Lord's teaching: *The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

Are we then to undervalue such good desires as those of St. Thomas? Far from it. For if the flesh is weak, and if its cowardice sometimes prevails even when the spirit is willing, it will reign supreme and unopposed if we do not at least go as far as good desires. Good desires begin the work. If we persevere in prayer, the good desires grow, till at last they are strong enough for the work they have to do, which is to bear away by holy violence the grace of perseverance and the eternal possession of the Kingdom of Heaven. True, if good desires are not nursed and strengthened, they become blighted blossoms,

and the proverb says that Hell is paved with such blighted good wishes; but if all good desires were valueless, the Angel of God would not have come to Daniel bringing such glad tidings, *because thou art a man of desires* (c. x.).

Every good desire helps the work of the Church. If we say from our hearts, *Thy Kingdom come*, this desire helps the spread of grace, according to its fervour. If we say, "Eternal light shine upon them," this cry is heard, and full value is given to it. With what contrition shall we mourn in Purgatory that we did not multiply and intensify our good desires! At all hours, in all places, we had at our command this way of giving alms to the living and the dead; and we may say, giving alms also to our God, for if we give peace to men, we always give at the same time glory and joy to God.

### SCENE III.

#### BETHANY.

#### THE STONE OF CONFERENCE.<sup>1</sup>

#### STATION I.

*Jesus, therefore, came and found that he had been four days already in the grave. Now Bethania was near Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off* (vv. 17, 18).

A. Lazarus died on the day that the message arrived. Jesus stayed after that two days; and now travels slowly, spending two days between the Jordan and Bethania, a distance of about forty miles.

Contemplate our blessed Saviour travelling on foot, with His disciples around Him, carrying with Him all His possessions—"all," being very little. *He said to them: Take nothing for your journey; neither staff, nor scrip, nor bread, nor money, neither two coats* (St. Luke ix.). *Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes* (St. Luke x.). *Be not solicitous therefore, saying: What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewith shall we be clothed?*

<sup>1</sup>The stone on which our Lord stood when speaking with Martha and Mary. See page 50.

Why so? Because *your Father in Heaven knoweth that you have need of all these things. Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns: and your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are you not of much more value than they?* (St. Matt. v.).

B. Later on, at the Last Supper, He put this question to them: *When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, did you want anything? They answered: Nothing* (St. Luke xxii.). Why not? Because the Christian apostolic poverty to which they were called, and which they are practising, is not a starvation poverty, but, in reality, a rich poverty. *Needy*, St. Paul writes, *yet enriching many: having nothing, yet possessing all things* (2 Cor. vi.). It is only a special covenant of trust in God, by which men bind themselves to give up house, and lands, and money, and lucrative trades, and professions, in order to devote themselves to God's work; and our Lord, on His part, undertakes to provide for them abundantly by an exceptional providence, a hundred-fold in this life, besides the eternal life to come. It is therefore merely a great act of trust in God; and our Father in Heaven is filled with infinite joy when His children will so trust Him. For He is accustomed to be much mistrusted. As our Blessed Lord was a Man *acquainted with infirmity* (Isaias liii.), so is He also acquainted and most familiar with every form of mistrust. For Satan is always busy, and most successful, night and day, in whispering calumnies against our good God; and therefore, if we may express a great truth in our colloquial language, our Lord is most thankful for small mercies, and every little act of trust delights Him. What is almsgiving but an act of trust? Do we really give, when we have God's solemn promise that all is to come back again, *shaken together, pressed down, and flowing over?* (St. Luke vi.). Do we call it giving when we are to get all back with such interest? Surely not. Almsgiving is in truth only lending, at immense interest, and on most excellent security. Where then is the merit of almsgiving? It is an act of

trust in our Lord. Instead of lending our money to a banker or a broker, we lend a little to our Lord, Who is in sore need for His poor, and this small act of trust and mercy contents Him ineffably. For He is lowly and needy, and accustomed to be "glutted with reproaches". He is surprised and comforted beyond all thought when any of His own children trust Him a little.

STATION II.

*And many of the Jews were come to Mary and Martha to comfort them concerning their brother (v. 19.).*

A. "*Attendite.*" Stay a little in this *house of mourning*. Look at these most sorrowful sisters; watch their tears; hear their sobbing; no unholy word of murmuring escapes from them, for our Blessed Saviour is speaking inwardly words that sanctify their grief. *Blessed are they that mourn* in this way. Sorrow is sometimes unblest, unhallowed. It then becomes irreverent and wicked, and blasphemes—that is, it accuses and calumniates God's providence. This should not be. Sorrow and suffering are specially blessed and sanctified by the Sacred Passion of Jesus, and ought to help us powerfully to greater union with Him.

B. Again, we may learn from these Jews who, though their race was stiff-necked and hard-hearted, can yet feel for the bereaved, and give their time to the holy work of comforting and consoling. The dead *who die in the Lord* are blessed, as St. John writes (Apoc. xiv.), and their lot is not matter for pity. Neither would it be a kindness to call them back, if we might. But survivors are often much to be pitied, for they are crushed by the sudden blow, and their oppressive loneliness becomes sometimes a danger to their souls. To comfort them and sympathise with them is good almsgiving, a blessed work of mercy.

STATION III.

*Martha, therefore, as soon as she heard that Jesus was come, went to meet Him, but Mary sat at home (v. 20).*

Martha is believed to have been the elder sister, and

was therefore, perhaps, managing the house, and the news would be brought to her that Jesus was near. She may have been carried away with her desire to see our Lord at once, and so started without staying to tell Mary; or else, seeing how Mary was overcome with her grief, she may have thought it better not to disturb her, but to go and bring the Master to her.

If Mary had heard the news when Martha did, it is scarcely credible that she would have stayed at home.

#### STATION IV.

*Martha, therefore, said to Jesus: Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But now also I know that whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee (vv. 21, 22).*

A. *If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* The father of the possessed child said to our Saviour: "I do believe, Lord, help my unbelief". And they who are washed from sin, still cry out: "*Amplius lava me*"—*Wash me yet more.* Here in Martha's case we see faith and great trust and reliance: but not enough. She feels sure that if Jesus had been present, all would have gone well; but she does not yet realise that, though beyond Jordan, He saw Lazarus dying, and could have hindered death. Again, even now, she believes it is not too late; that her holy Master need only ask, and God will hear and grant all He asks; but she has not as yet taken in fully our Lord's teaching, *I and the Father are one* (St John x.).

B. Christian parents, remember Martha's word: *If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* Impress this truth on your child in the dangerous time of youth. "If our Lord is with you, if by going to Mass and Holy Communion you keep Him with you, you will pass safe through these dangers; your soul will not die. His word to you will be: *Thou art Mine. I will be with thee, and the rivers shall not cover thee. When thou shalt walk in the fire thou shalt not be burnt, and the fire shall not burn in thee*" (Isaia's xliii.).

C. When things go wrong, we sometimes blame a servant, or we say: It was because we neglected some human precautions. But the real cause may be that Jesus was not here. We are taught by Holy Church to pray that "Every prayer and work of ours may begin always from Thee, O Lord, and by Thee be happily ended". Alas! the unfortunate bridegroom and bride are gone to be married sacrilegiously in the unhallowed temple of a false religion for which Christ has nothing but anathema. If Jesus is not with them on the nuptial-day, to bless and hallow married life and give abundant grace as His wedding present, married life will not be what He wished it to be, a safe and pleasant pathway to Heaven.

## STATION V.

*Jesus saith to her: Thy brother shall rise again (v. 23).*

A. Happy the day, happy the hour when our Lord at last answers the father and mother praying long and earnestly for their lost prodigal: "Your child shall rise again". To us, it seems, during the long, cheerless winter of distress and anxiety, as if prayers were not heard; and too often the suppliant grows weary and faint-hearted. *Patience is necessary for you, that doing the will of God you may receive the promise (Hebrews x.).* Blessed is he who perseveres to the end. *He who perseveres to the end he shall be saved (St. Matt. x. 22),* and shall save others. St. Monica did not lose hope, but prayed and wept for seventeen years. Not one prayer was wasted. When the safe moment was come, our Lord poured out in a plentiful profusion all the graces that had been earned by these multiplied prayers and tears, *good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together and flowing over (St. Luke vi. 3).* Three different poets have described pathetically the shepherd wandering at night in the drifting snow, and at last losing heart and lying down to die within a few feet of his own cottage door. A little more perseverance would have saved him.

So, too, the importunate man got at last the loaf he wanted for his guest by knocking and knocking again with troublesome perseverance.

#### STATION VI.

*Martha saith to Him: I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the Last Day. Jesus said to her: I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live. And every one that liveth and believeth in Me shall not die for ever. Believest thou this? (vv. 24-26).*

A. Martha has only a far-off hope for the Last Day. And so we oftentimes have only a faint hope that things will come right in Heaven. But our Saviour does not wait for Heaven. He means His faithful friends to have also their hundred-fold here. He means this earth, where now He has fixed His abode in the tabernacle, to be no longer a cheerless valley of tears, but "*aula Dei et porta cæli*"—the outer court of God and gate of Heaven (Genesis xxviii.).

B. *I am the Resurrection and the Life.* So our Lord speaks to us from the tabernacle. "Do not go elsewhere." *Come to Me all you who labour.* Even if you are dead, *I am the Resurrection.* If your soul is sick to death, *I am the Life.* Do not stay away from Confession and Holy Communion because you are full of infirmities. *They that are whole need not the physician, but they that are sick* (St. Luke v.).

C. *He that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live.* Of all times, it is when we have lost the life of grace by deliberate sin, that we have the greatest need of a strong act of faith and hope. Satan knows well that he has gained little so long as hope lives in the soul. Therefore, as soon as ever he has induced a soul to sin, he immediately sets to work most diligently to bring about a further sin—a much worse sin—against hope. For he knows that we dishonour our Father in Heaven

and the *plentiful redemption* of our Lord Jesus by the second sin against hope much more than by the former sin of anger or sensuality. He knows that the soul that can say after sin: "My God and my Father, my sin is great, but Thy mercy is greater," has already gone a long way towards repairing the sin committed. Therefore, with all manner of lies and trickery Lucifer labours to persuade the sinner who has just fallen, that he cannot possibly pray as yet, that it would be a mockery and an insult, that he must wait some days. It is St. Augustine who says that as hope is like the fresh air that sustains life, a sin against hope has the effect of strangulation, so that the breath of life from Heaven cannot find entrance into the soul. As long as hope lives in the soul, forgiveness will certainly come, and the life of grace will be restored. *He that believeth in Me (and My promises), although he be dead, shall live.*

D. *Believest thou this?* In Baptism Holy Church asks the child, with regard to the articles of the creed, "Dost thou believe?" The sponsors answer: "I do believe". St. Ignatius recommends us from time to time to make a study of the Creed, by what is called his second method of prayer, considering attentively each article. If our good Angel could get a hearing, he would often question us: "Do you believe that God is your Father, and do you believe that He sees you? Do you believe that Christ Jesus died for you? Do you believe that He offers Himself for you in the Holy Mass?" and so of the rest.

E. *I am the Resurrection and the Life. He that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live.*

When our Lord spoke this word so full of hope for us, He knew His own great secret. He knew that He was going to make a most abundant atonement for every kind of sin; that He was going to taste every kind of sorrow and trouble that could come to any of His followers in this world. He was going also in His Sacred Passion to present

Himself to men in so many attractive shapes that He had a right to say prophetically that even the dead soul shall live. *I will draw all to Myself.*

#### STATION VII.

*She saith to Him: I have believed that Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God, Who art come into this world (v. 27).*

A. Some commentators think that when our Lord said to Martha, *I am the Resurrection and the Life*, there went with His words an interior light into her soul that perfected her faith, and brought home to her that He was the Son of God, co-equal in all things with His Father. St. Chrysostom and others, however, think it doubtful whether she yet believed in His Divinity. Be this as it may, let us find leisure to say often with her, and with a full faith, as we turn our thoughts to the Holy Tabernacle: *Tu rex gloriæ, Christe.* I believe firmly that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, Who art come into the world to dwell among us.

#### STATION VIII.

*And when she had said these things, she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying: The Master is come, and calleth for thee. She, as soon as she heard this, riseth quickly, and cometh to Him. For Jesus was not as yet come into the town, but He was still in that place where Martha had met Him (vv. 28-30).*

Coming from the Jordan along the road from Jericho, our Saviour, when about half a mile from Bethany, would have the little town on the slope of Mount Olivet full before Him to the south-west. There He stood and sent for Martha. A singularly hard and smooth block of stone, resembling our granite and rising a little above the ground, is still pointed out as "the stone of conference". This is the stone on which our Saviour stood with His face towards Bethany, while He spoke with Martha, and afterwards with Mary.

The people of the country say that they have often tried to break pieces of stone from this block, in order to give them as relics to pilgrims, but that their efforts have been in vain.

There is great reason for giving credence to such traditions among the Arabs in Palestine, as they are known to cling to traditions with a pertinacity even more wonderful than what is observed in Ireland. A distinguished Irish Bishop, now dead, used to tell that when first consecrated, he found the people of the town in which he lived going every year to Communion on a certain day, which they called "abbey-day". They could give no further account of this devout practice than this, that it was "the abbey-day". Some time elapsed before the Bishop discovered that the fine ruins of an old abbey which stood about two miles from his house were the ruins of a Franciscan convent, destroyed with so many others by the man of ruin, Oliver Cromwell. For two centuries therefore and more, the people, without knowing why, had kept alive the tradition of the Portiuncula on the 2nd of August. They had not forgotten the day on which they used to go to the "abbey". The Arabs in Palestine are still more retentive of ancient traditions; and it is by listening to the information which they give that the indefatigable Franciscan Fathers and Brothers have known where to make their excavations, and brought to light so many sacred shrines long buried underground.

*A. She went and called her sister Mary.*

Each word from the lips of her Divine Master is increasing faith and hope and charity in the soul of Martha, and, under an inspiration from His loving Heart, she wishes her sister to have her share in this hour of grace. Let us reflect on ourselves; we also ought ever to wish to share all blessings with our neighbours. Holy Job thought it a great crime to eat his morsel alone, and not make the fatherless eat thereof (xxxi.) Old Tobias gave this as a parting counsel to his beloved son, *Eat thy bread with the hungry* (iv.). So must we desire to share every grace with others. We are to say "Our Father," not, "My Father". "Give us this day," not, "Give me this day". How admirable in the life of Blessed Peter Faber, S.J., is his continual prayer that blessings may come to others, that their crops may be good; that they who gave the candles to the altar may be blessed, and they also who light them. There are pious travellers who say a *De profundis* for the Holy Souls whenever they pass through a railway tunnel. In some Catholic Colleges St. Francis Xavier's

custom is maintained of reminding the students to pray for the dead while they are undressing to go to bed.

When we thus pray for others, our prayer becomes a holy alms as well as a prayer. Therefore we will not eat our morsel alone. We will share.

B. *She went and called her sister Mary secretly*, that is, she went to her and whispered gently. For Christ's messengers speak quietly to those who love Him. St. Ignatius teaches us, that when a soul is pleasing to God, and in a good and fervent state, our Lord Himself and the Angels, His messengers, speak to such a soul gently; their word comes like water dropping into a sponge. The devil, on the contrary, tries in such souls to create disturbance and alarm: his words are water splashing on a rock. But if, on the contrary, the soul is in a bad state, going from one grievous sin to another, Satan then naturally speaks soft words and presents images of sensual pleasure; but the good Angel brings the thought of death and judgment, and tries to stop by fear the downward progress.

C. *The Master is come and calleth for thee*. Our last summons will belike to this. *At midnight there was a cry made, Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go forth to meet Him* (St. Matt. xxv.).

May God grant in His mercy that His Angel may be able to bring us the tidings gently; and that they may be welcome to our souls, and not a harrowing disturbance.

D. *She riseth quickly and cometh to Him*.

Who will give tears to my eyes that I may bewail the hours in which I went most slowly and grudgingly to our Lord Who called me, or went not at all, but turned my back on Him?

E. *The Master is come and calleth thee*.

The Master is come, and is dwelling among us in the tabernacle. *He calleth thee*. He says to thee, as to Simon who entertained Him, *I have something to say to thee* (St. Luke vii.). *In whatsoever day you shall hear His voice harden not your hearts* (Psalm xciv.), but with Magdalen go quickly to Him, and say devoutly with the child Samuel, *Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth* (1 Kings ii.).

STATION IX.

*The Jews, therefore, who were with her in the house and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up speedily and went out, followed her, saying: She goeth to the grave to weep there (v. 31).*

A. Here, then, again, we who are disciples of Christ may learn a lesson from these Jews, seeing how they devote themselves to Mary to comfort her in her sorrow. They are giving her an alms; and in return for their work of mercy, they are led to our Lord and are witnesses of this great miracle, and many of them were no doubt drawn by this spectacle to believe in Him.

B. On the other hand, though well meant, theirs may have been a mistaken kindness. A better friend has now come to comfort Magdalen, she does not now need them. Sometimes we are intruding unseasonably upon sorrow, intending to comfort and console, when the mourners would be better alone with God. Worldly friends often persist in suggesting novels, theatres, and other similar medicines which give no relief. Physicians, too, at such times, prescribe long rest in the morning, whereas in that hour our Blessed Saviour is near on the altar; and He alone can, during the Holy Mass and at Communion, speak a word that will reach the wound in the soul and heal it.

STATION X.

*When Mary, therefore, was come where Jesus was, seeing Him, she fell down at His feet and saith to Him: Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died (v. 32).*

A. She says the same words that Martha had said; they had, no doubt, said them more than once to each other. But Magdalen is kneeling down at the feet of Jesus when she speaks her loving words. Her wish is ever to be where she first found grace and forgiveness, and first began to love much. *Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken away from her (St. Luke x.).* Blessed penitent,

holy Magdalen, obtain for us a grace that may draw us to the feet of our Lord, there to multiply acts of true contrition and loving sorrow, because we have offended our good God, our Father, our Master, and our loving Redeemer.

#### STATION XI.

*Jesus, therefore, when He saw her weeping, and the Jews that were come with her weeping, groaned in the spirit and troubled Himself (v. 33).*

A. *When He saw her weeping, and the Jews with her weeping.* How good it is to be with Magdalen; for her deep and holy sorrow is contagious. Sickness is contagious, so is vice; but goodness and grace are also contagious. In a thousand ways salvation is more easy when our days are spent with the good and holy who live by faith.

B. *Jesus groaned and troubled Himself.* Had He not Himself willed to be troubled, trouble could not have entered into His Soul. *He groaned in spirit.* The Latin word, *infremuit*, gives the idea that He groaned or shuddered through sorrow or indignation. Perchance, as some think, He was calling to mind how Satan has brought sin and death into the world; and how cruelly he persecutes men; and how this present miracle will be changed by his malicious suggestions into a poison to aggravate the wickedness of the Pharisees and priests.<sup>1</sup>

C. *Jesus groaned and troubled Himself.* We sometimes think that our Lord, like a rich man, can give us any alms we wish for without cost to Himself. We forget that for every grace that comes to us He paid a large price. Each time a sin of ours has been forgiven, He first endured Himself the penalty before our pardon was obtained. *In His bruises we are healed (Isaias liii.).* Of every

<sup>1</sup> Cardinal Toletus suggests that our Lord was troubled because the death of Lazarus, and all the sorrow it caused, was rendered necessary by the malice of the Pharisees, in order that this miracle might counteract their evil influence.

blessing that we now enjoy, it may most truly be said: It was bought for you at a large cost.

*Fac Cor amans Jesu mei.* Loving Heart of my Jesus, give me grace to believe and realise this great truth. *He loved me and delivered Himself up for me.*

STATION XII.

*And He said: Where have you laid him? They said: Lord, come and see. And Jesus wept. The Jews, therefore, said: Behold, how He loved him (vv. 34—36).*

A. *He said: Where have you laid him?* With the Prophet we may answer: "*Domine Deus, tu nosti*"—O Lord God, Thou knowest (Ezechiel xxxvii.). Why does our Blessed Saviour ask us so often to tell Him what He knows already? Why does He afterwards make Mary at His own tomb tell Him whom she is seeking? Why does He make Cleophas and his companion tell Him their troubles on the road to Emmaus? We have, I think, the answer in the words of the Eternal Wisdom: *My delights were to be with the children of men* (Prov. viii. 31). As a good mother takes pleasure in hearing her children telling in their own way things she knows already, but pretends not to know; so our Lord finds comfort and delight in having us to speak to Him. So much so, that He will not give us our daily bread unless we come to Him and ask for it. He never tires of being with us, and therefore would have us always conversing with Him. *He spoke a parable to them* (His disciples) *that we ought always to pray and not to faint* (St. Luke xviii.).

B. *And Jesus wept.* Spiritual writers tell us that He often wept, but was not ever seen to laugh. A true-hearted mother could scarcely laugh while her much-loved child lies under sentence of death. Night and day she is thinking how to rescue him. Holy Church presents our Lord to us giving this account of His own most loving Heart: *My Heart expected reproach and misery* (Psalm lxxviii.). He woke every morning with a heavy load on His

Heart; and, moreover, fully expecting to meet with ingratitude and contempt from those He loved. What wonder if His tears flow often, and if He does not laugh, or even smile! Yet all the while He has within Him His own peace; that peace which the world cannot give, and which no man can take from Him.

To His faithful followers in like manner He foretells that sorrow is to be their portion here on earth: *You shall lament and weep, but the world will rejoice; and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy* (St. John xvi.). The world gives its best wine first, but in the end a wine more bitter than gall and wormwood. Our Lord, on the contrary, gives first the bitter draught from His chalice; but endless sweetness afterwards throughout the long eternity. And He does not always wait for the next world to console. For even here in this valley of tears, they who are so blessed as to mourn can often say with St. Paul: *I superabound with joy in all my tribulations* (2 Cor. vii.). What wonder? for it is to the blessed mourners that He promises that priceless legacy: *Peace I leave you, My peace I give you.*

#### STATION XIII.

*The Jews, therefore, said: Behold, how He loved him* (v. 36).

A. In Purgatory, if we die well, we shall make long meditations on this word, *Behold, how He loved.* There at last we shall have leisure. For we shall be no longer under the *bewitching power of trifling* (Wisdom iv.), which keeps us so occupied and so busy here. And ten thousand times a thousand proofs will pass before our minds, each of them saying, *See how He loved you.* It is not a few tears only that are the proof; but He created me, made Himself my Father and me His child; He became Man for me; He made me His brother and His bride; He died for me; He invented His Blessed Eucharist for me; He sent His Holy Spirit to me; He charged His Blessed Mother to be a Mother to me; and at last He asked: *What is there*

*that I ought to do more for My vineyard and have not done to it? (Isaias v.). O cor amans Jesu mei. O loving Heart of Jesus, open my eyes here; give me grace to begin to see here how much, how truly, how wonderfully Thou hast loved me.*

STATION XIV.

*But some of them said: Could not He that opened the eyes of the man born blind have caused that this man should not die? (v. 37).*

A. This is a fair and reasonable question. Our Lord's answer, had He chosen to give one, would be: "Certainly, I could; but I had just and wise reasons for not hindering his death. It was expedient for you that I should not hinder it." *What I am doing thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter (St. John xii.).* We often are inclined to condemn the providence of our God. He could have prevented this misery; why did He not? So we argue. At the final Judgment when He makes known all His reasons and the whole plan and design on which He has acted, the prophetic Psalmist tells us: *He shall be justified in all His words, and shall overcome (and triumph) when He is judged (Psalm l.).* Angels and men will join with His Blessed Mother, their Queen, in her hymn: *My soul magnifies the Lord (St. Luke i.). The Lord is just in all His ways, and holy in all His works (Psalm cxliv.).*

B. Moreover, we often say: God can do all things. Why does He not bring about what I want? We forget that He has given us free-will and made the earth over to men: *The earth He gave to the sons of men (Psalm cxiii.).* As a father makes over a property to an eldest son and then does not interfere unduly, so God has made over this world to us, and has truly bound Himself not to interfere beyond a certain point with our supremacy here. He lets our will rule, but at the same time watches, and so overrules all our doings, that even our sins shall further His holy designs.

## SCENE IV.

BETHANY.

THE TOMB.

STATION I.

*Jesus, therefore, again groaning in Himself, cometh to the sepulchre. Now it was a cave, and a stone was laid over it (v. 38).*

The sepulchres of the Jews were not all of the same form. As part of Judea was a very rocky country, caves or grottoes abounded. These were utilised, sometimes as chambers or out-houses attached to a dwelling-place, often too as graves for the dead. The doorway, or entrance, was sometimes in the side of the rock. In this case a large stone door stood in a prepared groove, and could be closed or rolled back as required. In other cases the cave or grotto lay underground, and the entrance to the grave was from above. Consequently, the stone, or slab, that covered the entrance was "laid over it," as is here said of the tomb of Lazarus.

This tomb, which is still shown, stands about forty yards higher up Mount Olivet than the house of Lazarus. At present you enter through a door into a chamber, or grotto, and there you find steps leading down to the grave. It must have been over these steps that the stone was laid. Here, as in the case of so many other holy places, the Turks have desecrated the sacred spot by erecting a mosque. From the stone on the level where our Saviour conversed with Martha and Mary to the grave on the hill-side, the distance was nearly half a mile.

A. *Jesus, therefore, again groaning in Himself.*

Why is the Heart of our Blessed Lord again troubled? He is groaning, "*fremens*," that is, with a shudder or convulsion of horror. Has He not cause enough? He sees all things, and hears the never-ending wail of those who have been duped by Satan: *We fools. The serpent deceived me.* Death and the grave are only feeble representations of the eternal death and of that prison-house out of which there is no resurrection.

B. What wonder that the most compassionate Heart of Jesus pours out mercy in a torrent on all who help Him to save a poor sinner from the grasp of Satan? Forget

not the golden message delivered by St. James: *My brethren, if any of you err from the truth and one convert him; he must know that he who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his ways, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins* (c. v.).

*Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into the heart* (1 Cor. ii.) of any man on earth to conceive how sheer gladness and joy will overwhelm the soul at the judgment-seat, when the grateful Heart of our Lord speaks that word: *So long as you did it to the least of My little ones, you did it unto Me* (St. Matt. xxv.).

#### STATION II.

*Jesus saith: Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith to Him: Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he is now of four days. Jesus said to her: Did I not say to thee, that if thou believe thou shalt see the glory of God?* (vv. 39, 40).

A. *Take away the stone.* When our Lord wishes to give us a great grace, as a rule He requires us to do some little thing as a preparation. At Cana: *Fill the water-pots with water.* This was an easy effort. To the young man: *Go, sell what thou hast, and give it to the poor.* This seemed hard; but, compared with the eternal reward, how small! But, easy or hard, our Blessed Lady's advice is ever the same as at Cana, *Whatever He shall say to you, do ye.* If you have to offer with her two pigeons, do it. If you have to offer a lamb, do it. Whatever the price, pay it, in order to secure to yourself the Child Jesus.

Our Lord goes further. He says to us: *If thy right hand scandalise thee, cut it off and cast it from thee. Why? Because it is better for thee to go into Heaven maimed, than having two hands to be cast into everlasting fire* (St. Matt. xviii.).

B. But, alas! when our Blessed Lord thus asks us to give some little that He may have a plea for giving us much, our habit is to demur. *They began all at once to make*

*excuses* (St. Luke xiv.). Naaman, to be cleansed of his terrible leprosy, was only bidden to wash in the Jordan; but he did not see why he should. *Are not the waters of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel?* (4 Kings v.). So now against confession, which renders the forgiveness of sin so unspeakably easy, the tempter at once suggests: Why confess to a man? Why not go direct to God? The answer is: God is the Master. He can choose His own method of dispensing grace. He chose to say to men, His ministers: *Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven.* Happy they who become like little children and follow our Lady's good advice: *Whatever He shall say to you, do it* (St. John iii.).

C. *Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith to Him: Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he is now of four days.*

Martha's faith seems to have been, as St. Chrysostom thought, still somewhat imperfect. Her sisterly heart shrunk from a painful exposure of her dear brother's decomposed corpse.

Did she make her expostulation out loud? or would she draw near to her good Master and whisper it to Him? However this be, our Blessed Saviour is not angry. He reassures her: .

D. *Did I not tell thee, that if thou believe, thou shalt see the glory of God?*

If the resurrection of one dead body is *the glory of God*, what a glory, what an admirable and stupendous outcome of the Sacred Passion and the plentiful redemption of Christ Jesus is the daily and hourly resurrection of so many sinful souls from eternal death to everlasting life!

E. *Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he is now of four days.* "*O vos omnes attendite*"—O all you who pass by the way, stay a little while to listen to these words, and then reflect on yourselves, and apply them to your case.

A mortal sin is like a mortal wound. When the mortal wound is inflicted, death with all its horrors does not

always set in at once. The whole effect of mortal sin does not appear till eternal death is come in the next world. There *malice* against God begins in good earnest. This *malice* in the soul is the corresponding effect to *rotteness* and *corruption* in the body. *Malice* is the *rotteness* of the dead soul, from which all life, all health, all beauty, all hope, all joy, all love is gone for ever. Mortal sin has never done its full work till despair sets in. As long as hope survives, the mortal wound has not taken full effect. The devil is therefore tormented with an intolerable restlessness till he can induce the poor sinner, after a mortal sin, to fling away all hope.

It is on record that a hermit, who had served God well for many years, in an evil hour yielded to the tempter and sinned grievously. But because of his long fidelity, the Lord had mercy on him, and taught him how to foil and baffle the murderous efforts made by Satan to complete his ruin, now that the first victory had been won. The father of lies, as usual, whispered that all was lost; that he must of necessity fling aside the monastic habit and return to the world; that it would be a mockery for him, and unbearable presumption, to persevere in monastic observances. The hermit's Angel Guardian would not allow him to listen for a moment to these lies; and urged strongly that this sad fall could only be a passing madness; that he must at once say, "My God, my Redeemer, *in te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in æternum*". Satan had to fly away, in the rage of disappointment and chagrin, according to that word of the Holy Ghost: *Resist the devil and he will fly from you* (St. James iv.). Hope in Jesus Christ's redemption snatched the sinful soul out of the jaws of the destroyer; and true contrition undid entirely the ruin which the tempter had accomplished.

If, then, the poor frail soul falls into sin at noon, by far the wisest course is to repair that sin by an act of hope in God's mercy one minute after noon. It is not the voice of God, nor of any messenger from Heaven

that whispers so assiduously: "You cannot possibly pray to-day, nor confess to-day". Make haste, *Sacrifice a sacrifice of justice and hope in the Lord* (Psalm iv.). Make haste, *According to thy ability be merciful* (Tobias iv.), and thou shalt have mercy. Be quick, ask for pardon, and you shall receive. Be quick, confess your sin, and our Lord in Heaven will ratify the word spoken by His delegate on earth. "I absolve thee. Go in peace."

It is Satan, a liar from the beginning and a murderer, who well knows that it is when sin is four days old, and four months old, that the rottenness of death is more and more doing its work. So, poor sinner, *if to-day you shall hear the voice of God* (Psalm xciv.) praying you to come back and be forgiven, harden not your heart. Do not begin all at once to make excuses. Do not put off till to-morrow what you can do to-day.

### STATION III.

*They took, therefore, the stone away, and Jesus lifting up His eyes said: Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me. And I know that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people that stand about have I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me* (vv. 41, 42).

A. *Because of the people that stand about have I said it.*  
 "Attendite." Listen attentively, for in every word that cometh from the mouth of our Lord there is bread for our souls.

He is always Jesus. He is always saving; whether He speaks or is silent, when He eats, drinks, or sleeps. He is always thinking how to save *the people that stand about*, and the generations to come. For in reality we are all standing about, and as present to Him as were the Jews and Galileans around the grave. For our sakes He utilises the moments while they are drawing back the slab, to utter words that will nourish our poor souls.

"*Attendite,*" reflect upon yourselves, *Go thou, and do likewise.* For we too live in presence of many standing about. We cannot go to Hell or to Heaven alone. Like men in penal servitude, we have to work out our salvation in gangs, made fast to one another, and we necessarily help each other to good or to evil. *I am partner, O Lord,* the Psalmist says, *with all who fear Thee* (Psalm cxviii.). O my God, deliver me from being partner with those who fear Thee not. From the sins of others, *spare Thy servant* (Psalm xviii.).

B. *Father, I give Thee thanks.* This word also our Saviour speaks for the sake of us who stand about Him. Alas! how often and how often has His Sacred Heart been constrained to stop the stream of grace because we would not say that word so dear to Him! My God, my Lord, *I give Thee thanks.*

C. *Because of the people—that they may believe.*

Now He lets out His secret, why—doing violence to Himself—He tarried so long beyond Jordan, and then climbed so slowly the steep hills from Jericho to Bethany; and all that while left Mary and Martha and Lazarus in the house of mourning. Now is He justified in all His words and works, for this day salvation will come to many.

D. *I know that Thou hearest Me always, but because of the people that stand about, I said it* (St. John xi. 42).

Our Lord is a Mediator, a go-between. Observe His double work: first with His Father; then with the people. With His Father His task is easy. His Eternal Father is so well pleased in His Divine Son that He hears Him always, every wish of His Heart. But to win men and to persuade them He has to labour and suffer unspeakably.

E. *They took, therefore, the stone away.*

While Martha is troubled, contemplate her sister Magdalen. She has sunk down, once more, at the sacred feet of her Master. Her heart is loving Him much as she looks up into His face, *beautiful above the sons of men* (Psalm xliv.), listening to every word that He utters. A great

tranquillity has succeeded in her heart to the storm of her grief; and she is able to say in her secret soul to her Divine Master, "*Domine, singulariter in spe constituisti me*". Most wonderfully, Lord, and in a way truly miraculous and admirable, *Thou hast established me in hope* (Psalm iv.). As they begin to draw away the heavy slab, her eye and her heart turn at one moment to the grave and are then riveted again on the beauty of her Divine Master. For now His features are lighted up with a faint ray of that hidden glory which by rights is always His, but is suppressed. Her heart is burning within her while He speaks.

*They took, therefore, the stone away.*

The stone is rolled back; and suddenly there is a breathless stillness around the open grave, and the eyes of all are fixed on the majesty of our Lord's countenance.

#### STATION IV.

*When He had said these things He cried out with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth. And presently he that had been dead came forth bound hands and feet with winding bands, and his face bound about with a napkin. Jesus said to them: Loose him and let him go (vv. 43, 44).*

A. They turned pale, those motionless men and women around the grave, as they listened awe-stricken to that command given to the dead, for *never man spoke* as Jesus then spoke. For an instant there is suspense and strain, and then the dead man in his grave-clothes is seen mounting the steps from the open cave and coming out into the midst of them, bound up in his swathing bands.

*Loose him and let him go*, the Lord says gently. At the word Martha springs forward, her heart throbbing, her tears falling fast. It is her work. Her trembling hands can untie every knot and loosen every band. No one else intrudes. For Mary can stir no hand. She is kneeling speechless and motionless by the side of her Master, washing once more abundantly with tears from her heart the beautiful feet that have brought the glad

tidings of peace. For an instant, as Martha lifts the *sudarium* from the head of that dear brother now come back from death, Mary looks up to see the disfigurement and discolourment of the grave roll away, like a shadow, across his living features. And lo! he is there in the beauty of his revived manhood, a very image, a God-made image of his own Creator and Redeemer in Whose presence he stands.

*The stars, the Prophet writes, the stars have given light in their watches and rejoiced. They were called, and they said: Here we are: and with cheerfulness they have shined forth to Him that made them. This is our God, and there shall no other be accounted of in comparison of Him* (Baruch iii.). So is it now. Lazarus is called from out of the depths, and out of the depths he answers his Redeemer, "Here I am," and he comes forth from the grave, and with cheerfulness ineffable raises his eyes that they may shine forth to Him that made them and has now given back to them their sight.

Very soon, now that he is unbound, he is with Martha at the side of Mary and at the feet of Jesus, and their secret hearts are all saying: *This is our God, there shall no other be accounted of in comparison of Him.* O good Lord Jesus, in this hour there is more than one come back to give Thee thanks. There are none to go away thankless.

B. Did you mark—the disciples might say to each other afterwards—the Master's loud, clear voice? How it sounded like music from Heaven! It was, as the Psalm says, *the voice of the Lord in power; the voice of the Lord in magnificence* (Psalm xxviii.). The tongues of men, the tongues of angels, could not, I think, reproduce the tones of that voice.

C. Did our Blessed Lady hear that loud cry? She was often with her Divine Son during His Public Life; and as the End is now drawing near, may we not safely assume that she is there on the hill-side, her heart also crying out; *Lazarus, come forth?* "O men, living or dead,

*whatever my Son shall say to you, do ye.*" Can it be that Holy Mary is not there helping them in this hour to say fittingly and becomingly a canticle like her own: *My soul magnifies the Lord ; my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour ?*

D. The blessed angels also are listening in an ecstasy of contentment. For well they know that this is only the beginning of what the voice of God made Man is to do on earth.

E. And the loud clear voice is heard too by the princes of darkness, and scatters these proud spirits *in the conceit of their heart* (St. Luke i.).

F. But why does our Saviour cry out with so loud a voice? Would not a whisper from Him have reached Lazarus and awakened him from the sleep of death? When the End shall come, will not the voice of the Archangel and the sound of his trumpet bring up all the dead, great and small, into the presence of the throne? *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall rise* (1 Cor. xv.). As before, so now also, our Lord is thinking of us, *the people who stand by.*

When, two years ago, He healed the palsied man in Capharnaum, it was that all might see *that the Son of Man hath power to forgive sins.* Now, too, He knows well that this resurrection is only a picture, an image of that resurrection of the dead souls of sinners which is soon to be effected from the rising of the sun to its setting, and from sundown to the dawn. And well too He knows how much the resurrection of the sinner will cost Him; that He will have to put forth the might of His arm to undo and conquer and cancel the fatal work of sin; that the word of power which His minister is to utter in His Name will in very truth be *the voice of the Lord in power, the voice of the Lord in magnificence.* He wishes to impress on us that a loud cry indeed is needed to awaken the sinner from his sleep of death.

G. The multitudes that saw the palsied man rise and walk, *glorified God that gave such power to men.* As we listen

to the loud cry of Jesus, *Lazarus, come forth*, shall we not make hearty acts of thanksgiving for the heavenly power given to poor men to say, "In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, I absolve thee. Go in peace." What wonder that zealous confessors exhort their penitents to say from their hearts after confession the beautiful psalm, *Bless the Lord, O my soul, Who forgiveth all thy iniquities* (Psalm cii.).

H. Mark, too, how Lazarus comes out of the tomb with his grave-clothes still on him, and the swathing bands still binding him.

"*Attendite.*" *O all ye who pass by*, stay a little while to look at this picture. For it is even so oftentimes that we come out from the Sacred Tribunal of Penance. By a valid absolution we are raised to life assuredly. *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath* (our Redeemer) removed our grievous iniquity from us. But the grave-clothes of past habits may be still around us; and the bands of many usual venial sins may still be depriving us of the full liberty of the children of God, so that we come out of the confessional, at times, faint and feeble, and the spark of heavenly life within us needs most careful nursing, lest it be put out.

The Jews, when they embalmed their dead, did it less thoroughly than the Egyptians. So that commonly in their hot climate, after a short time decomposition began within the grave, and the corpse became an image of the sinner's dead soul, all life and beauty gone, and hideous corruption set in. Hence the sensitive terror of Martha when the grave of her beloved brother was to be opened. Hence too, perhaps, the fear of the devout women on Calvary that enough had not been done by Nicodemus and Joseph for the embalming of the body of their Lord.

I. Observe, before retiring from the grave, the calm, tranquil fortitude of our Saviour, Who knows full well that in this hour, by this public manifestation of His power, He is signing His own death-warrant. In earlier days, when He worked wonders, He sometimes sought

concealment. *Tell the vision to no man* (St. Matt. xvii.). *See thou tell no man what was done* (St. Luke viii.). But there is a time for concealment and a time for publicity. The hour of the great death-struggle is come. The time for secrecy is gone by. There is around the grave to-day a large gathering from Galilee and Judea ripe for grace.

J. *Loose him, and let him go.* In a special manner this Divine commission is given to priests. But, thanks to the great charity of our Lord, every one is allowed to share in the Divine work of loosing the poor sinner and enabling him to walk well up the mountain of God. To all of us, without exception, our Saviour says by His Prophet: *Loose the bands of wickedness; undo the bundles that oppress; let them that are broken go free; and break asunder every burden. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall hear; thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am* (Isaias lviii.).

Reflect upon yourself: Am I using my working-day diligently? Am I helping Catholics and Protestants to rise from the grave, and to get rid of their grave-clothes?

My time is short. Have I reason to fear that at my death my Saviour may be obliged to say to me, in sorrow unspeakable: *The weak you have not strengthened, and that which was sick you have not healed: that which is broken you have not bound up, and that which was driven away you have not brought back; neither have you sought that which was lost?* (Ezechiel xxxiv.).

#### STATION V.

*Many, therefore, who were come to Mary and Martha, and had seen the things that Jesus did, believed in Him* (v. 45).

A. How good a thing it is to be the friend, or kinsman, of the holy who are friends of Jesus Christ!

Mark how many are brought to Jesus through these two sisters and their holy brother. What an unspeakable joy it is to Mary and Martha and Lazarus to see so many of their friends and companions beginning to believe in their Divine Master!

Do those act wisely who by mixed marriages and by courting companionship with the worldly, become partners with them, and throw in their lot with those who are not at all dear to our Lord?

B. As they go home from the grave, how different all is from that hour when they came to bury Lazarus: *Going they went and wept. But coming they shall come with joyfulness. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted* (St. Matt. v.). How joyful the hour when Jesus calls from grief and desolation to peace and gladness! Still more when He calls the Holy Soul from the prison of Purgatory to his home in Heaven. But most of all when with a loud voice He calls the sinful soul out of death to heavenly life. Then there is great joy in Heaven.

### SCENE III.

#### THE HOUSE OF CAIPHAS AND THE ROAD TO IT.

*But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them the things which Jesus had done* (St. John xi. 46).

The house of Caiphas, Joseph Caiphas as he is called by the historian Josephus, stood at the south-west corner of Jerusalem, within the walls, and very near the Cœnaculum, or Supper-Chamber, where our Blessed Saviour celebrated the Last Supper. The house probably formed one wing of the Palace of the Priests; and was connected by long galleries and halls with the other wing, in which stood the house of Annas.

The High Priest in Jerusalem formerly held his office for life; but the Romans, though they respected Jewish laws and customs to a certain extent, yet, when it suited their convenience, treated the Jews and their religion with contempt. They had made their despotic power felt by frequently deposing the High Priests, and substituting others in place of the deposed. Annas was the last of those who had held office legitimately. The Romans had deposed him; but he was still looked upon by many as the High Priest *de jure*. He was considered to be one well versed in the Law; and he was the prime mover in all the machinations against our Lord. His son-in-law, Joseph Caiphas, had been raised by the Romans to the office of High Priest, and was entirely under the influence of Annas.

## STATION I.

*Some of them went to the Pharisees and told them the things which Jesus had done (v. 46).*

A. Note how the prophecy of Holy Simeon has its fulfilment: *This child is set for the fall and the resurrection of many* (St. Luke ii.). By the raising of Lazarus many are converted and drawn to Christ; but there are men, on the contrary, who take occasion by this miracle of mercy to work mischief and ruin. Alas! what was true then of our Lord, is equally true of Him now in His Eucharistic state. *Mors est malis; vita bonis.* To those who have grace, He is life; to those whose souls are poisoned by sin, the Bread of Life is death.

B. Mark the haste of these evil-minded men, as they hurry to the top of Mount Olivet and down to Gethsemani, and then, by what was afterwards called the road of captivity, along the south side of the city to the palace of Caiphaz. *Their throat is an open sepulchre* (Psalm xiii.). For as an open grave gives out infection, so does the mouth of tale-bearers spread iniquity. *The poison of asps is under their lips.* Such whisperers speak fair at times, and seem to be righteous; but the poison of asps is hidden under their plausible words. *Their feet are swift to shed blood.* In hot haste they are speeding to inflame the mad passions of the Rulers already thirsting for the Blood of Jesus. What wonder, then, that the Holy Spirit tells us that *the whisperer and the double-tongued is accursed, for he hath troubled many that were at peace. The tongue of a third person hath disquieted many* (Ecclus. xv.).

C. Observe that it is the tongue of the *third person* that disquiets you. If an enemy speaks ill of you behind your back, he undoubtedly wrongs you; but it is the tongue of the *third person*, who comes to report to you what your enemy has said, that really harms you; for he causes you to sin and to hate. Hence the Psalmist, after asking the question: *Lord, who shall rest in Thy holy hill?* that is, who

shall spend his eternity with Thee in Heaven? sets down this requisite among others: It is the man *who hath not taken up a reproach against his neighbour; in his sight the malignant is brought to nothing* (Psalm xiv.). That is to say, the man who will not listen to detractors and tale-bearers, so that the malignant whisperer, who comes to befoul the absent, finds himself not at all welcome, but strongly rebuked and *brought to nothing*.

Especially necessary is this unwillingness to listen to tale-bearing for all those who hold authority and wish to save their souls. The officious young Amalecite who came to David with the great news that his enemy, Saul, would trouble him no more, never returned again with such a message. (See 2 Kings i.) Neither will the slanderer come back if properly rebuked.

D. There is another milder way in which we at times imitate these tale-bearers. Some, without perceiving it, become gradually nothing but news-carriers. If a tragical death occurs, or an appalling accident, or, worse still, a frightful scandal, their impulse is at once to spread the news; to go in haste from door to door to tell the sad tidings. They only stay long enough to say with a sigh: "Very sad, is it not?" and then speed on to be the first at some other door.

But surely if there has been a death, the dead want prayers. If there has been a great sin, the poor sinner wants some one to win grace for him. Why not stay at home and do this holy work?

E. Jesus, Who when beyond Jordan saw Lazarus dying in Bethania, now sees these messengers on their way, and knows perfectly how they will rouse the jealous malice of the Rulers. He hears every word that they utter. With an act of His will, He could render them motionless, or dumb. But He has given to man a free-will, and for wise reasons does not repent, nor take that free-will away. His Heart is ready to endure what man's free-will designs against Him.

F. Contrast for a while the excited, feverish enemies of Christ with Lazarus just come back to life. Observe how he fixes his eyes on the Author of his life, and how he loves the Giver much more than the gift; and how tranquil and how gentle he is, and how little excited now by the things of this poor world to which he is called back. When our souls are raised from death to life, and, with the Prodigal, are welcomed home and clothed once more with the white robe, and fed with the Sacred Body of our Lord, shall all this wonderful and most unexpected forgiveness have no subduing effect on us? Shall it produce no heavenly meekness and tranquillity within us? Shall we at once relapse into giddy frivolity or impatience?

#### SCENE IV.

##### THE HILL OF EVIL COUNSEL.

##### STATION I.

*The Chief Priests, therefore, and the Pharisees gathered a Council, and said: What do we? For this Man doth many miracles. If we let Him alone so, all will believe in Him, and the Romans will come, and will take away our place and nation. But one of them, named Caiphas, being the High Priest of that year, said to them: You know nothing. Neither do you consider that it is expedient that one Man should die for the people; and that the whole nation perish not. And this he spoke not of himself, but, being the High Priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation; and not only for the nation, but to gather together into one the children of God that were dispersed (St. John xi. 47, seq.).*

On the south-east of Jerusalem there is a hill still called the Hill, or Mount, of Evil Counsel. Tradition says that the country villa of the Priests stood there, and that it was in this villa that the Priests and Rulers met to meditate vain things, and plot against the Lord and against His Christ (St. John xi.).

A. Take your place in spirit in this Council-Chamber.

Look at the troubled features of these malignant men. Each of them might well say to his soul, "*Quare conturbas me?*"—*Wherefore dost thou trouble me?* Aman, the great Chancellor, could not enjoy at all the vast blessings heaped on him, because one man, Mardochai, would not uncover his head to him. But the grievance of these dupes of the father of lies is not even as real as Aman's was. Jesus had never refused them any courtesy. Their one complaint is, that *this Man doth many miracles*. "O hypocrites," our Lord says to them, "*is your eye evil because I am good?*"

Have we not much reason to say humbly again and again, "From anger, hatred, and all ill-will, deliver us, O Lord"?

B. Observe too here, and throughout the Sacred Passion, how our Lord, as He can draw praises from the lips of infants (Psalm viii.), so too can also bring about that His enemies shall, when He wishes it, proclaim this truth, *What do we? For this Man doth many miracles*. They cannot then plead ignorance. Hence our Saviour, a little while later, said of them: *If I had not done among them the works that no other Man had done, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father* (St. John xv.).

O Lord, chastise me not in Thy wrath (Psalm vi.); say not to Thy avenging Angel: *Blind the heart of this people, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes* (Isaias vi.).

Notice the phrase, "blind the heart". Blindness of intellect may sometimes be excusable ignorance; but blindness of heart is wilful and malicious blindness.

C. *If we let Him alone so, all will believe in Him, and the Romans will come*. These Councillors were aware that the time of the Messiah was near, and that many of the people were persuaded that the Messiah would deliver them from the Roman yoke. They pretend, therefore, to fear that if the people believe in Jesus, there will be a rising against the Romans, of which they have already had some specimens;

and the Romans will crush the rising with merciless vengeance, and entirely sweep away their nation. This plausible fable the father of lies has ready for them, and they accept his teaching. The result is that, because they will not receive Jesus, but hunt Him to death, the Romans will come and take away entirely their place and their nation.

*From them that resist Thy right hand, keep me, O Lord, as the apple of Thy eye (Psalm xvi.).*

D. *One of them named Caiphas, being the High Priest of the year.*

Caiphas was *de facto* the High Priest, thrust in by Roman power. Annas, as has been said, had been the legitimate High Priest, but had been deposed by the Romans; and there had been a quick succession of intruded High Priests, appointed by the Roman Governors. Though Annas, then, may have a better title to the High Priest's office, still Caiphas holds the position, and because he is High Priest, he prophesies; and, what is more wonderful, prophesies without understanding the import of his own words.

Mark well this difference between the private life of Caiphas and his official capacity. *The Scribes and Pharisees*, our Lord said soon after, *have sitten on 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* (St. Matt. xxiii.). Catholics should carefully explain to Protestant friends that when we say that the Successor of St. Peter in his Apostolic office is infallible, we mean only that his official teaching is watched and guided by the Holy Ghost, and is therefore unerring. In his private life he must work out his salvation *in fear and trembling* (Philipp. ii.) like other men.

Give us grace, dear Lord, to help many to obedience to the infallible teaching of Thy Apostolic Vicar.

E. *It is expedient that one Man should die for the people.*

Yes, this is most true; and no one is so eager to die for

the people as our Lord Jesus Himself; and *not only for this nation*—for *Christ died for all* (2 Cor. v.), and for each of us; so that each can say truly, *He loved me, and delivered Himself up for me* (Galat. ii. 20). *He wishes all men to be saved* (1 Timothy ii.). And all will be saved by His plentiful redemption, and *gathered together in one, as children of God*, except those who deliberately and perseveringly reject Him, and join in the cry, *Away with Him*.

While these Priests and Rulers are *met together against the Lord and against His Christ* (Psalm ii.), His most compassionate Heart is saying to their hard hearts, *My people, what have I done to Thee, and in what have I molested thee?* (Micheas vi.).

## STATION II.

*From that day, therefore, they devised to put Him to death*  
(v. 53).

Here we see that there was reason to say in the Introduction to this work that the raising of Lazarus is "the beginning of the end". Jesus is now doomed. Some writers think that what was called the Greater Excommunication was at this meeting pronounced against Him; but others consider it more probable that this Greater Excommunication was not pronounced against Him till the day before the Crucifixion, and that till then He was only subject to the Lesser Excommunication, which forbade Him to teach in the Temple, or Synagogue. These writers think that in obedience to the sentence of Lesser Excommunication Jesus taught in His latter days only in the portico of the Temple. But this seems more than doubtful. The Gospels speak not only of His teaching in the Temple, but exercising full authority there as the Lord of the Temple.

The Greater Excommunication was pronounced very solemnly at the gate of the Temple, and at the door of every synagogue.

All through our Lord's life, and especially during His Sacred Passion, we may notice how He combines charitable prudence and meekness with the utmost fortitude and fearlessness. *The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not extinguish* (St. Matt. xii.). No harsh word from Him will ever break the frail reed already bruised; nor will He ever, through impatience, get rid of the oppressive odour by quenching the smoking flax. But when His Father's honour, or the salvation of His little ones requires it, He braves all the rage of His enemies.

We find Him, therefore, sometimes hiding Himself in order to remove the occasion of more sin, and sometimes showing

Himself most publicly in presence of all His persecutors. Meekness and humility of heart at times seem like weakness, but in reality they are the greatest strength, and are sure to conquer. *The meek shall possess the land* (St. Matt. v.).

## SCENE V.

EPHREM, A TOWN SIXTEEN MILES NORTH OF  
JERUSALEM.

## STATION I.

*Wherefore Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews, but He went into the desert into a city that is called Ephrem. There He abode with His disciples* (St. John xi. 54).

Our Lord, when tarrying beyond Jordan, was with His all-seeing eye watching Lazarus as he died in his chamber in Bethany. And now, after the great miracle, as He goes from the grave to the house of Lazarus, He sees and hears Annas and Caiphas and their accomplices *meditating vain things against the Lord and against His Christ*. As, therefore, His hour is not yet come, in order to prevent sin He leaves Bethany at once, probably on the day of the miracle, and retires to Ephrem, a town about sixteen miles to the north of Jerusalem, on the borders of the wilderness, or desert. In the mountainous districts of Judea, wild and lonely places called the wilderness, were common. As He foreknew that His enemies would also be full of malice against Lazarus, it seems probable that He counselled him and Mary and Martha to come with Him to Ephrem. The providence of God easily arranged that His journey should escape notice, and thus once more He baffles the counsels of the Rulers; for we find soon after the Priests and Ancients issuing an order that *if any man knew where He was, he should tell, that they might apprehend Him* (St. John xi.). But till He Himself chooses, no one can prevail against Him. So too are His servants always safe under His protection (Psalm xc.). It is in memory of this retirement of our Saviour that the images and crucifixes are veiled in our churches during Passiontide.

A. Observe how our Lord, though He has all power, yet uses the ordinary precautions dictated by prudence. St. Ignatius of Loyola, we are told, used to say, "Pray as earnestly as if Heaven was to do all: but work as diligently as if no help could come from Heaven".

B. There is *a time to keep silence, and a time to speak* (Eccles. iii.). Our Lord, in His wisdom, knows when to

hide Himself, and when to appear. Sometimes in our souls He reveals Himself, and all is sunshine. Sometimes He hides His face, and all is like dark winter. Are we to forsake Him in these dark hours? *Lord, to whom shall we go?*—(St. John vi.) St. Peter wisely said. If we abandon Thee, what other friend have we to whom we can flee? *Thou hast the words of eternal life.*

But has He not, some one says, abandoned me? No, He hides Himself, but is still with us; and more watchful over us now than during the sunshine. "Where wert thou, O Lord?" St. Antony cried out in anguish, when our Saviour appeared to him after a night of great desolation and temptation. "I was in the very centre of thy heart, Antony," our Blessed Saviour answered, "otherwise thou wouldst not have fought so well." *I am with him in tribulation* (Psalm xc.), is His promise to the afflicted soul. Therefore we must adhere to the counsel of the Holy Spirit, *Make not haste in the time of clouds* (Ecclus. ii.). God gives the sunshine; God gives the cloud. *If we have received good things from the hands of God, why not the evil?* (Job ii.).

This would be, perhaps, the place to discuss at length the question, how long our Lord abode at Ephrem; but a few words may suffice. In the beginning of chapter i. it was stated that some have adopted the theory of a modern English commentator, who has drawn out a very elaborate argument to prove that our Blessed Saviour raised Lazarus to life at the end of our January, and then from Ephrem went north through Samaria to Galilee, and after visiting all the places where He had preached, or where His disciples had preached, returned south along the east bank of the Jordan, and crossed that river in the neighbourhood of Jericho, early in Passion Week.

Even if this theory were true, it would be quite out of keeping with the scope of this work to follow our Blessed Saviour through those two months of His progress.

The other view is more convenient for our purpose; and also, very probably, the more correct one. It will be enough to offer one or two reasons for this opinion.

In the first place, it seems to fit in better with the narrative of St. John.

St. John, as is known, wrote his Gospel many years after the

other Evangelists had written. He had their narratives before him, and one of his objects was to supply some omissions, and to render some difficult passages more clear. As a rule he carefully abstains from repeating what the others had narrated, and so does not even record so important an event as the institution of the Blessed Eucharist.

If, then, one of his objects was to put facts in order and make the narrative and the chronology more clear, the theory which harmonises better with his narrative is probably the true one. Now it will perhaps be readily admitted that his story agrees better with the common opinion that our Saviour raised Lazarus to life shortly before Mid-Lent Sunday, and retired at once to Ephrem; abode there eight or ten days; and then, on Passion Sunday, or thereabouts, proceeded from Ephrem to Jericho, and from Jericho, by slow stages, to Bethany, arriving there about Friday in Passion Week.

This seems to be the view which would suggest itself to one who was guiding himself simply by St. John's narrative. His text is as follows:

*Wherefore Jesus walked no more openly among the Jews, but He went into a country near the desert, into a city that is called Ephrem, and there He abode with His disciples. And the Pasch of the Jews was at hand; and many from the country went up to Jerusalem before the Pasch, to purify themselves. They sought, therefore, for Jesus: and they discoursed one with another, standing in the Temple: What think you, that He is not come to the festival-day? And the Chief Priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment that if any man knew where He was, he should tell, that they might apprehend Him.*

This narrative seems to hang together very well, if we suppose, according to the more general opinion, that the events here recorded all took place in about a fortnight.

According to the other view, about two months are supposed to elapse between the words, *there abode with His disciples*, and the words immediately following, *And the Pasch of the Jews was at hand*. We do, no doubt, in the Gospels find intervals of time passed over in this way; but unless clear proof is brought that there was such a lapse of time between the two sentences, we may be allowed to read according to what appears on the surface, and consider the account of St. John as a consecutive story. Besides this argument drawn from St. John's narrative in favour of the common view, there is also the other to which allusion was made in the first chapter, that those who hold the opposite opinion are obliged to say, that when St. Luke tells us in chapter ix. that *Jesus steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem*, He was all the while going away from Jerusalem to the north. This seems a hard saying.

We may assume, then, that our Blessed Saviour, after raising Lazarus, went to Ephrem and abode there till the beginning of Passion Week, and then set out on His last journey to Jerusalem, through Jericho.

## CHAPTER III.

## PASSION WEEK.

## SCENE I.

## ROAD FROM EPHREM TO JERICHO.

*They were on the way going up to Jerusalem. And Jesus went before them, and they were astonished; and following were afraid (St. Mark x. 32).*

According to the chronology which we are following, this sentence records what happened on Passion Sunday or thereabouts.

Since the raising of Lazarus, our Blessed Saviour has been in retirement at Ephrem, and now has begun His last journey to Jerusalem. He is not going thither by the straightest and shortest road, but is going southward near the banks of the Jordan, towards Jericho.

There are words in St. Matthew's Gospel, and also in St. Mark's, which might lead us to suppose that our Saviour on leaving Ephrem crossed the Jordan, and walked southward down the eastern bank, and recrossed the river into Judea somewhere in the neighbourhood of Jericho.

The words in St. Mark's Gospel are: *Rising up from thence, He cometh into the coasts of Judea beyond the Jordan* (St. Mark x. 1). St. Matthew's words are like to these: and, at first sight, they seem to refer to this present journey.

We need not stop here to discuss the meaning of the words, *the coasts of Judea beyond the Jordan*, about which opinions are divided. For our purpose it is sufficient to note that in this passage St. Mark and St. Matthew are not speaking of the journey which we are considering, but of an earlier journey in the month of August or September, when, after the Transfiguration, our Lord left Galilee and went to Jerusalem. This is clear from St. Matthew: *It came to pass when Jesus had ended these words, He departed from Galilee and came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan.* On that occasion He started from Galilee.

Now He is, according to our supposition, on the road from Ephrem to Jericho.

## STATION I.

*And they were on the way going up to Jerusalem. And Jesus went before them, and they were astonished; and following were afraid* (St. Mark x. 32).

A. *And Jesus went before them.*

"*Attendite.*" Stay a little while to watch our Lord quickening His pace and walking ahead of His disciples. Why is He hastening? When many are travelling together on foot, if the spirit of charity reigns, the stronger accommodate their pace to the wants of the weaker ones. We may be sure that this ordinarily would be our Saviour's practice. Why then this exception? He has already furnished the answer. He has told us His secret. *I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptised, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished* (St. Luke xii. 50). As the time draws near, His suppressed desires are breaking forth. Daniel by his desires abbreviated the days of captivity. The yearnings of our Blessed Lord hasten the coming of the good time. Later, during His dark agony, when He allowed fear and desolation to come to His Sacred Heart, still all the while He was longing and thirsting for the hour in which His Sacred Blood should begin to flow for our salvation.

This desire, this straitening of the Heart of our Lord, is still further explained by His other word: *I came to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?* (St. Luke xii.).

Till His Sacred Blood is shed, the fire of love which He longs for will not spread. As He walks in haste, therefore, His loving Heart is saying to His Father with the holy impatience of charity: *Thou shalt arise and have mercy on Sion: for it is time to have mercy on it, for the time is come* (Psalm ci. 14).

O, what will be the gratitude of our Blessed Saviour to every one who helps Him to spread the Divine fire which He longs so much to see enkindled!

Consider, too, that when we bear pain with patience, though all the while we are wishing for relief, He rewards and blesses us for this resignation. And yet how far distant is this patience of our infirmity from His own hunger and thirst to suffer for our salvation! His most compassionate and grateful Heart makes so much of all our weak efforts. Magdalen's devotion at His sacred feet is to be preached wherever the Gospel of His own Life and sacred Death is preached. "*Quis sicut Dominus Deus noster?*" (Psalm cxii.). *Fac cor amans Jesu mei, Fac ut nos amemus Te.*

B. *And they were astonished, and following were afraid.*

A fortnight before, when Jesus proposed to go to Bethany to raise Lazarus from his sleep, the Apostles remonstrated. They well knew what their Master had to fear from the implacable malice of the Pharisees and Rulers. Now, this great miracle has added fresh fuel to the raging fire, and the danger is much greater and more imminent. They have reason to be frightened when they see their Divine Master hurrying forward to meet such enmity.

*Anima Christi, sanctifica me; Passio Christi, conforta me.* Sacred Heart of Jesus, give us some share of that love which is *strong as death.*

#### STATION II.

*Then Jesus took unto Him the Twelve, and said to them: Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the Prophets concerning the Son of Man. For He shall be betrayed to the Chief Priests and Scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death: and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles, to be mocked, scourged, and crucified: and the third day He shall rise again. And they understood none of these things; and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said (St. Matt. xx.; St. Luke xviii.; St. Mark x.).*

A. Note here the circumstances of the Passion which are most impressed upon our Lord's mind.

(1) He shall be betrayed by His own Apostle to His enemies, the Chief Priests and Scribes; (2) they shall condemn Him to death; (3) they, the Rulers of His own people, shall deliver Him up to the Gentiles, to aliens who have no sympathy or kindness at all for Him; (4) to be mocked; (5) and scourged; (6) and crucified.

This short sentence includes the whole terrible story. Our Lord has every detail present to His mind and Heart.

B. Let us remember also that all this intimate and accurate and complete knowledge of every circumstance of His Sacred Passion has been present to our Saviour from the first moment of His Incarnation. And a great part of this overwhelming secret He has, no doubt, disclosed to His Most Holy Mother during those hours when after the work of the day they sat together in the evening in the Holy House at Nazareth. Then was her heart burning while He explained to her what was written concerning Him by Moses and the Prophets. For surely, if in the days of old the Lord, when about to chastise the crimes of Sodom, said: *Can I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?* (Genesis xviii.), we cannot believe that He would hide from Holy Mary all that He was about to do and she was about to share in—to the end, to the very end. Her grace was growing, her merit was being multiplied exceedingly every hour of her life by this foreknowledge.

The Sacred Passion was, therefore, not merely the work of one day and one night. It was lifelong. Every day and every hour He could most truly say, and she could unite with her Son's words: *My Heart hath expected, and is expecting, reproach and misery* (Psalm lxxviii.).

Has He not good reason to say to us, *Remember Me: Forget not the kindness of thy Surety?* (Ecclus. xxix.). Even if we do no more for Him, at the very least should not our remembrance of Him be lifelong? *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem (O Calvary), 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* (Psalm cxxxvi.).

C. *And they understood none of these things, and the word was hid from them.*

The inspired author of the Book of Wisdom says to God: *With what circumspection hast Thou judged Thy own children* (c. xii.). That is, with the most loving and compassionate care He considers every circumstance that is in their favour. But it is not only when He is judging, but at all times and everywhere we find our Lord full of this tender care and circumspection for His disciples and *the people who stand about* (St. John xi.). Though they at present understand not, yet He utters this clear prophecy of His Death and Resurrection, in order that afterwards when they call to mind how He had clearly foretold all that He was to suffer, their terrified souls may be strengthened by the remembrance of the prophecy.

He well knows, however, how troubled and full of fear their hearts are at this moment, and He takes care that His words do not so add to their terror as to do them harm. *The bruised reed He shall not break* (St. Matt. xii. 20). Therefore *this word was hid from them.*

D. *This word was hid from them.*

Consider too that there are times when, much against His will, our most compassionate Saviour is obliged to leave us in blindness and hide His words from us. When weeping over Jerusalem, His lament was: *If thou hadst known, but now these things are hidden from thy eyes* (St. Luke xix.). *He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them* (St. John xii.).

O Lord, chastise me in other ways; but not in Thy wrath by blindness of heart.

## STATION III.

*Then came to Him the mother of the sons of Zebedee with her two sons, adoring, and asking something of Him (St. Matt. xx. 20).*

*And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying: Master, we desire that whatsoever we shall ask, Thou wouldst do it for us. But He said to them: What would you that I should do for you? (St. Mark x. 35, 36).*

*And she said to Him (and they said): Grant to us that we may sit (that my two sons may sit) one on Thy right hand and one on Thy left hand in Thy glory (St. Matt. xx.; St. Mark x.).*

A. How fully St. Luke's words are verified: *They understood not the things that were said.* Our Lord is telling the story of His Passion in all its details, and eagerly hurrying on to suffering and death: but these two Apostles, with their mother, are full of desire to have joy and glory without the suffering, and are plotting secretly that they may have a larger and better share than their brethren. What a contrast, Lord Jesus, between the love of Thy humble Heart and the selfishness of ours! What a contrast, too, between these Apostles as they are now, and as they will be after the Sacred Passion has borne all its fruit in years to come, when this same John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, so often repeats in his venerable old age his golden sermon, "Little children, love one another".

B. How often our desires are like to theirs! We say indeed with Holy Church, *Nobis quoque peccatoribus*, that is, "Grant, O Lord, to us sinners some part and fellowship with Thy martyrs"; but our interpretation of the prayer not unfrequently is: "Grant us, O Lord, fellowship with Thy martyrs in Heaven"; yes! but if some fellowship with them in their sufferings here on earth is proposed to us as a necessary preparation for partnership with them in Heaven, are our hearts ready to accept the

conditions? Oh, no! "From their sufferings on earth, O Lord, deliver us."

C. *Master, we desire that whatsoever we shall ask Thou wouldst do it for us.* They want our Lord to bind Himself before He hears their petition. They forget how He knows all things, *looking into the hearts of men, into the most hidden parts* (Ecclus. xxiii.). They forget how He knew beyond Jordan the moment in which Lazarus died at Bethany.

Whenever we wish to ensnare any one by engaging him to promise in the dark, is not this a sure sign that our desire is evil? *He who does evil hates the light* (St. John iii.). Herod leaped into the trap when he swore to give to Salome, the dancing daughter of Herodias, whatever she might ask, without having heard her petition. Afterwards the King was sad; but *because of his oath*, and through a weak fear of what his guests would think, he committed the horrible murder. We must make no promises in the dark, still less sign documents, without knowing what we put our hand to, and to what we become liable. The Holy Spirit says to the man who has become surety for his friend: *Run about, make haste: stir up thy friend; give not sleep to thy eyes: neither let thy eyelids slumber. Deliver thyself—as a bird from the hand of the fowler* (Prov. vi.).

We must also bear in mind that if in an evil hour we have made a sinful promise, it is a greater sin to keep it, and a virtuous act to break it.

D. *He said to them, What would you that I should do to you?* Our Blessed Saviour knew their thought quite well, and what their petition was to be. If a father of a family were making known to his children heavy troubles that were come upon him, that he was to be disgraced, imprisoned, and heavily punished, and that, moreover, he was actually suffering acute pain from a very dangerous ailment, and if, immediately after his sad story, one of his children were to begin begging for some gratification and indulgence for himself, the father might well complain

of this ill-timed selfishness. But our Saviour, *mEEK and humble of Heart* (St. Matt. xi.), asks gently, *What would you that I should do to you?*

Sometimes the mere putting into words of such selfish petitions shows us how base and unworthy they are, and makes us ashamed of them.

E. Let us here reflect upon ourselves a little while. Our Blessed Lord is full of charity for us also. If He were now to say to us, *What would you that I should do to you?* how should we answer? When He said to the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas of Aquin, "You have written well of Me, Thomas, what reward shall I give you?" the answer was, "Nothing but Thyself, my Lord". To a similar question, another Saint made answer, *Aut pati, aut mori*—"Give me suffering or death, O Lord"; a third, "Not death, but suffering, my Lord".

When our Saviour was giving His gifts to St. Peter, the true-hearted Apostle put in a word for St. John. So must we, even in our prayers, shun selfishness, and when asking for ourselves remember the wants of others. Share thy morsel. *Eat thy bread with the hungry* (Tobias iv.).

#### STATION IV.

*And Jesus said to them: Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of? or be baptised with the baptism wherewith I am baptised? But they said to Him, We can. And Jesus saith to them: My chalice indeed you shall drink, but to sit on My right hand or My left is not Mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by My Father* (St. Mark x. 39, seq.; St. Matt. xx. 22, seq.).

A. *Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of?* We sometimes have aspirations after a profound humility, close union with our Lord in prayer, and ardent love at the time of Holy Communion. Our Lord might answer these desires with this question, *Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of?* Can you pay the price of the precious pearl

you covet? "*Negotiamini*," He said on the morrow to His disciples, *traffic till I come*. In our spiritual life we have to buy graces as we buy meat and drink for our natural life. And in both lives the rule laid down by St. Paul holds good. *He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly: and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap blessings* (2 Cor. ix.).

If we pay a good price by desires and sacrifices, we shall get large graces. If we spend very little, we shall get only a little. Our Father in Heaven is always much more liberal to us than we are to Him. He always gives us, as our Saviour tells us, more than full value for the price we pay—*good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over* (St. Luke vi.). But still there is a rule and measure to be followed. *For with the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again* (St. Matt. vii.). This is true of our dealings both with God and with men. Hence, when we expect to get some large grace, such as a difficult conversion, or a very fervent love, merely because we have said three Hail Marys, this may be more unreasonable than to expect to buy an estate and a mansion for three half-crowns.

B. *Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of?* Here is what sweetens wonderfully the sufferings of Christ's holy disciples; they know that they are being allowed to drink with their Master out of His bitter chalice. No Christian need ever suffer alone. For as St. Thomas writes in his hymn, *Se nascens dedit socium*. Our Saviour says, *My yoke is sweet* (St. Matt. xi.), because He was born to be yoked to each of us; to bear the burden of life with each. Every sorrow that we feel He has felt far more intensely; and thus sanctified and anointed our sorrow. Whenever we are chosen by God for any suffering, we are highly privileged and called to drink with our Saviour out of His own cup.

"O merciful Lord Jesus, to us sinners also grant some part and fellowship with Thy martyrs."

C. Or (can you) *be baptised with the baptism wherewith I am baptised?*

Holy Church recognises three baptisms — *flaminis, fluminis, sanguinis*, of desire, of water, of blood.

According to the teaching of theologians, a heathen who had never even heard of Baptism, if he makes a true act of contrition for his sins, and desires to do whatever is pleasing to God, by this act has an implicit desire of Baptism, and is raised to the state of grace.

Holy Church also honours as martyrs some who were never baptised by water, but were baptised in their own blood and therefore certainly in desire also. Whether in this latter case contrition is required, or merely attrition, is disputed, but it is considered quite certain that God will give the martyr all the requisite dispositions.

Oh, how wise are they who often make fervent acts of contrition, which so surely do the work of absolution!

D. Can you *be baptised with the baptism wherewith I am baptised?* Can you shed your blood? Certainly not, unless a special grace be given, such as the martyrs get. Satan sometimes troubles holy souls by putting this question, “Could you die for Christ?” and then himself answering, “No, you never could,” with the view of bringing in hopeless thoughts. The safe answer to such a temptation is, “Certainly not, unless God strengthens me; but I am sure that God can strengthen me, and will strengthen me, if I need the grace”.

E. *But they said to Him, We can.* These blessed Apostles soon after found out their mistake, and learned even to glory in their infirmity. But, at the same time, their answer came from a consciousness that they had much love for their Divine Master.

Holy Apostles of Christ, obtain for us some share of that heavenly fire, and a strong sense of our own weakness.

F. *Jesus saith to them: My chalice indeed you shall drink.* To His chosen ones, to those to whom He afterwards said,

*I will not now call you servants, but I have called you friends*, the grand and special promise that He makes is this: "You shall, I promise you, before you die, drink of My chalice". To His own Most Blessed Mother, as they conversed together in Nazareth, this, doubtless, was the assurance that He often repeated in order to console her, that she should be with Him to the end, and share His bitter chalice to the dregs. His golden promise afterwards to St. Paul was, *I will show him what great things he must suffer for My Name's sake* (Acts ix.). How blind then are we if we believe that every suffering is a calamity and a proof of God's wrath; and that prosperity, and nothing but prosperity, is a sure sign of His favour!

He sends suffering in His mercy to atone here for past sin, to do here quickly the slow work of Purgatory.

He sends suffering also to prevent sin; and to draw us out of sin, as suffering brought the Prodigal home to Him.

Lastly, He sends suffering to His chosen ones, as to St. Paul; and these chosen ones then become, like Himself, Saviours unto many.

G. Who, on the other hand, are so truly to be pitied as those who sin and prosper? sin and laugh? sin and feast sumptuously? sin and sleep soundly? *Why do the wicked live? holy Job asks. Why are they advanced and strengthened with riches? Their houses are secure and peaceable, and the rod of God is not upon them. Their cattle have conceived, and failed not: their cow has calved, and is not deprived of her fruit. Their little ones go out like a flock, and their children dance and play. They take the timbrel, and the harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to Hell* (c. xxi.).

H. *But to sit on My right or left hand is not Mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared by My Father.*

The sons of Zebedee, St. John and St. James, were cousins of our Lord—*His brethren*, as the Gospel calls them. Many, both in State and Church, have been unfaithful

stewards and given to relatives and friends places and offices which God never intended them to have.

The mother of the two Apostles was probably cherishing a fond hope that the rights of kin would secure for them high positions. Our Saviour sets a holier thought before them. "Though all power is given to Me, yet at the same time *I and the Father are one* (St. John x.). His will is My will; therefore My work on earth is to dispense offices not to kinsmen, but to those whom He has destined for them."

Thus, therefore, all delegates of our Lord in Church and State are to be wise and faithful stewards, and not to give to relatives and friends places which God has not intended them to have.

#### STATION V.

*And the ten hearing it, were moved to indignation against the two brethren, and began to be much displeased with James and John* (St. Mark x.; St. Matt. xx.).

A. Who told the ten this news which displeased them so much, and made them indignant? We know not. That it was not our Blessed Saviour, we may doubtless be quite sure. St. James says truly that the tongue is *a restless evil; a world of iniquity*. What do I gain by running about and telling others news that makes them angry, and bitter, and full of uncharitable thoughts?

The Psalmist says: *I am partner with all who fear Thee, O Lord* (Psalm cxviii.). How wise it is to traffic in this way! I multiply my own graces by being glad at the good done by others. I become partner in their good. Surely a most easy and pleasant way of growing rich in grace is to become partners with the holy. Our Lord has, in His infinite goodness, given us this attractive method of winning grace. Tobias invited to his table those who feared God, and thus became a partner in their holiness (c. ii.). But what madness it is, when we have already our own many sins weighing us down, to increase our load a thousand-fold by becoming partners in the sins

of others. If my tongue utters words that make ten other men bitter and angry or uncharitable, by that word I become partner with ten other sinners.

B. *The ten*, however, had no cause to be angry, or troubled. No harm was to come to them. The prayer of James and John had not prevailed. If James and John had secured to themselves the best places unfairly, Peter and the others might have been disturbed; but they have lost nothing, and the sons of Zebedee have gained nothing. The only sufferers so far are the two who made this selfish petition. The ten suffer no harm till they become angry, and so harm themselves. They ought to have pitied James and John, and prayed for them that our Lord might renew a right spirit within them. This is what they would certainly have done in similar circumstances later on in their lives, after the coming down of the Holy Ghost. And this is what we must do.

*I say to you that hear: Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that calumniate you* (St. Luke vi.). This invaluable secret our Lord whispers into every soul that will hear.

“Grant us, O Lord, grace to be among those who listen to Thy voice.”

“I never knew what it was to be light-hearted,” a young man said in the flower of his youth, “till I was induced to practise this counsel of our Lord by praying earnestly for all who annoyed me. I now have not one enemy in the whole world.”

The devil will be very loth to bring annoyances to those who turn them into precious pearls by this charitable method of praying earnestly for those who ill treat them.

## STATION VI.

*But Jesus called them to Him, and said: You know that the princes of the Gentiles lord it over them; and they that are greater exercise power over them. It shall not be so among you: but whoever will be greater among you let him be your minister. And he that shall be first among you shall be your servant (St. Matt. xx. 25—27).*

*A. The princes of the Gentiles lord it over them.*

*Væ victis*—"Woe to the conquered," was a received maxim in the old world. The conqueror was to crush the conquered mercilessly, to heap shame and sorrow on them, in order to add pomp to his own triumph.

*Let our strength be the law of justice, the men of the world say, for that which is feeble is found to be nothing worth (Wisdom ii.).*

*The wild ass is the lion's prey in the desert, so also the poor are devoured by the rich. And as humility is an abomination to the proud, so also the rich man abhorreth the poor (Ecclus. xiii.).*

*Man when he was in honour did not understand (Psalm xlviii.).* That is, when a man is placed on a pinnacle, in a high position, pride often renders him giddy and most foolish. He acts as if he were no longer a man, but a god, and thus becomes as low as the brute beast. *He is compared to senseless beasts, and is become like to them (Psalm xlviii.).* What wonder that God established that rule: *To him that is little, mercy is granted, but the mighty shall be mightily tormented! (Wisdom vi.).*

On this point, as on so many others, Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, has made *all things new* (Apoc. xxi.). One of the greatest miracles of the Christian Church is that in private family life, and in public life, and in the Church, they that are first are so often seen serving their brethren. *He that shall be first shall be your servant.*

## SCENE II.

## OUTSIDE JERICO.

## STATION I.

*Now it came to pass when He drew nigh to Jericho, that a certain man sat by the way begging (St. Luke xviii. 35). And they came to Jericho. And as he went out of Jericho with His disciples and a very great multitude, Bartimeus, the blind man, the son of Timeus, sat by the way begging (St. Mark x. 46).*

*And when they went out of Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. And behold two blind men sitting by the way (St. Matt. xx. 29, 30).*

I. Observe. *When He drew nigh to Jericho (St. Luke xviii.). As He went out of Jericho (St. Mark x.). When He went out from Jericho (St. Matt. xx.).*

St. Chrysostom, in his Preface to St. Matthew, observes that if the Evangelists had agreed in every small detail, enemies would have said that they simply copied one another; whereas now, their discrepancies help to prove that they are independent witnesses. These discrepancies, however, when carefully studied, can generally be brought sufficiently into harmony. If we knew all the circumstances, we should easily reconcile the narratives.

In this instance, besides this discrepancy: *When He drew nigh to Jericho (St. Luke) and as He went out (St. Mark)*, we have also this other:

II. *A certain man sat by the way begging (St. Luke); Behold two blind men sitting by the way (St. Matt.); Bartimeus, the blind man, sat by the way begging (St. Mark).*

Were there then two blind men or one? Some commentators think three in all; one as they went in, two as they came out. All agree that there were two, at least, and that probably Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, was more known than the other, and is therefore specially mentioned.

With regard to the question whether our Lord worked the miracle before going into Jericho, or as He came out, some modern writers offer this suggestion. There were, they say, two towns of Jericho close to each other, one the old town, destroyed by Josue and rebuilt by Hiel of Bethel, who, according to Josue's prophecy, lost his first-born son when he laid the foundations, and his youngest when he set up the gates (3 Kings xvi. 34).

The other, the new town, the magnificent work of Herod the Great and his son, Archelaus. If the miracle was worked between these two towns, it might be said to be as He came out of the old town, and as He was going into the more important new town.

Another answer is given by Father à Lapede and others, that the blind man mentioned by St. Luke begged for his cure when our Lord was entering, but did not obtain it till next day when He was going out. But perhaps the best solution is Father Coleridge's, who thinks that there were two cures, one as our Lord went in (St. Luke), and the other as He came out (St. Mark), and that St. Matthew, according to his usual practice, mentions the two together, intending to record what was substantial and important without emphasising time or place.

Jericho, with the large plain round it which stretches from the mountains of Judea to the Jordan, was like a green spot in a desert. On account of the abundance and variety of its fruit-trees, it was called "the garden of perfumes". It is said that when snow was falling in Jerusalem, the inhabitants of Jericho could wear their summer clothing. The town is supposed to have stood about six or seven miles from the Jordan. Scarcely a vestige remains above ground at the present day. The English Jordan Hotel, the Russian Hospice, and a few huts now represent this ancient city of merchants.

## STATION II.

*And when he (the blind man) heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant; and they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by (St. Luke xviii. 36, 37).*

A. *He heard the multitude.* St. Mark says, *a very great multitude.* Our Blessed Lord's Sacred Heart is drawing as many as He can to Him on this last journey, *as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings (St. Matt. xxiii.).* He is multiplying works of mercy, knowing, as He said Himself, that *the night cometh in which no man can work (St. John ix.).* Are we imitating Him? As life passes are we growing more and more heedful of St. Peter's warning word: *Wherefore, brethren, labour the more that by good works you make your calling and election sure? (2 St. Peter i.).*

B. *They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by.* How many, alas! there are who, if told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, would give no heed! They

have other things to mind: their yoke of oxen; their farm; their wedding. When the great vision of the Lord sitting on His throne burst upon the eyes of Isaias, and then passed away, he exclaimed after it was gone: *Woe is me! because I held my peace: because I am a man of unclean lips* (c. vi.). Alas! alas! what shall a Christian say when his day of privilege here on earth is past? When he recalls to mind during the long leisure of eternity that in his case it was not *Jesus of Nazareth passing by*, once or twice, or at distant intervals; but always, every day and every night abiding with him, close to him, within the holy tabernacle. *Woe is me! because I held my peace*, and did not speak to Him! And when the tolling of the bell, or the voice of a friend reminded me that Jesus of Nazareth was about to appear on the altar and to show forth His Death again in the Holy Mass, *Woe is me! I held my peace*, and went away to be busy with trifles which I preferred. Alas! now it is too late. *The harvest is past; the summer is ended, and we are not saved* (Jerem. viii.).

## STATION III.

*Who, when he had heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, began to cry out and to say: O Lord, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And many rebuked him that he might hold his peace; but he cried a great deal the more: O Lord, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me* (St. Mark x.; St. Matt. xx.).

A. "Where there is a will there is a way," we say. When a man really wants to be cured he knows how to ask for it. We have all sufficient ability to make this blind man's prayer: *Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!* or, better still, *Jesus, Son of Mary, have mercy on me!* And, oh, how well spent is time given to such a cry! Who ever persevered in that cry and was disappointed?

We have only to practise ourselves till we have learned to *ask in faith, nothing wavering*; so St. James tells

us. *For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried about by the wind. Therefore, let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord (c. i., 6, 7).* It is then essential that we persevere till we can ourselves hope and trust that our prayer will be heard.

B. But *many rebuked him that he might hold his peace.*

So is it with us. Many unseen spirits, who pretend to be friendly and to advise us well, counsel us to give up our prayer and assure us that it is useless. This happens to all who begin to cry out for mercy. *Why, O Lord, the Psalmist exclaims, why are they multiplied that afflict me? Many are they who rise up against me. Many say to my soul, There is no salvation for him in his God (Psalm iii.).* But, taught from above, this afflicted servant of God knew better. His answer was: *But Thou, O Lord, art my Protector, my glory, and the lifter-up of my head. I have cried to the Lord with my voice, and He hath heard me from His holy hill; that is, from Calvary. For Calvary is now His holy hill.*

C. How good a grace was given to Bartimeus and his comrade! How glad they were afterwards of their pious obstinacy! *He cried a great deal the more.* St. Ignatius of Loyola lays down for us all this golden rule, that if urged strongly by unseen wicked spirits to break off our prayer as useless, we should always, on the contrary, prolong it resolutely and cry out *a great deal the more.* If we adopt this rule, the lying spirits very soon give over tormenting us with such hopeless thoughts. For to them it is gall and wormwood to be conquered by such inferior creatures as we are. *Resist the devil and he will fly from you (St. James iv.).*

D. Contrast the hearts of even good men with the Heart of our Lord. Men are tyrannical, and insist that the blind shall hold their peace and not disturb Jesus. But He is glad indeed to be disturbed in this way. *Come to Me,* He says, and He means His word, *Come to Me all you who labour and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you (St. Matt. xi.).* Come to Me, not once only, not seven times, nor seventy times seven times, but whenever you are burdened.

His name is Jesus, Saviour. This name He has to earn by saving. His one work is *to seek and to save them that are lost* (St. Matt. xviii.). The physician is, as has been said above, on the look-out for the sick, the brave seaman in the life-boat is intent on those drowning. Even so, our Blessed Saviour is ever looking for the lost sheep; one whose soul wants healing and saving.

## STATION IV.

*And Jesus standing still, commanded him to be called. And they called the blind man, saying to him: Be of better comfort; arise, He calleth thee; who, casting off his garment, leaped up, and came to Him* (St. Mark x. 49, 50).

A. *Be of better comfort.*

Were they who took this message the same who just now were rebuking the blind man for the noise he was making? They may have been others more tender-hearted, or they may have been the same, who began now to see, as we say in familiar language, "which way the wind is blowing". How often it happens when men are raising a cry, that they instantly change if the master or some leading man boldly takes the other side!

B. When we have been praying long for a grace, and the tempter has been multiplying discouraging thoughts, suddenly our good Angel begins to speak, saying: *Be of better comfort; arise, He calleth thee.*

Oh! how truly wise is the counsel of Ecclesiasticus: *Make not haste in time of clouds. Wait on God in patience; join thyself to God and endure, that thy life may be increased in the latter end. In thy sorrow endure, and in thy humiliation keep patience. Believe God, and He will recover thee. Ye that fear the Lord, wait for His mercy. Ye that fear the Lord, believe Him, and your reward shall not be made void. Ye that fear the Lord, hope in Him, and mercy shall come to you for your delight* (c. ii.).

What moments are there in life so full of contentment

and tranquil joy as those when, after a season of desolation, our Lord or His good Angel begins to speak again words of comfort? *Thou shalt say in that day : I will give thanks to Thee, O Lord, for Thou wast angry with me : Thy wrath is turned away, and Thou hast comforted me* (Isaias xii.).

C. Observe how meek and gentle our Lord remains, amid the mistakes and faults of His followers. When the sons of Zebedee made their selfish petition, and now when His disciples are officiously rebuking the blind, He does not show anger, nor ever swerve from His course of patient charity.

D. *Who, casting off his garment, leaped up, and came to Him.* The blind man did not need to be called twice. His cloak which he wanted as a protection against all manner of weather was now an incumbrance. He cast it aside and leaped up, and, guided no doubt by some who either shared our Lord's compassion, or were now sorry for having rebuked him, soon stood before the face of Jesus. What a daybreak is coming to this forlorn sufferer after the long and dreary night !

E. But, alas ! how often has our Lord called me and called me in vain, and I never leaped up or even rose reluctantly, but hardened my heart and would not come.

F. How easy it would be to rise quickly in the morning, if we would listen to our good Angel reminding us that Jesus, the Hidden God, is on the altar, waiting for us and calling us. Our hearts would answer in gladness, *Deus, Deus meus*—"O God, my God, to Thee do I wake at dawn of day".

#### STATION V.

*And Jesus answering, said, What wilt thou that I should do to thee ? And the blind man said : Rabboni, that I may see. And Jesus saith to him : Receive thy sight ; go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he saw and followed Him in the way* (St. Mark x. 51 ; St. Luke xviii. 41).

*And Jesus stood and called them, and said, What will you that I do for you? They say to Him, Lord, that our eyes be opened. And Jesus having compassion on them, touched their eyes. And immediately they saw and followed Him (St. Matt. xx.).*

*And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God (St. Luke xviii. 43).*

**A. *What wilt thou that I should do to thee?***

“*Attendite*”—look well, and listen attentively, and mark how our Lord, though He knows all things, yet, according to His constant practice, insists on hearing from our own lips what we wish for. Because He loves us so truly and His delights are to be with us, in order to oblige us to stay with Him and converse with Him, He acts as if He knew nothing till we tell Him all.

**B. *What wilt thou that I do?*** When God appeared to Solomon and said, *Ask what thou wilt that I should give thee*, Solomon's choice was, *Give me wisdom*. And God, well pleased with the choice, said, *Because this choice hath pleased thy heart, and thou hast not asked riches and wealth and glory, nor the lives of them that hate thee, nor many days of life, but hast asked wisdom and knowledge—wisdom and knowledge are granted to thee. And I will give thee riches and wealth and glory, so that none of the kings before thee, nor after thee, shall be like thee (2 Paral. i.).* This is what our Blessed Saviour has said to us also: *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added (St. Matt. vi.);* that is, meat and drink, and the other things of this earth.

The earnest prayer and craving of some men is for evil things, as when Herodias asked for the head of John the Baptist. Others desire vehemently money or better health. St. Augustine writes how he in childhood prayed sometimes most fervently that he might not be chastised for some fault. The strong desires of our heart are so powerful with God that they should not be wasted on things earthly; they should be kept to do the violence

necessary for winning great graces and the Kingdom of Heaven.

C. *And the blind man said, Rabboni, that I may see.*

*Rabboni* was the word used by Magdalen when our Lord appeared to her at His tomb. The interpreters translate it by, "My Master," or, "Master mine". They consider it a more reverential word than Rabbi. Perhaps, too, there is more heart and affection in it.

*Rabboni, that I may see. Cor Jesu amans*—"Loving Heart of Jesus, that I may see," see myself and see Thee; see at last all the hidden sins that have been a barrier between my soul and Thee; see all my own past sins with contrition and with hope, so that I may now find it impossible to look any longer on the faults of my neighbours; and then, at length, see also all Thy loveliness, all Thy compassion, all Thy charity, that I may love Thee, and love all men for Thy sake.

D. *And Jesus having compassion on them, touched their eyes.* Observe this compassion of our Blessed Saviour. How much more is He moved to great pity as He looks on the blindness of our souls! *Thou sayest, I am made rich, and have need of nothing! and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. I counsel thee, anoint thy eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see* (Apoc. iii.).

E. *And immediately they saw*; and the first object that met their awakened eye-sight was the sacred face of Jesus and His eyes of mercy. Oh, what a surprise! what joy unspeakable!

Yet what is this joy and this surprise but a faint image of what is coming, if all be well with us, when we pass from this dark world and wake up in the admirable light, and find the eye of our Lord resting on us in mercy and great love, and His Sacred Heart saying, *Come, thou blessed of My Father?*

F. The first gaze of those dead eyes restored to life was for their God. Our God loves first-fruits. Oh, how He yearns that the first years of childhood may be kept

sacred for Him! How consoled too is His suffering Heart if when we wake up from the blindness of sleep, the first glances of our souls are turned to Him!

Therefore it is that Satan makes such a persevering struggle to rob our Father in Heaven of the souls of children, those first-fruits in which He has so much delight. With what a gratitude will our Saviour welcome us if we fight a good fight for His little ones and are able to say with holy Job: *I broke the jaws of the wicked man, and out of his teeth I took away the prey* (c. xxix.).

G. *And he followed Him, glorifying God.* The blind men did not forget, as the nine lepers had forgotten, to give thanks and glorify God. They followed our Lord, it is said, to Bethany; and the Apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus, which may contain many true statements, records that a few days later Bartimeus spoke out loudly in defence of Jesus in the Prætorium of Pilate, testifying courageously, "I was blind, He touched me, and I see".

H. *And the people gave praise to God.*

How often and often we receive greater graces from God than this cure! Every absolution, each Holy Communion, each assistance at Holy Mass, the grace of our Lady's protection. Then also, each time we are helped to conquer a grievous temptation what hearty thanks do we not owe to our Father in Heaven, Who is always bestowing favours, and always preserving us from evil?

And again, we must learn from these Galileans and these Jews also to glorify God and praise Him for the graces and blessings He bestows on others around us; for the conversion of sinners, the call of heathens to the Church, the holiness and zeal we meet with among the faithful. Indeed, if our thanksgiving is to keep pace with the goodness of our God to us, we must carry out thoroughly the wish of Holy Church by praising and thanking Him *semper et ubique*—at all times and in every place.

## SCENE III.

## JERICHO. ZACHEUS.

## STATION I.

*And entering in, He walked [was walking] through Jericho*  
(St. Luke xix. 1).

A. Look at our Lord. Watch Him attentively. He is not fixing His thoughts on the fine buildings, or the fragrant gardens, or the luxuriant orchards; but walking with His face and His Heart set towards Jerusalem and Calvary. But meanwhile, as He goes, He is always seeking and saving those that were lost.

B. Men travel now so rapidly that they look upon a journey as a necessary and unavoidable break in their work, which they intend to resume when they come to the end of it. It is not so with our Saviour. His day of travelling is always a working day. He travels slowly, on foot, surrounded by His disciples, teaching them and healing the sick, and converting sinners. St. Peter afterwards, in the house of Cornelius, the first convert from the Gentiles, described these journeys of our Lord in these words: *He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil; for God was with Him* (Acts x. 38).

Some pious persons pray at Mass in the morning that our Lord will during the day throw some one in their way to whom they may do good. An officer used a few years ago to tell how some words said to him by a chance companion in a railway carriage, as he was going to Southampton to sail for India, sank into his soul like a good seed, and bore fruit some years later when he was received into the Church. Many earnest prayers for the living and the dead may be said on a journey, and the providence of God may bless us by bringing near to us some one to whom we can give valuable help. To be ready for such golden opportunities we ought to study

our religion well, and know how to remove skilfully prejudices and fears that stand in the way of grace. How many souls St. Francis Xavier won while journeying!

## STATION II.

*And behold there was a certain man named Zacheus, who was the chief of the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus, Who He was, and he could not because of the crowd, because he was low of stature (vv. 2, 3).*

The district round Jericho was exceptionally productive, and was a great centre of commerce. There was a flourishing trade, especially in fruits and balsams. A large revenue, therefore, went from thence to the coffers of the Roman Emperors, who, much to the disgust of the Jews, had laid on them heavy taxes. There were, therefore, many collectors of taxes in Jericho, and Zacheus was their chief. He was himself rich. For the Romans took care to select for such a post rich men who could sometimes advance the money wanted by the Government, and also make up deficiencies when there were defaulters. The Chief Collector had plenty of opportunities of repaying himself with interest by extortion. No wonder that the Jews hated and despised these tax-gatherers in the pay of Rome. Probably they often had reason to chafe under the injustice practised. For we observe that when the publicans came to St. John to be baptised, and in their turn asked him, *Master, what shall we do?* he said to them, *Do nothing more than that which is appointed to you (St. Luke ii.).* That is to say, do not extort anything beyond the appointed tax.

A. *And he sought to see Jesus.*

The Chief Collector is not moved by a mere idle curiosity. Though he has not yet seen Jesus, our Blessed Lord has seen him and fixed His Heart on him, and has begun to draw him. *With an everlasting love I have loved thee, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee (Jerem. xxxi.).*

“Prevent, O Lord, that is, forestall our actions by Thy holy inspirations; and turn Thine eyes of mercy also upon us.”

B. Follow Zacheus and watch the many eager attempts he makes to see Christ Jesus. But what can one of low stature do in a large crowd such as this? A faint-

hearted man whose desires are not strong would give up the attempt, and go away to find comfort in a good dinner, or in counting his money, or in some pleasant conversation. But Zacheus has a strong desire. He really wishes and wills, and has a share of that *beata violentia*, as St. Ambrose calls it, which bears off the Kingdom of Heaven.

A weak desire for grace falls far short of the "holy violence" with which the saints fought their good fight.

Blessed Mother of God, obtain for us a strong will for good, that we may continue to ask, to seek and to knock till we receive and find, and till the door is opened to us.

Call to mind certain desires we have felt at times at Holy Mass which seemed so fervent that we wondered why they were not granted. How long did they last? We went to our breakfast, we read the news, we busied ourselves about some trifles, and we found our consolation and contentment in these things. The passing desires of the morning have vanished. Strong desires do not pass away so quickly. Rachel yearning for her lost children could not be consoled by other things.

### STATION III.

*And running before he climbed up into a sycamore-tree, that he might see Jesus, for He was to pass that way (v. 4).*

A. *For He was to pass that way.*

When Herod wished to see the child Jesus, not in order to adore Him but to kill Him, our Lord knew well how to elude his search. The Wise Men were directed to go home by another road. So now, too, our Saviour, Who knows all things, could, if so minded, change His route and disappoint the chief of the publicans. But He has no will to do that. He Himself is inspiring Zacheus and directing his endeavours. When we are doing work that God has inspired and chosen for us, He assists us and

blessees our efforts throughout it. But if we begin without Him, we may have to go on without Him.

*He climbed up into a sycamore-tree.*

Those learned in natural history tell us that what is here called a sycamore-tree, was a fig-tree peculiar to Jericho and other warm districts of Judea, which had leaves like those of the mulberry. According to these writers, the name sycamore would simply mean in the Greek, the fig-mulberry. It is said to have had a short stem or bole, and spreading branches.

B. Zacheus being a man of business has a practical turn, and sees ways and means that duller men might not think of. He discovers a commanding position and loses no time in taking short cuts to secure it.

Contemplate this rich man ; the Chief of the publicans running and climbing the tree, in order to see Jesus of Nazareth passing by. What will his servants think of him ? and the sub-collectors ? and the Jews above all, who have so strong a contempt for the whole race of tax-gatherers ? How mercilessly will they scoff at the little man, even as Saul's daughter Michol when she saw her husband David dancing before the Ark, *despised him in her heart !* (2 Kings vi.). He, a rich and important man, ought to be watching the procession from his carriage, or mounted on a fine horse, or from the window of a noble mansion, but not climb a tree like a beggar-boy.

But one stronger than all these human critics is drawing Zacheus. *No one can come to Me*, our Blessed Lord said, *except the Father Who hath sent Me draw him* (St. John vi.). His Father in Heaven is drawing him, and our Lord is secretly drawing him, and the blessed angels are watching, for there is soon to be great joy among them.

All ye holy angels and saints, pray for us that the fear of men and human respect may not deter us from doing all that is necessary to get near our Lord.

C. We sometimes cry out to our Lady: "Turn thine eyes of mercy towards us and show us the blessed fruit of thy womb ;" and yet the face of our Lord seems to remain

still hidden from us. How is this? When David pardoned Absalom and let him come back from exile, he still gave this command: *Let him return into his house, and let him not see my face. So Absalom returned into his house, and saw not the King's face* (2 Kings xiv.). So is it oftentimes with God's children; their sin is forgiven, but till they have passed through their Purgatory and the last farthing has been paid, they cannot see the face of God their Father. But there are fervent souls who cannot resign themselves to this hard lot. *This is the generation of them that seek Him; of them that seek the face of the God of Jacob* (Psalm xxiii.). Like Zacheus, these men of desires never rest till they have raised themselves above the crowd that seems to shut them out hopelessly from the sight of our Lord, and their strong yearnings soon prevail with Jesus. *For not from His heart hath He afflicted nor cast off the children of men* (Lament. iii.).

## STATION IV.

*And when Jesus was come to the place, looking up He saw him, and said to him: Zacheus, make haste and come down, for this day I must abide in thy house* (v. 5).

A. *Make haste and come down.*

Most sudden, most unexpected, most surprising was this invitation to the mind of the publican; but on the part of our Lord it has been an eternal determination of His everlasting love. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee. Sursum corda.* Let us lift up our hearts and contemplate this long-reaching foresight of God—if we may so speak. Already He has made so many plans for our eternity in Heaven, and He is busy now with our future. How He will surprise us with new and most unexpected wonders of His boundless love. *I go to prepare a place for you* (St. John xiv.). *Let all flesh bless His holy name for ever, yea for ever and for ever* (Psalm cxliv.).

B. *Who is like the Lord our God, Who looketh down*

on the low things in Heaven and on earth? Who among all the wise men or great men of Judea or Galilee would have thought this morning that the eye of God was resting with unspeakable love on this Chief of the abhorred publicans? Holy writers counsel us to look on the sinner as a possible saint, one who may be God's child in Heaven; and on our present enemy as a future friend. This method of thinking makes charity much more easy.

C. *This day I must abide in thy house.*

Notice, too, the liberality of God; how He gives *in good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over*. Simeon had a promise that he should see the Saviour that was to come. He not only saw Him, but was allowed also to hold Him in his arms and to know and foretell His future. Zacheus craves just to see the face of Christ and His dress and His demeanour; he is given all this and much more. St. Augustine apostrophises Zacheus somewhat in this way:

*You long to see Him passing by the way:  
But He to make His home with you to-day.*

#### STATION V.

*And he made haste and came down to receive Him with joy*  
(v. 6).

A. The blind man did not, as we have seen, stay to be called twice when our Saviour asked for him. Neither did Magdalen when Martha whispered, *The Master is come and calleth for thee*. Zacheus is as prompt as they. *Zacheus, make haste and come down. And he made haste and came down.* What a contrast with those who when invited to our Lord's great feast, and though urged again and again, and even threatened with the worst consequences—*Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you*—(St. John vi.) begin *all at once to make excuses* (St. Luke xiv.). Shall we also make excuses? Our Lord says to us, *Will you also go away?* Oh, may we have grace to answer at once with St. Peter: *O Lord, to whom shall we*

go, if we leave you? *For Thou hast the words of eternal life* (St. John vi.).

*He made haste to come down.* St. Ambrose contemplating the scene and seeing Zacheus among the figs, says, "The ripe fruit drops at once from the tree at a slight touch".

B. *And received Him with joy.*

King Herod *was greatly troubled and all Jerusalem with him;* when the Wise Men announced that Jesus was born among them. The tax-gatherer receives Jesus with great joy. Simeon was filled with holy contentment and peace when allowed to hold the Divine Child in his arms, and was now willing to leave this world at once. *Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, in peace.* Our Blessed Lady, when her Son was still in her womb, already said: *My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.* How her joy and exultation and love grew day by day, as she knew Him more intimately! What disposition prevails in us when our Saviour is coming? when death seems near? or when He is coming to make His abode with us in Holy Communion? Are we frightened, and troubled, and do we wish to escape? Are we indifferent? Are we very glad and joyful? St. Paul wishes all to rejoice always, because *the Lord is near* (Philipp. iv.). Surely more especially when He is coming to us in Holy Communion. Is it not a sad sight for the blessed angels to see us approach to our Blessed Saviour with a heavy heart and most unwillingly? *He loves a cheerful giver* (2 Cor. ix.), and must be greatly consoled, if, like Zacheus, we give Him a welcome with much joy.

#### STATION VI.

*And when all saw it, they murmured, saying that He was gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner* (v. 7).

A. *And when all saw it they murmured.* Does the word *all* necessarily include every one who was following Him in this last journey, or does it only apply to the crowd of townspeople who were also there? Not every one

assuredly, for clearly we must make many exceptions. His Apostles were already aware of His predilection for sinners. St. Magdalen would not join in any murmuring against Him, still less murmur because He went to abide with a sinner. It is even possible and not improbable that our Blessed Lady was with Him on this last journey, as the end was so near. For we know for certain that she was sometimes with Him during His Public Life (St. Mark iii.); and we have no certainty that she was not often near Him, looking at His sacred Face and listening to every word, her holy heart always united with every prayer and desire of His Sacred Heart. Some holy writers assume that she followed Him all through His Apostolic Life.

B. *They murmured, saying that He was gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner.*

So did the Pharisee murmur when Christ allowed Magdalen the sinner to touch Him.

So, too, when the blind man defended Jesus, the Pharisees at once burst out against him as a sinner. *Thou wast wholly born in sins, and dost thou teach us?* (St. John ix.).

How strange, how sad a sight it must be to God's angels when one sinner condemns another sinner, because he is a sinner! For sad indeed it is even to us if a blind man scorns other men because they are blind. And yet so prone are we to judge and condemn in others what we do ourselves, that our Blessed Lord, in order to rescue us from this habit of intolerant pride and wickedness, has actually bound Himself by this most strange covenant: *Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned* (St. Luke vi.). Can this be true? we might exclaim. If one of our judges were to say to murderers found guilty and sentenced: "You will be set free if you do not judge and condemn other murderers," there would be an uproar throughout the country. The press would be unanimous in an outcry that if such wanton indulgence is shown to murderers, the country will soon swarm with them. And yet our Blessed

Lord sees that we are so madly bent on judging and condemning others for the very sins we have committed and are committing ourselves, that He solemnly pledges Himself to this covenant, that if we judge not we shall not be judged. What can be more stupidly wicked and insane than while asking for mercy for myself which I badly want, to condemn others whose case is not at all worse than my own, if as bad?

C. Again and again let us read over and ponder on St. Paul's words to the Romans: *Wherefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whoever thou art, that judgest. For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself. For thou doest the same things which thou judgest. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them that do these things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?* (ii. 1, 3).

D. *Thou doest the same things which thou judgest.* A proud man is very indignant at the pride of another. A strong-willed tyrannical man inveighs loudly against the despotic tyranny of another. Immoral men outside the Church are quite sure that convents and monasteries are full of immorality.

E. I am a sinner, and if I wish our Lord to look with mercy on me, and come to me, I must of necessity wish Him to look with mercy also on all other sinners and to visit them likewise.

If from anger or resentment I except even one sinner, or one neighbour who, I think, has wronged me, I by that exception exclude myself from all chance of mercy, *For, if you will not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive you your offences* (St. Matt. vi.).

#### STATION VII

*But Zacheus, standing, said to the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor: and if I have wronged any man, I restore him four-fold* (v. 8).

In certain cases the Jew who stole was required to give back four-fold, or even more. *If any man steal an ox or a sheep and kill*

or sell it, he shall restore five oxen for one ox, and four sheep for one sheep (Exodus xxii.). In most cases only double (Exodus xxii.). Sometimes only one-fifth over and above the sum defrauded (Levit. vi. 5).

A. Did our Lord speak any words to Zacheus to work this great conversion? It is possible. To the Scribes and Pharisees He had said: *Give alms, and behold all things are clean to you* (St. Luke xi.). As a publican's danger would be covetousness and hard-heartedness, our Saviour may with some words have taught the contrite collector on this point: we are quite sure that He spoke inwardly at least to his heart.

However this may be, we have a great lesson to learn from this admirable penitent. For we confess our sins and are absolved and say the short penance enjoined, and sometimes go away content as if we had fulfilled all justice. We forget two lessons which Zacheus teaches forcibly.

1. *First, that there is commonly a reparation still due.*

We know that oftentimes there will be a long Purgatory in the next world for sins absolved in this. Why so? Are they not forgiven? Yes, they are forgiven; but there are two degrees in forgiveness. A criminal condemned to death is sometimes pardoned and set absolutely free. Sometimes he is so far forgiven that he shall not die, but there is a commutation annexed; he is to have penal servitude for a term of years. God also forgives in these two ways. Sometimes, as in Baptism, He forgives absolutely and entirely, so that the forgiven sinner, if he died immediately after the Baptism, would enter Heaven at once. If an adult who has sinned has even the sorrow of attrition for all his sins and receives Baptism, all the sins are forgiven and all the punishment remitted. If the adult at the time of his Baptism was not sorry for some mortal sin but still attached to it, the sacrament could have no good effect till he becomes sorry, at least with the sorrow of attrition; then the effects would be produced.

With regard to sins committed after Baptism and consequently with more light, the absolution has not necessarily as full an effect as Baptism has. The guilt is forgiven, but often with a commutation; that is to say, the grievous sin is forgiven and the penitent will never be cast away for that sin; but a debt of punishment remains of which the last farthing must, in one way or another, be paid.

The sanctity and the justice and the charity of God require that a reparation be made. I say the charity of God, because His very love for us compels Him to wish that we should be so contrite for sin, and love so much as to wish ourselves to make abundant reparation. He said when defending Magdalen, *Many sins are forgiven her because she loves much*; and He added: *But to whom less is forgiven he loveth less*. That is to say, when there is very abundant contrition the forgiveness is very full and may be equal to a Baptism. But if for want of this abundant contrition, as, for instance, when the absolved penitent has only the sorrow of attrition, the forgiveness is not so ample, then he loves less, because the effects of his past sins leave a cloud between his soul and God. This cloud can only be removed by reparation and atonement made in a suitable way. Blessed they who delay not to make this reparation here.

Let one or two instances show what need there often is of reparation. St. James compares a word let fall from the tongue to a spark of fire, and adds concerning this spark, *What a great wood it kindles* (c. iii.), that is, what a great conflagration may grow out of this spark. A penitent, therefore, may have spoken in presence of several persons a word of serious detraction or calumny which fills their minds with very uncharitable judgments, and that uncharitable impression may before long spread from them to others. If in such a case he merely makes his accusation in confession, "I spoke a very uncharitable word," and then receives absolution and says the prayer

given to him as a penance, has he thereby entirely undone all the bad effects of his sin ?

So, too, if one speaks an angry word to another ; such a word, we know, often rankles a long time and gives very great pain, and occasions much sin. In a case like this does the short penance given at confession make good all the damage done ?

It is clear that our Blessed Saviour did not think so. For He requires that if when we are coming to the altar we remember that our neighbour has anything against us, we lay down our gift and go first to be reconciled with our neighbour and then come back to make our offering to God. By many of our sins we injure not only our God, but also God's image, man. As therefore God tells us plainly that he who touches any of us touches Him in the apple of His eye, it is quite evident that He cannot be properly reconciled to us unless, besides confessing our guilt to Him, we also make satisfaction to our injured neighbour.

Surely then, at our confession, we greatly need a share of this wonderful grace given to Zacheus on the day of his first conversion: *If I have wronged any man of anything, I will restore four-fold.*

*If I have wronged any man.* I must go back and examine carefully and find out all whom I have wronged, and make a good reparation to each.

I have wronged God my Father by not giving Him praise, reverence, and service which I owed Him.

I have wronged my crucified Lord Jesus, and His most loving Heart, by not giving Him the gratitude and love He deserves.

I have wronged the Holy Spirit by grieving Him *Who asketh for us with unspeakable groanings* (Romans viii.).

I have wronged our Blessed Lady, who has suffered so much for me, and been so true a Mother to me.

I have wronged my good Angel, who has taken so much care of me.

I have wronged the holy and patient souls in Purgatory by forgetting and neglecting them in their sore distress, when I could so easily have given them unspeakable relief.

I have wronged my benefactors here on earth, who have been most good to me and had no return.

I have wronged many others by making salvation more difficult for them, by bad example given, by bad advice, or by occasioning sin in them, or hindering good.

In all these cases, what reparation shall I make ?

Many leave this great debt to accumulate: and all through life it weighs them down, and acts as a barrier between their souls and God, compelling Him to stand aloof and not draw near in prayer as He desires to do.

2. The second great lesson taught us by Zacheus is contained in those other words of his: *Half of my goods I give to the poor.*

For, as we learn from very many passages in Holy Writ, abundant almsgiving will not only wipe out the debt left by past sins, but will also obtain for us grace to rise out of present sins, and grace too to resist future temptations to sin. The Holy Spirit dictated the word of Ecclesiasticus: *Water quencheth a flaming fire, and alms resisteth sins* (c. iii.). Alms has then against sin the same power that water has against fire. That is to say, if we are as merciful as we can be and ought to be, our alms will certainly obtain for us grace to conquer sin.

#### STATION VIII.

*Jesus said to him: This day is salvation come to this house: because he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which is lost* (vv. 9, 10).

A. *This day is salvation come to this house.* If early on that morning we had been asked to pray for this Chief of the publicans, we might have shaken our heads and said, What can prayer do for such a case? What is the use,

some one said, of praying for fine weather when the wind is quite in the wrong quarter? We are equally hopeless at times about the conversion of souls. If we had been near St. Monica when she had ended fifteen of her seventeen years of prayer for her son, we might have said to her heartlessly, as the peevish kinsmen of Tobias said to him: *Where is thy hope, for which thou gavest alms, and buriedst the dead?* Or with his wife, *It is evident thy hope is come to nothing, and thy alms now appear.* Yet our Lord's promise stands firm: *Again I say to you, that if two of you shall consent upon earth concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by My Father Who is in Heaven* (St. Matt. xviii. 19). It is true, however, that He added with regard to the youth possessed by that terrible dumb spirit which the Apostles could not cast out: *This kind can go out by nothing but by prayer and fasting* (St. Mark ix.). So that there are certain difficult cases which require prayer and penance. But if some of those countless hours that are so often wasted by Christian men and women and hang so heavily on their hands, were spent in hearty and combined prayer for some sinners, can we doubt but we should often be able to say in gladness, "Thanks to our good God, *Salvation has come this day to this house*"?

What a rich harvest of souls has been gained in this country during the last half century through the joint effort of so many communities and congregations on the Continent that were offering prayers for England! Badly wanted is the Apostleship of Prayer to rouse us not to lose hope for those whose case seems as desperate as the case of Zacheus seemed to be on the morning of his conversion; or the case of Saul when he set out on his journey to Damascus. Who can measure what the harvest would be if, with united hearts, we devoted some of the hours now wasted, to prayer for the conversion of poor sinners!

B. *For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

“*Attendite.*” Do not hasten on. Stay here a long time to fix well in your mind and heart this idea of our Blessed Lord’s office, that He is essentially Jesus—a Saviour, Who has to earn this blessed Name, *the Name above all names*, by saving us from our sins. He said a similar word when once before He called a publican to Him and made him one of His Apostles, *I came not to call the just, but sinners* (St. Mark ii.).

C. Again, His Sacred Heart reveals this same secret to us when He tells us that He is the Good Shepherd Who leaves the ninety-nine sheep in the desert and forsakes them till He finds the one lost, and brings it home on His shoulders; and then in gladness *calls together his friends and neighbours saying, Rejoice with Me, because I have found My sheep that was lost. I say to you, His compassionate Heart adds, I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in Heaven upon one sinner doing penance, more than upon ninety-nine just* (St. Luke xv.).

D. The same most necessary truth He again impresses upon us when He surpasses all human eloquence in His parable, to tell us how He looks out for the prodigal when He is afar off, and runs to meet him, and falls on his neck (*ibid.*).

I say “this most necessary truth,” because Satan knows well that salvation is sure so long as hope in the infinite mercy and compassion of God our Father and God our Redeemer endures, and he therefore labours incessantly to prove to each of us that our case is exceptionally bad; that God is indeed very good, but that we have so often resisted His graces that we must have tired out His mercy. But when we go round and find that Satan has whispered that same lie into a thousand times ten thousand other souls, what becomes of God’s goodness and mercy if we are to give ear to this slander and blasphemy? How is God to be our infinitely compassionate Father, if His mercy only reaches certain good children and has no pity for all of us poor sinners?

What became afterwards of Zacheus? Some writers have imagined that he was the St. Matthias afterwards elected as the substitute for Judas; but this supposition clashes with Acts i. 21, 22. The Apostles were to choose one who had *companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us*. There is more authority for the account which was formerly read in the Breviary of Tulle, in France, on September 3rd, that—according to an ancient tradition supported by innumerable testimonies and still more by a Bull of Pope Martin V. dated 1427—Zacheus emigrated to France, to a wild spot still called Roc Amadour, in the diocese of Cahors; and that there he is honoured under the name of St. Amadour or Amator, a name which, we may assume, he adopted to signify his love for our Lord. Another tradition tells us that he was the husband of Veronica.

## SCENE IV.

## JERICHO TO JERUSALEM.

*As they were hearing these things, He added and spoke a parable because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the Kingdom of God should immediately be manifested (St. Luke xix. 11).*

He is come out from the house of Zacheus, on the morning, probably, of Wednesday in Passion Week, and speaks this parable, before starting, to the great crowd gathered round Him.

Jericho is in a state of excitement. The news that Jesus is going to Jerusalem is spread abroad. The people, knowing the deadly hatred of the Rulers there against Him, feel sure that some important crisis is near. Jesus, the great Prophet, is, no doubt, going to strike a decisive blow, to liberate the people from the Roman yoke and restore the ancient theocracy. Jesus sees around Him the palace and the other splendid buildings raised about the time of His Birth by Herod and by Archelaus. Some commentators think that the story of Archelaus suggested the parable that follows. In one point his history does bear a resemblance to the parable, but in others it is as wide of it as it well can be. Archelaus, as we remember, was reigning in Judea when our Saviour was brought back from Egypt; and for this reason Joseph would not go to Judea, but went to Galilee. Why this preference of Galilee? If he feared Archelaus because he was a son of Herod, was not another son, Herod Antipas, reigning in Galilee? The reason may be that Archelaus was known to be an unscrupulous and bloodthirsty tyrant. He had been brought up at Rome at the Court of Cæsar. For the Romans were glad to have the sons of tributary princes with

them as hostages and security for good conduct. Archelaus then obtained from the Emperor a part of his father's kingdom, in which he was to be Tetrarch. Judea was his portion. During his short reign he distinguished himself by rapacity, extravagance and cruelty. Any one who wanted either justice or mercy had to pay a high price for it. To build his grand palace at Jericho and a house called by his own name, he destroyed existing towns; and to revenge himself on some who had opposed in Rome his petition for sovereignty, he massacred three thousand of his subjects. The people of Judea could not endure his tyranny and appealed to Augustus Cæsar, begging to be made a Roman province. Archelaus was summoned to Rome. The messenger, who bore his own name, found him, Josephus tells us, feasting sumptuously. He had to obey at once the Emperor's mandate; and when he arrived at Rome, was deposed and banished, a complete pauper, to Vienne in Gaul, where he died. The one point of resemblance between his story and the parable which our Saviour is about to utter, is that the people of Judea did not want Archelaus to reign over them.

The object, then, of our Saviour in His parable is to teach His disciples, (1) that the time for His entering into His Kingdom is not come yet; that they, during the interval, will have to be faithful and prudent servants; and (2) that those who refuse Him as their King will be terribly chastised.

#### STATION I.

*A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return; and calling his ten servants he gave them ten pounds, and said to them: Trade till I come (vv. 12, 13).*

A. Our Blessed Saviour, therefore, is, during this present life, in a certain sense, absent from His earthly home: waiting for the time when He is to enter into full possession of His Kingdom, the time of which St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: *Afterwards the end, when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God and the Father, when He shall have brought to nought all principality, and power, and virtue*—that is, the devils who had fallen from the different heavenly choirs. *For He must reign until He hath put all His enemies*

*under His feet. And the enemy, death, shall be destroyed last. For He hath put all things under His feet (1 Cor. xv.).*

On Calvary Christ conquered Satan and sin; and by His Resurrection the last enemy, death.

B. Meanwhile, He sets each of us over some little part of His possessions, with the condition that if faithful over a few things He will place us over many. He gives each of us a pound (*mna*, which the learned calculate to have been worth between three and four pounds of our money). The pound means our mental faculties—will, understanding, memory; also our bodily senses—eyes, ears, and tongue; also our time, our money, our health; then, besides, our spiritual helps—sacraments, instructions, Holy Mass, prayer, etc.

Let us stay a little while to examine whether we are faithful and prudent stewards over our Master's goods.

## STATION II.

*But his citizens hated him, and they sent an embassy after him, saying: We will not have this man to reign over us (v. 14).*

A. Here we have in few words the history of the war between Lucifer and Christ. Lucifer persuades his dupes—the men who make up what is called the world—that they have their heaven here. Their creed and gospel is: *Come let us enjoy the good things that are present* (Wisdom ii.). Christ, on the contrary, teaches His followers an opposite Gospel. Do not with Dives try to have your heaven here. Use the creatures here as much as they help you to your home in Heaven; but if they are a hindrance to your salvation, away with them. *If thy right eye scandalise thee, pluck it out* (St. Matt. v.). Satan's dupes, the men of this world, hate and abhor this doctrine and persecute all who hold it. Why so? Why cannot they enjoy present things themselves and let others practise self-denial? Because they feel in their hearts and proclaim it aloud: Christ *is become a*

*censurer of our thoughts ! We are esteemed by Him as triflers, and He abstaineth from our ways as from filthiness. Let us see if His words be true. He calleth Himself the Son of God. Let us examine Him by outrages (Wisdom ii.). This is the secret of all the cruelty and malice which the men of the world have poured out on our Lord and His martyrs and His Church in all ages—our own days included.*

B. Remember this word : *We will not have this man to reign over us. "Attendite."* Stay here and examine carefully on what side we stand : with Christ ? or with the world and Lucifer ? With our lips we often say to our Lord : *Thy Kingdom come ; Thy will be done.* But what do our deeds say ? Our Lord's complaint against the Pharisees was : *They say and do not (St. Matt. xxiii.).*

### STATION III.

*And it came to pass that he returned, having received the kingdom. And he commanded the servants to be called to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading (v. 15).*

A. St. Ignatius begins the Exercises with this fundamental truth : "Man was created *to praise God our Lord ; to reverence Him ; and to serve Him ;* and by so doing to *save his own soul*". This is all man (Eccles. xii.). Life, and every day of life, is to be made up of *praise to God, reverence and service.* This is our way of trading. By this trading we win our happy eternity.

*By so doing, to save his own soul.* He who praises, reverences, and serves his God with fidelity and diligence gains a higher place near God for eternity. He who is remiss has a lower place.

## STATION IV.

*And the first came, saying : Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said to him : Well done, thou good servant ; because thou hast been faithful in a little, thou shalt have power over ten cities (vv. 16, 17).*

A. Observe that this faithful and diligent servant does not take the credit to himself. He humbly says: *Lord, thy pound has gained ten pounds.* This is also the language of St. Paul, who was so faithful a servant. *I am the least of the Apostles, who am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am : and His grace in me hath not been made void : but I have laboured more abundantly than all they : yet not I, but the grace of God with me (1 Cor. xv.).*

B. A faithful and diligent servant of this kind trades with great industry, uses time and his other gifts so prudently and diligently, that sometimes, *made perfect in a short space, he hath filled up many long years (Wisdom iv.),* and by a spotless life is entitled to all the honour and reward due to venerable old age. St. Alphonsus Liguori bound himself by vow not to waste any time. He had before his mind the words of our Divine Master, *Trade till I come.* We marvel at this bold vow. No wise confessor would like to allow even a fervent penitent to take such a vow. Yet who is really the prodigy? The Saint so diligent, or we so idle?

Traders of this world and successful physicians are very chary of their time, and add on hour after hour to their working-day, in order to lay up gold and silver. And we, each moment, can earn fresh graces and a higher Heaven, more union with God and a more burning love for the Three Divine Persons through all eternity. Very soon, in the middle of the night, we shall hear the word: *Thou canst be steward no longer.* Come now and *give an account of thy stewardship (St. Luke xvii.).* From that moment our working-day is over. The night is come in

*which no man can work* (St. John ix.). Our day of privilege is at an end. We can earn no more, either in Purgatory or in Heaven. It is written of the tree, *In what place soever it shall fall, there shall it be* (Eccles. xi.). One truth contained in that text is that at the moment of death we have determined for ever our place in Heaven, and what degree of love for our God we are to have during the endless eternity; we cannot now add any more to the store we have brought with us from this world where we had every day such abundant opportunities. Here during every hour, nay, every minute, thanks to the plentiful redemption of Christ, the faithful servant can trade and add to his gains.

C. One of the readiest and most effective ways of multiplying our gains is by almsgiving and works of mercy. *He that hath mercy on the poor lendeth to the Lord, and He will repay him* (Prov. xix.), and richly. But works of mercy and alms have value according as they cost us. If I give alms out of my superfluities, this is good, but only copper alms. If I give alms, as theologians say, *de conveniente*, that is, out of money which is neither superfluous nor yet strictly necessary, but still very useful to me, this is silver alms. If I give out of my necessity, this is golden alms. If I go further, and give my bodily labour, earnest prayer, penance, and fasting and tears for some soul, I am giving diamonds and precious jewels.

#### STATION V.

*And the second came, saying: Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he saith to him, Be thou over five cities* (vv. 18, 19).

A. *Thy pound hath gained five pounds.*

This servant, too, speaks with humble modesty, "It is not I, Lord, but Thy grace that has won the increase".

B. *Be thou over five cities.* Our Good Master does not

reproach him and taunt him for not having earned ten pounds, as the other had done, but rewards him.

At the Judgment, the unfortunate sinner will be overwhelmed when he hears his sentence; but will not the child of God be also utterly crushed and overwhelmed when he finds out with what an infinite gratitude our Lord blesses and rewards him for his small doings here below on earth?

C. We ought to make out for ourselves a copious list of all the ways in which we can trade advantageously. I can gain by lending a good book, by helping to spread good books, by helping to have a good book printed. I thus leave behind me, when I am laid in my grave, a faithful agent that will continue to do good and gain for me.

Whenever I hear Mass I can traffic to great advantage, for then our Lord adds His passion to my prayers. And we must bear in mind that if we offer Mass, or have Mass offered for others, it is a larger charity to offer it for many than for one. Eminent theologians hold that each one of the many gets the full benefit of the Holy Sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> The larger our hearts are, and the wider the reach of our desires, the more they resemble the yearnings of our Lord.

Again, every act of self-denial gains for me. But if I do the act of self-denial or say a prayer for some other souls, I double my gains by adding almsdeeds to my self-denial.

Again, by night and by day, I can traffic wonderfully by desires for the holy souls or the conversion of sinners. God has in His mercy put the dead as well as the living

<sup>1</sup> If a priest receives a stipend, he is bound to intend that the soul on whose behalf this stipend is offered shall get all the good that it is entitled to from the Holy Sacrifice. But the eminent theologian, Father Ballerini, S.J., gives it as the *probabiliorum et communiorum sententiam*, that if a Mass be offered for ten persons, *debitum fructum unusquisque totum e singulis decem Missis perciperet*; that is, he teaches as the more probable and the most common opinion among theologians that if a Mass be offered for ten persons, each of the ten gets the whole value of the Mass. He adds as a corollary, that if a devout person is having ten Masses said, one for each of ten different souls among the living or the dead, these ten souls would benefit much more in the end if each Mass was offered for all the ten souls (Ballerini's Gury, *De Euchar.* n. 356, note 6).

within my reach, in order that I may have plenty of opportunities of trading advantageously by almsgiving.

I can also trade largely by praying that the good works of others may be blessed and may succeed. By so doing, I become their partner.

#### STATION VI.

*And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound which I have kept laid up in a napkin. For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man. Thou takest up what thou didst not lay down, and thou reapest that which thou didst not sow (vv. 20, 21).*

A. *I feared thee, because thou art an austere man.*

This slothful and useless servant ought, at least, St. Jerome writes, to have acknowledged his fault and begged pardon. But on the contrary, he slanders his master to justify himself. So did our first father Adam. *The woman whom Thou gavest to me to be my companion, gave me of the tree and I did eat (Genesis iii.).* We inherit this bad spirit. It is the father or the mother, we say, whom God gave me, that makes me sin. It is the temper that God has given me. It is my poverty, it is my surroundings, which are all God's appointment, that causes my ruin. But when grace grows, we say, on the contrary, with the good thief, I deserve well all that has come upon me; but this Man, Jesus, my Lord and my God, *has done no evil.*

B. The man who does not trade, who gains no increase at all, loses the little that he had and does not save his soul. He has not won his place in Heaven. He has not striven by good works to make his *calling and election sure* (2 St. Peter i.). He had one work to do in this world, "one thing necessary," and he has not done it. *So we also being born, forthwith ceased to be: and have been able to show no mark of virtue; but are consumed in our wickedness. Such things as these the sinners said in Hell (Wisdom v.).*

## STATION VII.

*He saith to him : Out of thy own mouth I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up what I laid not down, and reaping that which I did not sow. And why then didst thou not give my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have exacted it with usury ? (vv. 22, 23).*

A. *Thou wicked servant.*

God, besides being our Father, is our God, our Creator, and our absolute Master.

*Arise, He said to Jeremias, and go down into the potter's house. And I went down into the potter's house : and behold he was doing a work on the wheel. And the vessel was broken which he was making of clay with his hands : and turning he made another vessel, as it seemed good in his eyes to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying : Cannot I do with you, as this potter, O house of Israel, saith the Lord ? Behold as clay in the hands of the potter, so are you in My hand (Jerem. xviii.).*

We have not only to love and praise God as children, we have also to fear Him, and to reverence Him as our Supreme Lord and Master, and to be His servants.

*The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (Psalm cx.).* St. Ignatius makes us meditate on Hell with this object, that if the spirit of love, through our venial sins, in great measure dies out within our souls, a wise fear at least may save us from committing mortal sin. Holy Job tells us that he could never from childhood be hard or unjust to the poor. Why? Because *I always feared God as waves swelling over me, and His weight I was not able to bear (c. xxxi.).*

Therefore this slothful servant, if he had such a dark picture of God's severity before his mind, ought through fear at least to have bestirred himself.

B. Still it is much easier to serve our God when we can look on Him as a Father. Fear is only the beginning of wisdom, but we must not stop at this beginning. *Think of the Lord in goodness (Wisdom i.).* Even to the hard-

hearted Jews He says: *Therefore at the least from this time call to Me, Thou art my Father* (Jerem. iii.). And the one prayer bequeathed to us by our Blessed Saviour teaches us always to call God *our Father*.

#### STATION VIII.

*And he saith to them that stood by: Take the pound away from him, and give it to him that hath the ten pounds. And they say to him: Lord, he hath ten pounds. But I say to you, that to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound; and from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken from him (vv. 24—26).*

A. The pound not utilised by one is taken away from him and given to one who will traffic well. *As the rain and the snow, the Lord says, 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* (Isaias lv.). That is to say, graces sent down from Heaven shall not be wasted, but shall do God's work and prosper; because the goodness of our God offers the grace rejected by one to some one else more wise. When one of the forty martyrs apostatised, one of the guards came forward to take his place. When St. Francis of Assisi saw many of his first followers falling away he was alarmed lest his Order should die out; but our Lord comforted him, saying, "If one falls off, I will provide another". When Judas lost his place, it was not left vacant. *His bishopric let another take* (Psalm cviii.). Observe the warning word that Mardochai sent to his cherished ward, Queen Esther, when she was too terrified to venture into the presence of the great Emperor Assuerus to plead for her doomed people: *If thou wilt now hold thy peace, the Jews shall be delivered by some other occasion: and thou, and thy father's house shall perish* (Esther iv.).

Hence our Lord's admonition to the Bishop of the Church of Philadelphia, *Behold I come quickly; hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown* (Apoc. iii.).

B. *To every one that hath shall be given.* It is easy for a man who has much money to make more. So many chances occur of good bargains, and he can profit by those occasions. So it is with grace. When a man has much, and knows the value of grace, and is hungry for more, our good God is always glad to throw in his way chances of increasing his store.

C. *And from him that hath not, that which he hath shall be taken away.* That is, a man who, through his own fault, has very little grace, not enough for his circumstances and wants, is very weak when temptation comes, and loses the little that he has. Therefore did our Lord say so earnestly: *Watch and pray lest you enter into temptation—the flesh is weak.*

#### STATION IX.

*But as for those my enemies who would not have me reign over them: bring them hither and kill them before me* (v. 27).

A. So far our Lord has been teaching His disciples to be faithful stewards; now He adds one short terrible word about His enemies who reject Him, those most wicked men to whom He intends to say very soon: *You shut the Kingdom of Heaven: for you yourselves do not enter in, and those that are going in you suffer not to enter* (St. Matt. xxiii.).

*Bring them hither and kill them before me.* Would that this were all! But our Blessed Saviour sees beyond the grave. He hears these most miserable victims of Satan's malice and craft, weeping and wailing and gnashing their teeth, and howling out in anguish their fruitless moan: *The serpent deceived me.*

*And having said these things, He went before, going up to Jerusalem* (St. Luke xiii.). The journey from Jericho to Jerusalem is about twenty-five miles, but the road is so hilly that the walk must have been as fatiguing as if they had to walk forty miles.

Jericho stood, as has been said, in the plain that separates the Judean mountains from the southern part of the Jordan, and from the Dead Sea.

As our Lord walked out of Jericho towards Jerusalem He had straight before Him the Mountain of Temptation, or the Quarantine, as it is called. There in a grotto He had fasted forty days, and had permitted Satan to come to tempt Him. After walking about a mile across the plain and leaving the Mount of Temptation on the right hand He commenced the steep ascent. For Jerusalem stands between two and three thousand feet above Jericho, and therefore it may be, as well as because Jerusalem was the capital, that we read in the Gospel that the man who fell among thieves *went down from Jerusalem to Jericho*. The story of the Good Samaritan may not have been a parable, but a true narrative of what had occurred. For it would be difficult to imagine a region more fit to be the haunt of robbers than the country on each side of this wild and dreary road. Our Saviour and His followers had not to climb one continuous ascent, but to walk up and down a succession of rocky hills, abounding everywhere with caverns or grottoes out of which, even now, the Bedouins spring upon the unprotected traveller and leave him on the road stripped of all that they can take; and wounded also to death if he offers any resistance. For this reason pilgrims secure the service of one of the armed Bedouins who have entered the service of the Government as mounted police. These Bedouin gendarmes are respected by their lawless comrades, who are often met on the road carrying their rifle slung over their shoulder and a massive club in their hand. At the present day, with the exception of the khan or resting-house where pilgrims dismount to eat whatever food they bring with them (for they will find no entertainment there), there is scarcely a house to be seen from the time the traveller leaves the site of ancient Jericho till he arrives in the neighbourhood of Bethany. The journey not a little resembles the ride through Connemara, with this exception, that whereas in Ireland there is a good carriage road, from Jericho up to the Holy City there is none. A late enterprising Pacha of Jerusalem began to make a good road, but he was removed from his office, and it remains unfinished and useless, the necessary bridges not being erected, and the road being in parts so steep that it seems very doubtful whether carriages could be dragged up the heights. The spot is still pointed out where the Good Samaritan did his charitable work; and there is also seen by the roadside a small erection called the Well of the Apostles.

## STATION X.

*He went before, going up to Jerusalem (St. Luke v. 28).*

A. Contemplate the scene: the *persons*, the *words*, the *actions*. Watch our Blessed Lord walking on before, in His eagerness for the moment that is coming; yet now, as always, full of consideration for the faithful crowd that follows; and therefore not hastening on too fast for them. When He travelled along this road a fortnight before to raise Lazarus to life, He accomplished the journey from the Jordan to Bethany in two days. Now that He has a much larger crowd around Him, and many devout women, and probably too His Holy Mother, we may perhaps assume that He was best part of three days on the road.

B. Observe closely the poverty of our Lord and our Lady on this journey, and how He trains His followers to labour and to the endurance of hunger.

Mary and Martha and others were no doubt there to minister to Him and to Holy Mary and to the Apostles; but their money could only procure in that wilderness very scant refreshment after the weary walking. We must also take notice that the poverty of Jesus and His Blessed Mother is not only outward poverty, but inwardly also there is the most perfect poverty of spirit: a strong and unalterable desire and preference and love for this severe poverty. Twelve legions of angels are ready to minister to their King and their Queen, but the delight of their King and their Queen is in poverty. By their poverty they know that they will conquer the world with its concupiscences.

C. What are the thoughts of Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary, as they go back to their home at Bethany? Of what is Zacheus thinking as he walks? And the men so lately blind, as they gaze on the mountains and the valleys so new to them, what is their state of mind? Are they all complaining of the weary journey? or

do they all experience what we read in the *Imitation of Christ*, that "when Jesus is present, all goes well and nothing seems difficult"?

As for the Blessed Mother, she is the Mirror of Justice. Her soul reflects the Most Holy Soul of her Son. His thoughts are her thoughts. "Blessed Mother of God :

Vitam præsta puram,  
Iter para tutum.

Watch over us during our journey through life, that we may arrive cleansed from all sin at our death-bed."

## SCENE V.

### JERUSALEM AND THE ENVIRONS.

#### STATION I.

*And the Pasch of the Jews was at hand. And many from the country went up to Jerusalem before the Pasch to purify themselves (St. John xi. 55).*

A. May God grant us grace to learn from the stiff-necked Jews! If they purified themselves for their Pasch, what pains ought we to take to purify ourselves for our Pasch—for every Holy Communion? for the Paschal Communion? above all, for the Holy Viaticum, our last, our decisive Communion? *Wash me yet more, O Lord, from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin (Psalm i.).*

#### STATION II.

*They sought therefore for Jesus, and they discoursed one with another, standing in the Temple: What think you, that He is not come to the festival-day? And the Chief Priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment that if any man knew where He was, he should tell, that they might apprehend Him (v. 56).*

A. *They sought for Jesus.*

Again we may learn from these Jews. For they were at least anxious to see our Lord and hear Him, and

they sought for Him and discussed why He had not come. We are sometimes indifferent whether He is near us or far away ; and not anxious to be with Him in the Blessed Sacrament.

*B. And the Priests had given a commandment that any man who knew where He was should tell.* And therefore our Blessed Saviour is moved by His compassionate Heart to hide Himself, lest the poor people should, through fear of the Pharisees, be tempted to betray Him.

*Fac cor dulce Jesu mei, Fac ut nos amemus Te.* Grant us, O Lord, to love more and more the circumspect and compassionate charity of Thy Sacred Heart ; and grace to be very careful not to give scandal to any of Thy little ones.

On the Friday then in Passion Week, we may perhaps assume, our Blessed Saviour, accompanied by a large following, has arrived at the eastern side of Mount Olivet. The Holy City lies behind the hill on the other side. He has completed the work of climbing up the rugged ascent from Jericho, and He is now on the level road which runs round the base of Mount Olivet into Jerusalem. Bethany and the grave of Lazarus lie on the hill-side before Him, and He has reached the Stone of Conference, where a fortnight before He spoke with Martha, and then with Magdalen. May we not picture to ourselves Magdalen pointing out the stone to our Blessed Lady, and lingering there with her a while, and Martha too, repeating to the Blessed Mother the memorable words there said to her : *I am the Resurrection and the Life, he who believeth in Me, even though he be dead, shall live ?* These words, with so many others, Holy Mary lays up in her heart, never to lose them.

We may likewise try to read the thoughts of Lazarus when Martha brings him also to the stone. The Apostles point it out to many more.

Meanwhile, as we have seen, pilgrims from many lands are crowding into Jerusalem, through all the gates of the city, for the Great Pasch. Little they know how great a Pasch it is to be. Some of these pilgrims have fallen in with the disciples following Jesus from Jericho, and have heard something of what has passed. They carry the tidings into Jerusalem that Jesus of Nazareth is close at hand, that He has reached Bethany and is staying there. They further report that Lazarus is with Him. The news spreads rapidly through the city, and soon arrives at the villa of the High Priest on the Hill of Evil Counsel. The effect produced by the news is very different in different quarters.

## SCENE VI.

## BETHANY.

## STATION I.

*A great multitude of the Jews knew that He was there, and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus (St. John xii. 9).*

A. On the Friday evening, therefore,<sup>1</sup> and on the Sabbath day that follows, the road from Jerusalem to Bethany is crowded with men and women hastening to see Jesus; and with others, perchance still more eager to look on Lazarus, the man who was dead and is come to life.

Let us contemplate, in the first place, those among the crowd of visitors who are desirous of seeing Jesus. Many among them have a true affection for Him. As we watch them thronging round Him as they have been used to do, and with gladness on their faces gazing upon Him, and trying, perhaps, to touch the hem of His garments, we will pray that we may have some share of their affection for our Saviour, some of their desire to see Him and be near Him. In that very favourite hymn of Holy Church, the *Ave Maris Stella*, we are taught to pray to the Blessed Mother of God:

Vitam præsta puram,  
Iter para tutum,  
Ut videntes Jesum,  
Semper collætémur.

Keep us pure till life be done:  
Pray that safe our course we run:  
Then shall we behold thy Son,  
And be glad for ever.

B. Then, in the next place, as we watch the men and women eagerly thronging round Lazarus and looking in joyful wonder upon him, *Sursum corda*. We may lift up our hearts and see the blessed angels and saints gazing with a joy such as no eye on earth has seen on the poor sinner when he has come home to his Heavenly Father,

<sup>1</sup> *Jesus, therefore, six days before the Pasch came to Bethania (St. John xii.) (see page 284).*

*For he was dead and is come to life* (St. Luke xv.). Believe firmly these words of our Lord: *So I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God on one sinner doing penance* (St. Luke xv.). And if joy among the blessed angels, infinitely greater joy to our Heavenly Father Who created the sinner to His likeness, to be His child; infinitely greater also to the Heart of our Blessed Saviour Who sought after him and ransomed him and brought him back.

*The Lord is compassionate and merciful, longsuffering and plenteous in mercy. He will not always be angry, nor will He threaten for ever.—As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our iniquities from us* (Psalm cii.). Blessed the day, thrice blessed the hour, when by holy absolution we were raised from death to life for the last time, never to fall again. And if the sinner's coming home gives such gladness to God and to His angels and saints, what is their gratitude to him who helps to bring the prodigal home! Let us resolve with our Lord: *I will seek that which was lost; and that which was driven away I will bring again; and I will strengthen that which was weak* (Ezech. xxxiv.).

C. At the same time it is better to be anxious to see and know Jesus than to see the man raised to life by miracle, or cured by miracle.

"Many run," Thomas à Kempis writes in one of his admirable chapters on the Blessed Sacrament, "many run to different places to visit the relics of the Saints, and they are astonished as they listen to their deeds, and gaze on the vast structure of their churches, and kiss their sacred bones wrapped up in silk and cloth of gold. And lo! You are here present with me on the altar, my God, the Holy of Holies, the Creator of men, and the Lord of angels" (Bk. iv., c. i.).

*My spirit, Holy Mary says, rejoiceth in God my Saviour.* As the angels surround the tabernacle they say, What have we in Heaven, Lord Jesus, better than Thee? And the faithful on earth respond, Outside Thee what is there that *I desire upon the earth?* (Psalm lxxii.). It is worth

knowing the Latin language in order to meditate on St. Bernard's hymn :

Nil canitur suavius,	No music soothes the ear,
Nil auditur jucundius,	No words so sweet to hear,
Nil cogitatur dulcius,	No memories half so dear,
Quam Jesus Dei Filius.	As Jesus Son of God.

## SCENE VII.

THE VILLA OF THE HIGH PRIEST ON THE MOUNT OF EVIL COUNSEL.

### STATION I.

*The Chief Priests thought to kill Lazarus also : because many of the Jews by reason of him went away and believed in Jesus (vv. 10, 11).*

The news that attracts so many of the people from Jerusalem to Bethany also reaches, as has been said, the ears of the Priests and Ancients. *Mors est malis, vita bonis*—"Death to the wicked, life to the good". Jesus, the joy of the people, is to them a horrible spectre, a nightmare ever haunting them. At once they meet and conspire against Him.

A. Look at these desecrated Priests. Listen to the foolish words of these "blind guides". *The princes have met together, against the Lord, and against His Christ, and they have devised vain things (Psalm ii).*

Does it not occur to any of them that He Who raised Lazarus to life when he died of sickness, could also raise him again if murdered by the Rulers? Let us pray earnestly with the Psalmist: *I have cried to Thee, for Thou, O God, hast heard me. O incline Thine ear unto me, and hear my words.—From them that resist Thy right hand keep me, as the apple of Thine eye (Psalm xvi).* O Caiphas! O Priest of God! *Why dost thou glory in malice, thou that art mighty in iniquity? All the day long thy tongue hath devised injustice.—Thou hast loved malice more than goodness: and iniquity rather than to speak righteousness. Thou hast loved all the words of ruin, O deceitful tongue. Therefore will God destroy thee for ever. He will pluck thee out, and re-*

*move thee from thy dwelling-place; and thy root out of the land of the living. The just shall see and shall fear, and shall laugh at him, and say: Behold the man that made not God his helper (Psalm li.).*

May we have grace to abide always under the help of the Most High (Psalm xc.), and to say from our hearts: "Prevent, O Lord, and forestall all our actions by Thy holy inspirations, and carry them on by Thy gracious assistance, that every prayer and work of ours may begin always from Thee, and by Thee be happily ended".

## SCENE VIII.

### BETHANY. HOUSE OF SIMON.

#### STATION I.

*And when Jesus was in Bethania, in the house of Simon the Leper, they made Him a supper there (St. John xii.).*

There seem to be, as has been said, some grounds for the opinion that Simon the Leper, who made the supper for Jesus in Bethany, was Simon the Pharisee, mentioned by St. Luke (c. vii.), who was entertaining our Saviour when the penitent woman knelt at His feet and anointed Him. On that occasion our Lord said to him: *Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee, and taught him not to let his mind dwell on Magdalen's past sins, but on her present love. Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much.* The words of Jesus may have borne good fruit. If afterwards leprosy came on, and if he was cured through the compassion of our Saviour, it is no wonder that he is now trying to show some gratitude. And if, moreover, as is thought, he was a kinsman of Magdalen and Lazarus, the resurrection of Lazarus is an additional reason for the hospitality he is offering so gladly to his Divine Master.

*And when Jesus was in Bethania.*

A. Simon, no doubt, and Lazarus and Mary and Martha constrained our Lord, as Cleophas afterwards did at Emmaus, to remain with them at Bethany before going on to Jerusalem. *Mane nobiscum, quoniam advesperascit*—"Tarry with us, dear Master, to-night, for it is late". We may humbly beg for some little share of their familiar

and intimate love for our Blessed Lord. It is not presumption, for we are commanded to love Him with our whole hearts.

B. After this we may contemplate Simon, and try to enter into all his veneration and affection for Jesus, and mark the contrast between his thoughts at the former feast in Galilee and his thoughts of this evening in Bethany. He is not now saying in his heart: *This Man if He were a Prophet, would know surely what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him, that she is a sinner* (St. Luke vii.). He is watching in silent admiration the condescension of our Saviour, and with holy envy the devotion of Magdalen.

Even so, what a change will come over our thoughts when sin is entirely cleansed away in Purgatory! He whom we now look upon as an enemy will not then look like an enemy, but only as a beautiful image of Christ Jesus, and our brother. *Wash me yet more from my iniquity, O Lord, that I may have a clean heart and judge no one, but have a kind thought and a kind word for all Thy little ones.*

## STATION II.

*And Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those that were at table with Him* (St. John xii. 2).

A. With what a full and loving heart Martha serves Jesus; and, for His sake, all the other guests! How well pleased she is that so many are there to do Him honour!

What pains she takes that every one, after the toilsome journey from Jericho, shall be well refreshed!

She is not now troubled about many things. Her one wish is that her Lord, and all dear to Him, be treated with all reverence and all love. *Let all Thy works, O Lord, praise Thee. The Lord lifteth up all that fall, and setteth up all that are cast down. The eyes of all hope in Thee, O Lord* (Psalm cxliv.).

O chosen, happy Saint! We are all created to serve our Lord and to serve men who are His image. Obtain for us to give our service heartily, for *He loves a cheerful giver* (2 Cor. ix.).

B. *Lazarus was one of those who sat at table with Him. Sursum corda*—Lift up your hearts to the Supper of the Lamb to which we are all invited and at which we all may sit with Jesus.

*Write*, said the Angel to St. John, *Blessed are they that are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb* (Apoc. xix.). *Come, gather yourselves to the Great Supper of God* (v. 17). This is the hope laid up in our hearts, that He will raise us from the dead as He raised Lazarus, and that we shall sit at table with Him in His Eternal Home. Nay, if here we are faithful servants, this most grateful Master, so meek and humble of Heart and so loving, assures us that *He will gird Himself, and make us sit down, and will minister to us* (St. Luke xii.). And the joys of this banquet and this companionship will not pass away with the evening. Time shall not bring an end to them. The thief shall never steal them away, nor any moth consume them.

Mother of God, pray for us sinners, that we may so pass through the changes of this changing world as not to lose the abiding good things prepared for us by Thy Son, our Lord.

### STATION III.

*Mary therefore (having an alabaster box of precious ointment) took a pound of ointment of right spikenard and (breaking the alabaster box) she poured it out upon His Head: and she anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped the feet of Jesus with her hair, and the room was filled with the odour of her ointment* (St. Mark xiv. ; St. John xii.).

A. Magdalen's heart is going back to the hour when Jesus raised her soul from death to life, and to the hour

when He cried out with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth.* "*O vos omnes, attendite.*" O all ye who pass by heedlessly, stay a little while to study her love for her Lord and His contentment in her.

Does she grudge the precious spikenard? *If a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing* (Cant. viii.). All that I have, dear Lord, all that I give, is Thy creation and Thy gift to me. To Thee I give it all—all back to Thee. *In the simplicity of my heart I have joyfully offered all these things* (Paral. xxix.). Call to mind the gratitude of old Tobias and his son to St. Raphael. Tobias called to him his son, and said to him: *What can we give to the holy man, that is come with thee? Tobias answering said to his father, Father, what wages shall we give him or what can be worthy of his benefits?* (Tobias xii.).

While contemplating the grateful devotion of Magdalen, and watching how tears are running down from the eyes of Lazarus and Simon and others who love our Lord, what shall we say of ourselves, for we must in contemplation turn back upon ourselves? Alas! who is the wonder? who is the prodigy? Magdalen grateful and loving, or I cold, insensible, and selfish?

The grateful and the loving cry out in eager desire, "*Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi?*" (Psalm cxv.). What shall I, what can I, give back to the Lord for all He hath given unto me? My sad prayer must be very different. *Quid retribuam?* Judging by my past heartless indifference, what am I likely to give or offer to my Lord Jesus now?

Alas! what can I do? This much at least I can do. I can again and again repeat the all-powerful cry, "Mother of God, pray for us sinners. Mother full of all grace, full of knowledge, full of maternal love for thy Divine Son, pray for us sinners who know Him not and love Him not, but wish to know Him well and to love Him much."

With us oftentimes self has the place that Jesus has in the heart of Magdalen. All good things and delightful things and precious things are for self. We want the works of the Lord, His sunshine and the stillness of the night, and the herbs and flowers that grow, all to add to our comfort and pleasure.

“Mother of God, pray for us sinners. Give birth to thy Son in our hearts. Let His Kingdom now come that He may reign instead of self.”

All ye blessed Saints of Bethany, pray for us. All ye holy disciples of our Lord, pray for us.

#### STATION IV.

*Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was about to betray Him, said: Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor? (St. John xii. 4, 5).*

*And the disciples seeing it had indignation (St. Matt. xxvi. 8).*

*Now there were some that had indignation within themselves (St. Mark xiv. 4).*

##### A. *One of His disciples.*

Judas therefore takes the lead in the murmuring; and as we are apt to follow a leader, like sheep, some of the others thoughtlessly chime in. Observe how easily bad influence spreads from soul to soul. *A little leaven corrupts the whole mass*, St. Paul says (1 Cor. v. 6). Hence so many warnings against bad companionship. *If the wolf shall at any time have fellowship with the lamb, so the sinner with the just. What fellowship hath a holy man with a dog? (Ecclus. xiii.). Bear not the yoke with unbelievers (mixed marriages). What fellowship hath light with darkness? Or what part hath the faithful with the unbeliever? Or what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For you are*

*the temples of the living God (2 Cor. vi. 14). We wonder at the severity of the law imposed on the Israelites: Of those cities that shall be given to thee thou shalt suffer none at all to live, not even women and children, but shall kill them with the edge of the sword. But the reason is given, Lest they teach you to do all their abominations which they have done to their gods and you should rise against the Lord your God (Deut. xx.). God, Who knows all things, knew that the first man, and the wisest of men, and the strongest of men, and the man according to God's own heart, were all led astray by the evil influence of a sinful woman.*

#### STATION V.

*Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief; and having the purse, carried the things that were put therein (St. John xii. 6).*

A. Bitter zeal is hypocrisy. It professes to be indignant in a right cause; but in reality, the anger is all for self. *The anger of man doth not work out the justice of God (St. James i.). Reflect well on the truth of St. Paul's words: Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest. For thou dost the same things which thou judgest (Romans ii.). Judas is angry, so he says, because the poor are neglected; and all the while he is a thief who has been stealing the alms given to the poor. It is said that he had always stolen for himself a tenth of all entrusted to him for the poor. All the terrible curses of the 108th Psalm are poured out upon him, because he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor man and the beggar. When he is judged, may he go out condemned. He loved cursing, and it shall come unto him.*

B. Observe, too, that it is not now that he begins to be wicked. No one as a rule becomes very good or very wicked all of a sudden. He has long been sinning in secret against the poor. Therefore our Lord had said as far back as the

day of the loaves and fishes: *Have not I chosen you twelve? and one of you is a devil* (St. John vi.).

Grant us grace, O Lord, to advance from virtue to virtue. Cleanse us yet more from venial sins, that we may never commit grievous sins.

## STATION VI.

*Jesus therefore said, Let her alone; why do you trouble this woman? For she had wrought a good work in Me. For the poor you have always with you, but Me you have not always* (St. Matt. xxvi.).

A. *Let her alone.* This rebuke was gall and wormwood to the proud heart of Judas. In addition to his pitiless avarice, he has now a heart full of bitter malice and revenge against our Lord, and he determines to regain by selling his Master what he had lost by the loving profusion of Magdalen. Wickedness grows and develops rapidly, as a fire does, if we do not make haste to put out the first spark.

B. *Why do you trouble this woman? she hath wrought a good work in Me.* There are many who profess to approve of alms to the poor, but condemn as waste alms given directly to Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist. This kind of philanthropy is not the spirit of almsgiving which Christ teaches. His promise is that He will value alms to the poor *as if done to Himself*; but not as something better than alms to Himself. That is to say, out of His excessive charity and because He loves men so much, He will raise up and extol and exaggerate the value of alms to the poor and set them on a level with alms done directly to Himself. So that, if we give clothes and food to His poor, He will value that act of charity as much as if we gave an alms to Himself in person; as for instance, an altar on which He may offer His Sacrifice, a tabernacle to dwell in, bread and wine and oil for His Sacred

Mysteries. But He never said, nor ever could say, that alms to the poor are better than alms given to Himself. Philanthropists who laud alms to the poor, and condemn as waste alms given immediately to Jesus Christ, in reality destroy all the beauty and the sacred character of almsgiving to the poor. For the real dignity and worth of the poor is that they represent Christ Jesus, and are His image and His proxy. Let those who consider money wasted that is given directly to Jesus Christ for His altar, and those, too, who consider their children wasted and lost if they are consecrated to God, read the word spoken to us by our Lord, through Aggeus His Prophet, when the Jews, now come back from captivity, were building homes for themselves and not thinking of a house for the Lord: *Is it time for you to dwell in ceiled houses, and this house (My house) lie desolate? Set your hearts to consider your ways: you have sowed much and brought in little, you have eaten but have not had enough. You have drunk but have not been filled with drink. You have clothed yourselves but have not been warmed, and he that earned wages put them into a bag with holes. Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Set your hearts upon your ways, go up to the mountains, bring timber, and build the house (of God), and it shall be acceptable to Me, and I shall be glorified, saith the Lord. You have looked for more, and behold it became less. You have brought it home, and behold, I have blowed it away. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because My house is desolate, and you make haste every man to his own house. Therefore the heavens over you were stayed from giving dew, and the earth was hindered from yielding her fruits. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the wine, and upon the oil, and upon all that the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon beasts, and upon all the labour of the hands (Aggeus i.).* In other words, God says to us: Give to Me, and I give to you. Be niggardly with Me, and I will cease to bless you.

## STATION VII.

*She, in pouring this ointment upon My Body, hath done it for My burial (St. Matt. xxvi. 12).*

*What she had, she hath done. She is come beforehand to anoint My Body for the burial (St. Mark xiv. 8).*

A. This does not mean that Magdalen was aware that the Death of her loved Master was so near and was preparing for the burial; but only that He accepted her pious work for His burial; and that His Heart, fore-knowing that it was well timed for His burial, gave to hers the inspiration to do this act of charity.

St. John's version is a little different: *Let her alone, that she may keep it for the day of My burial.* From these words we are inclined to think that some of Magdalen's precious spikenard was kept for the burial. This would be a consoling interpretation, but the commentators explain the words to mean: "Let her alone, for hereafter she will have the comfort of knowing that what she has done to-day was a preparation for My burial". The Greek text points to this interpretation.

What consolation these words must, in after years, have given to Magdalen!

How blessed are they who follow good inspirations from Heaven! We hear sometimes the news: He died quite suddenly last evening without the sacraments, but he had been to Confession and Communion in the morning. How consoling for a priest when he can say: "The patient I was attending died very unexpectedly yesterday, when all thought that he was mending; but luckily I had gone in an hour before, and, though I saw no danger, I heard his confession and absolved him!" A few years ago a well-known man died during the night. The doctor had said when going away: "There is no danger to-night, you can all go to bed". But his good old mother sat by him and said next morning: "How glad I am that I did

not go away! I was saying the Litany for him when he was born, and I was saying the Rosary for him when he died."

B. *She hath done it for My burial.* We know how our Blessed Saviour appeared to St. Martin of Tours, and to St. Peter, the tax-collector, wearing the cloaks they had given to the poor, and saying: "This is the cloak Martin gave to Me. This is the mantle Peter gave Me." Therefore, if we help to bury a poor man or to take care of his bereaved orphans, our Lord will be grateful as if we had devoutly taken part in His burial.

#### STATION VIII.

*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 memory of her (St. Matt. xxvi. 13).*

*O you who go by the way, pause here a little while, or rather a long time, to contemplate the gratitude of our Lord's Sacred Heart. What Magdalen has done is to be recorded by the inspired Evangelists alongside the story of His own Life and Death, and to be remembered until the consummation of the world. All the Church of the saints shall declare (her) alms (Ecclus. xxxi.). And when all is over in this world—both the holy deeds of men and their sins—the gratitude of our Saviour's Heart will not die, but be fresh for ever: The just shall be in everlasting remembrance (Psalm cxi.). For ever, and for ever, Magdalen will be made aware, in a thousand ways, that the Sacred Heart of her Master is still saying: She did it for My burial.*

## CHAPTER IV.

*PALM SUNDAY TO HOLY THURSDAY.*

## SCENE I.

## FROM BETHANY TO JERUSALEM.

BETHANY, as we have seen, was on the eastern slope of Mount Olivet, not far from the base. From thence our Blessed Saviour had a choice of two ways to Jerusalem.

One by the high-road round the base of the hill. This road runs southward for a short distance, and then turning round Mount Olivet enters into the valley of the Cedron and runs northward along the eastern wall of the city, passing the Garden of Gethsemani.

The other and shorter route lay over Mount Olivet. Certain modern English writers maintain that we have no means of ascertaining which road our Saviour chose on the Palm Sunday.

But with regard to this triumphal procession of our Lord, one thing is certain from the Gospel, that it passed through Bethphage. If the site of Bethphage can be ascertained, the question is settled. These English writers, because no traces remain above ground of the little town, conclude at once that it is impossible to fix its site. The Franciscan Fathers, on the other hand, who have been for six centuries the Guardians of the Holy Places, consider that there is no doubt about the site of Bethphage, and all except a few English and American writers side with the Franciscan Fathers.

In ascertaining the position of ancient Bethphage the Franciscans followed the same method which they had found to be so successful in other parts of Palestine. They began by inquiring diligently among the Arab inhabitants whether there was any tradition among them as to this site. They found that the Arabs had no doubt as to the spot where the town stood. Quite recently, a traveller told his guide to ask an Arab whom he met by chance on Mount Olivet whereabouts was the town of Bethphage. He pointed at once unhesitatingly to the spot which is commonly believed to be the true site. The Franciscan Fathers after a long experience have learned to place great reliance on

the fidelity of tradition among the Arabs, and by excavating have been able to furnish most wonderful proofs of the correctness of their traditions.

They acted thus at Bethphage. On the slope of Mount Olivet, about midway between Bethany and the top of the hill, they purchased a small plot of ground on the site where the Arabs placed Bethphage. On the surface there was nothing at all to justify this expenditure. But when they excavated they came on two very consoling witnesses. In the first place they uncovered a block of stone between three and four feet in height and about the same in length and breadth. When the earth was all cleared away from this block they were able to discern ancient paintings on its sides. These paintings are still to be seen. The Fathers have built a small house on the spot, so that the stone and the paintings are now under cover. One of these paintings represents the ass being brought to our Saviour. Another, the raising of Lazarus.

On clearing away the ground still further, the indefatigable Franciscan Fathers and Brothers uncovered the foundation of a small church; one of the many, it is supposed, with which St. Helen did honour to the Holy Places. We may, therefore, safely trust the Arab tradition, and take for granted that Bethphage stood higher up on Mount Olivet than Bethany. This being so, it is quite clear that our Lord on Palm Sunday went by the shorter route over the hill to Jerusalem. This conclusion is, I think, rendered certain by the words in St. Luke xix.: *When He was now coming near the descent of Mount Olivet. Near the descent, would be when He had reached the top, and was about to descend.*

A further question arises here as to the time of this triumphal entry of our Lord. St. Matthew tells the story of this procession in his 21st chapter, and does not speak of the supper at Bethany till the 26th chapter. St. Mark follows the same order. He records the entry into Jerusalem in his 11th chapter, and the supper in Simon's house, in the 14th. If we had nothing but these two Gospels to guide us, we should not dare to place this entry of our Lord after the supper; but in St. John's Gospel we find these two incidents in reversed order: the supper first, and the entry on the day after. St. John on this point is very precise and clear. Immediately after his account of the supper, he writes, *On the next day a great multitude took branches of palm trees, etc.* Commentators without hesitation adopt this chronology of St. John, first because he wrote much later than the other Evangelists, and one of his objects was to clear up points left unsettled by them; and secondly, because they have ascertained by careful study that St. Matthew and St. Mark, in many parts of their narrative, do not propose to arrange events in chronological order, but merely to leave on record some of our Lord's remarkable sayings or doings.

St. John then gives us two dates not given by the other

Evangelists. He tells us, first, that our Lord arrived at Bethania *six days before the Pasch* (St. John xii.). This might mean on the Friday or Saturday of Passion Week. For the six days might be counted either from Good Friday, or Holy Thursday; since though the Paschal supper was held on the Thursday night, yet the following day could be, as we have seen elsewhere, called the day of the Pasch.

Then, secondly, St. John also tells us that our Lord's entry took place the day after the supper—*on the next day* (St. John xii.).

The order then appears to be that our Saviour arrived from Jericho on Friday, that the supper at Simon's house took place on Saturday, and the procession to Jerusalem on our Palm Sunday.

### STATION I.

*And when they drew nigh to Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto Mount Olivet, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them : Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately you shall find an ass tied and a colt with her (on which no man yet hath sitten), loose them and bring them to Me. And if any man shall say anything to you, say ye that the Lord hath need of them, and forthwith he will let them go. And the disciples going did as Jesus commanded them. And they found the colt tied before the gate in the meeting of two ways. And as they were loosing the colt, the owner thereof said, Why loose you the colt? But they said, Because the Lord hath need of him, and they brought him to Jesus (St. Matt. xxi. ; St. Mark xi. ; St. Luke xix.).*

A. *Say ye that the Lord hath need of them, and forthwith he will let them go.*

So, by rights, it should always be. As soon as I hear that the Lord *hath need* of anything that He has given to me, at once I ought to let it go. *For the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. As it hath pleased the Lord so is it done. Blessed be the name of the Lord* (Job i.). *Is not He thy Father, that hath possessed thee, and made thee, and created thee?* (Deut. xxxii.). But, alas! O my God, *to Thee only have I sinned* (Psalm l.). If a great man on this earth asks, I am in a hurry to give. If Thou ask, I am slow.

B. To the Jews God, using our human language, expressed by the mouth of Jeremias His holy envy of Jonadab, because he was revered and obeyed by his children. Go, He said to Jeremias, *to the house of the Rechabites and speak to them, and bring them into the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers of the treasures, and thou shalt give them wine to drink. And I brought them into the house of the Lord, and I set before the sons of the house of the Rechabites pots full of wine and cups, and I said to them, Drink ye wine. And they answered, We will not drink wine, because Jonadab, the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, You shall drink no wine, neither you nor your children for ever. . . . And the word of the Lord came to Jeremias, saying : Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Go and say to the men of Juda, Will you not receive instruction to obey My words? saith the Lord. The words of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, by which he commanded his sons not to drink wine, have prevailed, and they have drunk none to this day, because they obeyed the commandment of their father : but I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, and you have not obeyed Me. And I have sent to you all My servants, the Prophets, rising early and sending . . . and you have not inclined your ear, nor hearkened to Me (Jerem. xxxv.).*

Has not our Lord a similar reproach to make against us now from His tabernacle? "To the man of Bethphage My messengers had only to say, *The Master hath need of them, and he will let them go*; but if I send My messengers to you, to say that I have need of help from you, am I sure that you will give it? *O My people, in what have I molested thee? Answer thou Me*" (Micheas vi.).

C. *The Master hath need of them.* Observe the poverty of our Blessed Saviour. In this day of modest triumph, He has nothing but what men choose to lend, or give to Him. And now in our days He is quite as poor as then. Here on earth man is rich, God is poor. *The Heaven of Heavens is the Lord's; but the earth He hath given to the children of men* (Psalm cxiii.). It is as when a good father makes over a property to his eldest son. He has given it, and

will not take it back. *The Lord hath sworn and will not repent* (Psalm cix.). Therefore in this world man is master, and our Lord is poor, and quite dependent. If He wants bread for His poor, He comes to us for it. If He wants instruction for His little ones, He comes to us. Even when He wants to offer the Everlasting Sacrifice for men, He cannot do it till we give Him the juice of the grape, and the wheaten bread, and provide an altar, and the priest, and the vestments. If He wants to soothe the soul of the dying, He cannot carry out His loving wish till we give Him as an alms the oil of olives which is to be to the dying man the oil of peace and gladness.

Oh, how humble of Heart our Blessed Lord is when He stoops so low as to tell me that He hath need of me! *We* often say, "I do not choose to be under obligation to this man". Our Lord and our God wishes most ardently to be under obligation to each of us, that thus He may have a plea for pouring out all His riches on us throughout eternity.

Being Himself Charity, He cannot but love charity, and cannot help desiring that we His children be like to Him in charity. Therefore, this law He has firmly established, *Give and it shall be given to you*. And in order to induce us to give willingly and lovingly, even as He gives to us, He makes Himself completely dependent on us, and has continually to send us this message: "The Lord hath need of you". St. Augustine in his meditations used at times to indulge in a loving day-dream, planning what he would do for God, if he were God and God were Augustine. But *is* this a mere day-dream? What is our actual state at present? For my little short hour on earth I am the ruler, and my God and my Lord hath need of me and comes to beg of me. O man, be very bountiful to Him, for He desires to be infinitely bountiful to you for ever and for ever-during the long eternity.

D. It is indeed true that the inspired Psalmist wrote: *Thou art my God, because Thou hast no need of my goods*

(Psalm xv.). This was so, and, if God so pleased, would be so still. But out of His charity our God has invented a plan by which He has come to be in want of help from us, and so to need our goods. He is become poor exceedingly in this world, and every hour wants help from us.

## STATION II.

*And they brought the ass and her colt, and laid their garments upon them, and made Him sit thereon* (St. Matt. xxi.).

*And they brought the colt to Jesus, and they lay their garments on him, and He sat upon him* (St. Mark xi.).

*And they brought him to Jesus, and casting their garments on the colt, they sat Jesus thereon* (St. Luke xx.).

*And Jesus found a young ass, and sat upon it, as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion, behold thy King cometh sitting on an ass's colt* (St. John xii.).

*Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled what was written by the Prophet (Zach. ix.): Behold, thy King cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of her that is used to the yoke* (St. Matt. xxi.).

Zachary adds the words, *He is poor, and riding on an ass.*

A. Some commentators, comparing these passages, think that our Lord first sat on the ass long *accustomed to the yoke*, which was emblematic of the Jewish people who had long been subject to God's yoke, and afterwards rode through Jerusalem on the colt, *upon which no man yet hath sat*, which was emblematic of the Gentiles who till now have not been subjected to the yoke of God's law. Others think, and among them Father Coleridge, that He rode only on the colt.

B. If on this day of triumph, on His great festival-day, He is so poor and humble, how strong must be His love and predilection for poverty! St. Paul wrote, *I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be*

able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans viii.). Christ Jesus our Lord might respond, "I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor might, nor height, nor depth shall separate Me from the love of poverty and from humility of Heart".

Why does our Lord so thoroughly love poverty? Why does He say, *Blessed are the poor?* Why does He denounce riches? Why say, *Woe to you rich?* Why does the Beloved Disciple write: *Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world?* Did not our God create this world, and all the things in it, and all its riches? This is true; and it is also true that all that came from God's hand is good; and, as St. Paul teaches, *All things are clean to the clean* (Titus i.). *We know*, he adds, *that to them that love God all things work together unto good* (Romans viii.). If our hearts were clean and loved God, riches and poverty would both equally well help us to serve God and do His work. But as good wholesome food sometimes becomes like a poison to the diseased stomach, so to the soul tainted and blinded and corrupted by sin, the good things of this earth become like deadly poison. In fact, the father of lies has so duped and poisoned and utterly vitiated the minds of men that they have unhesitatingly agreed to set up riches, honour, and pleasure as their three gods; and to these they give their heart's worship, turning their backs in scorn on the Eternal Trinity. What wonder, then, that our Saviour dreads riches and loves poverty, and tries to draw us to His poverty? *Blessed are ye poor* (St. Luke vi.). *Every one that hath left house or lands for My Name's sake shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting* (St. Matt. xix.).

## STATION III.

*A great multitude that was come to the festival-day, when they had heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet Him, and cried, Hosanna, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel (St. John xii. 12, 13).*

*And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way (St. Matt. xxi. 8).*

A. A great multitude therefore comes out from Jerusalem to meet the crowd that is accompanying Jesus from Jericho and Bethany.

The crowd coming out from Jerusalem perhaps consists more of strangers arrived in Jerusalem than of the inhabitants of that unfortunate city. The people there are too much afraid of their jealous Rulers to pay honour to Jesus. With what reason holy writers warn us all to strengthen ourselves against human respect! For Jesus says: *Fear ye not them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul. . . . He that shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him (St. Matt. x).*

This is what our Lord had said: *No prophet is accepted in his own country (St. Luke iv.). He came unto His own, and His own received Him not (St. John i.).* In His own favoured city He is not welcome. *We are now His own people, the favoured ones.* Are we giving Him any cause to say, *Woe to you! for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the miracles that have been wrought in you, long ago they would have done penance?*

B. *A very great multitude spread their garments in the way.* Not out of their superfluities are they now giving alms to our Blessed Lord. The grace of devotion given to them is so fervent that they give the garments they are wearing—probably their best, their holiday clothes—to be trodden down and spoiled, in order to do Him honour.

Fac cor dulce Jesu mei,  
Fac ut nos amemus Te.

Cast into our hearts some spark of the Divine fire which warmed the hearts of the crowd on this day of grace.

C. *Others cut boughs.* This, we may assume, was done by the owners of the trees, or with their full sanction. The watchful providence of the Heavenly Father would not suffer this holy procession to be disfigured by any lawless excesses.

If we were to witness now such enthusiasm at a procession of the Blessed Sacrament, many would be consoled and edified; but we might, on the other hand, find some secretly saying, "*Ut quid perditio hæc?*"—*To what purpose this waste?* (St. Matt. xxvi.). Should not the police be asked to prevent this destruction of the trees?

St. Thomas in his glorious hymn for the feast of Corpus Christi sides with the devout multitude, and exhorts us to vie with them.

Quantum potes tantum aude	Dare all thou canst through all thy days,
Quia major omni laude,	And still seek new and worthier lays,
Nec laudare sufficia.	For still He soars beyond thy praise.

#### STATION IV.

*And when He was now coming near the descent of Mount Olivet, the whole multitude of His disciples began with joy to praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works they had seen, saying: Hosanna in the highest. Blessed be the King Who cometh in the name of the Lord. Peace in Heaven and glory on high* (St. Luke xix.; St. Mark xi.).

A. "*O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte*"—*O all you who pass by the way, stay a little while and see and listen.* Our good angels watch us as we pass to and fro thoughtlessly, and they earnestly ask us to pause a little while, and observe with a holy envy this burst of gladness and devotion and thanksgiving from old and young around our Blessed Saviour. *Look, they say, and do according to the Model* (Exodus xxv.). O Christian soul, contemplate attentively this crowd of men and women and children,

praising God *with a loud voice for all His mighty works—and go thou and do the like.* Ought we to rest content, till praising God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost has become an easy, a pleasant and habitual exercise of our soul? How often do we hear Holy Church reminding us that “it is God’s right, it is due to Him, it is only common justice and fairness, and besides, it is wholesome and salutary for ourselves that in all places and at all times we give thanks to Him”? *Speaking to yourselves*, St. Paul writes, *in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord. Giving thanks always for all things, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God and the Father* (Ephes. v.). This ought to be our habitual state. How near have we come to it?

B. But we must bear in mind that we have to eat our bread in the sweat of our brow. Holy thoughts and holy habits do not come naturally in our fallen state. We have by spiritual industry to learn a language new and strange to our corrupt nature, this heavenly language of praise and thanksgiving. Under our Lady’s teaching we must practise until from our hearts we can say: *My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, because He that is mighty hath done great things for me.*

C. Remember how oftentimes one small slight, or even an imagined slight, from a man, takes away all our thoughts from the countless good things that God is giving us! What a strange prodigy! One hasty word, one rude gesture from a man has more effect than all God’s immense bounty! It is right, no doubt, to leave the ninety-nine sheep to go after the one that is lost; but is it wise to forget entirely ninety-nine blessings from God to go after one slight from a man, and follow it till, like the will o’ the wisp, it leads us into the depths of the quagmire?

This was Aman’s folly. *He called together to him his friends and Zares his wife: and he declared to them the greatness of his riches and the multitude of his children, and with*

*how great glory the King had advanced him above all his princes and servants. And after this he said: Queen Esther also hath invited no other to the banquet with the King but me; and with her I am also to dine to-morrow with the King. And, he continues, whereas I have all these things, I think I have nothing so long as I see Mardochai the Jew sitting at the King's gate (Esther v.). Why is this? What magic power has Mardochai to counteract and embitter and poison all such wonderful prosperity? All Aman's blessings are effaced and blotted out simply because this one Jew will not rise up to honour the great Chancellor when he passes, nor even so much as move from the place where he sits. If Zares had been a sensible wife, and if Aman's friends had been true friends, they would all have come round the poor dotard and said urgently: "You foolish man, why need you go out by the gate where the Jew is? Forget that Jew entirely, and fix your thoughts on all your many blessings." But they were all evil counsellors, and advised him to turn his back on all his good things and go after this one vexation, to follow this one poor Jew, to persecute this one captive to the bitter end. What was the outcome? The foolish man lost all his ninety-nine blessings and was hanged on the one gibbet which he had prepared for Mardochai.*

#### STATION V.

*And when He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it, saying: If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace; but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee; and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee; and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone; because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation (St. Luke xix. 41—44).*

Our Lord was midway down the slope of Mount Olivet when He stayed to gaze so sadly on the city of His love. A chapel built by the Franciscan Fathers now stands upon the spot.

Over the *façade* stood a large cross; but the Turks, who by a mysterious permission of Divine Providence, are the masters of the Holy Land, ordered it to be taken down. They could not suffer it in so prominent a position. What accentuates in a more striking manner this animosity against the cross is the fact that they have allowed the Russians to erect on the summit of Mount Olivet a tower so high that it can be seen from the Dead Sea, a distance of about thirty miles.

There is scarcely any other place from which so beautiful a view of Jerusalem can be obtained as from the spot where our Lord halted to weep over His people.

A. "*O vos omnes*"—*O all you who pass by the way, pause for a little time at least to see and to listen.*

In the midst of the joy and triumph our Saviour is weeping. Why does He weep?

1st, Because when things go well with Him, His compassionate Heart cannot forget how ill it fares with others.

B. 2ndly, Because He sees the time that is to come as clearly as the present.

We laugh and make merry, because we only see the scene that is under our eyes: *Come, let us enjoy the good things that are present* (Wisdom ii.), is the war-cry of the men of the world. War-cry, I say, because they are aggressive and wage most cruel war on all who will not adopt this maxim: *Let us lie in wait for the just, because he is not for our turn* (Wisdom ii.). The Holy Spirit, on the contrary, tells us that *it is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting*. Why so? Because in the house where a family are mourning round a death-bed, *we are put in mind of the end of all, and the living thinketh what is to come* (Eccles. vii.). If we could see what is coming so soon, our death-bed and the Judgment, present joys and present troubles would lose their power. It was a very high festival on the night when Baltassar, the King, had a thousand of his nobles around him in the banquet-hall. It was what our fathers would have called a right royal rout, when the princes and their wives were all drinking out of the gold and silver vessels brought from the Temple

of Jerusalem. But in an instant, joy was turned into terror when the handwriting on the wall called away attention from the things present to the things that were coming. *God hath numbered thy kingdom and hath finished it. Thou art weighed in the balance and art found wanting. Thy kingdom is divided and is given to the Medes and Persians. Then was the King's countenance changed,* we read, and what wonder? *and his thoughts troubled him. Oh, what wonder? and the joints of his loins were loosed; and his knees struck one against the other.* What wonder? what wonder? For that which happened then would certainly happen now, too, if we only knew what is coming quite near at hand! *The same night, we are told, Baltassar, the Chaldean King, was slain, and Darius, the Mede, succeeded to the kingdom, being three score and two years old* (Daniel v.). A very familiar story often told, and often to be told again: "the same night, you will die, dear friend, and your heir will succeed in his tenth, or twentieth, or thirtieth year".

#### STATION VI.

*And when He drew near, seeing the city He wept over it, saying: If thou hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace* (vv. 41, 42).

A. The Holy City! His own City! yet not so holy nor so much His own as the soul of a Christian man, created by Him! redeemed by Him! baptised unto His image! sanctified and consecrated by the unction of the Holy Spirit! fed on His Sacred Body and Blood! the Bride of the Bridegroom, destined to share His eternal home! How often from His tabernacle does He look out on each of us, saying sorrowfully: *If thou hadst known in this thy day the things that are to thy peace, but now they are hidden from thy eyes.*

B. *In this thy day.* The short day on earth is *our day*; a day of exceeding privilege for us. Seeing our danger and how His enemy attacks us through hatred of our God, our Saviour has made redemption plentiful and salvation wonderfully easy. With a very slight effort we

can have our sins forgiven. And we have Emmanuel, that is, God with us; our Lord *always living* night and day on our altars *to intercede for us* (Hebrews vii.), and to listen to every cry.

Compare our condition, so abounding in grace, with the hopeless and joyless condition of the lost souls in Hell. Compare it with the loneliness and bereavement of Purgatory, where there is no Holy Mass, no Blessed Eucharist, no opportunities of gaining more merit or of winning more souls to our Lord.

In one point we may even compare with the state of the blessed in Heaven. For they can merit no more, nor can they any more suffer for our Lord Jesus Christ. Spiritual writers have said that our Saviour came to earth to find what He could not have in Heaven, thorns and tribulations.

C. *In this thy day.* Alas! how quickly it is passing! While I speak, while I write, another and another of the precious and privileged moments is gone behind us, not to come back, till at the judgment-seat all our years and days and hours are reproduced and set in the full light of that world that is to come when our short day for traffic is over. May we never have to say: *The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved* (Jerem. viii.).

D. *If thou hadst known the things that are to thy peace.* At His Birth our Lord made haste to announce that He came to bring true peace: *Peace to men of good will.* On the last night of His life again, He said as one of His parting words to His Apostles: *Peace I leave you; My peace I give you* (St. John xiv.). After He was risen His favourite word of greeting was: *Peace be to you.*

He gives peace to the understanding through faith, lulling to rest all troubling doubts, and *every wind* of false doctrine (Ephes. iv.). He gives peace to the heart through humility, meekness, and submission; through poverty and charity and self-denial. But men, alas! reject with scorn the peace He offers. What is the result? This never-

ending wail: *We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways, but the way of the Lord we have not known. What hath pride profited us? We have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us; and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us. . . . Such things as these the sinners said in hell (Wisdom v.).*

E. *But now these things are hidden from thy eyes.*

Blindness of soul is the terrible consequence and chastisement of sin. Against His will, entirely against His will, our Father in Heaven is compelled to allow this chastisement to come upon us: *Go to this people, and say to them: With the ear you shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive. For the heart of this people is grown gross, and with their ears have they heard heavily, and their eyes they have shut; lest perhaps they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them (Acts xxviii.).* From these words we might imagine that God wishes the blindness and hardness, but in reality He is only declaring that, entirely against His will, blindness and hardness is setting in through man's perversity: *Jerusalem, if thou hadst known!—How often would I have gathered together thy children as the hen gathers her chickens under her wings, but thou wouldst not.* "O Christian man, baptised in My blood, and fed with My Body and My Blood, *if thou hadst known!* but now, because thou wilt not pray, wilt not draw near to the altar of mercy during Holy Mass, wilt not invoke Holy Mary, wilt not even be merciful to the poor, all the things that are to thy peace are hidden from thy eyes."

F. *Thy enemies shall compass thee round and beat thee flat to the ground, because thou hast not known the day of thy visitation.* All that happened at the taking of Jerusalem, though so appalling, is as nothing to what shall go on in the everlasting prison-house of Hell. The Christian, the child of Heaven, deliberately renounces his birthright and his God, and chooses Satan for his master, and now has what he

has chosen. He is in the hands of Lucifer and his fallen angels. *Thy enemies, lost child of God, shall compass thee round and beat thee flat to the ground, because thou hast not known the day of thy visitation, thy day of privilege, when salvation was easy, when the Mother of God and ten thousand saints and angels were ever ready to pray for thee; when thou couldst have had forgiveness by saying from thy heart the one word, "peccavi". Alas! alas! The serpent deceived me.*

## SCENE II.

### JERUSALEM. THE PRECINCTS OF THE TEMPLE.

After our Blessed Lord's most sorrowful lament over Jerusalem, the procession descended to the torrent Cedron, passing on the right hand the Garden of Gethsemani. Then crossing one of the bridges over the torrent, they had to climb a very steep but short ascent to arrive at the Eastern Gate, sometimes called the Shusan Gate, sometimes the Beautiful Gate, later on the Golden Gate. This gate stood near the centre of the Eastern Wall, and led into the inner Court of the Temple, the Court of the Israelites. It was only opened on special occasions, such as this great Paschal season. It is supposed that our Saviour made His entrance through this gate. At present the Golden Gate is walled up. The Turks, it is said, have amongst them a prophecy, handed down from father to son, that one day the Christians will reconquer Palestine and make their entrance into Jerusalem through this Golden Gate. They hope to render this prophecy void by walling up the gateway.

A large part of the Holy City was built on three hills: Mount Sion formed the south-western portion; Mount Acra, the north-western; and Mount Moriah stood on the eastern side. On the southern slope of Mount Moriah down to the valley, lay the district called Ophel, where the poor people congregated. The Temple area occupied the greater part of Mount Moriah. Herod the Great, in the hope that magnificence might draw away the attention of the people from his tyranny and barbarous cruelty, had much enlarged the Temple precincts, and added greatly to the splendour of the buildings. The area, or plateau, in the centre of which the Temple stood, was therefore in our Lord's time about fifteen hundred feet in length, and nine hundred broad. It was divided into the outer court, into which the Gentiles might come, and the inner courts, into which only the children of Abraham might penetrate. Within this inner court was the portion reserved for the Priests and Levites; and here again in the innermost position stood the Sanctum Sanctorum into which no one but the High Priest could go. So that the

Temple was not one large edifice like our cathedrals, but rather a succession of enclosures and buildings one within the other. The whole area was surrounded by a colonnade, called the Portico of Solomon.

The Mosque of Omar occupies now the site of the ancient Temple, and at the southern extremity of the area stands the Mosque of El Aksa, where formerly stood the church built by St. Helen in honour of our Lady's life in the Temple.

Beneath the Temple area are very large excavations called the Stables of Solomon. There, it is said, the Crusaders found room enough to stable two thousand horses.

#### STATION I.

*And when He was come to Jerusalem, the whole city was moved, saying: Who is this? And the people said: This is Jesus the Prophet, from Nazareth of Galilee (St. Matt. xxi.).*

*The multitude, therefore, gave testimony, which was with Him when He called Lazarus out of the grave, and raised him from the dead. For which reason also the people came to meet Him, because they had heard that He had done this miracle (St. John xii.).*

A. We will contemplate the scene: the *persons*, the *words*, the *actions* as Jesus enters through the Beautiful Gate. Five centuries and a half before this time, the Prophet Zachary had seen in vision this triumphal entrance of our Lord, and had, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and speaking as God's delegate, called on the people to welcome their King. *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion: Shout for joy, O daughter of Jerusalem: Behold, thy King will come to thee: the Just and Saviour. He is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass (c. ix.).*

How thoroughly is the Divine will accomplished! As we listen, the men and women and children are with a wonderful fervour and enthusiasm crying out: *Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord! Blessed be the King Who cometh in the Name of the Lord! Peace in Heaven, and glory on high (St. Matt. xxi.; St. Luke xix.).*

Well may we with pious envy desire to have some share of this fervour. With what good reason Holy Church borrows the words of the inspired crowd and puts them into our hearts when the solemn time of the Consecration at Mass is coming, in the hope that we too, in the moment when our Blessed Saviour appears in the midst of us, shall greet Him from our hearts and say with much faith and hope and love, *Blessed is He that cometh* — our King so poor and meek, the Son of Man, the Son of Holy Mary, our Brother, our Saviour, our Jesus, our God and our All!

B. Now, too, *Sursum corda!* We must lift up our hearts; for during His Passiontide our Blessed Lord often reminds us that He will come again one day, not in His littleness and poverty, but as the King and Lord and Judge of all the living and the dead. If all the faithful on earth were joined to the Jews and Galileans at the Shusan Gate, all singing from their hearts the same *Hosanna*, that loud anthem would still give us no idea at all of the new *Magnificat* which the Blessed Mother will intone, and the heavenly choirs of angels and of men will take up and prolong when all is ended, when Judgment is done, and the King of Glory, followed by the countless hosts of His redeemed and sanctified, shall pass through the eternal gates into the Heavenly Jerusalem: *The tabernacle of God with men (where) He will dwell with them: and they shall be His people, and God Himself with them shall be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes: and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away* (Apoc. xxi.).

Here on this earth, *eye hath not seen* what that pageant shall be; *ear hath not heard* anything like that new song. Neither hath it entered into the heart of man what things, what manner of triumph the Eternal Father hath prepared for His Divine Son Who loved Him so well, and for all who have faithfully followed their

Lord, and remained with Him in His temptations (St. Luke xxiii.).

C. Here, too, we see in its true character the poverty of Christ Jesus; how He has nothing, but possesses all things. Silver and gold He hath none; but when was there ever on this earth emperor or conqueror so privileged as to have a triumph such as this one is?

Let us observe, moreover, how while He sits so poor on the ass, His poverty is enriching many, and will to the end of time enrich many.

“Poor Mother of a poor Son, Blessed Mother of a Blessed Son, pray for us that our hearts may learn to love this poverty so real, and yet enriching so many.”

D. In this large multitude gathering on Mount Moriah we may distinguish three groups: the first, of those believing disciples who have come from Bethany and Jericho, and witnessed the raising of Lazarus; the second, of strangers who as yet know not Jesus, and are asking: *Who is this?* The third, of those who are looking on in malice incurable. Every *Hosanna* is only adding virulence to the poison that is corrupting their hearts. Judas is among them, still meditating how he can betray Him *conveniently*, and so regain what he lost at Bethany, when the true spikenard of Magdalen was not sold for three hundred pence, but wasted, as he thought, on the Body of the Lord.

*Ab ira, et odio, et omni mala voluntate, libera nos, Domine*—“From anger and hatred and all ill-will, deliver us, O Lord”.

E. *The multitude gave testimony which was with Him when He called Lazarus out of the grave. The whole city was moved.* And behold, greater wonders far are wrought in our midst; and so plentiful is redemption that we grow familiar with these miracles as we do with the every-day sunlight.

Not one Lazarus, but ten thousand times a thousand are called out of the grave and raised from eternal death to heavenly life.

Men make long pilgrimages to see the tomb of Lazarus. How reasonable were the words of St. Louis: "I care not to see any miracle but the miracle wrought upon the altar by consecration". The tabernacle is better than the tomb of Lazarus. *Better is one day, O Lord, in Thy courts above thousands.* The Most Holy Eucharist is the memorial of (all) *His wonderful works* (Psalm cx.).

Spiritual writers warn us not to rely too much on sensible consolations and sensible fits of fervour, which come and go, but to labour to acquire a firm faith and strong convictions which are not so changeable. We are not bound to believe that all who cried *Hosanna* on Palm Sunday joined in the uproar of Good Friday against Jesus, but there is much reason to fear that very many were scandalised in Him.

#### STATION II.

*And He entered into Jerusalem into the Temple, and having viewed all things round about, when now the eventide was come, He went out to Bethania with the Twelve* (St. Mark xi.).

##### A. *He entered into the Temple.*

The last of the Prophets foretold this visit. *Presently the Lord Whom you seek, and the Angel of the Testament Whom you desire, shall come to His Temple. Behold, He cometh, saith the Lord of Hosts . . . ; and who shall stand to see Him ? for He is like a refining fire* (Malach. iii.).

The time is at hand when *He shall sit refining and cleansing.* For the present, He merely goes round as the Lord and Master to see in what condition His house is. He will return again to-morrow.

Let us pray for priests and people that we may all be able to say when He comes to judge: *Lord, I have loved the beauty of Thy house* (Psalm xxv.).

B. *When now the eventide was come, He went out to Bethania, because now, as at His Birth, there is no place*

for Him in the town. Even those who love Him are afraid of incurring the wrath of the Pharisees by offering Him a lodging. Some commentators think that He was already excommunicated.

Where does He spend the night when He goes from the city? Possibly sometimes at the house of Lazarus, or with Simon the Leper; but sometimes at least, if not always, a part of the night in the Garden of Olives; for Judas knew that *Jesus had often resorted thither with His disciples* (St. John xviii.). He loved to be by the Sea of Tiberias, because those waters with their storms and the fishing-boat of Peter were to Him a picture of His future Church. And so did He love to be among the olive-trees and in the cornfields, because there He is reminded of His holy sacraments which are to give birth to His little ones, and to nourish them. *By the fruit of their corn, their wine, and their oil they are multiplied* (Psalm iv.).

C. *When now the eventide was come.*

Stay a little while to watch our Lord as He stands in the court outside the Temple preparing to go to Bethany. Of the great gathering some have gone to their homes or their lodgings; many are still around Jesus, very reluctant to leave Him. He is there reading the thoughts of all; of His friends and His enemies alike. *For all things were known to the Lord God before they were created: so also after they were perfected He beholdeth all things* (Eccles. xxiii.).

We have been contemplating the actions of His friends and listening to His words. Let us turn for a while to His enemies, whose most secret thoughts are present to Him.

### STATION III.

*The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Do you see that we prevail nothing? Behold, the whole world is gone after Him* (St. John xii. 19).

A. *We prevail nothing.*

Some holy writers think that these Pharisees were

wavering, and beginning to believe in Him. It is certain that at this time *many of the chief men also believed in Him* (St. John xii. 42), but they do not seem to have been of the sect of the Pharisees; for St. John adds, *but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, that they might not be cast out of the Synagogue*. More probably, therefore, the Pharisees are now rousing each other to stronger measures against Him.

B. *The whole world is gone after Him.*

Would it were true, dear Lord, that the whole world was gone after Thee! Oh, teach us to say more and more heartily, and with holy importunity, *Thy Kingdom come*. For what is Thy desire but that the fire be kindled which Thou art come to cast on the earth?

C. Observe the disastrous weakness of the chief men who believe, but, through fear of the Pharisees, will not confess. Had they been as bold and resolute as the Pharisees, the people would have followed them and confessed Christ, instead of denying Him. We must never forget that by our example and words we all lead others towards good or towards evil.

D. *Do you see that we prevail nothing?* Grant, O my God, that I may never prevail against Thee. *Not as I will, but as Thou willest.*

E. *For fear of the Pharisees they did not confess.*

I cannot serve two masters. If I unduly fear and worship man, I must think much too little of God, and treat Him with contempt. Who has been hitherto my master? Who is now my master? God or man? Which do I reverence? Which do I contemn?

F. *For fear of the Pharisees they did not confess.*

Have I ever, by the weight of my example, or by ridicule or evil counsels, hindered any one from doing right? or led any one into sin? Have I discouraged almsgiving? hindered reconciliation and forgiveness? increased resentment? discountenanced prayer or penance? mocked at fervour? impeded religious vocations?

## STATION IV.

## OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE.

*Now there were certain Gentiles among them who came up to adore on the festival-day. These therefore came to Philip, who was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying: Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew. Again Andrew and Philip told Jesus (vv. 20—22).*

A. They come to Philip, Philip cometh to Andrew. So may we invoke a saint, that saint may go to our Lady, she to her Son.

B. Some called Gentiles may in their hearts be disciples of Christ. So too many are called Protestants who in their infancy became by Baptism true children of the Church, and may still retain the grace of faith and have a true desire to know our Lord and serve Him.

C. *Sir, we would see Jesus.*

Let us learn of these Gentiles. May our earnest desire be: Show us, Mother of God, the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

## STATION V.

*But Jesus answered them, saying: The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground dieth, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit (vv. 23—25).*

A. In the early part of His Public Life, our Saviour had said to His Apostles when He sent them to cast out unclean spirits and heal all manner of diseases, *Go ye not into the way of the Gentiles* (St. Matt. x.). To the woman of Canaan also He said: *I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel. It is not good to take the bread of the children and cast it to the dogs* (St. Matt. xv.). But now the time is near when all is to be changed by His Death. The Gentiles are no longer to be dogs, but children, and the Son of Man will be glorified in their conversion. Until now the grain of wheat has not been cast into the

ground to die. A little while, and from the tomb of Christ the good seed will spring up and be multiplied.

“By Thy Cross and Passion, O Lord, by Thy Death and burial deliver us, and may many be raised from death to life.”

B. *Unless the grain of wheat dieth, itself remaineth alone.*

Comparatively few were converted till after the Death of Christ. The charity of His humble Heart was not ambitious, did not seek His own glory (1 Cor. ix.). *He that believeth in Me, the works that I do he also shall do; and greater than these shall he do* (St. John xiv.). *I have sent you to reap that in which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labours* (St. John iv.). St. Peter was to draw into his net more souls in one day than our Lord had gathered in three years. Even so must we be unselfish, and wish that God's Kingdom may come, not only through our own efforts, but even more through the work of others more worthy.

C. *Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground dieth, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.*

*If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, St. Paul writes, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal* (1 Cor. xiii.). But I cannot have charity, or love, unless self dies. Therefore, I cannot bear much fruit in the souls of others unless I die to self. The blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the Church, and a sacrifice of self, of our comforts, of our precedence, of our humours, our tastes, our will, our judgment, is oftentimes the necessary price to be paid for the conversion of friends. There are devils which cannot be driven out *without prayer and fasting* (St. Matt. xvii.), that is, without penance, or some sacrifice as painful as fasting.

#### STATION VI.

*He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world keepeth it unto life eternal* (v. 25).

Our Blessed Saviour is giving us reasons why we

should take courage and die to self. If I am very fond of myself and of my comfort, and of being treated kindly and with honour, this very love of myself and of my well-being, ought to rouse me to win for my dear self everlasting rest and comfort and happiness and honour in Heaven by paying the requisite price of self-denial here. Better far a little trouble and pain now with everlasting joy and rest hereafter, than a considerable share of comforts now, followed by *weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth* for ever. The wise men of this world gladly make a sacrifice and pay out money which they can badly spare, in order to secure some rich prize that will render them comfortable for the rest of their days. The poor man that found the treasure in the field, went home and sold all that he had in order to buy the coveted plot of ground.

## STATION VII.

*If any man minister to Me, let him follow Me; and where I am there also shall My minister be. If any man minister to Me, him will My Father honour (v. 26).*

A. Another argument in favour of self-denial and the cross. If any man wishes to be My servant, let him follow Me. Every King who has a soldier serving under him has a right to say to him, "Wherever I am, on the march or on the battlefield, there you must be". And so our Lord says to us, "If you are My servant, follow Me to Calvary"; but He adds what no other master would say to his servant: "Where I am, in My Eternal Home, there shall My servant be". What general ever said to his soldiers: "Follow me, and you shall be till death with me in my home, at my table, sharing all with me"? The grateful Heart of our Lord goes much further than death. "Throughout eternity you shall be where I am, sharing in all I can share with you, if you follow Me here on earth." *The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour (hath) appeared (Titus iii).*

B. *If any man minister to Me, him will My Father honour.* As if it were something very generous on our part, very charitable, very condescending, to minister to our Lord Jesus. If we are to be honoured by Thy Eternal Father for ministering to Thee, most loving Lord, what shall be done to Thee for ministering to us and dying for us?

C. And again: "*Quid retribuam Domino pro omnibus quæ retribuit mihi?*"—*What shall I give back to the Lord for all the things that He hath given back to me?* (Psalm cxv.). That is, for all His gratitude to me. For our Blessed Saviour, besides all the boundless love He deserves for having first loved us, deserves a new heartfelt of love for the boundless gratitude wherewith He repays whatever we do for Him.

#### STATION VIII.

*Now is My Soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour. But for this cause came I unto this hour* (v. 27).

A. *Now is My Soul troubled.*

Here our Lord suddenly permits His Soul to be troubled, either through the agency of Satan, or without it, at the thought of His approaching Death. In the charity of His Heart He admits this trouble for our sake. He has been exhorting us to die to self, and now He humbly wishes us to see that His own blessed Soul shrinks and shudders at the prospect of bitter death. Hence St. Augustine speaks to our Lord with loving boldness: "Thou biddest my soul follow Thee, but now I see Thy own Soul troubled. What foundation can I find if the Rock gives way? But I understand the working of Thy compassion. Out of charity Thou dost permit Thyself to be troubled in order to console Thy weak followers, and hinder them from perishing when they feel hopeless. He raises us up to high things, but Himself suffers along with the most lowly of sufferers."

B. *And what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour.*

According to some holy Fathers, He deliberates, "What shall I say? Shall I say, *Father, save Me from this hour?* Shall I ask My Father to deliver Me from the horrors of My Passion?" According to others, He does pray, as afterwards in the Garden, *Father, save Me from this hour! Let this chalice pass from Me.* But at once He adds:

C. *But for this I came unto this hour.* That is, *Not My will, but Thine be done*; "since for this alone, for this one object, I came on earth, and have come to this last hour of My life to do Thy will and redeem Thy children".

#### STATION IX.

*Father, glorify Thy name (v. 28).*

That is, "be it done to Me according to Thy word and Thy will, provided only Thy name be hallowed". How good a prayer for our use! Our Father, *to us confusion of face* (Daniel ix.), but *hallowed be Thy name.*

Let not this short word pass by and be forgotten. It is a prayer to be treasured up for use, and adopted.

#### STATION X.

*A voice therefore came from Heaven: I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again (v. 28).*

A. This miracle may have helped on towards Christianity those Gentiles who were seeking to see our Lord. Added also to the triumph of the Palm Sunday, it may have afterwards helped the disciples to recover more quickly from the panic and the scandal occasioned by the Sacred Passion.

B. In His own good time our Lord will look down on His Vicar on earth and His suffering Church, and say: *I have before now glorified My name,* and humbled My enemies, and I will do it again.

## STATION XI.

*The multitude therefore said that it thundered. Others said an Angel spoke to Him. Jesus answered and said: This voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes (vv. 29, 30).*

God works miracles for our sakes, but men interpret miracles according to their humour. So can they interpret according to their fancy any words of Holy Scripture. Therefore has our Blessed Lord, in His charity, chosen as a safer path to truth, obedience to the living Apostolic voice. For we cannot interpret according to our humour the mandates of our living Superior. He is present to correct us and enforce His own meaning.

## STATION XII.

*Now is the judgment of the world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out (v. 31).*

A. *Now is the judgment of this world.* Some interpret: Now is the guilty world—the world made up of the men of Jerusalem, such as the priests, Herod and Pilate—about to be condemned by My Death. Others understand: Now is the fallen world, long oppressed by Satan, to be released and set free.

B. *Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.*

Satan's great power was broken by the Death of Christ. He is driven out of our souls at Baptism, and again by absolution. He is driven out, and our Saviour comes in his place to abide with us in the Blessed Eucharist. Satan is also driven out of houses and of the water, and from the air, and the fire, by the blessings and exorcisms of the Church. We must with a lively faith duly value all these sacred blessings of Holy Church, so powerful against wicked spirits. Those who in their impatience utter imprecations, cursing men, animals, their

tools, their food and the like, cancel these blessings of the Church, and bring back the power of the devil.

C. *Now shall the prince of this world be cast out.* Our Blessed Lord, after His trouble, is now comforted by the thought of the victory He is to gain over Satan, and the conversion of the Gentiles, and the salvation of innumerable souls. We must add to this joy by helping, as much as we can, to cast out sin from the souls of men.

### STATION XIII.

*And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself (v. 32).*

A. This thought goes with the preceding one. Lucifer shall be driven out, and I from My Cross will draw all hearts, and reign in them as King. But, O Lord, if with Thy servant Abraham *we* may speak, who are *but dust and ashes* (Gen. xviii.), canst Thou accomplish this Thy desire, canst Thou draw all hearts to Thyself on Thy Cross without help from us? The wine-press Thou couldst tread all alone (Isaias lxiii.), but must not faith in Thee come through hearing? Can men invoke Thee and be saved unless they first believe, and *how shall they believe Him of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?* (Romans x.). Thy Apostle St. Paul was not afraid to say, *I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh for His Body, which is the Church* (Coloss. i.). In Thy charity then, Thou hast left some part of Thy glorious work of redemption undone, that so we may help Thy work, and so be entitled to share Thy eternal reward.

*Fac cor dulce Jesu mei, fac ut nos amemus Te*—"Grant that we may love Thee, and help others to love Thee".

B. *I will draw all things to Myself.* We must each reflect: Has Jesus crucified been able to effect His promise and His wish in my regard? Are His other words come true in me? *They shall look upon Me Whom they have*

*pierced (Zach. xii.). You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains (Isaias xii.).*

#### STATION XIV.

*The multitude answered Him: We have heard out of the Law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest Thou: The Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man? Jesus, therefore, said to them: Yet a little while the light is among you. Walk whilst you have the light, that the darkness overtake you not. And he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth (vv. 34, 35).*

##### A. *We have heard, . . . and how sayest Thou?*

Here, as in countless other passages of Holy Writ, we see how absolutely necessary it is to have a Master and careful teaching when we wish to understand the revelation of God aright. What so easy, and what so utterly mischievous and ruinous as to run away with isolated texts, snatched up at random, and fasten our own interpretations to them, and then with hopeless obstinacy maintain to the death that our notion is God's truth?

B. *The Son of Man must be lifted up.* The men listening clearly understood the word used by our Lord to mean crucifixion or some other form of death, just as we understand that a criminal is to die when we hear that he is to be hanged.

C. *Who is this Son of Man?* He is my God, Who, because He loved me and wished to deliver Himself up for me and save me from the everlasting cruelty of Satan, was made Man and dwelt among us and died on Calvary.

D. *Yet a little while.* Call to mind Job's description of human life. *Man born of a woman, living for a short time (Job xiv.).* Add what lost souls, now acquainted with things eternal, think of time on earth; for the Holy Spirit has revealed to us some of the secrets of their prison-house. *What hath pride profited us? or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? all those things are passed*

*away like a shadow—as a ship that passeth through the waves—as when a bird flieth through the air—as when an arrow is shot at a mark.—So we also being born, forthwith ceased to be.—Such things as these the sinners said in Hell (Wisdom).*

*Yet a little while* for earthly pleasures.

*Yet a little while* for earthly sufferings. St. Paul called these all light and momentary, after he had seen a glimpse of the world to come.

*Yet a little while*, to fight, then all is secure.

*Yet a little while*, to earn a higher place in Heaven.

*Yet a little while*, to do penance here and so shorten those sorrows of Purgatory which eye hath not seen and our thoughts cannot measure.

*Yet a little while*, to hear Mass and receive Holy Communion.

*Yet a little while*, to win the Heart of our Lord by giving alms to His poor; to the souls of sinners; to the holy sufferers in Purgatory.

*Yet a little while*, in which we can be so blessed as to drink of His Chalice with Christ Jesus and Holy Mary.

E. *The light is among you.* How often in the month? How often in the week? How often each day? How often each hour, do we thank our good Lord for calling us into His admirable light?

F. How often, too, do we pray earnestly, and join penance with prayer for those who sit in darkness? *Think not*, Mardochai said to Esther, *think not that thou mayest save thy life only because thou art in the King's house* (Esther iv.).

Some saints have said that every Christian must be a Christ. It is not less true that every Christian must be a Jesus, a Saviour.

#### STATION XV.

*These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them (v. 36).*

The sense seems to be that our Lord began to move

as if to leave the Temple and go back to Mount Olivet. But apparently He lingered to say some other words before His departure.

*He went away and hid Himself from the malice of the Rulers, to prevent the multiplication of sins.*

“Even so, dear Lord Jesus, often hast Thou been obliged to withdraw from our souls, and hide Thyself. All Thy loveliness, all Thy charity, all Thy wisdom have been hidden from us, and we preferred things vile and mean before Thee.” Jerusalem, these things *are hidden from thy eyes.*

“Jesus, Son of David, Jesus, Son of Holy Mary, have mercy on us, *that we may see.*”

#### STATION XVI.

*And whereas He had done so many miracles before them, they believed not in Him (v. 37).*

##### A. *They believed not.*

The voice from Heaven was one more great grace. It fell on the hard, bad soil, like the seed, and bore no fruit. *You shall die in your sins*, our Lord had said to them. *If you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins* (St. John viii.).

Why this severe sentence? Our Blessed Saviour gave the explanation a little later to the Twelve. *If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin: but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father* (St. John xv.). *If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not; but if I do, though you will not believe Me, believe the works* (St. John x.). O Lord our God, from our hidden sins cleanse us, and from the blindness which they cause deliver us. We are much more surrounded by the wonderful works of Christ Jesus in His Holy Church, than the Jews were in Jerusalem. But, alas! all these things may become, through our own fault, hidden from our eyes.

STATION XVII.

*However, many of the chief men also believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, that they might not be cast out of the Synagogue. For they loved the glory of men, more than the glory of God (vv. 42, 43).*

*A. Many believed, but did not confess Him.*

We must often pray for those who are afraid to join the Church and confess Christ, through fear of men and temporal losses.

B. And if we ourselves are ever afraid to break our chains and confess our sins, let us remember at least to give alms and to do works of mercy, that the prayer of the poor may gain strength for us. *For water quencheth a flaming fire and alms resisteth sin (Ecclus. iii.).*

*C. They loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.*

By earnest meditation and fervent prayer, let us win grace to see how immeasurably better a thing it is to have glory from God than glory from men.

STATION XVIII.

*But Jesus cried and said: He that believeth in Me, doth not believe in Me, but in Him that sent Me (v. 44).*

*A. Jesus cried and said.*

Probably, as He was leaving the gathered crowd to retire to Bethania, He raised His voice and spoke this parting word of warning very loud, that it might make an impression on some at least of those present.

*B. In Him that sent Me.*

Observe that our Lord is the delegate and representative of His Father. In like manner, His Apostle is His Vicar, His delegate. *As the Father hath sent Me, I send you (St. John xx.). He that heareth you, heareth Me (St. Luke x.).* So, too, every lawful superior, within the limits of his office, is God's delegate and representative. So also every

one of our neighbours, every one needing help from us, comes to us as the proxy of our Lord: *Whenever you did it to one of My little ones you did it to Me.*

## STATION XIX.

*He that seeth Me, seeth Him that sent Me (v. 45).*

A. Here, as in so many places, He declares His own Divinity.

We must desire earnestly to see and know Jesus, that so we may see and know our Father who is in Heaven. *This is Life Eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Him Whom Thou hast sent, Christ Jesus (St. John xvii.).* And as we gaze on Him in Heaven and contemplate all His perfections, we shall necessarily become like to Him, because we shall *see Him as He is (St. John iii.).* For it will be impossible not to love His goodness with all our hearts and all our minds and all our strength as soon as we once see Him as He is. And knowing Him thus and loving Him, we shall necessarily become a perfect image of Him, even as iron becomes fire when placed in contact with it.

B. Great thanks we must give to our Lord for becoming Man and thus enabling us to see Him, and through Him the Eternal Father.

C. If seeing God and knowing Him is to be our bliss in Heaven, why not begin to taste our future bliss here by often contemplating the Person, the words, the acts of - Christ Jesus? If God is to be all my happiness in eternity, can He not content me here?

## STATION XX.

*I am come a Light into the world, that whoever believeth in Me may not remain in darkness (v. 46).*

*Whoever believeth in Me.* We believe rightly in Jesus Christ, when we accept Him as our God and our Teacher, and give up our souls to be taught by Him; and adopt

all His doctrines without any reserve or exception ; not picking out some and leaving others in the spirit of heresy. Any one who thus accepts Christ our Lord and all His revelations, lives in a blaze of glorious light. The father of lies, therefore, labours incessantly to hinder belief in Christ, and to induce men to follow some other leader in one or other of the multiplied false religions. Let us pray often and earnestly for all *who sit in darkness*.

## STATION XXI.

*If any man hear My words and keep them not, I do not judge him ; for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world (v. 47).*

*I came not to judge.*

While on earth, and now in the Blessed Eucharist, our Blessed Lord's work is to seek and to save those who were lost. He is not with us to judge, but to save. Later, when all is over here, He will be our Judge. Mother of God, pray for us poor sinners, that thy Divine Son may be able always to be our Saviour and not our severe Judge.

## STATION XXII.

*He that despiseth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him : the Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day (v. 48).*

At present, men dispute and cavil about the meaning of our Lord's words, as, for instance, when He said : *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church* (St. Matt. xvi.). But, at the Judgment, every word will stand in such full, clear light, that even the Judge Himself will have no need to interpret. Everything at variance with the words of our Lord will stand at once condemned.

## STATION XXIII.

*For I have not spoken of Myself, but the Father Who sent Me, He gave Me commandment what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is Life Everlasting. . . . Even as the Father said to Me, so do I speak* (vv. 49, 50).

A. Our Blessed Saviour, the Eternal Wisdom, with profound humility of Heart speaks nothing from Himself, only what His Father has commanded; and we, who have so little wisdom, are ever inclined, in our insane pride, to speak and act on our own impulse.

B. All false religions would cease to be, if those who teach adopted this rule of our Lord: "I speak nothing of Myself, but only what My Father hath commanded". All who have care of children, and all in authority, have great need to fix this word in their hearts by meditation: *The words that I speak to you, I speak not of Myself* (St. John xiv.).

C. *I know that His commandment is Life Everlasting.* How blessed shall we be if we thoroughly persuade ourselves that God's commandment is Life Everlasting, that every word of God is the bread of life for our souls, both here and hereafter! *Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the council of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the chair of pestilence. But his will is in the Law of the Lord, and on His Law he shall meditate day and night* (Psalm i.). *Let not the book of this Law depart from thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate on it day and night, that thou mayest observe and do all things that are in it; then shalt thou direct thy way and understand it* (Josue i.).

SCENE III.

MOUNT OF OLIVES. THE NIGHT AFTER PALM SUNDAY.

STATION I.

*These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them (St. John xii. 36).*

*In the day-time He was teaching in the Temple; but at night going out He abode in the mount that is called Olivet (St. Luke xxi. 37).*

*Leaving them, He went out of the city into Bethania, and remained there (St. Matt. xxi. 17).*

A. After crying out with a loud voice His parting earnest word of warning, *He went away and hid Himself from them.*

It was easy for Him, as has been said, to hide Himself. Whenever He pleased their eyes were held and they could not recognise Him. Surrounded, then, by His chosen ones He passes away unnoticed. Contemplate Him with His Blessed Mother and His Apostles, and other faithful followers, walking tranquilly through the midst of His enemies who see not because He so wills. They know not whither He is gone, and He by going hinders many sins that His presence would have occasioned among His implacable enemies.

“O Jesus, Hidden God, have mercy on us, that we may see Thee, for our eyes also are held.”

B. *At night He abode in the mount that is called Olivet.*

Where, then, did He pass the night? Some interpreters think that He spent this night and the three following in the Garden of Gethsemani, preparing for His Sacred Passion by prayer. We know that *He passed the whole night in the prayer of God (St. Luke vi.)* before He selected His twelve Apostles. The occasion is now more solemn, and He would naturally wish to teach His future martyrs to prepare for their conflict by long and earnest prayer.

“Merciful Lord Jesus, give us grace ever to remember that even when the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak, and that if we pray not, we shall enter into temptation.”

C. Consider how easy it is to devote the night hours to any work that we love, and how unwilling we are to watch when we love not. When we read how the Saints spent nights in prayer, we must remember that love for Jesus Christ had become in them a strong passion. To those who have used holy violence, and torn down the veil between their souls and Jesus, His *conversation hath no bitterness, nor His company any tediousness, but joy and gladness* (Wisdom viii.).

What could the heart of our Blessed Lady do during these holy nights but watch with her Son, wishing what He wished, weeping when He wept, rejoicing at what consoled Him?

D. Contemplate our Saviour during these night hours. He has around Him the olive-trees, the corn-fields, and the vines; and, as has been said, they give consolation to His afflicted Heart, for He is thinking how souls will be gathered to Him through the wheaten bread and the juice of the grape; and how His dying servants will be soothed, and sanctified, and purified from the remnants of sin by the olive oil. *Thou waterest the hills, O Lord, that Thou mayest bring bread out of the earth, and that wine may cheer the heart of man, that he may make the face cheerful with oil, and that bread may strengthen man's heart* (Psalm ciii.). But bread and wine and oil are to do better and holier work than this.

“*Attendite.*” O stay a little while, and watch the Sacred Heart of Jesus planning to become as bread and wine and oil for His people, and often asking His angels, His Holy Mother, and His eternal Father, *What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard that I have not done to it?* (Isaias v.).

E. When we are angry and resentful, we are not planning to become bread or wine or oil to our neighbours, but by wrangling to roar at them as enraged beasts do, or

to sting them cunningly as venomous serpents do, or to bite as dogs do. *Beware of dogs*, St. Paul writes. *Without are dogs*, St. John writes (Apoc. xxii.). They allude to those who with venomous tongues malign the children of the Church.

The Holy Ghost tells us that sinners go about not acting like bread and wine and oil towards their neighbours, but spreading infection by their words. *Their throat is an open sepulchre* (Psalm xiii. 3). Martha did not wish her brother's grave to be opened, lest the stench of corruption might be perceived. We can understand the force of the Psalmist's comparison by the mischief so often caused in our days by bad drains. We might write the similitude in this way: "Their throat is like a bad drain". Large sums are spent to get rid of a defective drain. Every one understands that no pains must be spared. It is a matter of life and death. Meanwhile there is above ground, in the drawing-room and dining-room, a bad drain continually spreading poison; one who by tale-bearing, detracting, calumniating and backbiting the absent, is every day and every night destroying the good name of a neighbour, poisoning the souls of listeners, and dishonouring grossly God the Father Who created, and God the Son Who redeemed, by thus wantonly multiplying sins.

F. We must think how we can imitate the Sacred Heart of our Lord, and plan to become good bread and wine and oil to our neighbour. By instructing others we feed and strengthen them. By cheering them and bringing back hope to their hearts we do the work of good wine. By soothing sorrow, by allaying anger, and bringing quarrels to an end we act as the oil of olives.

G. *In the night He abode in the mount that is called Olivet.*

*Thou hast appointed darkness and it is night*, the inspired Psalmist writes. *In it shall all the beasts of the woods go about. The young lions roaring after their prey and seeking*

*their meat from God. The sun ariseth and they are gathered together, and they shall lie down in their dens. Man shall go forth to his work and to his labour until the evening (Psalm ciii.).*

Man then is to be abroad by day, and the wild beasts by night. The night is man's time for repose; repose for the body, repose for the soul; for the body through sleep, and for the soul through intercourse with Jesus Christ our Lord. The stillness and darkness is created to favour sleep and to assist prayer. *In the day-time the Lord hath commanded His mercy (works of mercy and charity), and a canticle to Him in the night (Psalm xli.).*

But the unseen spirits of darkness labour incessantly to spoil God's plans, and induce men to desecrate the sacred night-time.

H. If with perseverance we contemplate Jesus watching by night and praying for us, we shall find that a virtue comes out from Him to us. We shall get grace to cut down sleep to what is necessary and useful for us. We shall win grace to pray when we wake at night or are sleepless, for the Holy Souls and for sinners, and to turn to our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Some, after being in bed for a little while, rise to pray for a few minutes to secure a blessing on the night, and grace to rise promptly in the morning. St. Ignatius wishes those who make his Exercises in full for thirty days, frequently to make a meditation at midnight. And many holy religious of both sexes carry out our Lord's wish for *a canticle to Him* in the night by breaking their sleep to chant their nocturns.

I. Some commentators think, and apparently with reason, that after praying for some time in the Garden to which He so often resorted, our Lord went on with His disciples to Bethany. This view seems more correct, for St. Matthew and St. Mark state clearly that *He went out to Bethania*. If so, observe to what a laborious life He trains His followers: since the night is far ad-

vanced when He crosses Mount Olivet with them to arrive at Bethany. Do they murmur at being obliged thus to watch and walk after their weary day? Thy sweet presence, O Lord, is to them better than sleep and rest. *Better is Thy mercy than lives* (Psalm lxii.); better than pleasant days, better than nights of still repose. "Blot out our iniquity, O Lord, which prevents our souls from resting in Thee."

J. The saints learned from our Lord to love prayer by night. How much of the strong faith of Ireland is due to the long hours devoted every night by St. Patrick to prayer and penance! How many graces are won for the unconscious world by the night-watches and holy psalmody of cloistered monks and virgins! Even among the faithful laity many can say with the Psalmist: *I rose at midnight to give praise to Thee, O Lord* (Psalm cxviii.). "I trust to the holy hour on Thursday night for my contrition," a good and faithful servant of our Lord used to say.

At His Birth our Lord invited to His first reception shepherds keeping the night-watch. His Apostles, afterwards, were most of them fishermen accustomed to watch by night.

#### SCENE IV.

THE ROAD FROM BETHANY. MONDAY MORNING.

STATION I.

*In the morning returning into the city, He was hungry*  
(St. Matt. xxi. 18).

According to tradition, our Blessed Saviour on this morning went into Jerusalem by the road that runs round the base of Mount Olivet. The site of the fig-tree is still shown.

A. *In the morning.*

Our Divine Master, as we have seen, trained His followers to labour. If "early to bed" was not always

their rule, "early to rise" apparently was. St. Luke writes that during these last days of His life the people came early to Him in the Temple. The Latin word *manicabant* is a word not often met with. It expresses that the people were spending the early hours waiting for Jesus and listening to Him.

Stay a little while to reflect on our early mornings. Are we in the temple betimes for Holy Mass? Do we secure quiet time in the morning for a meditation on our Lord's Life and Death? Or are we desecrating those hallowed morning hours by sloth? Are we giving much trouble and scandal by breakfasting in bed when not compelled by sickness?

B. *He was hungry.* What wonder! He had said before now: *My food is to do the will of Him that sent Me.* For others He would multiply the loaves, but for Himself He would not bid the stones become bread. And now that His working-day is nearly at an end, He redoubles, as we shall see, His efforts to save that which was lost, and forgets food and rest.

To St. Elizabeth of Hungary He revealed on one occasion, towards the end of her life, how much He had suffered from weariness and exhaustion. She was praying with great fervour, when suddenly she saw spread out before her a hand resplendently white and luminous, but very much wasted away, and with the fingers elongated, and in the palms a deep wound. By this last sign she knew that it was the hand of Jesus Christ, and was astonished to see it so lean and fleshless. The voice with which she was so familiar answered at once: "The cause is that I was worn away with watching and prayer by night, and journeying by day through towns and country places to preach the Kingdom of God".

C. How gladly would Mary and Martha and Lazarus and Simon have ministered to His wants, if permitted! But His compassionate Heart is turned so early in the morning towards Jerusalem, *to seek and to save that which*

*was lost*, that they have no opportunity of giving Him food.

D. How happy we should be had we on that morning been allowed to prepare breakfast for Jesus and His Blessed Mother, and some of the great Saints who were following Him! Waste no time in wishing for that happiness, but make haste to use your present great privilege. *Deal thy bread to the hungry* (Isaias lviii.), for *as long as you did it to one of these, My least brethren, you did it to Me* (St. Matt. xxv.).

E. *He was hungry.* That is, He allowed Himself to feel hunger and exhaustion. For forty days and nights in the wilderness He fasted and prayed, sustaining Himself not on bread, but on *every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God* (St. Matt. iv.). Then, after the forty days of retreat, *He was hungry*: and He allowed Himself to feel the natural effects of the long fast. Satan observed His exhausted state, and thought he had found the fitting time to tempt Him to act inordinately by providing some refreshment for Himself in a miraculous way.

F. *He was hungry.*

Before going on further to contemplate the last scenes of our Saviour's Passion, let us stay here a little while, and not hurry away. Allow time for an attentive consideration of His thirst, His hunger, and His weariness. We must no doubt also turn from Him to ourselves; for we look at Him in order to learn what to do ourselves. It is, however, still true that if we only glance hastily at Him, and then turn away too soon, to become engrossed with our own badness and cowardice and sensuality, the sure result will be discouragement and an increase of cowardice. We must never forget that it was while the Israelites looked on the brazen serpent that they were cured. If cowardly thoughts are setting in, this is a clear sign that we have turned our eyes away too soon from Jesus, and ceased to look on Him. We must go back to Him, and continue to contemplate His hunger, His thirst,

and His weariness, till, after a time, we find that virtue is coming out from Him to us; that a little of His Divine strength is being infused into us. "Passion of Christ, strengthen us."

G. We do not here want high thoughts and conceptions; we have to look at Jesus, hungry, thirsty, and tired, and say humbly and perseveringly, *Passio Christi, conforta me.*

First, "May Thy holy hunger and thirst, Lord Jesus, atone for my gluttony and greediness".

Secondly, "May Thy hunger and thirst awaken in me a desire to share Thy hunger, and Thy thirst, and Thy weariness".

"Blot out, merciful Jesus, my iniquity which hinders me from loving Thee, and wishing to suffer something for Thy sake."

H. *He was hungry.*

We will also remember, and not forget, that it is to the Passion of Christ that we owe not only life eternal, and, here on earth, the perpetual Sacrifice, the holy sacraments, and the forgiveness of our sins; but also that purified and hallowed and enlarged enjoyment of all the good things of this earth which is the outcome of our Blessed Saviour's plentiful redemption. We may say in all truth that our food, our refreshment, our rest, the sunlight by day, the stillness of the night, and all the kindness of domestic life and social life, all come to us blessed and sanctified by the Sacred Blood of our Saviour. Call to mind, therefore, what happened to David. He was in a fortress beleaguered by the Philistines: *And David longed and said, O that some man would give me water of the cistern of Bethlehem, which is in the gate.* The Philistines were at the time in possession of Bethlehem; but three of David's valiant men *broke through the midst of the camp of the Philistines, and drew water out of the cistern of Bethlehem—and brought it to David to drink. And he would not drink of it, but rather offered it to the Lord, saying: God forbid that I should*

*do this in the sight of my God; and should drink the blood of these men: for with the danger of their lives they have brought me this water. And therefore he would not drink* (1 Paral. xi.).

We must mark the words, *God forbid that I should drink the blood of these men: for with the danger of their lives they have brought me this water.* It is by His hunger and thirst and weariness and wounds, that our Blessed Saviour has won for us our present life in the Christian Church, with all its comforts and blessings. Even every cooling cup of water, and every refreshing breeze as they come to us now saying, *Sursum corda!* all are bought at a great price.

Should we not, then, be more occupied with love for the Giver than with the gifts? "O merciful Lord Jesus, blot out our iniquity which clings to Thy gifts, and forgets the Giver".

I. *He would not drink, but rather offered it to the Lord.*

If we give a cup of cold water to one of Christ's little ones in the name of a disciple, we shall not lose our reward, for we have given it to Christ. But there are two ways of giving a cup of cold water to Christ. We may give it out of our superfluity, without depriving ourselves; and even so, if we give it to one who wants, because He is Christ's disciple and our brother, we are sure of a reward. But if we rob ourselves, if we are thirsty ourselves and will not drink, but either give it to the thirsty or offer a sacrifice direct to our Lord, this is a much higher gift, and it comforts unspeakably His suffering Heart.

J. St. Ignatius reminds us that when health does not permit us to curtail food, we may sometimes safely share the thirst of our Saviour, and deny ourselves some refreshing drink.

"Passion of Christ, strengthen me, that I may conquer my selfish sensuality."

K. If we satisfy fully our hunger and our thirst with the meat and drink of this world, can we ever obtain a

strong relish for the Blessed Eucharist? or a strong hunger and thirst for graces? or for the conversion of our neighbour? Has not our Lady said: *The hungry He hath filled with good things*: but *the rich*—the contented, the satisfied, those who have had their fill of this earth's good things—*He hath sent empty away*?

“Have mercy on me, O Lord, according to Thy great mercy, that I may crave less for the good things of the earth, and much more for Thee.”

L. How easy it is to win graces for ourselves and others by sharing a little of our Saviour's weariness, by waiting for a little while before we give ourselves the rest we long for; or by not allowing ourselves the most comfortable positions! There are devils which cannot be driven out except by prayer and fasting, that is, prayer and penance.

M. It will cheer us and strengthen us if we remember that as we deny ourselves comforts and share our Lord's hunger and thirst and weariness, a better hunger and thirst and love for Him will always be growing, and will make us forget our bodily privations.

“O most loving Heart of Jesus, if I had long ago listened to Thy voice, and denied my senses, Thou wouldst not be obliged to say to me now, *So long a time am I with you, and have you not known Me?*” (St. John xiv.).

## STATION II.

*And when He had seen afar off a fig-tree having leaves, He came if perhaps He might find anything on it. And when He was come to it, He found nothing but leaves. For it was not the time for figs. And answering He said to it: May no man hereafter eat fruit of thee any more for ever. And His disciples heard it* (St. Mark xi. 13, 14).

A. *He came if perhaps He might find anything on it.*

Why did He come? Did He not know that there was not a fig on that tree? Ecclesiasticus answers, under the

inspiration of the Holy Spirit: *The eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun, beholding the bottom of the deep. For all things were known to the Lord, before they were created: so also after they were perfected He beholdeth all things* (Ecclus. xxiii.). Every fig that grows must be helped to grow by Him. Well, therefore, He knows that there are none for Him on that tree.

Then wherefore does He come? It is only one more instance of the method used by the Divine Wisdom of teaching through parables and types and figures. When Isaac is bound on the altar, he is a type of something to come. Judith's victory over Holophernes is an image of the Blessed among women who was to crush the serpent's head. The stormy sea of Galilee is a picture of the Church's history. And even so our Lord now walks some distance to reach the fruitless fig-tree, merely to bring home to us vividly what He is continually doing when He comes to our souls in the hope of being comforted and refreshed by finding some good fruit. His people are the fig-tree, Jerusalem is the fig-tree, each one created to His image and redeemed by His Sacred Blood is the fig-tree. Our poor souls are each His fig-tree.

B. *It was not the time for figs.* And yet He comes as if He were merely a hungry man hoping against hope. For so He continually visits our souls, in spite of a long and sad experience, hoping against hope that He may at last find some fruit.

First, as He explains in His parables, He sends messengers, then lastly He comes Himself.

He comes, and is disappointed again and again, and He makes this meek expostulation: *Yet I planted thee a chosen vineyard, all true seed. How then art thou turned unto Me into that which is good for nothing, O strange vineyard?* (Jerem. ii.).

C. *And answering He said to it: May no man eat of thee any more for ever. And the disciples heard it.*

*And answering.* For the tree may be supposed to say to Him, "I have no fruit for Thee".

Commentators observe that our Lord is often said to answer when no one has spoken to Him. He is either answering some secret thought in the mind of His hearers, or, as in this instance, what the circumstances seem to say.

D. *May no man eat any more of thee.*

The tree clearly deserved no curse. It had leaves, because it was the time of the year for leaves. It had no fruit, because it was not the time for fruit. But our Blessed Saviour, hungry though He be, is not really occupied in His mind with His hunger or with the fig-tree. He is addressing Himself to man, His own image, for whom the tree stands as a proxy. He is specially speaking to His chosen people, the Jews then, now ourselves.

A little time before, He had spoken another parable concerning a fig-tree which bore no fruit. The disappointed owner said to the dresser of the vineyard: *Behold, for these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and I find none. Cut it down, therefore: why cumbereth it the ground? But he answering said: Lord, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it, and dung it. And if happily it bear fruit: but if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down* (St. Luke xiii.). The zealous Apostles on earth, the blessed Saints in Heaven, the loving Angel Guardian, and, above all, the Mother of God and men, are all interceding for the unprofitable servant, for the barren tree. And our Blessed Lord, Who is *a gracious and merciful God, patient, and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil* (Jonas iv.), most gladly hears the intercession, and waits, and waits, and waits again.

E. But now His disciples are listening, and He wishes them to understand that the time is at hand when His people will pronounce the curse on themselves, and He, most unwillingly and with infinite sorrow of Heart, will

be compelled to ratify their suicidal sentence, and say :  
“Amen, be it done to you according to your fixed and  
wicked word”.

O Lord Jesus, *gracious and merciful, patient and rich  
in mercy, and ready to repent of the evil . . . return (to us)  
and forgive ; and leave a blessing behind* (Joel ii.).

## SCENE V.

### JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE.

#### STATION I.

*And they came to Jerusalem. And Jesus went into the  
Temple of God* (St. Mark xi. ; St. Matt. xxi.).

Contemplate our Blessed Saviour with a large party  
of His disciples around Him, among whom, probably,  
our Blessed Lady is walking. It is still very early when  
they come round the base of the Mount of Olives, and  
walk up northward along the valley of Josaphat, and then  
crossing the bridge over the torrent of Cedron, climb the  
steep pathway up the slope of Mount Moriah to arrive at  
the Temple. Beyond what happened at the fig-tree, we  
have no record of any discourse made by our Saviour  
during the walk of two miles from Bethany. Perchance  
He was teaching His disciples, both present and to come,  
to love very much a reverential silence in the early morning,  
as they wend their way to the House of God and the  
Altar of Sacrifice.<sup>1</sup>

“Blessed Mother of God, our Morning Star, and all ye  
holy disciples of the Lord, pray for us that we may love  
to reverence and hallow and sanctify the holy hour of the  
Morning Sacrifice.”

#### STATION II.

*And when He was entered into the Temple, He began to cast  
out them that sold and bought in the Temple, and over-*

<sup>1</sup> In religious houses the time from the end of Night Prayers to the end of  
Mass next morning is called the time of the Great Silence.

*threw the tables of the money-changers, and the chairs of them that sold doves. And He suffered not that any man should carry a vessel through the Temple (St. Mark xi).*

A. Very early in His Public Life, at the first Pasch at which He assisted, our Saviour visited the Temple and cleansed it of all these abuses. *When He had made as it were a scourge of little cords, He drove them all out of the Temple, the sheep also and the oxen; and the money of the changers He poured out, and the tables He overthrew. And to them that sold doves He said: Take these things hence; and make not the house of My Father a house of traffic (St. John ii.). And His disciples remembered that it was written: The zeal of Thy house hath eaten Me up (Psalm lxxviii).* Holy writers observe that on the first occasion He was more gentle with those who sold doves to the poor than to the money-changers and owners of oxen and sheep who dealt with the rich. Now at the end of His life He deals severely with all. He overthrew also the chairs of those who sold doves; for they now deserved severity, as they had not heeded His former correction.

B. *The zeal of Thy house hath eaten Me up.* Contemplate the zeal of our Saviour; His earnestness, His fearless boldness in maintaining the honour of His Father.

Zeal is a virtue specially odious to the luxurious and self-indulgent men and women of the world, to those of whom Sophonias speaks: *The men settled on their lees; the men who wish to enjoy present good things and not to be disturbed.* Ecclesiasticus describes such a one as *the man that hath peace in his possessions; that is at rest; whose ways are prosperous in all things, and that is yet able to take meat (Ecclus. xli.),* that is, to enjoy life. Zeal is a troublesome and odious virtue to such men. It censures them, and it sets *a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother (St. Matt. x).* To all Catholics who are ambitious to serve two masters, that is, to stand well with the Protestant world and also with God, zeal is a most un-

pleasant virtue. They were getting on very well till the over-zeal of Ultramontanes roused up the Protestant spirit against Papal aggression. Surely, they cry out with indignation, Christ's Gospel is a Gospel of peace and brotherhood. They forget that it is Christ Himself Who says: *Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth. I came not to send peace, but the sword* (St. Matt. x.).

But did not angels, so they contend, sing round the Crib: *Peace on earth?* Yes; but they spoke of that peace *which the world cannot give; that peace which passeth understanding.* The peace of the saints, the peace of the martyrs, is always a peace won by hard fighting. It is not at all like the effeminate peace of those who are *settled on their lees* (Sophon. i.); that is, of those whose peace consists in gratifying, without being disturbed, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life; that most fragile peace which the thief can steal, and the moth consume, and which perishes when "the husks of swine, with which they fain would fill their bellies, no man will give to them" (St. Luke xv.).

C. *The zeal of Thy house hath eaten Me up.*

Have we some little share of our Lord's zeal for the beauty of His house? Do we gladly give alms to our Lord, so poor, so helpless, so dependent on us in His tabernacle? Have we a zeal that the house of our Lord may be not only worthy of Him, but also attractive to men, and above all to the poor?

D. Our souls also are the house of God. How welcome a home to our Lord is the soul He created for Himself! *If any man love Me, My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him* (St. John xiv.).

And when He visits us at the time of Holy Communion, He is sometimes forced to say in sorrow: *My house is the house of prayer, but you make it a den of thieves.*

"Most compassionate Lord Jesus, blot out my iniquity."

We must not rest contented till our souls are a house of prayer. Our Blessed Saviour never exaggerates. Yet

we read that He spoke a parable to prove that we ought *always to pray and not faint*. We pay large prices to a master who will teach us music or painting. Let us find some master who will teach us how to practise wisely and successfully this lesson of our Saviour: *That we must pray always and not faint*.

E. We are very angry sometimes if servants offend a second time after being once reprov'd. We give them hard words. Perchance they are even harshly discharged. But if the cattle-dealers and money-changers pay no attention to the order of our Saviour, but come back to desecrate the Temple, what great wonder is it if our mandates are also at times neglected? We are not more entitled to dutiful obedience than our Lord and Master was.

F. *And He suffered not that any man should carry a vessel through the Temple.*

How much more reverence does the Christian Church deserve, where Christ Jesus dwells in the tabernacle! Ought it to be used as a thoroughfare? or a short cut between street and street? If we enter a church to look at the architecture, ought we to go out again without giving a little time to our Blessed Saviour? "*Remember Me*, for without fault of Mine, and only because I have loved you, and delivered Myself for you, I am here, much forgotten in My narrow prison."

### STATION III.

*And there came to Him the blind and the lame in the Temple; and He healed them (St. Matt. xxi.).*

A. As soon as the abominations are cleansed away from God's house, wonders of mercy begin. In our retreats, first comes the Purgative way, and then heavenly lights and a *great tranquillity* in the Illuminative and Unitive ways.

B. Again, here we have what ought always to be: *the*

*blind and the lame came to the Temple and He healed them. Our Lord's house is the home, the hospital, and the school of the blind and the lame. There they learn to see, and to walk in the way of God's commandments.*

C. *Then came to Him the blind and the lame.*

*"Quis ascendet?"* (Psalm xxiii.) the Psalmist asks. *Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord? Who shall approach the holy altar to partake of the Bread of Angels? The blind and the lame may come, if only they desire to be cured. Come to Me all you who labour and are burdened* (St. Matt. xi.). *For not they that are in health need a physician, but they that are ill* (St. Matt. ix.). *And the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost* (St. Luke xix.).

D. *"Attendite."* *O all you who go by the way, stay here a little while and contemplate our Lord curing the blind and the lame. Do not go away till a strong hope comes that He will also now cure us who for so long a time have been miserably blind and lame.*

E. Observe also how many of the blind and lame are helped by others to come to Jesus. Four men sometimes carry one palsied man. Are we helping any blind and any lame to draw near to our Lord?

## SCENE VI.

### THE PALACE OF THE PRIESTS.

#### STATION I.

*Which when the Chief Priests and the Scribes had heard, they sought how they might destroy Him. For they feared Him, because the whole multitude was in admiration at His doctrine* (St. Mark xi.).

A. *They sought to destroy Him. The multitude was in admiration.*

Holy writers remind us that the sun melts wax and hardens clay. Every new work of our Lord and every word that comes from Him is increasing the fire of charity in the

heart of His Holy Mother and those who love Him, but is acting like a deadly poison on those who are given up to sin and Satan.

In what way are the wonderful works of our Lord affecting us? Which is He to us, resurrection, or ruin? "O most merciful Lord—*tantus labor non sit cassus*—may all Thy toil, may all Thy tears and prayers not be rendered void in our souls!"

B. *They sought to destroy Him.*

Why cannot you, Annas, destroy Jesus to-day as well as later? St. John gives the answer, *because His hour had not yet come* (c. ii.). How clear stands out the truth which our Lord uttered, *I lay down My life. . . . No man taketh it away from Me* (St. John x.). As long as He chooses, He walks about in the day, and no man can lay hands on Him. When He chooses, the night comes and they shall seize Him. *He was offered because it was His own will* (Isaias liii.).

C. Let us observe well how thoroughly and miserably these poor men are duped by Satan. What cause have they to be troubled because Jesus is dear to the people? Who loves them as Jesus loves them?

SCENE VII.

THE TEMPLE.

STATION I.

*And the Chief Priests and Scribes seeing the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the Temple and saying: Hosanna to the Son of David: were moved with indignation, and said to Him, Hearest Thou what these say? And Jesus said to them, Yea, have you never read: Out of the mouths of infants and of sucklings Thou hast perfected praise? (St. Matt. xxi.).*

A. Breathing vengeance and slaughter, these envious men hasten to the Temple; Jesus must be got rid of at any price! But lo! all their bold daring is gone, when they

come into His presence. They can do nothing at all but utter a foolish and weak remonstrance, *Hearst Thou what these say?*

“*Sine tuo numine nihil est in homine.* Unaided by Thy Holy Spirit, O Lord, man is but a helpless nothing, and nothing can he do against Thee. He cannot even do work for Thee without Thy sanction and Thy help; but unspeakably helpless and foolish is he when he resists Thee, O Lord of love, and Lord of power!”

B. Mark how our Blessed Saviour silences His adversaries with a word from Holy Writ: *Have you never read, Out of the mouths of infants and of sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?*

So in the wilderness did He overcome and baffle each temptation of Satan with a word from the Holy Scripture. Hence we learn how useful a labour it is to fix holy words from God's revelation in our minds and hearts by meditation, that we may have them ready to hurl at the head of the tempter. *Thy words I have hidden in my heart* (O my Lord) *that I may not sin* (Psalm cxviii.).

C. “Most merciful Lord Jesus, Who canst draw perfect praise out of the mouths of infants, teach us at least in our old age, in our eleventh hour, to praise Thee and love Thee.”

## STATION II.

*And when evening was come, leaving them He went out of the city into Bethania and remained there* (St. Matt. xxi.; St. Mark xi.).

*In the day-time He was teaching in the Temple, but at night going out He abode in the Mount that is called Olivet* (St. Luke xxi.).

A. *When evening was come.*

Here then we are come to the close of another day, Monday in Holy Week.

We have no long discourses recorded by the Evangelists for to-day. Therefore as we know that He was early in

the Temple and only left it at evening, we may perhaps conclude that He spent a considerable time in cleansing the Temple from all profane abuses; and also that He devoted a long time to the work of healing the blind and the lame.

*Our little day is passing fast away. For a short while longer we can help Him in His Divine work of curing the lame and the blind: of cleansing and beautifying God's house—His sanctuary, His altar, and also His own house in our souls.*

We are surrounded by those *who sit in darkness*, and by those who are not walking in the way of God's commandments.

Are we making use of our marvellous opportunities? Are we daily becoming more clean of heart ourselves? Are we converting any of those who have gone astray, from the error of their ways? Are we covering the multitude of our sins by helping souls to salvation?

*B. In the day-time—in the Temple.—At night—in the Mount that is called Olivet.*

Once more contemplate our Blessed Saviour's poverty. In Jerusalem He has not whereon to lay His head.

Had you been living in Jerusalem would you have offered Him a lodging? Alas, even *many of the chief men also believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, or entertain Him.* Are we more brave against human respect than they? He does not now pass by our door to go at sundown to Bethany, but He says to us, *As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren you did it to Me* (St. Matt. xxv.). *Bring the needy and the harbourless into thy house; when thou shalt see one naked cover him and despise not thy own flesh* (Isaias lviii.).

*C. At night in the Mount.*

Neither must we forget how our Blessed Saviour, though so weary, yet when night comes finds His refreshment in praying for us. For night and day, He is *always living to intercede for us* (Hebrews vii.).

*Forget not the kindness of thy Surety* (Ecclus. xxix.). For He hath given His days and His nights and *His life for thee.*

## SCENE VIII.

THE ROAD FROM BETHANY. TUESDAY MORNING.

## STATION I.

*And when they passed by in the morning, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. And the disciples seeing it wondered, saying: How is it presently withered away? And Peter, remembering, said to Him: Rabbi, behold the fig-tree which Thou didst curse is withered away* (St. Matt. xxi.; St. Mark xi.).

This morning again, Jesus goes to Jerusalem not by the path over Mount Olivet as on Palm Sunday, but by the lower road round the base of the Mount, as yesterday.

*The fig-tree which Thou didst curse is withered away.*

Say not, the Holy Ghost warns us, *Say not: I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me? For the Most High is a patient rewarder* (Ecclus. v.). After sin, we can still buy and sell and eat and drink; and we think that no great harm is done. But wait a very little while and the delusion shall be dispelled. At the judgment it becomes manifest that the supernatural life of faith, hope, and charity is gone; and then the Christian men or women—no matter what their natural gifts of body and soul may be, no matter what their position in this world has been—are in the eyes of our Lord as worthless as this dried-up fig-tree. Their sentence is: *Depart from Me, accursed.*

## STATION II.

*And Jesus answering saith to them: Have the faith of God. Amen, I say to you, that whosoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed and be cast into the sea; and shall not stagger in his heart, but believe that whatsoever he saith shall be done; it shall be done to him* (St. Mark xi. 22, 23).

A. *Have the faith of God.*

Our Lord might have spoken to the Apostles of the coming rejection of the Jews prefigured by this withered tree. He prefers to inculcate a lesson useful to themselves: *Have the faith of God*; not only the usual degree of faith necessary for salvation; but the vivid faith which enables Apostles to work even greater wonders than their Master wrought (St. John xiv.).

B. We may learn from His example not to waste time in blaming the absent who hear not, but speak what is useful to those who are present and listening.

Luther and Latimer, and others like them, in their sermons loved to inveigh loudly and in coarse language against rulers, ecclesiastical and secular. St. Ignatius of Loyola strongly impresses on his sons that such abuse of absent magistrates and rulers does no good to the hearers, but very great harm to them and to many more besides. The priest in the pulpit is to speak words salutary to those who make it a duty to come to hear him.

### STATION III.

*Therefore I say unto you: All things whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive: and they shall come to you (St. Mark xi.).*

Here we have one disposition necessary for successful prayer—strong hope. Observe the difference between faith and hope. I may believe to a certain extent that God is good and very good, but yet allow the father of lies to persuade me that my case is exceptional; that God's goodness and mercy is not adequate to the greatness of my unworthiness. Here hope is wanting. Hope believes that even in my case God will be good and will hear, and will forgive, and will bless, and will love. *If any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God, Who giveth to all men abundantly and upbraideth not: and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and*

*carried about by the wind. Therefore let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord (St. James i.).*

We must then pray on with persevering importunity, asking, seeking, knocking; and if a cloud of desolation comes over us and we are tempted to give up our prayer as useless, we must remember the golden rule: *Make not haste in the time of clouds.* We must not cut short prayer, but rather prolong it.

#### STATION IV.

*And when you shall stand to pray: forgive, if you have ought against any man; that your Father also, Who is in Heaven, may forgive you your sins. But if you will not forgive, neither will your Father, that is in Heaven, forgive you your sins (St. Mark xi. 25, 26).*

A. This lesson our Lord taught early in His Public Life, in the Sermon on the Mount. He repeated it later on when He promised His Apostles the power of loosing and binding, and, in answer to St. Peter's practical question, He taught us all that we must forgive *not only seven times, but seventy times seven times.* Now in these closing days, when every word becomes more impressive, He again, quite unexpectedly, reminds us all of this most important truth, that whenever we pray we must forgive from our hearts; otherwise our prayer will not be heard. *Man to man reserveth anger, and doth he seek remedy of God? He hath no mercy on a man like himself, and doth he entreat for his own sins? He that is but flesh, nourisheth anger, and doth he ask forgiveness of God? Who shall obtain pardon for his sins? (Ecclus. xxviii.).* Therefore before we can obtain other blessings, we must secure for ourselves grace to forgive all; and to forgive entirely from our hearts, not in words only. Perhaps the quickest way of arriving at this necessary disposition is to begin by praying earnestly for those who seem to have wronged us. At first, we seem scarcely to mean what we say—as if the words were only lip words and our hearts were far away—but as we persevere grace grows. We come

at last to be able to ask blessings for our supposed enemy heartily, and then we find that the blessings are coming abundantly to ourselves.

B. There are five special times when we should make acts of forgiveness: (1) In the moment when we think we are wronged; (2) When we go to pray; (3) When we go to the altar to offer our gifts and receive Holy Communion; (4) When we go to the sacred tribunal to ask for absolution; (5) At night-time before we go to rest. *Let not the sun go down upon your anger* (Ephes. iv.).

## SCENE IX.

THE TEMPLE. TUESDAY MORNING.

STATION I.

*And they come again to Jerusalem* (St. Mark xi.). *And it came to pass, that as He was teaching the people in the Temple and preaching the Gospel, the Chief Priests and the Scribes with the Ancients met together* (St. Luke xx.).

A. As we have seen already, it is very early in the morning. The people gather soon after daybreak, in order to be ready for Jesus. His enemies are as active out of hatred and envy as the people are through veneration and love. The Priests and Rulers are astir with the dawn, and are closeted in council on the Mount of Evil Counsel, or at the palace of the Priests, to see if they possibly can devise any plan for destroying Jesus.

On this day they will put forth all their strength to effect His ruin, and to-day He will utter, one after another, His strongest warning words to awaken their consciences and move them to repentance.

Can we see anywhere a more striking picture of the fatal power which we allow Satan to exercise over us by his lies? Here are the wise men of Jerusalem, the men who beyond all on earth have had opportunities of learning wisdom, spending hours and days in conspiracy to do away with their one true friend, their Creator and

their Redeemer. With what intensity have they since uttered the fruitless wail: *The serpent deceived me!*

Early, then, in the morning, they are in Council against Jesus; and, with more determined malice than ever before, they prepare a plan of campaign against Him. The different sects, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Herodians, will all act in concert in order to ensnare Him and find matter of accusation against Him.

## STATION II.

### FIRST ONSET OF THE PRIESTS AND RULERS.

*And when He was come into the Temple, there came to Him, as He was teaching, the Chief Priests, and the Scribes and the Ancients. And they say to Him: By what authority dost Thou these things? And who hath given Thee this authority that Thou shouldst do these things? (St. Matt. xxi.; St. Mark xi.).*

A. Here is the first onset.

How appalling does the scene become, when a poor, insignificant man begins to sit in judgment on his God! and yet this scene occurs often enough. Men accuse God and His providence, and blame Him and condemn Him. *The Princes met together against the Lord and against His Christ (Psalm ii.).*

B. *By what authority dost Thou these things?*

The full answer to this question of these blind guides our Saviour gave soon after, at the Supper, to the Twelve: *If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father (St. John xv.).* The man born blind also gave a short time ago to these proud men the correct answer to the question they are now putting, when he said to them: *Why, herein is a wonderful thing that you know not from whence He is, and He hath opened my eyes. Now we know that God doth not hear sinners: but if a man be a server of God and doth His will, him He heareth. From the*

*beginning of the world it hath not been heard that any man hath opened the eyes of one born blind. Unless this Man were of God He could not do anything* (St. John ix.). The eyes of this blind man's soul have been opened as well as those of his body, and most wisely he teaches his masters. But with what result? Their pride is roused to fury, and they scream out at him: *Thou wast wholly born in sins, and dost thou teach us?* If passion were not, as has been before said, entirely blinding them, they would see that their words, rightly understood, have this most ridiculous meaning: Dost thou who wast wholly born in sin, dare to teach us who were born immaculate?

Here is a terrible specimen of pride (*superbia*)—that passion that puts men above their position. These men are actually posing as if they had not been born in sin. "Mother of God, on whose lowliness the Lord looked down, pray for us sinners, that we may not be found among the proud whom thy Son scatters in the conceit of their hearts."

Knowing then that they were not seeking light or truth, but fighting against both, our Lord shaped His answer to them so as to confound their pride.

### STATION III.

#### OUR LORD'S REPLY.

*Jesus answering, said to them: I also will ask you one word, which if you shall tell Me, I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. The Baptism of John, whence was it? from Heaven or from men? But they thought within themselves, saying: If we shall say from Heaven, He will say to us: Why then did you not believe in him? But if we shall say from men, we are afraid of the multitude; for all held John as a prophet. And answering Jesus, they said, We know not. He also said to them: Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things* (St. Matt. xxi.).

A. *I also will ask you one word.*

Remember that to-day we have the great final struggle between the wisdom of men and the wisdom of Christ. Observe how calmly and effectively He crushes them.

Clearly these men do not want an answer to their question. They are in no need of more light. They have had from the works of our Lord such abundant testimony that He is the Christ, and the Messiah, that long ago He has said to them: *Unless you believe that I am He you shall die in your sins* (St. John viii.). Now, once more, He offers them truth and light in abundance, so that if they had not been obstinately bent on rejecting Him, they must have fallen at His feet.

B. *They said, We know not.*

Observe how completely our Saviour's words baffle and silence them. Is His truth less powerful now? Are we to be afraid and half-hearted when sceptical antagonists come forward, as bold and scornful as the Pharisees, to scoff at the Resurrection, or at creation, or to proclaim the newly discovered beauties of Buddhism and Theosophy? Are we to be afraid that our Blessed Saviour founded His religion without leaving behind Him ample evidence to satisfy sensible men that faith in Him and His Church is most perfectly in accordance with right reason, and disbelief nothing but the foolish pride of men duped by Lucifer?

We must bless our Lord with all our hearts, because we belong to a *chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people, that (we) may declare His virtues Who hath called (us) out of darkness into His marvellous light* (1 St. Peter ii.).

Our Blessed Saviour follows up His victory, and adds on stronger words to shake the obstinacy of these poor dupes of Satan.

## STATION IV.

## FIRST PARABLE OF OUR LORD.

*But what think you? A certain man had two sons, and coming to the first he said, Go, work to-day in my vineyard. And he answering, said: I will not. But afterwards, being moved with repentance, he went. And coming to the other, he said in like manner. And he answering, said, I go, Sir, and he went not. Which of the two did the father's will? They say to Him, The first (St. Matt. xxi.).*

*Which did the father's will?*

If the wise men who disputed with Stephen some months later, *were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit that spoke* (Acts vi.), what wonder that these Priests and Rulers are helpless babes before the face of Jesus? Whenever He pleases He draws them on to pronounce their own condemnation.

They are men who have for ever had fair words on their lips. It is not long since our Saviour addressed these stern words to them: *Hypocrites, well hath Isaias prophesied of you, saying: This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me* (St. Matt. xv.). To-day we shall hear Him a little later on characterise them as men *who say and do not*. But they are but little prepared for the moral and conclusion which our Lord now proceeds to draw from His short parable, They have given their answer that the first son is the obedient one; that the second, who speaks fair words and does nothing, is disobedient.

## STATION V.

*Jesus saith to them: Amen, I say to you, that the publicans and the harlots shall go into the Kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of justice, and you did not believe him. But the publicans and the harlots believed him; but you seeing it did not even afterwards repent that you might believe* (St. Matt. xxi.).

These are hard words for those deluded men whose habit it is to thank God that they are not sinners as the rest of men are.

It is then better to begin badly with publicans and end well, than to begin well and end badly. It is better to say, *I will not*, and afterwards repent and do what God wills, than to begin with fair words and promises and in the end do nothing. *Be ye doers of the word*, St. James charitably warns us, *and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves* (c. i.). Whether we began well or began ill, let us take care to end well.

“Mother of God, pray for us now and at the hour of our death, that we may do what is right now, and persevere to the end in doing right.” For *he who shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved* (St. Matt. x.).

#### STATION VI.

##### THE SECOND PARABLE.

*Hear ye another parable. There was a man, a householder, who planted a vineyard, and made a hedge round about it, and dug in it a press, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen; and went into a strange country* (St. Matt. xxi.).

A. With untiring and never-flagging enmity the Priests and Ancients will to-day heap attack on attack. With charity far more untiring, our Saviour multiplies His salutary words of confutation and rebuke.

“O most merciful Lord, do not grow tired of speaking to my poor soul, and give me grace that if to-day I hear Thy voice, I may not harden my heart” (Psalm xciv.).

In the first place, God our Creator is the Householder, Who plants the vineyard on this earth and provides all necessaries, and then withdraws from this world, letting the vineyard to us, His husbandmen. *The Heaven of Heaven for the Lord, but the earth He hath given to the children of men* (Psalm cxiii.). He makes over the earth to us, as His

stewards. He allows us to be, as it were, supreme here. He will never unduly interfere with our free-will. He gives us great authority here, in order that we may, by being faithful over a few things, deserve to be set over more things and better things in eternity.

B. Secondly, the Jewish Church was in a special sense the chosen vineyard of the Lord. By the Prophet Isaias our Saviour had already explained His parable more fully to the Jews: *My Beloved had a vineyard on a hill in a fruitful place. And He fenced it in, and picked the stones out of it, and planted it with the choicest vines, and built a tower in the midst thereof, and set up a wine-press therein; and He looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes. And now, O ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and ye men of Juda, judge between Me and My vineyard. What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard that I have not done to it? Was it that I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it hath brought forth wild grapes?* (Isaias v.).

That the Jewish Church was the chosen vineyard of God Isaias says expressly, a little further on: *For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the man of Juda His pleasant plant.*

The Jewish people and each individual of the nation had been protected and blessed by God in most wonderful ways. *The hidden and uncertain things* of God's wisdom had been manifested to them. The providence of God had drawn round them a wall of separation that protected them from the abominations of heathenism. They had Prophets and Priests on the watch-tower. They had the sacrifices and quasi-sacramental rites as means of grace.

C. But thirdly, in our meditations we must remember that in the Christian world all God's words are verified in a far more exalted sense.

1. The Christian Church is truly the vineyard on the sunny hill-side, and established on a most fruitful soil.

2. *He fenced it in* with a strong wall. No heresies can

find entrance. The promise made by the mouth of Isaias is perfectly fulfilled. *A path and a way (to truth) shall be there, and it shall be called the holy way: the unclean shall not pass over it. No false teachers shall profane it, and this shall be unto you a straight way, so that fools shall not err therein (Isaias xxxv.).*

3. *He picked the stones out of it.*

The most dangerous stones and stumbling-blocks are false doctrines and new Gospels. These are most carefully picked out from the vineyard of the Church.

4. *He planted it with the choicest vines.* All the heavenly virtues grow and flourish in the Church. The Blood of Christ in the Blessed Eucharist is the most choice wine that springeth forth virgins (Zach. ix.); that so inebriates the martyrs that they can shed their blood with joy; that warms the hearts of the faithful so that they can part with all their goods for the poor, and forgive their bitter enemies from their hearts.

5. *He built a tower in the midst thereof.* The Apostolic See is the tower on the rock. Thence the watchman sees all dangers that approach and gives warning with no uncertain sound.

6. *He set up a wine-press therein.* St. Mark writes: *Dug a place for the wine-fat (c. xii.).* The vast treasury of the Church contains a boundless store of grace won by the Life and Death of our Lord, by the merits and prayers of Holy Mary, the blood of the martyrs, the penance of confessors, the chastity of virgins. Through the Communion of Saints we have our share in them all, sometimes through sacraments, sometimes through the Holy Sacrifice, sometimes through Indulgences, and in countless other ways.

D. Moreover, fourthly, we must while contemplating bear in mind that every Christian soul may be called the Church in miniature. Every grace of the Church, the fence, the tower, the choice vines, the good seed, and the wine-press are, like the Blessed Eucharist, for all and for each. *Sumit unus, sumunt mille.* Christ died for each; His

Redemption is wholly and entirely for each, the Blessed Eucharist for each.

Therefore *Isaias* says: *The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the man of Juda is His pleasant plant.* Each Christian soul is our Lord's loved vineyard, and each *His pleasant plant*.

With what complacency a good gardener stands looking at his pleasant plant! How unspeakably consoled our Lord is when He contemplates the soul that is bearing good fruit, and is *His pleasant plant!*

#### STATION VII.

*And when the time of the fruits drew nigh, he sent to the husbandmen a servant to receive of the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard (St. Matt. xxi. ; St. Mark xii.).*

*Who having laid hands on him beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent to them another servant, and him they wounded in the head and used him reproachfully. And again he sent another, and him they killed: and many others, of whom some they beat and others they killed. Therefore having yet one son most dear to him he also sent him unto them saying: They will reverence my son. But the husbandmen said one to another: This is the heir: come let us kill him and the inheritance shall be ours. And laying hold on him they killed him and cast him out of the vineyard (St. Mark xii.).*

A. In this brief history of the Jewish Church our Blessed Saviour utters words which we might imagine would overawe the most hardened. As has been already said, He is to-day making His last supreme effort to overcome their obduracy. And when we remember the many prayers and tears He has poured out for them during His watchings, we see more clearly the terrible power of sin to poison and harden and blind the soul.

B. *He sent to the husbandmen . . . to receive the fruits.*

Our Lord therefore asks for the fruits of His vineyard,

"*multifariam multisque modis*," as St. Paul writes (Hebrews i. 1), at *sundry times and in divers manners*.

To the Jewish Church He first spoke by Prophets, lastly through His Son. For the Christian Church the Divine Son began the teaching; and before He left the earth He uttered this solemn promise: *I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will teach you all truth* (St. John xvi.). He began the teaching. The Holy Ghost continues it through the voice of the Apostle and his successors.

Throughout the ages then our Blessed Lord is either sending His messengers, or Himself visiting His Church to see if His vineyard is bearing good fruit.

C. So it is with each individual soul, *His pleasant plant*. Again and again He comes to console His sorrowful Heart by seeing that His Life and Death and His plentiful redemption have not all been in vain; and when He finds good fruits of charity, of patience, of humility, of faith, of hope, He is comforted ineffably.

D. *Who having laid hands on him sent him away empty*.

For too often, as in the case of the Jews, all is disappointment. Apostrophising Jerusalem later on this very day, He can only address her in these awful terms, *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee!* (St. Matt. xxiii.).

E. At last the time for patient forbearance is ended. The owner of the vineyard has at the entreaty of his faithful servants waited till every expedient has been tried.

Again He asks: *What is there that I ought to do more for My vineyard that I have not done?* And then by the mouth of Isaias He foretold what He is actually doing to-day. *For now*, He said, *O ye inhabitants of Jerusalem and ye men of Juda, judge between Me and My vineyard*. This prophetic word is literally to-day fulfilled. For now we see He calls on the priests and Pharisees to judge between Him and themselves.

## STATION VIII.

*When therefore the lord of the vineyard shall come, what will he do to those husbandmen? They say to Him: He will bring those evil men to an evil end, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen that shall render him the fruit in due season (St. Matt. xxi.).*

A. *What will he do to those husbandmen?*

Observe how the wisdom of the Lord that can draw praise from the mouths of sucklings, draws from the lips of these murderous enemies their own sentence. His parable is so plain, so convincing, that involuntarily they pronounce the just award against the evil husbandmen, little thinking that they are speaking their own doom.

Very soon, however, our Saviour revealed the whole truth to them.

## STATION IX.

*Jesus saith to them: Have you never read in the Scriptures; The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? (the keystone of the arch). By the Lord this has been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes. Therefore I say to you that the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof (St. Matt. xxi.).*

A. *The Kingdom shall be taken from you.*

He could not more plainly pronounce their sentence. He had already said to them by Malachy (c. i.), *I have no pleasure in you, I will not accept a gift from your hands.* He had said by Daniel: *After sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain, and the people that shall deny Him shall not be His (Daniel ix.).* Now from His own lips they hear that they are going to be cast off. All the graces and blessings of the vineyard are to pass away from them to the Gentiles: *The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and be given to a nation yielding the fruit thereof.*

B. By the mouth of Isaias we are told more in detail what our Lord does when His vineyard utterly disappoints Him.

*And now I will show you what I will do to My vineyard. I will take away the hedge thereof and it shall be wasted. I will break down the wall thereof and it shall be trodden down. And I will make it desolate: it shall not be pruned, and it shall not be digged: but briars and thorns shall come up: and I will command the clouds to rain no rain upon it* (Isaias v.). These threats will never be carried out with regard to the whole Christian Church, which is to last and flourish till the consummation of the world.

But local Churches have been visited by God's anger. In the reign of the sacrilegious King Henry VIII. and his unhallowed daughter, the fence was cast down in England. Heresies rushed in and the vineyard was laid waste, and the people were commanded on pain of death to hearken no more to the warnings from the watch-tower.

C. It will perhaps be more practically useful if we study in contemplation how our Lord deals with individual souls which disappoint all His hopes.

*I will take away the hedge, I will break down the wall.*

The baptised children of a good Christian family are very carefully fenced round. Christian parents know that the baptised child is as one of God's angels, that might be transferred this very hour from earth to Heaven. They watch as having to render an account of the treasure confided to them.

Besides the commandments of God and the laws of Holy Church which surround innocent children as strong walls, domestic discipline renders them so secure that they have little cause to fear *the terror of the night or the arrow that flieth in the day* (Psalm xc.).

In a certain evil hour the young prodigal begins to wish for more freedom. If he or she persists, one great fence is at once beaten down to the ground. All the safeguards provided by parental authority and domestic discipline are destroyed. Soon after, the precepts of the Church no longer command reverence. A little while later, the great main wall of the commandments also falls to the ground. Then the five gates of the soul, the five senses, stand open and

entirely unprotected. Through the eyes death enters unopposed. Through the ears sin enters without let or hindrance. The choice vines planted by the owner of the vineyard are all blighted; faith, hope, charity, chastity, humility, flourish there no more.

*Briars and thorns shall come up.* Vice after vice grows strong, and at last our Lord, with a broken Heart, is compelled to pronounce the sentence of the ruined soul: *I will command the clouds to rain no rain upon it.* The Mother of God has ceased to pray; the poor are not pleading. No dews of grace come down from Heaven.

D. Souls in such a state sometimes lay the blame of their ruin on God. They murmur blasphemously that He requires too much from them. They hate God because He will judge and punish them. Our Lord asks: "Why is this? Is the reason *that I looked that it (My vineyard) should bring forth grapes, and it hath brought forth wild grapes?* Am I wrong in expecting from the child that I have created to My image, and redeemed with My Blood, the good fruit of Christian holiness? Am I, after My Life and Death, to give up the kingdom of this world to Lucifer?" Our Lord closed this most earnest appeal to the Jewish rulers with the very decisive words which follow.

#### STATION X.

*Whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder*  
(v. 44).

Christ is the Rock. St. Peter, because he is His Vicar, is also the Rock, against which neither waves nor winds nor all the powers of Hell can prevail. All St. Peter's strength and everlasting stability comes from our Lord. Any one who assails Him shall be broken and dashed to pieces; and when, in the end, the anger of our meek and patient Lord must come down on the reprobate, it will indeed grind them to powder. When He utters the final word, *Depart*

from Me, all strength, all courage, all hope, all joy, are gone for ever. Nothing remains but weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, and the never-ending moan, *The serpent deceived me.*

Now then, at length, the eyes of the Pharisees are opened. They see that they have been led on, in presence of the people, to acknowledge their own wickedness, and pronounce their own doom. Had they fallen at the feet of our Saviour and from their hearts said this one word, *Peccavi*, with what gladness of Heart would He have cancelled all their sins and removed them far as the east is from the west! But the dewfall from Heaven has not softened them. All the good seed has fallen on a hard highway, *and it was trodden down, and the birds of the air devoured it* (St. Luke viii.).

#### STATION XI.

*And when the Chief Priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they knew that He spoke of them. And seeking to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they held Him as a prophet* (vv. 45, 46).

A. *They feared the multitudes.* This is their only reason for not at once destroying Jesus. In their hearts their sin is already consummated. In spirit and desire they have already scourged and crucified Him, but they feared the multitudes. We must notice this, that sins may oftentimes be thoroughly consummated in thought, though no outward act follows because we are deterred by possible natural or social consequences.

B. "How happy are they, loving Lord Jesus, who do not fear men but fear Thee!" For as the Holy Spirit teaches us, *the eyes of the Lord are upon them that fear Him. He is their powerful Protector, and strong stay, a defence from the heat, and a cover from the sun at noon, a preservation from stumbling, and a help from falling. He raiseth up the soul, and enlighteneth the eyes, and giveth health, and life, and blessing* (Ecclus. xxxiv.).

*C. They feared the multitudes.*

For *wickedness is fearful* (Wisdom xvii.). They feared the multitudes, and the multitudes feared them. A few just and upright men, strong in their innocence, might have saved the doomed city.

## STATION XII.

## THE THIRD PARABLE.

*And Jesus answering, spoke again in parables to them*  
(St. Matt. xxii. 1).

A. This, as has been said, is our Lord's last day for public teaching; the day of final struggle. He is bringing forth, one after another, parables and exhortations and threats and all manner of persuasive words, most calculated to shake the wicked determination of sinful men.

They are in return holding Councils again and again, and devising all kinds of snares and pitfalls, to see if they can destroy Him.

B. *Jesus answering.* Sometimes our Lord is giving answers to spoken words, sometimes to their secret thoughts.

C. Contemplate our Saviour, weary and hungry, yet most untiring in His efforts to save the lost sheep.

## STATION XIII.

*The Kingdom of Heaven is likened to a king who made a marriage for his son* (v. 2).

A. The Incarnation is the marriage which the Eternal Father planned before all ages for His Son. In the Incarnation the Divine and Human Nature are made one, and what God has joined no power shall ever sunder. Even when our Lord died on Calvary, His Body and His Soul both remained united with the Divinity.

B. "*Attendite.*" Find leisure to think upon this wondrous mystery.

*He made a marriage for his son.*

Feed your soul with those words from the mouth of God which we hear so often read in the sanctuary :

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.*

*All things were made by Him, and without Him was made nothing that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*

*And the Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth (St. John i.).*

Let us look a long time at this picture: *The Word made Flesh.* For at last the great truth will grow upon us, that as God is become Man, Man is to become God: that is, Man is to participate in the Divine Nature.

#### STATION XIV.

*And he sent his servants to call them that were invited to the marriage; and they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying: Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready. Come ye to the marriage (vv. 3, 4).*

A. We are invited not only to be spectators of the marriage, but to be raised up and ennobled in such an inconceivable way, that through Baptism and the Blessed Eucharist, through the water and blood that came from the Side of the Second Adam, we actually are made sharers in the marriage, and become the Bride of Christ. This union between us and Jesus Christ begins here on earth, but *the Marriage Supper of the Lamb*, with all its joy, and gladness, and delight, which *eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered into man's heart to conceive*, is to be celebrated in Heaven. *Blessed*, the Angel said, *blessed are they that are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.* And he added to St. John, *These words of God are true (Apoc. xix.).*

“Attendite.” *O all ye who go by the way, stay and listen to this Angel’s words.*

*Blessed are they who are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.*

The festivities begun in that hour will never suddenly come to an end, or be disturbed. In this world, *laughter shall be mingled with sorrow, and mourning taketh hold of the end (the skirts) of joy* (Prov. xiv.). Not so there, for neither *mourning nor crying nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away* (Apoc. xxi.).

Are we not by nature, even to excess, lovers of pleasure? Why then not secure for ourselves the true joys that are to be eternal?

B. Our Blessed Saviour has told us that the happiness of Heaven will consist in this, that *they shall know Thee, the only true God, and Him Whom Thou hast sent, Jesus Christ* (St. John xvii.).

But the knowledge will be a full and complete knowledge. *We shall see God as He is* (1 St. John iii.) in Himself; and this complete knowledge will constrain us to love Him with all our hearts, with all our minds, with our whole strength. Here on earth saints get a foretaste of this blissful knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ.

C. St. Paul, who has been allowed to taste so largely of heavenly joys, is not afraid, after that, to utter boldly these astounding words, *I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Romans viii.).

St. Bernard also, in his most devout hymn, has a word that may encourage us to ask and seek and knock perseveringly, in order to obtain a strong love of our Lord. He says: *Expertus potest credere, quid sit Jesum diligere*—“He who has tried and tasted, and he alone, can rightly believe what it is to love Jesus”.

## STATION XV.

*Again he sent other servants, etc.*

*But they neglected and went away, one to his farm, another to his merchandise (v. 5).*

A. *One to his farm, another to his merchandise.* If we refuse our Lord's invitation here, what shall we do during the long eternity? We shall have no pleasant farm, no interesting merchandise to occupy us, to distract our tortured minds from the everlasting meditation on our own incredible foolishness. *The serpent deceived me* we shall repeat with weeping and wailing, and Satan will answer scornfully: "Child of Heaven, you elected to serve me. Be content! you have had your reward, your heaven. Remember your pleasant farm and your merchandise, and how well things went with you!"

B. *Again he sent other servants.* Mark well how anxious our Heavenly Father is to gather us into His home. Anna, the mother of young Tobias, when he was absent, *could by no means be comforted, but daily running out looked round about and went into all the ways by which there seemed any hope he might return, that she might if possible see him coming afar off* (Tobias x.). Even so, as Jesus Christ tells us, our Heavenly Father is looking with infinite longing for His Prodigal, and sees him when he is yet afar off. Yet we hear men say: "I wish I could have faith, but I cannot"; "I wish I could get contrition, but I cannot". The spirits of darkness never tire of whispering lies: *Many say to my soul, There is no salvation for him in his God* (Psalm iii.).

How blessed they who answer this calumny of the father of lies with the Psalmist's words: *But Thou, O Lord, art my protector, my glory, and the lifter up of my head. I have cried to the Lord with my voice, and He hath heard me from His holy hill. I have slept and have taken my rest, and I have risen up because the Lord hath protected me. I will not fear thousands of the people surrounding me. Arise, O Lord, save me, O my God* (Psalm iii.).

## STATION XVI.

*And the rest laid hands on his servants, and having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. But when the King had heard of it, he was angry, and sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city (vv. 6, 7).*

A. When our Lord on a former occasion preached the substance of this parable in Galilee (St. Luke xiv.), He omitted this sentence. He said that all the invited began to make excuses, but He did not add that they laid hands on the servants and were consequently destroyed. Now He conceals nothing, He reveals all that is coming in order to move His enemies to repent before it be too late. *I have spread forth My hands all the day to an unbelieving people who walk in a way that is not good, after their own thoughts (Isaias lxxv.).*

## STATION XVII.

*Then he said to his servants : The marriage indeed is ready, but they that were invited were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as you shall find call to the marriage. And his servants going forth into the ways gathered together all that they found, both bad and good, and the marriage was filled with guests (vv. 8—10).*

A. First of all we must thank God very heartily that we have been gathered into His Church out of the highways, and not left out among the heretics and unbelievers.

B. Secondly, we must not forget that within the visible Church on earth there are bad and good. Fools indeed, and blind guides are they who, duped by Satan, undertake to invent new religions because they find scandals in the Church of Christ.

C. Thirdly, St. Peter shows us a much wiser course. Not content with being in the Church, you must, he tells us, *labour that by good works you may make your calling and election sure (2 St. Peter ii.).*

*D. The servants gathered both bad and good.*

Outside the pale of the visible Church, there are many properly baptised, some of whom may have kept the commandments from their youth. These the Apostles of Christ often gather into the visible fold because in their souls sin is not resisting grace. Again, Christ's Apostles sometimes find it easy to deal with souls that have sinned grievously, because their falls have humbled them and thus removed the great barrier of pride.

Those who resist God most are the proud, and He also resists them. To the proud Pharisees and Rulers, Christ says, as we have seen, *The publicans and harlots shall go into the Kingdom of God before you.* Even so, there is often better hope for fallen sinners conscious of their degradation, than for those false teachers who, blinded by great pride, give no heed at all to that warning of the Holy Ghost: *Neither doth any man take the honour to himself, but he that is called by God as Aaron was* (Hebrews v.). *They prophesy falsely to you in My Name, and I have not sent them, saith the Lord* (Jerem. xxix.).

## STATION XVIII.

*And the King went in to see the guests, and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith to him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the King said to the waiters: Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, for many are called but few are chosen* (vv. 11—14).

A. Faith, therefore, will not suffice unless we take care to have on the wedding garment of charity. If faith avail not without charity, still less will money or learning compensate for the want of love for God and man.

B. *He saw there a man.* One thought suggested by this passage is, that few will be cast out through want of the

wedding garment, compared with the multitudes who are never to taste of the banquet in Heaven because they obstinately refuse to come when invited.

C. *Many are called but few chosen.* Our Lord is, in this parable, speaking to the Jews, all of whom had been called to the Church, but only a few listened to the call. He does not teach that only a few of those who have followed the call and entered the Church shall be saved.<sup>1</sup>

## SCENE X.

### THE COUNCIL-CHAMBER IN THE PALACE OF THE PRIESTS.

*And the Chief Priests and the Scribes sought to lay hands on Him the same hour, but they feared the people, for they knew that He spoke this parable to them (St. Luke xx. 19).*

*Then the Pharisees going, consulted among themselves how to ensnare Him in His speech (St. Matt. xxii. 15).*

The Pharisees and the Rulers therefore are more irritated than ever on account of the impression made on the people by the fearless and weighty words of our Blessed Saviour. We may assume that to-day again was often repeated the word spoken by the servants of the Priests on a former occasion, *Never did man speak like this Man* (St. John vii.). Gladly would they seize Him at once and hurry Him off to their dungeons, but they are afraid of the multitude, who are won to Him because *He was teaching them as one having power, and not as the Scribes* (St. Mark i.). Fear of the people then is the apparent cause that restrains them. But behind this obstacle which appears on the surface, lies the real hindrance to their murderous wishes, which is the Divine decree that His hour is not yet come.

For the moment, then, His enemies can do nothing but hold another Council to see if by any means they can ensnare Him in His speech. Up till now they have no impeachment against Him. Last Sunday they said in the bitterness of their hearts, *Do you see that we prevail nothing?* (St. John xii.). They are just as helpless now. They have still to begin from the very beginning to find matter of accusation before the Roman Governor.

It would appear that all the different sects or factions of Jerusalem assembled together in this Council and took part in

<sup>1</sup> See this text explained in *The Pearl of Hope*, or in *Holy Confidence*, an extract translated from the large work of Father Rogacci, S.J., called *Unum Necessarium*.

the deliberations, for we find them afterwards acting in concert on a prearranged plan.

The chief sects or factions then existing in Jerusalem were the Herodians, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Scribes.

1. *The Herodians* were rather a political faction than a religious sect. They were the partisans of the Herods, and as the Herods were the creatures of Rome, put into authority by the Romans, the Herodians were men that Romanised. They approved of the tribute paid to Cæsar, and generally favoured Roman interests, and were by no means zealous for Jewish law. Herod the Great was not a Jew, and if he built the Temple to the true God in Jerusalem, he built another to the heathen gods in Cæsarea.

2. *The Pharisees* began by believing and teaching that Moses had received from God, in addition to the written law contained in the Pentateuch, a certain amount of oral teaching which was to be venerated as tradition. In course of time, this code of tradition, now become greatly enlarged, was in their eyes more sacred than the Divine precepts. They professed to lead a severe life, but from the action of our Lord when they accused the sinful woman (St. John viii.), and from many other passages in the Gospel, it would seem that their strictness inclined more to outward observances of their own inventions than to the *weightier things of the law* (St. Matt. xxiii. 23).

Though the resurrection of the dead was not expressly taught in the Pentateuch, yet they found it in the teaching of the Prophets, and therefore believed this dogma; and, so far from disbelieving miracles, they seemed rather to think that they had a right to expect miracles at every turn.

3. *The Sadducees* were the most opposed to the Pharisees. They were the forerunners of Martin Luther in his enmity to all traditions. They were for the Pentateuch, and the Pentateuch only. Because they could not find the resurrection of the dead explicitly taught in the writings of Moses, they would not accept that doctrine. To the writings of the Prophets they did not give the same credence which they yielded to Moses.

For all the traditions of the Pharisees they had nothing but scorn. From pharisaic severity of life they were equally abhorrent. Their disbelief in the resurrection naturally inclined them to make the best of the present life, so that they were looked upon as worldly and sensual men. They were inclined to explain away all miracles and interpositions of God's providence, and professed that men by their industry and intellect and free-will could rule the course of events. For a short time, at one period, they had been supreme in Jerusalem; but ordinarily they had not the influence of the Scribes and Pharisees.

4. *The Scribes* were in the beginning good men who made a study of the law, and strove to maintain its observances among the people. Thus Esdras, who led the people back from the

Captivity, is described as a man *who had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do and to teach in Israel the commandments and judgment* (1 Esdras vii.). And we find him called *Esdra the Priest, the Scribe instructed in the words and commandments of the Lord, and the ceremonies in Israel.* Hence Artaxerxes commences the charter granted to him for the rebuilding of Jerusalem in this way: *Artaxerxes King of kings to Esdras the Priest, the most learned Scribe of the law of the God of Heaven, greeting.* Therefore, had the Scribes remained faithful, they would have been the theologians, the commentators, the canonists and moralists of the Jewish Church.

Gradually they fell away from a true and genuine study of the law; sacrificing the spirit for that exaggerated idolatry of the letter against which St. Paul so strongly inveighs. They abounded in traditions and glosses as much as the Pharisees did, and hence were for a time more akin to them than to the Sadducees, who, if they could have had their will, would have swept away all the commentaries of the Scribes, and adhered to the Bible of Moses, and nothing but that Bible. At the time of our Saviour the Scribes and Pharisees were antagonistic and rivals to each other. With the people oftentimes the Scribes carried more weight on account of their supposed learning, and very commonly the President of the Sanhedrin was a Scribe.

It is thought by some that the Scribes were less hostile to our Saviour, and did not join in the sentence passed upon Him. We shall see one instance in which they side with Him against the Sadducees, but in many other passages we find our Blessed Lord denouncing them as strongly as He denounced the Pharisees.

#### STATION I.

#### THE COUNCIL.

*Then the Pharisees going consulted among themselves.*

A. Contemplate the dismal and melancholy scene in this Council of blinded, weak, and helpless men, raging, and meditating most foolish things *against the Lord and against His Christ* (Psalm ii.). They accept greedily every suggestion offered to them by the fallen angel, their murderous enemy; suggestions which Satan himself knows to be most insane and stupid lies, and yet good enough for foolish men blinded by pride, whom he contemns as much as he hates them.

B. In this Council, out of their own mouths they condemn themselves. They are unanimous that till now they have nothing to lay before the Roman Governor

worthy of death. They must begin all over again on a new plan to collect evidence. All their shrewdest and most able disputants must attack Him one after another, to see if they can ensnare Him in His speech, and find something that shall look like treason against Cæsar. Full of this new scheme they return to the portico of the Temple.

“Blessed be God for His mercy.” *I have not sat with the Council of Vanity, neither will I go in with the doers of unjust things. I have hated the assembly of the malignant, and with the wicked I will not sit* (Psalm xxv. 4, 5).

## SCENE XI.

THE PORTICO OF THE TEMPLE. TUESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

## STATION I.

## QUESTIONS TO ENSNARE JESUS.

*And being on the watch they sent spies who should feign themselves just, that they might take hold of Him in His words, that they might deliver Him up to the authority and power of the Governor* (St. Luke xx. 20).

A. Contemplate these spies, these proud, self-sufficient men, glad to be picked out as clever and skilful in argument, each confident that he will conquer Jesus. Holy Job was more wise. He said: *Man cannot be justified compared with God. If he will contend with Him, he cannot answer Him one for a thousand. He is wise in heart and mighty in strength; who hath resisted Him and hath had peace?* (c. ix.).

“Lord Jesus, show forth Thy wonderful mercies. *From them that resist Thy right hand keep me as the apple of Thy eye*” (Psalm xvi.).

B. Observe, too, how already their plan is fixed that He is to be delivered to the authority and power of the Roman Governor. For they are resolved on His death, but *to us it is not allowed to kill any one* (St. John xviii.); and they are resolved, moreover, that He must die by the terrible Roman

punishment of crucifixion. Our Saviour's prophecy must be fulfilled: *The Son of Man shall be betrayed to the Chief Priests and Scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death and deliver Him up to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified* (St. Matt. xx.). His own Apostle shall betray Him to the Priests and Scribes; and His own priests shall deliver Him up to the heathen strangers. Observe, how His own, when once corrupted, are His worst enemies.

C. Contemplate, then, these hypocritical spies coming up one after another to ensnare Him with captious questions, while the Priests and Pharisees look on, watching with a malicious eagerness which they cannot disguise. Hear their first champions.

## STATION II.

### THE PHARISEES AND HERODIANS.

The Pharisees sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying: *Master, we know that Thou speakest and teachest rightly, and Thou dost not respect any person, but teachest the way of God in truth. Tell us therefore what dost Thou think: is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not?* (St. Matt. xxii. 16, 17; St. Luke xx.).

A. The Herodians and Pharisees were not friends; but all coalesce against Christ. So now, too, all sects combine against His Church. All who are worldly, no matter what their sect, combine against Jesus Christ. *Let us lie in wait for the Just* (Wisdom ii.).

B. *Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not?* This they hope will prove a murderous question. It is framed with a diabolic skill, like some of those questions prepared in our country by the Crown lawyers bent on shedding the blood of Blessed Thomas More, Blessed Bishop Fisher, and the rest. Among the Jews there was a strong feeling against paying tribute to Cæsar: but the Herodians, because Herod had been made King by the Romans, favoured this tribute. If our Lord says "No," they will report Him to Pilate and have Him crucified. If "Yes," they will tell the

people that He is a friend to the Romans and a traitor to them.

C. If men can be so crafty, so malicious, so unscrupulous, so bloodthirsty, what must Satan be? And yet we perpetually trust him rather than our Lord, and look to him for friendly counsel. With reason our Lord, Who knows thoroughly the intensity of Satan's cruel malice against us, says to us so earnestly: *Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.* What wonder He wishes us to say always in our familiar prayer, never tiring: *Lead us not into temptation?*

## STATION III.

## JESUS ANSWERS.

*But He, considering their guile, said to them: Why tempt you Me? (St. Luke xx. 23).*

By the mouth of His Prophet Jeremias God says: *The heart is perverse above all things, and unsearchable, who can know it?* And then He immediately answers His own question: *I am the Lord, Who search the heart, and prove the reins: Who give to every one according to his way and according to the fruit of his devices (c. xvii.).*

These clever men little dream that our Blessed Saviour saw them in the Council-Chamber, heard every word, and read all their unuttered thoughts.

“Give me grace, O Lord, to live in Thy presence, to remember always that I am under Thy all-seeing eye.”

## STATION IV.

*Show me a penny. Whose image and inscription hath it?*

*They answering said to Him: Cæsar's. And He said to them: Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's (vv. 24, 25).*

A. Contemplate this most unequal contest between the wisdom of men and the wisdom of God; the facility with which our Saviour baffles their schemes. *Who is as the Lord our God Who dwelleth on high? (Psalm cxii.). Thou*

being Master of power judgest with tranquillity (Wisdom xii.). Think of the supreme foolishness of those whom the father of lies persuades to trust to their own intellects and their science, rather than to the revelations of the all-wise God. Alas! they will spend their eternity *weeping, wailing and gnashing their teeth*, and saying, full of anguish and rage: *We fools. We have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us* (Wisdom v.). And the mocking spirits answer: "What is that to us, disciple of Christ? You look to it. Remember the day and the hour when we advised you to renounce Jesus, and to take Lucifer for your king and your master for ever, and you consented. You have what you chose, be at peace. Jesus and His friends repeated till you were tired of hearing it, that here there would be *weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth*, but you still preferred to be with us. So be ready now to give praise and reverence and service to your king and lord and master, Lucifer."

B. *Give to Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar, and to God what belongs to God!*

Make a careful examination: do we give to our neighbour what belongs to him? do we give to God what belongs to God?

To God, and also to man His image, we owe *praise, reverence, service*: do we *praise*; do we *reverence*; do we *serve* God?

Do we *praise*, do we *reverence*, do we *serve* God's image, man, our neighbour?

And to ourselves what is due? Daniel answers: *To us, O Lord, who have sinned, confusion of face* (c. ix.).

C. Even the crafty spies, and their masters who put them forward, are filled with wonder and astonishment at the simple answer of our Lord.

*And hearing they wondered, and leaving Him they went their ways* (St. Matt.). *And they marvelled at Him* (St. Mark xii.). *And they could not reprehend His word before the people: and wondering at His answer they held their peace*

(St. Luke xx.). Alas! why did they not acknowledge themselves conquered and become the disciples of so wise a Master? *Who hath bewitched you?* St. Paul would ask, that you prefer to serve the most foolish of all fools, the fallen angel, who would not serve his God?

STATION V.

THE SADDUCEES. THEIR CAPTIOUS QUESTION.

*And there came to Him some of the Sadducees, and they asked Him, saying: . . . In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife shall she be? And Jesus said to them: The children of this world marry and are given in marriage, but they that shall be accounted worthy of that world and of the resurrection shall neither be married nor take wives. Neither can they die any more, for they are equal to the angels and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection (St. Luke xx. 33—36).*

The Sadducees, seeing the Pharisees discomfited, come forward, full of hope that their learning will succeed better. They do not believe in the resurrection. *They say there is no resurrection (St. Matt. xxii.);* and they propose what they think a subtle case of the woman who had been married to seven brothers in succession.

A. Mark how our Lord impresses on them the doctrine of the resurrection, and tries to spiritualise their views.

B. Let us pray humbly and earnestly, not once nor seven times, but seventy times seven times, that we may be *the children of God accounted worthy of that world, and of the resurrection.*

STATION VI.

*And the multitudes hearing it were in admiration at His doctrine (St. Matt. xxii. 33).*

Let us join with our Blessed Lady, saying: *My soul doth magnify the Lord: for He hath scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart.* The Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians are all baffled and silenced.

Alas! why do they continue to *kick against the goad*? why do they not fall down at His feet, saying: *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?* (Acts ix.).

Full of charity for their souls, our Blessed Saviour goes on to prove to the Sadducees the all-important doctrine of the resurrection.

*Now, that the dead rise again, Moses also showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord: The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For He is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live to Him* (St. Luke xx.).

A. *He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.*

The implied conclusion is: therefore, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still living, and not extinct, as the Sadducees maintained.

B. *He is not the God of the dead.*

Therefore, too, His Church must be a living Church.

*We are the disciples of Moses, the Pharisees said; we know that God spoke to Moses.* But our Blessed Saviour insisted that they must believe in Him, the living Messias. *If you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sin* (St. John viii.). A Church that only believes in Moses, or in the Church of the first four centuries, and rejects all living authority, is not a living Church, but dead, and no Church of Christ. For He is the God of the living, and the Supreme Head of the one living Church, the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

C. By thus maintaining the doctrine of the resurrection, our Lord made a good impression on some of the Scribes who did not belong to the sect of the Sadducees. Some of the Scribes answering, said to Him, *Master, Thou hast said well* (St. Luke xx.).

If afterwards they grew in grace, and came to believe in Him, they would recognise with humble gladness that He is justified in all His words, and that *He hath done all things well* (St. Mark vii.). *The Lord is faithful in all His words, and holy in all His works* (Psalm cxliv.).

## STATION VII.

## THE SCRIBE.

*And there came one of the Scribes.*

And now a better disposed man comes forward, a Scribe, but not one of the conspirators against our Saviour.

*There came one of the Scribes who had heard them reasoning together, and seeing that He had answered them well, asked Him which was the first commandment of all (St. Mark xii. 28).*

St. Matthew's account seems at first sight to differ from this.

*But the Pharisees, hearing that He had silenced the Sadducees, came together, and one of them, a Doctor of the Law, asked Him, tempting Him, Master, which is the great commandment in the Law? Jesus said to him: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole Law and the Prophets (St. Matt. xxii.).*

From what follows in St. Mark's Gospel, the commentators reconcile the two narratives in this way. The Pharisees, with most unhappy perseverance, are anxious to make a new effort *to ensnare Him in His speech*, and to effect what the Sadducees and Herodians failed to do. This Scribe tells them that he has a difficult question on his mind that he would like to ask. He is really desirous to see whether Jesus can give him a good answer; but the Pharisees put him forward merely to gain their own ends—that is, to see whether they can find anything against the Law of Moses in His teaching.

## STATION VIII.

*Jesus answered: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, etc. And the Scribe said to Him: Well, Master, Thou hast said in truth that there is one God, and there is no other besides Him, and that He should be*

*loved with the whole heart, and with the whole understanding, and with the whole soul, and with the whole strength: and to love one's neighbour as oneself is a greater thing than all holocausts and sacrifices. And Jesus, seeing that he had answered wisely, said to him: Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God (St. Mark xii.).*

A. Each answer given by our Lord was a victory over human folly, and these victories ought to have beaten down the passions and prejudices of the Pharisees. Have we not reason to tremble at the terrible power of sin, and the blindness and hardness of heart which result from sin? "*Delicta quis intelligit?*"—*Who understands sins?* (Psalm xviii.).

B. And here we have matter for many hours of contemplation. "Listen to the words," St. Ignatius says when he teaches us how to contemplate. What words deserve to be listened to if these do not?

*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart. And the second is like to it: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

*On these two commandments, our Lord added, dependeth the whole Law and the Prophets.* St. Paul simplifies our work still farther. He writes to the Romans, and his teaching is the teaching of the Holy Ghost: *He that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the Law* (Romans xiii.). He knew that he who rightly loves God's image will also love the unseen God.

This then is *all man* (Eccles. xii.) to love God, and to love man, His image. Let us beg earnestly for a share of that Divine light which is dawning in the heart of this Scribe: That *to love one's neighbour as oneself is a greater thing than all holocausts and sacrifices.*

#### STATION IX.

*And no man after that dared ask Him any question (St. Mark xii.).*

They have gained nothing. They have not ensnared Him in His words.

Alas! how easily Satan ensnares us in our words. How easily he induces us to utter words which dishonour God, injure our neighbour, and defile our own souls! Do we often and fervently pray with the Psalmist, *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and a door round about my lips?* (Psalm cxl.). Our Lord's Body rests on our tongues at Holy Communion. He, at least, has the power to tame the restless tongue that *no man can tame* (St. James iii.).

## STATION X.

## OUR LORD'S QUESTION.

*And the Pharisees being gathered together, Jesus answering said, teaching in the Temple: How do the Scribes say that Christ is the Son of David? For David himself saith by the Holy Ghost: The Lord said to my Lord, Sit on My right hand until I make Thy enemies Thy footstool. David therefore himself calleth Him Lord, and whence is He then his Son? And a great multitude heard Him gladly. And no man was able to answer Him a word. Neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions* (St. Mark xii.; St. Matt. xxii.).

A. It is now our Lord's turn to ask questions. Contrast His Spirit with the malice of men. *Oh, how good and sweet is Thy Spirit, O Lord, in all things!* (Wisdom xii.). Their whole aim and object is to ensnare Him, for this they put forth all their talents and all their energy. His only retaliation is by trying to induce them to open their eyes and see the light. David, He argues, calls the Christ, *Lord*. Therefore the Christ, the Messiah, must be something higher than a mere son of David. The argument is unanswerable. *No man was able to answer a word*. It went home to the hearts of many in the surrounding crowd. *A great multitude heard Him gladly*. But our Lord asks in sorrow by His Prophet, *Who is blind but he that is sold? or who is blind but the servant of the Lord?* (Isaias xlii.). These Priests and Rulers are sold as slaves to Satan, and are blind.

By the Levitical law the blind and the lame were forbidden to minister to the Lord in His Temple, but now the Priests in Jerusalem are blind with a blindness of the worst kind. Had any one else argued as clearly as our Saviour, the reasoning would have prevailed, but *who is blind but My servant?*

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy, for to Thee only have I sinned.* "Grant me grace, O Lord, to be always among those who hear Thee gladly, and never with those who, though silenced, are not won by Thy teachings."

*B. And the Pharisees being gathered together.*

From these words, and many others, we see that during the course of this day of final struggle, the Pharisees and Scribes and Priests were sometimes round our Lord listening, and then retired again to deliberate and see whether they could dare to seize Him. Their conclusion was that it would be dangerous, on account of the influence Jesus had among the people. They were not aware that the Eternal Providence of God had fixed the day and the hour when they were to have liberty to work their will against Him, and that till that hour is come they were powerless.

"Fix in our hearts, O Lord, this truth, that so long as Thou art pleased to protect us, harm cannot come near us."

## SCENE XII.

OUR LORD'S LAST PUBLIC DISCOURSE. TUESDAY  
AFTERNOON.

STATION I.

This has been a long day of struggle. Jesus, as we see in St. Luke xxi., used to come in early from Bethania to begin His teaching. *And all the people came early in the morning to Him in the Temple to hear Him* (v. 38).

The different sects of Jerusalem, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Herodians, have all combined with the learned Scribes, the Priests, and the Ancients for a supreme effort. The day is

wearing on. It is now the afternoon. All His antagonists have been baffled and silenced, and the people are favourably disposed towards Jesus. As sometimes on former occasions He saw that it was the time to be silent and to hide Himself, so now, full of sorrow of heart and indignation at the scandal and havoc caused among the people by these wicked Rulers, He sees it is the time to speak aloud. *There is a time to keep silence and a time to speak* (Eccles. iii.). Now, therefore, He reveals His thoughts with marvellous fortitude and fearlessness in the face of these raging enemies.

## STATION II.

*Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples*  
(St. Matt. xxiii.).

*In the hearing of all the people He said to His disciples*  
(St. Luke xx.).

This is His last public discourse, His solemn and final warning. In the hearing then of all the people, after enduring all the forenoon the assaults of His enemies, He begins His terrible reply to them.

A. Observe how His practice at that hour teaches us that it is lawful to expose publicly the wickedness of men, if thereby we can lessen their influence and power of corrupting others.

B. But notice also how He takes care first to secure respect and reverence for the official character and position of those who are mercilessly persecuting Him.

## STATION III.

*The Scribes and Pharisees have sitten on 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* (St. Matt. xxiii. 2, 3).

A. Mark how He chooses for this important lesson the moment when the wickedness of the Scribes and Pharisees is at its height. No matter how great the depravity of the delegates whom He has commissioned to teach in His Name, we must hear their teaching, even when we abhor

their evil life. He has nothing but anathemas for their private life; but insists on submission to their teaching. The reason of this distinction is clear. He guarantees their official teaching, but not their private life.

B. *For they say and do not.* Alas! how easy it is to speak fairly and act badly, to teach well and live wickedly, to counsel virtue and practise vice! "Blessed St. James, pray for us that we may, according to thy good teaching, be *doers of the Word*. If you know these things, our Saviour said to His Apostles, *you shall be blessed if you do them* (St. John xiii.). The more I know, the heavier my stripes will be if I do not act according to my knowledge.

"Compassionate Heart of Jesus, grant us grace to be so blessed as to be doers of Thy law."

#### STATION IV.

*For they bind heavy and insupportable burdens, and lay them on men's shoulders, but with a finger of their own they will not move them* (St. Matt. xxiii. 4).

A. O Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us according to Thy great mercy, and teach us to love our neighbours as ourselves, or rather, to love them as Thou hast loved us; taking their burdens on ourselves; but never, never laying on them burdens which we know we cannot ourselves bear.

#### STATION V.

*And all their works they do for to be seen of men. And they love the first places at feasts, and the first chairs in the synagogues, and salutations in the market-place* (vv. 5, 7).

A. "Attendite." O all you who go by the way, stay a little while to consider the pride and arrogance which Jesus humble of Heart abhors. We must not go away till from His Heart there passes into ours some share of His horror of worldly pride and ostentation.

1. *They do all their works to be seen by men.*
2. *They love the first places at feasts.*
3. *The first chairs in the synagogues.*
4. *And salutations in the market-place.*

STATION VI.

*Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men, for you yourselves do not enter in; and those that are going in, you suffer not to enter (v. 13).*

A. Listen to His words, St. Ignatius says, and watch with your eyes His sacred Person, the sorrow of heart which appears in His face for the scandal caused to His little ones by these proud and heartless leaders. We must attend to every word. *Woe to you hypocrites! You shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men. For you yourselves do not enter in, and those that are going in, you suffer not to enter.*

B. How many points for self-examination are here! O Lord Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, give us grace to go over with Thee our bygone years, to find out how often and in how many ways we have been hypocrites and proud Pharisees.

C. How often we eagerly sought for the first places!

D. How many there are among the living or the dead whom we have hindered from entering the Kingdom of Heaven, or hindered from making progress in sanctity!

E. And we must bear in mind that we scandalise others sometimes by commission, by insulting or provoking them, by bad example, bad advice, bad teaching; sometimes by omission, by not teaching when bound to teach, by not giving good example, by not giving alms much needed, by neglecting vigilance when in office.

F. Observe too how wickedness is always aggressive, seeking to make proselytes. If we enter not the Kingdom of God, we do not like to see others enter. If we do not care to live fervently, we dislike fervour in others because

it reproaches us. *He is grievous unto us even to behold; for his life is not like other men's, and his ways are very different* (Wisdom ii.).

Most merciful Saviour, give us grace to resolve with Zacheus, *If I have wronged any man I give back four-fold.*

#### STATION VII.

*Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you tithe mint, and anise, and cummin, and have left the weightier things of the law, judgment, and mercy, and faith. These things you ought to have done, and not leave those undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel* (vv. 23, 24).

“Sacred Heart of Jesus, deliver us from all spiritual delusions, that we may not be satisfied with mere pious practices, while neglecting to be just in our judgments, to be obedient, and to show mercy and fidelity.”

#### STATION VIII.

*Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you make clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but within you are full of rapine and uncleanness* (v. 25).

“O Jesus, humble of Heart, give us grace to aim at pleasing Thy pure eyes rather than the eyes of men. *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and grant me ever to remember that my bone is not hidden from Thee, and in Thy book all shall be written*” (Psalm cxxxviii.).

#### STATION IX.

*Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because you are like to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones, and all filthiness* (v. 27).

“Lord Jesus, by all the ignominy of Thy bitter Death and Passion, deliver us from the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

*Let not the oil (the flattery) of the sinner fatten my head (Psalm cxl.). Grant us to be blamed rather by men and commended by Thee, than to be beautiful in their eyes and foul in Thine."*

STATION X.

*Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers (v. 32).*

The 108th Psalm teaches us that, if we forget to show mercy and persecute the poor, the sins of our parents will be remembered: *May the iniquity of his fathers be remembered in the sight of the Lord, and let not the sin of his mother be blotted out.* The sins of parents will not be visited unjustly on children, but if God, on account of the merciless hardness of the child, is compelled to remember the iniquities of his parents, many graces will be withheld from the child which would have come, if parents by their goodness and almsgiving had won blessings for their children, and so, through his own fault, the child will feel some effects of his parents' sins.

STATION XI.

*You serpents, generation of vipers, how will you flee from the judgment of Hell? (v. 33).*

A. Severe and terrible words! But we must bear in mind that on a former occasion, when pouring out more privately in the house of a Pharisee many of these anathemas, the Lord Jesus changed His tone to point out a road to salvation still open to these wicked men. *But yet that which remaineth, give alms; and behold all things are made clean to you (St. Luke xi.).*

Therefore, in the end, their condemnation will be pronounced for their neglect of works of mercy. *I was hungry and you gave Me not to eat (St. Matt. xxv.).*

So with Judas, his terrible doom came upon him *because he remembered not to show mercy (Psalm cviii.).*

## STATION XII.

*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not. Behold, your house shall be left to you desolate (vv. 37, 38).*

A. Let us listen most attentively to these words of our Blessed Saviour. They are the simple truth. There is no exaggeration. Indeed, they fall far short of the truth. His anxiety to save each of us, to draw us to Himself and gather us, is infinitely beyond the solicitude of the hen striving to gather her chickens under her wings. We must not pass hastily away from this truth. Like our Blessed Lady, we must lay up this word in our hearts. How can we fail in holy hope, if we lay up in our hearts this sentence of our most compassionate Redeemer?

B. And this thought also suggests itself. If the Heart of our Saviour is thus yearning with far more than motherly love for us, how boundless must be His gratitude to any one who helps Him to save even one poor sinner! What would be the feelings of a good mother to him who rescues her child from a raging fire?

C. Throughout eternity, the Priests and Rulers of Jerusalem, if to the end they continued, *like the deaf asp that stoppeth her ears*, to resist the calls of Him Who charmeth wisely (Psalm lvii.), will have these parting words of our Blessed Lord ringing in their ears, and they will see most clearly how true it was that He laboured to gather them *as the hen doth gather her chickens*. Too late they recognise their wicked insanity, and can only now repeat their everlasting wail: *We fools! the serpent deceived me.*

## STATION XIII.

*For I say to you, you shall not see Me henceforth till you say: Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord (v. 39).*

Our Lord has ended His last public discourse with

that solemn appeal: *Jerusalem, Jerusalem!* And He now foretells to His enemies that the time is at hand when they shall see Him no more till He comes in glory. Then they also will be compelled to make that profession which they blamed so much last Sunday: *Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.*

Some commentators think that our Saviour is alluding to the conversion of the Jews at the end of the world, when they will join with all Christians in blessing Him, as is foretold by Osee the Prophet (iii. 4): *The children of Israel shall sit many days without king, and without prince, and without sacrifice, and without altar, and without ephod, and without theraphim. And after this, the children of Israel shall return, and shall seek the Lord their God, and David their King. And they shall fear the Lord, and His goodness in the last days.*

#### STATION XIV.

THE TEMPLE. THE ALMS-BOX. TUESDAY EVENING.

*And Jesus sitting over against the treasury* (St. Mark xii. 41).

A. This day of terrible struggle between the mad pride of men and the meek charity of Jesus is now drawing to a close. The crowd is scattering. The multitudes are making their way to their homes and lodging-houses. The Rulers and Ancients and Priests, confounded and beaten down by the awful words of our Saviour, have gone away hard and impenitent, and vowing vengeance. Jesus remains alone. As yesterday He came out hungry from Bethany, so probably this day of heavy conflict has passed without much refreshment for Him. He is sitting now alone and weary opposite the alms-box of the Temple. His disciples have gone away to a little distance. And now the loving care of His Eternal Father provides a little consolation for His sorrowful Heart.

B. "Most loving Lord Jesus, sitting down weary and hungry for my sake, *Tantus labor non sit cassus.* May I not cease to contemplate Thy weariness till grace and virtue comes out from Thee to my poor soul!"

## STATION XV.

*And Jesus sitting over against the treasury, beheld how the people cast money into the treasury; and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she cast in two mites, which make a farthing (vv. 41, 42).*

If among the Jews many of the rich cast in much, should Christians when rich do less? Our Lord is now, at the present hour, watching our almsgiving as attentively as He watched them. What does He see? Do we gladden His Heart? or is He afflicted?

## STATION XVI.

*And calling His disciples together, He saith to them: Amen, I say to you, this poor widow hath cast in more than all they who have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want cast in all she had, even her whole living (vv. 43, 44).*

A. The housewife that found her lost groat called in her neighbours to be glad with her. Our Blessed Saviour calls all His disciples round Him to notice the alms of this poor woman, which gives such consolation to His charitable Heart in this hour of His great need. And so now also, when we do a work of mercy that costs us much, He gathers His saints and angels to see it and share His gladness.

B. Alms, given out of our abundance, are good, but they are only copper alms. Alms given out of money that is not over-abundant or quite superfluous, but still quite sufficient and more than sufficient for our present maintenance, is silver alms. The alms given out of our want is golden alms. Hence, though it seems easier for the rich to give alms than the poor; yet the rich man has to go very far in almsgiving before he gets beyond his superfluities. Too often the rich are unwilling even to give of their abundance. We may apply to alms this sure

rule, that the more self-sacrifice they entail, the more precious they are in God's sight. Hence those who have no silver or gold, but give their toil in the schoolroom, or by the sick-bed, and those who give their tears and fasting and earnest prayer for sinners, may be giving alms much more precious than gold, because they tax self more severely.

### SCENE XIII.

OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE. THE EVENING OF TUESDAY IN  
HOLY WEEK.

#### STATION I.

*And Jesus being come out of the Temple, went away*  
(St. Matt. xxiv. 1).

Our Lord not having *where to lay His Head* in Jerusalem, is going, according to His custom, to the Mount of Olives.

"Alas! most loving Lord, how often still art Thou in sore want, and we offer no help!"

#### STATION II.

*And as He was going out of the Temple, one of His disciples saith to Him: Master, behold what manner of stones, and what buildings are here. And Jesus answering said to him: Seest thou all these great buildings? There shall not be left a stone upon a stone* (St. Mark xiii. 1, 2).

A. *Not a stone upon a stone!* What are buildings? what are great cities? what are empires in the sight of God if they cease to serve His purpose? So, too, of great and distinguished men, great conquerors, great statesmen, great orators, famous men of science! *Sine tuo numine, nihil est in homine*—"Without Thy grace, man is nothing, and worse than nothing".

*Giants were on the earth in those days; the mighty men of old, men of renown* (Genesis vi.). How many giants have appeared in every department; gigantic monarchs, giants

in war, giants in intellect, men of gigantic wealth. Where are they all? In some factories, old blocks of patterns gone out of date are stowed away by the thousands. So is it with the natural gifts in Hell. *There* may be seen in plenty great emperors; there the heroes of a hundred fights on land and sea; there the poets, and the orators, and the great actors, on whose lips the audience hung entranced. There are unrivalled musicians; there are the giants in science, the strong and the beautiful. The 48th Psalm describes their condition: *They are laid in Hell like sheep.*

*Why this waste?* we may ask with far more reason than Judas had. These men, if allowed to come back, could dazzle the world, delight our ears, enlighten our minds, ravish our eyes. Why are they cast aside and wasted? The Holy Ghost gives the answer (Psalm xiii.): *The Lord hath looked down from Heaven on the children of men, to see if there be any that understand and seek God. They are all gone aside. They are become unprofitable together. There is none that doth good, no, not one.* We know how useless for social life the idiot is who has lost, for the time, the rational life. Even so, in God's eyes, the men who ought to have the supernatural life of faith, hope, and charity, and have it not, are utterly useless, and accordingly are of necessity cast away and forgotten for ever.

B. The words heard by St. John concerning the fall of Babylon apply, many of them, as well to doomed Jerusalem: *Rejoice over her, thou Heaven, and ye holy Apostles and Prophets; for God hath judged your judgment on her. And a mighty angel took up a stone, as it were a great millstone, and cast it into the sea, saying: With such violence as this shall Babylon that great city be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all. And the voice of harpers shall no more be heard at all in thee; and no craftsman of any art shall be found any more at all in thee; and the sound of the mill shall be heard no more at all in thee; and the light of the lamp shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice*

*of the bridegroom and the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee ; for all nations have been deceived by thy enchantments. And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth (Apoc. xviii.).*

This, then, is the moral. No city, no empire, however glorious, is necessary unto God. So, too, no man, however gifted, is necessary to God, or even useful, unless he has grace to believe, to hope, and to love.

#### SCENE XIV.

THE SLOPE OF THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.  
TUESDAY EVENING.

##### STATION I.

*And Jesus being come out of the Temple, went away. And as He sat on the Mount of Olivet over against the Temple, Peter, James, and John, and Andrew asked Him apart : Tell us when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the consummation of the world ? (St. Mark xiii.).*

A. The evening of Tuesday in Holy Week is now come, a day into which so many all-important lessons, so many tremendous warnings, have been crowded. Our Saviour has spoken for the last time to His people in Jerusalem. When next He returns into the city, it will be to enter on His Sacred Passion.

He has, with His disciples, walked down the steep side of Mount Moriah on which the Temple stands. He has crossed the Brook of Cedron, close to the south side of Gethsemani, and having walked a little way up Mount Olivet, is now sitting, with His disciples around Him, on the slope, near the spot where, on Palm Sunday, He wept over the city. Once more His Heart and His eyes are fixed on the sinful city and the desecrated Temple. For Jerusalem is the city of His predilection, His chosen sanctuary, His holy city. *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* (Psalm cxxxvi.). Call to mind some of the words which He had inspired His Prophets to speak concerning this favoured spot: *Is this the city of perfect beauty, the joy of all the earth?* (Lament. ii.). *Thus saith the Lord God: This is Jerusalem; I have set her in the midst of the nations, and the countries round about her* (Ezechiel v.). The Temple on Mount Moriah was the one chosen house of the Lord, *the House of Sacrifice. My eyes shall be open and my ears attentive to the prayer of him that shall pray in this place* (2 Paral. vii.). *From Sion the law shall come forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem* (Isaiaes ii.). *God is our King before ages. He hath wrought salvation in the midst of the earth* (Psalm lxxiii.). We find many holy writers speaking of Jerusalem as the centre of the earth. Lastly, in the dying prayer of old Tobias, we read: *Jerusalem, city of God, give glory to the Lord for thy good things, and bless the God Eternal. Thou shalt shine with a glorious light, and all the ends of the earth shall worship thee. Blessed are they that love thee and rejoice in thy peace. Happy shall I be if there shall remain of my seed to see the glory of Jerusalem* (c. xiii.). Our Blessed Lord knows all that He has planned to do for Jerusalem, if only His people would acknowledge Him. Try to enter into the grief of His most loving and disappointed Heart.

And here we must reflect upon ourselves, for He that is mighty has done for us things a thousand times more merciful and more loving than for Jerusalem. How far more intense His disappointment when He is obliged to say to us too: *My people, what have I done to thee?* (Micheas vi. 3).

B. Our Blessed Saviour had just been speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem. On former occasions, He had spoken of His Second Coming. *The Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels* (St. Matt. xvi. 27). His Apostles remember this, and now question Him concerning both events: *Tell us when shall these things be?*

STATION II.

He answers first: *Take heed that no man seduce you. For many will come in My Name, and they will seduce many. And you shall hear of wars and rumours of wars. See that you be not troubled. For these things must come to pass. But the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and there shall be pestilences and famines and earthquakes in places. Now all these are the beginnings of sorrows* (St. Matt. xxiv. 4—8).

He here teaches them not to expect the consummation of the world too soon, as His Church has first to pass through a long term of sufferings. These are only *the beginnings of sorrows*; worse are to follow.

STATION III.

- (1) *Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall put you to death, and you shall be hated by all nations.*  
(2) *Then shall many be scandalised, and shall betray one another and hate one another.* (3) *And many false prophets shall rise and seduce many.* And (4) *because iniquity hath abounded, the charity of many shall grow cold* (vv. 9—12).

Here are the greater sorrows that are to follow: (1) persecution; (2) many shall be scandalised; (3) false prophets shall seduce many; (4) the charity and fervour of many shall grow cold.

In the midst of these greater sorrows our days are now spent. How have we been affected by them? Have we been at all seduced by false teachers? Have we been scandalised? shaken in our faith? Have we ever turned traitors? Has the chilling atmosphere of Protestantism and worldliness and unbelief caused charity to grow cold within us?

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy, and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies*

*blot out my iniquity. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within my bowels (Psalm 1).*

## STATION IV.

*But he that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved (v. 13).*

*Man's life on earth is a warfare (Job vii.). Through many tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of God (Acts xiv.). Holy Church asks God daily to give us some fellowship with the martyrs. We ought not to have much leisure to be solicitous about money or about health or other things that pass with this world; for, One thing is necessary. All our desires and prayers must be that we persevere to the end.*

## STATION V.

*And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all nations, and then shall the consummation come (v. 14).*

Has this condition been yet fulfilled? Has the Gospel been preached in the whole world? Do we by prayers and alms help the propagation of the faith through the whole world?

As the Apostles had asked concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and concerning the end of the world, our Lord in His answer says some words that apply to both. Now He speaks for a while about the destruction of Jerusalem.

## STATION VI.

*Then they that are in Judea let them flee to the mountains. And he that is on the housetop let him not come down to take anything out of his house.*

*For there shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be (vv. 15, 17, 21).*

If, to avoid bodily suffering, we are to be so prompt, and sacrifice home and save ourselves by rapid flight, what ought we to do to save ourselves and our children

from spiritual ruin? We are the children of the men who fled to the Continent, and sacrificed home and lands, and went to prison and to the scaffold, to keep the holy faith for us. *What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his soul?* (St. Matt. xvi.).

STATION VII.

*And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved: but, for the sake of the elect, those days shall be shortened* (v. 22).

*For the sake of the elect.* If ten just men could be found in the city, God was ready to spare Sodom. He afterwards, we are told, put a limit to the fury of the Romans who destroyed Jerusalem, for the sake of the few who wished to become disciples of Christ. If we, then, are true to our holy religion, besides saving our own souls, we act as guardian angels to protect others. It is on record that a truly Christian soldier, Albuquerque, when all seemed lost in the middle of a raging storm, lifted a baptised infant in his arms, and besought God by the innocence of that child to save the ship and the crew, and that his prayer was heard.

STATION VIII.

*Then if any man shall say to you: Lo! here is Christ, or there, do not believe him. For there shall arise false Christs* (vv. 23, 24).

Here He warns them that impostors will arise and tell them that the Messiah is come to conquer the Romans.

*Behold I have told it to you beforehand.* Alas! in vain; for the multitudes are led astray by false teachers, as if our Lord had never forewarned.

STATION IX.

This leads Him to speak of His Second Coming, and to teach them that it shall be very sudden and very public.

*For as lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even into the west: so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.*

*Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together.*

That is, as birds of prey rapidly swoop down and gather round a carcass, so all men will rapidly gather to the spot to which our Lord is come to judge. Happy they who in our present day of privilege gather with hunger and thirst, like birds of prey, around the tabernacle where the body of our Lord now reposes. They will not fear when He comes in His majesty.

#### STATION X.

*And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and the stars; men withering away for fear, and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world (St. Luke xxi. 25).*

*And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven, and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn.*

*And they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven (St. Matt. xxiv. 30).*

A. If we have grace to love the Passion of our Lord now, the Cross will not then overwhelm us with fear.

B. When bound as a prisoner during His Passion, He reminded His judges more than once that He would one day be their Judge. As we contemplate Him become so little and so annihilated in the tabernacle, we must often rouse our faith, and say, *Judex crederis esse venturus*—"I believe that Thou art my Judge Who is to come".

#### STATION XI.

*Amen I say to you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be done.*

*Heaven and earth shall pass, but My words shall not pass (St. Matt. xxiv.).*

We must firmly believe every word of our Lord. Before the human race shall pass away, every iota shall be fulfilled.

STATION XII.

*But of that day and hour no one knoweth; no, not the angels of Heaven, but the Father alone (v. 36).*

So too God does not permit us to know the hour when we shall die and be judged, lest perchance, if we knew that we yet had some years to live, we should live negligently and sin, and in consequence of multiplied sins not have, in the end, grace to repent.

STATION XIII.

*Watch ye, therefore, because you know not in what hour your Lord will come (St. Matt. xxiv. 42).*

Our Lord now urges upon all His disciples this great moral.

As the destruction of Jerusalem bore a resemblance to the end of the world, so too for each of us does the day of our death, since for us it is the end of all things here.

*As in the days of Noe, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the Flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, even till that day on which Noe entered into the Ark, and they knew not till the Flood came, and took them all away; so also shall the coming of the Son of Man be (37, 38).*

That is, the day of death will come upon us as a surprise. *Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth (Apoc. xvi.). Blessed is that servant whom, when the Lord shall come, He shall find so doing (St. Matt. xxiv. 46).*

*Watch ye, therefore, for you know not when the Lord of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning. Lest coming on a sudden He find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all, Watch (St. Mark xiii.).*

If the Heart of our Saviour wished to be severe and to take us by surprise, He would not be at such pains to

impress on us that He will come as a thief. His one anxiety is to move us to live as children of His Heavenly Father ought to live. For, if we are not in a fit state to die, we are not living rightly.

## SCENE XV.

### MOUNT OF OLIVES. WEDNESDAY IN HOLY WEEK.

Where did our Blessed Saviour spend the Wednesday of Holy Week? Some commentators answer that He was teaching in the Temple, as on the two foregoing days. They ground their opinion on the words of St. Luke (c. xxi. 37). *In the day-time He was teaching in the Temple, but at night going out He abode in the Mount that is called Olivet.* These words are found after the account that St. Luke gives of our Lord's discourses, and seem to refer to all the days between the supper at Bethany and the Last Supper. On the other hand, there appear to be reasons for judging that our Saviour on the Wednesday did not go into Jerusalem, but remained either in Bethany or some other part of the Mount of Olives. The strongest of these reasons is that St. Mark, who carefully notes our Lord's movements on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday, makes no mention of any return to Jerusalem on Wednesday morning.

We may also here ask where did our Blessed Saviour pass the nights on these first four days of Holy Week? Guided by the words just quoted from St. Luke, *At night He abode on the Mount that is called Olivet*, some interpreters take for granted that He spent these nights in prayer on the Mount of Olives. If He did so, He would only be doing, in these last days, what He had done in the early part of His Public Life. *He spent the whole night in the prayer of God* (St. Luke vi.).

Other commentators, however, bearing in mind that Bethany was situated on the slope of Mount Olivet, understand the words of St. Luke to mean that He passed part of the night at Gethsemani and part at Bethany.

With regard to the day-time, we may follow the opinion of those who, guided by St. Mark, believe that our Blessed Saviour did not go into Jerusalem on Wednesday, but taught His disciples privately on the Mount of Olives.

A third question also occurs. What did He teach them on that day? Where does the discourse of Tuesday break off? Where does the teaching of Wednesday begin? We know nothing for certain. All that He said after leaving Jerusalem on Tuesday evening is given in one unbroken narrative, as if all formed a part of the same discourse delivered while He sat on Mount Olivet that evening.

On the other hand, there is nothing to forbid the supposition that He divided His teaching and reserved some of it for

Wednesday. The Evangelists very frequently make no attempt to fix in chronological order the events or discourses of each day.

Add to this, that on the Tuesday He had taught so much and spoken so often that it would not be surprising if He reserved some of the important lessons He was giving for the day following. As then in St. Matthew's 25th chapter we find parables and lessons, not given by either of the other two Evangelists, who chronicle carefully what happened on the Tuesday, these, for convenience sake, we may detach from the rest, and suppose that they were the instructions given by our Saviour to His disciples on the Wednesday, either in Bethany, or perhaps on the slope of Mount Olivet, where He sat the previous days.

He has around Him the Apostles and other disciples, some of the devout women from Galilee and some of those converted at the grave of Lazarus. It seems also highly probable that our Blessed Lady was there too in that favoured company.

#### STATION I.

#### THE PARABLE OF THE VIRGINS.

*Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be like to ten virgins who, taking their lamps, went out to meet the bridegroom and the bride (St. Matt. xxv. 1).*

*Ten Virgins.* Why ten? Probably, some commentators say, our Lord was following some custom usual at wedding-feasts. Some ancient writers state that at the wedding-feasts in the East five young boys waited on the bridegroom and five bridesmaids on the bride.

*Taking their lamps.* In olden times the weddings were solemnised towards nightfall, and torches were borne before the bridegroom and the bride. In Judea, so we are told, not torches were used, but lamps.

#### A. *The bridegroom and the bride.*

This was St. John's vision. *I saw a new heaven and a new earth. And I, John, saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice from the throne, saying: Behold the tabernacle of God with men (Apoc. xxi.).*

The Holy Church of Christ then is His Bride, to whom He says, *All I have is thine (St. Luke xv.). All My things are thine, and thine are Mine (St. John xvii.).* For by the Incarnation the Divine and Human Natures are united

in an indissoluble and eternal wedding. And even here on earth our Blessed Saviour shares whatever He can share with His Bride. He gives her His Body and His Blood in the Blessed Eucharist. After this, what wonder if He gives His Blessed Mother to be the Mother of His Church, and shares His own infallibility with His Bride!

B. But it is in Heaven that this wedding union will be complete. Then He will share all that He has with His Bride. After the General Judgment all the children of the Church who have saved their souls will go in to *the Marriage Supper of the Lamb*. *Sursum corda!* Ponder on the Angel's words to St. John: *Blessed are they that are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb* (Apoc. xix.).

But meanwhile each of us is called away from the world, as soon as our appointed time is come, that we may take our place in the wedding procession.

#### STATION II.

*And five of them were foolish, and five wise. But the five foolish, having taken their lamps, did not take oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels with the lamps. And the Bridegroom tarrying, they all slumbered and slept (vv. 2—5).*

A. *But the Bridegroom tarrying, they all slumbered and slept.*

If we knew that we had but a few days to live, we should try to keep ourselves well on the alert, we should not have much time for newspapers, or politics, or plays, as we must mind *the one thing necessary*. But now life seems to us long, though in reality it is so short. The Holy Spirit, Who knows what eternity is, says to us, *Short are the days of man* (Job xiv.), and describes man as *living a short time*. But to us it does not seem so; life appears to be long, and we imagine that we have time in abundance to do all the work given to us, and, over and above, plenty of leisure to spare. A few, such as the holy saints, are persuaded that they want all their time to do well the one

thing necessary ; but the great majority of men, and even of Christians, look upon these painstaking saints as men of exaggeration. Their notion is, that if they give a little time morning and evening to the care of their souls, all will go well, and they can thus have very ample leisure for other things.

This is only another way of saying that for a large part of their lives they *slumber and sleep*. They live in a dream, busy about many things, spell-bound by what the Holy Spirit calls the "*fascinatio nugacitatis*"—the *bewitching of trifling* (Wisdom iv.), and not applying their minds earnestly to the one thing necessary, which is "to praise, reverence, and serve God," *for this is all man* (Eccles. xii.). *Whether you eat or drink, or whatever else you do, do all to the glory of God* (1 Cor. x.).

B. *Five of them were foolish, and having taken their lamps, did not take oil with them.* The French pulpit orator, Massillon, of whom it has been wisely said that he preached an opinion that neither Bourdaloue nor any other good theologian would have uttered, will have us believe that scarcely one out of a large Catholic congregation, assembled on the Sunday for Mass, is to be saved. Our Lord's teaching is not this rigorist Gospel. He makes five at least, out of the ten virgins, wise.

C. *Taking their lamps, they did not take oil with them.*

In Baptism we each receive our lamp. It was lighted by faith ; and this light of faith is not a light without warmth, as the electric light is, somewhat incorrectly, said to be ; but a light thoroughly mixed and blended with the fire of charity.

While the Bridegroom tarries, however, that is, while we are sojourners here in this world, it is our business to keep the fire of charity alight. For this we want our supply of oil. By prayer, by almsgiving, by sacrifices, we have to keep the fire of charity and love burning. If

charity is extinguished, faith becomes a cold and spectral light that profits nothing.

“Mother of God, pray for us sinners, that by multiplying works of mercy we may keep alive the Divine fire of Christ.”

*D. But the wise took oil in their vessels.*

That is to say, our Lord’s wise and prudent and faithful servants, though to some extent they too may slumber and sleep, yet always pray enough, and give alms, and multiply works of mercy, and by self-denial make sacrifices enough to keep a supply of the oil of grace in their lamps.

“*Attendite.*” Stay here a little while, and examine carefully: Is my lamp lighted? or is it extinguished? If lighted, have I oil ready to keep it alight? If extinguished, how long has it been so? How soon do I mean to have it lit again with that fire which our Saviour came to cast on the earth and so much longs to see enkindled? In other words, how soon do I mean to seek for a good absolution, that my soul may be raised from death to life?

*E. Observe St. Peter’s words: Wherefore, brethren, labour the more, that by good works you may make sure your calling and election (2 St. Peter i.).*

*Make sure your election.* Run no risks. How soon will you confess your sin? Soon, you say. But how soon? To-morrow. But why not to-day? Why not at once? To-morrow! Where will you be spending your to-morrow? The Holy Spirit says: *A king is to-day, and to-morrow he shall die (Ecclus. x.).* To-day you are a king. You have great power and privilege. You can have grace and mercy by only wishing it. To-day, that is now, is your hour. To-morrow is not your hour. To-morrow the king shall die, and all his power and privilege and glory is gone. *For when a man shall die, he shall inherit serpents, and beasts, and worms (Ecclus. x.).* *Man when he shall be dead, and stripped, and consumed, I pray you, where is he? (Job xiv.).*

He intended to sign his will to-morrow ; but did not live to do it. He intended to alter his will and make it more Christian, more charitable, but he did not do it. Poor dear man ! He had fully made up his mind to go to confession. "We promise you solemnly," an Anglican clergyman and his wife said, "to come back in six months to be received into the Church, as soon as ever we have paid some debts. We have already sent our child to a Catholic convent school. We have not a single doubt about the true Church. But my wife insists that I must wait six months in order to earn wherewith to pay our debts." Alas ! ere the six months were expired, Eve, who kept her husband back by her persuasion, was called away to the house of her eternity ; and the mourners went round about in the street with her coffin (Eccles. xii.).

*Make thy election sure* : run no risks. "Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death."

### STATION III.

*And at midnight there was a cry made : Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet him (v. 6).*

A. *At midnight.* For then the first deep sleep has completely mastered weary men. Our Lord wishes us to understand that many men, very many, will be heavily asleep, neither watching nor praying, when death comes, and entirely given up to their dream about the bewitching trifles of this earth, its politics, its news, its scandals.

We must always remember that our loving Redeemer has no wish at all to take us by surprise. If He had, He would not urge us, as earnestly and as often as He does, to watch and be ready : *If the good man of the house knew at what hour the thief would come, he would certainly watch. Wherefore be you also ready (St. Matt. xxiv.).* Our Lord's one desire is that we be found ready, not slumbering and sleeping, but watching and expecting the coming of our Master.

*Take heed to yourselves, lest perhaps your hearts be over-*

*charged with surfeiting and drunkenness and the cares of this life : and that day come upon you suddenly* (St. Luke xxi.).

B. No, we need not wonder, as has been already said, that our God does not let us know how many years we have to live, in order that we may prepare for death before it comes. For, *O, how good and sweet is Thy Spirit, O Lord, in all things!* (Wisdom xii.).

Since surely if we foreknew that we had still forty years to spend on earth, the father of lies would easily persuade many of us to give up thirty-five of them to sensuality, to bitter resentments, to pride. If now, when we are not certain of one day, he so often induces us to put off repentance, how few, how very few, would take the trouble to live chastely and charitably, if they were sure that they had time before them! They would live in sin for twenty, thirty, forty years, under the idea that they can easily repent in the last five years of life. But who has promised them grace after twenty, thirty, or forty years of sin? Sin is death. Each sin multiplies, if we may so say, death and all the corruption of the grave. After twenty years of sin, the soul is nothing but a mass of corrupt and putrid death. Death is intensified a thousand times. Can we, at any moment we please, raise ourselves to life out of such a death? Only the Divine voice can say the word, *Lazarus, come forth!* Our God promises to forgive if we repent; but He nowhere has promised to give us grace to repent to-morrow, or twenty years hence, if we harden our hearts and refuse to hear His voice to-day.

#### STATION IV.

*Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise : Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. The wise answered saying : Lest perhaps there be not enough for us and for you, go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves* (vv. 7, 8, 9).

A. "Waste not, want not," we say. Careful people

have a place for bits of cord and packing-paper, for their scissors and their knife, and in the hour of need they know where to find what they want. The careless and slothful, who are too lazy to keep their things in order, when the hour of need comes expect the painstaking to supply their want. "Lend me your scissors: Lend me a knife: Lend me a sovereign to pay this bill!"

B. So too in the spiritual life, there are those among the faithful who seem to think that if they say from time to time to the fervent: "Will you pray for me?" "Be sure you pray for me." "Now, won't you pray for me?" "Mind you do," they have fulfilled all justice.

C. And when they fall sick, and become nervous, they are very anxious to have the whole Church stirred up to a Catholic or universal crusade on their behalf. Will you write to Lourdes? and to Rimini? and to Our Lady of Pompeii? and to the Curé d'Ars? and to the Poor Clares? I have great faith in them and also in the Carmelites! and will you pray to Father de la Colombière? and to all whom we are trying to get canonised? For it is their interest to help me. Will you pray to the holy souls? I have such confidence in their prayers! But—how are we to contrive to rouse up the whole Church Militant and Triumphant to join in this great effort on your behalf? What signal services have you rendered to all Christendom to entitle you to universal sympathy? What special plea can we advance for you?

The Gospel truth is that you must save your own soul. You must yourself *labour by good works to make your election sure*. No one else can work out your salvation. If a man abound in works of mercy, and by much almsgiving earns mercy for himself, then the good angels take care to inspire many holy souls to pray for such a one in his hour of need, and thus, *to every one that hath shall be given and he shall abound* (St. Matt. xxv.). The charitable, who have in life helped many, find many friends when they are dying; and the prayers of so many secure for them special

graces and shorten their Purgatory much. Nay, our Lord Himself undertakes *to help* such a one *on his bed of sorrow* (and to turn) *all his couch in his sickness* (Psalm xl.). But the careless, the slothful, the selfish, are quite mistaken when they imagine that they can suddenly, on their sick-beds, fill the whole of Christendom with a burning zeal for their souls. It cannot be done.

D. *Go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.*

If we want grace, we must go to Holy Mass, say our Rosary, give alms, pray earnestly for those who have—as we imagine—wronged us, and for those whom we ourselves—as we know full well—have wronged. We must be good to the Holy Souls, and pray *for* them much more than *to* them.

#### STATION V.

*Now whilst they went to buy, the Bridegroom came, and they that were ready went in with Him to the marriage, and the door was shut. But at last come also the other virgins, saying: Lord, Lord, open to us. But He answering, said: Amen, I say to you, I know you not* (vv. 10—12).

A. The lesson here taught is, that when the summons of death is come, we have no more time to do all those good works which are necessary to win the grace we want.

How can we at that time be instructed in order to enter the Church? How prepare well for a long confession? How go to Mass? What is the use of telling us to make acts of contrition then if we don't know how? Have you no easier, no practical method to meet such cases as ours? We are in too much pain to pray. You tire us and bore us by preaching to us. Pray leave us alone. Alas! they die as they live. And as death is, so is judgment.

B. *Lord, Lord, open to us.* It is too late, too late. *I know you not.*

*My son, our Lord says to us most earnestly, if thou wilt receive My words, and wilt hide My commandments with thee; if thou shalt call for wisdom and incline thy heart to prudence;*

*if thou shalt seek her as money, and shalt dig for her as a treasure; then shalt thou find the knowledge of God (Prov. ii.).*

*Because I called, and you refused; I stretched out My hand, and there was none that regarded; you have despised all My counsel, and have neglected My reprehensions; I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock when that shall come upon you which you feared. When sudden calamity shall fall on you, and destruction, as a tempest, shall be at hand: when tribulation and distress shall come upon you: then shall they call upon Me, and I will not hear: they shall rise in the morning, and shall not find Me. Because they have hated instruction, and receive not the fear of the Lord; nor consented to My counsel, but despised all My reproof. Therefore they shall eat the fruit of their own way. The prosperity of fools shall destroy them (Prov. i.).*

*C. Then shall they call upon Me, and I will not hear.*

If such men pray on their death-beds, it is oftentimes a short, unmeaning prayer, devoid of that earnestness that is necessary to do violence to Heaven.

*D. They shall rise in the morning, and shall not find Me.* At death men suddenly awake from their dream, and are like men rising in the morning. Alas! what an awaking! what a rising! if we find not our Lord waiting for us with a welcome!

*E. The prosperity of fools shall destroy them.* Ezechiel gives this account of the wickedness and ruin of Sodom: *Behold, this was the iniquity of Sodom, thy sister, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance, and the idleness of her and her daughters: and they did not put forth their hand to the needy and to the poor (c. xvi.).*

“*Attendite.*” Let us reflect long and earnestly on our own state.

#### STATION VI.

*Watch ye therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour (v. 13).*

This is the earnest petition of our Lord's loving Heart to us: “Watch and be ready. I purposely keep

the hour hidden from you, because I love you, and wish you always to be ready, always to be holy, always to be faithful to Me, never to be for one instant the wicked dupes and slaves of the father of lies."

#### STATION VII.

##### THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS.

*For even as a man going into a far country called his servants, and delivered to them his goods (v. 14).*

Our Father retires, as it were, from the world. *The earth He hath given to the children of men* (Psalm cxiii.). He makes over the earth, and all His goods here, to each of us as to an eldest son; but at the same time we are to be His stewards, to use everything according to His intention, and at the end to render an account of our stewardship.

#### STATION VIII.

*And to one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one, to every one according to his proper ability; and immediately he took his journey (v. 15).*

To one five talents, to another two, *according to his proper ability (propriam virtutem)*. This does not mean that one, because he has more intellect or some better natural gifts, *merits* a larger share of grace. Grace is a free gift, not merited by any natural qualities. As gifts of nature differ, and one has more and another less, so God gives greater graces to one than to another, and destines one to a higher place in Heaven than another. But the measure of grace offered to every one of us is so great that we need not be envious of others. We do not arrive even near to the heights where God wishes to place us.

#### STATION IX.

*And he that had received five talents went his way and traded with the same, and gained other five. And in like manner, he that received the two, gained other two. But he that had received the one, going his way, digged into the earth, and*

*hid his lord's money. But after a long time, the lord of those servants came, and reckoned with them. And he that had received the five talents, coming, brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou didst deliver to me five talents; behold, I have gained other five over and above. His lord said to him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

*And he also who had received the two talents, came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst two talents to me; behold, I have gained other two. His lord said to him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.*

*But he that had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I know that thou art a hard man. Thou reapest where thou hast not sown, and gatherest where thou hast not strewed. And being afraid, I went and hid thy talent in the earth; behold, here thou hast what is thine. And his lord, answering, said to him: Wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sow not, and gather where I have not strewed. Thou oughtest, therefore, to have committed my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received my own with usury. Take ye away, therefore, the talent from him, and give it to him that hath ten talents. For to every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound; but from him that hath not, that also which he seemeth to have shall be taken away. And the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth (vv. 16—30).*

A. This parable in many of its details resembles the Parable of the Pounds which our Blessed Saviour spoke when leaving Jericho last week. There is, however, one main point of difference, that there He laid stress on the fact that the subjects of the King, or Lord, did not wish

him to reign over them, and were therefore exterminated; for He wished to impress on the people around Him in Jericho the coming fate of the stiff-necked Jews.

But in this present parable He addresses Himself more to each of us individually.

B. We are not to conclude that only those who receive one talent bury and waste their gifts. A man who receives ten may bury and waste them all. On the other hand, he who receives one may traffic wisely and win many more.

C. The talents are (1) gifts of grace, faith, hope, charity, chastity, humility, vocation, and other actual graces; (2) natural gifts, good judgment, good health, eloquence, skill, talent for painting or music, literary gifts, etc.; (3) external helps, such as being thrown among faithful and fervent companions, being under the care of holy parents or zealous priests, having good books to read, etc.

D. The orchard scattered with blossoms after unseasonable gales is a picture of wasted graces.

Do we reflect on the value of every grace?

1. It is a gift from our Father in Heaven. Is any gift from Him small?

A soldier who had lost his arm in battle told the first Napoleon that he would willingly lose the other, if so he might receive the cross from the hand of his Emperor. The family would treasure such a cross as an heirloom. A grace comes to us from the hand and from the Heart of our own God.

2. A grace is a seed out of which grows the tree of life. Is it to be wasted?

3. Every grace is won for us at a great price, the Blood of our Saviour. Is grace so dearly bought to be wasted?

E. When grace is once given, it is not left to our discretion to use it or not, we are servants and bound to traffic for our Master.

St. Paul writes, *If I preach the Gospel, it is no glory to me; for a necessity lieth upon me; for woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel* (1 Cor. ix. 16).

F. If our Lord gives me a call or vocation, and I harden my heart, what a loss of graces to myself and others may ensue! Who can count the graces that necessarily follow in the wake of a good vocation?

G. The late Cardinal Wiseman used to say that he thought he had cultivated and improved every natural talent he had received from God except the musical talent.

Are we improving natural gifts in order to serve God with them? What weight and influence a good Catholic can exercise if he is thoroughly well educated and stands high in his profession!

What a power the rich man has for good, if along with riches he has a lively faith and warm charity!

St. Ignatius and other saints saw clearly how important it is in these latter days that Christ's servants should carefully cultivate their natural gifts, in order to cope with His adversaries.

H. Call to mind with sorrow the hours and days wasted by so many, as if time were a worthless weed, and not one of God's good gifts.

I. What would those whose day on earth is over, now give if they might have back even a few of their wasted hours in which to traffic diligently?

J. Each moment of time, if used fervently, can win a higher place in Heaven for ourselves, besides much grace for others also.

K. Alas! with what vehement desire the Holy Souls in Purgatory long that we would not waste the precious moments in which we can so easily procure refreshment and release for them!

L. In every moment, we can be offering to our Lord Jesus that inestimable jewel which He prizes so ineffably, an act of love from our hearts: *My son, give me thy heart* (Prov. xxiii.). "*Delectare in Domino*"—*Take delight in the Lord* (Psalm xxxvi.).

M. *I know that Thou art a hard man.*

Let us most heartily reject and detest this thought.

*Think of the Lord in goodness, the Holy Ghost says to us (Wisdom i.); and let us do our best to move others to think of God in goodness. Our Father, hallowed be Thy name.*

Fac cor amans Jesu mei,

Fac ut nos amemus Te.

*N. Thou art a hard man.*

Remember how all the blessed in Heaven, all the Holy Souls in Purgatory, and all the faithful on earth are united in an earnest prayer, *Our Father, hallowed be Thy name*; that is, may all men believe that Thou art a good Father and cherish Thy name of Father.

Let us collect together from Holy Writ better thoughts concerning our Father, and our Lord Jesus, our loving Saviour; such as the words of Jonas (c. iv.): *I know that Thou art a gracious and merciful God, patient and of much compassion and easy to forgive evil*: and the Psalmist's words: *Thou, O Lord, art sweet and mild, and plenteous in mercy to all that call on Thee* (Psalm lxxxv.).

Every one of these words we should shut up in our hearts, and feed our souls with them till at last our minds and hearts have thoroughly adopted the idea of our God which they contain.

O. So must we also bear in mind and meditate long on the fact, that of all His names and titles our Blessed Lord loves best His name of Jesus, Saviour. All who now say in their hearts that Jesus is an austere man, will, unless conversion comes, fruitlessly repeat for ever and for ever their hopeless lament: *The serpent deceived me.*

P. At the same time, we must bear in mind that even if our God appears at times to be severe, He is our Master, and we are not only His children, but His servants also, and the work of His hands; so that, as He reminds us, He has, at the very least, the same rights over us that the potter has over his clay (Jerem. xviii.). Much more right in reality, for the potter has not created the clay which he fashions; but God has created us out of nothing.

When God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, He wished to teach the lesson that He is Supreme Lord and Master. When our Lord at twelve years remained in the Temple, without saying a word to His Blessed Mother or St. Joseph, He wished to impress on us that though through life He voluntarily and most cordially subjected Himself to His Holy Mother and His foster-father, yet He is always Supreme, and can at any moment suspend the ordinary laws to which He has subjected Himself. So too again when He said to the man in Samaria, *follow Me*, and the man answered, *Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father*, this petition would have been, ordinarily, most reasonable and one that our Lord would commend; but He wanted us to understand that He is Lord and Master, and when He gives a special call, His word is above all ordinary laws; and He therefore said, *Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God* (St. Luke ix.).

*Q. The unprofitable servant cast ye out into exterior darkness.*

The *exterior darkness* means the dark prison which is outside, and far away from, the bright home of our Father in Heaven.

#### STATION X.

#### THE JUDGMENT.

*And when the Son of Man shall come in His majesty, and all the angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the seat of His majesty. And all nations shall be gathered together before Him* (vv. 31, 32).

A poor Catholic woman sitting on a doorstep when a very magnificent royal procession was passing, said, as she raised her eyes to heaven, "What will it be when the Lord of Glory comes?" St. Ignatius, standing on the roof of his house in Rome, used to look up at night to the sky and say: "How poor and mean this earth becomes to me when I look up to heaven!" Who will remember earthly pageants when the Lord comes in His majesty?

## STATION XI.

*And He shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats. And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, and the goats on His left (vv. 32, 33).*

A. This will be the last, the real, the eternal separation. Bitter tears are often shed when death comes to take one and leave another. The unhappy King Agag, when the sword was drawn to slay him, said, in great anguish: *Doth bitter death separate in this way?* (1 Kings xv.). And to the man who *hath now peace in his possessions* (Ecclus. xli.), and no hope of a better world to come, death seems separation and destruction and ruin unspeakable. But with our Lord and His Church death is but a sleep. It need not make any everlasting separation. *Lazarus sleepeth*, our Saviour said, *your brother shall rise again*. But once separated at the Judgment Seat, the parting is for ever. No communion, no sympathy, no friendship, no relationship, no tie of any kind for evermore between those on the right and those on the left, the blessed and the cursed.

Preces meæ non sunt dignæ,  
Sed Tu bonus fac benigne,  
Ne perenni cremer igne.  
Inter oves locum præsta,  
Et ab hædis me sequestra,  
Statuens in parte dextra.

Though all unworthy is my cry,  
Yet save me, Jesus, when I die,  
From fires that burn eternally.  
Oh, keep for me, Good Shepherd, keep,  
A place among Thy own blest sheep.  
Nor cast me down to wail and weep  
For ever in those dungeons deep.

## STATION XII.

## THE JUDGMENT. GENERAL AND PARTICULAR. PART I.

*Then shall the King say to them that shall be on His right hand: Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in; naked, and you covered Me; sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me (vv. 34—36).*

We may also apply these words to the Particular Judgment after death.

A. *I was hungry.*

From these words it appears as if there was to be no searching into our lives on earth. All seems to turn on one point—works of mercy. Is this so?

By His Prophet Sophonias (c. i.) the Lord says: *It shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and will visit on the men that are settled on their lees.* It is quite certain, then, that when men die, *their works follow them* (Apoc. xiv.). Past thoughts, words long ago forgotten, and bygone deeds—none of all these things have really passed away. The recording angels watch and note and preserve them all; and they shall all appear again at the Judgment. If our eyes were opened, we should see as we eat and drink and buy and sell, what Baltassar saw, a hand writing on the wall every word of ours, every thought, every deed. Each one of them is weighed and valued, and its worth or worthlessness is carefully registered and kept. Every act and every omission, with the intention that led us to act or omit, is most faithfully photographed and kept for the reckoning-day. For the Lord is true and faithful, and so are His angels.

*I will visit on the men that are settled on their lees.* If the cask of wine is long undisturbed, the lees settle at the bottom of the cask. Men who ignore, or entirely neglect the duty of confession become like casks of old wine long undisturbed. There is a great deposit of filth at the bottom of the cask. God forewarns us all that He *will visit on the men that are settled on their lees.* There will be a terrible stirring up of all the filth and iniquity accumulated during the years gone by.

*I will search Jerusalem with lamps.*

What will these lamps be?

1. The Gospel of Christ will be a lamp; and the Ten Commandments will be lamps. During this life *Thy Word, O Lord, ought to be a lamp to my feet, and a light to my paths*

(Psalm cxviii.). But at the Great Tribunal, the Commandments, and the Gospel, and all the words of our Lord, will be shining lamps, directed upon our inmost soul, and it will appear at once whether we have or have not walked in conformity with our Lord's Gospel and His Commandments.

2. "Man," St. Ignatius says in the opening of his Exercises, "was created to *praise God*, to *reverence Him*, and to *serve Him*."

*Praise, reverence, service*: here are again three lamps which will be employed to search Jerusalem. Have our days and our nights been made up of *praise, reverence, and service* of our God, our Creator, our Redeemer?

3. "All other things," he goes on, "were created for man, and to help him to gain his end. Therefore man is bound to use creatures honestly and rightly as a trust: that is, to use them so far as they are a help to him, and to disentangle himself from them if they prove a hindrance."

Every creature that I have used—my time, my money, my books, my food, my dress, my senses, my intellect, the earth, the air, the stars, the sunlight, the night, the day; and in the spiritual world, our Lord in the tabernacle, the Holy Mass, the sacraments, the power of prayer, the holy teaching vouchsafed to me, the good example of those around me—all these things, and many more, will be witnesses to testify concerning me whether I have been a faithful steward and used creatures honestly. They will all be lamps that will bring to light the good and the evil in my career.

Then all my neighbours, too, the men and women with whom I spent my days, will have to bear witness. I was created to help them to salvation. They were created to help me. I had a power to become partner with all who feared God, and to have fellowship and communion with all their good works. I had also a power to become an accomplice in the ill-doing of others by approving, by counselling, by provoking, by neglecting to do my duty to them, and through failing to hinder their sins by correction and careful training.

Those with whom I have lived, therefore, will all be lamps to throw their light on my life. They will all witness concerning me, and the voice of the people will be the voice of God.

Then the office which each man has undertaken to perform will act as a lamp to show what his life has been. Has the father been really a father? Has the physician fitted himself for his work? Has the priest been faithful at the altar, in the pulpit, in the confessional, at the sick-bed, in the poor-school?

B. This full and complete examination will not require time. In St. Paul's language, it will be completed *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye* (1 Cor. xv.). How so? Because God has been with me, not only as a witness of every deed and word and thought, but as my servant, helping me to walk, to lift my hand, to speak, to think, to pray. For never for one instant can I walk alone, or act, or speak, or think, without help from my Creator. In fact, by preserving me in my being, He is virtually creating me every instant.

Since then God has ever to be with us, helping us in every act, it follows, that by creating us such as we are, with a free-will, He binds Himself, so long as we live, to be our servant, and to give—though most unwillingly—a certain measure of help, even when we sin. If a man walks along the street to steal, God must help him to walk. If he moves his tongue to curse, God is as a sorrowful servant helping him whilst he utters the curse. For during the present short time God is the servant and man the master. How pathetically does our God contrast our serving of Him with His serving of us. *This people have I formed for Myself, but thou hast not called on Me, neither hast thou laboured about Me; I have not caused thee to serve with oblations, nor wearied thee with incense. Thou hast bought Me no sweet cane with money: but thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied Me with thy iniquities* (Isaias xliii.).

Oh, may our eyes be opened to see something of the dishonour to which we subject our God when we thus compel Him to serve us in our sins, and weary Him with our iniquities!

Monster tyrants have sometimes tied the living to the dead. Who can conceive how much our good and holy and loving God is *inwardly touched with sorrow of heart* (Genesis vi.) when obliged to live in such union and contact with the sinner—serving us in our sins, wearied with our iniquities? What wonder that He says, *I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth?* (Apoc. iii.). The wonder of wonders is that He has not long ago done so. "*Misericordiæ Domini quia non sumus consumpti*" (Lament. iii.). It is owing to the mercy of our Lord, His meekness, His patience, His longsuffering, that we are not long ago consumed.

The Lord our God then needs no long time to search. All our iniquity is deeply impressed upon Him, and fully before His eyes.

### STATION XIII.

#### THE JUDGMENT. PART II.

A. But there is another side to this Judgment scene. We find it suggested in the familiar words of the 129th Psalm: *If Thou shalt observe iniquities, O Lord, Lord, who shall stand it?* For those words imply that sometimes our Lord chooses *not to observe* our iniquities. Thus it was that after lamenting his lot upon his sick-bed, King Ezechias at last, filled with hope, exclaimed, *But Thou hast delivered my soul, O Lord, Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back.* That is, "Thou wilt not observe them any more". The Devil will be at the judgment-seat to accuse the brethren. He is there to accuse night and day (Apoc. xii.). He is essentially the accuser, the calumniator, trying to make the worst of every sin, but oftentimes our Guardian Angels are able to say with gladness unspeakable, *The accuser of our brethren is cast forth who accused them before God day*

and night. Our Saviour's sole answer to the accuser in these cases is, *Satan, avaunt!* He does not choose to observe the iniquities set forth by the wicked Angel. Why is this? Because He has bound Himself by a most sacred compact: *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall find mercy.* "*Juravit Dominus et non pœnitebit eum*" (Ps. cix.). To this solemn covenant the Lord hath sworn, and never will He repent His promise. If men have been duly merciful, *their sins* He never will observe. But, on the other hand, *Judgment without mercy to him that hath not done mercy* (St. James ii.). To such a one the lamps will be applied rigorously. Every sin will be observed, and weighed, and measured. But, on the other hand, for those who have been duly merciful there is to be nothing but mercy.

B. This truth is in Holy Writ repeated again and again in many different forms, in order that our attention may be drawn to it.

*Alms deliver from all sin, and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness.*

*Alms shall be a great confidence before the Most High God, to all them that give it* (Tobias iv.).

Observe this wonderful promise: *Alms will not suffer the soul to go into darkness.* As if it were impossible for one who does his duty well in works of mercy to be lost.

Are we to believe then that men can sin, and die in sin, and still be saved, because they give alms? *Absit!* Heaven forbid the thought! But we find in Ecclesiasticus the right interpretation of Tobias' words: *For from the merciful all these things* (habits of vice) *shall be taken away, and they shall not wallow in sins* (Ecclus. xxiii.). If then a man die in sin, he shall be condemned. But if he has been rightly merciful, he will not die in sin. *For all these things shall be taken away, and he will not wallow in sins.* He will have grace given to him during life to live innocently, or, if he has sinned, to break his chains, to make a good confession, and to reform his life. *Alms deliver from all sin.*

C. This doctrine is rendered more clear by another word

of Ecclesiasticus : *Water quencheth a flaming fire, and alms resisteth sins* (c. iii.).

Alms, we here learn, has a power against sin such as water has against fire. One or two small alms that cost us little, may not suffice ; just as one or two pails of water may not extinguish a flaming fire ; but if we pour water enough, water at last prevails over fire.

And so if we continue doing works of mercy, they will, sooner or later, according to the measure of our mercy, win us grace to conquer sin, to confess past sins, to obtain a good absolution, and to resist future temptations.

D. Hence it is that we find Daniel saying to that gigantic sinner, King Nabuchodonosor, *Wherefore, O King, let my counsel be acceptable to thee ; and redeem thou thy sins with alms, and thy iniquities with works of mercy to the poor ; perhaps He will forgive thy offences* (c. iv.). And our Blessed Saviour's words to those arch-sinners the Pharisees are still stronger. For Daniel says, *perhaps* forgiveness will come ; but our Lord, while uttering "woe" upon "woe" against those apostles of Hell who are scandalising the whole people, says, without a "perhaps," *But yet that which remaineth, give alms, and behold all things are clean to you* (St. Luke xi.).

E. No words, however, can be stronger on this subject than those we are now considering, our Blessed Saviour's parting words on Mount Olivet. *Come, ye blessed, for I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat. Depart from Me, you cursed, for I was thirsty, and you gave Me not to drink* (St. Matt. xxv.).

The one cause here specified for the blessing is: "When I was hungry you gave Me to eat". That is to say, because you were merciful you shall find mercy. You may have committed sins, but you received grace to be contrite, and now I can cast your sins behind My back. Your mercy and your almsgiving therefore have saved you.

And when, on the other hand, He says, *Depart, you cursed, because I was hungry, and you gave Me not to eat*, the meaning is this: It is not your sins of commission that

are the real and final cause of your ruin. For others have sinned, and yet are saved, because they were willing to redeem their sins with alms. They won mercy after sinning, by being merciful. You sinned, and might also have obtained mercy by being merciful, but you deliberately chose *not* to be merciful. You would *not* give alms that all might be made clean to you. The Holy Spirit tells us how at the judgment-seat the wicked will be astounded at seeing that those who had been sinners like themselves receive mercy. They *shall be amazed at the suddenness of their unexpected salvation* (Wisdom v.); and with anguish unspeakable will cry out, "We too could have had mercy, but *the serpent deceived us*".

Even more than our commissions we have to dread our omissions of acts of mercy.

#### STATION XIV.

*Then shall the just answer Him, saying: Lord, when did we see Thee hungry, and fed Thee? thirsty, and gave Thee drink? And when did we see Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and covered Thee? Or when did we see Thee sick or in prison, and came to Thee? And the King answering, shall say, Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me (vv. 37—40).*

A. When we are in fear here below, we often picture to ourselves coming evils; and our anticipation is worse than the realities. Sometimes, on the other hand, fervent souls in their meditations imagine themselves going through martyrdom, or doing heroic things from which when the realities come, they shrink with horror: and thus they prove the truth of our Lord's words, *The spirit is willing, but the flesh weak.*

The words of our Saviour which we are considering show how widely different the realities of the Judgment will be from our conception of it here. What text do

we so often hear impressed upon us as the familiar one that what we do to Christ's little ones we do to Him? And yet we see here that when the Judgment is actually come and when our Saviour says to the just, *You gave Me to drink, you gave Me to eat*, they are quite taken by surprise, they are lost in amazement. The words are as novel and startling as if they had never been heard before. We sometimes try to realise some of the terrors of the Judgment; the severe account to be rendered, the hideous aspect of our sins in that hour. But can we, on the other hand, form any conception of the extent to which our souls will be confounded and overwhelmed, and, I may say, crushed with a joy and delight which, by all rights, ought to be quite insupportable, when we suddenly see the boundless gratitude with which our Saviour magnifies the little things done by us for Him, and generously rewards services which to ourselves appear so poor and mean and unworthy and insignificant?

B. With what an ineffable sense of relief and consolation and loving gratitude the holy soul that has heard this welcome from the mouth of our Lord Jesus, *Come ye blessed, for I was naked and you covered Me*, will fly away to hide itself in Purgatory till the last farthing due to His infinite goodness is paid!

C. Theologians tell us that at the judgment-seat the soul in the state of grace no sooner sees the loveliness of Christ Jesus than it at once elicits an act of contrition so intense, that all venial sins of every kind are forgiven. Consequently, the faithful in Purgatory are all holy saints quite free from all sin, though still bound to pay the debt of penalty due.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This teaching of theologians may explain an opinion of Father de Lugo, S.J., who though he holds with Father Suarez that an adult who receives Baptism with an attachment to a venial sin cannot have that sin remitted until he repents of it, yet he also agrees with the general persuasion of the faithful that such a one if he died immediately after Baptism would go straight to Heaven without Purgatory. The two opinions seem to clash, but they will be in harmony if we say that this newly baptised soul elicits an act of contrition at the judgment-seat which clears away the sin. For then, as Baptism does away with all penalty, there will be no Purgatory.

## STATION XV.

*Then He shall say to them also that shall be on His left hand : Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave Me not to eat : I was thirsty and you gave Me not to drink : I was a stranger and you took Me not in : naked, and you covered Me not : sick and in prison, and you did not visit Me. Then they also shall answer Him, saying : Lord, when did we see Thee hungry or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to Thee ? Then He shall answer them, saying : Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least, you did it not to Me (vv. 41—45).*

A. *When did we see Thee hungry ?* The wicked are even more astounded than the good when they hear from the lips of the Judge these words : *I was hungry and you gave Me not to eat.* For during life they gave much less heed to Gospel truths than the just did. The revelation at the judgment-seat to them is such that the Holy Spirit describes them as *troubled with terrible fear, and groaning for anguish of spirit* (Wisdom v.).

And whereas the elect are overpowered with the most affectionate surprise when they see our Lord's eyes of mercy turned on them and hear Him say, *I was sick and you visited Me*, sinners on the contrary are filled with the spirit of despairing malice, and they blaspheme, and ask with defiance, "*When did we see Thee sick ?*" It is all false, it is all calumny. We never did see Thee sick." To this also our Saviour, with infinite sorrow of Heart, will give the unanswerable explanation : *As long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to Me.*

B. Alas ! alas ! Lucifer keeps men busy with disputes about the Real Presence, the Infallibility of the Pope, and the rest. We want all our time and more to gain a firm belief of this fundamental truth that our Lord so loves each of us, and so entirely identifies Himself with

each of us, that He says with perfect truth, *As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me.*

C. *Depart into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.* Therefore Hell is intended by God only for Lucifer and the rebel angels; and no man enters thither who has not by his own choice become the subject and slave and possession of Lucifer. These words bring out in a very strong light the great truth which we too much forget, that when we yield to temptation and sin, we not only choose a creature, and a little pleasure before God, but we deliberately renounce Christ Jesus and go over to His bitter enemy, Lucifer, and give ourselves to him.

D. *Depart into everlasting fire.* Three hundred years ago, the then strong-minded men, as they considered themselves, ridiculed the notion of a Purgatory, but had nothing to say against Hell. In our nineteenth century those who consider themselves too clever and intellectual to become little children in order to learn from God, highly approve of Purgatory, at least of a Purgatory remodelled on their plans, but declare Hell to be an outrage to their little minds, and heartless hearts.

E. It is well to bear in mind that even when the doctrine of eternal punishment is believed, it too often proves not strong enough to deter men from indulging their passions and selling themselves to Lucifer. In what state then would the world be if the fear of Hell were removed?

F. Then again men who exclaim against eternal punishment often represent sin as a momentary act that is past and gone, and yet remembered and chastised for ever by a God Whom we are taught to believe a God infinitely good.

But is it true that sin is a momentary act past and gone?

The sin of Lucifer is to-day as present, as living, as active, as mischievous, as murderous, as truly diabolic, as it was in the first hour. Suicide seems to be a momentary act, but the death it produces is not momentary. For the absence of life and the corruption go on. Can we say, "Oh, it was the foolish act of a moment, by-gones must be

bygones," and at once reinstate the decaying corpse in its former position in our home?

Impossible! For death and corruption are not a bygone thing, but a state enduring still. So is it with the sin of the lost soul.

G. If a fallen angel had repented of sin and was still chastised, we might have some grounds for saying that there seems to be unintelligible vindictiveness in God. But when we see that Lucifer and his accomplices are as determined in their hatred of God our Lord, and of man the image of God, as they were in the beginning, what wonder that Hell goes on? If a sin deserves even half an hour of chastisement, it still deserves the half-hour as long as it continues. So long as the sin lasts, the chastisement must last. It is said that there is somewhere in the "Lives of the Saints" a record of a vision in which a Saint heard our Saviour saying to Lucifer: "You know, Lucifer, that if you had repented you would have found mercy". And the answer was, "Never, never will I repent".

H. Here then is the mystery—how does sin endure? The Psalmist answers with this unanswerable question: "*Delicta quis intelligit?*"—*Who understands sins?* (Psalm xviii.). We see a man of fourscore years and more, with already one foot, as we say, in the grave. We conjure him to make his peace with God, to break away from some vicious attachment, to forgive an enemy, to restore ill-gotten goods. He turns away and will hear nothing; and, as far as we can judge, if he lived eight thousand years his obduracy would live on. Who can explain his sin? "*Delicta quis intelligit?*"

Let the strong minds and wise heads find out some plan for putting an end to sin, and we may be sure that Hell will cease as soon as sin is no more.

I. A loving father, if forced to shut up in prison a son bent on murdering his brother or sister, might forgive and reinstate him as soon as he was thoroughly repentant; but if his father knows that the imprisoned son is still as much as

ever intent on murder will he set him free and reinstate him? Never.

J. If Hell's gates were in this hour thrown open, and all those confined there were set at liberty, they would all rather a thousand times remain there than be forced to go and keep companionship with God and His Saints. When the possessed men met Jesus on the shores of Tiberias, the devils cried out through their mouths: *What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of God? Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?* (St. Matt. viii.). The presence of Christ is the worst of torments to Lucifer. The holiness of Heaven would be infinitely more intolerable to the damned than the sufferings of Hell are. Never would they approach Heaven unless they could vent their fury on God and on all who love Him.

K. *I was hungry and you did not give Me to eat.* No wonder that all lost souls weep and wail and say, *We fools, the serpent deceived me,* when they see now quite clearly how easily and how pleasantly they might have won mercy by giving alms and doing mercy. But, some one will say, "Then the rich have a most unfair privilege, for they can give alms, but I cannot".

St. Peter answers: *Silver and gold I have none, but what I have I give to thee* (Acts iii.). We may not have gold and silver, but we can give kind words, and the help of our hands, and our earnest prayers, and our tears, and our fasting and penance. And thus while the rich man is only giving out of his superfluity, we are giving, out of our necessity, alms that cost us much more, and are therefore much more agreeable to our Lord.

#### STATION XVI.

*And these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the just into life everlasting* (v. 46).

"In the Day of Judgment, deliver us, O Lord."

"Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death."

These are the closing words of our Lord's discourses. The same Divine lips pronounce both words: *everlasting punishment; everlasting life*. One is as certain as the other. We have the same warrant for both.

## SCENE XVI.

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES. WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON.

## STATION I.

*And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended all these words, He said to His disciples: You know that after two days shall be the Pasch, and the Son of Man shall be delivered up to be crucified (St. Matt. xxvi. 1-2).*

A. Before entering Jericho, our Blessed Lord foretold all the chief details of the Passion to the Twelve; but, as we read, they understood nothing. Now He once more reveals His awful secret, and probably with something of the same result. They do not realise what is coming so soon.

Contemplate our Blessed Saviour thus isolated and lonely, carrying about in His Heart this terrible future, and unable to find among His followers one who can enter into His thoughts and sympathise with Him! His Blessed Mother alone can share with Him, but she by sharing with all her Mother's love only doubles His agony.

Many complain of loneliness. How unboundedly grateful the lonely Heart of our Lord would be if they would give up some of those solitary hours, which are a burden to them, to companionship with Him! For *His delights are to be with the children of men*. How glad He is when we have some little desire to be with Him; yes, some *little* desire, because He is beyond all precedent or example acquainted and familiar with neglect. *My Heart*, He says, *hath expected misery* (Psalm lxxviii.). He is, therefore, grateful with an everlasting gratitude whenever He meets with a little sympathy from us.

*After two days.*

Did our Lord speak these words on Tuesday evening or on Wednesday?

The Jews, as we know, reckoned the festival from sunset to sunset. If we follow this mode of reckoning, two days before the Pasch which is to be eaten on Thursday, would be Tuesday evening.

But some careful and learned students of Holy Scripture tell us that it is all but certain that as we sometimes reckon from midnight to midnight, and sometimes when we speak of a festival-day mean by the word only from dawn to sunset, so among the Jews, in their common parlance, the Pasch was sometimes spoken of as lasting from sunset to sunset; at other times they calculated, as we do, from midnight to midnight; and sometimes also they spoke of the Pasch or the day of the Pasch, as we might do, meaning from daybreak to sunset. If this be correct, our Blessed Saviour might say on Wednesday that the Pasch (Good Friday) would be after two days, and that on that day He would be delivered up to be crucified. Or again, if the Resurrection on Sunday morning can be said to be on the third day, the paschal supper might be said to be after two days, even if He were speaking on Wednesday.

## SCENE XVII.

THE HIGH PRIEST'S PALACE. WEDNESDAY.

### STATION I.

*Now the feast of the Pasch and of the Azymes was after two days (St. Mark xiv. 1).*

*Then were gathered together the Chief Priests and Ancients of the people into the Court of the High Priest, who was called Caiphias; and they consulted together that by subtilty they might apprehend Jesus, and put Him to death (St. Matt. xxvi. 3, 4).*

A. What a terrible lesson we draw from the constant unflagging perseverance of these wretched dupes of Satan, that God at last, when the hour of mercy is past, gives way to the obdurate will of the sinner! *God gave them up to the desires of their heart* (Romans i.).

*"Ne in furore tuo arguas me (Psalm vi.). Do not, O God, my Creator, chastise me in Thy wrath. Do not give me up to the thoughts and desires of my corrupt heart."*

B. We see how they are walking through hard ways, and weary themselves in the way of iniquity (Wisdom v.). If we work for Jesus Christ as they work for their master, Satan, we shall be saints.

C. *That by subtlety they might apprehend Jesus.*

Ever since our Saviour began to draw the people to Him by His preaching and miracles, these jealous men have been plotting against His life, and many times they have made a determined effort to get Him into their power and to make away with Him by stoning or some other form of murder. In vain our Saviour expostulates with them and says: *Many good works I have shown to you from My Father; for which of those works do you stone Me?* (St. John x.). He has always failed to soften them. And, as we have seen, the raising of Lazarus doubled and trebled their mad envy. From that day they have been labouring with untiring activity to procure His death. We have seen how the whole of yesterday they were bringing forward their ablest men from all the different sects of Jerusalem to catch Him in His speech, that they might give Him up to the Roman Governor. They failed utterly. His hour was not come.

But here they are again to-day—maddened more than ever by the victories our Lord won yesterday—with that persevering will which our Blessed Saviour so much wishes to find in His own followers, holding a Council, and meditating *vain things against the Lord and against His Christ*. And now they can think of no other plan but trickery. *By subtlety* they are to apprehend Him and put Him to death. By trickery Pilate is to be won to their side. By trickery they are to persuade the Governor that their one aim is to be loyal to Rome. By trickery they are to draw Jesus to some spot where they can safely surround Him and seize Him without provoking a rising of the people.

In the Talmud a detailed narrative is given of the way in which certain astute Jews pretended to be disciples of Jesus, and drew Him to Jerusalem where He was seized

and killed. That was the Jewish fiction; but it was true as far as this, that His enemies trusted to subtlety.

D. But it was not to be as they willed. Neither their force nor their subtlety was to prevail against Jesus. *He was offered because it was His own will* (Isaias liii.). He was to become their prisoner and victim in the hour when He willed it, in the place He had chosen, after the manner approved by Himself. *For who is God but the Lord? or who is God but our God?* (Psalm xvii.). *They have intended evils against Thee; they have devised counsels which they have not been able to establish* (Psalm xx.).

“Teach us, O compassionate Lord Jesus, ever to say with Thy Holy Patriarch Joseph: *Can we resist the will of God?*” (Genesis l.).

E. *By subtlety.* We must never forget that Satan carries on his war much more by subtlety than by force. Hence the lament of his dupes throughout eternity is, *We fools. The serpent deceived me.*

“From the snares of the devil deliver us, O Lord.”  
“Lead us not into temptation.”

## STATION II.

*But they said, Not on the festival-day, lest perhaps there should be a tumult among the people* (St. Matt. xxvi. 5).

A. *Unless the Lord build the house, in vain have they laboured who built it* (Psalm cxxvi.).

These blinded Rulers have passed two decrees.

(1) That Jesus is to be destroyed by subtlety. But God's decree is “not by subtlety,” and God prevails.

(2) They decree, *Not on the festival-day*; but God's decree is, Yes, on the festival-day, and on no other day, shall the Lamb of God be slain.

“O wise God, O good God, O God our Father, may Thy most just and most holy will be always done on earth as in Heaven.”

B. All their wisdom, all their subtlety is baffled and quite powerless. Our Blessed Saviour clearly foretold a week ago near Jericho how the end was to be brought about: *The Son of Man shall be betrayed to the Chief Priests* (St. Mark x.). The avowed and raging enemies can do nothing till a traitor appears to help them. A traitor, that is, a secret enemy disguised as a friend, a wolf in sheep's clothing; one of His own, who uses the knowledge he has acquired while a disciple, His own familiar, must come to be guide and leader to His enemies.

*If My enemy had reviled Me, our Lord said by His Psalmist, I would perhaps have hidden Myself from him; but thou, a man of one mind with Me, My guide and My familiar* (Psalm liv.).

C. Mark well how much more powerful for evil a traitor is than open enemies. Apostate priests and bishops were the founders and apostles of the great heresies. Traitors have ever been Satan's chosen allies and disciples, his twelve, and his seventy-two, whom, in mocking travesty of our Lord's holy methods, *he sent before his face into every city and place whither he himself was to come* (St. Luke x.).

The traitor is within the fortress, and can in the moment of danger open the doors and let in the enemy. Our Blessed Saviour has more reason to say than any one else, "Save me from My friends"; from weak friends, half-hearted friends, friends without a will, treacherous friends, who when the battle is raging turn false and spread ruin. What can a general do when in the critical moment one of his trusted officers leads his men away to the enemy and jeopardises the whole army?

"The enemies of a man are those of his own household" (St. Matt. x.). We are now those of our Lord's household. We must be either thorough and faithful friends, or, if traitors, His worst enemies.

D. The Priests and Scribes and Pharisees *found not what to do to Him* (St. Luke xix.), till the traitor came to

help and guide. *They found not what to do to Him, for all the people were very attentive to hear Him.* They were helpless till the traitor came to their assistance. For some time past, as we have seen, *the Chief Priests and Pharisees had given a commandment that if any man knew where He was, they should tell, that they might apprehend Him* (St. John xi.). But all in vain. He came and went as He pleased, and eluded their search till the traitor offered his service. *A man of one mind with Me ; My guide and My familiar.* One of His own Twelve.

E. Even then, our Divine Lord could, of course, had it so pleased Him, have baffled the treachery of Judas as easily as He rendered void all the subtlety of the Rulers. But, from the inspired words of the Psalm, it would seem as if the bruised Heart of our Saviour did not wish to make any further resistance, as soon as His own chosen disciple became the leader of His enemies. *If My enemy had reviled Me, I would verily have borne with it. And if he had spoken great things against Me, I would perhaps have hidden Myself from him. But thou, a man of one mind, My guide and My familiar : who did take sweet meats together with Me : in the house of God we walked with consent. From my enemy I would perhaps have hidden Myself,* but when My own chosen disciple comes against Me, I resist no more.

Judas was His *guide* and His *familiar* in the sense that he was allowed to manage for Him temporal concerns, and, no doubt, our Lord in many things followed his advice.

In literature we are told how Julius Cæsar, when his own trusted friend, Brutus, stabbed him with his sword, covered his face with his mantle and struggled no more.

SCENE XVIII.

THE ROAD FROM MOUNT OLIVET SOUTHWARD, TO THE HILL OF EVIL COUNSEL. WEDNESDAY EVENING.

STATION I.

*And Satan entered into Judas, who was surnamed Iscariot, one of the Twelve. And he went and discoursed with the Chief Priests and the magistrates how he might betray Him to them (St. Luke xxii. 3, 4).*

A. *Satan entered into Judas.* Not now for the first time. Long before our Blessed Saviour said : *One of you is a devil (St. John vi.)*. But as occasion offered, Satan induced his wretched dupe to commit new sins, and thus became more and more master of this miserable soul.

One of the curses pronounced in the 108th Psalm against this most unhappy man is, *Set thou the sinner over him, and may the devil stand at his right hand*, to lead and guide to ruin the fallen child of Heaven who has freely elected to be Satan's slave.

*“Lead us not into temptation, O Lord, but deliver us from evil. May Thy Kingdom come, more and more.”*

B. At the supper in Bethany, as we have seen, the avaricious heart of Judas was goaded to madness because Magdalen's alms did not come into his dishonest keeping. Ever since that hour he has been meditating how to regain as much as he has lost.

C. Now he hears our Lord say that after two days He shall be delivered up. If so, no time is to be lost. Some one else may turn traitor and win the prize before him.

D. He finds, therefore, some excuse for leaving the company round our Lord, and bends his steps towards Jerusalem.

E. Contemplate Judas as he walks alone towards the city, his person, his secret thoughts, his words, his actions. The Psalmist prays : *Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth,*

and a door round about my lips. *Incline not my heart to evil words ; to make excuses in sins, with men that work iniquity.*

*And I will not communicate with the choicest of them. The just man shall correct me in mercy, and shall reprove me ; but let not the oil of the sinner fatten my head.*

*For my prayer also shall still be against the things with which they are well pleased ; their judges falling on the rock have been swallowed up. They shall hear my words, for they have prevailed (Psalm cxl.).*

These ought to have been the thoughts of a chosen disciple of Christ, trained by our Lord Himself ; but the Latin proverb is true : *Corruptio optimi pessima*. When the best and the holiest are once corrupted and tainted, theirs is a corruption the most complete of all and the foulest. Judas has, during so many days of grace and miracles, been carrying about within him death and foul corruption, so that all graces and good and holy thoughts are now at once turned into poison and malice. Great need has he now to pray : *may a watch be set before my mouth, and a door round about my lips*. But, on the contrary, out of the abundance of his bad heart his mouth is going to speak. Great need he has to cry out for grace, for his heart is now *wholly inclined to evil words*.

He is planning and arranging in his mind his interview with Caiphas and the rulers, *the men that work iniquity* ; and is preparing excuses for his treason. He will tell them how at last his eyes are opened to the wickedness of Jesus and to His blasphemous pretensions. He does not say : *I will not communicate with the choicest of them* ; on the contrary, his thought is : " As soon as I get a chance, and when it is dark, when I can go unnoticed, I will communicate with the choicest of them, those who are the most bitter in their enmity to Jesus ".

" The Just Man corrected him in mercy," and reprovved him in the supper-room at Bethany with much meek gentleness and charity. " O chosen disciple ! you ought to have welcomed the correction. You ought to have

blessed the loving Heart whence the reproof came." But all is now venom and deadly poison within his soul. He much prefers to have his head fattened by *the oil of the sinner*. The tempter is whispering the flattering words of approval which the priests and elders will shower upon him. If his good angel could gain a hearing, he would remind him to pray with the Psalmist: *Let them be presently turned away blushing for shame, that say to me: 'Tis well, 'tis well* (Psalm lxi.); but now, alas! his soul longs for the oil of sinners; and the father of lies multiplies before his imagination seven times, and seventy times seven times, the fair words and the pieces of gold and silver that they will gladly give him for such a prize.

F. True, at times, our Lord sends terrible fears which make him waver, for *wickedness is fearful, and a troubled conscience forecasteth grievous things* (Wisdom xvii.). But, when he thinks how his treason may be discovered, and how Peter and the rest of the Twelve may fall upon him in their rage, and how the anger of God may overtake him, then the father of lies reassures him and whispers delusions of this kind: *My prayer shall still be against the things with which they are well pleased*. You have no wish to see Him slain, as they wish. He has often escaped from them, and so He will again. You shall be enriched, but "these wicked judges shall fall against a rock, and be swallowed up". They will listen to you and give you all you want, for "My words will prevail".

G. Did the tempter tell him how small the price was to be for his treason, and how vast the treasure he was giving up? Did he tell him that thirty pieces of silver, nothing more, were the commutation or exchange which he was to receive in lieu of his God, his companionship with Jesus, his apostleship, his eternal home in Heaven, his immortal soul?

Judas had no doubt heard our Lord ask the question, *What exchange shall a man give for his soul?* (St. Mark viii.). If a man once makes over his soul to Satan, what price

would induce Satan to give it back? Satan said to Christ: *All these (all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them) will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me* (St. Matt. iv. ; St. Luke iv.). What price would he not give, if allowed to do so, to win one soul created by God to His own image, and redeemed by the Blood of Christ, and sanctified in Baptism by the Holy Ghost? Far more for the soul of a chosen disciple. But, alas! he knows through a most melancholy experience that he can dupe us and persuade us to sell our birthright and ourselves and our God, for a mess of pottage, for thirty pieces of silver, or even less.

## SCENE XIX.

THE COUNCIL-CHAMBER ON THE HILL OF EVIL COUNSEL.  
WEDNESDAY EVENING.

## STATION I.

*And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money. And he promised. And he sought opportunity to betray Him in the absence of the multitude* (St. Luke xxii. 5, 6).

Judas said to them: *What will you give me and I will deliver Him to you?* (St. Matt. xxvi. 15).

A. The evening of Wednesday is come. Judas, who is the man of business for the Twelve, has, as we have seen, found some pretext for leaving his companions on Mount Olivet to go into Jerusalem. Unnoticed on the road crowded by strangers, he makes his way from Olivet southward, past the pool of Siloe and the village, to reach the hill on the south-east of the city, where the High Priest had his country villa. He sends in his message that one of the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth has important news for the Priests. Everything about Jesus is, in their excited state, to them most important, and therefore Judas is admitted without delay into the presence of Annas, the hoary arch-sinner who leads and guides this death-struggle

against the Lord and against His Christ. With Annas are gathered Caiphas and the rest.

B. And so now the priests of the Old Covenant and the man chosen to be an Apostle of the New Testament stand face to face. They are met to set a price on the Blood of the Lord.

Listen to the solemn recantation of the fallen disciple ; with how much servility, and with what a profusion of obsequious words he renounces his Master, Jesus Christ, and wishes to make amends to those who had been so wronged by Jesus, by now becoming their faithful servant, and helping all he can to put an end to the mischief which Jesus is working. And he can render valuable service, for he knows all the habits of the Galilean. He knows where He hides Himself. He knows where He passes the night. He can easily put them in the way of apprehending Him without any fear of a tumult. "I know all His secrets and His plans. I have been one of His chosen Twelve. I was His treasurer. He leant entirely on me." The more he can enhance his own importance in their eyes, the larger, he makes sure, will be their offer.

C. *And they were glad, and covenanted to give him money.* Little reason have they to be glad. Small joy will grow out of the unblest alliance between the cast-away priests of the Old Testament and the traitor who should have been an Apostle of the New.

Alas! what an evil hour it is for us when at last God gives way, and no longer resists our corrupt will, and abandons us to our desires, and lets us prosper in wickedness. *I had a zeal on occasion of the wicked, seeing the prosperity of sinners. Until I go into the Sanctuary of God and understand concerning their last ends—How are they brought to desolation ! (Psalm lxxii.).*

"O God our Father, never allow us to constrain Thee to say of us : *I let them go according to the desires of their heart ; they shall walk in their own inventions*" (Psalm lxxx.).

D. *They covenanted to give him money.*

Many fair words, no doubt, they gave to the miserable man! Much praise for his loyalty! And they also added abundant assurances that of course they would reward him well, and for the rest of his days prove their gratitude to him.

E. But Judas' trust in these castaway priests is about as great as their trust in him. He is not satisfied with a vague promise of money.

*What will you give me, he asked, and I will deliver Him to you?*

"You know how much you have longed to have Him in your grasp. I can put Him completely in your power, to do what you wish with Him. What will you give me?" It is Jew against Jew. Love of money has hindered *them* from winning mercy for their starved souls by almsgiving. Love of money has changed *him* from a chosen disciple into a devil. *One of you is a devil.*

They deliberate, and possibly retire to consult together as to the price. Much they wish to have Jesus in their grasp, but much also they wish not to let money out of their grasp. They deliberate. Annas is ever the ruling spirit in these evil deliberations. When huckstering had gone on for some time between these priests and the traitor, at last they fix their ultimatum. Judas can have thirty pieces of silver, no more.

## STATION II.

*They appointed him thirty pieces of silver*  
(St. Matt. xxvi.).

A. Is that all? after so many fair assurances? Contemplate the fierce vexation of the covetous traitor. Thirty pieces of silver! *The wicked shall see and shall be angry. He shall gnash with his teeth, and pine away* (Psalm cxi.). "Thirty pieces of silver, Judas!" If an ox gore a *bondsman or bondswoman*, the owner of the ox shall pay thirty sicles of silver to the master of the slave (Exodus xxi.). "Do

you offer to me the price of a slave for delivering up to you the great leader of the people?"

But the father of lies is whispering that, no doubt, much more will be added later.

Many commentators think that the thirty pieces of silver were thirty sicles; the appointed compensation for a slave killed. Others think the silver pieces were only half-sicles. There is much difference in the calculations of Biblical scholars who try to fix the value of these thirty pieces. Some put the price paid as low as fifteen or sixteen shillings. Others suppose it to be about £120. A very painstaking modern writer sets down the thirty pieces as equal to ninety-three francs, less than £4.

When the objection is raised that the potter's field could not be bought at such a price, they answer that probably the burial-ground bought for strangers was a small plot of very poor land, worth very little; and they add that though Judas' fee was devoted to the purchase of this cemetery, other money may have been added out of the Treasury.

Against this latter supposition might be urged St. Peter's word (Acts i.), that Judas *hath possessed a field of the reward of iniquity*. Though the words of St. Peter were partly a figure of speech, since, according to the common opinion, Judas did not live to be in possession of the field; yet the words would imply that the money of Judas purchased the field.

The Prophet Zachary is supposed to allude to this bargain in chapter xi.: *They weighed for my wages thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said: Cast it to the statuary (the potter?). A handsome price that I was prized at by them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and I cast them into the house of the Lord to the statuary (the potter).*

The Patriarch Joseph, a type of our Lord, was sold by his brothers for twenty pieces of silver (Genesis xxxvii.).

B. Learn a lesson from these hard-hearted and blinded priests. They are willing to pay thirty pieces of silver to gain possession of Jesus in order to destroy Him. He is offered to us at a less price that we may possess Him and enjoy Him for ever. *You that have no money, make haste, buy and eat (Isaias lv.).*

Alas! alas! how closely we should now be united to our Blessed Saviour had we been always willing to pay the little price asked of us for the possession of Him; less oftentimes than the two pigeons offered by Holy Mary in the Temple.

C. Judas was willing to sell his Divine Master for thirty pieces. Seeing that he could extort no more *he promised*. When grievous sin is committed, our Lord is given up, and as far as it rests with us, given up for ever, often for less than thirty pieces; for a theft; for a sensual gratification; for an act of revenge.

“O my God, *the whole world before Thee is as the least grain of the balance, and as a drop of the morning dew* (Wisdom xi.). What then shall the poor sinner think throughout eternity of the bargain he made, and the price he accepted in exchange for Thee, his God and his all?”

*Woe is me! The serpent deceived me.*

*Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and ye gates thereof be very desolate, saith the Lord. For My people have done two evils. They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that hold no water* (Jerem. ii.).

### STATION III.

*And from thenceforth he sought opportunity to betray Him*  
(v. 16).

A. He has not got his money yet; he has still to earn it; and scant indeed though his gains be, he devotes himself earnestly to the task of securing his thirty pieces of silver. All that night and next day his mind is planning and contriving.

Oh, that we who claim to be children of light would learn from this child of darkness to traffic diligently! If we work to win Jesus as Judas did to betray Him, we shall certainly succeed; and with what a different outcome! He gained his thirty pieces, but not to enjoy them; we shall gain Jesus, to have Him and possess Him and love Him for ever.

## CHAPTER V.

## HOLY THURSDAY.

## SCENE I.

## JERUSALEM.

*And the day of the unleavened bread came (the first day of the Azymes), on which it was necessary that the Pasch should be killed (St. Luke xxii. ; St. Matt. xxvi.).*

Preparations for this solemn Pasch were being made in Heaven, in Hell, and on earth. "*O vos omnes qui transitis per viam, attendite et videte.*" Oh, let us not pass heedlessly on our way, but halt at least a little while, to see with the eyes of our soul and to listen with our ears.

Early in the morning of this day, as some commentators infer from the Talmud, at the door of every synagogue in Jerusalem—and there were many—the sentence of the Greater Excommunication was solemnly, and with sound of trumpet, pronounced by one of the Priests against Jesus of Nazareth. Before the arrival of the Romans, the effect of this awful sentence was that the criminal so doomed was outlawed, and could be hunted down and slain by any one so blessed as to find the chance of striking the blow. The Romans, by taking away the power of life and death, lessened very greatly the terror of this sentence, but the form still remained; and the ceremony would, it was hoped, help to overawe the people, and bring them to see that Jesus was not, as they thought, a holy Prophet, but a most wicked seducer. To a certain extent it is a sore disappointment to the Priests and Ancients that the Excommunication cannot have its full effect. Gladly indeed would they have used their ancient liberty and offered ample largess to any one who would bring to them Jesus of Nazareth, alive or dead. But the day of their theocracy is passed. They are the slaves of the Romans. There is no Judas Maccabeus living

now to assert their independence. On the north side of the Temple area, even on the sacred Mount Moriah, and almost within a stonethrow of the Holy of Holies, stand the impregnable towers of the fortress Antonia, the Roman stronghold, with its hated Roman name. There it stands, the inheritance left them by a creature of Rome, the alien usurper, Herod—Herod the Great, so called. The fortress Antonia controls the whole city; but most of all, every movement of the Priests and Levites in the Temple. They cannot stir hand or foot in their thralldom. And at this season, when Jews from all countries crowd into Jerusalem, Roman vigilance is doubled and trebled. On the other hand, there is this one great consolation for the malice of the Jewish Rulers, that the Roman law allows more ample room for their cruelty. They will not be limited to *forty stripes save one*. Neither will they be obliged to put the blasphemer to death by stoning, for the Romans crucify. And till now in the history of the world, no form of death has been found out more appalling than crucifixion. The Rulers have, therefore, selected for Jesus the Roman death by crucifixion.

#### STATION I.

*The day of the unleavened bread came* (St. Luke xxii. 7).

A. Listen to the trumpet sound, and hear with a heavy heart Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed excommunicated and an outlaw.

St. Ignatius, in his meditation on Hell, directs our special attention to the blasphemies there uttered against Jesus Christ our Lord.

We are permitted to approach Him in the holy tabernacle to console Him and say: "Thou art not excommunicate, dear Lord, nor *the outcast of the people* (Psalm xxi.). *Tu Rex gloriæ Christe; Tu Patris sempiternus es Filius*—Thou art the King of Glory; Thou art the Father's own Eternal Son. Besides Thee what have Thy blessed ones in Heaven? Besides Thee what need we desire on earth?" (Psalm lxxii.).

Let us not hasten away too soon; for gladly are we welcomed by our Blessed Saviour when we remember Him and come to console Him. Linger then still a little, to say with St. Bernard:

Nil canitur suavius,  
 Auditur nil jucundius,  
 Nil cogitatur dulcius,  
 Quam Jesus Dei Filius.

No music soothes the ear,  
 No voice so sweet to hear,  
 No day-dreams half so dear,  
 Jesus, as Thy loved Name.

B. We may also learn here to value at their true worth human judgments, the praise of men and their blame. Jesus of Nazareth is sentenced as a wicked outlaw by these miserable Rulers; but the voice of His Eternal Father proclaims aloud: *This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased* (St. Matt. xvii.). What wonder that they who love Christ loathe the praises of the world that excommunicates Jesus? *The sons of men are liars in the balances* (Psalm lxi.).

C. Moreover, how fatal for ourselves it is to judge and sentence others rashly, and then spread abroad our calumnious judgments! These most unhappy men excommunicate Jesus; but on whose head does the sentence light? On His, or on theirs? *For wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself* (Romans ii.).

D. Meanwhile, despite the trumpet warning and the excommunication, and the mandate renewed that *if any man knew where he was he should tell* (St. John xi.), our Lord is walking in the daylight, surrounded by His followers. For not yet is the night come in which *no man can work*. They do not lay hands on Him, for their eyes are held.

## SCENE II.

BETHANY.

STATION I.

*The day of the unleavened bread came* (St. Luke xxii. 7).

A. Every day of His thirty-three years in this valley of tears, our Blessed Lord may be supposed to have said as the morning came: *I have a Baptism wherewith I am to be baptised, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished* (St. Luke xii.). Therefore, according to the inspired pro-

verb, *Hope that is deferred* has been afflicting His Soul; and now *desire when it cometh is a tree of life* (Prov. xiii.). This is the day of the Azymes which His Blessed Soul *with desire hath desired*. To-day we may be sure that He is saying from the day-break: Father, *My Heart is ready, O God, My Heart is ready* (Psalm lvi.). *O God, My God, to Thee do I watch at the dawning* of this thrice blessed day (Psalm lxii.). *My Heart watcheth because of the voice of My Father in Heaven Who is knocking* (Cant. v.).

B. And surely we may assume that His heavy-laden Heart finds relief in communing a little while with His Blessed Mother in Bethany, and telling her *the good tidings of great joy*.

*Ave, gratia plena! Arise, make haste, My Holy Mother, for My hour is come. For winter is now past* (Cant. ii.).

Let us also say from our hearts: *Ave, gratia plena, Dominus tecum*. "The time is come, Blessed Mother, when thy Son and thy Lord shall be with thee in a new way—united with thee more closely than ever in the work of redemption." *Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus*.

C. Then, too, we may contemplate with what tenderness our Blessed Saviour looks for the last time on the holy home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus; and on the house, too, of Simon the Leper. St. John tells us two things: (1) that *Jesus loved Martha, and her sister Mary, and Lazarus*; and (2) that *having loved His own, He loved them to the end*. Therefore He is now more than usually manifesting His loving kindness in that blessed home at Bethany, where His eyes and His Heart have remained so long (2 Paral. vii.).

"Blessed Saints of Bethany, and all ye holy disciples of our Lord, pray for us, that we may know our Divine Master more intimately and love Him better."

D. Alas! close to this fire that is coming from His Sacred Heart is standing also the traitor, cold and lifeless. While the rest are drinking in hope and contrition and

love from the fountains of their Saviour (Isaias xii.), he is absorbed in his one meditation: *how he may conveniently betray Him.*

What a meditation! Each of us may say, "Under the eyes of the Blessed Mother, and my good Angel, and the holy saints, I, too, have in time past studied how I could betray my God *conveniently*; how I could sin against infinite goodness and not suffer for it; how I could sin and not be found out; sin and continue to prosper; sin and be able to say that blasphemous word which the Holy Spirit bids me never say: *I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me?* (Ecclus. v.). *O God, Thou knowest my foolishness; and my offences are not hidden from Thee*" (Psalm lxviii.).

#### STATION II.

*And he sent Peter and John, saying: Go and prepare the Pasch, that we may eat (v. 8).*

A. The mid-day is come, and Mary and Martha and Lazarus and Simon the Leper are allowed to give for the last time frugal hospitality to Jesus and His disciples. It is said that at this dinner Judas is placed between Jesus and His Blessed Mother, and that Holy Mary begs him to watch over her Divine Son, for she knows how His enemies are raging. What a contemplation!

When the repast is ended, as the Apostles and others are gathered about Him on the hillside, and the holy women are grouped perchance round our Blessed Lady, He reminds all that the first day of the Azymes (unleavened bread) is come; the day *when it was necessary that the Pasch should be killed* (St. Luke xxii.).

The disciples at once answer: *Whither wilt Thou that we go to prepare for Thee to eat the Pasch?* (St. Mark xiv.).

B. Judas perchance joins in the question, for he is on the alert. Hitherto he has been the managing man, and if employed on this commission, he may find his opportunity of

betraying *conveniently*. But the desire of the sinner, like the subtlety of the Pharisees, shall perish. For the Lord is *looking into the hearts of men, and into the most hidden parts* (Ecclus. xxiii.). Already the sentence gone out against Judas is beginning to have its fulfilment: *His bishopric, his Apostleship, his vocation, all his sacred offices and charges, let another take* (Acts i.). “O fallen disciple of Christ, *great as the sea is thy destruction* (Lament. ii.); *not a stone shall be left on a stone*: not a vestige of thy heavenly dignity.”

*Miserere nostri, Domine*—Have mercy on us, O Lord, and do not cast us away from Thy face.

C. Jesus has this time no trust, no commission for Judas. But for the great and sacred work to be done to-day, the *remembrance of* (all) *His wonderful works*, He selects the fitted ones; the disciple who loves Him, and the disciple whom He loves. He sent Peter and John, saying: *Go and prepare the Pasch, that we may eat*.

D. The disappointment ought to have been a grace to Judas. For it was when the prodigal could not get the husks of swine he craved for, that his thoughts at last turned homeward to his father. It was when Ignatius could not find a romance to read on his sick-bed at Loyola, that he was willing to read about Christ our Lord. Oh, that we would persevere for good as this fallen man perseveres in evil! For he only redoubles his earnestness to find out how to betray *conveniently*.

### STATION III.

*But they said: Where wilt Thou that we prepare?* (St. Luke xxii.).

A. How late it is to think of beginning preparations for the great Pasch! Clearly these are the preparations of poor men whose banquets can soon be got ready.

*Blessed are the poor!* “Draw us, O Lord, to Thy blessed poverty.”

B. It is precisely because they know that their Master

is quite poor, that they ask: *Where wilt Thou that we prepare?* The Law prescribed: *Let every man take a lamb by their families and houses* (Exodus xii.). Where is Thy house, dear Lord?

The Holy House at Nazareth has long ceased to be His home: and here in Judea, *the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head* (St. Matt. viii.).

The vengeance of the Rulers in Jerusalem has rendered it quite unsafe for any one there to harbour Jesus. When the blind man, restored to sight, dared to say a word in defence of Him, *they cast him out*. And this casting out meant at least the "Lesser Excommunication," which brought with it many severe sufferings.

C. Is it not a marvellous proof of the overruling care of Divine Providence that, notwithstanding the fierce storm raging in Jerusalem, there is such holy calm across Mount Olivet at Bethany? For the terrorism which paralyses the people in the city seems to have no effect at all upon the faithful disciples there, though only fifteen furlongs off.

"Your Father in Heaven takes care of the lilies, and of the birds of the air; and you, blessed Saints of Bethany, *are you not of much more value than they?*" (St. Matt. vi.).

D. The Apostles then have good reason to ask: *Where wilt Thou that we prepare?* Naturally they may expect that He will stay at Bethany and eat the Pasch where He is so welcome. But He has said: *Go and prepare the Pasch, that we may eat*. Possibly all who could do so were expected to keep the festival within the walls of the Holy City. Be this as it may, the Lord has said: *Go and prepare*: and the two commissioned are quite at a loss whither to go, for He is poor and homeless, and so are they.

E. We may pause a little while to contemplate the charitable poverty of Jesus. He was poor then, and remains quite poor still, in order that men may have continual opportunities of befriending Him, and that He

consequently may have abundant excuse for pouring out blessings on them through eternity. *Come, ye blessed, for I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat* (St. Matt. xxv.). When has it ever been heard that a Prince, the heir to the throne, lived in great poverty in order that he might, afterwards when King, largely reward those who were kind to him in his poverty?

“Blessed for ever, Lord Jesus, be Thy most loving poverty that is so *needy, yet enriching many*” (2 Cor. vi.).

#### STATION IV.

*And He said to them: Behold, as you go into the city there shall meet you a man carrying a pitcher of water: follow him into the house where he entereth in. And you shall say to the good man of the house: The Master saith to thee: My time is near at hand, with thee I make the Pasch. Where is the guest-chamber where I may eat the Pasch with My disciples?* (St. Luke xxii.; St. Matt. xxvi.).

A. Thrice happy they to whom our Lord can thus tell all His wants without any fear of a refusal! As He has sent His messengers to this favoured man to ask for the guest-room, so now when He has some good grace in store for us, He directs His poor to our door. They are His special messengers, sent to ask us to give Him an alms. For it is with Him a sacred rule, fixed and unalterable: *Give and it shall be given to you* (St. Luke vi.). Blessed are those who respond quickly and heartily, as this *good man of the house* does.

For we learn from tradition that the owner of the house was as overjoyed at the good news, as Zacheus had been last week at Jericho.

B. *And he will show you a large dining-room furnished; and there prepare ye for us* (St. Mark xiv.).

How happy that good man was through all the remainder of his life, how happy will he be through eternity, that he promptly gave what his God asked of him! Men con-

sider themselves most fortunate if their king or their master is obliged by an accident to ask a service of them.

“*Thou art, Lord Jesus, sweet and mild* (Psalm lxxxv.), *gracious and of much compassion* (Jonas iv.). Who makest Thyself perfectly poor in order that Thou mayest be obliged to beg from us.”

C. *A large dining-room furnished.* When He came on earth to be our companion and our model, He began life in a stable, and through life endured discomfort and poverty in order to win us to poverty and lowliness. But this night He is to begin His Eucharistic Life, and in this new existence His object is not so much to be the model of our outward life as to be our Emmanuel: that is, our God with us; our Sacrifice, our food, our support, our own beloved Jesus. And in this new and most strange existence He desires to be well treated, most generously treated by us. He is glad if we give Him the very best that we have. For here He can be rich without scandalising us. He can be rich and yet make us love poverty. He therefore arranges to begin His Eucharistic Life in a spacious and well-furnished chamber; and His grateful Heart will never forget it if we love the beauty of His house, and do our best to make His home on earth in every way suitable and becoming. Hence St. Thomas of Aquin’s teaching, which he derived from the spirit of Holy Church, that around the altar of the Blessed Sacrament, the beauty of the sanctuary, the splendour of the services, the sweetness and majesty of the sacred anthems should all show that the grateful hearts of the faithful wish to go as far as human skill can go, in order to do honour to the adorable Mysteries.

Quantum potes tantum aude,  
Quia major omni laude,  
Nec laudare sufficis.

Dare all thou canst through all thy  
days,  
And still seek new and worthier lays,  
For aye He soars beyond thy praise.

D. And if it is His wish to begin His Eucharistic Life in a large and well-furnished Guest-chamber, much more

does He desire in Holy Communion to find in our souls a guest-chamber very clean and seemly and well-adorned. For then will He be able to pour out blessings, as He did in the house of Zacheus, so that "our souls may be filled with grace and a pledge of future glory be given to us". If not hindered, He will surely say to us in that hour: *Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*

"*Who will give water to my head and a fountain of tears to my eyes? and I will weep day and night* (Jeremias ix. 1), because in the years gone by I have not prepared a worthy guest-chamber for my Lord in the hour of my visitation."

### SCENE III.

#### JERUSALEM. THE CŒNACULUM.

I. To reach Jerusalem more quickly, Peter and John would naturally choose the short, rough road over Mount Olivet; but when they arrived at Gethsemani they would be at a loss whether to make for a northern or a southern gate. As, therefore, our Blessed Saviour knew that the Cœnaculum, for the use of which He was begging, was situated at the south-western corner of the city, He no doubt directed His two Apostles to a southern gate, where the water-carrier would naturally be.

The site of the Cœnaculum is now outside the more modern walls raised after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Emperor Adrian. But at the time of this Pasch the Supper-room stood within the city; and from the Cœnaculum to the palace of the Priests, the distance was probably not more than about two hundred yards. No vestige remains at present of the room where the Last Supper was held. A church was built upon the spot by St. Helen, and afterwards destroyed by the Mahometans. Another church was erected on the site by the Crusaders, but that also has disappeared. The greater part of the ground formerly occupied by those Churches is now desecrated by a Turkish Mosque. A large upper chamber is still visited, and called the Cœnaculum. It is supposed to stand on the site of the Guest-room in which our Saviour celebrated the Pasch. It is about forty feet in length, and resembling somewhat a small nave and aisle, separated from one another by a row of pillars. This chamber is in the possession of the Mahometans, and used by them for some religious purposes. Christians are liable to meet with much rudeness there; and are always required to pay a good entrance-fee. In an inner room they are allowed to look through

a window at what is called the Tomb of David. This Tomb of David, so called, is for the Jewish population and for travellers not Catholics, the principal feature of the building, which is therefore known better as the Tomb of David than as the Cœnaculum. There seems, however, to be great reason to doubt whether any Tomb of David ever existed there. Under the upper Chamber now called the Cœnaculum, there is on the ground-floor a harem, where Mahometan widows and other women live.

In this most sacred spot, as in so many others, faithful hearts are saddened by the *abomination of desolation*, but we are allowed to hope that the other words of Daniel do not apply to this most sacred sanctuary: *And the desolation shall continue even to the consummation and to the end.* It is said that the Turkish Government never consent to make over to Christians any site where there has been a mosque for their own religion; but experience has proved that money has a wonderful power over the Sultans and their Ministers. If alms were abundant, many holy sites could still be rescued from desecration.

II. *And the disciples (Peter and John) did as our Lord appointed them, and they prepared the Pasch.*

The Law prescribed: *On the tenth day of the month let every man take a lamb by their families and houses. And you shall keep it till the fourteenth day of the month.* The lamb then ought to have been purchased on the Palm Sunday. Had the Apostles on that day made the purchase? Or may we assume that the good man who had the Guest-room prepared was also inspired to purchase the lamb on the day appointed and have it ready? It is said that his house was very large, and that he was in the habit of entertaining pilgrims who wished to celebrate the Pasch. One writer who collects from ancient sources states that the Guest-chamber had been prepared, by desire, for King Herod, but that the King had altered his plans, and did not use it.

III. Besides the immolation of the lamb, other rites were prescribed, and therefore there were other things to be provided.

*Thus shall you eat it.*

1. *You shall gird your reins;*
2. *And you shall have shoes on your feet,*
3. *Holding staves in your hands.*
4. *Moreover, they shall eat the flesh roasted at the fire,*
5. *And unleavened bread,*
6. *With wild lettuce.*

Some commentators think that many of these prescribed ceremonies had fallen into disuse. We are allowed, however, in contemplation to prefer the opinion of other learned interpreters who take for granted that all that had been prescribed was faithfully observed at this last and most solemn celebration of the ancient Pasch. The disciples commissioned would therefore see that the girdles, shoes, staves, and all else required, were in

readiness. The devout owner of the house had probably taken care to have all that was wanted.

IV. Again, some commentators are of opinion that all the lambs were slain by the Priests in the Temple, and then carried to the different houses. But others, and among them Father à Lapede, one of the most esteemed interpreters of the Holy Books, takes for granted that on this point the Paschal lamb was an exception to all other victims, and was immolated in each home by the head of the family. This seems more in accordance with the ordinance in Exodus xii.: *You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, and the whole multitude of the children of Israel shall sacrifice it in the evening.* The killing of the lamb would seem to be an important part of the sacrifice, and therefore included in what the *whole multitude of the children of Israel* were to do. Add to this, that it seems difficult to understand how the Priests could kill such a number of lambs as would be required for all the families in Jerusalem at a time when such multitudes of visitors were assembled there.

And if, moreover, the ceremony of sprinkling the blood was, as some of the best commentators think, still observed, this would add considerably to the difficulty, as the blood would have to be carried from the Temple to each house. There does not seem to be any reason why we may not in contemplation adopt the opinion of those who think that our Blessed Saviour was present when the lamb was slain.

One argument indeed against this view might be drawn from St. Mark's words: *And when evening was come, He cometh with the Twelve*

But these words clearly do not mean that He then arrived at Jerusalem, for two of the Twelve were already in Jerusalem. St. Mark's meaning probably is, that when the sunset was come He went with the Twelve into the large Guest-chamber. And so St. Matthew writes: *When it was evening He sat down with His twelve disciples.* St. Luke: *When the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him.* He may, therefore, have been earlier in Jerusalem, and witnessed the killing of the lamb.

## SCENE IV.

### THE HALL OR VESTIBULE OF THE CENACULUM.

#### STATION I.<sup>1</sup>

A. It is supposed by some that our Lord Himself drew the first blood of the Paschal lamb. If so, as they

<sup>1</sup> Before commencing contemplations on the Watches of the Sacred Passion, it may be very useful once more to read carefully St. Ignatius' method of contemplating the scenes of our Lord's Life and of His Passion, as explained in c. i., p. 9.

bring towards Him this lamb, a yearling without spot or blemish, *a meek lamb* (Jeremias xi.) that makes no resistance, because it knows not that men *had devised counsels against* it, and that it is about to be made a victim, our Blessed Saviour's tender Heart understands full well the pitiful ceremonial.

B. In years gone by, when at Nazareth He was explaining to His Blessed Mother in the Sacred Books *the things that were concerning Him*, her heart was no doubt throbbing within her as she listened to words like those of Jeremias: *And I was as a meek lamb that is carried to be a victim, and I knew not that they had devised counsels against Me, saying: Let us put wood on His bread,<sup>1</sup> and cut Him off from the land of the living, and let His name be remembered no more.*

And again the words of Isaias: *He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and shall be dumb as a lamb before his shearer, and shall not open His mouth* (c. liii.).

To His Sacred Heart, then, and to the heart of His Blessed Mother who, with the devout women, is about to celebrate the Pasch in another apartment, the lamb meek and without spot is a most vivid picture of what is coming. We must then, as St. Ignatius teaches, try in contemplation to read the thoughts of Jesus and of Holy Mary, and, if so disposed, speak to them in colloquies.

“O Lamb of God, meek and innocent, Who takest away the sins of the world, blot out those iniquities which blind me and harden my heart, and hinder me from realising that Thou art going to death because Thou hast *loved me and delivered* (Thyself) *up for me.*”

Eia Mater, fons amoris,  
Me sentire vim doloris  
Fac, ut tecum lugeam.

Loving Mother, hear my prayer,  
In thy grief give me a share,  
Make me mourn with thee.

<sup>1</sup> *Wood on His bread.* They sometimes mixed the pounded wood of the poisonous yew-tree with food when they wished to kill by poisoning.

## STATION II.

*And they shall take of the blood thereof, and put it on the side-posts and on the upper door-posts of the houses where-in they shall eat it (Exodus xii. 7).*

*And the blood shall be unto you for a sign in the houses where you shall be; and I shall see the blood and shall pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you (Exodus xii. 13).*

Let us watch the faithful observance of this prescribed ceremony; and, as we look upon the figure, think how the Heart of our Blessed Lord is thanking His Eternal Father for permitting Him to shed His Blood for us; and dwelling with exceeding consolation on the triumphs of His Sacred Blood in His future Church; how it will scare away the destroyer, and cleanse a multitude of sinful souls. *How much more will the Blood of Christ cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Hebrews ix.).*

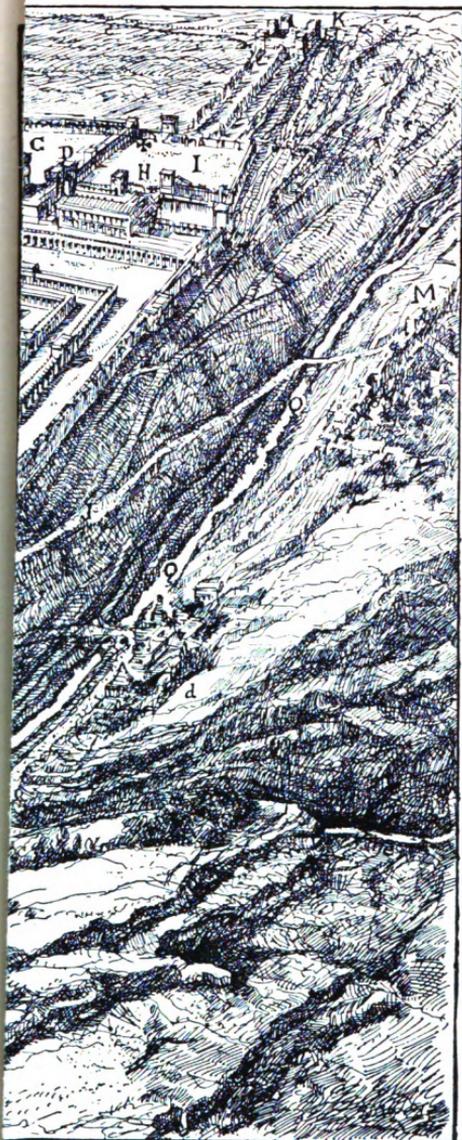
“Save Thy people, O Lord, whom Thou hast redeemed by Thy Precious Blood.”

## STATION III.

*And they shall eat the flesh that night roasted at the fire (v. 8).*

A. Contemplate our Lord as He looks on attentively while the lamb is being flayed and roasted. For He has vividly before His mind what is to be done to Him on the morrow, when His woollen garment, which His Mother wove for Him, shall be dragged out of His wounds, and His Body shall be like the roasted flesh of the lamb, *from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head, wounds, and bruises and swelling sores (Isaias i.):* and all this because *He loved me and delivered Himself up for me (Galat. ii. 20).*

“*Sancta Mater, istud agas, crucifixi fige plagas, cordi meo valide*—Do this for me, Holy Mother, fix the wounds of Thy Crucified Son firmly in my heart.”



- A. CALVARY.
- B. HOLY SEPULCHRE.
- C. JUDGEMENT GATE.
- D. "ECCE HOMO" ARCH.
- E. VIA CRUCIS.
- F. ROMAN FORUM.
- G. TOWER OF ANTONIA.
- H. PRÆTORIUM OF PILATE.
- I. GABATHA.
- J. ROAD OF THE CAPTIVITY.
- K. HOUSE OF HEROD ANTIPAS.
- L. THE TEMPLE.
- M. GETHSEMANI.
- N. OPHEL.
- O. TYROPEAN VALLEY.
- P. POOL OF SILOAM.
- Q. BROOK OF CEDRON.
- R. VALLEY OF HINNON.
- S. HOUSE OF CAIPHAS.
- T. HOUSE OF ANNAS.
- U. CENACULUM.
- V. SION.
- W. PALACE OF HEROD THE GREAT.
- X. POOL OF EZECHIAS.
- Y. FILIA SION.
- Z. ĀCRA.
- a. GAREB.
- b. VALLEY OF GIHON.
- c. ROAD TO JOPPA.
- d. SLOPES OF OLIVET.
- e. ROAD TO BETHANY AND JERICHO.
- + COLUMN OF THE FLAGELLATION.



## PART II.

## THE WATCHES OF THE SACRED PASSION.

## CHAPTER I.

## THE FIRST NIGHT WATCH, FROM SIX TILL NINE P.M.

## SCENE I.

## THE GUEST ROOM. THE PASCH.

## STATION I.

*When it was evening He sat down with His twelve disciples*  
(St. Matt. xxvi. 20).

*He sat down and the twelve Apostles with Him* (St. Luke  
xxii. 14).

We may take it for granted that none but the Twelve were present with our Lord at the Last Supper. Our Blessed Lady and the devout women were, no doubt, in some other chamber under the same roof, and it is said that the seventy-two disciples, the future helpmates of the Apostles, were elsewhere in the building, eating the Pasch. But the text of the Evangelists seems to make it clear that none but the chosen Twelve were at table with Jesus. He had words to say to them that were not for others. He wished to prepare them with special care for their holy ordination to the priesthood of the New Covenant, and to make His last effort to win back the traitor Judas.

*When it was evening.*

The sun had set, and with the setting began the feast of the Passover; and within the four Watches of the night and the four Watches of the next day, the Passion of our Lord, His Death and His Burial, are to be completed, and all is to be *consummated*. "*Ordinatione tua perseverat dies*" (Psalm cxviii.). *By Thy ordinance, O God, this night and this day shall go on. Through these night watches, and from the rising of the sun to its going down, praiseworthy is the Name of the Lord* (Psalm cxii.).

*He sat down.*

The Latin word *discubuit* would imply literally that He reclined on a couch; but in this instance it may fairly be understood to mean that He and His Apostles took their places. Ordinarily, those at table reclined or sat; and the word is retained here, though they did not recline or sit during the Paschal supper, but eat standing. In consequence of the use of this word, some commentators have thought that the custom of standing had become obsolete. They go so far as to say that the ceremonies revealed to Moses were only for the first Pasch in Egypt, but this opinion cannot well be reconciled with Exodus xii. 24, 25: *Thou shalt keep this thing for a law for thee and thy children for ever. And when you have entered into the land which the Lord will give you, as He has promised, you shall observe these ceremonies. And when your children shall say to you, What is the meaning of this service? you shall say to them, It is the victim of the passage of the Lord.*

Just as the Holy Mass, then, is to show forth the Death of the Lord till He come (1 Cor. xi.), so the Pasch was to be a scenic observance that would bring to mind the night when the Lord struck the Egyptians and delivered His people. We may therefore assume that our Lord and His Apostles faithfully observed all the rites prescribed in Exodus xii. It is not indeed there mentioned explicitly that they were to stand, but this seems to be implied in some of the other ceremonies enjoined which we shall contemplate.

## STATION II.

*Thus you shall eat it: you shall gird your reins, and you shall have shoes on your feet, holding staves in your hands, and you shall eat in haste.—And they shall eat the flesh that night roasted at the fire, and unleavened bread with wild lettuce.—You shall eat the head with the feet and entrails thereof. Neither shall there remain anything of it till morning (Exodus xii.).*

After making the usual preparatory prayer, and, in the first prelude, recalling shortly the portion of the story we have selected for our contemplation, in the second prelude we picture, as well as we can, the scene, the special table prepared in the large Guest-chamber for the eating of the Pasch; our Blessed Lord and the Twelve standing round in the prescribed pilgrim's dress, and with staves in their hands; on the table the roasted lamb, the unleavened bread, the wine, and the wine-cups; the dish of bitter herbs.

Then we are permitted to place ourselves in spirit at a little distance, and to watch and to listen.

But before we begin, we lift our hearts in the third prelude, and beg the grace we desire, which is to know our Lord better, to love Him more, and to follow Him faithfully; but, in contemplations on the Passion, also and specially, that we may have some feeling and confusion because our Lord is dying, or going to His bitter Death, for us.

After this we contemplate, sometimes looking at the Persons, sometimes listening to words, sometimes watching actions—whichever we think likely to suit us best; and afterwards reflecting on ourselves we try to gain some fruit. Or, if we think well, we can dwell rather on one of the other three additional topics or points suggested by St. Ignatius: (1) How much our Blessed Saviour is suffering or going to suffer; (2) how easily He could put an end to His suffering, but will not; (3) how He is suffering all for my sins. What, then, must I do?

A. First, then, we will notice the prescribed pilgrim's dress in its details.

In Egypt this dress prescribed to the Israelites—the shoes, the staves, and the rest—denoted that they were to be ready for an immediate journey. The Egyptians, when they became aware of the destruction of their first-born—*for there was not a house in which there lay not one dead*—pressed for their immediate departure. *Pharao arose in the night and all his servants, and all Egypt.—And Pharao calling Moses and Aaron in the night, said, Arise, and go forth.—And the Egyptians pressed the people to go forth.—And they baked the meal.—And they made earth-cakes unleavened, for it could not be leavened, the Egyptians pressing them to depart, and not suffering them to make any stay. Neither did they think of preparing any meat (Exodus xii.).*

While contemplating our Lord and His Apostles in their dress of travellers, we will be careful to reflect on ourselves and gather some good fruit.

*And Pharao in the night said: Arise, and go forth!*

And first it will be a holy and wholesome thought to keep in mind that we too are pilgrims and travellers. In the middle of the night there arose a great cry in Egypt, and the Egyptians bade the Israelites depart. So now also, in the middle of the night, we shall on a sudden hear the cry, *Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet Him*

(St. Matt. xxv.). "Go forth, Christian soul." And after the summons we shall not be allowed to tarry any more, or to loiter. In that same hour it will be whispered at our bedside, "He is dead." "He is gone." "His place here is empty." Who is his heir? who succeeds? *For we have not here an abiding city* (Hebrews xiii.).

B. God, our Father, Who has His own home ready for us, has no pleasure in seeing us contented here with the husks of swine, at rest as if this valley of tears were our Heaven, and quite unwilling to go to Him when the summons comes.

It is the Holy Ghost Who dictated those words: *O death! how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions, to a man that is at rest, and whose ways are prosperous in all things, and is yet able to take meat* (Ecclus. xli.). Therefore our loving Father often multiplies sorrows here to wean us from the good things of this earth, and make us willing to go at once when He calls us away. For, He knows how true the word is that follows: *O death, thy sentence is welcome to the man that is in need, and whose strength faileth; who is in a decrepid age, and in care about all things.*

Our loving Lord urges us to be faithful servants, with our "lamps in our hands," ready in the middle of the night to open when our Master knocks. How easy it is to become one of those who may say with truth, *My soul hath cleaved to the pavement* (Psalm cxviii.) of this poor world; their motto is ever: *Come, let us enjoy the good things that are present* (Wisdom ii.). A Christian ought, like holy Simeon, to be living in the world to come, *expecting the consolation of Israel* (St. Luke ii.).

C. *You shall have shoes on your feet.*

Shoes were, moreover, emblematic of liberty; slaves went barefoot. When the prodigal came home, one part of the good father's order to his servants is, *Put shoes on his feet.* Remember the heavenly liberty *wherewith Christ has made us free.* *We are not the children of the bonds-*

woman, but of the free. And because you are sons, God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, *Abba, Father* (Galat. iv.).

We must learn to say from our inmost heart: *Our Father.*

D. *You shall gird your loins.*

When the Ancients loosened the girdle, and let their robes flow, it was to enjoy rest and pleasure. The loins girt mean self-control, readiness for labour, chastity, and a renunciation of dangerous ease and pleasure.

“*Attendite.*” *Look and do according to the pattern that was shown thee* (Exodus xxv.).

E. *Unleavened bread. Seven days there shall not be found leaven in your houses. He that shall eat leavened bread, his soul shall perish out of the land.*

Leavened bread was more palatable, and required more time for its preparation. Unleavened bread could be made quickly, and was penitential food. It reminded the Israelites of their dark days of slavery from which the mercy of God had delivered them. *Seven days thou shalt eat without leaven the bread of affliction, because thou camest out of Egypt in fear* (Deut. xvi.). If those who indulged in the luxury of leavened bread were to perish out of the land, surely we, who are disciples of Jesus Christ crucified, must not be the men condemned by St. Paul, *lovers of pleasures more than God* (2 Timothy iii.); men who treat with contempt prescribed laws of fasting and abstinence; men who, greedy to excess, devote their time and thought and industry and the money which ought to go to the poor, to the procuring of luxuries, and to “*feasting sumptuously every day*”.

Catholics are sometimes tempted to vie with the luxury of their rich and worldly neighbours who form the good society (so it is called) of the great metropolis of this vast Protestant Empire built upon the ruins of the old Catholic Church in this country. We must not, however, forget the vision of St. John, wherein he foresaw the fate of every Babylon that was to come: *I heard another voice from Heaven saying, Go out from her, my people, that you be*

not partakers of her sins, and that you receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto Heaven, and the Lord hath remembered her iniquities. As much as she hath glorified herself and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give ye to her (Apoc. xviii. 4).

F. *With wild lettuces.* (According to the Hebrew—bitter herbs.)

The Pasch is a joyful solemnity, and a triumph, but mingled with sad remembrances of Egyptian bondage, and also of the tribulation through which the people of Israel passed before they reached the land of promise. This is still more God's dispensation for the Christian Church. We have to remember, even more than old Tobias, the Prophet's words: *Your festival-days shall be turned into lamentation and mourning* (Amos viii.). For St. Paul's sentence must come true, *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution* (2 Timothy iii.). The Christian martyr has joy set before him as his Master had, but he must reach the eternal joy through many tribulations. He must climb up *the mountain of the Lord* to his eternal home, carrying his cross all the way. In Heaven all is joy; in Hell there is no joy, no love, no hope; *all weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth*. Here, on earth, on this battlefield placed midway between Heaven and Hell, the joyful songs of Sion and the wailing and the weeping of Hell are found commingled. *Laughter shall be mingled with sorrow, and mourning taketh hold of the end of joy* (Prov. xiv.).

The *Gloria in excelsis* of the angels was quickly followed by the wail of the bereaved mothers of Bethlehem *who would not be comforted* (St. Matt. ii.), because their infants were no more. Sorrow is to be tempered by joy, and joy by sorrow. The Christian is to give to God many painful sacrifices, but all the while to be rejoicing: *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say rejoice* (Philip. iv.). *For God loves a cheerful giver* (2 Cor. ix.). So writes St. Paul, and he was, by God's great grace, able to practise himself what he preached: *I am filled with comfort; I exceedingly*

*abound with joy in all our tribulation* (2 Cor. vii.). The magistrates, rending off their clothes, commanded them (Paul and Silas) to be beaten with rods. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the gaoler to keep them diligently; who having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas, praying, praised God; and they that were in prison heard them (Acts xvi.). Sorrow then with joy, and joy with sorrow! Bitter herbs and Paschal jubilee!

G. *And you shall eat in haste.*

Not with the haste of the greedy; but with the haste of travellers hurrying away from slavery into freedom. Haste that comes from passion our Lord does not commend, but there are at times good reasons for haste.

1. St. James writes: *Let every man be swift to hear, but slow to speak and slow to anger* (c. i.). For there is often great humility and charity in listening, whereas pride and impatience urge us to speak.

2. So too in Ecclesiasticus the Holy Ghost gives this counsel: *In all thy works be quick, and no infirmity shall come to thee* (Ecclus. xxxi.). This quickness is a conquest over that sloth, sluggishness, selfish laziness, which puts off, and dallies, and does work slowly, and with no diligence. The biographers of Henry IV. of France tell us that he spent less time in sleep than his enemy, the Duc de Guise, gave to his meals.

3. Our Lady, again, went *with haste to the hill country* (St. Luke i.), because she was going on an errand of humble charity.

4. In like manner the proverb tells us that we double a gift by giving it quickly. *Towards the poor be thou more hearty, and delay not to show him mercy* (Ecclus. xxix.).

5. Again, as selfishness and sensuality incline us to a prolonged and leisurely and comfortable enjoyment of pleasures or amusements; so our Lord, on the contrary, does not like to see us thus having *peace in our possessions*.

He prefers holy haste. When, therefore, Gideon was leading his army to battle, the Lord said to him: *The people are still too many; bring them to the waters, and there I will try them.* At the stream three hundred men *lapped water, casting it with the hand to their mouth.* These were chosen to fight the battle of the Lord. *The rest of the multitude had drunk kneeling*—that is, more leisurely, and at their ease. They were sent home (Judges vii.).

6. As in time of war, so in time of great sorrow men cannot be leisurely over amusements and banquets. Hence Ezechiel writes: *The word of the Lord came to me, saying: Son of man, eat thy bread in trouble, and drink thy water in hurry and sorrow* (c. xii.).

As, then, Christians are both soldiers and mourners, and as, moreover, our time for finishing our work here is short, St. Paul wishes us not to dally with the things of this world, not to waste time in nursing joys or sorrows that are merely of this earth. *This therefore I say, brethren, the time is short; it remaineth that they that weep be as though they wept not, and they that rejoice as if they rejoiced not; and they that buy as though they possessed not. And they that use this world as if they used it not, for the fashion of this world passeth away* (1 Cor. vii.).

H. *You shall eat the head with the feet and entrails thereof. Neither shall there remain anything of it till morning. Neither shall a bone thereof be broken* (Exodus xii.).

All these injunctions denote haste. Nothing is to be kept for to-morrow; for there is not to be a to-morrow in Egypt for the people of God. Neither is there time to break the bones in order to suck out the marrow; nor time to clear out the brains and "entrails thereof".

To the Beloved Disciple, St. John, it was revealed, and through him to us, that some of these ceremonies were prescribed with a view to the Pasch that was to come. *For Christ our Pasch is sacrificed* (1 Cor. v.). The words, *Neither shall they break a bone of it*, he tells us, are a prophetic forbiddance to the Jews to break the legs of our Lord when they broke the bones of the other two crucified with Him.

## PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION.

I. While contemplating these ceremonial rubrics of the ancient Pasch, we may find many useful suggestions how to prepare ourselves for the Blessed Eucharist, which is our Most Holy Pasch. Our anxiety then, when we are about to partake of the Heavenly Banquet, shall not be only to procure some sensible consolation and devotional feelings, but that we may grow in grace. And so, before Holy Communion, and also after :

1. *You shall gird your reins.*

We may not be *discincti*—that is, without the girdle of restraint and self-control and guard over our senses—but with our loins girt, chaste and continent, and able to deny self. Isaias says of our Lord (c. xi.): *Justice shall be the girdle of His loins, and faith the girdle of His reins.* And St. Paul writes to us: *Stand therefore having your loins girt about with truth* (Ephes. vi.). For any one of these three virtues—that is, a habit of justice to God and man, or a strong and lively faith, or a great love for God's truth—will act as a girdle of restraint for our corrupt nature.

2. *You shall have shoes on your feet* ; ready for a journey, ready for death, if God calls ; ready, as the good soldier or servant is. If He says go, we go ; if He says come, we come.

*Shoes on your feet.* St. Paul says: *Having your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace* (Ephes. vi.). That is to say, we are not to be satisfied with some passing emotions or affections, but we must have our souls so well prepared by careful meditation on the Gospel of peace, that now our feet are well shod, and we can walk safely, without taking harm from thorns or brambles, or from *the stone of stumbling or rock of scandal* (1 St. Peter ii.) which may come in our way. A sharp word, therefore, is not now to wound our souls so that sinful resentment shall set in. Neither are we, through human respect, to give ear to detractors, or those who speak of things not to be named among the holy (Ephes. v.).

3. *Unleavened bread.* *There shall be no leaven in your houses.* For the more we satisfy our appetites with the good things of this world—such as dainty food, the theatre, the novel, the news of the day—the less relish we have for the Body of our Lord.

Again, *unleavened bread, the bread of affliction.* For holy contrition penitential exercises and devout mourning are a preparation most pleasing to our Lord. *A contrite and humbled heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise* (Psalm l.).

4. *Bitter herbs.* For our prayer must be, *Passio Christi, conforta me.* In Holy Communion “the memory of His Passion is renewed”. An excessive craving then for sensible sweetness is surely somewhat unseasonable. Our humble prayer must be for courage to do acts of penance and self-denial.

5. *You shall eat in haste.* The blessed saints, in their well-prepared Holy Communions, obtained grace to make haste to enter into their eternal rest, and to use the things of this world quickly, as if they used them not; as means to their great end, but not as the home and the repose of their hearts.

J. Besides attending to the pilgrim’s dress and the other rubrics of the Paschal supper, we will fix our eyes also on the reverence of our Blessed Saviour. For, whether He eats or drinks, or whatever else He does, according to the prescribed rites, He does all for the glory of His Father.

K. We observe also how virtue goes out from Him to His Apostles; how by looking on Him, and listening to Him, they have learned to become like to Him. With much devotion, therefore, and fervour, they unite with their Divine Master in the prescribed psalms and hymns.

L. Thanks to the charity of our Blessed Saviour, we too can always join our poor prayer to His. For He has made Himself our companion and our helpmate. He bears the yoke with each of us. When we pray He prays with us,

when we suffer He too suffers, and adds worth and holiness to our weak efforts. It is this that makes His *yoke sweet* and His *burden light*.

M. And we may also try to read the thoughts of our Blessed Saviour as He gives to each a portion of the Paschal lamb. For well He knows what He is about to do this night. Not a small morsel, but the Lamb of God, whole and entire, is to be the food of each Apostle, and of every man that is willing to come to the Heavenly Banquet.

Non confractus, non divisus,  
Integer accipitur.

There is no breakage, no dividing,  
Whole He comes to every one.

*I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven.*

“O Sacred Banquet, in which Christ is received, and the memory of His Passion is renewed.”

### STATION III.

*And He said to them: With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer. For I say to you, that from this time I will not eat it till it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God (St. Luke xxii. 15, 16).*

*A. With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you.*

“O vos omnes, attendite.” For He Whose name shall be called *Wonderful, Counsellor, God the mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace*, tells us His secret, that His Heart has been longing through life to eat this Pasch with these poor Galileans. Wise men of the world would shrug their shoulders and say there is no use in discussing or analysing tastes and caprice.

“O Mother of Mercy, our Advocate, turn thine eyes of mercy towards us, and show us the meek and humble and condescending Heart of thy Son, *Whose delights were to be with the children of men* (Prov. viii.), and *Whose conversation is with the simple*” (Prov. iii.).

*B. I have desired to eat the Pasch with you before I suffer.*  
When death is so near, and such a death, many men

would like to be alone, or to be with one or two who can sympathise ; who will think of nothing and talk of nothing but the coming agony. But Jesus is thinking only of His disciples. It is for their sakes that He desires to eat the Pasch with them before He suffers.

Fac cor amans Jesu mei,

Fac ut nos amemus Te.

C. *Before I suffer.* Is it not strange that no one among the Twelve fastens on this word and questions Him earnestly, "Are you really going to suffer, dear Lord?" As has so often happened before, they do not understand His word. Their eyes were sometimes held, and did not see; so now their ears also are held, and do not hear. Alas! how many and how many of our Lord's words have been much more wasted on me!

"Incline, O Lord, our ears to hear, and our hearts to compassionate Thee Who art going to suffer for our sins."

D. We may ask why our Saviour has so strongly desired to eat this Pasch?

We know, in part at least, the answer.

1. Before this Pasch is over, He will have shed His Blood, and redeemed the world. *I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptised, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?* (St. Luke xii.).

2. This Pasch, therefore, brings to an end all the poor types and figures and shadows—*Umbram fugat veritas, noctem lux eliminat.* This is the last of the shadowy and phantom Paschs. The reality begins to-night. *For I say to you that from this time I will not eat it till it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of Heaven.*

At this Pasch He will at last be able to give to His Most Blessed Mother and to His Church His own Body and His own Blood as their food.

3. Some of His other words also throw light on this one. He said: *I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I but that it be kindled?* (St. Luke xii.). By the hour of evening sacrifice to-morrow, Calvary will have

become a centre of light and fire brighter and warmer than the sun. *And there is no one that can hide himself from that heat and that light* (Psalm xviii.).

*E. Before I suffer.*

Yet pause a little while to consider this wonder. Here is a Man, a true Man born of a woman, Who has through life been desirous for this Pasch to come, because with this Pasch comes suffering and shame and torment and death. The whole world, wise and foolish, young and old, rich and poor, are toiling and studying and spending in order to escape suffering. Here is one who desires it much more than all men abhor it. Has He not a right to say: *Behold I make all things new?* (Apoc. xxi.).

F. And what is still more strange, He has the secret of enabling His followers also to desire and long for suffering. "O cross," St. Andrew cried, as he fell on his knees in sight of the terrible torment prepared for him, "O cross! so long desired, so earnestly loved, sought for unremittingly, and at last here ready for my longing heart, take me away from men, and restore me to my Master."

This is the heavenly change that the Passion and Death of Christ can work in our poor weak nature. *Passio Christi, conforta me.*

STATION IV.

*And having taken the chalice, He gave thanks and said: Take and divide it among you. For I say to you, that I will not drink of the fruit of the vine till the Kingdom of God come* (St. Luke xxii.); *till that day when I shall drink it with you new in the Kingdom of My Father* (St. Matt. xxvi.).

From St. Matthew's Gospel and St. Mark's, we should be inclined to think that our Lord said these words after instituting the Blessed Eucharist. They make no mention of any other passing round of the chalice, except when the Consecration takes place. But in St. Luke's Gospel it is clear that the chalice, or wine-cup, is handed round at least once before the celebration of the Sacred Mysteries. Some writers gather from other sources that the wine-cup went round twice during the eating of the Pasch.

Our Blessed Saviour, therefore, now gives thanks, and blesses the cup and says to His disciples: *Take and divide it among you.*

A. *Having taken the chalice He gave thanks.*

Let us draw near and watch and listen, that virtue may come out from Him to us. Here, then, we are taught to give thanks; always and everywhere to give thanks to our Father in Heaven, in union with His beloved Son. "*Our Father, hallowed be Thy name. May we bless and thank Thee for being a true, a good, a most loving Father to us.*"

B. *I will not drink of the fruit of the vine till that day when I shall drink it with you new in the Kingdom of My Father.*

Is our Lord here speaking of the day of Eternity when His Apostles will sit down with Him in the Home of His Father at the Supper of the Lamb? Some commentators so interpret.

But, as St. Luke places these words not after the Consecration of the Blessed Eucharist, but before, may not the meaning be: "I never more will taste the fruit of the vine, till by consecration it is made new in the Holy Sacrament which I this day institute for My Church"? St. Luke's text admits of this interpretation; and this sense would correspond with those other words which we have seen in his Gospel: *From this time I will not eat it (the Pasch) till it be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.* Our Blessed Lord did doubtless that night receive with His Apostles the Holy Communion under both kinds, and then the Kingdom of God was come, and the Pasch was fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. St. Matthew's text need not exclude this meaning—although he places the words after the Consecration—if we bear in mind, what commentators often inculcate, that he frequently departs from the chronological order.

If this interpretation be admitted, the abstinence of our Lord teaches us to earn, by abstaining from the good things of this world, such as meat and drink and romances and

theatres, an ardent thirst for the heavenly wine of Christ's Kingdom.

“ Blood of Christ, inebriate me.”

The holy disciples of our Lord have been in all ages inebriated and filled with a heavenly foolishness by partaking of the Most Blessed Sacrament. Intoxicated by the love of Christ Jesus, they could laugh at earthly pleasures and pains, and had strength to conquer all the wisdom and all the might and all the cruelty of tyrants.

*C. I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine.*

We may dwell a little longer on the abstinence of our Blessed Saviour. We have seen how hungry and how exhausted He has been during these latter days ; how great His labour was, how long His watchings, and how scant His refreshment. When sitting weary by Jacob's Well, He asked the Samaritan woman to give Him to drink, but we do not read that He then either drank or eat. *I have a food, He said, which you know not ; My food is to do the will of Him that sent Me* (St. John iv.). When men are much intent on some pursuit, they can forget food. Our Blessed Saviour night and day is hungering and thirsting that His Father's will may be done, and that His Father's beloved children may be saved.

“ *Fac cor amans Jesu mei* : Do this for us, loving Heart of Jesus, do this for us ; by Thy bitter Passion obtain for us to love Thee ardently, to hunger and thirst for Thee, that so we may not have our peace in the things of this earth.”

*D. I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine.*

Let us pause still a while to ponder on these words : for one part of our Lord's meaning certainly is : “ This is My last and farewell supper with you. The meat and drink of this world I have now done with.”

We can make a reflection on ourselves. For our Master might go on to say to each of us : *Yesterday for Me, to-day for thee* (Ecclus. xxxviii.). The hour is nigh when you, too, shall say : “ For the last time I have taken

my place at the family-table. For the last time I have had my chair by the fireside. For the last time I have looked on the green trees and the sea beyond. For the last time I have bought and sold. For the last time I am making my confession, and about to receive absolution. For the last time I am going to receive Holy Communion. This is my last Viaticum. My coffin and my shroud will soon be in this room, and men will dig my grave. In that hour, how shall I rate and value things of this earth? its pleasures and its pains? kindness and hard words? money and poverty?"

#### STATION V.

*Neither shall there remain anything of it until morning. If there be anything left, you shall burn it with fire* (Exodus xii. 10).

A. The ancient Paschal supper is now concluded, and, according to prescribed rule, whatever is over is consumed by fire; nothing is allowed to remain lying about to be desecrated by profane uses. So, too, on a former occasion, when our Blessed Saviour was exhibiting another prophetic picture of the Blessed Eucharist in the multiplied loaves, He said to His disciples: *Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost* (St. John vi.). As He spoke, His Heart was mindful how the Holy Spirit would teach His Bride, the Church, to gather up with great care and preserve in sacred vessels of gold and silver all the fragments of the Divine Banquet. What wonder that she lets no particle of the Good Gift escape her! (Ecclus. xiv.).

Is there not great force in the argument put forward by our great Cardinal Newman lately taken from us, against the validity of Anglican Orders, that if the Anglican clergy had been priests who could really consecrate at the altar, the providence of God would never have allowed all that profanation of the fragments which so long prevailed in those cold and desecrated churches from which all life had departed?

Let us pray earnestly that all true priests may greatly reverence the Adorable Mysteries; and that all outside

the Holy Church in this country may begin to desire earnestly the grace of receiving the real Bread from Heaven.

## SCENE II.

### THE USUAL FAMILY SUPPER.

*When the hour was come He sat down and the twelve Apostles with Him (St. Luke xxii. 14).*

The celebration of the Pasch was followed by the ordinary supper. After, therefore, devoutly reciting the prescribed prayers and psalms which concluded the legal ceremony, the Lord and His Apostles doubtless left the special table prepared for the Pasch; and putting off, perhaps, the pilgrim's dress, took their places at the other tables which were ready for them in the large and well-furnished Guest-room.

I. Were they all at one table, or distributed at several small ones? Some Biblical students place them all at one table; and it is further stated in certain commentaries that the table was shaped like a horse-shoe. Other learned writers deduce from the Latin word *Triclinium*, that in those days the guest-chambers were furnished with many small tables, at each of which there was couch room for three guests (hence the name, *Triclinium*—a refectory furnished with tables, at each of which three might recline). If this was the arrangement, those authors are perhaps correct who at the same table with our Lord place St. John and Judas Iscariot. They place Judas there, because it is clear that he was so near that our Saviour could reach him the morsel, and also speak words to him which the others were not to hear. Another reason might be that evidently it was our Lord's wish during the supper to endeavour to soften the heart of this Apostle by marks of kindness.

With regard to St. John there is no room for uncertainty. He was close to Jesus. Against this supposition, however, that there were several small tables with three at each, might be adduced, and with much force, the words in St. Luke's Gospel (xxii. 2).: *The hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table.* If the tables were so small, these words would have revealed to all who was the traitor.

II. Did they *sit* at the supper as we commonly see them painted, or were they *reclining* on couches?

It seems clear that the Eastern usage was not always uniform; that men sometimes sat at their meal, as we do, and sometimes reclined. Thus, in Genesis we read that when Joseph entertained his brethren: *They sat before him, the first-born according to his birthright, and the youngest according to his age* (c. xliii.). Queen Esther, on the contrary, reclined on a couch (vii.). In the time of our Blessed Saviour also, it seems clear from the account of the entertainment in the

house of Simon the Pharisee (St. Luke vii.), that the guests were reclining. For St. Magdalen, we are told, was *standing behind at His feet*; and these words are intelligible if we suppose our Lord to be reclining on a couch, with His Head near the table and His feet away from it. In this position the guests leaned on one arm and fed themselves with the other. If the tables were semicircular, St. John might easily be so situated as to recline his head on the breast of his Divine Master.

St. Peter, as we know, was so placed that he was able to catch the eye of St. John.

After the usual Preparatory Prayer and Preludes, we begin to contemplate persons, words, and actions, using too the other three points suggested by St. Ignatius for the Passion; and begging also in the third Prelude for the special grace which we seek for in the Contemplation on the Passion. (See Introduction, Part II.)

## STATION I.

### THE ORDINARY SUPPER.

#### SACRED HOSPITALITY.

*He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him (v. 14).*

A. Were we present, we should certainly notice the charitable hospitality with which the good man of the house provides everything generously for *the Master* and His poor companions. Happy man to be so privileged! Nothing that he does shall be forgotten. As the Angel was writing on the wall at Baltassar's banquet, so now, recording angels register every detail, even *a cup of cold water* (St. Matt. x.). But what need of the ministry of holy angels when our Blessed Saviour is there Himself with His ever-grateful Heart, the same to-day as yesterday, the same as when at Bethany He said of Magdalen: *Wherever this Gospel shall be preached, in the whole world, that also which she hath done shall be told for a memory of her?* (St. Matt. xxvi.). *In Thy book, Lord Jesus, in Thy Heart, all shall be written* (Psalm cxxxviii.); never to be blotted out; never to be forgotten throughout endless eternity.

*Sursum corda.* Let us lift up our hearts in great gladness; for, thanks to that boundless love which compels our Saviour to identify Himself with each of us, we can all give Him hospitality, even as this good man

did, by providing for His little ones. Most difficult it is for us who are selfish to believe those wonderful words, *Whosoever you did it to the least of My brethren, you did it to Me* (St. Matt. xxv.). But *I do believe, O Lord, help Thou my unbelief* (St. Mark ix.).

B. May we not here rouse ourselves to adopt heartily St. Peter's counsel: *Before all things have a constant mutual charity among yourselves: using hospitality one towards another without murmuring?* (1 St. Peter iv.).

*Using hospitality.*—And we must keep in mind the true idea of sacred hospitality that our Lord has given us. *When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor thy neighbours who are rich: lest perhaps they also invite thee again, and a recompense be made to thee. But when thou makest a feast call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind: and thou shalt be blessed, because they have not wherewith to make thee recompense; for recompense shall be made thee at the resurrection of the just* (St. Luke xiv.).

C. But are we then never to have a place at our tables for our friends and kinsmen? We need not be so stern. For our Blessed Saviour seems to be only afraid of kinsmen and neighbours *who are rich*, and will reward us by inviting us in return. He is a jealous God, Who desires much not only to have the delight of rewarding us Himself, but to be Himself our reward. *Fear not, Abraham, I am thy Protector and thy Reward exceeding great* (Genesis xv.). *Father, I will that where I am they also may be* (St. John xvii.). Therefore is He in dread of rich friends and kinsmen who can reward us on this earth, and thus rob Him of the privilege He clings to so fondly. If friends and kinsmen are in need of kindness from us, to invite them may be real hospitality. And if we invite friends and kinsmen in order to keep alive charity and strengthen family ties, for this He can bless us and reward us. But if we invite *merely* in order to be invited again, this must not be called by the sacred name of hospitality.

D. Old Tobias was hospitable. *There was a festival of the Lord, and a good dinner was prepared in Tobias' house. He said to his son, Go and bring some of our tribe that fear God to feast with us* (c. ii.). What a wise instruction! For such invitations sent to those who fear God, because they fear God, entitle us to the rewards due to the holy who fear God. Human justice, human gratitude, human wisdom, would perhaps scoff at such a compact as this; but our Blessed Saviour has willingly bound Himself to it. *He that receives a just man in the name of a just man shall receive the reward of a just man* (St. Matt. x.).

*All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like to Thee?* (Psalm xxxiv.). He is not only a patient rewarder, but we may say that He alone is a true and real rewarder. *Glorify the Lord as much as ever you can, for He will yet far exceed, and His magnificence is wonderful* (Ecclus. xliii.).

E. Abraham understood and practised sacred hospitality. *He was sitting at the door of his tent in the very heat of the day, and when he had lifted up his eyes there appeared to him three men standing near him: and as soon as he saw them he ran to meet them from the door of his tent, and adored down to the ground, and he said: Lord, if I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away from thy servant. But I will fetch a little water, and wash ye your feet, and rest ye under the tree. And I will set a morsel of bread, and strengthen ye your heart: for therefore are you come aside to your servant. And they said, Do as thou hast spoken. Abraham made haste into the tent to Sara, and said to her: Make haste, temper together three measures of flour, and make cakes upon the hearth. And he himself ran to the herd, and took from thence a calf very tender and very good, and gave it to a young man, who made haste and boiled it. He took also butter and milk, and the calf which he had boiled, and set before them. But he stood by them under the tree* (Genesis xviii.).

"*Attendite et videte.*" It was in the heat of the day, when men are lazy and more selfish. These strangers have no claim, according to the ideas of this world. But

with Abraham they have this strong claim that they *are strangers*, and therefore at present homeless. His hospitality is according to St. Peter's own heart, *without murmuring*. He has no knowledge that they are angels. He addresses the principal visitor as lord because holy hospitality is reverential and most courteous. He begs them as a favour not to pass him by. He worships them and looks on their visit as an honour. He promises them *a morsel of bread*, but takes care to give much more; all the best that he has, *meat very tender and very good; and butter and milk. Look and do according to the pattern*. What a joy for ever after, when he found that he had been entertaining God's angels!

F. Were we present in the Cenacle, we should also assuredly notice how our Saviour and those He has trained are not only very temperate and abstemious, but also not at all hasty or precipitate in eating and drinking; and how with great charity they prevent one another's wants, and how they are all more impressed by the holy thoughts which their Master suggests, than by the courses served to them.

## STATION II.

*And whilst they were eating He said, Amen I say to you, that one of you is about to betray Me. One of you that eateth with Me shall betray Me. But they began to be sorrowful, and to inquire among themselves which of them it was that should do this thing. But Jesus said: The hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table. And they being very much troubled began every one to say to Him one by one, Is it I, Lord? Is it I? Who saith to them: He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, he shall betray Me. One of the Twelve who dippeth with Me his hand in the dish. And the Son of Man indeed goeth according to that which is determined: but yet woe to that man by whom He shall be betrayed. It were better for him if that man had not been*

*born. And Judas that betrayed Him, answering said : Is it I, Rabbi? He saith to him : Thou hast said it (St. Matt. xxvi. ; St. Mark xiv. ; St. Luke xxii.).*

*A. One of you is about to betray Me.*

This is the first time that our Saviour during the supper discloses the terrible secret which He is carrying about with Him. Thrice again, as we shall see, He will return to this most oppressive sorrow that is weighing down His Heart. How often it happens that the father of the family, the head of the house, is obliged to sit down to table, and to try to look cheerful, and hold conversation with his guests, and all the while he has a heavy load on his heart! This shape of sorrow, as well as so many others, our Lord would taste Himself and sanctify. It is a most bitter draught, and He has to drink it to the dregs.

We who are hard-hearted cannot at all conceive the anguish of the wound left in the tender and grateful and loving Heart of our Saviour by the ingratitude and treachery and apostasy of one of His chosen Twelve. To Judas He could say as truly as to the rest, *You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you. I have called you friend, because all things whatsoever I have heard from My Father I have made known to you.* To Judas, as well as the rest, *He gave power and authority over all devils and to cure diseases, and He sent (him) to preach the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick.* And in a special way He could call Judas *My guide and My familiar* (Psalm lvii.). *What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard and have not done it? (Isaias v.). Yet I planted thee a chosen vineyard, all true seed : how then art thou turned unto Me into that which is good for nothing, O strange vineyard? (Jerem. ii.).* These words the Prophet wrote, but in the most meek and compassionate Heart of our Saviour they find their most intense expression.

*B. We have meditated on that secret disclosed by our Divine Master. My Heart hath expected misery and re-*

*proach* (Psalm lxxviii.). We may try to picture to ourselves the insolent scoffing of Lucifer, his blasphemous triumphing when he tears away from Jesus Christ one specially chosen, one whom He has been labouring to keep, *as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wing* (St. Matt. xxiii.).

C. While contemplating this sad ruin, this fallen Apostle, we cannot forget that high as his dignity was, yet in many ways we are more privileged. For certainly, when our Lord is now speaking, Judas has never received the Blessed Sacrament, which we receive so often. And we shall see that it is very doubtful if he ever did receive It. He has not witnessed the Sacred Passion, nor heard our Blessed Lady appointed to be the Mother of all disciples, and the special refuge of sinners. Surely each of us may well say, *He that is mighty hath done great things for me.*

“Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death, that all the goodness of God our Creator, of God our Redeemer, may not be made void in us. *Tantus labor non sit cassus.*”

D. *One of you is about to betray Me.* Alas! most merciful Lord, to us you have a worse word to say, for now it is: *One of you, My chosen ones, My favoured ones, has betrayed Me, and betrayed Me not once only, but oftentimes, and not for thirty pieces of silver, but for less, far less: Our iniquities are multiplied before Thee, and our sins have testified against us. And we have known our iniquities* (Isaias lix.). *O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, but to Thee, the Lord our God, mercy and forgiveness, for we have departed from Thee* (Daniel ix.).

E. *One of you is about to betray Me.* Even if we had never sinned, we ought to work out our salvation *with fear and trembling* (Philipp. ii.), lest we should ever come to betray our God, and fall under the terrible power of Lucifer. *He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall* (1 Cor. x.). But much more must the burnt child dread the fire. One reason why the Holy Spirit gives us that most necessary advice: *Be not without fear about sins forgiven*

(Eccclus. v.), is that sins forgiven are not unfrequently like bad wounds healed. All the damage done is not thoroughly repaired. There is left behind a predisposition to relapse.

Therefore, wise spiritual guides, like the holy Father Baltasar Alvarez, teach their children not only to look back at past sins, but to make also the examination of foresight, that is, to look forward with care and solicitude to see what dangers are ahead.

F. *But they began to be sorrowful, and being very much troubled began every one to say to Him, one by one, Is it I, Lord?* (St. Matt.; St. Mark.). Blessed saints! It is the characteristic of holy souls, the Fathers of the Church teach us, to fear danger even when they have no cause to fear. On the other hand, what more deplorable than to be in imminent danger of betraying our Lord and our God, and yet not sorrowful, not troubled, not concerned! If after a most merciful and loving absolution and forgiveness, we go back recklessly to very dangerous temptations, the result has been already foretold by the Holy Spirit: *He that loveth danger shall perish in it* (Eccclus. iii.). It is simply impossible to hate sin against our good God as we ought, and at the same time hanker after occasions of sin.

G. *They began every one to say one by one, Is it I, Lord? Every one, one by one.* For each soul is a distinct and separate world. What profit is it to us that our nearest neighbour is good and faithful if we are not? Man, each man, is created to save his own soul. No proxy can do this for us. We must ask for ourselves, *Is it I, Lord? Have mercy on ME, O God, according to Thy great mercy. Wash ME yet more from MY iniquity, and cleanse ME from MY sin.* Alas! how easy it is to sin and become callous; to sin and go on buying and selling, eating and drinking and sleeping; to sin and to prosper; to sin and to go on sinning; *and in a moment they go down to Hell* (Job xxi.).

H. *He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, he shall betray Me.*

We have seen already how in the 54th Psalm our

Blessed Saviour makes known to us how much His Heart was wounded by the treachery of one so intimate, *who didst take sweet meats together with Me*. He utters the same sad lament elsewhere: *Even the man of My peace in whom I trusted, who eat My bread, hath greatly supplanted Me* (Psalm xl.). We must reflect on our own case. To sit at table with Jesus, to share His bread with Him—oh, how immeasurably this intimacy falls short of what is permitted to us!

O res mirabilis! manducat Dominum  
Pauper, servus, et humilis.

O wonder of all wonders! the poor and lowly slave feeds on the Body of the Lord!

What *sweet meats* did Judas ever taste worthy to be named with our privilege? *For Thou didst feed Thy people with the Food of Angels, and gavest them Bread from Heaven, prepared without labour; having in it all that is delicious and the sweetness of every taste* (Wisdom xvi.).

Observe: *Bread from Heaven prepared without labour*, that is, without labour on our part; but who can count up the price that Jesus, our Brother, paid in labour and cruel suffering, in order to win the Most Blessed Sacrament for us poor sinners?

I. *Woe to that man by whom the Son of Man shall be betrayed* (St. Luke xxii. 22). *Not from His Heart* does our Saviour pronounce this "woe". *Not from His Heart hath He afflicted nor cast off the children of men*.

For if man will consent, *the Lord will not cast off for ever*. *For if He hath cast off, He will also have mercy according to the multitude of His mercies* (Lament. iii.). If man will consent! But if persevering with a most miserable constancy, man uses his free-will to the end against his Creator and most loving Redeemer, we know what the outcome must be: *Their madness is according to the likeness of a serpent, like the deaf asp that stoppeth her ears, which will not hear the voice of the charmers, nor of the wizard that charmeth wisely*

(Psalm lvii.). Our Blessed Lord, throughout the Sacred Passion, is *the charmer*. Who ever charmed so wisely as He? For besides all the beauty and loveliness of His own sufferings, He thought also of that most merciful plan of having His Holy Mother by His side, to the end that poor sinners might be more easily won.

J. *And the Son of Man indeed goeth according to that which is determined; but yet woe to that man by whom He shall be betrayed.*

*According to that which is determined.* The death of our Lord has already been determined in Hell by the fallen angels, on earth by their dupes and ministers, the fallen priests: *One man must die for the people* (St. John xi.). *They determined against Me an unjust word* (Psalm xl.). And now, that which sinners in Hell and sinners on earth, as powerless and as foolish as they are wicked, have decreed in malice, the same our Father Who is in Heaven has out of His boundless charity and goodness ratified. And thus by His infinite wisdom and love, the Sacred Passion, intended by sinners to have been a scene of unmixed horror, is changed into a spectacle so ineffably beyond the beauty of Paradise, that the blessed angels, if we may so speak, hasten out of Heaven in crowds to gaze upon it, and the Eternal Trinity decrees that it shall, by the miracle of miracles, be made perpetual and everlasting in the Holy Mass. In the end, therefore, the bitter chalice when presented to our Saviour comes from the hand of His Father. All other agents have power only so far as God says, *Fiat. For great power* (O God) *always belonged to Thee alone, and who shall resist the strength of Thy arm?* (Wisdom xi.).

K. *According to that which is determined.*

Therefore, some unwisely argue, Judas and other sinners are only instruments working out what God wills; consequently, their work is not so evil.

One reply may be that Judas and all sinners add beside what God wants, much, very much that He does not want,

but abhors with an infinite hatred ; they add malice and sin. Sin was not necessary for the Sacrifice. Had Isaac died by the hand of his father, there would have been no sin in that death. And though we are appalled and bewildered when we read what some holy men have written, that the Blessed Mother of God, immeasurably more obedient than Abraham, would have had grace herself to immolate her Divine Son, had God asked that inconceivable service from His handmaid ; yet with even our small measure of light we can see that, as all her motherly tenderness and love is only a small part of that infinite love with which the Eternal Father loves His only Son, even if her heart had undergone the agony of striking the death-blow, yet her act of self-immolation would have been immeasurably less than the act of the Eternal Father, *Who so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting* (St. John iii.).

If God could have wished for sin, or looked upon sin with any other feeling but infinite horror, never would He have sacrificed His Divine Son in order to destroy sin.

God, therefore, in no wise wills the sin ; but when the sinner resolves on sinning despite all the efforts He makes to prevent sin, God will not take away the free-will that He has given, but in His infinite wisdom will find out a method of utilising even sin, and making sin *work together* with everything else *unto good for those who love God* (Romans viii.).

*L. But yet, woe to that man by whom He shall be betrayed.*

St. Paul writes : *If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema* (1 Cor. xvi.).

Some writers have gathered either from revelations made to saints, or some other sources, that on the Judgment Day Jesus will appear to all the immense multitude as He was in His Passion when the Roman Governor

solemnly exhibited Him to the people, saying, "*Ecce Homo*". Whether this be so or not, certain it is that His holy Cross and His wounds shall be seen by all, and shall make known to all and each that He loved them and delivered Himself up for every one.

M. In that hour all, either willingly or unwillingly, shall bow their knees when the Name above all names, the holy name of Jesus, is pronounced.

N. Then shall be heard a loud "Amen" to St. Paul's sentence: *If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema.* "And Thou shalt overcome, Lord Jesus, when Thou art judged."

O. In that awful hour, even the most loving Heart of Jesus and the most compassionate heart of His Holy Mother, will firmly and unhesitatingly give their sanction to the final and irrevocable word, *Depart from Me, accursed.*

P. Then will that word spoken in the Supper-room, *Woe to the man by whom He shall be betrayed*, be understood, and be ratified by a plebiscite of all creation, and it shall have its fulfilment.

Q. "*Delicta quis intelligit?*" (Psalm xviii.). Who understands what it is for poor, fallen, helpless man to betray Jesus Christ? to betray God? to betray God made Man for us? to betray infinite goodness? as far as in us lies to hand over Jesus Christ, our God, our Creator, our most loving Redeemer, to the cruelty and malice of Lucifer? to betray Him—that is, to pass off as His friend, and then use our position in order to destroy Him, as far as in us lies?

And yet our Father's only desire is to be able to forgive us all our sins.

*Wash yourselves; be clean, take away the evil of your desires from My eyes: cease to do perversely, learn to do well, and then come and accuse Me, saith the Lord: if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow; and if they be red as crimson, they shall be white as wool (Isaias i.).*

*I will pour upon you clean water and you shall be cleansed*

*from all your filthiness ; and will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh (Ezech. xxxvi.).*

R. *It were better for him if that man had not been born (St. Matt. xxvi.).* Tertullian, writing in our human style, says that when God created Adam, "knowing that he was a model for the future Adam (*forma futuri*, Romans v.) He was wholly intent on His work (*totum Deum occupatum*), His hand, His mind, His labour, His prudence, ordering everything most wisely". Each of us is predestined, as Adam was, to be a very perfect image of Christ Jesus ; another Christ, and therefore each is created with infinite care and solicitude. If a great master had spent long years on a picture of Christ crucified, and saw it, in an evil hour, wantonly destroyed, how would he mourn over the work of his life ! But what can this poor comparison do to bring before us all the disappointment and sadness with which our Lord asks the man who has chosen to die in sin : "*Quam commutationem*"—*What exchange shall a man give (Me) for his soul, which My Father created with infinite care, and I redeemed with infinite love ? Sin has defeated and baffled and quite brought to nought God's perfect work. Better if that man had never been born than perish so !*

### SCENE III.

#### THE WASHING OF THE FEET.

*Before the festival-day of the Pasch.—And when supper was done (St. John xiii. 1, 2).*

The Paschal supper is ended, and the ordinary supper that followed is also practically ended. And now our Blessed Saviour begins to make immediate preparations for the fulfilment of ancient prophecies. *For behold I create a new heaven and a new earth ; and the former things shall not be in remembrance, and they shall not come upon the heart. But you shall be glad and rejoice for ever in the things which I create (Isaias lxv.).*

*Before the festival-day of the Pasch.*

We have been contemplating our Lord celebrating the last

great Pasch; and are now going to contemplate the washing of the feet. But lo! here we have St. John's testimony that the washing of the feet took place *before the festival*. Commentators have been obliged to say: *This is a labour in my sight; I studied that I might know this thing* (Psalm lxxii.). Father Coleridge has treated the question fully in his account of the Last Supper.<sup>1</sup> Among other solutions of the difficulty offered to us there are three which we may notice.

I. That when *the first* of the seven days of the Pasch—which was the solemn day, to be kept like a Sabbath—fell on the sixth day of the week, that is from Thursday at sunset to Friday at sunset, the Jews, by custom, were allowed to transfer this solemnity to the great Sabbath-day immediately following, so as not to have two strict holidays coming close together, and accordingly did on this occasion so transfer it, though our Lord adhered to the prescription of the Law, and eat the Pasch on the Holy Thursday, the 14th day of that month which was to be to God's people *the beginning of months* (Exodus xii.).

If this solution be adopted, St. John's words will mean that the washing of the feet and the Last Supper took place before the day on which the Jews *that year* kept the Pasch. This interpretation, though not altogether satisfactory, would harmonise with the hypocritical scruples of the Priests and the Ancients on the following morning: *Who went not into the hall that they might not be defiled, but that they might eat the Pasch.*

II. A second solution, advanced by some, is that our Saviour would naturally, according to Eastern usage, *begin* the Paschal supper, as any other supper, by washing the feet of His Apostles; and so He would complete the washing before the sunset when the festival began. This explanation cannot be fitted in with St. John's precise words, that He began to wash the feet *when supper was done*.

III. A third solution, suggested by the Jesuit theologian Father Pereira, seems to be more satisfactory than any other. He observes that among Christians:

1. A festival-day is sometimes reckoned as beginning with First Vespers and ending with Second Vespers and Compline. This way of reckoning is akin to the Jewish method of counting from sunset to sunset.

2. Again, we sometimes date a festival from midnight to midnight; thus following the reckoning of ordinary civil life.

3. Also, we oftentimes mean, when we speak of a festival-day, the hours from dawn to nightfall. Father Pereira assumes as certain, or nearly so, that the Jews also in common parlance used all these three ways of speaking of a festival-day. So that when St. John writes: *Before the festival-day*, he does not necessarily mean before the festival celebrated from sunset to sunset, but may mean, on the evening before *Friday*, which, in common parlance, would be called *the festival-day of the Pasch*.

Considered in this way, Thursday evening would be like the First Vespers of the festival-day.

Two other suggestions may be offered.

The first drawn from the words of St. Luke: *The day of the unleavened bread came, on which it was necessary that the Pasch should BE KILLED.* Custom may have established an interpretation that the Paschal lamb must be *killed* on the first day of the Azymes, but might be eaten either at the First or Second Vespers of the festival. This interpretation would account for the Priests having to eat the Pasch on the evening of Good Friday. They were much too engrossed with their conspiracy against our Lord, to find leisure for the Pasch on the Thursday.

The second suggestion is that as there were seven days of Azymes, or unleavened bread, the Paschal solemnity lasted all these seven days; and therefore what we find in the writings of some contemplatives is probable, that there was a Paschal supper every evening during the seven days. One argument that might be adduced to prove that a lamb was eaten on each of these seven days, is that in Numbers xviii. it is prescribed that during the Paschal solemnity *you shall offer a burnt sacrifice; seven lambs of a year old without blemish; and the tenth of a tenth of flour to every lamb, that is to say, to all the seven lambs.* One lamb might thus be immolated and eaten each evening *with the tenth of the tenth of flour* made into unleavened bread; and so the Priests might say that they had to eat the Pasch on Good Friday evening.

We may, however, perhaps add that it is scarcely worth while trying to account for the unaccountable scruples of men who did not wish to defile themselves by going into the judgment-hall, but were quite ready to crucify Jesus Christ. In whatever way the question be settled, we may safely take it for granted that the Last Supper was celebrated on Holy Thursday evening, and that at the close of the supper our Blessed Lord proceeded to the washing of the feet.

#### STATION I.

*Jesus, knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father (St. John xiii. 1).*

From these words we see that all that now follows is our Blessed Lord's more immediate preparation for His Death. Here then we may well make a halt, and try, while we look upon Him and listen to Him, to learn how we too may prepare for death, praying that while we contemplate, virtue may come out from Him to us.

## A PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

**A. The First Lesson.**—*Knowing that His hour was come.*

This then is a first grace that we must ask for, that we may know when our time is come, in order that death may not take us unawares, before we have made our preparation.

But here a difficulty meets us. Why does our good God conceal from us the time of our death? Our Blessed Saviour, we read, knows that His hour is come. If we also knew in what year and on what day we should die, might we not make a better preparation?

One answer to this difficulty may be gathered from St. John's words: *But Jesus did not trust Himself unto them: for that He knew all men. And because He needed not that any should give testimony of man. For He knew what was in man* (St. John ii. 24, 25). Our Blessed Lord knows fallen man too well to trust us with this great secret, when the supreme moment is to come in which *if the tree fall to the south or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall there shall it be* (Eccles. xi. 3).

For even now, when the tenure of life is so uncertain, how do men act? Let us listen to our Saviour's parable. *The land of a certain rich man brought forth plenty of fruits. And he thought within himself: What shall I do, because I have no room wherein to bestow my fruits? And he said: This will I do. I will pull down my barns, and will build greater; and into them I will gather all things that are grown to me, and my goods. And I will say to my soul: Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thy rest, eat, drink, make good cheer. But God said to him, Thou fool, this night they require thy soul of thee* (St. Luke xii.).

If, then, when death is coming this very night, men adopt as their programme, *Take thy rest, eat, drink, and make good cheer*, what power could check sensuality if they were certain that half a century of life on this earth was still before them? What would be the result? After forty years of sensuality and sin, we should have rendered our-

selves utterly unworthy of the grace of a good death. We should have become so familiarised with sin, that all inclination for repentance and holiness would be gone. We should certainly die as we have lived.

Moreover, even if it were possible after a life of sin easily to retrace our steps during the closing years or months, yet how could our Heavenly Father be content that His own children should for so many years wallow in sin, the outcast slaves of Lucifer, and a loathsome abomination in the eyes of their Creator? Therefore the Lord our God, knowing that, as a rule, we die as we live, and that a good life is the only preparation for a good death, warns us all from the beginning that death will come in the hour we do not expect; so that we may see the absolute necessity of living with our souls always in our hands, washed and cleansed and ready for the summons, whether it come *at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning* (St. Mark xiii.). He loves us too well to disclose to us the hour of our death, but earnestly says: *Watch ye, therefore, lest coming on a sudden He find you sleeping. And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch* (St. Mark xiii.).

B. We are not then to expect, or to wish, to know long beforehand when we are to die; but it is quite lawful to wish and pray that during our last illness, if we die by sickness, we may not be deluded by false hopes of recovery, but, with our Lord, may know that our time is come.

One reason, among many, why Catholics should shrink from mixed marriages, is the danger that often comes with them of an unprovided death. When a dying Catholic is surrounded by relatives, by nurses, by servants, by doctors, who are not Catholics, the principle is too often adopted that the dying must not be frightened. Cheering assurances of speedy recovery must be multiplied; and above all, no priest must be introduced till unconsciousness and coma shall have rendered nervous panic impossible. This is one terrible instance of the truth of our Lord's words: *A man's enemies shall be they of his own household* (St. Matt. x.).

“Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and in the hour of our death, that we may then know that the great hour is come, and now prepare diligently for it.”

C. Meanwhile, at present, our fervent prayer must be, not to know when we are to die, but for a strong grace that shall make us believe firmly that we must now and always be ready; that life is most uncertain; that death may come to us very soon and very suddenly; and therefore that we must watch and be ready.

#### STATION II.

*Jesus knowing that He should pass out of the world to the Father, that He came from God and goeth to God* (vv. 1, 3).

A. *The Second Lesson.*—We must, as a preparation for a holy death, pray that we may have grace to believe firmly that death is a going out of the world to our Father in Heaven; in other words, that a strong hope in the merits of our Lord's Death and Passion may bring to us this new conception of death, and take away from us *the sting of death* (1 Cor. xv.), which is sin and the effects of sin. Who among us would fear to die if this hope were laid up in our heart, that to die is to go home, to the House of our Father in Heaven? But this conception of death, which is the true one, and the one which, without presumption, we have a right to cherish, does not come naturally or easily to a soul in which sin has worked havoc. The first effect of sin in the Garden of Eden was to change in the soul of Adam and Eve filial feelings towards God into terror and suspicion and a malicious estrangement. So must it always be. Grievous sin always brings on a death, and as the death of the body is followed by corruption, so the death of the soul changes the filial loving spirit of a child into dread and malice; for malice in the soul corresponds with the rottenness and corruption of death. Therefore one daily task of those who wish for a holy death, is, by acts of inward contrition and outward penance and by strong

acts of hope and love, to diminish more and more that spirit of dread and estrangement from God which sin has produced; and to increase love which, when perfect, *casteth out fear* (1 St. John iv.). It is in order that this filial love of our Father in Heaven may be restored in our souls and the souls of others that our Lord teaches us to pray continually: *Our Father, hallowed be Thy Name.* May Thy name of Father become a dear name, a cherished name, a great reality to our souls!

B. It is worthy of note that contrition and penance are the short road to hope: *Sacrifice a sacrifice of justice, and hope in the Lord* (Psalm iv.).

### STATION III.

*Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end* (v. 1).

A. *The Third Lesson.*—Our Blessed Saviour also prepares for His Death by manifesting more and more strongly the love for His disciples which burned in His Heart. And therefore His example says to us, *Go thou and do likewise.* What better way is there of winning abundance of grace for our last moments than by multiplying alms, and works of mercy, and earnest prayers for the crying wants of those around us on earth, and for the holy and suffering souls departed?

Some when advised to pray for others answer, "I need all my prayers for my own soul"; but our own great wants are the very reason why we should give alms to others. For we know that our Lord will not depart from that rule: *Give, and it shall be given to you in good measure.* It is true that He also said, *Ask, and you shall receive.* But we have to continue asking with importunity, and we have to join with asking, seeking and knocking. The best way of knocking at our Lord's Heart is by mercy to others: *Give, and it shall be given to you.* Prayer is good, but prayer for others is prayer and alms joined together.

B. When death is coming, selfish souls are rendered

more selfish by anxiety. They expect, as has been said, every one who comes near them to pray earnestly for them, and to send petitions for prayers for them to all who are said to be in the odour of sanctity, and to all holy shrines. But is there anywhere in Christ's Gospel a promise that this nervous selfishness will be able to awaken any fervent or widespread response from Christian hearts? No. *Give, and it shall be given to you*, is the one golden rule. If we are merciful during life, our Lord pledges Himself that He will help us *in the evil day and on our bed of sorrow* (Psalm xl.).

C. *Having loved, He loved them to the end.*

We must not overlook another important lesson suggested by these words, *Having loved, He loved to the end*. We cannot hope to *begin* the work of loving on our death-bed. Death is merely the close of life. If a death full of love is ever the outcome of a selfish life, this is a prodigy to be compared with those impossibilities of which our Lord makes mention: *Men do not gather figs from thorns, nor from a bramble-bush do they gather the grape* (St. Luke vi.). Life is the tree, and death the fruit. *There is no evil tree that beareth good fruit*. If during life we form the habit of almsgiving, that is, of loving our neighbour and helping his wants, we shall go on during our last illness loving and giving alms. But we must convince ourselves that there is no more chance of our *beginning* on our death-beds to love much, than of our *beginning* to speak Hebrew or play the church organ, if during life we have known nothing of Hebrew or music.

STATION IV.

*The devil having now put it into the heart of Judas to betray Him (v. 2).*

A. *The Fourth Lesson*.—Our Blessed Saviour, being perfectly meek and humble of Heart, is not moved by the ingratitude and wickedness of Judas to turn aside from the work of loving to the end, in which He is engaged. If we

are not strengthened greatly by the grace that comes from the Sacred Passion, a wrong done to us by a neighbour, or a calumny uttered against us may easily produce a resentment that shall upset our soul, and scatter to the wind all our good plans for preparing for death. Hence the Psalmist prays, *Redeem me from the calumnies of men that I may keep Thy commandments* (Psalm cxviii.); as if the calumnies of men were too crushing to allow the soul to attend to God's work.

But from the Sacred Heart of our Saviour came out into the hearts of His martyrs that unalterable meekness which enabled them to fulfil thoroughly our Lord's precept: *Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you.* They were strong enough to meet their cruel death with the words of the glorious St. Stephen on their lips, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge* (Acts vii.).

Therefore, one most necessary part of our preparation for death is to pray very earnestly for those who offend us, till we have entirely extinguished all resentment.

*Learn of Me, that I am meek and humble of Heart, and you shall find rest to your souls* (St. Matt. xi.) through life and at death.

#### STATION V.

*Knowing that the Father hath given all things into His hands, He began to wash the feet of His disciples* (vv. 3, 5).

A. *The Fifth Lesson.*—Lastly, our Blessed Saviour prepares for His death-bed by humbly washing the feet of His own disciples and servants. And so all manner of acts of humiliation must be a most salutary preparation for death.

Above all we must specially value the wonderful effects of the humble confession of sin, of humble acts of contrition, of humble acts of penance, of works of mercy which combine humiliation with charity. St. Augustine, a little while before his death, was reading the Penitential Psalms, and said he should be sorry to die on a day on which he

had done no acts of penance. To confess sins already confessed is often a most useful humiliation.

*End of the Preparation for Death.*

#### STATION VI.

*Knowing that the Father hath given Him all things into His hands, and that He came from God and goeth to God, He riseth from supper and layeth aside His garments, and having taken a towel girded Himself. After that He putteth water into a basin and began to wash the feet of His disciples, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded (vv. 3—5).*

*A. Knowing that the Father hath given all things into His hands.*

An ordinary effect of honour on our fallen nature is to intoxicate us, and render us foolish. Twice in the 48th Psalm we read these words: *Man when he was in honour did not understand.*

The robes of office do not necessarily bring with them an increase of heavenly wisdom and all those other virtues which we need for a difficult position; but they do bring more servile worship from others, more adulation, more nourishment for our pride; and thus the man placed in honour easily becomes, as our Lord describes him, a whited sepulchre, outwardly beautiful, but within, *full of dead men's bones and of all filthiness* (St. Matt. xxiii.). Hence St. Ignatius of Loyola enjoins that in the Society of Jesus every Superior entrusted for the first time with government, shall during his first year of office exercise himself for forty days in the humble work of teaching catechism to children. So, too, he required of those of his Fathers who held distinguished posts in the Council of Trent, that from the council-hall they should go to serve the sick in a hospital.

The Scribes and Pharisees very much loved honour and the first places. How thoroughly they were rendered

foolish by elevation we see in the language which they address even to God in prayer: *O God, I give Thee thanks that I am not like the rest of men*: and again from the suffering they went through in order to pass for holy men among the people. *They disfigure (exterminant) their faces that they may appear to men to fast.* Add to this their long prayers at the corner of the streets and in the market-place. But above all else mark how they lost all peace and embittered their lives in their hopeless struggle against Jesus Christ: *We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity.*

Our Lord then leaves us as a precious legacy this lesson, that it is when we are placed in honour that we have most special need of lowly offices.

B. Contemplate Jesus washing the feet of Judas, and wishing by that act of reverence and friendship to soften his hard heart. Sorrow for His fallen Apostle was in His mind immediately before He began this humble exercise, and when it was ended, at once, as we shall see, His thoughts again revert to the miserable man duped by Satan. So that we may safely assume that one aim and object of His tender Heart in the washing of the feet was to make an impression on the traitor. It is said that He began His charitable task with Judas, and more than once affectionately kissed his feet and pressed them to His breast.

C. Another motive that inclined our Blessed Lord to this act of loving humility, was the great secret in His Heart that He was about to entertain His Apostles at the Heavenly Banquet, to be in after ages called the Supper of the Lord. It was a usual act of courtesy in the East to have the feet of the guests washed before a banquet. Our Saviour had not forgotten His own words to Simon the Pharisee, who invited Him to dinner: *Dost thou see this woman? I entered into thy house: thou gavest me no water for My feet, but she with tears hath washed My feet, and with her hairs hath wiped them* (St. Luke vii.).

His loving Heart will not, at His Great Banquet, omit any form of kind courtesy to His poor guests; especially

as He knows well that His humble charity will do much more than cleanse their feet, by bringing grace to their souls.

#### STATION VII.

*He cometh therefore to Simon Peter, and Peter saith to Him :  
Lord, dost Thou wash my feet ? (v. 6).*

A. We may stay a little while to watch and to listen ; to watch with sympathy St. Peter's face, reddened with humble confusion, so expressive of the pain in his heart.

Then as we gaze on Jesus kneeling, we may also reverently try to read His thoughts. Is He perchance pouring out that most intense prayer for His future Vicar, to which later on, before leaving the Supper-room, He alluded : *I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not ?*

B. *Lord, dost Thou wash my feet ? "Attendite."* Let us not hasten on, for these are words to treasure, and to imitate. "Lord, dost Thou not know me ? Dost Thou bid me eat Thy Sacred Flesh and drink Thy Precious Blood ? Lord, dost Thou absolve me once again ? Hast Thou forgotten how often I have been forgiven, and how often I have fallen again ?" The holy Psalmist cries out, *What is man that Thou art mindful of him ?* But a more overwhelming question is this : "What am I, and who am I, that Thou dost still remember me, and bear with me and bless me and love me ? So many—oh, how many—there are who would long since *have done penance, sitting in sack-cloth and ashes* (St. Luke x.), and long since have loved Thee heartily, had the wonders been wrought for them which have been wrought for me."

#### STATION VIII.

*Jesus answered and said to him : What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter (v. 7).*

A. "*Attendite.*" We will stay here again a little while to feed our souls on this word that comes from the mouth

of our Lord. For it is a word that is not to pass away; a word that our Blessed Saviour would often with great charity repeat to our souls if we would hearken. When we are eager for some desire to be accomplished, and are disappointed and tempted to murmur, He chides us with much compassion, saying: *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.* Perhaps to-morrow all will be clear, and you will know why I did not grant this petition, but give you something better. But at least in the light of coming death and at the Judgment you will know how I acted towards you, and you will be well content, and bless Me.

You will say just what St. Paul said, that the tribulation was *momentary and light* (2 Cor. iv.).

B. When persecution rages and holy martyrs are led to the slaughter, the faithful at times begin to fear that the Lord has forgotten them. *What I do*, He answers, *you know not now, but you will know hereafter*, when the blood of the martyrs has become the seed of a glorious Church. He can never forget when His servants suffer, for in each of His martyrs He suffers Himself. Every lash that falls on them touches Him in the apple of His eye (Zach. ii.). Hence, when Saul was persecuting His disciples unto death, our Lord's expostulation with him was in this form, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou ME?* (Acts xxii.). And He further knows most intimately, for He has told us so, that unless the days of persecution were shortened, *no flesh should be saved* (St. Matt. xxiv.). Therefore, when He delays to come to the relief of His servants, we may not know what He is doing, but certainly we shall know hereafter that in this, as in all His works, He was most *merciful* and most *just*. *He hath delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, and my feet from falling* (Psalm cxiv.).

C. Many ask with holy Jeremias (c. xii.): *Why doth the way of the wicked prosper? Thou hast planted them, and they have taken root.* If we know not now, we shall know hereafter, that even with the worst of sinners God is a

patient rewarder (Ecclus. v.). He chastises *little by little*, giving them time and place whereby they may be changed from their wickedness, and by such works Thou hast (O Lord) taught Thy people that they must be just and humane (Wisdom xii.).

The Holy Spirit adds this remarkable truth: Thou (O God), being Master of power, judgest with tranquillity. It is said that in battle fear makes men cruel. They kill through fear of being killed. God, because He has all power, and has no fear, is gentle and tranquil. For Thy power is at hand when Thou wilt (Wisdom xii.). To us, short-lived and weak, He seems at times to act too slowly.

#### STATION IX.

*Peter saith to Him : Thou shalt never wash my feet (v. 8).*

In St. Peter's impetuosity and abruptness there may have been fault, but, as we say familiarly, it was fault on the right side. His reverence and love for his Master made him shrink from seeing Him humiliated; just as on a former occasion he was shocked to hear Him say that He was to be put to death, and, taking Him, began to rebuke Him, Lord, far be it from Thee; this shall not be unto Thee. He had still to learn how true God's word is: *As the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are My ways exalted above your ways, and My thoughts above your thoughts (Isaias lv.).* But let us pray most earnestly that some spark of the Divine fire which warmed his heart may be cast into ours.

#### STATION X.

*Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with Me (v. 8).*

A. Let us pause a little while that a most useful lesson may sink into our souls. *If I wash thee not* thou canst not have that union with Me in prayer, that fervour at Holy Communion which thou art desiring. Spiritual writers impress upon us that we must watch very carefully over purity of conscience if we wish to arrive at close friendship with our

Lord.<sup>1</sup> May our Blessed Lord grant us a great value for holy absolution, and the grace to say often and often, and always with growing earnestness, "*Amplius lava me*"—*Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*

STATION XI.

*Simon Peter saith to Him : Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head (v. 9).*

Our Blessed Lord well knows what kind of threat will make an impression on St. Peter's heart: *Thou shalt have no part with Me.*

Let us reflect upon ourselves and ask what manner of threats impress us and alarm us? And on the other hand, what kind of promises allure us? If we avoid evil, is it through fear of temporal chastisement? If we pray or do good works, is it to win better health? or some prosperity in this world? Is the dread of being separated from our Lord and having no part with Him our chief terror? Are we learning to say heartily St. Francis Xavier's prayer: *O Deus, ego amo Te?*

Why then, sweet Jesu, love not Thee,  
Who lovest me so tenderly?  
Not that I may Thy glory see,  
Nor Hell's eternal tortures flee,  
Nor any way rewarded be,  
But only as Thou hast loved me,  
So love I now, and will love Thee.<sup>2</sup>

"*Create a clean heart in me, O God; and renew a right spirit within my bowels—the loving spirit of Thy blessed Apostle, St. Peter.*"

STATION XII.

*Jesus said : He that is washed needeth not but to wash his feet, but is clean wholly. And you are clean, but not all. For He knew who it was that would betray Him ; therefore He said : You are not all clean (vv. 10, 11).*

<sup>1</sup> See P. S. Lallemand's *Doctrine Spirituelle.*

<sup>2</sup> Father Eyre's translation.

A. The blessed saints on earth who walk *in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without blame* (St. Luke i.), are clean of heart; but still as they walk, some little of the dust of this world settles on their feet; and this they carefully wash away by their daily contrition. And so pleasing to God is their contrition, that some spiritual masters teach that God suffers at times faults to remain in His faithful servants, in order that their great contrition may gladden Him and win grace for them. We read that St. Francis Borgia twice every day begged for absolution in sacramental confession, in order to cleanse his feet from the daily dust.

B. *You are clean.* Oh, how allowable it is for us to crave with a holy envy that we too may be so blessed as to hear now, and still more at death, that word full of hope, *You are clean.*

But more intensely far is our Saviour yearning to say to us at death that word so dear to Him, *You are clean*; that so He may present us quickly to His Father and our Father, His God and our God. For His own sake, for the honour and glory of His plentiful redemption, He desires that we may not be exiled to a long Purgatory.

C. *You are clean; but not all.*

Once more His oppressed Heart gives utterance to Its crushing sorrow. Once more He is hoping against hope that a friendly word of warning may move the traitor to be converted and to live.

Once more, too, must we humbly and earnestly cry out: *Have mercy on me, O God, and give me not over to a foolish and shameless mind* (Ecclus. xxiii.).

D. We must not fail to notice attentively in the case of Judas how often and in how many ways, "*multifariam multisque modis,*" our Saviour seeks to make an impression on his hard heart. Not that *Thou wast unable, O Lord, with one rough word to destroy (him) at once.* But *Thou gavest (him) place of repentance* (Wisdom xii.). A year before, He had said in the hearing of Judas: *One of you is a devil.* And now with what a compassionate perseverance,

on this last night of His life, does He employ threats and kind words and miracles to move him to contrition! Because God does not use thunder and lightning against us, we are inclined at times to think that He allows sinners to perish without warning. But we see here clearly how many earnest efforts God makes to bring back the poor sinner, before it be too late. *I desire not the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God. Return ye and live (Ezech. xviii.).*

#### STATION XIII.

*Then after He had washed their feet and taken His garments, being sat down again, He said to them: Know you what I have done to you? You call Me Master and Lord: and you say well, for so I am (vv. 12, 13).*

A. *Know you what I have done to you?*

“*Attendite.*” We will pause a little while, to hear our Blessed Lord put this question to each of us: *Know you what I have done to you?* when I created you? when I died for you? when I forgave you, not seven times, but seventy times seven times, and much more? when I planned My Blessed Eucharist for you? and gave you My Blessed Mother to be a Mother to you? And also: know you what I intend to do for you? when you have fought a good fight, and when your work here on earth is done?

B. *You call Me Master and Lord: and you say well, for so I am.*

We must often practise our souls in good acts of faith.

“O most merciful Saviour, Thou art my Lord, my Master, my Redeemer, my Father, my God, that hast *possessed* me and *made* me and *created* me” (Deut. xxxii.).

We must also make acts of true contrition, because in time past we have so often by our wicked self-will denied that He is our Lord, and our Master, and our God.

#### STATION XIV.

*If then I being your Lord and Master have washed your feet, you ought also to wash one another's feet (v. 14).*

A. Washing the feet of guests who arrived tired and travel-stained was an exercise that combined charity and humility. Charity and humility are two flowers, each most fragrant, and delightful to the Heart of our Lord. But skilful gardeners, not content with the beauty and brilliancy of single flowers, combine the colours together to make an exquisite flower-bed. Even so, a humble heart delights our Lord, and every act of charity also gives Him great glory; but when we have the chance of doing some service to a neighbour that is a humiliation to self as well as a good alms to him, we have found a golden opportunity of offering to Jesus a combination of the colours and the kinds of fragrance that He loves best.

#### STATION XV.

*For I have given you an example that as I have done, so you do also (v. 15).*

“*Attendite.*” Here, too, we may rest a little while to learn another great lesson. *Look and do according to the Model* (Exodus xxv.) is a word that our Master is always silently saying to us, as often as we contemplate. His aim and object is not merely to enlighten our intellects or increase our knowledge; for He says to each of us: *If you know these things, blessed shall you be if you do them* (St. John xiii.). How often are we reminded of this truth, both by our Lord Himself and by His Apostles: *Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves* (St. James i.). *Every one, therefore, that heareth these My words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man* (St. Matt. vii.). Therefore, when by using our intellect or by the help of light from Heaven, we have an inward perception of a Gospel truth, then we must with our will labour earnestly to obtain grace to do what we have learned, remembering always that even when *the spirit is willing the flesh is weak.*

STATION XVI.

*Amen I say to you : The servant is not greater than his lord.  
Neither is the Apostle greater than Him that sent him  
(v. 16).*

*A. The servant is not greater than his lord.*

All Christians in authority, even those in the highest stations, such as Bishops and Kings and the Holy Father, are the servants of our Lord, and His delegates, holding His place. And their claim and title to reverence and obedience is that they are sent by Him and represent Him. Therefore, he argues, "You who are My ministers and delegates must not desire more honours or more reverence than is given to Me ; and if offices of humble charity, such as washing the feet, do not dishonour or degrade My ministry, neither will they degrade yours". If then the highest in Church and State are not to deem such humble works too menial for them, how much more reasonable is it that *we* persuade ourselves that humble acts of charity are most becoming in our position of servants of Christ ; that a Christian who does not such acts of humble charity, while his Master is doing them, is a very unseemly spectacle in the eyes of God's angels ; and that a favourite motto of every Christian ought to be that word of Christ : *I am come not to be ministered to, but to minister* (St. Matt. xx.) ; that is, I am come not to be served, but to serve. St. Ignatius opens his Exercises with this fundamental principle : "Man was created to serve" ; that is, to be a servant, to be subject and to be useful to his Master.

How smoothly and peacefully our days would pass if we were once firmly persuaded of this truth, that serving is what we are by creation intended for, and therefore best suited for ; and that, if placed in high position, we easily turn giddy unless helped by an extraordinary grace ! What an immense amount of the suffering of life comes from craving, as did Aman, for some honour which God does not intend for us !

## STATION XVII.

*If you know these things, blessed shall you be if you do them*  
(v. 17).

“*O vos omnes, attendite.*” Again and again we need reminding of these words, and must ask ourselves: Are we *doers of the law*? (St. James i.) or are we content with hearing or reading? Are we trying to copy into our own lives what we learn? Even if we fail somewhat in our practice through infirmity, yet so long as we are earnestly striving to be *doers of the law* we are in a good state. We shall not be judged by our success, but by our hearty efforts. Hence, prayer in desolation may win much more grace and reward for us than prayer in consolation.

It is quite necessary then to keep in mind that as good masters see that their pupils learn one lesson well before they pass on to another, it is far better to dwell on one word of our Lord till we *do it* than to read many and *do* nothing.

## STATION XVIII.

*I speak not of you all : I know whom I have chosen : but that the Scripture may be fulfilled : He that eateth bread with Me shall lift his heel against Me* (v. 18).

A. *I speak not of you all.*

Suddenly, once again, the Divine Master breaks away from the thread of His instruction to think once more of Judas and to say some word that may reach his soul.

We often read in the Holy Gospels words like this: *Jesus answering said*: and on examination we find that He is answering not a question put to Him, nor any words that have been spoken: but the secret thoughts of His disciples. So may it now be that when He turns abruptly to speak of the traitor, He is answering some thought which, at the moment, the father of lies is suggesting and Judas is adopting. In spite of the warnings already given, Satan may still be trying to delude Judas with the

hope that he is not discovered, that Jesus does not really know his secret, but is only making conjectures. Our Lord therefore again most pointedly declares that one *who eateth bread with Me shall lift his heel against Me*, and He states plainly that when a moment before He said, *Blessed shall you be if you do what I have taught*, He knew quite well that not all present would be faithful to His training: *I know whom I have chosen*. I have not been deceived. I know most intimately each one of the Twelve whom I have chosen. I know who are true, and I know the traitor. *Darkness shall not be dark to Me; and night shall be as light as the day*. Thy bone, Judas, is not hidden from Me, which I made in secret. In My book all shall be written and is written (Psalm cxxxviii.). *Though they be hid in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them away from thence; and though they hide themselves in the depth of the sea, there will I command the serpent and he shall bite them* (Amos ix.).

B. *I speak not of you all.*

No word comes from our Lord's lips except those, as He tells us, which He hears from His Father (St. John viii.); and no word of His is idle: *It shall not return to Me void* (Isaias lv.). An idle word is one which the speaker utters without any desire, either actual, habitual, or virtual, to honour God by it, or to do good to himself or to his hearer. Our Blessed Saviour, whenever He speaks, is sowing good seeds; saying some words that shall bear fruit in souls, if not at the moment, yet surely in time to come; perchance in days far off; for the eternal God is patient and tranquil and can wait (Eccles. v.; Wisdom xii.). Here He is forewarning His Apostles of the treason of Judas, in order that during His Passion and after, the remembrance of His prophecy may help to repair the damage done to their faith by the scandal of the Cross.

How often it happens that seeds sown in the souls of children bear a glorious fruit in old age, or on the death-bed!

## STATION XIX.

*Amen, Amen I say to you, he that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me (v. 20).*

Sometimes a ruler, if he is flattered and made very comfortable, cares little how his delegates are treated. Let us study diligently the charity and equity of our Saviour. His delegate is as Himself. If we treat His delegate well, we are quite sure that He accepts all as if done to Himself. If we ill-treat His delegate, we ill-treat Him.

If then Christ sends us a poor man wanting help and we receive him, we receive our Lord. How blessed, thrice blessed the rich would be if they believed this truth, and understood their wonderful privilege of imitating God their Creator and God their Redeemer! For have they not power to imitate God's daily work described in the Psalms: *Thou openest Thy hand and fillest with blessing every living creature?* (Psalm cxliv.). When a rich man gives an alms which raises the father and mother of a starving family out of the depths of hopelessness, does he not, like a Creator, give a new life to these crushed hearts? A Latin poet describes a Roman carpenter debating whether he will out of the log of wood before him produce an idol or some utensil for the kitchen; and he makes him resolve at last to create an idol.—*Maluit esse deum*. Near the rich man's home is a poor boy, hitherto well brought up by his pious parents, but now left an orphan. By a timely alms the rich man can often determine whether this child shall be in the future a worthy priest of God's Church, a glorious image of Jesus, a Saviour helping many to salvation, or shall be consigned to the corruption of the workhouse, or an errand-boy's life. *Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor* (Psalm xl.), and makes the right resolve. "This child of Heaven shall be the priest of the most high God."

STATION XX.

*When Jesus had said these things He was troubled in spirit, and He testified and said: Amen, Amen I say to you, one of you shall betray Me (v. 21).*

*He was troubled in spirit.*

A. "*Attendite et videte.*" Watch well His sorrowful face and listen to every word. After the short digression to His favourite teaching on charity, our Blessed Saviour's Heart allows His overwhelming sorrow to come back again for the fourth time. Perhaps He sees Satan making a desperate struggle to secure his prey.

We have here an exact picture of His way of dealing with our own souls. He has given us free-will, and will not take it away, nor coerce us; but He will kneel to us, as He did to Judas, and again and again speak words to soften our stony hearts. Shall we wait for the long leisure of Purgatory to multiply acts of contrition for the times without number when we hardened our hearts against the voice of our God? *I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, and you have not obeyed Me.—And I have sent to you all My servants the Prophets, rising early and sending,—and you have not inclined your ear nor hearkened to Me (Jerem. xxxv.).*

STATION XXI.

*The disciples therefore looked upon one another, doubting of whom He spoke (v. 22).*

A. They make no rash judgment: but they are exceedingly anxious at hearing these repeated warnings.

"*Pierce Thou (O Lord) my flesh with Thy fear (Psalm cxviii.) and every day of my life remind me of my great frailty; and that if Thou do not help me I shall certainly betray Thee.*"

## STATION XXII.

*Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved (v. 23).*

A. "*Attendite et videte.*" Stay a little while, to see and contemplate this picture. St. Ignatius tells all whom he instructs in the art of contemplation, to pray at each scene that "we may know Thee better, O Lord, and love Thee more, and follow Thee". For if we know well the loveliness of our Lord's character, all His tenderness, and true, affectionate friendship, how can we fail to love Him and to follow Him? The father of lies, on the other hand, is for ever poisoning our minds with calumnies against our Lord which estrange us from Him. We must then be wise, and look at Him attentively, and judge for ourselves.

Let us, therefore, watch Him on this last night of His life, with all the horrors of His Passion present to Him, consoling Himself with His affection for the disciple whom He loves with a special love.

B. We might naturally ask here, why our Blessed Saviour bears this special love to St. John? According to the opinion of the holy Fathers, we find the answer in the words of the Psalm, *Thou hast taken me up on account of my innocence, and established me in Thy sight for ever* (Psalm xl.). Others of the Apostles were married men. St. John, tradition tells us, was the youngest, and still in virginal innocence.

While gazing on the love shown to St. John, let us learn to detest more and more the sins that have obliged our Saviour to turn away in displeasure from our souls.

At the same time we will not forget how great His tenderness is even for sinners. What more consoling than His answer, when *Sion said: The Lord hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee* (Isaias xlix.). There

are few truths which we want more than this one; and therefore Satan labours untiringly to efface this true image of our Lord from our souls, and to leave fixed there the impression that He is an austere Master, Whose whole desire is to watch our sins, and chastise us rigorously. We must take care to dwell long on the scenes and words which reveal to us all His charity and compassion, and we must cry out hopefully, *Wash me yet more, O Lord, from my sins*, that at last we too may be among the disciples whom Jesus loves with a special love.

#### STATION XXIII.

*Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, and said to him: Who is it of whom He speaketh? He therefore leaning on the breast of Jesus said, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is to whom I shall reach bread dipped (vv. 24—26).*

A. *Simon Peter beckoned to him.*

Simon Peter is chosen to be Christ's Vicar, yet he uses St. John as a mediator between himself and our Lord. Thus too, after His Resurrection, when Jesus stood on the shore, it was John who first recognised Him, and said to Peter, *It is the Lord*. So is it in Christ's Church: it is a Body with many members, the Vicar of Christ is the Head, and has all the gifts that belong to the Head. His official teaching is always guided from above. He is always an infallible teacher. But he has not necessarily all the different gifts which the Holy Spirit pours out on the whole Body. For *to one*, St. Paul writes, *by the Spirit is given the word of wisdom, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy. All these things one and the same Spirit worketh, dividing to every one according as He wills* (1 Cor. xii.). For the sake of His people, in order that they may have a safe and easy path to heavenly truth, our Lord guarantees that His Vicar shall always be guided by the Holy Ghost when he teaches the Church; but there may be many living who surpass him in personal holiness.

In his private life he must, like other men, work out his own salvation *in fear and trembling* (Philipp. ii.). Nay, he may have even more reason than others to fear and tremble, on account of the dangers which necessarily encompass his high position. It is on account of these many dangers to which he is exposed, as well as the great influence for good which a holy Pope can exercise, that prayers are offered for him daily on the altars of Christendom. It was so from the beginning. *Peter was kept in prison, we read, but prayer was made without ceasing by the Church unto God for him* (Acts xii.).

#### STATION XXIV.

*And when he had dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon* (v. 26).

##### A. *The son of Simon.*

Unhappy Simon, to be the father of such a son! Christian parents by prayers and alms avert the calamity of seeing their offspring accursed. Fathers who, like Tobias, give alms abundantly, win graces for their children. *The God of Israel bless thee, because thou art the son of a very good and just man, and that feareth God and doth almsdeeds* (Tobias ix.).

##### B. *He gave it to Judas Iscariot.*

Oh, let us not fail to contemplate this new effort of our Blessed Saviour's Heart to subdue the malice of Judas. With what infinite delight would He forgive all the past, if this fallen Apostle would humbly say, *peccavi!* How quickly He would run to meet the wretched prodigal, if by some act of mercy and charity to others this lost child of Heaven would make a first step towards a return home. *For I know that Thou art a gracious and merciful God, patient and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil* (Jonas iv.).

“From my hidden sins deliver me, O Lord, for they blind me, and hinder me from seeing how loving a Father,

how compassionate a Redeemer, Thou art to me. Mother of God, turn thine eyes of mercy towards me, and show me the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus."

STATION XXV.

*Judas that betrayed Him, answering said, Is it I, Rabbi? He saith to him, Thou hast said it (St. Matt. xxvi. 25).*

A. The other Apostles had asked their Divine Master, *Is it I, Lord?* Judas could not do less.

B. From this passage we see that he must have been reclining near to Jesus, so that our Lord could hand him the morsel, and say a word to him not heard by the others.

This is another chance given to the traitor. Many sinners, if they know that all their secret designs are found out, are afraid to go forward.

C. It is from this persevering zeal and charity of our Saviour, that St. Francis Xavier and the other apostolic saints learned not to despair of sinners, not to relax their efforts. How grateful through eternity will St. Augustine be to his true and faithful mother, St. Monica, because she did not lose hope and patience during her long years of watching and waiting.

STATION XXVI.

*And after the morsel Satan entered into him (St. John xiii. 27).*

A. *After the morsel.*

This sentence has often been taken to prove that Judas received the Blessed Eucharist. But, God be praised, it has no reference to the Most Holy Sacrament.

Father Salmeron and Father Coleridge have drawn out at length the arguments which render it probable that Judas was not present at the celebration of the first Holy Mass, and did not receive the Blessed Eucharist. Other commentators of great authority, such as Cornelius à Lapide, follow the opinion of St. Augustine, St. Chry-

sostom, St. Cyril, that he was present when our Lord distributed the Blessed Eucharist, and received with the rest. St. Thomas of Aquin seems to follow this opinion in his hymn—

Cibum turbæ duodenæ  
Se dat suis manibus.

“To the gathered Twelve, with His own hands He gave Himself.” In these chapters on the Sacred Passion, for reasons that will be given later, the less harrowing opinion of Father Salmeron, and the order of events suggested by Father Coleridge, have been adopted.

B. *Satan entered into him.*

Satan had long ago found entrance into the heart of Judas; but now, as the tempter persuades him to reject every effort of his Divine Master to win him back, each resistance to grace produces an increase of hardness, blindness, and malice. As grace after grace is refused, Satan's mastery becomes more complete, so that by this time the sin of Judas is already in thought fully committed and consummated; and the father of lies is now undisputed master.

#### STATION XXVII.

*Jesus said to him, That which thou dost, do quickly (v. 27).*

A. It has just been said that the traitor's sin was already consummated. Therefore, in these words our Lord is not urging him to sin, but only to execute quickly the sinful plan already thoroughly resolved upon.

B. *That which thou dost, do quickly.*

Lucifer, whom St. Paul calls *the God of this world* (2 Cor. iv.), is planning the Passion of Christ. The Jews, under his inspirations, are also planning; but meanwhile our Blessed Lord and His Eternal Father have their fixed design which overrules every other. They permit Satan and the Jews to execute just so much of their plans as suits the merciful purposes of the Divine Providence. Among other details, our Blessed Saviour wishes all to be

done quickly, and therefore permits the Jews to carry out their malicious desire that all shall be done quickly. He wishes for quickness, that there may be less time for sins to be multiplied, and that the graces of redemption may come the sooner. They wish for quickness through their feverish and malicious longing to see Him dead.

#### STATION XXVIII.

*Now no man at the table knew to what purpose He said this to him, for some thought, because Judas had the purse, that Jesus had said to him, buy those things which we have need of for the festival-day, or that he should give something to the poor (vv. 28, 29).*

A. Our Blessed Saviour has revealed to St. John who the traitor is ; and before so doing, He prepares the soul of John so that he shall take no harm from knowing this most sad secret. Possibly too St. John may have given St. Peter some sign in answer to his question, that he also might know who was going to commit the crime. If so, then our Blessed Lord doubtless gave St. Peter also some grace to prevent sin in his soul. To the rest our Blessed Saviour did not make known the traitor.

B. "*Attendite et videte.*"

How necessary the lesson that we learn by contemplating this reserve and *circumspection* of our Divine Master! If we reveal without sufficient reason the unknown grievous sin of another, we ourselves, as a rule, commit grievous sin. So long as a man's sin is secret, his reputation remains good, and a good reputation is a possession of high value. If, therefore, we destroy a good name by revealing secret sin, we rob a man of a most valuable property, and sin grievously. Moreover, when we sin by blackening the character of the absent, we often, at the same time, draw those who are listening into our grievous sin ; since the listener, by listening, encourages the detractor to detract.

C. *Buy those things which were needed for the festival-day.*

Either Friday, the first day of the Pasch, or Saturday, the Great Sabbath, may be *the festival-day*.

Some commentators think that when the two came close together it was lawful on the Pasch to buy things needed for the festival.

#### STATION XXIX.

*He, therefore, having received the morsel, went out immediately. And it was night (v. 30).*

A. Our Blessed Saviour by saying, *That which thou dost, do quickly*, has told Judas the same thing He told the Rulers in the Garden later, *This is your hour*. He has most reluctantly given Judas what his will is bent upon, power to earn the price of his treason. And at once this unhappy man becomes the slave and the apostle of Satan; and sets about the task assigned to him by his new master. He hastens to Caiphas to urge immediate preparations, tells the Priests that Jesus is hard by, eating the Pasch on Mount Sion, and is sure to repair very soon to the Garden of Gethsemani.

“From all evil, O Lord, deliver us; lead us not into temptation; do not give us up to our own will; give us grace to do quickly all that we can do for Thee, but never to be quick to serve against Thee.”

B. *And it was night.*

Darkness had set in. It was probably mid-way between seven and eight o'clock when Judas left the Supper-room.

C. *And it was night.*

A much darker and more dismal night had overspread his soul, than the night outside and around him. A night like the Egyptian darkness *come up from the lowest and deepest hell* (Wisdom xvii.).

D. *And it was night.*

“O yes, my God, my most loving Father, my most merciful Redeemer, it was most horrible night in my

soul when I abandoned Thee. *Malum coram Te feci*; in Thy presence and under Thy eyes, and when being led by Thy hand, and nursed by Thy loving care, I sinned against Thy infinite goodness.

“*It was night.* For indeed I did not know what I was doing. And it is night still, and will be as long as I do not love Thee, my God, my Father, my Redeemer, with a true and fervent love. Jesus, Son of Holy Mary, have mercy on me that I may see.”

STATION XXX.

*When he therefore was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself (vv. 31, 32).*

*A. Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.*

The departure of Judas is the immediate preparation for the commencement of the Sacred Passion, so that our Lord speaks as if the desired hour had already come.

1. Now therefore He as Man is to be glorified. For His conquest over all that His enemies can do will prove Him to be more than Man; the true Christ, and verily the Son of God, and God equal to the Eternal Father.

The design and plan of His worldly persecutors is revealed to us by the Holy Ghost. They resolve to put Him to the test. *We are esteemed by Him as triflers, and He glorieth that He hath God for His Father. Let us see then if His words be true; let us prove what shall happen to Him: and we shall know what His end shall be. For if He be the true Son of God, He will defend Him, and will deliver Him from the hands of His enemies. Let us examine Him by outrages and tortures that we may know His meekness and try His patience. Let us condemn Him to a most shameful death, for there shall be respect had unto Him by His words* (Wisdom

ii.). As then, the princes of darkness and the Jews will put forth their utmost strength against Him during the Passion, but shall not conquer Him, He shall be glorified.

2. God also is to be glorified, because Jesus is to be obedient unto death, and by His obedience to give the greatest glory to His Father.

*B. Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.*

Alas! how often we have sought to glorify ourselves, and God was not glorified in us.

*C. And if God be glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him.*

If Christ as Man gives glory to God, God will in return give glory to Christ as Man, not only by the darkening of the sun and the rending of the rocks, and the other wonders wrought at His Death, but infinitely more by drawing multitudes of souls to Him. *If He shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long-lived seed (Isaias liii.). God will also glorify Him* by sharing with the Sacred Humanity all that can be shared of the Divine Nature.

#### STATION XXXI.

*Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You shall seek Me, and, as I said to the Jews, Whither I go you cannot come, so I say to you now (v. 33).*

##### *A. Little children.*

His Heart is loving to the end. They are His loved little ones whom Satan hates.

##### *B. Whither I go you cannot come.*

This is an open announcement to His Apostles that His Death is close at hand, an affectionate and tender word of farewell. *You shall seek Me.* I am going, My place will be vacant; you will miss Me, you will feel My loss when you want counsel.

So have the holy servants of the Lord often taken leave of their children. "Farewell, children of my heart,"

St. Anthony said to his disciples as he lay dying, "Anthony is departing hence, and will no longer be in the world present with you." St. Bonaventure also gives us this parting word of St. Francis of Assisi: "Farewell, my children, in God's fear. In it abide for ever, and since coming temptation and tribulation is near at hand, happy those who shall persevere in the course they have begun. As for me, I am hastening away to God, to Whose grace I commend you all." After a pause he added a word from the 141st Psalm: *The just are waiting for me till Thou reward me*; and expired.

STATION XXXII.

*A new commandment I give unto you: That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another* (v. 34).

A. Here, we may say, our Lord wishes to speak some special parting words, and He begins with a commandment quite new. Till now the law has been: *Thou shalt love thy friend as thyself* (Levit. xix.). The Jews in their corrupt tradition had promulgated the doctrine, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy* (St. Matt. v.). Our Lord had denounced and anathematised this corruption: *But I say to you, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you; pray for them that persecute and calumniate you* (St. Matt. v.). He had preached publicly in Jerusalem a day or two ago in the hearing of the Priests and Rulers that the second commandment is like to the first: *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself* (St. Matt. xxii.). But now that the time of grace and plentiful redemption is come, He sets before His disciples a far higher standard: *Love one another, as I have loved you.*

B. *Love one another, as I have loved you.*

As, then, we have to do according to this Model, we must of necessity halt here to study a little what manner of love our Saviour has had for us. St. Paul will here be a help to us, for he has given us a detailed description

of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. True he is speaking of charity, but *God is charity*; and the Heart of Jesus is charity. Let us then attend to St. Paul's words for a little while.

#### A STUDY OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

##### 1. The Heart of Jesus is *patient*.

*Patient*, as we see from the Latin, is only another word for suffering. The Heart of our Lord is a suffering Heart. His love is a suffering love. We sometimes are kind and charitable as far as we can be *conveniently*, that is, till charity begins to cost, and brings suffering.

##### 2. The Heart of Jesus is *kind*: in deeds, words, thoughts.

If we give an alms, that is a kind deed. We must not spoil the kind deed by unkind words or unkind thoughts. St. Peter teaches that we must do kindness *without murmuring* (iv. 9). *My son, in thy good deeds make no complaint, and when thou givest anything, add not grief by an evil word* (Ecclus. xviii.).

##### 3. The Heart of Jesus *envieth not, is not ambitious, seeketh not its own*.

He stood in the background, and put His Apostles forward. They were to do greater things than Himself; and to reap the fruits of His toil. *I have sent you to reap that in which you did not labour* (St. John iv.).

The people would have made Him King, but He hid Himself. He did not hide Himself when they made Him a mock King, and dressed Him as a fool. He lived not for self. He annihilated Himself, and lived only to give glory to God and peace to men.

##### 4. The Heart of Jesus *dealeth not perversely*.

*Perversely*.—The original word has been differently rendered in different versions. A man is perverse when he does mischief for mischief's sake. Again, when his temporal interests might benefit if he acted aright, but still from spite or malice he elects to do wrong. It is

perverse also to rake up offences long ago repented of and forgiven. The Pharisees were perverse, who, not content with losing Heaven themselves, would not suffer others to enter.

Our Lord does not perversely rob us of our reward because we succeed not; He looks to our efforts. He does not punish mistakes as sins. He does not recall words we said in the past, after we have repented of them. *We* sometimes, if we do not like an order given, take advantage of some ambiguous word, and execute the command too literally, so as to cause trouble. Our Lord does not take advantage of our mistakes; even if we ask for a stone, He will not give us a stone, but bread.

5. The Heart of Jesus *is not puffed up.*

A body puffed up is larger than it ought to be, not through a healthy growth, but swollen out by vapours and bad humours. Pride (*Superbia*) puffs up the soul, making us appear to ourselves something above our proper position. There are only two main positions: the Creator's, and the creature's. If we set ourselves above the position of a creature, we at once make ourselves creators, gods. Hence God's horror of pride. Jesus, though deserving of all honour and glory and benediction, is always *humble of Heart*. We, though deserving nothing but *confusion of face*, crave for honour.

6. The Heart of Jesus *is not provoked to anger.*

"He made me angry," we sometimes say of our neighbour; "I am very kind to those who are kind to me, but he made me angry." Our Saviour tells us that heathens reach this degree of goodness. He wants us to go much further, and to love those who wrong us. He did so.

St. Peter writes: *Servants, be subject to your masters, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward* (1 St. Peter ii.). St. Paul says with reason, that *he who loveth his neighbour, hath fulfilled the law*; because to love our neighbour properly, as Christ loves, we must have

many other virtues. For instance, we must be meek, since true charity *is not provoked to anger.*

7. The Heart of Jesus *thinketh no evil.*

St. Paul writes: *Thou dost the things which thou judgest.* The innocent believe others to be innocent. Corrupted souls suspect others. What St. Paul writes of the use of meats, is true also in other ways. *All things are clean to the clean, but to them that are defiled and unbelievers nothing is clean, but both their mind and their conscience is defiled* (Titus i. 15).

8. The Heart of Jesus *rejoiceth not in iniquity.*

On the contrary, He mourns night and day over the sins of those who hate Him. We are tempted to be glad if one whom we dislike disgraces himself by a sin.

9. The Heart of Jesus *rejoiceth in the truth.*

He is Himself truth, and must love truth. He wishes all *men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.* He knows that without truth there is no sanctity or salvation. We must have a zeal for the spread of truth.

Have we got so far that we wish the whole truth against ourselves to be known at least in confession? Do we find ourselves in daily life taking extravagant pains to conceal the truth with regard to our social position, or some personal defect?

10. The Heart of Jesus *beareth all things, endureth all things* (*portat, στέγει, sustinet, ὑπομένει*). The Greek text helps us to see the difference between *bearing* and *enduring*. A beast of burden is under a heavy load to bear it, or carry it (*portat*). A man lying under a heap of ruins is there enduring the weight (*ὑπομένει*).

*Portare* means to bear or carry. St. Paul exhorts us to bear or carry each other's burdens. Mothers carry helpless children in their arms. Our Saviour helps the frail and the tempted to prevent their falling, thus carrying them in His hands.

*Sustinere* means to endure. The Heart of Jesus endures all the slights that we heap upon Him, and still loves us.

11. The Heart of Jesus *believeth all things.*

It is a great mystery that our Saviour can forget our past faithlessness, and shut His eyes to our future fickleness, so as to give full belief to our present resolves not to offend Him.

We, because we do not love much, find it hard to believe the promises of our Lord. They seem too good to be true. Neither are men who love not, willing to believe what great gifts God has given to His Church, such as the Blessed Eucharist, the Infallibility of His Vicar, the motherly care of Holy Mary.

12. The Heart of Jesus *hopeth all things.* He hopes against hope. A good mother hopes for her prodigal when all others despair of him. How many are now saints in Heaven who would have been abandoned, as past all hope, by a weak love!

13. The love of the Heart of Jesus *never falleth away,* never fails, never changes. In Heaven there will be no hope, no faith, but love will live for ever.

STATION XXXIII.

*By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another (v. 35).*

A. We must examine ourselves very diligently by this test. If we are seen in a Catholic church, men say that we are Catholics. We want a more sure test in order to be certain that we are disciples of Christ; the more so as in these days race is set against race, and class against class. Nay, those who belong to the same class are subdivided into sets. "He does not belong to our set. I cannot possibly introduce him to my family. This is the law of the Medes and Persians."

If we, too, rigidly follow the law of the Medes and Persians here below, is there not danger that in the next world we may be classed with Medes and Persians and heathens and publicans? Our Lord's love for us was not

hemmed in by any narrow fences. It travelled over the heads of the refined and the respectable to reach the lost and the outcast.

#### STATION XXXIV.

*Simon Peter saith to Him : Lord, whither goest Thou ? Jesus answered : Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now ; but thou shalt follow hereafter (v. 36).*

A. St. Peter, though not yet sufficiently grounded in humility and mistrust of himself, has a strong love for his Divine Master, and is not resigned to that word which He has just spoken : *Whither I go you cannot come.* Blessed Apostle, obtain for us some share of thy love for Jesus Christ and thy desire to be ever near to Him, and a great sorrow if we are not where He is.

Tradition tells us that once again in after years St. Peter said to Jesus this same word : *Lord, whither goest Thou ?* He was leaving Rome discouraged at seeing no prospect of doing good there, when suddenly he saw his Master coming on the road towards him, and in his surprise, cried out : "*Domine, quo vadis ?*" — *Lord, whither goest Thou ?* "I am going to Rome to be crucified," was the answer. From which word St. Peter understood that the promised time was come when he should die for his Lord, and therefore he returned to Rome, and soon after died fastened to his cross.<sup>1</sup>

B. *Thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow Me hereafter.* St. Peter presumes rashly that even now he can die for his Master. Later on he became more like the picture drawn by himself : *fixed in the incorruptibility of a quiet and meek spirit, merciful, modest, humble* (1 St. Peter iii.).

St. Francis Xavier wrote from the Indies that he found that there was a wide distance between desires of martyrdom formed during prayer in his room, and unshaken fortitude when the sword is uplifted to strike. When the Holy Spirit shall have come down on St. Peter, he will have courage enough to follow his Master to death.

<sup>1</sup> May the piety of the faithful be moved to restore and beautify the little church which commemorates this apparition, for it seems neglected and desolate.

C. There is another reason why St. Peter was not permitted as yet to die. His Divine Master had said by the well at Sichar: *See the countries, for they are white for the harvest* (St. John iv.). There will be a great harvest ready after the work of to-morrow, and the workmen will be few. St. Peter must do his share as a fisher of men and as Vicar of Christ.

“Grant us grace, merciful and compassionate Lord, to do faithfully the work Thou hast allotted to us; and then, when Thou willest, and where Thou willest, and in the manner Thou willest, call us to follow Thee into Thy Kingdom by a holy death.”

#### STATION XXXV.

*Peter saith to Him: Why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thee. Jesus answered him: Wilt thou lay down thy life for Me? Amen, Amen, I say to thee, the cock shall not crow till thou deny Me thrice (xiii. 37, 38).*

From St. John's narrative we gather that our Saviour uttered this sad warning before the celebration of the Holy Mysteries. After the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist, He again, as we shall see, repeated the forewarning. Holy Church teaches us all to approach the Holy Table, striking our breast, and saying, “Lord, I am not worthy”. Our Blessed Lord may have wished by speaking this solemn prophecy to have checked in St. Peter presumption and self-reliance, in order that he might receive the Bread of Heaven in the spirit of humility and with a contrite heart.

#### SCENE IV.

##### PREPARATION FOR THE HOLY EUCHARIST.

A little thought must be here devoted to the important question, at what time during the proceedings in the Cœnaculum did our Blessed Saviour institute the Blessed Eucharist?

I. St. Matthew writes: “CŒNANTIBUS ILLIS”. *WHILST THEY WERE AT SUPPER, Jesus took bread and blessed and broke and gave it to His disciples, and the rest.*

*And taking the chalice, He gave thanks and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of this* (c. xxvi.).

St. Mark's words are: "MANDUCANTIBUS ILLIS". **WHILST THEY WERE EATING, Jesus took bread, etc.**

*And having taken the chalice, giving thanks, He gave it to them, etc.* (c. xiv.).

St. Luke writes: *Taking bread, He gave thanks and gave to them, saying, etc.*

*In like manner the chalice also, AFTER THEY HAD SUPPED, saying, etc.* (c. xxii.).

The Roman Liturgy, which is supposed to have been drawn up under the guidance of St. Peter, uses these words: "Who the day before He suffered took bread, etc. And in like manner, **AFTER THEY HAD SUPPED, He took the chalice,**" etc. Father Coleridge observes that as these words are supposed to be St. Peter's, and have been handed down under the guardianship of Holy Church, they seem to have almost as much sanction as the Gospel narrative.

The special revelation made to him St. Paul records in these words: *The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke, and said, etc.*

*In like manner also the chalice, AFTER HE HAD SUPPED* (1 Cor. xi.).

St. John, according to his custom, is silent about the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist, because others had sufficiently recorded it. But, as we shall see later, he gives a very important clue which may help us to fix the time of the Institution.

In these texts, then, we find some apparent discrepancy which requires to be harmonised. For St. Matthew and St. Mark, on one side, seem to place the Consecration during supper: while St. Luke, St. Paul, and the Roman Missal, on the other hand, place the Consecration after supper.

In solution of this difficulty two theories are offered.

1. Some commentators, adhering rigidly to the letter, conclude that the consecration of the bread took place during the supper, and the consecration of the chalice after. This opinion, which to our minds, familiarised with the character and the ritual of the Holy Mass, seems quite improbable, is yet held by theologians of very high authority.

2. As it is certain from St. Paul, St. Luke, and the Roman Liturgy, that the chalice was consecrated after the supper, the more generally received opinion, and the one which agrees with the received notion among the faithful is, that the bread and the wine were both consecrated at the end of the supper.

As, however, some of the most eminent theologians, as has been just said, hold the first opinion, that the bread was consecrated during the supper, and the wine after, it may be well to consider briefly the reason that moves them to adopt a theory which seems to go against the mind of the faithful and the practice of Holy Church in the Adorable Sacrifice.

Their main reason then for maintaining that opinion—

perhaps their sole reason—is that it seems to accord better with the letter of the Gospel texts.

For, as we have seen, St. Matthew and St. Mark state that *while they were eating—while they were at supper*—Jesus consecrated the bread.

On the other hand, St. Luke, St. Paul, and the form in the Roman Liturgy, ascribed to St. Peter, state that He consecrated the chalice *after He had supped—after they had supped*.

Those, therefore, who hold the first opinion, argue in this way: “St. Matthew and St. Mark tell us that there was a consecration while they were eating; St. Luke and St. Paul, on the other hand, write that the consecration of the chalice took place after supper. To reconcile these two statements, we must necessarily say that the consecration of the bread took place during supper, and the consecration of the wine after.”

Those who hold the second opinion, that the Holy Sacrifice was a separate and distinct service after the supper was ended, feel a strong repugnance (1) to believe that our Lord separated the two consecrations, and still more (2) that He introduced the consecration of the bread during the supper without any special preparation for it, and without the observance of any solemn rite. They, therefore, have looked about for another way of reconciling the words of the sacred writers.

They observe then (1) that St. Matthew and St. Mark, who seem to place the consecration during supper, do not at all separate the two consecrations. If their words really mean that there was a consecration during the supper, and if we are to follow their text literally, we ought to say that both consecrations took place while they were eating.

For St. Mark writes, *Whilst they were eating, Jesus took bread, and then, without any break, continues, and having taken the chalice, giving thanks, He gave it to them, etc.* St. Matthew, in like manner: *Whilst they were at supper, Jesus took bread, etc., and then at once adds, And taking the chalice, He gave thanks, etc.*

Now if we turn to St. Luke and St. Paul, and to the Roman Liturgy, we find (1) that neither do they separate the two consecrations; (2) that they do not state that any consecration took place *while they were eating*. St. Luke's words are, *And taking bread, He gave thanks, and then immediately after, without any break, In like manner the chalice also, after He had supped*. St. Paul's and St. Peter's account agrees with this.

If St. Luke had written that He took the bread during supper, and the wine after He had supped, the first opinion would be established beyond doubt; but this he does not say. He does not specify when our Lord consecrated the bread, but, apparently, puts the two consecrations together, and says explicitly that one of them took place after the supper.

Consequently, if we fix our mind on the letter of the different texts, we find all the Evangelists so far in agreement, that no one of them separates the two consecrations. So that if we had

only St. Matthew and St. Mark to guide us, we should say that if there was any consecration at all during the supper, both consecrations took place at that time. If, on the other hand, we had only St. Luke's and St. Paul's narratives, and the Roman Liturgy to guide us, we should say that both consecrations took place after the supper.

How then are the words of St. Paul and St. Luke and the Liturgy, *after they had supped*, or *after He had supped*, to be reconciled with St. Mark's words, "*Manducantibus illis*"—*while they were eating*, and St. Matthew's words, "*Cœnantibus illis*"—*while they were supping*?

To the words of St. Luke and St. Paul, *after He had supped*, only one meaning can be given. It is quite impossible to force them to mean *during supper*.

But is it impossible to interpret St. Matthew and St. Mark so as to bring them into harmony with St. Luke and St. Paul? Those who hold the second, and generally received opinion, think not.

For (1) we have been taught that St. Matthew and St. Mark oftentimes do not intend to fix the time and place of events or discourses, but only to chronicle what is more important, namely, that Jesus did work such a cure, or pronounce such a discourse.

Then (2) it seems to be commonly admitted, that the phrases, *Cœnantibus illis*, *manducantibus illis*, need not necessarily be rendered, "*whilst they were eating, or supping,*" but might mean what we, in our language, mean when we say that something happened at dinner, at supper.

For instance, we often read in published reports, that at a certain dinner speeches were made, and from custom we interpret that these speeches were made, not while they were eating, but at the end of the dinner, or, as men used to say half a century ago, when the cloth was removed.

Consequently, if we assume that St. Matthew and St. Mark on this occasion, as on so many others, do not intend to give the exact moment when the consecration took place, but merely wish to record the great fact that at the Last Supper, or on the occasion of that Supper, and while they were in the Cenacle, the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist took place, we can in this way bring all the sacred writers into harmony, and we are not obliged to clash with the mind of the faithful or the practice of Holy Church ever since. For surely, without an infallible declaration from the Apostolic See, it would be difficult to induce the faithful to believe that the consecration took place whilst they were eating at table, without any special preparation and without any sacred ceremonies; and that the two consecrations were not united together as parts of one Holy Sacrifice; but effected quite separately, one during supper, and one after.

In the very passage which we are considering, we find in St. Mark's text some words which show us very clearly the

necessity of not accepting hastily the sense that seems to lie on the surface. For with regard to the consecration of the chalice, he writes: *And having taken the chalice, giving thanks, He gave it to them. And they all drank of it. And He said to them, This is My Blood of the New Testament.*

If we were obliged to adhere rigidly to the letter, we should have to say that the Apostles drank of the chalice before our Lord pronounced the words of consecration; an interpretation which could in no wise be admitted.

There is only one more remark to be made.

The words of St. Luke, St. Paul, and the Liturgy, *In like manner, after He had supped, or after they had supped*, are clearly capable of two interpretations. They might mean that our Lord effected one consecration during supper, and then another similar act of transubstantiation after. This is the interpretation followed by those who hold the first opinion. But the words *in like manner*, may also mean that the second miracle of consecration was not only wrought after the manner of the first, but also at the same time as the first, that is, that our Lord consecrated the chalice, as well as the bread, after supper.

This interpretation accords better with the second opinion, which is the one generally held in the Church, that the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist took place when the supper was ended.

II. Those who adopt this second opinion, for the most part, take also for granted that our Blessed Saviour in consecrating made use of special rites and ceremonies, which were to serve the Apostles as a model to be imitated in the Church.

This theory is supported by what we read in the revelations of some holy contemplatives and mystics.

It is the view that will be followed in these contemplations on the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist.

III. A further question still remains for discussion.

Those who believe that the Blessed Eucharist was instituted after the supper, commonly assume that our Blessed Lord offered up the Holy Sacrifice after the washing of the feet, and before the long farewell discourse; and on this account many of them take for granted that Judas received the Holy Communion with the rest.

Father Coleridge has pointed out a serious objection to this commonly accepted theory, and is, apparently, the first to offer a new conjecture, which seems very probable and satisfactory.

He grounds his reasoning on the closing verse of St. John's fourteenth chapter, the first chapter of the farewell discourse. Our Lord there says: *But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I: Arise, let us go hence.*

Many commentators, when they come to this verse, are obliged to say: *It is a labour in my sight. I studied that I might know this thing* (Psalm lxxii.).

The difficulty lies in the word, *Arise, let us go hence*; for the question at once occurs, whither did they go?

Three answers are offered by the older interpreters.

(a) They went to Gethsemani.

But (1) this would oblige us to believe that this greater part of the long discourse, and the prayer also that follows, was made in the streets, and on the road to Gethsemani.

And (2) what is more decisive, the supposition cannot be reconciled with what we read at the end of the discourse and the prayer, in the commencement of chapter xviii.: *When Jesus had said these things, He went forth with His disciples over the Brook Cedron, where there was a garden.* For from these words it is clear that He did not leave the Cœnaculum till the prayer was ended.

(b) Others try to solve the difficulty by saying that they all rose to start for Gethsemani, but, as friends often do, lingered round their Master in the Guest-room, or in the hall.

But it seems improbable that when our Lord had still three-fourths of this most solemn and important discourse to utter, He would bid them arise, and prepare to go, as if He had said nearly all that He wanted to say.

(c) St. Chrysostom, like so many others, is at a loss, and offers the conjecture that our Saviour, seeing the Apostles alarmed because He had just told them that *the Prince of this world* was coming, took them to another more retired part of the building, where they would feel more secure.

Father Coleridge's new solution agrees in part with St. Chrysostom's, but he differs from the great Saint in one important point. His suggestion is, that at the word of Jesus they all rose, and went either to another part of the large Guest-chamber, where a sanctuary had been prepared, or to another part of the building, where there was a suitable oratory, and that there our Lord instituted and offered up the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar.

This theory seems to explain our Saviour's words, *Arise, let us go*, better than any of the others; and at the same time it harmonises very well with what we read in the writings of privileged contemplatives concerning the first Holy Mass.

Moreover, it is in keeping with St. John's usual method. He is silent about the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist, because the other Evangelists have recorded this important fact; but he adds a few words omitted by them which indicate the precise time at which our Lord celebrated the Holy Mysteries.

Father Coleridge's view seems indeed to go somewhat against St. Ignatius of Loyola, who in his Exercises places the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist before the last discourse; but St. Ignatius' object is rather to propose matter for holy meditation, than to determine critically the exact chronological order. In this he follows the method of St. Matthew and St. Mark. Moreover, even in Father Coleridge's supposition, the greater part of the farewell discourse follows the celebration of the Holy Mass.

Assuming, then, Father Coleridge's conjecture to be correct, the first chapter of the discourse (c. xiv.) is a preparation for the Most Holy Sacrament. The rest of the discourse, and the prayer, form part of the Post-Communion thanksgiving service.

We may now return to our study of the Gospel narrative, and resume our contemplations at the beginning of the fourteenth chapter of St. John, considering this first discourse, which it contains, as a preparation for the first Holy Mass and for Holy Communion, and also for the Sacrament of Holy Orders, which the Apostles were about to receive.

We shall observe how our Lord's words are ever increasing faith, hope, and charity in their souls, which, it is needless to say, are the best preparation for the Most Holy Eucharist.

### STATION I.

#### THE DISCOURSE BEFORE THE HOLY SACRIFICE.

*Let not your heart be troubled* (St. John xiv. 1).

A. The Apostles were in trouble of mind, and not without reason :

1. Because our Lord had told them that He was going.
2. And that He was going whither they could not follow.
3. Because He had said that Peter would follow later, and had not given any assurance to the rest.
4. Also because He had told them that one of them was about to betray Him.
5. And lastly, because He had said that Peter would deny Him before the cock-crow.

Therefore our Lord begins to prepare them for the Holy Eucharist by saying, *Let not your heart be troubled*.

B. What was the effect of that word ? Did it give peace to their souls ? This much we know. *The word* of the Lord *is living and effectual*. In this respect, among others, His word differs much from ours.

We often say to men, *Peace, peace, and there is no peace* (Jerem. vi.). Our words are often very cheap and very worthless, because we have done nothing to earn grace and blessing and heavenly power for our words. But when our Lord speaks to the troubled waters He has already paid a large price for the grace He wishes to give

to us, and consequently the *voice of the Lord is in power* : the *voice of the Lord is in magnificence* (Psalm xxviii.). In an instant the winds are hushed ; and *there (is) made a great calm* (St. Matt. viii.). The Jews were wrong, therefore, when they said to Moses, *Speak thou to us and we will hear ; let not the Lord speak to us lest we die* (Exodus xx. 19). " No, rather do Thou, most merciful Jesus, speak to our souls, for we remember Thy saying : *The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life* " (St. John vi.).

#### STATION II.

*You believe in God, believe also in Me* (v. 1).

As we are assuming, He wishes to prepare their souls for their first Holy Communion, and He begins by helping them to an increase of faith. The Apostles have been confused and troubled because their Master had said quite lately : *The Son of Man shall be delivered up to be crucified*. He desires therefore to invigorate their faith in Him, and to prepare them for the great temptation coming ; so that they may believe firmly that He is more than Man, and therefore that even if He be crucified, all will be well restored.

*You believe in God, believe in Me.*

This is one of the many sentences whereby He teaches that He is God, equal to the Father.

#### STATION III.

*In My Father's house there are many mansions. If not, I would have told you, that I go to prepare a place for you* (v. 2).

A. They had heard that Peter was to follow Him ; and were in fear that they might be excluded from their Father's house. He wishes therefore to bring back hope and love before Holy Communion, and says : *There are many mansions, that is, there is in My Father's house ample room for you all and for many more beside. Otherwise I would*

have told you, that ("quia") I go to prepare a place for you. That is to say, if there were not already many mansions and ample room, I should have told you that I shall go and prepare a place for you.

B. Another explanation of this passage is given by those who make "quia" mean *because*. If there had not been ample space for all of you, I would surely have told you; I could not have deceived you on this point, *because*, in reality, I am going away from you to make all ready for you; to put the mansions already prepared into complete order for your reception. It was by His Death and Resurrection and Ascension that our Blessed Saviour made all quite ready, and opened the gates of Heaven for us.

#### STATION IV.

*And if I shall go and prepare a place for you I will come again, and will take you to Myself, that where I am you also may be (v. 3).*

A. 1. *I will come again* after My Resurrection.

2. *I will come again* in the Holy Eucharist.

3. *I will come again and take you to Myself* at the hour of your death—if you are then ready.

4. If you are not then quite ready, but need more purification, I will come and take you to Myself for ever, the moment that the last farthing of your debt is paid in Purgatory. For *My own sake* I will not delay.

B. *That where I am you also may be.*

"*Attendite.*" This word comes from the very depth of our Lord's Heart. All His suffering Life has been devoted to this object; His bitter Death will be offered for this end. For this He gives us His Body and His Blood in the Blessed Eucharist. To the attainment of this end our Lady also will devote herself. Full easily He might create as our eternal home a Paradise unspeakably beautiful. But nothing can content His Heart but this, *that where I*

*am you also may be. My delights (are) to be with the children of men (Prov. viii.).*

C. If then He says to us: "*Delectare in Domino*"—*Take delight in the Lord (Psalm xxxvi.),* He, as our good God, our Father, our Redeemer, has first taken great delight in His children. We are not to be the first to love: *not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us (1 St. John iv.).*

D. If this is our Lord's wish that throughout eternity, *where I am you also may be,* how fervently we ought to answer in the words of Ethai to David: *In what place soever thou shalt be, lord my king, either in death or in life, there shall thy servant be (2 Kings xv.).*

E. *That where I am you also may be.*

"*Attendite.*" Stay here a little longer to dwell also on this thought, that, if He wishes us to be with Him now in poverty, in labour, in lowliness, it is only that the union may be eternal in His Father's home.

#### STATION V.

*And whither I go you know, and the way you know (v. 4).*

A. These words are to do away with the sadness left by His former words: *You shall seek Me, and whither I go you cannot come.* He is going to open His Sacred Heart to them as a friend to friends.

We now know, even better than the Apostles then did, whither our Lord was going, and the way by which we must follow.

"*Passio Christi, conforta me; strengthen me that I may with courage and a cheerful heart deny myself and take up my cross, and follow Thee, Lord Jesus.*"

#### STATION VI.

*Thomas saith to Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, and how can we know the way? Jesus saith to him: I am the way and the truth and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by Me (vv. 5—6).*

A. Here, as in so many other instances, our Blessed Saviour to a material question gives a spiritual answer, which at first seems unsatisfactory; but the more it is studied, the more it comforts and enlightens and elevates. *Sursum corda. Veni lumen cordium.*

B. *I am the way and the truth and the life.*

“*Attendite.*” Pause and listen, in this nineteenth century of bewilderment and confusion, to these saving words of our Blessed Saviour. The boasted strong minds of our day are *ever learning and never attaining to the knowledge of the truth* (2 Timothy iii.). *Children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine* (Ephes. iv. 14). It is our part to pray most earnestly that they who at present *will not endure sound doctrine, but heap to themselves teachers, and are turned unto fables*, may at last come back to Jesus Christ, and give heed to His words: *I am the way, the truth, the life.* I am Man, and I am God; I have come down to your level in order to climb up with you the mountain of God, and to make you a sharer in My Divinity. Join yourselves to Me; learn of Me: for *no man cometh to the Father but by Me.* Through Mary to Jesus; through Jesus, the visible Man-God, to the most holy and invisible Trinity. All men would easily arrive at truth if they would keep in mind His promise, that in His Church there shall be a path to truth so plain and straight that even fools shall find it (Isaias xxxv.).

#### STATION VII.

*If you had known Me you would have known My Father also; and from henceforth you shall know Him, and you have seen Him* (v. 7).

Here our Blessed Saviour raises up their souls to a right conception of His Divinity. He tells them plainly that knowing Him they know the Father.

More and more He is loving to the end, and dealing with them not as servants, but as beloved friends, He is

largely increasing *their Faith, their Hope, their Love*, as a preparation for their first Holy Communion.

Imprint, O Lord, also in our hearts lively sentiments of faith, hope, and charity, and a true contrition for our sins.

#### STATION VIII.

*Philip saith to Him : Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us (v. 8).*

A. The Apostles believed our Lord to be the Messiah, and the Son of God ; but they did not all as yet realise with a vivid faith that He was “ God of God and Light of light and consubstantial with the Father ”.

*I believe, O Lord, help Thou my unbelief (St. Matt.).*

B. *Show us the Father, and it is enough for us.*

Still, from this request of Philip we can draw great humiliation for ourselves. For, as the words of our Lord are more and more creating a clean heart in him, his one desire now is to know the Father ; and there is true charity also in his soul, for what he wishes for himself he wishes for all : *Lord, show us the Father.*

Is our prayer to God such as this : *Show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us ?* Sometimes men say, “ Give me health and I ask no more,” “ Give me an income that will keep me out of debt, and I am quite content,” “ Deliver me from this one disgrace hanging over my head in consequence of my folly, and I ask for nothing further ”. Philip *has chosen the better part.* The bliss of Heaven, our Lord says, is that *they know Thee, My Father, and Him Whom Thou hast sent.* Therefore, St. Philip’s prayer is a most wise one. “ Give us to know our Father Who is in Heaven, give us here a beginning of our eternal bliss, and that is sufficient.”

We may be sure that our Blessed Saviour was not displeased with this petition of Philip’s, even though there was imperfection in it. He had shown a special mark of affection to him before the miracle of the loaves, when He

consulted him: *Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?* (St. John vi.). And when the Gentiles on Palm Sunday wished to see Jesus, it was to Philip they addressed themselves. Perchance, Father à Lapidè conjectures, because they perceived in his countenance and the tone of his voice a special gentleness and kindness and simplicity which attracted them. He may have been in his character, like his comrade Nathaniel, whom he drew to our Lord, *an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile* (St. John i.). However this may be, we are sure that it was with great kindness that our Lord answered him.

STATION IX.

*Jesus saith to him: So long a time have I been with you: and have you not known Me? Philip, he that seeth Me, seeth the Father also. How sayest thou, Show us the Father? (v. 9).*

A. *He that seeth Me, seeth the Father.*

These same words our Saviour had cried out aloud as He was leaving Jerusalem on the Palm Sunday: *He that seeth Me, seeth My Father.* But then they did not make impression. Now He is communicating much more light to His Apostles, and increasing *their Faith* as an immediate preparation for the great mystery of the Blessed Eucharist.

B. *So long a time have I been with you: and have you not known Me?*

Not more than three years had elapsed since Philip was called to know Jesus.

“Alas! my Lord and my God, how much more reason Thou hast to say to me from Thy tabernacle: *So long a time have I been with you: and have you not known Me?* (St. John xiv.). *Forty years have I been near to this generation, and I said: Always they go astray in their hearts*” (Psalm xciv.).

## STATION X.

*Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you, I speak not of Myself. But the Father Who abideth in Me, He doth the works. Believe you not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? (vv. 10—11).*

Every word is strengthening in the soul of Philip and the other Apostles faith in our Lord's Divinity and His intimate and essential union with His Father, and making them more ready for the Most Holy Sacrament. *Credo, Domine, Credo.*

## STATION XI.

*Otherwise believe for the very works' sake (v. 12).*

To raise their faith and render it more vivid, He reminds them of the stupendous miracles they have witnessed. And then, to make them see more clearly what a value He sets on faith, He adds :

## STATION XII.

*Amen, amen, I say to you, he that believeth in Me, the works that I do, he also shall do, and greater than these shall he do (v. 12).*

A. "*O vos omnes. Attendite.*" We must pause here to wonder at the marvellous effect of Divine faith. By believing firmly in our Lord, we become in a manner one with Him, and share His Divine powers, and do the wondrous works He does.

B. Still more wonderful and beautiful and loveable is the humility of our Blessed Lord's Heart. *Charity*, St. Paul writes, *is not ambitious, seeketh not its own.* Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, does not, as we have seen, seek the first place. His disciples shall do greater works than He did. He trod the wine-press alone. He went through His Passion alone; for His Blessed Mother, the only one who shared it, was as a second self to Him, half of His

Soul. Alone and in sorrow He sowed the seed ; but He has no wish to reap the harvest alone. *It is one man that soweth*, He had said to His Apostles, *and it is another that reapeth*. *I have sent you to reap that in which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labours* (St. John iv.). This thought was to keep His Apostles humble in the midst of their marvellous success. After the first discourse of St. Peter, many more became disciples, than Christ had won during His three years of preaching. And even an ordinary priest, when he absolves many, as so often happens, does, in a way, a greater work than our Lord had done when He uttered these words ; greater, that is, in this sense, that to absolve many is a greater work than to absolve few. So, too, when the Holy Father rules and teaches the whole Church, he may be said in a certain sense to be doing a greater work than our Lord did.

C. *The works that I do he shall do, and greater than these shall he do.*

“*Attendite.*” What lesson do we need so much as this : to practise humility of heart, to be content with labouring and sowing, and to be willing that others shall reap, or at least share with us in the reaping? *Fac fieri* was a word of advice which a spiritual guide used to give to all in authority : get things done by others ; do not be anxious to do all yourself. Be content, like our Saviour, that others should do greater work than you have done.

### STATION XIII.

*Because I go to the Father. And whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you shall ask Me anything in My Name, that will I do* (vv. 12—14).

A. *Whatsoever you shall ask, that will I do.*

Now, in the second place, our Blessed Saviour, as a preparation for the Blessed Eucharist, strengthens *Divine*

*Hope* in the hearts of His Apostles. Full of the truest and most tender affection for His brethren, and for all the members of His fallen race, His Sacred Heart pours out this most consoling promise: I am leaving you, but ere I go, I make this covenant with you, that: *Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My Name, that will I do.* So that He may well say a little later: *It is expedient for you that I go.*

B. Mark, too, how He inculcates again and again that He is one with His Father, and yet a distinct Person: *Whatsoever you ask My Father, that will I do.*

C. *Whatsoever you ask in My Name.*

We must understand this word. A priest absolves *in the Name of Christ.* He speaks as Christ's delegate and proxy, and therefore says: *I absolve thee.* For the Scribes were right when in their hearts they thought: *Who can forgive sins but God only?* (St. Mark ii.). If a man forgives sin, it can only be as God's vicar and delegate and *alter ego.* From this example we can understand in some measure what our Blessed Saviour means when He tells us to ask in His name. We are to go to prayer as His delegates, dressed, as it were, in His garments: not to get from His Father surreptitiously the blessing that belongs to our elder brother, but authorised and commissioned by Him to ask in His name and through His merits, as if they were our own, for the blessing that belongs to Him, but which He wishes to share with us.

D. *That the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

Oh, when shall our cry be heard: *Our Father, hallowed be Thy name?* When shall that name, so full of comfort and joy and hope, be a reality to us? When shall the great desire of our heart be in all our works, that our Father may be glorified in us?

E. *If you shall ask Me anything in My Name, that will I do.* Here again He reveals His Divinity. We may either pray to His Father or to Him.

“O most compassionate Saviour, remember Thy promise.

We humbly ask in Thy Name, and by Thy Name of Jesus, that we may know Thee better, and firmly believe in Thee, true God and true Man."

STATION XIV.

*If you love Me, keep My Commandments (v. 15).*

Here, too, is a good preparation for the Heavenly Banquet. He is aware that the words He has spoken are warming their hearts, and increasing their love; and therefore He throws in this word of instruction to teach them, and to teach us, that the chiefest and truest expression of love is obedience to God's laws, and that we must not believe in any love that does not keep His Commandments.

STATION XV.

THE SOLEMN PROMISE OF THE HOLY GHOST TO HIS CHURCH.

*And I will ask the Father and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth (v. 16).*

A. This is another outpouring of the tenderness of His Sacred Heart. Yes, indeed, truly did St. John write that our Divine Master was loving to the end. He is going because it is necessary and expedient; but He will ask for another Comforter Who shall do for His bereaved Apostles even more than He has done.

B. *He shall give you another Paraclete.*

Paraclete (παράκλητος) means one called to my assistance. Hence an advocate, a counsellor, a comforter.

Most openly now and confidentially our Blessed Saviour is speaking to His future Vicar and His delegates. Now for the first time He utters that great promise which is the indefeasible charter of His future Church: *I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Ever Blessed Trinity, the Spirit of Truth; not to remain with you, as I have*

done, only for three years, but to abide with you for ever. This great compact He repeats *four times* more before He leaves the supper-room; once before He institutes the Blessed Eucharist, and three times afterwards. What wonder that He again and again repeats the great promise? For He knows that this assured assistance of the Holy Ghost which is to abide with the Apostolic office, and teach the Church through the Apostolic voice, is the grand and glorious outcome of His Sacred Passion, and the undying life of His future Church.

*Five times then*, as has been said, on this last night of His life He repeats to His down-hearted Apostles this life-giving assurance:

I. *I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you for ever, the Spirit of Truth* (xiv. 16, 17). Then knowing that His Apostles were to be the future teachers, and that men might very naturally think that they had forgotten much of their Master's teaching, He adds:

II. *These things I have spoken to you, abiding with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My Name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you* (xiv. 25). In this word there was wonderful comfort and encouragement for the bereaved Apostles, but it is equally consoling and precious for us also to know that Christ's Apostolic Delegate shall always have brought back to his mind the teaching of Christ Jesus; and shall be taught all truth and will teach all truth.

Then seeing that, notwithstanding so many comforting words, His Apostles are still sorrowful because He is leaving them, again He speaks to them:

III. *Because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth, it is expedient for you that I go; for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you: but if I go, I will send Him to you* (xvi. 6, 7).

In these reassuring words our most loving Redeemer teaches His afflicted Apostles, that when the Holy Ghost comes they will be in a much better position than they are at present. For He, while on earth, has been only preparing the way. He has been teaching them, as it were, first lessons, and from outside; and consequently the truths which He has uttered have not sunk deep enough into their minds, nor been thoroughly understood. But when the Holy Spirit shall be poured out upon them, He will bring home to their inmost hearts every truth, and fill them with vivid faith and firm hope and ardent love.

We must then most heartily join in the cry of Holy Church: *Veni, Creator Spiritus. Veni, Sancte Spiritus.*

Now, surely, we might think, our Lord has promised enough ; but no, He is revealing a truth most essential and fundamental, and therefore yet again He cheers their hearts with this glorious guarantee :

IV. *I have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now ; but when He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will teach you all truth, for He shall not speak of Himself, but what things soever He shall hear He shall speak, and the things that are to come He shall show you (xvi. 12).*

(a) In these words our Lord goes beyond what He has said before. He has already promised that the Holy Ghost will bring back to their minds all that they have heard from Him during the last three years ; but now He tells them that there are many other truths which He wishes and intends to communicate to them, but for which they are not as yet prepared ; that all these truths the Holy Ghost will reveal to them : and, as they questioned Him two days before about things to come, He now adds that the Holy Spirit will also show them the things to come.

(b) And it is well worth notice that here again our Lord says of the Holy Spirit what He has often said of Himself, that *He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever things He shall hear He shall speak*. What a lesson for us poor, insignificant, small-minded men ! Happy shall we be if we become convinced and persuaded that when we speak the words of God or words inspired by God, words that begin with God and by Him are happily ended, we are doing good ; but that if we are speaking words of our own, we are the blind trying to lead the blind.

Oftentimes our ambition is to be original. We, who are created by God, sometimes delude ourselves that we can utter wiser words than God has revealed ; that our conceptions will be more beautiful and more sublime than the thoughts of the Infinite God Who created our littleness. There would not be on the face of the earth one false religion, if all who profess to teach Gospel truths followed the lesson taught in these words : *He shall not speak of Himself*.

(c) And in ordinary life, too, is it not one main cause of the widespread mischief and havoc which prevails, that habitually we foolish men give advice rashly, and without pausing for one moment to consult the Holy Ghost ? We advise men to take revenge, to go to law, to spend money in luxuries, to refuse an alms, to read bad books, to buy houses, to make investments. On every subject, in fine, we love to give advice rashly and recklessly, so that while our Saviour says of the Holy Spirit, *He shall not speak of Himself*, the story of our usual, ordinary habits might be, "He always speaks from himself". *With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in his heart* (Jerem. xii.).

(d) Holy men on earth and the blessed in Heaven are filled with a sorrowful amazement when they meet with this headlong

independence. *The just shall see and fear and shall say: Behold the man that made not God his helper* (Psalm li.).

“Come, O Holy Spirit, and incline our hearts to abide always under the help of the Most High (Psalm xc.), that so all our works and words may begin always from Thee, and by Thee be happily ended.”

(e) And now having guaranteed that, under this teaching of the Holy Ghost, His Apostles shall not only forget nothing of what they have learnt during the last three years, but shall understand thoroughly many truths which He has not yet fully unfolded to them—in fact, shall know all truth, and have a prophetic knowledge of many things to come—then at last He reveals why He is pouring graces so lavishly upon them, and explains His designs respecting them, and the great work He intends them to do.

V. *When the Paraclete cometh, Whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, Who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me, and you shall give testimony, because you are with Me from the beginning* (St. John xv.).

Here at length our Lord discloses in what way He is about to fulfil the promise made long before to His future Church through Isaias the Prophet: *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* (Isaias xxxv.). He is the Eternal Truth, and one chief desire of His Heart is, as St. Paul tells us, that *all men come to a knowledge of the truth* (1 Timothy ii.).

He has pledged Himself that in His Church there shall be a plain and safe path to truth; which no unclean teacher of falsehood shall ever defile; and which shall be so straight and easy that even fools cannot go astray therein. Now on this last night of His life, He reveals how this is to be done, and what this straight path shall be.

His Apostles, who have been taught all truth by the Holy Spirit, shall go and give testimony of Him; but, working conjointly with the Apostles, the Holy Ghost shall also give testimony; so that the Apostle shall be but the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit.

Then, too, the Bishops of the Church shall, by the grace of the same Holy Spirit, be inclined to listen to the Apostolic teaching, and to adhere to it. Through them all truth shall reach the great body of the faithful.

The faithful also, the Church Catholic, the whole Christian people, shall, by the same Holy Spirit, be rendered docile and willing to be taught.

By this simple process every man, woman, and child may always share the truth by merely listening like little children to the never-failing teaching which comes to them from the Apostolic voice.

True, indeed, all must become like little children, and let themselves be taught; but taught, not by an erring man, but by the voice of the Apostle, to whom the Lord has promised: (1) That the Holy Spirit will teach him all truth; (2) and that when he teaches, the Holy Ghost will always be with him to guide his teaching. Blessed be God Who has called us *out of darkness into His marvellous light* (1 St. Peter ii.).

By daily use we grow accustomed to the sunlight, and forget what a gift of God it is. So, too, we are apt not to remember with sufficient gratitude the immense grace given to us of possessing always all truth through docility to the Apostolic teaching, while so many others around us sit in darkness, and are carried about by every wind of doctrine (Ephes. iv.); *ever learning and never attaining to a knowledge of truth* (2 Timothy iii.).

We have been digressing in order to bring together all the passages in our Lord's discourse which have reference to the coming of the Holy Ghost, and His office in the future Church. We must now go back to study His words in the order in which they stand.

#### STATION XVI.

*I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you (v. 18).*

A. His Heart is loving to the end. He heaps words of consolation one upon another. He knows full well that during three years of close familiarity the hearts of His Apostles have been strongly drawn to Him. They lean entirely on Him. The separation is about to be a cruel one. They are to be like sheep among ravening wolves. His Sacred Heart already feels the agony much more than they will do; and He thinks that He cannot say too many words of comfort.

B. *I will not leave you orphans.*

Thus too, when by death one is taken and another left, and all joy and hope seem to be gone out of the life of the survivor, our Blessed Saviour feels the pang more than the bereaved one. *I am with him in tribulation* (Psalm xc.). It was not by His will that sin brought death and all its sorrows into the Paradise He had planned for men (Zach. ii.).

Death that touches you touches the apple of My eye. *Se nascens dedit socium.* At My Birth I gave Myself to be your companion, your yoke-fellow, to bear the yoke with you, to share every burden, and when you are in sorrow, to share with you tear for tear.

C. *I will not leave you orphans.* "I will come to you soon, very soon after My Resurrection, to say *Pax vobis.* Soon also, sooner still, I will come to you in the Most Blessed Sacrament which I am about to institute in order to be always with you. And last of all I will come to you when your work is done on earth, and will take you to Myself."

#### STATION XVII.

*Yet a little while and the world seeth Me no more. But you see Me, because I live, and you shall live (v. 19).*

A. *You shall live.*

You shall live by faith. *Blessed they who have not seen and have believed (St. John xx).* We need not envy those who saw our Lord with the eyes of the body. Far better it is to live by faith; by a living faith to believe in Him and know Him.

B. How grateful our Lord will be to us for ever, if by prayer and by alms and by self-denial and penance and zeal we help men of this world to come out of the darkness and believe in Him.

#### STATION XVIII.

*In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you (v. 20).*

Our Lord has awakened their *Faith* and *Hope.* He now warms their hearts with *His divine love.*

When did friendship find words to express itself such as these are? He sets alongside His intimate and eternal union with His Father, His union with us and ours with Him: *I in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. You in Me* as the branch on the vine; *I in you* as the vine in the branch.

He had already foretold that the Blessed Eucharist would bring about this union. *He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me and I in him.*

We are amazed at times, and dismayed also, when we read the great commandment: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.* But here we have the explanation why He exacts so much love, for is it not clear that He has first loved us with His whole Heart, and with all His strength?

*Fac, cor dulce Jesu mei, fac ut nos amemus Te.*

#### STATION XIX.

*He that hath My commandments and keepeth them: he it is that loveth Me. And he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and manifest Myself to him (v. 21).*

A. *He it is that loveth Me.*

Here again, in order to dispose their souls for the Most Blessed Sacrament, He combines instruction with His appeal to their hearts. Not content with awakening affection within them, He carefully teaches them how true love shows itself by faithfully keeping His commandments. He then adds this most powerful argument to move them, to increase love in their hearts: *He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him.* If our poor and small and miserable hearts will love the infinite goodness and loveliness of God, then the Eternal Father and His only Son will, with all their boundless power of loving, love us.

B. *I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.*

It is then our want of love that keeps us in darkness and blindness, and hinders our blessed Lord from manifesting Himself to us.

*“Ab occultis meis munda me. Cleanse us, O God, from those hidden sins that deaden love in our souls. Mother of God, turn thine eyes of mercy towards us and show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.”*

## STATION XX.

*Judas saith to Him, not the Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us, and not to the world ? (v. 22).*

A. St. Jude has just heard our Lord say : *He that loveth Me, I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him*, and he remembers that a little before He had also said : *The world seeth Me no more. But you see Me.* He is perplexed. Apparently he thinks that our Lord intends to make Himself visible to His Apostles, but not to the rest of men. He does not understand that when Jesus says, *The world seeth Me no more*, He is not speaking of all men on earth, but only of those who belong to the wicked world which He has often denounced. Neither does he comprehend that our Blessed Saviour when He speaks of manifesting Himself, does not mean that He will render Himself visible to the eye, but, through a lively faith, known to the soul.

B. *Judas saith to Him, not the Iscariot.*

Happy, thrice happy the man after whose name the blessed angels can thus add : “ Not the traitor,” “ not the sinner,” or if once a sinner, “ now quite contrite ”.

## STATION XXI.

*Jesus answered and said to him : If any one love Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him ; and We will come to him and will make Our abode with him. He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My words (v. 23).*

A. By this answer He corrects the mistake of His Apostle, and He explains that He has no intention of only manifesting Himself to His Apostles and excluding all other men ; since, not only will He manifest Himself to every man who loves Him, but His Eternal Father will come with Him, and both will abide in that happy man’s soul.

B. It may be well here once again to observe, how in

these words, conjointly with others that occur in this discourse, our Blessed Saviour brings clearly before His Apostles the doctrine of the Trinity, mentioning distinctly the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

C. *We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him.*

This blessed state begins at Baptism, when that wicked spirit whom St. Paul calls *the God of this world* (2 Cor. iv.), is compelled to withdraw from the soul of the Christian child now made a consecrated temple, in which the Eternal Trinity fix their abode. But the unclean spirit, thus *gone out of a man, walketh through dry places, seeking rest and findeth none*, for Satan's only rest is to dishonour God by ruining man, His child. Therefore, before long he returns to watch the baptised child, and as soon as reason dawns, begins again the work of the Garden of Eden. By gross lies he tries to dupe the soul till now so blessed in its guileless innocence, and to induce the baptised child, by its first mortal sin, to expel the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost from Their consecrated temple. If he succeeds, he returns triumphant, to reign there again, and *this last state is made worse than the first* that existed before Baptism.

D. *We will come to him, and will make Our abode with him.*

"*Attendite.*" This is a fitting place to halt, in order to remember with sorrow those hours in years past in which we have driven out from our souls God, our Father, our Redeemer, and the Holy Ghost our Comforter, and have deliberately welcomed back Satan to reign over us.

Mother of God, pray for us sinners, and say to our souls: *Know thou, and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God* (Jerem. ii.).

E. *He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My words.*

If we love any one much, we not only wish to keep all his commandments, but we watch every sign of his will. If love grows cold, we become less keen to do his will.

If there is no love for God in our hearts, we break the commandments without difficulty, and we drink in iniquity like water (Job xv.). We say: *I have sinned, and what evil hath befallen me?* (Ecclus. v.). Our study and great effort must be to obtain an increase of love. There is no presumption in this desire, for we are all commanded to love our God with our whole heart. Neither should the remembrance of our past sins hinder us from trying to increase our love; for love is the only good reparation for sins committed. Satan labours incessantly to hinder souls from loving Christ Jesus, on the pretence that they ought to be occupied only with their sins. But we must always keep in mind that our Lord Himself has sanctioned the rule that he who has sinned much and been forgiven, ought to love much, and even more than others.

By fixing our minds exclusively on our sins, we may hinder love. It is by looking at our Saviour, watching Him and listening to Him, that we gain an increase of love.

#### STATION XXII.

*And the word which you have heard is not Mine, but the Father's Who sent Me (v. 24).*

How often our Blessed Saviour repeats this salutary lesson, in order to impress on all His disciples, and, most of all, on those who share the Apostolic work of teaching and preaching, that their words and their doctrine must not be their own conceptions, their own private opinions, still less an outburst of their own bad passions, but the true Gospel of the Lord. *If any man speak, let him speak as the words of God. If any man minister, let him do it as of the power which God administereth* (1 St. Peter iv.). It is indeed an evil and a bitter thing when Christ's Apostles, instead of preaching from the altar the good tidings of our Lord's Gospel, pour out their own rash judgments or private resentments, thus changing the house of God into a den of thieves, if not into something worse.

STATION XXIII.

*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you ; not as the world giveth do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid (v. 27).*

A. Our Blessed Saviour is, as has been said, disposing the souls of His Apostles more and more for the Blessed Sacrament ; raising them out of despondency, and increasing their faith, hope, and love. " I am going, but I leave *My peace* with you ; not a false peace, such as the world gives, but true and real peace."

*My peace.*

Peace was our Lord's first promise to men on the night of His Birth. *Peace to men of good-will* ; and now that His last hour is at hand, He repeats His promise : *My peace I give unto you.*

B. *Not as the world giveth.*

We can understand better the difference between our Lord's true peace, and the apparent peace which the world offers, if we use a comparison drawn from health. Sometimes when the doctor cannot cure, he orders his patient to keep within doors, to lie in bed, perhaps to have the room darkened, to avoid the least breath of cold air, and all effort and exercise ; or perhaps to travel to a warmer climate. Moreover, there is to be no worry, no anxiety. Thus, then, so long as the diseased man can be protected from the air of heaven and the light, from fatigue and from worry, from cold and from heat, from east winds and north winds and every other vagary of capricious climate, his life may be prolonged. But this is no cure. If the patient were cured, he might have the air and the wind, and the heat and the light, and endure toil as other men do.

So is it, too, with regard to peace. The peace which the world offers is that which the Holy Ghost speaks of (Ecclus. xli.), that peace which a man has *in his possessions*. So long as the man of the world has good health, much money, good weather, and servants that obey, children

that are docile, neighbours who do not contradict him, no imaginary wrong haunting him, and no fear for the future tormenting him, he enjoys a kind of peace; but a peace of the most fragile nature, and entirely insecure. The moth can consume it, the thief can at any moment steal it. Though Aman is a marvel of prosperity, yet Mardochai can destroy all Aman's peace by refusing to salute him.

Our Lord gives a peace which the moth cannot spoil, nor the thief steal away from us. He effects by His grace a thorough and complete cure, and deadens within us all the disturbing passions. His peace, like a hardy evergreen, stands through all the blasts of winter. St. Paul was sure that *neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, nor might nor height nor depth*, could ever take this heavenly peace from him. Even death, which has such an irresistible power to strip and consume, cannot deprive a Christian of the peace of Christ. The first martyr's face was bright as an angel's with joy, when they were dragging him to death.

*C. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid.*

We may assume that these words of our Lord sink into the souls of His Apostles, and for the time produce a great calm, so as to prepare them for their Holy Communion.

#### STATION XXIV.

*You have heard that I said to you, I go away and I come to you. If you loved Me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father, for the Father is greater than I (v. 28).*

*If you loved Me, you would indeed be glad.*

And now He adds another word that will help them to set aside the selfish thought of their own bereavement, and to elicit a strong act of love by rejoicing in the good coming to Him, their Master. At the same time, He sets once more before them this true doctrine respecting His Human Nature that as Man He is lower than His Father.

STATION XXV.

*And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it shall come to pass you may believe (v. 29).*

“*Attendite.*” Let us stay again a little while to contemplate our Lord, and while we listen, observe how every word proceeds from charity. *We* speak sometimes of our ailments, or of our coming death, to get sympathy or to gratify self-love. Our Blessed Lord always has in view His Father’s glory and the good of His hearers’ souls. He is foretelling His Death, in order that their faith, scandalised by His Passion, may afterwards be repaired, when they remember what He had prophesied.

“Grant us grace, O Lord, to act and speak in union with the intentions of Thy Divine Heart, that so we may follow St. Paul’s teaching: *All whatsoever you do in word or work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*” (Coloss. iii.).

STATION XXVI.

*I will not now speak many things with you. For the prince of this world cometh, and in Me he hath not anything (v. 30).*

A. Once again our Blessed Saviour reminds His Apostles that the end is very near, that they will not hear His voice much longer. These tidings, we may be sure, rouse their attention more and more to every word, and also increase very much their affection for Him, so that they are becoming better and better prepared for the Holy Mysteries.

B. *The prince of this world cometh.*

Man, under God, was by right the prince of this world. *The Heaven of heaven is the Lord’s, but the earth He hath given to the children of men* (Psalm cxiii.). When in the beginning He created the beautiful Paradise, He put man there *to dress it and to keep it*. So that man was to manage for God, and to keep this world. And glad indeed and well content our Father in Heaven would be to see man, as His

image, His child, His faithful steward and His delegate, continuing in charge over this world.

But man by a deliberate act of his free-will made himself over, with all his rights, to Satan, and became Satan's slave. Thus did the wicked angel become the prince of this world, which God wished to be man's paradise of pleasure.

If our Blessed Lord groaned in spirit beside the grave of Lazarus, at the thought of all the ruin Satan had caused, what does His Sacred Heart feel now when He is obliged to call him the prince of this world? With desire He is desiring the hour, which is fast approaching, when by His Death He will blot out *the handwriting* of the bond and *the decree* that is *against us and contrary to us* (Coloss. ii.).

"O most holy and most loving Lord, may Thy Kingdom come back to Thee. May Thy most holy, most just, and most wise Will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

C. *And in Me he hath not anything.*

"Over Me he hath no power. Adam freely gave himself up to Lucifer. Adam's children have ratified their father's choice. Over them Lucifer has power, but I am not one of his slaves." For, as St. Paul expresses it, He *emptied Himself*, or annihilated Himself, *taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men and in habit found as a man* (Philipp. ii.), and, in order that He might have compassion on our infirmities, becomes *one tempted in all things like as we are*; but with one essential exception, *without sin*.

*Without sin.* All the rest of the sinner's inheritance and position He has claimed for Himself, but *without sin*, absolutely and entirely *without sin*. And because the fallen angel now usurps power over Him as if He were a sinner, and puts forth all his might and malice against Him as if He were one of his sinful slaves, he thereby forfeits all the power he had acquired over men.<sup>1</sup> Our Saviour joins in that hand-to-hand death-struggle with Lucifer which

<sup>1</sup> St. Thomas, p. 3, q. 49, a. ii. con.

Heaven gazed upon in amazement—“*Duello conflixere mirando*”—and snatches His fallen family out of the cruel grasp of the prince of darkness. *I broke the jaws of the wicked (one), and out of his teeth I took away the prey* (Job xxix.)

*All my bones shall say: Lord, who is like to Thee? Who deliverest the poor from the hand of them that are stronger than he: the needy and the poor from them that strip him* (Psalm xxxiv.).

#### STATION XXVII.

*But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I. Arise, let us go hence* (v. 31).

These are the words on which Father Coleridge grounds his opinion that at this point Jesus broke off His discourse and went to the Sanctuary prepared and ready for Him, there to celebrate the first Holy Mass. As has been already said, it is quite clear that He did not now at once set out on His way to Gethsemani; for St. John gives three more entire chapters of His discourse and His prayer, before we come to the words at the beginning of the eighteenth chapter, *When Jesus had said these things He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where there was a garden.*

Conformably, then, with what we find recorded by some contemplatives who have been permitted to see in prayer the scenes of the Sacred Passion, we may assume that our Lord did, while in the Coenaculum, go with His disciples either to some place in the large Guest-chamber which had been fitted up as a Sanctuary, or to some other part of the building in which there was an oratory suitable for the Sacred Mysteries. This being so, we may further with Father Coleridge believe that it was at this precise point in His discourse that He arose from the supper-table and went to the Sanctuary to institute and offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar.

A. *Arise, let us go hence.*

Before the procession moves to the Sanctuary, we may stay for a moment to consider how well our Saviour has prepared His Apostles for the Holy Sacrifice, for the reception of the Blessed Eucharist, and for the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Earlier in the evening He had said to them: *You are clean, but not all.* Now He can withdraw the

exception, *but not all*: for the traitor is gone to be the apostle of another master and the guide of the enemies of Jesus.

Therefore now they are all clean.

Besides this, we remember how some days later the disciples at Emmaus said: *Was not our heart burning within us while He spoke in the way?* (St. Luke xxiv.). Well, our Lord has this evening been speaking many words to His Apostles, and speaking with special tenderness and love. They are farewell words; and with each word there went from His Heart into theirs some of that fire which He is come to cast on this cold earth. So that we may surely take for granted that their hearts are now full of lively sentiments of faith and hope, and well warmed with Divine charity.

This being so, we may contemplate our Lord Jesus now saying in His Heart to His Eternal Father: *It is time to have mercy* (on Sion), *for the time is come* (Psalm ci.).

## SCENE V.

THE APARTMENT WHERE OUR LADY AND THE DEVOUT  
WOMEN HAVE EATEN THE PASCH.

*Arise, let us go hence.*

Was our Blessed Lady present at the first Holy Mass?

Some of those who hold the opinion that the Blessed Eucharist was instituted at the supper-table, and during the Supper, teach, as a consequence, that she was not present at the Institution, and are consequently obliged to say also that she did not receive the new Pasch, the adorable Sacrament, on this holy night; and therefore, not till after the Resurrection, and perhaps not till after the Descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost.

Those, on the contrary, who prefer the common opinion that our Lord, after the Supper was over, offered up the Holy Sacrifice as a sacred service apart, gladly take for granted that she did assist at the first Mass and did receive sacramentally the Sacred Body of her Divine Son.

Some writers go still further, and consider it probable that Jesus under the Eucharistic veil remained sacramentally present within her during the whole of the terrible conflict which she sustained next day, and during her own peculiar Passion-time that followed, when she was *Maria Desolata*. The Gospel gives

us no help on this point. Neither do we find a tradition of the Church supporting the opinion.

As we are following the more common opinion that He as High Priest offered up the unbloody Sacrifice of the New Law with rites and ceremonies that were to be a model to His future Church, we may also in our contemplation assume that the Ever Blessed Mother was present at this first Holy Mass; and that with her, Magdalen and the devout women from Galilee, and possibly too some privileged disciples, such as Lazarus and Zacheus, and John, Mark, and others of the seventy-two disciples came to join the Apostles. We read in certain histories of the Sacred Passion that Cleophas and other disciples served at the Last Supper and brought the water for the washing of the feet. And there are writers who gather from old traditions that all the seventy-two disciples eat the Pasch in a separate chamber of the Cœnaculum. If so they may have all assisted at the Holy Mass.

#### STATION I.

##### A. *Arise, let us go hence.*

At Bethany, Martha went *and called her sister, Mary, secretly (silentio), saying: The Master is come and calleth for thee.* Did our Divine Lord at this point select a fit messenger to go to His Holy Mother? (Who so fit as the disciple whom He loved and whom she loved?) And did John find her, and reverently and *secretly* deliver his message: "The Master says: My hour is come; and He calleth for thee"?

If so, we may contemplate the intensity and the depth of the consolation with which she receives the invitation. Whenever she is away from Him she bears the separation with a most humble resignation, and says: *Fiat.* But when she may be in His presence, her spirit doubtless exults anew in God her Saviour, and she speaks to herself *in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in her heart to the Lord* (Ephes. v.). With great tranquillity and gentleness and prudence she arranges in order the devout women who are to accompany her, that all may be seemly and becoming around the holy altar, for she *loves the beauty of God's house* (Psalm xxv.).

B. And now we are further permitted to try in contemplation to picture to ourselves in our poor way some of her

thoughts concerning the adorable mysteries that are to be accomplished.

For we may, as has been said, take for granted that she knows all that is to come. Her Divine Son on this night is treating the fishermen of Galilee as His intimate friends, and saying to them: *All things whatsoever I have heard of My Father I have made known to you.* Did He not then surely in those long years of patient waiting at Nazareth comfort His overburdened Heart and her motherly heart by sharing all His secrets with her? *Can I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?* (Genesis xviii.).

Among other mysteries, then, He has no doubt fully revealed to her the design of His Eternal Father, that when His natural life on earth is ended, He shall live on here below in a new and ineffable manner in the Blessed Eucharist.

C. And her tears are flowing fast and her humble heart is throbbing and burning as He explains to her how it is, in the first place, love and reverence for her that constrains Him to enter upon this most marvellous sacramental existence. She is to give up, for love of Him, her right to die with Him. She is to survive Him, a widowed, childless, exiled mother. *Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged: my soul hath been long a sojourner!* (Psalm cxix.). For very compassion then for her, if other reasons there were none, His filial Heart is restless till He has invented this plan of abiding still with her.

Qui pro nobis natus,  
Tulit esse tuus.

Thus does Holy Church sing in our familiar hymn, the *Ave Maris stella*. That is to say, the Incarnation is for us all. For all men the Lord is made Flesh. But in a way most special and transcendent, the Son of God has become Man for her, and to belong to her. So is it now. The Most Holy Eucharist is for us all: for, O Lord, *Thou didst feed Thy people with the food of angels, and gavest them Bread*

*from Heaven prepared without labour; having in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste. For Thy sustenance showed Thy sweetness to Thy children, and serving every man's will it was turned to what every man liked (Wisdom xvi.).*

Yes, for every man Jesus Christ was born; for every man He died; and with all His Heart and with all His strength He wishes all men to be saved. So, too, does He now wish all men to eat His Flesh and drink His Blood, that every man may live by Him and have *everlasting life* (St. John vi.). All this is true; but as in a very special and transcendent sense He became Incarnate for her, and in a better, higher, and supereminent way by His Death redeemed her; so is the Adorable Sacrament of His love in a special and excellent way instituted for her. Through her He was given to us in Bethlehem; and through her, in another sense, He is given to us in the Most Adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist.

D. The Blessed Eucharist, as has been said, is to be the Sun in the firmament of the Church, from Whose light no one can hide himself (Psalm xviii.). What wonder therefore, if, knowing as they do that the Blessed Eucharist and every other good thing come to us through the Mother of God, holy and learned men are not afraid to apply to her the words of Ecclesiasticus: *I made that in the Heavens there should rise light that never faileth?* (c. xxiv.).

E. Tertullian, using human language, represents God, when creating the body and soul of Adam, as entirely absorbed, if we may so speak, in the work, because He knew that He was creating a likeness of His Divine Son—*forma futuri*—a figure of the second Adam, Who was to come (Romans v.). *Totum Deum occupatum et deditum; manu, sensu, opere, consilio, sapienter providentem*—“The whole Godhead occupied and devoted to the work—with hand, perception, labour, prudence—arranging every detail most wisely”.

These words contain a great truth. A painter prepares

most carefully the sketch of the grand picture to come. And so God creates Adam with infinite care, because He is creating an image of Christ Jesus. The sketch or image must foreshow fitly the perfection of the excellent and transcendent work that is to come.

But if Adam was to be the figure, so are all intended by God to be copies and images of Christ Jesus—*Whom He predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren* (Romans viii.). Here is the secret of our being so precious to our God. We are images, most carefully made by the Creator Himself, of His one begotten Son. *Since thou becamest honourable in My eyes, thou art glorious : I have loved thee* (Isaias xliii.).

It is because we are images, living images of Christ Jesus, and His brethren and therefore children of His Mother, that we are admitted to a share in all the good things created for Him and for her.

“Blessed be God. Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true Man. Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most holy.”

F. Here, too, we have the secret why man, redeemed and become Christ’s image, is so hated and persecuted by Lucifer. God, knowing well why Lucifer hates us, treats us with infinite compassion.

## STATION II.

*But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I. Arise, let us go hence* (St. John xiv. 31).

A. *That the world may know that I love the Father.*

Therefore those theologians who think that Jesus here rises to go and begin His Passion at Gethsemani, naturally understand these words to mean that our Saviour is going forth to prove that His loving obedience is strong as death and far stronger. But according to the view of Father

Coleridge, which we have adopted, that our Saviour is not as yet going to Gethsemani, but is going to the altar to enter into a new existence in the Blessed Eucharist, quite a new light dawns upon these words: *That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I.*

For now the sense must be that, in order to prove His boundless love to His Father, and His most complete and filial and loving obedience, He is rising up to begin this new existence under the form of wheaten bread and the juice of the grape.

The chalice which He was to drink on earth as Man, was entirely, every drop of it, prepared for Him by His Eternal Father. It is in obedience to His Father that He became Incarnate. In obedience to His Father He will die. So, too, is it a decree of His Father that He is to live in the Blessed Eucharist, in the form of a morsel of bread and a few drops of wine. This being His Father's will, at once, with all His Heart and all His mind and all His strength, He answers: *Behold I come—that the world may know that I love the Father, and as He gave Me commandment, so do I. Arise, let us go hence.*

B. Some of the holy Fathers apply to the Incarnation of the Son of God these words: *Behold, He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills* (Cant. ii.).

(a) To His first great downward leap, when from Heaven He entered into the virginal womb of His Blessed Mother, Holy Church applies the words of Wisdom: *While all things were in quiet silence and the night was in the midst of her course, Thy Almighty Word leaped down from Heaven from Thy royal throne* (Wisdom xviii.). In that hour *the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us.*

(b) A second great downward leap our Saviour took, constrained thereto by the excess of His charity, when at the ninth hour He passed from the life of this world, through the gates of death, into the darkness of the grave and the prison of the holy dead.

(c) The third, and perchance the deepest plunge of all, is when the compassionate love of our Father in Heaven asks of Him to enter into His Sacramental Life and become permanently the Food of men.

Yes; "Perchance the deepest plunge of all".

C. For when our Lord God takes the form of a little bread, He puts Himself in a position immeasurably lower than the state and position of a man, to which He came down at His Incarnation. What comparison, according to our notions, can there be between the condition of a man and the condition of the food which is taken into the body of man? When, therefore, He became our food, this is, we may say, a new annihilation. In a new and more astounding way He has *emptied Himself*, as St. Paul expresses it.

D. Then again—to continue the comparison in some detail—as an Infant in His mother's womb He was only known to her, and from her received nothing but continual veneration and love. But in the Blessed Eucharist He is in the presence of multitudes who judge Him and rate Him solely by the garb He wears. To them He is a morsel of bread, and they deride Him as a wafer God. "*Exinanivit semetipsum.*"

E. In the next place, as a Child He was subject to Holy Mary and St. Joseph, but they used their authority with inexpressible tenderness and most reverential love. In the Blessed Eucharist He shall be subject to men of every class and condition, to the good and to the bad alike. *Sumunt boni, sumunt mali.* This is the Eternal Father's will, and His immediate answer is: *Behold, I come—Arise, let us go, because I love My Father, and as He gives Me commandment, so do I.* "*Exinanivit semetipsum.*"

The cost He has counted, and into His Eucharistic Life He enters, saying: *My Heart hath expected misery and reproach.*

F. True, as a Man He was afterwards subject to other masters besides His Blessed Mother and St. Joseph. He

was subject to Pilate, and to Herod, and to the Rulers, and to the soldiers and the servants of Jerusalem.

But in the first place, the power of these men was limited. All the others were dependent on the will of the Roman Governor, and required his sanction before they could carry into effect their designs regarding Jesus. Then Pilate himself was kept in check by the fear of Tiberius, and what he might say and do if Roman justice were outraged.

G. Moreover, all these masters who in Jerusalem had power over our Lord, even if we include the cohort of soldiers and all the servants, are few, very few when compared with the uncounted and countless crowd of masters that shall exercise power over Him in His Eucharistic state; and a power too not kept in check by any Roman Governor or Emperor.

H. Add besides, that the rule of all these masters in Jerusalem is short-lived. After the ninth hour, even Pilate himself, the head Ruler, shall no longer be able to say: *I have power to crucify Thee, and power to let Thee go.*

But when His wondering angels ask how long His Eucharistic subjection is to last, our Lord answers by pointing to His unchangeable word: *Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world.*

I. Then if we compare the downward leap from life on earth into the darkness and the shadow of death, with this new plunge down into the depths, when He enters into His Sacramental existence, we must remember that when He died at the hour of the evening sacrifice, His Blessed Soul passed out of the power of men and malicious demons into the hands of His Eternal Father; and the anguish of His Blessed Body was also at an end. In the tomb, the wicked ceased to trouble Him, and His weary body was at rest.

But when He begins His existence on the altar, He comes out, if we may so speak, from the shelter and

protection of the Most High which He enjoys in His Home in Heaven, to put Himself again into the hands of men, and into the power of those princes of darkness, whom men choose to have as their masters.

And this time it is not for one day that He is going to subject Himself to men. It is decreed and fixed that now His exile on earth is to be till the consummation of the world.

J. Neither will He now any more avail Himself of that power which He so often used in Judea, in order to escape from His enemies; in the Eucharistic life He will not hide Himself, He will not suddenly escape out of the hands of priests and people, and go elsewhere.

Why is this? Neither change, we are told, nor the shadow of change, can come over the unchangeable Son of God, Who is *Jesus yesterday and to-day, and the same for ever*. And yet, certainly, His disciple who knew Him well tells us that in Judea *He did not trust Himself* unto men, *for that He knew all men. And because He needeth not that any should give testimony of man, for He knew what was in man* (St. John ii.). How is it then? Are men so entirely altered and amended and trustworthy now that He can give Himself up so completely to our keeping? If so, how comes it that the Holy Spirit dictated that sentence, *What is that that hath been? The same that shall be*. Is not this the true meaning of these words, that the men living now are the true, genuine, unmistakable children of the men that then were, with all their passions; and surrounded by the same malicious spirits, ever seeking whom they may tempt and whom they may devour?

Was there any type of man existing in Jerusalem, in the Prætorium, or the Palace, or the Presbytery, or the streets, that has since died out? If the Heart of Jesus then expected *reproach and misery*, what is to come now when He puts Himself so completely into the power of men, the bad as well as the good? *Sumunt boni, sumunt mali*.

K. *That the world may know that I love the Father. Arise, let us go.*

For what more can He do to prove His loving obedience? Into what deeper depths can His love cast Him down? For in good truth, what else is our Lord's Eucharistic life to be but the Sacred Passion prolonged and perpetuated in a new and miraculous and stupendous way, invented by the charity of His Sacred Heart? In the revelation vouchsafed to St. Paul concerning the Blessed Eucharist, it is said: *As often as you shall eat this bread and drink this chalice, you shall show the Death of the Lord until He come.* In more ways than one the Blessed Eucharist is to show and represent the Death of the Lord, and not only His Death, but that ocean of disgrace and ignominy and degradation which overwhelmed Him during His Sacred Passion, before His Death. It is to be a memorial of all His wonderful works, and above all, a memorial and living representation of the ingratitude and injustice and opprobrium which in silence He endured during His Passion. *He shall be dumb as a lamb before the shearer: and He shall not open His mouth* (Isaias liii.).

L. *He shall not open His mouth.*

For a silence like the stillness of the grave shall reign for ever unbroken in the Tabernacle. A silence such as shall persuade multitudes of men to say, There is no one there. No one sees me; no one hears me. For the Lamb of God shall live there day and night — *through honour and dishonour, good report and evil report—He shall not open His mouth.* “*Jesus autem tacebat.*”

As an infant He could be seen, and His very littleness and His tears could attract some compassion, and He could also make His cries heard to win some pity and get some help.

Later, again, when a Man of Sorrows, His pale face could draw the eyes of men, and His wounds could speak to their hearts. But in His Eucharistic state He is incom-

parably more helpless. He is little and insignificant, as one annihilated and emptied out.

**M.**            *Visus, gustus, tactus, in te fallitur.*  
                  *In cruce latebat sola Deitas,*  
                  *At hic latet simul et humanitas.*

“The sight, the taste, the touch, give us no help at all to know how near He is. On Calvary His Divinity, only His Divinity, was hidden; but here there is no sign of any kind to tell us that His human Soul and Body are with us.”

*Erat subditus, He was subject*, was the history of His life at Nazareth. *Jesus tacebat* was true of certain short hours of the night and the day of His Sacred Passion. But now those words, *Erat subditus—Jesus tacebat*: are to be the short story of His long existence through the ages in the Most Holy Eucharist. The hidden God He is to be. And, alas! too often we might borrow the words which St. Paul found inscribed at Athens, and say that in many places Jesus shall be in the tabernacle the *unknown God*.

*N. That the world may know that I love the Father.*  
*Arise, let us go.*

We were endeavouring just now to imagine what manner of thoughts arose in the heart of His Blessed Mother when her Son in days gone by explained to her, as He stood by her side in all the loveliness of His youth, the compassionate decree of the Eternal Father that He was to become in the Blessed Eucharist the food of fallen man. Let us return for a little while longer to this study.

If, by an impossible supposition, Jesus had a mother who loved Him as Mary loved, but was not wise and holy and one in will with her Divine Son, as Mary was, how would the heart of such a mother beat and throb and break with sobbing when it dawned upon her what a future in His Sacramental Life was prepared by the Eternal Father for her Son!

We have dwelt upon that most appalling thought of

some holy Fathers that the Ever-Blessed Mother would, with unflinching love and obedience, with her own hand have immolated the Divine Victim had such been God's desire. But if by so doing the Mother could avert the long-enduring misery and reproach and dishonour which her Divine Son sees before Him in His Eucharistic Life, then surely to strike the death-blow would have become to a maternal heart immeasurably more possible.

"O my Son," the broken-hearted Mother would say, as the picture of this life of humiliation is set before her, "*Why hast Thou done so to us?*" (St. Luke ii.).

"O Eternal Father, all else that is in this bitter chalice, let Him drink it, but do not say that He is to live for ever as the food of men, and in the power of men, to be loathed with nausea by them, and to be scoffed at for ever by the powers of darkness."

For when we read in the Book of Job how Satan in the pride of his victories intruded among the sons of God, to scoff at Him because men whom He created did not serve Him or love Him; may we not take it for granted that the wicked spirits, as they range through this world, often halt to scoff at our Saviour in His tabernacle? "You boasted that you would draw all men to yourself; have you done it? Neither your promises nor your threats can induce them to come to you." Surely any mother who loved Christ Jesus tenderly, but was not full of grace, as Mary is, would plead most piteously, *Absit!* Far be from Thee, my Son, all this opprobrium. *This shall not be unto Thee* (St. Matt. xvi.).

O. But these are not the thoughts of the Blessed among women when the message comes to her from her Son: "My hour is come". For though she knows that sorrows *great as the sea* are close at hand, yet at these tidings her soul superabounds with joy, seeing that all the glories of this Eucharistic Mystery have been disclosed to her.

Some holy writer has suggested that at the marriage-feast of Cana, when her Divine Son said to her, *My hour is not yet come*, He was answering a secret wish and longing, a hope against

hope in her soul, that by some possibility the great first miracle of His Public Life, which she felt in her heart He was about to work for her, might be the miracle of miracles, the Eucharistic transubstantiation. For that crowning and culminating grace His hour was not come ; but at once, to console her patient love, He gladly put forth the might of His arm to work a wonder that should prepare the way for the Blessed Eucharist. For it convinced men that all power was given to Him, and that, as in the beginning God could by a word create out of nothing, so too could He also now by a word change water into wine, and wine into His Sacred Blood.

Be this, however, as it may, we can rest assured that if the Blessed Mother rises and gathers round her the devout women to go with her to assist at the first Holy Mass, she understands fully what is the breadth and length and height and depth of the charity of her Son Jesus, about to be hidden under the semblance of the unleavened bread and the juice of the grape. Her Divine Son has fully disclosed to her the plan and intention of His Eternal Father, and as she now hastens to Him, no word can come from her heart but a most reverential and jubilant *Fiat, Fili mi*. Be it done, my Son and my God, according to Thy word. *Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, Who alone doth wonderful things. And blessed be the name of His Majesty for ever ; and the whole earth shall be filled with His Majesty. So be it. So be it. Amen. Amen* (Psalm lxxi.).

*P. Arise, let us go hence.*

O yes, because the time is come, and her Divine Son is going to fulfil His Father's wish, which is, in the first place, that He shall give back His Body and His Blood to her who gave of her flesh and her blood to Him, and so enable Him to become God-Man, and to earn His name of Jesus ; then, too, secondly, that He shall, with His Body and His Blood, feed and nourish her who has fed and nourished Him with the substance of her body. Nothing less will content the longing of His Heart. Nothing less will accomplish the decree of His Eternal Father.

With what delight we read in the Sacred Books how

old Tobias and his son put this difficulty of their grateful hearts to one another: My son, *what can we give to this holy man that is come with thee?* and his son answered, *Father, what wages shall we give him? or what can be worthy of his benefits?* (c. xii.). *Sursum corda.* Let us lift up our hearts, and reverently dare to contemplate how the blessed choirs of angels listen in breathless ecstasy, while the Eternal Father and His Divine Son take counsel together in the wide immensity of their infinite gratitude. "My Son, what shall we give to Thy Mother, ever blessed, in return for what she has given to Thee? *Quid retribuam?*" And the Divine Son answers only by echoing back the question, "*Quid retribuam?* My Father, what shall we give to her that shall be fitting and worthy of our boundless gratitude?"

And, to go on with our human language, the outcome of this Divine conference is the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. The Eternal Son, Who came forth from her womb, shall, it is decreed, go back and dwell within her body. The Flesh He had from her, to her He will give back.

Moreover, carefully and faithfully and lovingly she nursed and fed Him in His helpless infancy. So now He shall become her Food, in which she shall find *the sweetness of every taste* (Wisdom xvi.), and It shall serve her and be turned to whatever she likes.

*Q. Arise, let us go.*

Further than this, her Divine Son has explained to her in those early days how, when He took to Himself a Human Body and Human Soul, it was not His thought to sanctify and elevate only that one Body and one Soul; the whole of His fallen family must be raised up and hallowed and made quite heavenly. Every disciple of Christ is to become a Christ, a Divine man: *of His flesh and of His bones.* The chaos of separation between her one only-begotten Son and the countless children of her second family that is to come, shall be bridged over; all are to

be in very deed her children, and the brethren of her Son :  
*of His flesh and of His bones.*

R. *Arise, let us go.*

For she has, moreover, laid up in her heart another truth taught her by her Lord, that, through the Adorable Sacrament, the sentence passed on fallen man, *Thou shalt die*, will be so far most gloriously cancelled and reversed, that the Blessed Eucharist shall become to the mortal body the germ of immortality. *He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the Last Day* (St. John vi.).

S. *Arise, let us go.*

For neither has she forgotten how her Son, as He explained to her the things that were written in the Holy Books concerning Him and concerning herself, pointed out that promise of His Eternal Father : *After her shall virgins be brought to the King. They shall be brought with gladness and rejoicing, they shall be brought into the temple of the King* (Psalm xlv.).

And she is fully conscious that it is through the Eucharistic *corn of the elect*, and the Eucharistic *wine that germinates virgins* (Zach. ix.), that she shall be able to lead after her into the temple of the King the long line of virgins who, even while living in the flesh, shall rival the purity of the angels. It is the Body of Christ that will sanctify their virginal bodies.

*Corpus Christi, salva me.*

T. *Arise, let us go.*

Yes! for as His Sacred Body shall sanctify, so too she knows that His Precious Blood in the sacred chalice shall inebriate. That is to say, it shall so cheer and gladden interiorly, and fill with heavenly transports the souls of His disciples, that men and women, and boys and maidens, will go to martyrdom as to a joyous wedding-day.

*Sanguis Christi, inebria me.*

U. And more than this, she knows too in her heart how the wheaten bread and the drops of the grape juice shall

be in the Church a picture of that union of hearts which is to be produced by the Sacrament of Love.

Many grains in one wheaten cake, the juice of many grapes in one chalice ; even so shall many hearts be brought together and made one by feeding on the same Divine Food. They shall drink together in heavenly charity from the fountains of their Saviour, and from His Heart learn to love even as He loved. " In Thy clemency, O Lord, grant, we beseech Thee, to Thy Church the graces of unity and peace, which in the offered gifts are mystically signified ; through our Lord Jesus Christ." <sup>1</sup>

*V. Arise, let us go.*

For add to all, that this holy work of the first Good Friday is too sacred, far too necessary, and too full of heavenly loveliness, to be allowed to pass away with the day. From henceforth, such is the will of the Eternal Father, every day is to be a Good Friday, and every hour of the day and the night is to be tinged and coloured by the sacred darkness on Calvary ; and the men and women of all nations under heaven shall crowd round the altar, and be witnesses of the Death of the Lord, and the offering of the clean oblation, the unbloody and everlasting Sacrifice of the New Covenant.

The Holy Mass, she knows, is to be the Death of the Lord perpetuated, but with all the hideousness of sin taken out of it, and so tempered and softened by God's inventive charity, that even weak men and women can now look on without being scandalised or staggered, even as the blessed angels gazed on the Sacrifice of Calvary.

*W. Arise, let us go hence.*

Beyond all this, the Blessed Mother also knows that the Most Blessed Eucharist is planned by her God to be, till time is done, *a memorial of (all) His wonderful works* (Psalm cx.).

*A memorial of His creation, for the Lord will speak,*

<sup>1</sup> Secret for the feast of Corpus Christi.

and the adorable miracle shall be effected. He shall command, and it shall be created (Psalm xxxii.).

*A memorial*, too, like the rainbow set in the heavens, of His enduring mercy. For so long as the Body of the Lord shall be offered upon the altar, and the adoring angels are able to cry out: *Look, O God, on the face of Thy Christ* (Psalm lxxxiii.), never shall the mercies of the Lord be taken away, never again shall the waters of the flood of God's wrath destroy all flesh.

*A memorial*, too, of the ever adorable Incarnation, when *the Word was made Flesh and dwelt among us*. For, in the Holy Eucharist, that blessed hour shall be made perpetual; and for ever and for ever shall be renewed that glorious pledge, that *no word shall be impossible with God*. The faithful, therefore, who wish devoutly to adore the Divine Infant concealed in His Mother's womb, will kneel before the hidden God in the Tabernacle and have Nazareth present to their souls. Even so, as each festival of Holy Church shall come round, the Christmas and the Passiontide and the Easter Resurrection, the Holy Mass and the Blessed Eucharist will serve *every man's will and be turned to what every man likes*, and be a living memorial of Bethlehem and Calvary and the Sepulchre.

X. Lastly, every day and every night, nay during every hour of the sunlight, and every still hour of the darkness, the Lord Jesus, though living so unknown, so unthanked, so unblessed in the midst of men, shall yet be ever saying to their poor souls, always inclined to grovel and despair, *Sursum corda*. "Go, tell My brethren—for they are all My brethren, of My Flesh and of My bones—go tell them that My God is their God; My Father is their Father, and My eternal home is their home for ever. Tell them that whenever they eat My Flesh and drink My Blood, a certain pledge of future glory is given to them.

"Not yet, not yet, can I call them away from earth to enter into their rest; but a little while, a very little while and I will come and say: *This day thou shalt be with Me.*"

Holy Mary has all these things and all this hope laid up in her bosom. And therefore as, full of grace, she bends her steps towards the chosen Sanctuary, many tears are relieving her full heart that is sighing with vehement desires for the miracle of love: *Arise, O Lord, my Son, into Thy resting-place.* And what words can bring home to us the consuming intensity with which she adds the prayer that follows in the Psalm, *O may Thy priests, my Son Jesus, may Thy priests be clothed with justice, and may Thy saints rejoice?* (Psalm cxxxi.).

As she arrives at the Sanctuary and kneels most reverently in the place prepared for her, we may humbly contemplate the devout expectancy of her heart that is watching and waiting and crying out: *How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God* (Psalm lxxxiii.).

## SCENE VI.

### FROM THE GUEST-ROOM TO THE SANCTUARY.

#### STATION I.

*That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath given Me commandment, so do I. Arise, let us go hence* (St. John xiv. 31).

A. In the days of old, the Son of God, much grieved because His sheep were neglected by the appointed shepherds of Israel, said by His Prophet Ezechiel: *I Myself will seek My sheep and will visit them: I will feed them. I will seek that which was lost, and that which was driven away I will bring again: and I will bind up that which was broken; and I will strengthen that which was weak, and that which was fat and strong I will preserve. And I will feed them in judgment* (Ezech. xxxiv.).

*I will feed them in judgment, that is, in the wisest and best way. I will feed them in the most fruitful pastures, and*

*these pastures shall be in the high mountains of Israel ; there shall they rest on the green grass ; and be fed in fat pastures upon the mountains of Israel (v. 14).*

Now, on Mount Sion, in the centre of Israel, our Lord Jesus Christ is going to keep His promise and do all this. *Rejoicing like a giant to run His way* (Psalm xviii.), the Good Shepherd rises to lead His little flock to the fruitful and fat pastures, and the pleasant places of repose.

B. Reverently and in great tranquillity the holy ones chosen to be the first-born of the Christian priesthood are, in their processional order, moving towards the Sanctuary, round which the blessed angels are already gathered, to see the valley of tears changed into the house of God, and a Paradise at the gate of Heaven. And after them walks the High Priest of the New Testament, *beautiful above the sons of men*, His features radiant with that ineffable contentment, that peace of His own, which fills His Soul because He is going to do what His Father has commanded. He is going in gladness *as a bridegroom coming out of his bride-chamber* to set *His tabernacle in the sun*, so that henceforth no one may be able to *hide himself from His heat* (Psalm xviii.).

St. Paul will be, in days soon to come, desiring and longing to be *dissolved* and to be with Christ. What are his longings, to the yearning of Christ Jesus in this hour to be *dissolved* and to be with men, the Food of men ! *I in them, and they in Me* : to be dissolved—not by death—but to have all natural and material impediments caused by flesh and blood melted away, if we may so speak, by the fire of charity, and so spiritualised that He can become, under the guise of bread and wine, Himself the food of His little flock.

Not in the cave of Gethsemani did He say for the first time, *My Father, Thy will be done*. Since the moment of His Incarnation His Heart has found in this one desire its meat and drink—its only repose.

C. He has found at last what He could not find in Heaven ; He has found littleness : perfect littleness, to its

lowest degree, into which He can enter, and where He can admirably prove His love for His Father; and He is now arising in gladness unspeakable to go into His new resting-place, there to abide till time on earth is done.

D. As the procession moves towards the chosen Sanctuary, may we contemplate the High Priest, reciting with His priests elect some one of those familiar Psalms, so suitable, because they were inspired by the Holy Spirit as memorials of His wonderful words and wonderful works and wonderful sufferings.

*As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after Thee, my God.*

*My soul hath thirsted after the strong, living God. When shall I come and appear before the face of God?*

*My tears have been my bread, day and night; whilst it is said to me daily, Where is thy God?*

*These things I remembered, and poured out my soul in me: for I shall go over into the place of the wonderful tabernacle, even to the house of God.*

*With the voice of joy and praise, the noise of one feasting.*

*Why art thou sad, O my soul? and why dost thou trouble me? Hope in God, for I will still give praise to Him: the salvation of my countenance, and my God (Psalm xli.).*

## SCENE VII.

### THE SANCTUARY. HOLY MASS.

Arrived at the Sacred Oratory, we may assume that they find there, provided by a most cheerful giver, *the good man of the house*, all which is necessary in order that the first Eucharistic Sacrifice may be a model for Holy Church in after ages.

Some of those privileged ones who in prayer are permitted to penetrate the veils drawn by time and space, tell us that the precious chalice used by Melchisedech of old, was ready in this holy house for use at the first Mass. Venerable Bede records that in his day this sacred chalice was still preserved with devout veneration in Jerusalem.

What is more important (at least, if the letter be authentic) is that the holy Pope and Martyr, St. Fabian, preserves in one

of his letters a tradition of the early Church that on this hallowed night, our Lord, when raising His Apostles to the priesthood, and consecrating, as is thought, some of them to the episcopal office, taught His Church by His own example to use the sacred chrism. If this be so, the vessels containing the oil and the balm to be consecrated are also ready there. And if the High Priest of the New Testament and the chosen candidates for Holy Orders have need of any special Paschal robes, all have been provided by the hospitable good man, under the eye of that watchful Providence that feeds so well the birds, and clothes so richly the lilies of the field.

An additional argument which helps to prove what already seems so probable and reasonable, namely, that this first Holy Mass was considered by the Apostles to be the model that the Church was afterwards to follow, may be drawn from the fact that Pope Leo IX. states in one of his Epistles that the words in the form of consecration used in the Roman Liturgy—*Mysterium fidei*—were inserted by St. Peter, who, through his special gift of faith, was enabled to understand more fully and retain more exactly the words of our Saviour.<sup>1</sup>

#### STATION I.

*I will go in to the Altar of God (Ps. xliii.).*

A. In the Sanctuary and immediately round the altar we find the High Priest Jesus and the Eleven whom He had trained so well, and is about to raise to the priesthood according to the order of Melchisedech. They are henceforth to go into Thy holy hill, O God, and into Thy tabernacle. They are to stand at the altar of God in place of the children of Aaron and the Levites, whose office is now to become extinct.

B. There, in a special place prepared for her, we find the Blessed Mother of God, and near her St. Magdalen and other devout women.

C. Then too, as it is recorded that in a separate chamber of the Cenacle the seventy-two disciples, who were to be the helpmates of the Apostles, had eaten the legal Paschal supper, we may also contemplate them permitted to assist at the Holy Sacrifice in the oratory.

<sup>1</sup> See Father Barradius and Ven. M. d'Agreda on the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist.

D. Present also, though unseen, are the choirs of the angels drawn down from Heaven by the wonderful novelty and passing holiness of this work to be done on earth. Words akin to those they heard at Bethlehem are their invitation to each other now. Let us go down and see the things that are to be done on Mount Sion. *Come, let us praise the Lord with joy, let us joyfully sing to God our Saviour. Let us come into His presence with thanksgiving.* Their old song was, *For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods* (Ps. xciv.). Now must they sing a new canticle, "The Lord God is little, and because He is little He will be a great King above all gods". Their ancient anthem was, *Great is the Lord, and exceedingly to be praised.* Their new song now shall be, "Little is the Lord, and exceedingly to be loved. *Let us fall down and adore before the littleness of the Lord that made us.*"

E. Then sternly and with authority does St. Michael, the Prince of the heavenly host, command the wicked spirits of darkness and say to them, Avaunt! so that they shall not dare to intrude at this hour into this Paradise of the new creation. The storm has raged that they stirred up; and this very night the storm shall rage again more fiercely than ever before. But for this short hour of blessed privilege there shall be a great tranquillity.

Sit jucunda, sit decora  
Mentis jubilatio.

Very sweet and most becoming  
Be the soul's glad psalmody.

F. Happy and most blessed company! Is this earth any longer the valley of tears? "What have we in Heaven," the blessed angels are saying, "better than Christ, the Son of God? What else is this little Christian Sanctuary with its altar but *Domus Dei et porta cæli*—the very house of God, the gateway and outer court of Heaven? For our King and the Queen of Heaven are here, and the court of Heaven must needs come out to be with them."

G. Is Peter saying once more in his secret soul, *It is good for us to be here?* He has good reason to say so.

Other disciples turned away and left Jesus, and walked no more with Him, when He told them in Capharnaum what He was going to do this night. They said: *This saying is hard*: and they left their God. Most unwisely did they make haste *in the time of clouds*, and give no heed to the good counsel: *Wait on God in patience: believe God and He will recover thee* (Ecclus. ii.). Alas! where are they on this hallowed night, they who ought to be with His little flock? *Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonas*, and blessed are they who stood with thee when, as answer to the question of the Lord, *Will you also go away?* thou didst so wisely say: *Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life!*

H. And he, the unhappy man whose place is empty here to-night, whose bishopric another is to take, he too, though perchance he spoke no words on that day at Capharnaum, yet did he entirely in his heart agree with those who then rejected the Holy Mystery of the Blessed Eucharist. For otherwise, it would be difficult to account for that scathing word our Saviour uttered, apparently out of season, *Have not I chosen you Twelve, and one of you is a devil?* Judas now, under the orders of the prince of this world, is marshalling his array of soldiers and armed servants, while the High Priest Jesus with His twelve legions of peaceful angels is at the altar.

I. Let us join with St. Peter, and say, *It is good for us to be here.* "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, Who have dealt with us so mercifully that even the most lowly can say daily: *Introibo ad altare Dei—I will go in to the altar of God* and witness the wonders that are wrought there." *I rejoiced at the things that were said to me: we shall go into the House of the Lord* (Psalm cxxi.). The prophecy is about to be fulfilled: *I will bring them into My holy Mount, and will make them joyful in My House of Prayer: their holocausts and victims shall please Me upon My altar; for My House shall be called the House of Prayer to all the nations* (Isaias lvi.).

STATION II.

THE HOLY SACRIFICE.

A. And now in contemplation, may we believe that our High Priest Jesus, mindful to teach His future Church, begins the solemn Mysteries with those sacred and familiar words: "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," and signs Himself with the sign of salvation? For it is the opinion of theologians that He did afterwards use the sign of the Cross in blessing the bread and the chalice.<sup>1</sup>

B. If after this He bows Himself down and humbles Himself before His Eternal Father, as His delegates at the holy altar shall do hereafter, never shall penitent saint have a heart bruised and contrite as His is in this hour. For He knows that He is now the Sinner, the Representative of the sinful race, that *the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all*. Everything belonging to the sinner—excepting always the guilt—is now His portion. *My iniquities, He can say, are gone over My head, and as a heavy burden are become heavy upon Me. I am become miserable, and am bowed down even to the end. I walked sorrowful all the day long* (Psalm xxxvii.).

C. Then we may ask too, does He on this hallowed night for the first time make known to His disciples the hymn of the angels which Holy Mary has had laid up in her heart since the first Christmas night: *Glory to God on high, and on earth peace to men of good-will?*

D. After this, if by example He is teaching Holy Church to predispose the minds of the faithful for the Holy Mysteries by some fitting instruction selected from the Old Testament, and some also from His own Gospel, we may ask what words He selects to be read from the ancient prophecies? Does He wish His disciples to be reminded by Malachy that the old priesthood of Aaron and the old sacrifices are now to pass away? *To you, O priests, that*

<sup>1</sup> See Father Cornelius à Lapide, *In Evang. St. Matt.* c. xxvi. 26.

*despise My name, and have said : Wherein have we despised Thy name ? You offer polluted bread upon My altar, and you say : Wherein have we polluted Thee ? In that you say : The table of the Lord is contemptible. If you offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil ? And if you offer the lame and the sick, is it not evil ? Offer it to thy prince if he will be pleased with it, or if he will regard thy face, saith the Lord of hosts. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts ; and I will not receive a gift of your hand. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles : and in every place there is sacrifice : and there is offered to My name a clean oblation : for My name is great among the Gentiles (Malach. i.).*

Or does He rather choose that they should hear some one of the revelations made to His Prophets concerning His Sacred Passion ? For if so, His Apostles will recall in after times what they hear to-night, and thereby understand that remembrance of His sufferings and Death will always be a most suitable preparation for receiving the Blessed Eucharist.

Possibly, too, He foresees how much their shaken faith will be repaired and strengthened, if at this hour to-morrow they shall call to mind that they had heard the terrible events of the day detailed in prophetic words such as those of Isaias. *There is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness : and we have seen Him, and there was no sightliness that we should be desirous of Him. Despised, and the most abject of men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with infirmity. Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows ; and we have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted. But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins : the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed (c. liiii.).*

Or, again, He may perchance think it well that they should hear those prophetic words of the Archangel Gabriel to Daniel which are now to have their fulfilment :

*Know thou therefore and take notice : That from the going forth of the word to build up Jerusalem again unto Christ the Prince, there shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. And the street shall be built again, and the walls in straitness of times. And after sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain, and the people that shall deny Him shall not be His. And a people with their leader that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary : and the end thereof shall be waste, and after the end of the war the appointed desolation. And He shall confirm the covenant with many in one week : and in the half of the week the victim and the sacrifice shall fail : and there shall be in the Temple the abomination of desolation, and the desolation shall continue even to the consummation and the end (c. ix.).*

E. After this we may perhaps also contemplate our Saviour bringing back to their minds, with great affection and very solemnly, words from His own Gospel. Surely it would be the moment to call back some of the wonderful words He had spoken at Capharnaum a year ago. *I am the Bread of Life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead. This is the Bread which cometh down from Heaven, that if any man eat of It he may not die. I am the Living Bread which came down from Heaven. If any man eat of this Bread he shall live for ever ; and the Bread that I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world.—Amen, amen, I say to you, Except you eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the Last Day. For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood abideth in Me and I in him. As the Living Father hath sent Me and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me the same also shall live by Me. This is the Bread that came down from Heaven. Not as your fathers did eat manna and are dead. He that eateth this Bread shall live for ever (St. John vi.).*

F. And then, as not many days ago, after saying to Martha, *I am the Resurrection and the Life*, He put the question: "*Credis hoc?*"—*Dost thou believe this?* so now in this solemn moment He may wish His Apostles to prepare for the Sacred Mysteries by making their devout profession of faith. *My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed. Credis hoc?*—Do you believe? *He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the Last Day. Credis hoc?*—Do you believe? When heretofore He addressed words akin to these to the father of the possessed child we read that immediately the afflicted father of the boy, crying with tears, said: *I do believe, Lord, help my unbelief.* May we then assume that in this hour of grace, this acceptable time, when the Sacred Heart of our Lord is pouring out its tenderness in exceptional profusion, and the Blessed Mother is with her all-powerful intercession pleading for her little flock, may we assume that they too, as the High Priest puts the solemn question, *Credis hoc?* with very devout tears give their answer: Yes, Lord, I do believe; I do believe?

G. Then as we observe that Holy Church in the Introit, the Gradual, the Offertory, and Post-Communion of the Mass, introduces short sentences from the Holy Books, which throw light on the Sacred Mysteries and increase devotion to the festivals in the souls of the faithful; so, too, our *High Priest, holy, innocent, and undefiled*, may wish to put His little flock in mind of some of the many prophetic sentences of the Old Testament, which are about to have now their fulfilment. Such would be, for instance, *Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not, but a Body Thou hast fitted to Me. Holocaust 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. x.).

Or again: *The sparrow hath found herself a house, and the turtle a nest for herself where she may lay her young ones Thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and My God. Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord* (Psalm lxxxiii.).

Or else: *Thou hast fed Thy people with the food of angels, having in it all that is delicious and the sweetness of every taste* (Wisdom xvi.).

H. So far in our contemplation we are helping ourselves as well as we may with pious and probable conjectures. Now we come to what is certain, that is, to the things revealed to us in the narrative of three Evangelists, in St. Paul's account of the special revelation vouchsafed to him; and also, we may add, in the Liturgy of the Holy Roman Church. For, as Father Coleridge has well observed, between the words of Consecration as they stand in the Roman Missal, and the words recorded in the Gospel, there is in all probability only this difference, that those in the Liturgy are the version preserved and recorded by St. Peter, and those of the New Testament are the form as preserved and recorded by the Evangelists and by St. Paul. The version which we find in the Missal is, we may observe, fuller than the others given in the New Testament. This is only what we might expect. For as the Gospel of St. Mark contains many sentences added by St. Peter, so too the Liturgy of the Roman Church, drawn up under his guidance, might well contain words omitted by others, but which his special gift of faith preserved and thought well to record. Thus it is, as has been said, that the word *Mysterium fidei*—"the mystery of faith," found nowhere else but in the Roman Missal, was, we are told, added as a sacred tradition preserved by St. Peter.

Let us then fix our attention now on the holy and inspired record of the Consecration service bequeathed to us.

### STATION III.

#### THE OBLATION AND CONSECRATION.

We have then five different accounts of the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist.

a. St. Matthew and St. Mark give a very brief account, and their narratives are almost identical.

b. St. Luke and St. Paul differ a little from St. Matthew and St. Mark, and agree together, though not in all details.

c. Then we have the Liturgy used in the Roman Church, which was drawn up under the guidance of St. Peter, and, as Father Coleridge observes, on account of the Church's sanction, may be considered to be well nigh as authentic as the Gospel narratives.

1. St. Matthew writes: "CŒNANTIBUS ILLIS"—*Whilst they were at supper Jesus took bread, etc. And taking the chalice He gave thanks, etc.*

2. St. Mark writes: "MANDUCANTIBUS ILLIS"—*Whilst they were eating Jesus took bread, etc. And having taken the chalice, giving thanks He gave it to them. And they all drank. And He said to them: This is My Blood, etc.*

3. St. Luke writes: *And taking bread He gave thanks and brake, etc. Do ye this for a commemoration of Me.*

*In like manner the chalice also, AFTER HE HAD SUPPED, saying, etc.*

4. St. Paul's account of the private revelation made to him is this: *The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, etc. This do for a commemoration of Me.*

*In like manner also the chalice, AFTER HE HAD SUPPED, saying, etc. This do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of Me.*

*For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink this chalice, you shall show the Death of the Lord until He come.*

In the Roman Missal we find St. Peter's narrative:

*Who (He) the day before He suffered, took bread into His holy and venerable hands: and raising His eyes to heaven, to Thee His Father Almighty, giving thanks to Thee, blessed, broke, and gave to His disciples, saying: Take and eat ye all of this. For this is My Body.*

*In like manner AFTER THEY HAD SUPPED (after the Supper) taking also this glorious (excellent) chalice into His holy and venerable hands, and also giving thanks to Thee, He blessed and gave to His disciples, saying: Take and drink ye all of this. For this is the chalice of My Blood, of the new and everlasting Testament, the mystery of faith: which shall be shed for you and for many unto the remission of sins.*

In these narratives we notice, as has already been observed, an apparent discrepancy.

For St. Matthew and St. Mark write: *during the Supper, while they were eating.*

But St. Luke, St. Paul, and the Roman Liturgy have the word, *after they had supped—after He had supped.*

How these statements, which appear to be contradictory, can be reconciled, has been explained in the beginning of the chapter.

Here then we must first notice what are the different ceremonies specified:

1. He took bread into His holy hands.
2. He raised His eyes to heaven.
3. He gave thanks.
4. He blessed.
5. He broke.
6. He gave to His disciples.
7. He said the sacred words.

In like manner:

1. He took the chalice into His holy hands,
2. And gave thanks.
3. He blessed.

4. He gave to His disciples.

5. He said the holy words.

A question at once presents itself.

Are we bound to understand that these ceremonies took place in the order in which they seem to be enumerated in the Liturgy?

For instance, must we believe that our Lord first broke the bread and afterwards pronounced the words of consecration?

Again, are we obliged to believe that our Saviour first distributed the morsels of bread to His Apostles and afterwards consecrated them? Theologians do not seem to recognise any obligation of adhering so rigidly to the letter.

All are no doubt agreed that the transubstantiation did not take place until our Lord had pronounced the words of consecration: *This is My Body*.

But whether these words were pronounced after the bread was broken, or before, is a question disputed. One of the contemplatives sometimes cited by Father Coleridge, the Abbess d'Agreda, states that in one of her visions she saw our Saviour first break the bread into portions and then consecrate it. Some theologians, on the contrary, think it more probable that He first consecrated the unleavened cake and afterwards divided the Sacramental Species.

St. Thomas of Aquin seems to take it for granted that He pronounced the sacred words slowly while blessing and breaking and distributing.

Our present notions incline us to think that if the bread were broken before consecration, and crumbs and particles cleared away, there would be less danger of consecrated particles being afterwards exposed to desecration.

Some few theologians have imagined that when our Saviour made the sign of the Cross, and *blessed (benedixit)*, He in that moment effected the Consecration; but, as has just been said, there can be no doubt that transubstantiation was not effected till our Lord pronounced the sacramental form: *This is My Body*.

This then is clear, that we cannot insist rigidly on the words as they stand, and maintain that our Blessed Lord went through the sacred rite in the order which seems at first to be suggested by the words.

This is made very manifest by what we read in St. Mark's version of the consecration of the sacred chalice. *And having taken the chalice, giving thanks He gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And He said to them: This is My Blood of the New Testament.*

According to the strict letter of this text the Apostles all drank of the chalice before our Lord pronounced the words of Consecration. This is utterly inadmissible.

## STATION IV.

*On the day before He suffered, He took bread into His sacred and venerable hands.*

We must observe that the priest who now consecrates according to the Roman Liturgy, begins by *reciting* what our Lord did and said—*He took bread into His sacred hands—lifting His eyes to heaven, and giving thanks—He blessed.*

Nor are we bound to suppose that our Blessed Saviour completed all these ceremonies in the few moments which the priest now occupies in narrating what He did. St. Peter in his version records what is omitted in all the other narratives, that Jesus stood, *lifting up His eyes to heaven to Thee, the Father Almighty.* Are we obliged to believe that this was only a momentary act?

A. As we are assuming, on good grounds, that our Lord is giving His Apostles the pattern and model according to which they are afterwards to do, we may contemplate Him holding the bread for some time in His sacred hands, and praying with His eyes uplifted, as the priest, directed by the sacred rubrics, does now at the Offertory of the Mass.

Again, the priest, who is the delegate of Christ Jesus, now prays as he offers the bread and wine to God before Consecration: "In the spirit of humility and with a contrite soul may we be received by Thee, O God; and so may our sacrifice be accomplished this day in Thy sight, that it may please Thee, Lord our God". These words are taken from the Old Testament, and are an extract from that prayer which Azarias made to God when standing with his two companions in the fiery furnace of Babylon: *For we, O Lord, are diminished more than any other nation; and are brought low this day for our sins. Nor is there at this time prince, or leader, or prophet, or holocaust, or sacrifice, or oblation, or incense, or place of first-fruits before Thee that we may find mercy. Nevertheless, in a contrite heart and humble spirit let us be accepted; so let our sacrifice be made in Thy sight this day that it may please Thee (Daniel iii.).*

B. Words, then, such as these we may contemplate our Lord devoutly pronouncing while He stands holding the bread in His holy hands, and with His eyes uplifted to His Eternal Father: *In a contrite heart and humble spirit let us be accepted: so let our sacrifice be made in Thy sight this day that it may please Thee.*

Then, too, we may bear in mind how in that one comprehensive prayer which our Saviour composed for us, the *Pater noster*, though the faithful throughout Christendom use the common reading of the words, and say, "Give us this day our daily bread," yet in the translation made by St. Jerome—the Church's chief interpreter of Holy Writ—which is adopted in the Vulgate, he, who was so profound and thorough a scholar in Biblical languages, renders the prayer in these words: *Give us this day our supersubstantial bread.*

Many commentators, indeed, bring reasons to show that this rendering coincides with the ordinary one, but others gather from the words *supersubstantial bread*, that our Lord wished our thoughts and desires to be turned not only to the bread that sustains the body, but also to the Bread of Life, the Bread of Angels. *I am the Bread from Heaven.*

C. This being so, may we not in contemplation picture to ourselves our Blessed Lord—with the bread in His sacred hands, and His eyes uplifted, and the heart of His Blessed Mother united to His own—saying aloud in the name of His fallen race this sacred family prayer, and the petition which on this hallowed night brings home so new and so sublime a meaning: *Our Father, Give us this day our supersubstantial Bread; give us the life-giving Body of Thy own Divine Son Jesus?*

D. So, too, we may assume that, in order to give His disciples a model for their future practice,<sup>1</sup> while standing with His eyes upraised, and holding in His sacred hands the bread and the sacred chalice, He prays most fervently for all those for whom He is about to die, the living and the dead; first for His little flock present, but, as He said a little later, *not for them only, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me.*

And then, as His disciples, no doubt, believe that it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, we may contemplate Him not forgetting the holy dead; and

<sup>1</sup> Father Barradius proves that Christ offered sacrifice, by thus reasoning. His mandate to His Apostles was this: "Hoc facite quod ego. At Apostoli obtulerunt, et illorum successores offerunt. Ergo et Christus obtulit: et ab illo didicerunt" (*Comment. in Evang.* lib. iii. c. xiv.). He takes for granted that from what the Church does now we may infer what Christ did then.

Father à Lapidè in like manner assumes that our Lord used the sign of the Cross in blessing the bread and the chalice, in order to furnish a model for His Church.

thus teaching His Apostles that the *clean oblation* is to be for ever offered as the Sacrifice of the New Law, both for the living and the dead.

But while, following the example of the saints, we try with the help of God's grace to fill up for ourselves some of the details not given in the Holy Gospel, we take care to remember always the word our Lord spoke a little later, *I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now; but when He the Spirit of Truth is come, He will teach you all truth.* How much, therefore, He taught His Apostles on this holy night concerning the Holy Mass, and how much He left to the Holy Spirit to complete and perfect, we can only reverently conjecture; as the Gospels tell us but little respecting the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist. It has been already said that there were good reasons why the Evangelists and the Apostles were, at the beginning, reserved in their teaching regarding the Adorable Mysteries.

*E. Taking bread He gave thanks.*

One thing, however, we may look upon as something more than a conjecture, that when, as we read, holding the bread in His venerable hands and with His eyes uplifted, our Saviour gives thanks to His Eternal Father, this thanksgiving is not merely a passing word. So much we may assume as a certainty. What form of thanksgiving our Lord used we are not told. But as grave theologians take for granted that He is giving His future Church the pattern to be followed—*Fac secundum exemplar*—it is possible that the glorious hymn of praise which we call the Preface of the Mass, may be either in part a reproduction of what St. Peter hears this night, or a hymn of praise modelled on what our Lord utters as He stands at the altar. We may try, then, devoutly to listen to the tones of His voice, so reverential, so full of love and devotion, as He slowly and solemnly repeats words such as the Seraphim say one to another, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of hosts.*

*F. This is My Body.*

*“O vos omnes, attendite.”* Oh, give heed now, and watch with your eyes, and with your ears listen; for the time that the blessed choirs of angels have been spending

in expecting ecstasy is past—the time that has reproduced in Holy Mary's heart the transport of that hour when she was awaiting the Birth of her Divine Son—it is gone by. The moment chosen by His Eternal Father is arrived; and Jesus holding the bread in His sacred and venerable hands, pronounces that word—more wonderful than the word which created all things in the beginning—*This is My Body*.

G. *This is My Body*.

And at once, foremost of all in Heaven and on earth, the Ever-Blessed Mother—for whose sake pre-eminently this wonderful word is spoken by the Lord—“Nothing hesitating in her heart,” but “with her whole heart believing”—says, as with perfect faith she adores: “I believe, my God: I believe, my Lord; my Son Jesus, I believe”. And in a new way, and beyond what has been heretofore, her spirit exults in God her Saviour.

H. *This is My Body*.

And with their Queen, the blessed angels in their noiseless ecstasy call on each other: *Come let us adore and fall down: for He is the Lord our God. Blessed, O Queen of Heaven, they add, Blessed is the fruit of thy womb.* And no mind at all have they to say proudly, “We will not serve the Hidden God in His littleness”.

I. *This is My Body*.

“Creative words,”<sup>1</sup> theologians call them, which, had the Sacred Body not been in existence, would have brought It into being. “*Sursum Corda! Attendite.*” With our hearts turned to the Holy Sanctuary let us consider them diligently.

In this moment, under the unchanged appearances of a little wheaten bread, the Lord Jesus is present on the altar. In His own hands He holds Himself, His Body, His Blood, His Soul, His Divinity.

J. *This is My Body*.

In union with the Blessed among women, and the holy

<sup>1</sup> “Si Corpus Christi non esset in rerum natura, ad prolationem verborum formalium Corpus Christi de novo produceretur” (Vasquez, in 4, disp. 11, ad 3).

angels, we too may humbly prostrate ourselves to say as fittingly as we can,

Adoro Te devote, latens Deitas !

Devoutly, devoutly I adore Thee,  
O Hidden God !

*I believe, Lord, help Thou my unbelief.*

Credo quidquid dixit Dei Filius :

What God has said believe I with  
all certainty :

Nil hoc verbo veritatis verius.

No truth more true than Truth's  
own word can be.

**K.** *In like manner, taking also the glorious chalice.*

Foreknowing, however, that on the morrow His Sacred Blood will be drained out of His Body, and wishing the Holy Mass to show forth till the consummation of the world this separation of His Blood from His Body in Death, again He puts forth the Divine power of His arm, again He proves now that He has for our sake become Man, *no word shall be impossible with God.*

Therefore, *in like manner*—in that same hour when the old Paschal supper was brought to an end for ever—*taking also the glorious chalice into His sacred and venerable hands—and once more giving thanks to Thee, O Father—He blessed—and gave to His disciples—saying, Take and drink ye all of this—For this is the chalice of My Blood—of the new and everlasting covenant—the mystery of faith—which for you and for many shall be shed unto the remission of sins.*

*He said, and they were made. He commanded, and they were created (Psalm cxlviii.).*

**L.** *This is My Body which shall be delivered for you (St. Paul, 1 Cor. xi.).* The same Body, the very same, that is to be covered with wounds, crucified, dead and buried.

Ave verum Corpus natum  
Ex Maria Virgine !  
Vere passum, immolatum,  
In cruce pro homine !  
Cujus latus perforatum  
Unda fluxit et Sanguine.

Sacred Body, truly born  
From the Virgin Mary's womb,  
Sacred Victim, bruised and torn,  
Dead and buried in the tomb—  
Body of the Crucified,  
While still hanging on the rood,  
Forth came from Thy wounded Side  
Cleansing water, saving Blood.

M. *This is My Body which is given for you* (St. Luke xxii.).

Given to you, and never to be taken away from you.

Given to you to be for ever near you on the altar.

Given to you to be your strength and consolation through life.

Given to you to be your Viaticum for the journey when death comes.

N. *This is My Body.*

My wounded Body: the remembrance of which shall scare away unholy images and chasten both soul and body.

O. *This is My Body. This is My Blood.*

And day and night they say to us: *See how He loved you!*

P. *This is My Body. This is My Blood.*

This is the price paid for us by our God! It tells us what we are worth in His eyes. *What exchange shall a man give to his God for his soul that cost so dear? Indeed, you are bought at a great price* (1 Cor. vi.).

Q. *This is My Body.*

“My crucified Body. Is it a small evil to render void the bitter Passion which My Body and My Soul endured for you?”

R. *This is My Body. This is My Blood.*

“My Body wounded for you! My Blood poured out for you! Oh, see and understand what sin deserves! what sin requires! *For if in the green wood these things be done, what shall be done in the dry?*”

S. *This is My Body. This is My Blood.*

“If I then have done and suffered so much for you, will you do nothing for Me? Nothing for yourself?”

*Think diligently upon Him that endured such opposition from sinners against Himself, that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds. For you have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin* (Hebrews xii.).

T. *This is My Blood which shall be shed for you and for many. For many, that is, for all. For Christ died for all* (2 Cor. v.).

Oh, let us never forget that all our neighbours are children of our Father as much as we are. For each one Christ Jesus gave His Body and His Blood.

*Destroy not him for whom Christ died* (Romans xiv.). Do not scandalise him for whom Christ died. Hate not him for whom Christ died. Do not judge him, do not condemn him, do not wrong him for whom Christ died. "And if *thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, go first to be reconciled, and then come to the altar of My Body and My Blood.*"

U. *This is My Body. This is My Blood.*

"My Body wounded; My Blood shed in presence of My Holy Mother, during our great struggle against Lucifer for your soul." For Lucifer had conquered our race; but by a man and a woman Lucifer our cruel enemy is conquered. *Thanks be to God Who gave us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ* (1 Cor. xv.).

V. *This is My Body. This is My Blood, the mystery of faith.* We see not, but we believe. *Blessed* (thrice blessed) *they who have not seen but have believed.* Blessed be God *Who has called us from darkness into His admirable light of faith* (1 St. Peter ii.).

W. *This is the chalice of My Blood of the New and Everlasting Covenant.*

In humble gratitude let us contrast this new covenant with the old one.

God said: *Moses alone shall come up to the Lord, they (Aaron and the Ancients) shall not come nigh: neither shall the people come up with him. And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord. Then Moses took half of the blood and put it into bowls: and the rest he poured upon the altar. And taking the Book of the Covenant he read it in the hearing of the people. And they said: All things that the Lord hath spoken we will do; we will be obedient.*

*And he took the blood and sprinkled it upon the people; and he said: This is the blood of the covenant which the*

Lord hath made with you concerning all these words (Exodus xxiv.).

In this Covenant, observe :

1. *They shall not come nigh.* They are kept at a distance.

Yet their boast was: *Neither is there any other nation that has Gods so nigh them as our God is present to all our petitions* (Deut. iv.).

*We are not kept at a distance.*

*Take and eat ye all of this. This is My Body.*

*Come to Me all you who labour and are burdened.*

2. In the Old Covenant the compact between God and His people is hallowed and sanctioned and ratified in the blood of calves.

With us our Lord makes a new covenant of love, and has it hallowed and made sacred and inviolate in the Blood of His Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

X. *The New and Everlasting Covenant.*

Whenever there is a covenant, there are two who bind themselves.

1. Our Blessed Lord binds Himself to be to us a Jesus—a Saviour; to atone for all our sins; to win every necessary grace for us; to forgive us not seven times, nor seventy times seven times, but as often as we repent; to be our companion through life, yoked with us, bearing with us *the burden of the day and the heat*; to be our food; to be our ransom; to be our eternal reward.

2. What do we covenant in return? To believe in Him; to hope in Him; to love Him; to be sorry for having sinned against Him; for His sake to love our brethren as ourselves.

Y. The faithful at times renew solemnly their baptismal vows. Religious men and women renew at stated times the vows of their profession.

When we approach the holy altar to receive the Sacred Body of the Lord, shall we not refresh our remembrance of the New and Everlasting Covenant of love that exists between our God and ourselves?

Z. *This is My Body. This is My Blood.*

Corpus Christi, salva me,  
Sanguis Christi, inebria me.  
Passio Christi, conforta me.

## STATION V.

## HOLY COMMUNION.

A. From the sacred words of the Liturgy which we have been considering, it seems that between the Consecration and the Holy Communion there is no interval.

As soon as ever our Lord God is become by transubstantiation in a fit state to be the Food of man, He makes haste to give Himself to each of His little ones. He loses no time. For *with desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you.*

Se dat suis manibus.

B. "*Attendite.*" We may reverently therefore stay looking with our eyes at the devout demeanour of the holy Apostles as they receive their first Communion. Perchance we see tears of most humble love trickling down the weather-beaten faces of the fishermen.

C. And then the first Communion of the Ever-Blessed among women, the Mother of God.

May we devoutly speculate and ask ourselves: Did her Divine Son with His own hands give Himself to her? Or did He wait a little while till He had completed the ordination of His first priests, and with the holy chrism consecrated three of them as Bishops, and then, in order to teach His little flock the dignity and majesty of His Christian priesthood, commission His future Vicar, or her future Apostle, John the Beloved, to feed her with His Body and His Blood? *Domine, Tu nosti.*

In one way or the other, we may contemplate her receiving her Divine Son in the Adorable Sacrament, and the blessed angels gathering round their Queen, and, through St. Gabriel as their spokesman, saying to her in the old words now made quite new, now an entirely new canticle: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Thy Son Jesus is with thee, as He was in thy virginal womb."

Full of grace! Yes, and immeasurably more full than then. Blessed among women! Yes, and more blessed now, and far more full of grace than in those days gone by, happy and holy as they were.

For every day she has grown in grace. The Blessed Fruit of her womb, Jesus, is with her, more united with her, better known to her, more loved by her immeasurably now than then.

D. We too may, despite our unworthiness, draw near and greet her in this hour of new joy and new wonders. We too may reverently say, "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Blessed is thy Hidden God." She meanwhile in her secret soul is perchance saying, with new meaning and new transports, *My soul doth magnify the Lord, my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Jesus.*

## SCENE VIII.

### STATION I.

#### HOLY ORDERS.

*Do this in remembrance of Me.*

Here the question meets us, At what time during the offering of the *clean oblation* did our Lord raise His Apostles to a participation in His priesthood, and what holy rite did He use in conferring this great Sacrament of Holy Orders upon them?

As has already been said, the letter ascribed to the holy Pope and martyr, St. Fabian, but held to be of doubtful authenticity, makes mention of a primitive tradition that our Saviour, in consecrating His Apostles, made use of holy chrism, and taught them to use it in time to come. And though this seems but scanty information, and not entirely trustworthy, yet it is in accord with the statements of those holy contemplatives who tell us in their writings that when permitted in prayer to see something of what passed in the Cenacle, they noted in many details a striking resemblance to the sacred ritual which, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Church, the Bride of Christ, makes use of in the Holy Sacrifice and the Sacraments.<sup>1</sup>

What prayers, therefore, and what holy ceremonies our Saviour employed in ordaining His priests we know not. But the ceremonies which His Church makes use of in the administration

<sup>1</sup> See *The Dolorous Passion*, by Sister Emmerich; *The Mystic City of God*, by M. d'Agreda.

of Holy Orders are so fitting and so devotional that we are inclined to picture to ourselves our Lord, our great High Priest, *the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls* (1 St. Peter ii.), handing down to His Church the main features at least of her beautiful ritual. If, on the contrary, we think, as some holy men do, that Jesus, being Lord of all things, chose to give the great sacramental graces with very scant outward ceremony, then St. Paul says to us, *Let every man abound in his own sense*; since Holy Church teaches us no doctrine on these points.

*Do ye this in memory of Me.*

We may here take notice that in the Liturgy we do not find exactly these words, but others akin to them, after the consecration of the chalice: *These things, as often as you shall do them, you shall do in memory of Me*, but neither these words nor any other like them after the consecration of the bread. In St. Paul's account, however, of the revelation made to him, we read after the consecration of the bread: *This do for the commemoration of Me*; and again, after the consecration of the chalice: *This do ye, as often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of Me*.

St. Matthew and St. Mark omit these words in both places.

In this instance, as in so many others, we see how all the inspired writers are independent witnesses who do not blindly copy one another; and all these variations, when carefully considered under the guidance of Holy Church, help to bring the revelation of our Lord more and more into the full light.

In our present case the omission of these important words by St. Matthew and St. Mark casts no doubt whatever on their authenticity. Neither does St. Luke's testimony prove in any way that our Lord said the words only after the consecration of the bread. Nor can we conclude from the Liturgy of St. Peter that our Saviour only pronounced these words once after the consecration of the chalice. Each sacred writer sets down what the Holy Spirit wishes him to record, and our Lord has told us that *the Spirit breatheth where He wills*, and we may add also "as He wills".

St. Matthew and St. Mark set down many great truths, and also omit very many. St. Luke and St. Paul are prompted by the Holy Spirit to record other important truths, and they also omit many words and acts of our Saviour of great moment. Some of these omissions St. John many years afterwards supplies. But much more, very much more, is not committed to writing at all, but is by the Holy Spirit stored in the minds of the Apostles, and by their preaching and the teaching of Holy Church, is handed down from age to age.

*Do ye this in memory of Me.*

It is quite certain then that, as we find in St. Peter's Liturgy, our Saviour, after He had consecrated both the bread and the chalice, pronounced these words, or the other kindred form which we find in the Roman Liturgy: *These things as often as ye shall do, you shall do in memory of Me*. If He had only said them at this

one time, He would by this one utterance give to His new priests the power to do all that He had done.

But to St. Paul it is revealed that after the first consecration, He said the words, *This do for the commemoration of Me*; and again, after the consecration of the chalice, He said, *This do ye as often as ye shall drink for the commemoration of Me*. This account given by St. Paul may perhaps be considered the most complete. For inspired writers may omit words or events; and no Evangelist professes to tell us all that concerns our Lord. But it seems less likely that an inspired writer would add to what our Lord said. Consequently, as St. Paul states, according to all the best Catholic authorities, that it was revealed to him that our Blessed Saviour twice pronounced the Ordination form, *Do this for the commemoration of Me*, once after the consecration of the bread, and again after the consecration of the wine, we may receive this as an accurate account.

St. Paul is the only one who has preserved for us the additional words, *For as often as you shall eat this bread, and drink the chalice, you shall show the Death of the Lord, until He come* (1 Cor. xi.). Yet these words are most important, for they set before us briefly and clearly that the *clean oblation*, the unbloody Sacrifice of the Mass, is to be a substantial representation and continuation of the Sacrifice on Calvary; and it is to be the *juge sacrificium*, the everlasting Sacrifice of the New Covenant, until the end of the world.

*Do ye this in memory of Me.*

The question might be asked: Did our Blessed Lord pronounce these words over each of His new priests separately, or only once over them collectively? It is quite clear that He to Whom all power is committed, and Who is the Giver of all good gifts, could confer grace in either way. As Holy Church is always guided by the Holy Spirit, the practice of the Bride of Christ naturally inclines us to think that He too would repeat the sacramental form over each separately. On the other hand, the form as handed down to us by St. Paul, St. Luke, and the Liturgy, applies to all collectively.

*Do ye this in memory of Me.*

In the present Liturgy of the Church, as well as in St. Paul's account and St. Luke's, these words follow immediately the words by which the bread and the chalice are consecrated. This question may therefore also be asked: Must we necessarily conclude that our Lord also pronounced them immediately after giving the Blessed Sacrament to His Apostles? Or may we suppose that some interval of time elapsed during which He used other holy ceremonies, such as the application of the chrism, and then pronounced the form of ordination? From all the sacred writings before us it seems as if our Lord pronounced the words, *Do ye this in remembrance of Me*, immediately after consecrating and distributing the Blessed Eucharist. If so, it

was at this moment that He conferred the great fundamental power of the priesthood. The anointing, therefore, with chrism, and other ceremonies, may either have come before, as a preparation, or followed after the conferring of the sacerdotal office.

The two other great powers of the priesthood, the faculty of forgiving sins, and the commission to preach the Gospel, our Lord chose to confer after His Resurrection.

A. *Do this in remembrance of Me.*

We may then contemplate the Divine High Priest of the new and everlasting Covenant, as He stands with His eyes upraised to His Eternal Father, stretching His sacred hands over the eleven chosen ones—possibly over each of them separately—and praying meanwhile with a strong cry of His Heart, which is heard at once *for His reverence*, that the Holy Spirit, the *other Paraclete*, may come down upon them.

B. Then, too, if we adopt the old tradition, or the revelations of holy mystics, we may watch Him while with the chrism which He has already blessed, He consecrates and sanctifies their hands for the holy work they will have to do at the altar.

As we watch, we may, with St. Peter, very heartily say: *Not only my feet*, Lord Jesus, but wash and sanctify my hands and my head, that I may be wholly clean.

C. Other ceremonies He perhaps adds to inform their minds and to signify the great and principal power of the Priesthood which He is now committing to them. Perchance He delivers into their hands the patena, or dish, with the unleavened bread upon it; and the chalice, containing the juice of the grape.

D. Be this, however, as it may, of one thing we are certain, that He raises them to their heavenly dignity, and constitutes them *Priests for ever according to the order of Melchisedech* in that moment when He most feelingly and solemnly pronounces the words: *Do ye this in memory of Me.*

E. "*Attendite.*" *Sursum corda!*

Let us mark how to this heavenly command given by her Son, the Ever-Blessed Mother listens in a rapture of

reverent love. For she knows that a power is at this moment given to poor frail men even greater in some respects than her own sublime privilege. For she gave birth to her Divine Child once, only once, and in one favoured spot; but the priest shall, with a creative power, give to Christ Jesus His Eucharistic Life upon the altar<sup>1</sup>—*Corpus Domini conficere*, is the word sanctioned by Holy Church—every hour, from the rising to the setting of the sun, and from the sundown throughout the still hours till the daybreak. Every hour, and in every land under the sun, the priest can pronounce the word of power: *This is My Body. This is the chalice of My Blood. "In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum"* (Psalm xviii.).

"O my Lord, and my God, O my Son," her Mother's heart cries out, "*Fiat, fiat*, may Thy most holy will be done, and may Thy *priests be clothed with justice.*"

F. Now, too, let us contemplate the blessed choirs of Angels and Archangels, of Seraphim and Cherubim, all most humble of heart and most charitable, all so unlike their fallen companions whose malicious jealousy worked the ruin of men; all full of ineffable contentment because God has lifted up needy man from the earth, and from the dunghill raised up the poor to set them among the princes of His people. They are singing a new song to *glorify God, Who gave such power to men* (St. Matt. ix.). "It is truly meet and just and equitable and salutary," they say in gladness, "that everywhere and in all times we give thanks to Thee, O Holy Lord, O Father Almighty, O Eternal God, through Christ our Lord and our King. For He is Man, and the Son of Man. And His Blessed Mother, a daughter of Eve, is our Queen. And through this Man and this Woman the serpent's head shall be crushed; and fallen man is lifted high above the earth."

"*Solis presbyteris, solis presbyteris,*" they now repeat

<sup>1</sup> "Est actio substantialiter productiva substantiæ Corporis et Sanguinis Christi sub speciebus, ut bene probat Suarez" (disp. i. sect. 4, 5), Ven. P. Lancicius, *De Missa*, lib. ii. cap. 2.

with most humble delight. To priests, to men, to priests only, is this heavenly office committed.

G. Oh! let us make a little leisure to study devoutly and contemplate, as St. Ignatius teaches us, each word of St. Thomas's Eucharistic hymn :

Sic sacrificium istud instituit,  
Cujus officium committi voluit,  
Solis presbyteris, quibus sic congruit  
Ut sumant et dent ceteris.

"'Tis thus, 'tis thus He instituted this Sacrifice—the unbloody, the everlasting Sacrifice of the Altar'—in which the ministry is confided to priests, only to priests; whom therefore it behoves to receive themselves, and to distribute to others, the Body and the Blood of the Lord."

#### STATION II.

*This do for the commemoration of Me. For as often as you shall eat this Bread and drink the Chalice, you shall show the Death of the Lord until He come (1 Cor. xi.).*

A. "*Attendite.*" Give thought to every word, let not (any) part of the good gift pass thee by unheeded.

The priest is to do precisely what the Lord has done. He is to say: *This is My Body. This is My Blood.*

*This is My Body that shall be delivered for you: that is given to you. This is My Blood, that shall be shed for you and for many.*

And in that same hour the true Body of the Lord and His Most Precious Blood shall lie upon the altar, and Jesus Christ, God and Man, shall be there truly and really present. And the altar shall become Mount Calvary. And Jesus, the same Jesus to-day as He was then—His Heart, His compassion, His pleading for us all the same—shall once more, as Priest and as Victim, offer Himself to His Eternal Father for us poor sinners, and as earnestly and lovingly as on Calvary, He will say again: *Father, forgive them.*

B. And so men, raised and consecrated to the priesthood

according to the order of Melchisedech, shall, till the consummation of the world, show forth the Death of the Lord; represent the Death of the Lord; exhibit to the faithful the Sacred Body and the Sacred Blood, inseparable now, it is true; and yet, to the eye, as if they were separated as on Calvary, in order that men may better remember Jesus and His bitter Death.

C. Oh! if the Shepherds said: *Let us go over to Bethlehem and let us see the Word that is come to pass*: have we not better reason earnestly to call to one another: "Let us make haste to the altar, for the consecrated priest is about to show and to represent truly and substantially the Death of the Lord"? Which spectacle ought to draw our hearts more strongly, His Birth or His Death? He Himself has answered the question. *I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself* (St. John xii.).

*Oh, foolish and senseless people!* God's messenger may well say to us, if the serpent deceives us and induces us not to hasten to Holy Mass, and still more, not even to go reluctantly when commanded under pain of great sin.

D. *Do this in remembrance of Me. For as often as you shall eat this Bread and drink this Chalice, you shall show the Death of the Lord.*

"*O vos omnes, attendite.*" Oh! let us join most fervently in the cry of our Lady, and the earnest prayer of all the blessed angels: *May Thy priests, O Lord, be clothed with justice, and may Thy saints rejoice* (Psalm cxxxi.).

May the Blessed in Heaven be all gladdened because His priests on earth are *clothed with justice*.

May they not be saddened and made very sorrowful because "Thy priests, O Lord, are not *clothed with justice*".

But can there be sadness or sorrow in Heaven? True, indeed, sadness and sorrow may not be the words to express the disappointment and dismay in the Heart of our Lord, and the hearts of all the Blessed who compassionate Him, when His chosen priests are faithless to Him. We use, for want of better, human language, as God Himself is obliged

to do when He speaks to us. God, it is written, *was touched inwardly with sorrow of heart, and He repented that He had made man*, when He witnessed the wickedness of men before the Deluge. But what was wickedness then, in that land of banishment with the curse lying upon it, compared with sin now in the Holy Sanctuary? sin at the Altar? sin beside the Tabernacle? Does the loving Heart of Jesus repent at times that He said that word to men: *Do this in memory of Me?* Does He repent that He said: *My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed?*

E. *Do ye this in memory of Me.*

Yes, truly it behoves us to pray heartily and perseveringly: *May Thy priests, O Lord, be clothed with justice.* For it is written: It shall be, *like people, like priest* (Osee iv.). That is to say, there will be a necessary mutual influence; a holy priest will help many to holiness, and a holy people will by their prayers secure the inestimable blessing of having holy priests.

F. *Do ye this in memory of Me.*

Our Mother the Church establishes in each season of the year Ember days of prayer and penance, in order that the faithful may have good priests, *clothed with justice.* Besides this public supplication, in which we should join most fervently, it behoves us all, every family, every household, every individual, to have our own private Ember days, in which we shall cry to God to give us the priceless blessing of good and holy priests, since the sheep so very much depend upon their shepherd.

G. *Do ye this in memory of Me.*

*Pray ye*, our Saviour said to His disciples, *Pray ye to the Lord of the harvest that He send forth labourers into His harvest* (St. Matt. ix.).

The priest is Christ's labourer. Let us then give ear to our Lord's petition, even as He hears our petitions, and let us pray earnestly with Him and His Blessed Mother that His priests may be *clothed with justice.*

(a) *Clothed with justice*, yes; in order that they may be

just at the altar to Christ Jesus—ever *discerning* the Body of the Lord which they hold in their hands: and ever by their reverence and devotion teaching the people that they are *showing the Death of the Lord*.

(b) *Clothed with justice*, yes; that they may be just to themselves—not taking the *honour to themselves* unless they be *called as Aaron was*; and walking cautiously lest, when they have preached to others, themselves *should become castaways*.

(c) *Clothed with justice*, yes; that in the pulpit they may be just to Christ's little flock, and sincerely *preach the word*, and be *instant in season, and out of season*; and *reprove, entreat, rebuke, in all patience and doctrine*; and *do the work of an evangelist, and fulfil (their) ministry* (2 Timothy iv.).

(d) *Clothed with justice*, yes; that in the sacred tribunal the priest may be to the faithful:

A *judge* who shall judge justly, who never will bind when he ought to loose, and never loose when he ought to bind; but will always pronounce a judgment that Christ can ratify in Heaven, and always be a *faithful dispenser of the mysteries of God*.

A *father, who can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err* (Hebrews v.).

A *physician* trained and expert, to heal wounds skilfully and lovingly.

A *doctor whose lips shall keep knowledge*, and the faithful shall seek the law at his mouth, because he is the *angel of the Lord of hosts* (Malach. ii.).

(e) *Clothed with justice*, yes; that beside the bed of the dying the priest may most justly and carefully and diligently provide all the helps which the Lord hath left for His little ones in their great need; that he may be there to *pray over the sick man the prayer of faith*; to *anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord*; to take care that the dying in that supreme moment has ample absolution, plentiful Indulgence, and the Most Holy Viaticum, the Bread of Heaven,

to strengthen him for the great journey: and the continual prayers of the bystanders so long as Satan has still time to deceive.

(f) *Clothed with justice*, yes; that he may be just to the holy dead, and call on the bereaved survivors not to waste precious moments in lamenting—even as others who have no hope—but to hasten with him to the altar, full of firm belief that *it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins.*

(g) *Clothed with justice*, yes; that when his own time shall come, and the angel whispers in the middle of the night, *Come, and give an account of thy stewardship, for now thou canst be steward no longer*, he may in that last hour be able to say humbly and hopefully, *I have fought a good fight*; and that at the judgment-seat our Lord may with gladness say to him: *Come, thou good and faithful servant, because thou wast faithful over a few things, I will set thee over many things*; and not be compelled to say to him, touched with infinite sorrow of Heart: *My flock you did not feed. The weak you have not strengthened, and that which was sick you have not healed; that which was broken you have not bound up, neither have you sought that which was lost* (Ezech. xxxiv.).

H. *Do this in remembrance of Me.*

The priest, then, is to be Christ's familiar; most intimate with Him; one who lives on Calvary; showing the Death of the Lord.

I. *May Thy priests be clothed with justice.* For, as so much is given to them, assuredly much shall be required of them. Therefore must we all have great compassion on the priests of the Lord, for heavy is the burden they bear.

J. The priest is one among the prelates for whom St. Paul pleads: *Remember your prelates—obey your prelates, for they watch as being to render an account of your souls; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief. For this is not expedient for you* (Hebrews xiii.).

K. *This is not expedient for you.*

No: surely it is not expedient for you that your priest, your shepherd, should be unfaithful to his charge. Therefore in your prayers plead for him that he *may be clothed with justice*, and prove himself a prudent and a faithful servant.

L. *Remember your prelates.*

The priest is the candle not to be put under a bushel, but set on a candlestick. He is necessarily prominent and conspicuous. If he has defects and shortcomings, they cannot be hidden; but are we therefore to go about spreading the news of his faults and failings, as if it were good news that we had to tell? Charity *does not rejoice in iniquity*. If we discern faults and sins in the priest of God, our Lord will ask us at the Judgment, "What did you do to better him, to heal his wounds? What alms did you give by prayer and penance to one whose need was so sore?" For the priest is one of *the mighty*, who if they sin *shall be mightily tormented*.

Indeed, it is *not expedient for you*, it is no gain to you if your priest, your pastor, is unfaithful. Have compassion on him.

M. The faithful by their prayers often secure to themselves the great grace of having zealous and holy priests for their pastors.

N. How many Catholic families owe the blessing that rests on their home to the alms they willingly gave to educate well-chosen children for the priesthood!

O. Of priests more than others is it true, *As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me*. It was a saying of St. Francis of Sales that a Catholic who passed through a family lawsuit without grievous sin deserved to be canonised. A quarrel with a priest may easily prove as great a calamity as a bitter lawsuit. Oh, hard indeed is it to reverence God, if, rightly or wrongly, we lose reverence for His delegate. The Holy Spirit, therefore, joins God and God's priest together: *With all thy soul fear the Lord and reverence His priests. With all thy*

strength love Him that made thee, and forsake not His ministers. Honour God with all thy soul, and give honour to the priests (Ecclus. vii.).

### STATION III.

#### THE POST-COMMUNION.

*And when they had said a hymn, they went forth to the Mount of Olives (St. Mark xiv.).*

A. The first Holy Mass is now near its close. All the essential work is now consummated. The *clean oblation* has been offered, and Christ the High Priest has with His own hands given Himself to His little flock to be their food. *Se dat suis manibus.*

From the words of St. Mark, *When they had said a hymn, they went forth*, we need not, so our guides and masters teach us, conclude that Christ and His disciples said a hymn and immediately went out; it is enough if we believe that they did say a hymn of thanksgiving before they left the Cenacle. Even if St. Mark had been silent on this point, as the other Evangelists are, and had said nothing to us of this thanksgiving, we might safely have taken it as a certainty that this little flock, the chosen company which is to be with the blessed angels in Heaven, and which has been taught by our Blessed Saviour Himself, would not, after their first Communion, go away abruptly, like the Galilean lepers, without a hearty thanksgiving.

B. It is recorded that the prescribed thanksgiving service at the end of the legal Paschal supper consisted of the 113th Psalm: *In exitu Israel*, and the four following Psalms: the Psalm *Dilexi* (cxiv.), the Psalm *Credidi* (cxv.), the Psalm *Laudate Dominum omnes gentes* (cxvi.), and the Psalm *Confitemini Domino* (cxvii.). If then our Blessed Saviour thinks proper, now that the new Pasch has been celebrated in His Kingdom, to make use of these holy Psalms as the Post-Communion hymn of thanksgiving,

we may devoutly contemplate the Blessed Mother of God listening to those inspired words which now have so new and so sublime a meaning.

If, at the coming out of Israel from Egypt, *the earth was moved at the presence of the Lord, and the mountains skipped like rams, and the hills like the lambs of the flock*, how is the earth, how are the mountains, and the hills, and the valleys to express their gladness now that the Lord Jesus has entered into His rest and taken up His abode on earth till the consummation of the world? If men allow Him to have His will, there shall not be a hamlet on the mountain, nor a village in the valley, without its altar, where the Hidden God shall live in His resting-place, in the midst of His beloved little flock.

The Psalmist says exultingly that in those bygone days of the ancient Pasch *He turned the rocks into pools of water, and the stony hills into fountains of water*. What is that miracle when set beside the works done in the Cenacle to-night? Or the work that these consecrated fishermen are now empowered to do?

C. It is Pope Urban VIII. who wrote those words: "If there be aught in this nether world which the blessed in their heavenly home might envy (supposing that envy could reach them there), surely that one thing would be the Sacrifice of the Mass, thanks to which men here below enjoy by anticipation a Heaven on earth; since they have before their eyes and hold in their hands the Lord of Heaven and earth".

May we not then be permitted to think of the blessed Saints now in glory, St. Peter, St. John, St. Paul, St. Benedict, St. Ignatius, St. Alphonsus, as looking down with a holy and heavenly envy on their successors still here in the flesh, who are privileged to stand at the altar and offer to God the *everlasting Sacrifice*, the *clean oblation*?

D. Let us try to contemplate the reverence and love with which the Blessed Mother and the newly ordained priests and the faithful disciples listen to our Lord reciting

with them the thanksgiving psalms. They heard Him at Bethany thank the Eternal Father for giving Him power to raise Lazarus from death. What is the resurrection of Lazarus to the miracle of boundless love, which the Eternal Father has permitted Him to work to-night? And oh—infinitely more surprising!—He has given full permission to these poor fishermen and their successors to work the same to the end of time.

E. "*Laudate Dominum omnes gentes*"—the prescribed Paschal thanksgiving continues—*All ye nations, praise the Lord, for (now) His mercy is confirmed on us.*

This is the new and everlasting covenant in His Blood. As long as we see the holy altar in our midst, and the priest according to the order of Melchisedech offering the everlasting Sacrifice, and our Hidden God reposing in His resting-place, we may be quite sure that our Father in Heaven has not forgotten His covenant of mercy and love. *His mercy is confirmed upon us.*

In the old days, indeed, even God's faithful servants thought that He had forgotten the covenant He had made with David. *Thou hast rejected and despised. Thou hast been angry with Thy anointed. Thou hast overthrown the covenant of Thy servant. Thou hast profaned his sanctuary on the earth* (Psalm lxxxviii.). They did not then understand that the promises made to David have their real fulfilment in Jesus the Son of David. To Holy Mary St. Gabriel revealed that her Son Jesus was to be, in the highest and heavenly sense, the successor of David and the true and real David. *The Lord God shall give to Him the throne of David His Father, and He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of His Kingdom there shall be no end* (St. Luke i.).

Therefore, though the Christian people sin, the Lord God will stand by His covenant: *If they profane My justice, and keep not My commandments, I will visit their iniquities with a rod, and their sins with stripes. But My mercy I will not take away from Him* (the true David), *nor will I*

*suffer My truth to fail. Neither will I profane My covenant, and the words that proceed from My mouth I will not make void. Once I have sworn by My holiness: I will not lie unto David: His seed shall endure for ever and His throne as the sun before Me (Psalm lxxxviii.).*

Our Lord Jesus then is the true David; the Son of Man; our Brother; the Head of our fallen family. God's covenant is made with Him on our behalf, and made in His Sacred Blood. By virtue of this covenant, truth shall last in the Church to the end of time: *Nor will I suffer My truth to fail; and the everlasting Sacrifice shall endure with us to the end. The Hidden God will never abandon His resting-place on the altar. His throne shall be as fixed and stable as the sun before Me. His mercy is confirmed on us.*

F. With tenderness then, and devotion beyond all our thoughts, does the Blessed Mother unite with the thanksgiving of her Son.

*Give praise to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever.*

*Let Israel now say that He is good, that His mercy endureth for ever.*

*Let the house of Aaron now say, that His mercy endureth for ever.*

*Let them that fear the Lord now say, that His mercy endureth for ever (Psalm cxvii.).*

For henceforth, from the rising of the sun to the sunset, and from the sunset to the dawn, *in every place there is sacrifice and there is offered to My name a clean oblation, for My name is great among the Gentiles (Malach. i.).*

Wheresoever the altar of the Holy Sacrifice stands, and the Hidden God resides in His humble dwelling-place, we may be sure that the word of the Lord will come true: *My eyes shall be open, and My ears attentive to the prayer of him that shall pray in this place. For I have chosen and have sanctified this place that My name may be there for ever, and My eyes and My Heart may remain there perpetually (2 Paral. vii.).*

G. And to help the devotion of His little flock, and to give His Apostles the model for the future Liturgy and the psalmody of His Church, it is possible that our Lord introduces short and suitable antiphons from Holy Writ between the Psalms and through the Post-Communion service. Never before could His faithful disciples understand, as they do now, such words as these: *Neither is there any other nation so great, that hath gods so nigh them as our God is present to our petitions* (Deut. iv. 7).

*How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts. My soul longeth for the courts of the Lord* (Psalm lxxxiii).

*The Lord ruleth me and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture. He hath brought me up on the water of refreshment.*

*Thou hast prepared a table before me against them that afflict me.*

*Thou hast anointed my head with oil; and my chalice which inebriateth me, how goodly it is* (Psalm xxii.).

H. And so the Sacred Pasch of the New Law is instituted :

In hac mensa novi regis,  
Novum Pascha novæ legis,  
Phase vetus terminat.

In this divinest Feast  
Of our new King and Priest,  
All ancient rites have ceased.  
The new Pasch takes their place.

#### STATION IV.

##### THE END OF HOLY MASS.

A. *Gather up the fragments lest they be lost. They gathered up therefore* (St. John vi.).

Our Blessed Lord, we may assume, teaches His newly ordained priests to see carefully that no consecrated particles are left exposed to desecration. The unseen angels and archangels most reverently assist them in their holy task. *Let no part of the good gift overpass thee* (Ecclus. xiv.).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It is stated by some writers that a devout and becoming shrine was found in the Cœnaculum, where the Most Holy Sacrament was reserved to be a consolation and great joy to the Blessed Mother and the disciples after the Resurrection.

We may also here *gather up* a few scattered and fragmentary thoughts concerning what has taken place.

B. Does it not well repay the faithful who have taken the trouble to master the Latin language—the language of Holy Church—when they find themselves able to understand and devoutly relish that masterpiece among Christian lyrics, the *Lauda Sion* of St. Thomas of Aquin ?

We may linger in spirit in the Cenacle, at the Sanctuary of the first Holy Mass, where our Lord Himself and His Blessed Mother and the holy Apostles and the other privileged saints have partaken of the Heavenly Banquet ; and there at our leisure contemplate, as St. Ignatius teaches us in his second Method of Prayer, the words of this glorious hymn :

Lauda Sion salvatorem,	Dogma datur Christianis,
Lauda ducem et pastorem,	Quod in carnem transit panis,
In hymnis et canticis.	Et vinum in sanguinem.

Bone pastor, panis vere,  
Jesu nostri miserere:  
Tu nos pasce, nos tuere :  
Tu nos bona fac videre  
In terra viventium.

C. Among the inspired Psalms we have one that is an eulogy of David because he determined to build a temple for God.

*O Lord, remember David, and all his meekness.*

*How he swore to the Lord, he vowed a vow to the God of Jacob.*

*If I shall enter into the tabernacle of my house : if I shall go up into the bed wherein I lie :*

*If I shall give sleep to my eyes, or slumber to my eye-lids,*

*Or rest to my temples, until I find out a place for the Lord, a tabernacle for the God of Jacob (Psalm cxxx.).*

What wonder that David is largely blessed by God for such a zeal for His house ! But how would his heart be stirred up to persevering efforts were he in our circumstances, and a place were wanted for a home, for an altar, for a tabernacle for Christ Jesus !

What is the Jewish temple when set beside the Christian sanctuary, where the perpetual lamp burns to tell us that the Word made Flesh is abiding there!

Blessed the poor, we say; but blessed also, thrice blessed the rich man who is privileged to raise an altar and a throne for Christ Jesus in the midst of His people!

D. Let us here again call to mind how in the days of Aggeus the Prophet, the Lord was angry with His people after their return from captivity, because in their eagerness to build homes for themselves, they said that they were too poor to build a house for Him. *Is it time for you to dwell in ceiled houses, and this house (My house) lie desolate? I called for a drought upon the land and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon the wine, and upon the oil, and upon all that the ground bringeth forth, and upon men, and upon beasts, and upon all the labour of the hands. Why this chastisement, saith the Lord of hosts? Because My house is desolate, and you make haste every man to his own house (c. i.).*

God did not then want a Home on this earth of ours as He does now. It is an absolute necessity for Him to dwell now in the midst of His people, that He may be to them their Jesus, offering up *the everlasting Sacrifice* for them, and feeding them with His life-giving Body and Blood. Should we suffer as much as we do through false religions, and from the death-struggles between class and class, if men did not neglect the House of God and His holy altar?

E. St. Paul calls the attention of the Christians at Corinth to the fact that there are many sick among them and many deaths. *There are many infirm and weak among you, and many sleep (1 Cor. xi.).* He adds that these sicknesses and deaths are not a merely natural result of bad water or infected air; but a chastisement sent on account of the profanation of the Blessed Sacrament which was going on among them.

They neglect to *prove* themselves; that is, to examine

and cleanse their consciences before receiving the Blessed Eucharist. They received It without *discerning the Body of the Lord*; that is, without distinguishing the Bread of Heaven from common bread; and by these unworthy Communions, he tells them, "they are eating and drinking *judgment to themselves*".

"O God, Who in this wonderful Sacrament has left us a memorial of Thy Passion, grant us, we beseech Thee, so to venerate the Sacred Mysteries of Thy Body and Thy Blood, that we may ever find in ourselves the effects of Thy Redemption. Amen."

Anima Christi, sanctifica me.

Corpus Christi, salva me.

Sanguis Christi, inebria me.

Passio Christi, conforta me.

F. *Do this in memory of Me.*

When Jesus said to the man sick of the palsy, *Arise*, and he at once arose; *the multitudes seeing it, feared and glorified God that gave such power to men* (St. Matt. ix.). If so, where are we to find a new canticle to express fear and amazement, and thanksgiving and great joy, now that the Lord has in the Cenacle given to men the supereminent sacerdotal power over His own Sacred Body and Precious Blood? *Rejoice unto Him with trembling* (Psalm ii.), the inspired Psalmist wrote in the days of old. Was that a prophetic admonition to the little flock in the Cenacle and to all of us?

G. Are the blessed angels trembling while with their perfect charity they glorify God Who hath given to men this ineffable power which He has not given to the Cherubim or Seraphim? Are they trembling when they see the extent and the fulness of the power given to men over their King?

Might they not expostulate: "O gracious Lord, our King, hast Thou in the excess of Thy condescension and love forgotten the counsel given by Thy Holy Spirit? Give

not to son or wife, brother or friend, power over thee while thou livest (Ecclus. xxxiii.). And yet it is not to brother or friend only, but to every priest, worthy and unworthy, that this power over Thee is given!"

H. And—what aggravates the risks to our King and our Lord—the power once given, it is for ever. The priest is so made one with Christ Jesus, so much a second self, an *alter Ego*, that neither man nor angel can sunder what God has joined. Man is made a priest for ever.

In every place, from sea to sea, the consecrated priest carries with him his power over Thee, our Lord! Neither can time take it from him; nor even death, which spares so little. For if called back, like Lazarus from the grave, Thy priest, Lord Jesus, would bring back his priesthood with him, for he is a priest for ever. Death breaks for ever the bond of union established by the Sacrament of Matrimony; but touches not the sacerdotal character.

I. *Semper et ubique*. Always and everywhere, as Holy Church tells us, we ought to thank Thee and love Thee, our God. Certainly, even though no one else cared to do it, Thy priest at least, always and everywhere ought to *publish the memory of the abundance of Thy sweetness—I will praise Thy name for ever, yea, for ever and for ever* (Psalm cxliv.), since for ever and for ever he holds his priestly consecration.

J. The prophets of the Lord, the very greatest and holiest among them, had their power of working wonders, only *pro hac vice*, as we express it, that is, for this one occasion, not to use it at their pleasure always and everywhere. "Why, then, Lord God, great and terrible, dost Thou give Thy priests power to work their stupendous marvels always and everywhere?" Would it not be only wise and just and prudent and salutary to limit this perilous power to a few, exceeding few, and even then to license and sanction only for a few great festival-days? He answers: *My thoughts are above your thoughts* (Isaias lv.).

K. "Thy two chosen champions who are to fight Thy

battle in the latter days—Thy *two witnesses*, Thy *two olive-trees*, Thy *two candlesticks*, that stand before the Lord of the earth (Apoc. xi.),—they are to have power exceeding great when they return: *These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy, and they have power over waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with all plagues as often as they will.*

“Yet the very least of Thy priests has a power not given at all to these great Saints.

“The power to turn water into blood is not like the power to change the grape-juice into Thy Sacred Blood, O Lord. And besides, those glorious Saints will hold their exceptional powers only during the one thousand two hundred and sixty days of their ministry; but every one of Thy priests has his powers for the remainder of his days on earth.”

L. *Do ye this in memory of Me.*

The Venerable Father Lancicius writes that he knew intimately some holy servants of God who had received the extraordinary grace of working miracles from time to time; and he testifies that he always noticed that these privileged men, when they began to receive their exceptional favours from Heaven, became much more anxious to avoid every word or deed or thought that could offend the Lord their God. If so, he argues, what is to be the solicitude of a priest who receives his power and privilege, not from time to time, at distant intervals, but holds it always and everywhere!

Alas, is the sunlight less a blessing from our good God because we enjoy it every day? Is God's charity to us less precious because it is perpetual? Can it be right and natural to love Him less because His bounty is not merely fitful and occasional?

M. *Do ye this in memory of Me.*

On the first Holy Thursday night, when Jesus says these words, He says them only to friends; for to all, whom He consecrated on that night, He said: *You I have*

*called friends.* Surely this is what ought to be. The man who is to have this marvellous power over the Lord Jesus Christ—so that when he says, Come, the Lord must come, and be in his hands upon the altar—such a man ought to be nothing else but a most intimate, familiar and tender friend. Who but the Blessed among women was fit to be Mother to the Divine Child? who but Holy Joseph fit to be the foster-father of Jesus? And yet the priest has a power akin to theirs. He, too, has the Body and the Soul and the Divinity of the self-same Lord Jesus in his keeping. Surely none but a true and most tender-hearted friend should approach the altar to be consecrated for such an office. *Whence is this to Me?*

N. *Do ye this in memory of Me.*

St. Paul adds: That not even the best of friends, unless he be a man *that is called by God as Aaron was*, can intrude himself into this priestly dominion over the Lord Jesus Christ. What is written of all power and authority is true ten-fold here: *He that taketh power to himself unjustly shall be hated* (Ecclus. xx.).

Alas! alas! with what unanimity, with what a sorrowful intensity, but yet an unflinching, unhesitating intensity, will all the blessed saints and angels, and even the Mother of Mercy herself, unite in the final anathema pronounced against him who was a consecrated priest of Jesus Christ, and yet loved not Jesus Christ.

O. *Do ye this in remembrance of Me.*

The memory turns to what the heart loves; and the tongue speaks of what the heart loves.

The priest is to be a friend who truly loves Jesus: and it behoves him to come to the altar full of remembrance of Christ Jesus, of His Life, of His Death, of His Sacred Heart. Out of the abundance of the heart, his memory is to call up countless words and works of Jesus; and his tongue is to speak of Jesus.

The priest of Jesus Christ cannot easily be a midway neutral man, an indifferent, neither hot nor cold. If not a

true friend and intimate familiar, how shall he escape being a traitor?

P. For as often as you shall eat this Bread and drink the Chalice, you shall show the Death of the Lord till He come (1 Cor. xi.).

The Holy Mass is to be the *Memoriale Mortis Domini*. One reason why our Blessed Saviour instituted this Most Holy Sacrament under two kinds, is that He wished the Holy Mass to be, we may say, a scenic representation of His Death.

The Sacraments are outward signs of an inward grace. The Holy Mass, too, *the clean oblation*, is to be an unbloody representation and perpetuation of the Sacrifice which was offered with so much shedding of Blood on Calvary.

At the time of His Death, His Blood had been well-nigh drained out of His Body, by the Agony in the Garden, the Scourging, the Crowning, the Crucifixion. The spear that pierced His Side brought out the few drops remaining.

The separation of His Blood from His Body, or His Soul from His Body, can never take place again: *Christ rising from the dead dieth now no more. Death shall no more have dominion over Him* (Romans vi.). But our Saviour wished to represent the separation of His Sacred Blood from His Body. This is better done by our having the Most Holy Sacrament under two kinds, and by our hearing the words, *This is My Body. This is My Blood.*

Holy Church makes a very resolute stand against all false teachers who pretend that they who receive under one kind receive only half a sacrament.

All the faithful know through her teaching that if Christ were not whole and entire under either kind, He would not be present with those who receive under both kinds. If the Sacred Host were nothing but the lifeless Body of Christ, and if the chalice contained nothing but His Sacred Blood, He would not be present and living either under one kind or under both. Under either kind, therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ is truly received.

But under the appearance of bread the Body is present by its own right, and by virtue of the sacred word: *This is My Body*. The Precious Blood is only present under the form of bread by the right it now possesses of inseparable companionship with the Sacred Body. Had Mass been offered up while our Lord was dead, and after the Blood had been drained from His Body, the Sacred Blood would not have been present under the form of Bread.

Q. Before retiring from the Sanctuary of the first Holy Mass, we may reverently ask the question: Did our Blessed Saviour make known to His little flock the thanksgiving hymn of His own Most Holy Mother?

It is the will of His Eternal Father and His own that it shall be the evening-song of His future Church till time

is done. This is decreed: and so, *Day telleth unto day* the words of her Canticle: *And night unto night* passes on the knowledge of them. *There are no speeches nor languages* in which the song of the Mother of God is not heard. The *sound is gone forth into all the earth*, and her words *to the ends of the world.*

Did our Blessed Saviour wish to commence Himself the use of this Vesper song? Did He wish to give gladness unspeakable to the listening choirs of angels by adding on to the Post-Communion hymns of thanksgiving—this song of praise, so sweet and so becoming—*Magnificat anima mea Dominum*?

Sit jucunda, sit decora,  
Mentis jubilatio.

## SCENE IX.

### THE DISCOURSE AFTER MASS.

As has been said, we are following, while we contemplate the scenes in the Cenacle, the order suggested by Father Coleridge, according to which, besides the short discourse by which our Saviour prepared His Apostles for the Blessed Eucharist and for their Priesthood, He spoke many more parting words after the Holy Mysteries were ended. Probably they were addressed only to the Apostles.

It falls in well with this arrangement that our Lord commences His Post-Communion exhortation with words that might well be suggested by the Holy Sacrifice just celebrated.

### STATION I.

*I am the True Vine* (St. John xv. 1).

A. "*Attendite,*" for we are permitted to be present in spirit. "May the Blessed Mother and the holy disciples pray that we may have ears to hear, and that we may not merely be hearers but doers."

Therefore, the juice of the grape, which His little flock have just seen consecrated, is created to be a type or image of His Most Precious Blood. When the Eternal Father creates the vine *that wine may cheer the heart of man* (Psalm ciii.), He has in His thoughts something better

than the poor image; He has the True Vine, and the Sacred Blood of His Son Whom He will send. *I am the True Vine*, and My Blood is the Wine that shall inebriate the hearts of the elect. This chalice is the *beautiful thing* of His Church, filled with the *wine that germinates virgins* (Zach. ix.). Inebriated with the wine which they will drink in gladness from *the fountains of their Saviour*, the disciples of Jesus will, with heavenly courage, conquer the flesh, the world, and the powers of Hell.

If He is the Vine and we the branches, what wonder that He wishes to nourish us with His Sacred Blood? Were the Lord's Supper only bread and wine, how could it effect all that the branch requires from the vine?

## STATION II.

*I am the True Vine and My Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He will take away; and every one that beareth fruit He will purge it that it may bring forth more fruit (vv. 1, 2).*

A. Here is a short history of the Church—a short history, but a contemplation for many days.

We can then divide men into two great classes:—

1. Branches that bear no fruit, which after a time are cut off and cast away.

2. Branches which bear fruit, and which God is pruning and purging that they may bear more fruit.

Why, we sometimes ask impatiently, why is God afflicting me? why has He taken from me my child? my lands? my friends? We have the answer here. The careful, the all-wise Husbandman is purging and pruning, that the fruitful branch may bear more fruit. *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.*

“*Attendite,*” let us give heed, and lay up this Divine word in our hearts. This world is not our home. All that goes on here is but preparation for the eternal life in our Father's everlasting home.

## STATION III.

*Now you are clean by reason of the word which I have spoken to you (v. 3).*

Already, after the washing of their feet, He had said to them, *You are clean*; but now, after the new word that He has spoken to them, *Take ye and eat, for this is My Body; take and drink ye all of this, for this is the chalice of My Blood*, they are still more clean; their souls are filled with much more grace.

“Grant us, most merciful Jesus, so to reverence the Most Sacred Mysteries of Thy Body and Thy Blood, that we may ever experience in us the fruit of Thy Redemption. Amen.”

## STATION IV.

*Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me. I am the Vine, you the branches; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing. If any man abide not in Me, he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire, and he burneth (vv. 4—6).*

A. *Abide in Me, and I in you.*

“The Sacrament, that is, the outward sign and ceremony, passes quickly; but the union effected between your soul and Mine, your heart and Mine, your body and Mine, is not to pass away: *Abide in Me, and I in you.*”

B. *Abide in Me, and I in you.* His earnest longing is that we may be as anxious to abide with Him as He is to abide with us. *For the Lord hath chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel for His own possession (Psalm cxxiv.).* Ought this to be impossible or too difficult? According to human wisdom, who is the gainer by this union? Our Lord, or our souls? In the Holy Mass we pray that we may be “partakers of *His* Divinity, Who has vouchsafed to share

our humanity". What an exchange! We give Him the poor rags of our human infirmity, and in exchange we ask to be clothed with His Divine perfections. The holy Psalmist had good cause to expostulate with our Lord, saying: *What is man that Thou art mindful of him? or the Son of Man that Thou dost visit him?* Yet He not only visits us, but wishes to abide in us.

C. "But, Lord Jesus," each of us may say, "even if Thou visitest Thy faithful servants and takest delight in abiding with them, yet, *whence is this to me*, my God, that Thou shouldst come to me, and wish to abide in me? *Lord, I am not worthy that Thou enter under my roof*" (St. Matt. viii.).

D. The wonder is partially explained when we remember the common saying that "love goes downwards"; that a good father and mother care more for their child, than their child for them. Our Father Who created, is infinitely more fond of His child than His child is of Him. There is no one but His own Divine Son Who knows Him and loves Him adequately and fully; and next to Him the Ever-Blessed Mother.

E. *Abide in Me, and I in you.* "*Se nascens dedit socium.*" He is born purposely to be our inseparable companion; two yoked together; two labouring together in the field; two grinding together in the mill. *All whatsoever you do in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him* (Coloss. iii.). We must mark that word *by Him*. In the Holy Mass the priest is taught to say that, "Through Him, with Him, and in Him, we give glory and honour to God". We have to keep close to Him, close as the chickens under the wing of the hen. Nay, closer much than this; close as the branch to the vine. Every true disciple is that man described in the 90th Psalm, who *dwellleth in the aid of the Most High, and shall abide under the protection of the God of Jacob*.

Holy Church teaches us to pray "that all our words

and works may begin always from Thee, O Lord, and by Thee be happily ended". The sap from the vine is ever to be giving life to us. All our words and works must be begun and ended by virtue of a grace coming from His Sacred Heart.

F. *Abide in Me, and I in you.*

It is especially during prayer that we must abide with Christ Jesus; and St. Ignatius' method of contemplation helps very much to this. If we are watching Him and listening to His Prayer in the Garden, or on the Cross, and dwelling on His words, and trying, as infants try, to utter in our poor way His words, and to say them more and more after His manner, virtue is all the while coming out from Him to us, and this method of praying is immeasurably more efficacious than if we pray alone and apart from Him.

G. *Abide in Me, and I in you.*

One moment when we specially need to remain close to Christ our Lord, is when we have committed some sin, or some fault. For Satan then always tries to drag us down deeper by a sin against hope. *Væ soli—Woe to him that is alone, for when he falleth he hath none to lift him up* (Eccles. iv.). If we sin, O my Lord, must we leave Thee and go away? Blessed St. John says not so: *My little children, if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just* (1 St. John ii.). If we go away from Him, where shall we find another to plead for us? It is a most powerful help towards rising when we have sinned and lost in part our relish for God, to remember that if *we* are fickle, *He* is not. If *we* are tired of Him, *He* is not tired of us. If *we* lose hope in ourselves, *He* has not despaired of us. *For charity hopeth all things.*

H. *He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit, for without Me you can do nothing.*

*Unless the Lord build the house, in vain have they laboured who built it* (Psalm cxxvi.). If the Apostles and disciples are to work greater wonders than He worked, this

is only because He vouchsafes to work in them and by them. St. John in his Gospel writes (c. iii.): *Jesus abode there and baptised*; but in chap. iv. we find these words: *Jesus Himself did not baptise, but His disciples*. From these two statements it is clear that when they baptise, He baptises; when they absolve, He absolves; when they consecrate, He consecrates. St. Paul also explains this to the Corinthians, who are forming parties and saying: *I am Paul's, I am Apollo's*. What then, he asks, *is Apollo? what is Paul?* And immediately answers: *The ministers of Him Whom you have believed*. The members, the instruments, the mouthpiece of Jesus Christ. *Therefore I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase* (1 Cor. iii.). And if Christ is not abiding in His minister, when he speaks words or preaches, the words are only the noise of the *sounding cymbal*. "*Vivit vero in me Christus*"—*But Christ is living and working in me* (Galat. ii.).

"*Sine tuo numine, nihil est in homine*." Without the assisting grace of Thy Holy Spirit, O Lord, there is nothing at all in men. "*Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam*" (Psalm cxiii.). "For Thy own Name's sake, bless our poor efforts to help our neighbours."

I. *Without Me you can do nothing.*

If then we want to bear fruit, when we correct children or servants, or argue with Protestants, or exhort sinners to a better life, we must first take care to be abiding in Christ, and to have Him abiding with us. Not only every Apostle, but every Christian is to be, in a certain sense and a true sense, a Saviour, a living branch on the Vine, bearing good fruit.

J. *Without Me you can do nothing.* We are like paralysed creatures. We cannot lift hand or foot, or speak a word, unless helped by God. If I walk, "*etenim manus tua deducet me*" (Psalm cxxxviii.)—*Thy hand shall lead me; Thy right hand shall hold me*. In our supernatural life, we are still more helpless without our God. *No man can say the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost* (1 Cor. xii.).

K. *Abide in Me, and I in you.* We sometimes tire

of our friends, if they stay too long with us, but our God never tires of us while we stay with Him. He only wearies of us when we leave Him by sin. Is it not time that we grow quite weary of being away from Him? and cease to be tired of being with Him? If He is to be our Joy, our Heaven, our God throughout eternity, how is it that we cannot find contentment in Him here?

L. *If any man abide not in Me, he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire, and he burneth.*

By the mouth of Ezechiel, our Lord has taught us how worthless is a vine branch, cut off from the stem: *Son of Man, what shall be made of the wood of the vine: Shall wood be taken of it to do any work? or shall a pin be made of it, for any vessel to hang upon? Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel* (c. xv.). He wishes us to contemplate attentively and not hurriedly, this picture of a man who has not the grace of Christ in him. He may have great beauty, great strength of body, and many eminent talents, and a high position, and large possessions, and many followers and servants; but if he has not the life of grace in him, he is a vine branch cut off and withered, quite worthless in God's eyes, and fit for nothing but the fire. He will be thrown aside as utterly valueless, and remain for ever and for ever an outcast thing in the darkness of *the land of oblivion* (Psalm lxxx.). *Thou shalt be fuel for the fire. Thou shalt be forgotten. I the Lord have spoken it* (Ezech. xxi.).

M. Once more we must bring to our minds the everlasting gratitude with which our Saviour will bless us, and love us with a special love if we have, during our exile here, helped Him to rescue the souls which He redeemed at so great a price, from being cast away for ever as a withered branch. "Oh," He says to us with all the earnestness of His loving Heart, "*Tantus labor non sit cassus*—Help Me, that all the love with which My Father created, and all the love with which I redeemed, may not be in vain and void."

STATION V.

*If you abide in Me and My words abide in you, you shall ask whatsoever you will, and it shall be done unto you (v. 7).*

Our Blessed Saviour is adding on word to word in order to move them and to move us to make perpetual the union with Him begun by the Holy Eucharist. We often complain that our prayers are not heard. Who is to blame? Does our Blessed Saviour forget His promises? Is He liable to fickle changes? We may be quite sure that *He* does not forget, nor change His mind, but *we* forget how St. James warns us that when we pray we must ask aright (c. i.). St. Paul, too, tells us that *he who sows sparingly, shall reap sparingly* (2 Cor. ix.). Our Lord's faithful servants who wish much to abide in Him and to have His words abiding in them, take care to remove from their souls things that necessarily drive our Lord away, and then they are not disappointed in His promise: *Ask whatsoever you will, and it shall be done unto you.* It is but a repetition of an older promise: *Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart* (Psalm xxxvi.).

STATION VI.

*In this is My Father glorified, that you bring forth very much fruit, and become My disciples (v. 8).*

Here He adds the motive which weighs most with His own Sacred Heart. "My Father is glorified if you bring forth very much fruit. In the sight of all the fallen angels, in the face of the great world that makes war with Satan against God, My Eternal Father is glorified; and all His creatures are obliged to own that He has been a good Father, and that He acted wisely and most lovingly in allowing His Divine Son to become your companion, your ransom, your food, and your reward, when they see that My Passion and Death are not void, but bear great fruit in your souls."

“ O Sacred Heart of Jesus, give us a great desire to glorify our Father in Heaven by bearing very much fruit, and to be *in spirit and in truth* (St. John iv.) Thy disciples.”

STATION VII.

*As the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you.*

*Abide in My love* (v. 9).

A. Still He is urging them and urging us to strive always to render perpetual the intimacy established in Holy Communion. He is labouring to draw us on to His great commandment: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.*

B. *As the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you.*

What a meditation! *Why art thou sorrowful, O my soul? why dost thou trouble me?* Where is he that complains of being lonely and abandoned? Let such a one only find a little time, and allow these words of Jesus Christ to sink into his soul: *As the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you.* For if there is even one person who loves you with a great love, with a love that you can never measure, with a boundless love, with that inconceivable love wherewith a Father infinitely good loves His Son infinitely deserving, can you be really lonely, really abandoned?

Your sadness, your trouble, your depression, exist only because you never find time to listen to such a word as this, and ponder on it, and lay it up in your heart: *As the Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you.*

C. *Abide in My love.*

How incessantly, and with what subtle arguments the father of lies works upon us to persuade us that we have no right to love our God! that love is not for us! Let us be wise and make leisure, and give heed most attentively to this word of Jesus Christ: *Abide in My love.* “Live habitually in the thought of My love for you, and in returning love to Me. In the morning and at nightfall, and in the working hours of the mid-day; in your winter and your summer, in your dark days and bright days, *Abide in My*

love." Never must we forget that the one great commandment is, that we are to love our Lord. We must not serve God as an austere master, but take delight in Him. If we have a letter to write and a prayer to say, and always from disinclination put the prayer aside to another time, we do not take delight in our Lord. If when we are bound to go to prayer, a voice easily persuades us to arrive as late as may be without grievous sin, we do not delight in the Lord.

D. *Abide in My love.*

As an all-powerful God loves us with an infinite love, what wonder that He uses all His authority and commands us to love Him?

Is it tyranny to demand love from us? If He had commanded us to serve Him most diligently and perseveringly, every day and all day long, but forbidden us sternly to love Him, our lot would have been a sad one.

Kings require their slaves and servants to obey and serve very diligently, but command them most severely not to presume to fall in love with the royal children. Such service may be very hard; but when Jacob *serves* and *loves* at the same time, we read that the seven years of service *seemed but a few days because of the greatness of his love* (Genesis xxix.).

Any one who loves truly, and is truly loved, is strengthened by this love to bear many troubles. For this reason, among many others, we must say with intensity: *Our Father, hallowed be Thy Name.* Blessed be our good God, because He has *commanded* us to love Him. If He had only *permitted* us to love Him, this would still have been infinite goodness and condescension: but when He loves us and *commands* us to love Him, this earth is no longer the valley of tears, the land of banishment. It is the outer court of Heaven.

E. If our God does so love us, how could He do otherwise than give us His Body and His Blood as our food? A Lord's Supper consisting of mere bread and wine was never the invention of His Sacred Heart.

## STATION VIII.

*If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love, as I also have kept My Father's commandments and do abide in His love (v. 10).*

He wishes for love, and for true love, and therefore teaches them and teaches us what is the safest and surest test of true love. It is to keep His commandments with some share of that filial fidelity wherewith He did His Father's will. If the commandment to love our God were taken away, the other commandments would not be at all a light burden or a sweet yoke; but so long as our hearts are warmed by filial love, and we can say in the spirit of love: *Our Father, may Thy will be done on earth cheerfully and thoroughly as in Heaven, His burden is light, and His yoke is sweet.*

## STATION IX.

*These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and your joy may be filled (v. 11).*

How often we turn away from words of our Lord and complain that they are *a hard saying!* Let us then rest here a little while, and allow this great truth to take root in our souls, that whenever He asks for a sacrifice from us, or for some self-denial, or for obedience to His commands, He is always speaking that *My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be filled.* It is His way to offer the worst wine first, and the sweet and excellent wine after, if we let Him. When we deny self, when we rob ourselves to give an alms, we console unspeakably the Heart of our Lord, because we give Him a plea for blessing us, a right to enrich us. For, as has been already explained, His Heart is yearning more to give blessings than the mother in labour to bring forth her child. When therefore we do some act which gives Him the necessary excuse for giving us more grace, then He has His desire that *My joy may be in you, and your joy may be filled.*

STATION X.

*This is My commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you (v. 12).*

They are to abide then in that love and union established in Holy Communion, and they are to prove and maintain their love by keeping His commandments. Now, what are His commandments? They are all summed up in this New Commandment which He has given to them this night: *That you love one another, as I have loved you.*

*This is My commandment ; My special commandment ; My new commandment.* Here is the great fruit that Holy Communion is to produce. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is a fire. *God is love* (1 St. John iv.). He does not always wish us to remain after Holy Communion with Magdalen at His feet, seeking to enjoy that *conversation* (which) *hath no bitterness, or His company in which there is not any tediousness, but joy and gladness ;* but oftentimes the work He has for us to do is like St. Peter's: "If thou lovest Me, *feed My lambs, feed My sheep*".

STATION XI.

*Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends (v. 13).*

A. But now He Himself is going to lay down His life not for friends, but for men who are enemies to Him: *The Just for the unjust*: and this is His new commandment, that we love one another as He has loved us.

B. One of our Lord's promises this night is that the Holy Spirit will teach them many things which they are not ready for at present. Is not the Heroic Act which Holy Church, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, encourages us to make, a greater act of love than it would be to die for a friend?

STATION XII.

*You are My friends, if you do the things that I command you (v. 14).*

In family life a servant does not rise to be a friend because he does his master's bidding. In the army a soldier who obeys does not become the friend of his commanding officer. *Oh, how good and sweet is Thy Spirit, O Lord, in all things!* (Wisdom xii.). But the fact is that we are not only His servants, but His children also: and He with infinite partiality allows immeasurably more than full value to all we do; and holds us to be His true friends if we merely do, like faithful servants, what He wills: though He knows quite well that He wills nothing but what is entirely for our good.

Another reason why He is so exceedingly indulgent to us is because He sees how Lucifer through hatred of Him persecutes us.

#### STATION XIII.

*I will not now call you servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord does. But I have called you friends, because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father I have made known to you (v. 15).*

A. *I will not now call you servants.*

He is loving to the end; revealing more and more the tenderness of His Heart. It is indeed a fitting Post-Communion discourse.

How could He any longer treat them only as servants now that He has fed them with His own Sacred Flesh and Blood, and made them one with Him? This establishes a relationship between Him and them more intimate than the tie between mother and child, or man and wife.

B. And what does He desire but to have *us* also always as His friends? What is His wish but to speak intimately to *us* also, and disclose to *us* all that He has heard of His Father? How consoled and delighted He is when we are willing to listen to Him!

O hateful father of lies! O servant full of malice! O murderer from the beginning! how fatally have you deceived us whenever you persuaded us to devote all our time and

thought to trifling, and to have none to give to conversation with our Divine Master, Who is longing to teach us whatsoever He has heard of His Father! "Alas! alas!" the blessed in Heaven lament, "the good God, the wise God, the great God, the God of all power and majesty, on Whose face the angels long to gaze, is not good enough to content poor deluded men. They must have the refuse of the earth and the husks of swine to make them happy."

C. What a true friend and benefactor to other men he is who makes leisure and listens to the secrets of Christ Jesus, and is afterwards able to spread truth and grace among many!

#### STATION XIV.

*You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you* (v. 16).

A. If a prince marries a peasant's daughter, it is a great comfort to her, and a great honour to her, and a good ground for trust and confidence, if she hears her husband say to her: *You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.* You did not seek me for my wealth and position. You did not intrigue to win this marriage. I chose you because I valued you.

So is it a strong ground for great confidence when we hear our Lord say: *You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.* If the future wholly depended on our choice in the past, there would be no sure footing, as our will and our tastes are so fickle; but *I have chosen you*, and I do not change. "*Beatus quem elegisti*" (Psalm lxiv.).

B. Again, when a prince chooses a peasant girl as his bride, he may not know the defects in her character, nor some flaws in her past social history: but when our Lord chose us, He knew us thoroughly and most intimately; *He needed not that any man should give testimony of man; for He knew what was in man* (St. John ii.). Therefore as He knew all the worst of us when He chose us, this is firm and solid ground for lifelong hope. St. Paul reminds us of this ground of hope, that it was not when we were good

that Christ died for us; but *when as yet we were sinners* (Romans v.). He knew us thoroughly, and still He chose us. As then He is all wise, He could not make a foolish choice. And as He is unchangeable, He will not suddenly repent and cast us away. *I have chosen thee, and have not cast thee away* (Isaias xli.).

#### STATION XV.

*I have chosen you and appointed you, that you should go and should bring forth fruit; and your fruit should remain* (v. 16).

A. What He says to His Apostles is in proportion true of each of us: *I have chosen you, that you should go, and should bring forth fruit.* It is not God's design that we should go to Heaven alone. *To every one of them He gave commandment concerning his neighbour* (Ecclus. xvii.).

Those in the Church, those in the Ark, must stretch out their hands to those perishing outside. *Wo unto me if I preach not the Gospel* (1 Cor. ix.), St. Paul wrote. So, in due measure, wo to us if we help not perishing souls.

B. *I have chosen you that you should bring forth fruit, and your fruit should remain.*

Are we bringing forth some good fruit that will live after us and endure? If we give an alms for the education of a good priest; if we give an alms for the building of a church or a school; if we give an alms for the printing of a good book, we are doing a good that will endure. The Holy Ghost writes of the wicked: *Their fruits shall be unprofitable and sour to eat, and fit for nothing* (Wisdom iv.); and their lament in the everlasting prison-house is this: *We also being born, forthwith ceased to be, and have been able to show no mark of virtue, but are consumed in our wickedness* (Wisdom v.).

C. Another question is: "Have I brought forth any evil fruit that will remain?"

One of our great poets has written this true word, true in more senses than one: "The evil that men do lives after

them". If we have ever occasioned a scandal that lasts and continues to injure souls, or if we had hindered some good work that would have produced lasting fruits, we have sore need of that grace given to Zacheus, who said: *If I have wronged any man, I restore him four-fold* (St. Luke xix.). *From my secret sins cleanse me, O Lord, and from those of others spare Thy servant* (Psalm xviii.). Our good Cardinal Wiseman said before he died that it consoled him to think that he had not hindered good.

STATION XVI.

*That whatsoever you may ask the Father in My name, He may give it you* (v. 16).

One reward, then, of those who bring forth much fruit is that their prayers are speedily heard: *Loose the bands of wickedness; undo the bundles that oppress: let them that are broken go free, and break asunder every burden. Then shalt thou call and the Lord shall hear. Thou shalt cry and He will say, Here I am* (Isaias lviii.).

STATION XVII.

*These things I command you, that you love one another* (v. 17).

Here is the scope and aim of all our Lord's teaching. Here is the great fruit of Holy Communion, that our hearts learn from the Heart of our Lord to love others and bring forth fruit in their souls. Seeing that our Saviour so often returns to this precept, and that, too, in these closing hours of His life when all His words are more precious, what wonder that the disciple whom He loved had in his old age only one sermon: *Little children, love one another!*

STATION XVIII.

*If the world hate you, know that it hath hated Me before you. If you had been of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you* (vv. 18, 19).

A. *You are not of the world.*

The *world* is a vast association, gathered together by Lucifer out of all countries and classes and conditions of men, and out of all religious denominations. The old belong to it, and the young are members. Protestants, High and Low Church, Methodists, Jews, Buddhists, and Catholics are all willingly admitted. The children of the Catholic Church are specially welcome. Why so? because traitors can damage the cause of Christ more than open enemies. The *world*—this vast association, has a creed and a code of its own. This creed and code of the *world* is: irreconcilable hostility against the doctrine of Christ crucified, that we must deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow Him. St. Ignatius, adhering to the Gospel of our Lord, teaches that *we are to use creatures*—as we use medicines—*inasmuch as they are a help to salvation; and that if they are no help, but a hindrance, we must rid ourselves of them.*

The world, taught by Lucifer, detests this doctrine; and preaches loudly: *Come, let us enjoy the good things that are present; let us crown ourselves with roses before they be withered; let none of us go without his part in luxury* (Wisdom ii.). The world's creed is that riches, pleasures, and honours are a heaven, and to be loved and enjoyed for their own sake.

Consequently, the world is ever at enmity with Jesus. *Because He is become a censurer of our thoughts. He is grievous unto us even to behold: for His life is not like other men's, and His ways are very different. We are esteemed by Him as triflers; and He abstaineth from our ways as from filthiness, and He preferreth the latter end of the just, and glorieth that He hath God for His Father. Let us see then if His words be true. Let us examine Him by outrages and tortures. Let us condemn Him to a most shameful death* (Wisdom ii.).

This is a declaration of war to the bitter end. And our Lord's response is: "*Væ mundo*"—*Wo to the world!* (St. Matt. xviii.). And when the compassionate Heart of

our Lord is compelled at last to utter this word: *Wo to the world!* there is more terror in that short word than in all the threats that the hostile world can utter.

This much then is clear, that between Christ and the world there is war as active as it can be. What are the consequences that follow from this?

B. *First.* A very comforting one; that if Satan, *the ruler of the world of this darkness* (Ephes. vi.), hates us and persecutes us and troubles us with temptations, it is simply and entirely because he first hated Christ our Lord. *If the world hateth you, know that it hath hated Me before you.* He has no quarrel with us, save that we are created by God, and redeemed by Christ; God's children, and God's image. If, then, our troubles and temptations come on us because we come from God and belong to God, our Blessed Lord will know well how to fight for us and protect us. *He will overshadow thee with His shoulders; and under His wings thou shalt trust* (Psalm xc.).

C. *Secondly,* as the war is raging so fiercely—*the world hateth you*—and with such determination on both sides, *neutrality is out of the question on this earth*, which is simply a battlefield. We cannot possibly serve two masters when the two masters are waging a war of extermination. If we serve one, we bid open defiance to the other, and fling contempt and scorn at him. *If you had been of the world, the world would love its own, but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

D. *The world hateth you.*

We sometimes hear Catholics say: "I get on very well with men of the world. I see no reason why Catholics should not take their place as men of the world."

In reply, we say that there is a right way and a wrong way of being men of the world. One can be a man of the world without belonging to the anti-Christian *world*. We must of course distinguish between the world which God created and declared to be good, and the *world* which

Christ denounces : that vast and powerful association of which we are now speaking.

If then you are nominally a Catholic, but in reality one of the bad *world's* "own," the *world* has of course very special reasons to cherish you and make much of you.

If therefore the *world* that is Christ's enemy welcomes you and is good to you, are you quite sure that *you are not of (this) world?* For our Lord says very clearly, *because you are not of the world, the world hateth you.* If you are not of the *world*, if you are a true disciple of Christ, how do you explain the fact that you are popular with the worldly?

Blessed Sir Thomas More for a time seemed likely to enjoy a large share of the sunshine of the world ; but very soon he had to choose which master he would serve, and because he chose Christ Jesus, the *world* hated him and beheaded him.

It is most desirable for the cause of God that Catholics should win by their industry and ability, and through God's blessing, such a position as will widen their influence. For then their good example and fidelity may draw many from the camp of Satan to the camp of Christ. But it will be a miracle, like the Miracle of the Burning Bush, if their conscientious fidelity to Christ Jesus, while it attracts many, does not oftentimes draw upon them the hatred of those devoted to the *world*.

#### STATION XIX.

*Remember My word that I said to you : The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they have kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake (vv. 20, 21).*

A. *The servant is not greater than his master.*

"*Attendite.*" This is an obvious truth : who can doubt it? But the Prophet writes : *All the land is made desolate because there is none that considereth in the heart (Jerem. xii.).* We know many Gospel truths superficially ;

but till we make leisure and meditate on them, and in colloquies petition earnestly for grace to be *doers of the Law*, the Gospel truths never come home to our hearts; we do not digest and assimilate the heavenly food and make it part of ourselves.

If we really believe that we are not greater than our Master, as we see that His own people do not hearken to *Him*, why are we sometimes so disturbed and so angry when a servant, or a pupil, or one of our children, will not give heed to *our* words? or if the Protestant whom we wish to convert does not surrender to *our* arguments?

B. *But all these things will be done to you for My name's sake.*

If we have a firm faith, these words will often give us wonderful strength and courage. We are sometimes greatly troubled and surprised that temptation comes. We forget the forewarning given us by the Holy Spirit: *When thou comest to the service of God, prepare thy soul for temptation.* If we resolve to serve God, if we come to prayer, and frequent the sacraments, if we begin to give alms and practise self-denial, the devil is watching: therefore, *prepare thy soul for temptation.* If we give up the desire of serving God, he will cease to trouble us and be our friend. It is simply because we bear the name of Christ, and wear His badges and appear as His soldiers, that we are so persecuted. *If you partake of the sufferings of Christ, rejoice.* So wrote St. Peter, and he practised what he wrote when he himself was crucified.

C. *If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.*

Observe how it is after Holy Communion that our Lord reveals the coming dangers to His disciples. Let one of our favourite petitions after receiving the Body of the Lord be, *Passio Christi, conforta me.*

The soul may suffer from dryness and desolation at the Holy Table; but if the Bread from Heaven gives courage for the troubles of the day, we surely have no reason to think that such a Communion is not a good one. Knowing

that the altar of the Blessed Sacrament was *the table against those who afflict me* (Psalm xxii.), the early Christians were exhorted to receive very frequently, and even daily, in order to have strength for martyrdom. It was the virtue which came out from the Body of the Lord that enabled St. Peter to write these words, and also put them in practice: *Wherefore you shall greatly rejoice if now you must be for a little time made sorrowful in divers temptations. For this is thankworthy if for conscience towards God, a man endure sorrows, suffering wrongfully. If doing well, you suffer patiently, this is thankworthy before God* (1 St. Peter i. ii.). Flesh and blood does not teach this kind of wisdom.

## STATION XX.

*But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they know not Him that sent Me* (v. 21).

A. *Because they know not Him that sent Me.*

So that when wronged and persecuted, we ought rather to feel compassion for those who do the wrong, because they know not Jesus Christ and His Eternal Father, than to desire vengeance. This is our Saviour's glorious teaching. *Bless them that curse you, pray for them that calumniate you.* Say: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* We must dwell on this great truth till we thoroughly master it, that the wrong-doer is much more to be pitied than the sufferer.

B. *They know not what they do.*

It is recorded that a gentleman sitting in his parlour near to a glass door, saw a man, apparently on set purpose, walk across his beautiful flower-bed and trample down his chosen flowers. He started up, and grasping a stick, threw open the glass door and rushed at the offender. He was on the point of striking a heavy blow, when he suddenly perceived that the poor man was quite blind. If he had struck that blow, when would he in after years have been able to forgive himself? They are blind; *they know not Him*

*that sent Me. They know not what they do.* This is our Blessed Saviour's plea for all of us.

C. *These things they will do to you for My name's sake.*

When a wrong is done to us from outside, it always remains in our power to determine whether it shall prove a great blessing or a great curse. Of the Holy Child, Simeon said: *He is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many.* It rests with each of us to choose whether Christ shall be our ruin or our resurrection. So is it, too, when an injury comes. If we choose rightly, it will be a saving medicine and bring us much grace. If we choose wrongly, it will become a deadly poison. No calumny, no insult, ever harms us until we deliberately choose to sin by revenge.

#### STATION XXI.

*If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin. He that hateth Me hateth My Father also. If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin: but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father. But that the word may be fulfilled which is written in their law: they hated Me without cause (vv. 22—25).*

A. *If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin.*

The brighter the light, the greater the sin if the light be rejected.

*That servant who knew the will of his Lord, and prepared not himself, and did not according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not and did things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes. And unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required; and to whom they have committed much, of him they will demand the more (St. Luke xii.).*

These words concern us much. For assuredly *He that is mighty hath done great things for us.*

B. *He that hateth Me, hateth My Father also.*

First, because He is the delegate of His Father and His representative. Secondly, because He is the perfect image of His Father, as He said to St. Philip: *He that seeth Me, seeth the Father also.*

Even if He were not the Eternal Son of God, consubstantial with the Father, so long as He is God's delegate and Messiah, to hate and reject Him is to reject God. Therefore, when the people insisted on having a King, instead of Samuel who was the ruler appointed by God, the Lord said to him: *They have not rejected thee, but Me, that I should not reign over them* (1 Kings viii.).

All our brethren are, as we know, God's representatives; and therefore He says to each one, *He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of My eye* (Zach. ii.). But those who hold legitimate authority from Him are in a much more special way His representatives. This is why He speaks so strongly of disobedience. *It is like the sin of witchcraft to rebel: and like the crime of idolatry to refuse to obey* (1 Kings xv.).

When God sets up a man in His own place as a Father or a Superior, He well knows that such a one is likely to become a *sign which shall be contradicted*. Therefore, by great promises and great threats He safeguards those in authority.

C. The malice of the Jewish Rulers was far worse, because they hated not only His office, but His personal holiness, which was the image of His Father's infinite sanctity.

D. *If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin.*

Before our Lord required His people to believe in Him, He proved, beyond doubt, by miracles that He was sent by God; because He always asks for a *reasonable service*. Satan persuades men to shut their eyes to our Lord's claims to their obedience; and yet they flatter themselves that they possess strong faith and great strength of mind because they believe in Irving or Wesley or Luther or

some clergyman whom they fancy, who yet have no credentials of any kind to show.

*E. They hated Me without cause.*

What a terrible awakening for a Christian it will be in the everlasting prison-house to find that the serpent utterly deceived him with regard to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that he allowed himself to be most miserably duped; so that he had nothing but hatred for Him, *Who loved (him) and delivered Himself up for (him)* (Galat. ii.).

Heart-rending are the accounts that have been written of the hopeless remorse that tortured the man who in a fit of jealousy, utterly groundless, murdered his innocent and devoted wife, and discovered when too late that the calumnies against her were studiously whispered into his ear by a cruel enemy envious of his happiness: *They hated Me without cause.—The serpent deceived me.*

*F. They hated Me without cause.*

Good-hearted Catholics who do not like to think evil are sometimes, if they are not thoroughly instructed, overawed and staggered by the confident boldness with which enemies of Christ assert that it is His fault if they are sceptics, because He has left His religion without sufficient title-deeds and grounds of proof. If we take care to instruct ourselves well and understand our religion as we ought to do, we shall see at once that these men are blaming our Lord *without cause.*

We must never forget these words: *If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin. If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin: but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father.*

How could our Lord sincerely wish *all men to come to the knowledge of the truth*, and yet leave behind Him no proofs of His mission, and no credentials for His Church that can satisfy logical minds? Champions of unbelief can only be strong and bold when we are ignorant, and do not know how to make it clear that our obedience to Christ and His Church is most reasonable. Christianity has for its foundation the Resurrection. Catholics ought to instruct themselves so as to be able to show to men that we cannot *reasonably* call in question the fact of the Resurrection; and that history ceases to be trustworthy if the Resurrection is impugned.<sup>1</sup> In like manner with regard to the Church, we are free to believe that individuals attached to sects may be in invincible ignorance, and have not sinned grievously against the Faith,

<sup>1</sup> See the little volume called *Human Testimony*, by FitzArthur. London: Kegan Paul and Co.

and therefore that if they were in childhood validly baptised they are still members of Christ's Church; but at the same time we must always bear in mind and proclaim that Christ has set His Church in a blaze of light; and that He has abundantly kept His promise that He would leave a path to truth so straight *that fools shall not err therein* (Isaias xxxv.). The promise of God was that the throne of David, which is the throne of Christ, shall be *as the sun before Me, as the moon perfect for ever, and a faithful witness in Heaven*. Has His promise been forgotten? Is the Apostolic See anything else but a never-failing source of light and truth perennial as the sun and moon, a faithful witness set in the firmament that every eye may see?

## STATION XXII.

*But when the Paraclete cometh, Whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth Who proceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me. And you shall give testimony, because you are with Me from the beginning. These things I have spoken, that you may not be scandalised. They will put you out of the synagogues. Yea, the hour cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth a service to God.*

*And these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father nor Me.*

*But these things I have told you, that when the hour shall come you may remember that I told you of them.*

*But I told you not these things from the beginning, because I was with you (St. John xv. 26, 27; xvi. 1—5).*

The words that concern the coming of the Holy Ghost have been considered in the Discourse before the Institution of the Holy Eucharist.

A. *The hour cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doth a service to God.*

We may see how great a grace has come through the Holy Sacrifice and the First Communion, from the fact that our Saviour speaks to them now so openly about the sufferings in store for them, and tells them clearly that they are near at hand: *The hour cometh*. He knows that before two months are over, Peter, John, and others will have been cruelly scourged for His sake and will be entering on a long course of persecution.

“O Sacred Banquet in which Christ is received, the memory of His Passion is renewed, the soul is filled with grace. *Passio Christi, conforta me.*”

B. *These things they will do, because they have not known the Father nor Me.*

Again our Blessed Saviour reminds us of this truth so much wanted, that when we commit sin, it is always because we know not our good God and our most loving Lord Jesus Christ. We are duped and deceived; we put *darkness for light, and light for darkness: bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter* (Isaias v.). Therefore, lost souls bewail their past culpable ignorance: *The way of the Lord we have not known* (Wisdom v.). Let us then try diligently to know our Father and our Redeemer more and more by careful contemplation; for so we shall certainly keep much further away from sin.

C. *They have not known the Father nor Me* (v. 3).

Again too He reminds us of another truth which He wishes us never to forget, that those who hate us, out of hatred to Him, are blind, and therefore fit objects of great compassion. Well He knows how the prayer of the first martyr Stephen will win a marvellous grace for Saul, who is joining in the persecution of that unoffending Saint simply because he is blind and knows not Jesus Christ. It is one of the inventions of our Lord's charity, to allow wicked men sometimes to persecute the holy, in order that the prayers of the persecuted may win grace for those who are persecuting and never praying for themselves.

D. *These things I have told you, that when the hour shall come, you may remember that I told you of them* (v. 4).

How hard it is when we are suffering much ourselves, to be very thoughtful for others; but our Blessed Saviour, in spite of all the tide of sorrows which He sees coming to overwhelm Him, is always full of thought for His disciples, and leaves no word unsaid that will help them to recover from the scandal occasioned by His Sacred Passion.

“Compassionate Heart of Jesus, give us some little share of that charity which was in Thee *strong as death*, and stronger. *Anima Christi, sanctifica me.*”

*But I told you not these things from the beginning, because I was with you* (v. 5).

A difficulty presents itself here. For in St. Matthew's Gospel (c. x.) our Lord forewarns His Apostles of coming troubles, even as He does here: *They will scourge you in their synagogues. You shall be hated of all men, and the rest.*

How then does He now say: *I told you not these things from the beginning?*

1. Some Holy Fathers assume that St. Matthew does not aim at giving our Lord's discourses and actions in their proper chronological order: that he very probably in his narrative introduced into discourses of the first or second year of the Public Life of Jesus words spoken at the Last Supper or after the Resurrection. His object was simply to give our Lord's words, which have their heavenly value even when detached from their context. St. John, writing later, wished to be more exact in following the order of time.

2. Other learned commentators prefer to think that when our Saviour says, *I told you not these things from the beginning*, He is alluding only to what He has just been saying about the coming of the Holy Ghost. The sense would thus be: I did not speak to you of the coming of the Holy Ghost, because I was Myself with you as your Paraclete, to teach you and comfort you. So, too, when He says just before: *These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalised*: they understood the sense to be: I have now made known to you the coming of the Holy Ghost, that you may not lose hope and courage by My going away from you.

This explanation does not, however, quite fit in with the context. For the words, *I told you not these things from the beginning*, ought, at least, it would seem, to include not only the coming of the Holy Ghost, but also the persecutions spoken of immediately before.

3. Therefore other interpreters say that our Saviour is alluding both to the coming of the Holy Ghost and to the persecutions, concerning which He is speaking more plainly now, by telling them (1) that His enemies will kill them; and (2) that the persecutions are near at hand. As long as He is with them it is arranged by His Eternal Father that they are not to be molested.

### STATION XXIII.

*And now I go to Him that sent Me, and none of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou? But because I have spoken these things, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell*

*you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go, for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come: but if I go, I will send Him to you (vv. 5—7).*

A. *None of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou?* St. Thomas had said, *Lord, we know not whither Thou goest* (c. xiv.), but neither he nor any of the others, had pressed for an answer. Had they known more of our Lord's plans, they would not have been so downcast.

B. As has been said before, this is already the fourth time that He consoles His Apostles by the assurance that the Holy Spirit shall come. How well He intends to fulfil that other promise uttered in the discourse before the Holy Mass: *I will not leave you orphans.* He Himself remains with His Church in the Blessed Eucharist, and His Blessed Mother is to remain to nurse the infancy of His Church; and now, as if all this were little, the Holy Spirit shall come to teach, to guide, to give life and love to all His disciples.

Had not our Lord a right to say that we need not envy those who saw Him in the flesh, and that we who have not seen and have believed are blessed?

#### STATION XXIV.

*And when He is come, He will convince the world of sin,  
and of justice, and of judgment.*

*Of sin, because they believed not in Me.*

*And of justice, because I go to the Father and you shall see  
Me no longer.*

*And of judgment, because the prince of this world is already  
judged (vv. 8—11).*

##### A. *Of sin.*

The Church, enlightened by the Holy Ghost, will recognise clearly how great the sin is of those who rejected Christ.

##### B. *Of justice.*

The Holy Spirit will reveal clearly to the Church that

Christ, by rising from the dead, and ascending to His Father in Heaven, and thence sending, according to His promise, the Holy Ghost, has proved Himself to be no impostor, but eminently just and holy, and therefore that the world which rejects Him deserves condemnation.

*C. Of judgment.*

Because men will see that the devil, the prince of this world, is cast out and conquered by the Apostles of Christ, and that therefore the world, which is the slave and ally of Satan, is also judged and condemned.

STATION XXV.

*He shall glorify Me, because He shall receive of Mine. All things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine: therefore I said that He shall receive of Mine, and show it to you (v. 14).*

*He shall receive of Mine.*

Our Lord had said just above: *I will send Him.*

These and other similar texts are used to prove the Procession of the Holy Ghost both from the Father and the Son. They also establish the Divinity of Christ: since *all things whatsoever the Father hath are Mine*. The Divinity of the Holy Ghost is proved from the words in Station XXII.: it is *expedient for you that I go*; since if the Holy Ghost were not God it would not be *expedient* for the disciples that Christ, Who is God, should go and the Holy Ghost come in His place. He Who comes must be equal to Him Who goes, otherwise they would lose much by the exchange.

STATION XXVI.

*A little while and now you shall not see Me: and again a little while and you shall see Me: because I go to the Father (v. 16).*

A. Now our Lord begins to impress more strongly on their minds that He is about to leave them. Already He had said to them, *I go to the Father, but I will not leave you orphans. I will come to you.* And again: *Now I go to Him that sent Me, and none of you ask Me, whither goest Thou? But because I have spoken these things, sorrow hath filled your hearts.* To allay somewhat this sorrow He had

assured them that the Holy Ghost would come to be their Comforter. Now He returns to the subject, and wishes them to know something more of what is going to happen: *A little while and you shall not see Me: and again a little while and you shall see Me, because I go to the Father.*

One interpretation is: *I go to the Father*, that is, I am about to die. Therefore, after a few hours you shall not see Me. But a little while after, and you will see Me risen in joy. Others interpret "a little while," that is, "after My Ascension you shall not see Me: but life is short, so that again after a little while you will see me in Heaven".

B. *Sorrow hath filled your hearts.* May we have great sorrow for those unhappy hours when by sin we forced our Lord to depart from us.

#### STATION XXVII.

*Then some of the disciples said one to another: What is this that He saith to us: A little while and you shall not see Me, and again a little while and you shall see Me, and because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that He saith: A little while? We know not what He speaketh (vv. 17, 18).*

The Apostles are perplexed. "For," as St. John tells us later, in the account of the Resurrection: *As yet they knew not the Scripture that He must rise from the dead.* Therefore, these words are an enigma to them: *A little while and you shall not see Me, and again a little while and you shall see Me.* And yet Christ has spoken very plainly. But what can words do without Thy assisting grace, Holy Spirit of Truth? *Sine tuo numine nihil est in homine.*

And if God wills us to become little children and to learn from a Master, what will words or books profit without a Master?

#### STATION XXVIII.

*And Jesus knew that they had a mind to ask Him: and He said to them: Of this do you inquire among yourselves,*

*because I said: A little while and you shall not see Me, and again a little while and you shall see Me?* (v. 19).

Our Blessed Saviour is kindly and gently proving His Divinity to them more and more by letting them see that He hears their secret whispers and reads their inmost thoughts.

*As the Lord liveth*, His faithful servants used to say of old, *As the Lord liveth, in Whose sight I stand* (3 Kings xvii.).

“Grant us, merciful Lord, grace to walk in Thy presence, and to say with a lively faith, *My bone is not hidden from Thee: in Thy book all shall be written*” (Psalm cxxxviii.). *God is witness of his reins and a true searcher of his heart, and a hearer of his tongue* (Wisdom i.).

#### STATION XXIX.

*Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice: and you shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy* (v. 20)

A. To men of this world these would be heavy tidings; but the Apostles soon after learned to understand well how inestimably they are blessed and privileged in being allowed to drink of His chalice with Him. Looking back now, Holy Church never tires of repeating this word: “*Nimis honorati sunt amici tui, Deus*”—*Exceedingly, too much, too highly, are Thy friends honoured, O God* (Psalm cxxxviii.).

B. Let us convince and persuade ourselves of this truth:

Better far a short mourning now, and joy everlasting hereafter.

Better the bitter cup first, and then the sweet for ever.

Better, a thousand times better, weeping with Jesus, than gladness with the world.

C. *Of this one thing be not ignorant, my beloved*, St. Peter writes, *that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day* (2 St. Peter iii.). St. Paul, who had seen some of the secrets of the Everlasting Home in

Heaven, had this same idea concerning time here and eternity hereafter. *That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation, worketh for us above measure an eternal weight of glory* (2 Cor. iv.).

Our Blessed Saviour is then speaking, in the first place, of the days of sorrow that are close at hand, and the joyful days that are to follow the Resurrection; but He also has before His mind the future career of His Apostles, and the eternal reward laid up for them.

STATION XXX.

*A woman when she is in labour hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but when she hath brought forth the child she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So you also now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you* (vv. 21, 22).

As soon as our Lord was risen from the dead, and the Holy Spirit was sent down, then the Apostles were filled with a joy which no man could take from them. Theirs was that peace which the world could not give; nor could the world take it away. But the promise was not verified in all its fulness until they reached the everlasting city on the foundations of which are inscribed *the twelve names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb* (Apoc. xxi.), that Eternal Home *which hath no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine in it. For the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof* (Apoc. xxi.).

STATION XXXI.

*And in that day you shall not ask Me anything: Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in My name. Ask and you shall receive that your joy may be full* (vv. 23, 24).

*A. If you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it to you.*

Higher and higher our Lord is raising the needy whom He lifted from the earth, *that He may place them with princes, with the princes of His people* (Psalm cxii.).

Here He is speaking not merely of the days close at hand, when He shall be risen from the dead, but of their sojourn on earth after He shall be taken from their sight; and He gives them this comforting assurance: "It is true that you will not be able to come to Me and ask Me what you want, as you have done till now, but I now give you this most solemn promise, *Amen, amen, I say to you* (it is, as St. Augustine says, as if He bound Himself by oath), that when I am gone from you, you will remain on earth as My proxies and delegates; and you will ask My Father and your Father *in My name* for all that you want, *and anything you ask for in My name, He will give it to you.*"

#### B. *In My name.*

In prayer we are all allowed so far to personate Christ as to ask in His Name, by His rights and merits. To a certain extent we share the priest's privilege who absolves in His Name, and consecrates in His Name. For in prayer the Christian may speak as one united to Christ Jesus, and representing Him; a member *of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones* (Ephes. v.).

#### C. *In My name.*

When we ask things in Christ's name, we must of course ask only such things as Christ would desire for us. "Weigh well your petitions," St. Gregory writes, "see whether you are asking in the name of Jesus, that is, if you are asking for the joys and blessings won for you by His redemption. For, in the house of Jesus (the Church of Jesus), you are not seeking Jesus, if in His eternal temple you ask importunately only for things temporal. Thus one asks in his prayer for a wife, another begs for a villa, a third is praying for a robe, a fourth is earnestly beseeching for food and sustenance."

D. Amen, amen, I say to you, if you ask the Father anything in My name.

“Attendite.” Every word of this solemn promise deserves to be well weighed. To ask properly in our Lord’s Name :

1. We must not be at enmity with Him ; we must be contrite for all our sins.

2. We must pray with faith and hope ; *nothing wavering*, as St. James writes.

3. We must ask for such things as our Lord can wish for us.

4. We must ask, as He wishes us to ask, with persevering importunity, asking and knocking till the loaf is given.

E. *Ask and you shall receive, that your joy may be full.*

When Eliseus was about to work a miracle for the poor widow woman, he said : *Go borrow of all thy neighbours empty vessels not a few.* He knew that the miraculous oil would flow as long as she presented an empty vessel to hold more. So our Lord wishes us to ask and ask again, and continue to ask a long time, that our *joy may be full*, that we may have grace in *good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over* (St. Luke vi.).

When King Joas, threatened by the Syrians, also came for help to Eliseus, saying in sorrow : *O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the guide thereof*; the Prophet said to him, *Take the arrows, and strike with an arrow upon the ground. And he struck three times, and stood still. And the man of God was angry with him, and said, If thou hadst smitten five or six or seven times, thou hadst smitten Syria even to utter destruction : but now three times shalt thou smite it* (4 Kings xiii.).

So is it when we are praying. Our Lord grieves exceedingly because we break off our prayers too soon, and do not continue to importune till our joy is full. *He spake also a parable to them that we ought always to pray and not to faint* (St. Luke xviii.).

## STATION XXXII.

*These things have I spoken to you in proverbs. The hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father (v. 25).*

*In proverbs, or parables, means in veiled and figurative language which they have not fully understood. After the Resurrection our Lord explained the Scripture more clearly; and when the Holy Ghost came down He taught the Apostles fully and perfectly all truth. Veni Creator Spiritus.*

## STATION XXXIII.

*In that day you shall ask in My name; and I say not to you that I will ask the Father for you.*

*For the Father Himself loveth you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came from God (vv. 26, 27).*

We must note carefully what pains our Blessed Lord takes to comfort His disciples; and how often He repeats to them this consoling assurance that when He is gone, they will not feel the need of His visible assistance, as they have hitherto done, since the Holy Ghost will fill them with faith and love, and His Father will love them, because they have believed in Him and loved Him. So that they will have a right to ask in His Name, and will obtain whatever they so ask, without it being necessary that He should be visibly present, as heretofore, to ask for them.

## STATION XXXIV.

*I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and I go to the Father.*

*His disciples say to Him: Behold, now Thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now we know that Thou knowest all things, and Thou needest not that any man should ask Thee. By this we believe that Thou camest forth from God (vv. 28, 29).*

A. Our Lord had before now said clearly, *I go to the*

*Father.* He had also said clearly: *The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him, and the third day He shall rise again* (St. Mark ix.). But as His Apostles had not light to understand these words when spoken, it was as if He had spoken in proverbs and parables. Now He has fed them with His Body and His Blood, and as the end draws nigh He is loving to the end, that is, He is pouring out more and more grace from His loving Heart, and the Apostles believe more firmly and understand His words more clearly.

*B. Now we know that Thou knowest all things. By this we believe that Thou camest forth from God.*

His disciples are now in a state of consolation. They are not under delusion, for they have received a large increase of faith, of hope, of charity; but our Blessed Saviour knows the storm that is coming, and that a measure of grace which might be sufficient for the time of calm and quiet is not sufficient for the time of trial that is close at hand. The Blessed Eucharist has strengthened them and enlightened them much; but not till the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit shall be poured out in abundance upon them, will they be fit for the battle that is to rage between them and the powers of darkness. Therefore, seeing them now cheered and consoled by the increase of light which they perceive in themselves, He gently adds a warning word against presumption upon the graces just received through the Holy Sacrament.

#### STATION XXXV.

*Jesus answered them, Do you now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, and it is now come, that you shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me* (vv. 31—32).

*A.* When our Lord is speaking these words, He sees Satan and the princes of darkness present, with their

malicious and murderous eyes fixed on His Apostles, and burning with a most fierce rage and jealousy to be allowed to measure their strength with these favoured disciples. He also sees Judas and the priests busily engaged in gathering and arming their followers. He therefore understands how exceedingly His little flock need earnest prayer, and a most complete mistrust of their own strength. Hence His solemn word of caution, followed later by so many others: *You shall be scattered, and shall leave Me alone.*

At once, however, He adds another word to quicken their faith, and to impress upon their minds that He is not to be conquered in the coming struggle: *Yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.*

B. *And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me* (v. 32).

*O it is good for us to be here,* listening to this word of our Saviour. Which of us could find the burden of life unbearable, if we would make leisure, and ponder on this word till virtue comes out from His Heart into our poor hearts? For who is there among us that is not the child of our Heavenly Father? Who is there that has not a right to say: Yet after all, *I am not alone* in this sad world, because *the Father is with me?* My God is with me. My Lord Jesus Christ, Who loved me more than His own life, is with me. A young man lying sick in a remote part of India would be cheered unspeakably if he suddenly found out that a very good and kind relative of his was living close by. "If that be so," he would say, "I am not alone in this strange land." Can a man be alone who has his Creator near him? his good God near him? Jesus Christ with His loving Heart near him? and near him also the Blessed among women, who is charged to be a Mother to him?

C. When is man truly alone? Then only when he himself has obliged his God, his Creator, his Father, his Redeemer to abandon him. O then indeed it may truly be

said, *Væ soli*—wo to him who is in this most deplorable loneliness.

The Holy Spirit tells us that during the Egyptian darkness, the wretched people of the country *lay there exiled from the eternal Providence—scattered under a dark veil of forgetfulness.* But that misery lasted only three days.

“By Thy bitter Death and Passion, Lord Jesus, deliver us from everlasting loneliness and eternal separation from Thee.”

Well may the Christian who has lost his soul *gnash with his teeth and pine away*, when he finds himself given up entirely by his own choice to the government and tyranny of Satan, and that the providence of God no longer interferes to protect him. *The dark veil of forgetfulness* hangs between him and the charity of the loving God, Who once was his Father. He is to pine away for ever, to wail for ever in the land of forgetfulness, where God is never any more called Father. *Shall Thy wonders, O Lord, be known in the dark, and Thy justice in the land of forgetfulness?* (Psalm lxxxvii.).

#### STATION XXXVI.

*These things I have spoken, that in Me you may have peace.*

*In the world you shall have distress; but have confidence, I have overcome the world (v. 33).*

A. *That in Me you may have peace.*

“How, Blessed Lord, are they to have peace in Thee? Hast Thou not just said that they are to be scared and scattered, and in their terror to forget all Thy miracles and Thy Divine power, and Thy tender care of them, and to be scandalised and discouraged?”

Yes, in the first outburst of the storm they will be scared and scattered. Perchance, however, if they would follow their Divine Master's counsel and example, and would watch and pray, lest they enter into temptation, the strength already given them in Holy Communion would be multiplied, and would be sufficient for the crisis. But even if their hearts fail now for the moment, and they leave

Him alone, He cannot therefore abandon *them* and leave *them* alone; very soon He will gather them again, and abide with them. And the days will come when in the world indeed they shall have distress, sore distress and numberless tribulations, but in the midst of their distress they will find their peace in Him. For while contemplating Him in His infirmities, virtue will come out to them, and they will hear Him say that word: *Have confidence, I have overcome the world.*

In these days of grace that are coming, enlightened by the Spirit of Truth, they will understand that their Master conquered the world by meekly enduring all that the world could inflict on Him; that His meekness and patience tired out both the world and the princes of the world. They remained baffled, and He was victorious. It is St. Denis the Areopagite who speaks of the *almighty weakness* of Christ Jesus.

**B.** *Have confidence, I have overcome the world.*

How comes it then that the world has still such a destructive power? Men declare that it is quite impossible to resist the fascinations and the exceeding great power of the world.

One answer might be, that now it has power only over those who are willing to be conquered. A further explanation is this: He has conquered this world, not by crushing and destroying its good things, but by the method which a wise mother adopts to get the better of her wilful little child bent on keeping possession of a dangerous plaything; she does not wrench it away by force, but shows the child something more bright and attractive, and at once the mischievous toy is dropped that the brighter one may be secured. So has our Lord done with us in order to conquer the world. To win us away from this world, He has shown us His own loveliness. His plan was to become Himself the alluring apple hanging on the tree. *I, if I be lifted up, will draw all things to Myself* (St. John xii.). If we choose to make leisure and look at Him, little

by little we shall be drawn strongly to Him, and the world will lose all its power over us.

But if we will not find time to look at our Lord Jesus Christ, and to know Him, we shall not love Him; and if we love not Him, this world will have over us all its ancient power. For, as has been said, our Lord has not destroyed all that was attractive in the universe, but has set before us something better—the goodness of the Creator, the goodness of our Redeemer—so that we may love the Giver more than His gifts, and the Creator more than His work.

## SCENE X.

### THE PRAYER OF OUR LORD.

Here we may, perhaps, in contemplation assume that our Blessed Saviour rises. Do His little flock also stand around Him; or do they kneel while He pours forth from the depths of His Heart that prayer which we may consider the close of the thanksgiving service after the Holy Mass and the great First Communion?

We will fix the eyes of our soul on His reverential attitude, on the heavenly beauty of His countenance inflamed by the fire burning in His Heart. We will listen to the tones of His voice, so solemn and so full of emotion. We will watch our Blessed Lady, who with her heart and her whole being responds to every word that comes from the Heart of her Son. We will also notice how virtue passes from our Saviour into the souls of His disciples, and how they all with great fervour join in His farewell prayer.

### STATION I.

*Father, the hour is come : glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee. As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He may give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given to Him (St. John xvii. 1, 2).*

A. What is our Blessed Saviour asking for when He says, *Glorify Thy Son?*

1. His glory is to be obedient to His Father unto death, to prove that His love is stronger than death, and all manner of torments of soul and body.

2. His glory is to endure all that the enemies of His Father can inflict on Him, and to conquer them by endurance.

3. His glory is to rescue the children of His Father out of the grasp of Satan, at the cost of His own life. Therefore, His prayer is that every shape and form of sorrow which can glorify His Father may come to Him, but that all the designs of His enemies may be so controlled and overruled, that all shall *co-operate unto good*, and promote the glory of His Father.

Have we courage to unite in this prayer of our Lord? "Glorify me, my God; give me the honour, the glory, the blessed privilege of drinking of Thy chalice with Thee, of drawing many souls to Thee, and, by suffering myself, of filling *up the things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ*" (Coloss. i.).

B. *As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He may give eternal life to all whom Thou hast given Him.*

Therefore, again, "Father, glorify Thy Son by overruling the testimony of witnesses and the sentences of judges, and by multiplying miracles in such a way that it shall be manifest to all that Thy Son is not a malefactor, but Thy Christ, Thy Messiah, Thy well-beloved and only Son, that so He may be able to bring to eternal life all whom Thou hast given to Him".

The Sacred Heart of Jesus has only one desire, to use the boundless power given to Him for the salvation of all the children of His Father.

*Anima Christi, sanctifica me.*

C. What wonderful things have those holy men done for God and for the salvation of souls, who, in union with their Divine Master, devoted all their powers to God's work, and said heartily and most earnestly: "Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and all my will. All these things Thou gavest to me, my God, to Thee I give them all back."

STATION II.

*Now this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent (v. 3).*

A. "If eternal life is to know Thee, O Father, and Thy Son, then multiply signs and wonders, and order all things so, that the humiliations of My Passion may not hinder men from knowing Me, and through Me arriving at the knowledge of Thee."

B. If eternal life consists in knowing Jesus Christ and the Eternal Father, we can begin our Heaven here by labouring diligently and praying earnestly to know Them more and more perfectly.

C. Let us fix this idea of Heaven in our minds, that close intimacy with our Father and with our Lord Jesus Christ will be our Heaven, and that through knowing Them we shall necessarily become like to Them.

STATION III.

*I have glorified Thee on earth. I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do. And now glorify Thou Me with the glory that I had, before the world was, with Thee (vv. 4, 5).*

A. "*O vos omnes attendite.*" Let us stay and listen most attentively, and contemplate our Blessed Saviour as He speaks; for so virtue will come out from His Heart to ours: *Come ye unto Him and be enlightened (Psalm xxxiii).*

*I have glorified Thee on earth.*

As we listen to these words, perchance we shall be moved to look back in the bitterness of our soul at days and months and years gone by during which we have not glorified our Creator, but dishonoured Him, and dishonoured Jesus Christ, our most merciful Redeemer.

B. And we may find too a strong desire growing within us to be able to say before we die: Yes, my God, I have tried to glorify Thee.

1. It is a great glory to God when in the presence of His enemies we take delight in Him, and are glad to be with Him, and do not shun prayer, but seek it with desire.

2. We glorify God when we resolutely adopt Gospel maxims in presence of the *world*: forgiving injuries, renouncing forbidden pleasures, preferring the heavenly luxury of almsgiving to the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

3. We glorify God when we will not suffer immodesty or *covetousness* even to be named among us *as becometh the saints* (Ephes. v.).

C. *I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do.*

Alas! O my God, do I even know what the work is that Thou gavest me to do?

This much we know at least, that our main work, the one thing necessary, is to save our souls by praising, reverencing, and serving our God. One thing that we certainly have to do is to die in God's grace.

But, besides this, to every man God also gave *commandment concerning his neighbour* (Ecclus. xvii.).

How much of this work have we accomplished? Let us at least try in the eleventh hour to redeem time past by labouring diligently to help some poor sinners to return to God.

#### STATION IV.

*And now glorify Thou Me, O Father, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with Thee* (v. 5).

A. "Raise My Body to life again, and glorify My Body and My Soul, and bring about My Ascension into Heaven, that with My Sacred Humanity united to Me, I may sit at Thy right hand to possess the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

With all our hearts let us join in this prayer: "Our Father, glorify Thy Divine Son Jesus".

B. Whether our Lord be glorified much or little on earth, and whether His saints be glorified or not by men,

He and they will be glorified by their Father in Heaven. But let our prayer be, "May Thy Kingdom come on earth also, Lord Jesus, and Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven".

STATION V.

*I have manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou hast given Me out of the world. Thine they were, and to Me Thou gavest them, and they have kept Thy word (v. 6).*

*I have manifested Thy name to the men whom Thou hast given to Me.*

Christian priests! Christian parents! Christian teachers! "Attendite." Let us listen to these words and learn what our duty is. We have to make God more known to those whom God has given to us. These children, these poor people entrusted to me—"Thine they were, O my God, and to me Thou gavest them. O God, grant that I may have the grace so to train them that hereafter I may be able to say: *They have kept Thy word.*"

STATION VI.

*Now they have known that all the things Thou hast given Me are from Thee. Because the words which Thou gavest to Me I have given to them, and they have received them and have known in very deed that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me (vv. 7, 8).*

A. Our Blessed Saviour's constant endeavour is to make it known that all that He has comes from His Father.

St. Paul presses this lesson upon us: *What hast thou that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received?* (1 Cor. iv.). Our most earnest desire ought to be that all our words and works may begin from Thee, dear Lord, and by Thee be happily ended; that so there may be nothing that is merely our own in our teaching or our enterprises. For whatever is only from me, is ill done, whatever is well done is Thy work,

O Lord. "*Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed nomini tuo da gloriam.*" *If any man speak, let him speak as the words of God. If any man minister, let him do it as of the power which God administereth, that in all things God may be honoured through Jesus Christ, to Whom is glory and empire for ever and ever. Amen* (1 St. Peter iv.).

## STATION VII.

*I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me, because they are Thine* (v. 9).

In this special parting prayer, our Lord is praying for these chosen disciples, begging for them the large graces which their state will require, begging His Father to have mercy on them *according to His great mercy*, which, as the devout Father Segneri writes, includes a large share of the Cross. He is not now praying for the world; but elsewhere He does pray for the world; as, for instance, on the Cross: *Father, forgive them*. And later on, in this very prayer He begs that the disciples may be one in order *that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me*. There is a world for which our Lord prays and works; thus St. John writes: *God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved through Him* (iii. 17). St. Paul also writes: *For God indeed was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself* (2 Cor. v.). And again, *God wishes all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth* (1 Timothy ii.). If our Lord excludes the world from His prayer, it is, St. Augustine writes, only those who obstinately adhere to sin, and to the anti-Christian spirit of the world.

## STATION VIII.

*And all My things are Thine and Thine are Mine, and I am glorified in them* (v. 10).

A. In these words our Blessed Saviour once more clearly teaches His own Divinity and equality with His Father. Speaking as the Son of Man, He had said, *Thine they were,*

to Me Thou gavest them. But He now adds, as Son of God: *All Thy things are Mine, and I am glorified in them*, because Thy glory is My glory.

B. Our Father in Heaven said to the elder son who was jealous of the returned prodigal: *Thou art always with Me, and all that I have is thine* (St. Luke xv.). What is the will of our good God but to share all that He can share with each of us? If then we will only with filial hearts believe in this loving liberality of God, we too can say with our Lord: *All my things are Thine* (O my God), *and Thine are mine.*

#### STATION IX.

*And now I am not in the world, and these are in the world; and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep them in Thy name whom Thou hast given to Me, that they may be one as We also are* (v. 11).

A. *Now I am not in the world.*

His Death is so near that He speaks as if it were come. Moreover, once His Sacred Passion begins, He is practically taken away from His disciples.

B. *Holy Father, keep them in Thy name.*

This is a parting cry of His Heart for His little flock; for He is full of compassion for their coming bereavement, and with all the tenderness and earnestness of His charity He beseeches His Father to protect them.

*Keep them in Thy name.* That is, "May Thy name of Father, and Thy name of God, be sanctified in them. May Thy name be a reality to them. May they always find a protection in Thy name. May they always draw strength and hope and love from their belief that Thou art their Father and their God." One valued commentator, Father Ribera, thinks that in these words our Blessed Lord prays for His Apostles, and obtains what He asks, that they may never during their apostolic career fall away from grace by mortal sin.

C. *That they may be one as We also are.*

Here is another chief desire of His Heart, that the unity of the Most Blessed Trinity may be represented in His Church; and some of the most esteemed commentators think that in making this prayer He is expressing what the Blessed Eucharist is to do. The bread is made out of many grains of wheat. The wine is the juice of many grapes. The many grains and the many grapes become His one Body and His Sacred Blood. Then in the next place His one Body and Blood becomes the food of all His disciples; and they do not convert this food into their substance, but they are all changed by it and become one body and His members: *Of His flesh and of His bones* (Ephes. v.). Now therefore the cry of our Lord's Heart is that this union and unity may be perfect: that all may have one faith, one Baptism, one Holy Sacrifice, one Heavenly Banquet to nourish them; one mind and one heart: all loving one God and one Lord Jesus Christ, and for His sake loving cordially one another.

## STATION X.

*While I was with them I kept them in Thy name. Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept* (v. 12).

A. *Those whom Thou gavest Me have I kept.*

How happy the death-bed of Christian parents and Christian priests, and Christian Superiors, and all in charge of others, if they can say humbly when dying: *While I was with them I kept them in Thy name. Those whom Thou gavest me have I kept.* This great grace given to them is better than length of days, better than all earthly glory. O Lord, *Thy mercy is better than lives* (Psalm lxii.).

B. *I kept them in Thy name.*

That is, as Thy delegate. How often our Saviour reminds us of this fundamental truth, that man is only God's steward! A steward gives leases and collects rents in his master's name. Therefore St. Paul writes: *All things what-*

*soever you do in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. iii.).*

*C. In Thy name.*

How much more easy it is, when we have charge of others, to keep them safe if we keep them in God's name, than if we act independently in our own names! So long as we act in God's name, God acts with us and in us. How much better is work done when God does it, than when we do it!

*D. In Thy name.*

What wonders men have wrought when they speak and act in God's name! St. Peter said to the lame man at the Beautiful Gate: *In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk; and he leaping up stood and walked and went (Acts iii.).*

When God sent Moses to speak to Pharaoh in His name, He said to him: *I have appointed thee the God of Pharaoh (Exodus vii.).* And we have heard our Lord promise that His faithful disciples who act in His name, shall do the *works I do, and greater than these shall they do (St. John xiv.).*

*E. In Thy name.*

Satan and all his ministers are much troubled and alarmed when a man speaks in the name of Christ Jesus. The High Priest, when the Apostles were brought before the Council, said to them: *Commanding we commanded you that you should not teach in His name. And after they had scourged them, again they charged them that they should not speak at all in the name of Jesus.*

St. Peter's answer was: *We ought to obey God rather than men (Acts v.).*

With St. Peter and St. Paul then, we will try to do all things *in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

## STATION XI.

*And none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scripture may be fulfilled (v. 12).*

A. *The son of perdition.*

The 108th Psalm is, as we have seen, applied by St. Peter to Judas (Acts i.).

In that terrible Psalm it is written: *When he is judged, may he go out condemned; and this cause is assigned for his reprobation: Because he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor man and the beggar; and the broken in heart, to put him to death.*

“O compassionate and loving Heart of Jesus, deliver us from hardness of heart, make us always remember to show mercy.”

B. *That the Scripture may be fulfilled.* Judas is not condemned in order that the Scripture may be fulfilled; but the Prophet is inspired to write what God sees happening in time not yet come to us.

## STATION XII.

*And now I come to Thee, and these things I speak in the world that they may have My joy filled in themselves (v. 13).*

A. *My joy; My peace.*

The joy and peace in the Heart of our Lord is one that lives on through all His tribulations. This is the joy and peace He wishes to bequeath to His Apostles. When He said to the Samaritan woman: *The water that I will give shall become a fountain of water springing up to life everlasting*, she, though she did not know the full value of this heavenly water, said wisely: *Sir, give me of this water.* So must we say.

B. *That they may have My joy filled in themselves.*

Here we have the constant undying wish of our Lord's Heart. Whether He consoles us or rebukes, rewards or chastises, He is always labouring most earnestly *that they may have My joy filled in themselves.* To human eyes

what so appalling as the torments of the martyrs? And yet all the while our Lord is giving them as a high privilege a special share of His chalice, *that they may have My joy filled in themselves.*

“Compassionate Lord Jesus, give us Thy joy and give us Thy peace.”

STATION XIII.

*I have given them Thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, as also I am not of the world (v. 14).*

A. Here is a thought for Christian priests to dwell upon attentively. Because *I have given them Thy word—they are not of the world*, but are hated by the world. If we then preach rightly and faithfully the Gospel of Christ, those who hear will not be of the world.

B. *I have given them Thy word and—they are not of the world.*

Every word from God's mouth is not only our bread, but a strong medicine against the spirit of the world.

STATION XIV.

*I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil (v. 15).*

Sometimes God does take out of life His young saint: *He was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding or deceit beguile his soul. For the bewitching of vanity obscureth good things, and the wandering of concupiscence overturneth the innocent mind (Wisdom iv.).* For the same reason God calls many innocent souls to the secure shelter of the cloister; but the Apostles of Christ and the great body of Christian men and women are to live in the world and leaven the world. For these the prayer of our Lord is: *Not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil.* This is to be the father's and the mother's most earnest prayer for their children: “O my God, *keep them from evil*”.

## STATION XV.

*They are not of the world, as I am not of the world (v. 16).*

Christian priests, Christian laity, men and women, "*attendite*". We must dwell upon this word. For in the world we must live; but our Divine Master ought to be able to say with truth of us: *They are not of the world, as I am not of the world.* Can He speak so of us?

## STATION XVI.

*Sanctify them in truth. Thy word is truth (v. 17).*

The father of lies has persuaded many, very many, that they can be holy without truth; that true doctrine is not necessary for holiness; that men can believe what they please, and still be charitable and holy. Our Lord knows, on the contrary, that real holiness must be founded on truth; that is, on God's revealed words.

For if God is love, so also God is truth. *I am the Truth.* Hence St. Paul writes: *He will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.* He joins salvation and truth together: *What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.*

## STATION XVII.

*Thou hast sent Me into the world. I have also sent them into the world (v. 18).*

As then *I and the Father are one*; "My Apostles and My Church are sent and commissioned by the same God Who sent Me. Therefore, *He that heareth you, heareth Me; he that despiseth you despiseth Me, and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me*" (St. Luke x.).

## STATION XVIII.

*And for them do I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth (v. 19).*

A. St. Augustine interprets: "I sanctify My Humanity, and by making My disciples members of My Body, sanctify

them also". By partaking of His Sacred Body and Blood His brethren become holy with His holiness. *Anima Christi, sanctifica me.*

B. *For them do I sanctify Myself.*

Fathers and mothers and priests and all in authority may rouse themselves to fervour by this thought. For the sake of those under me I must sanctify myself.

STATION XIX.

*And not for them only do I pray, but for them also who through their word shall believe in Me (v. 20).*

So far our Lord has been making a special farewell prayer for His Apostles. Now He turns His thoughts to us who are to come after, but who are as present to His mind as those in the Supper Room. For us then also He prays. Oh, let us listen; for if His prayer was efficacious for His Apostles, so is it also for His present Church. It won grace for St. Lawrence, for St. Francis, for St. Ignatius, for St. Teresa, and wins abundant grace for us.

STATION XX.

*That they may all be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me (v. 21).*

A. *That they may be one in Us.*

St. Cyril and others think that our Blessed Saviour is praying that through the Blessed Eucharist we may be all made one, and kept in unity; with one faith and one strong bond of charity.

B. *That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.*

Mark, too, this second word: "That men seeing charity among My disciples may believe that Thou hast sent Me". By want of charity we scandalise men and make them disbelieve in Christ's Church. *Pierce, O Lord, my flesh with Thy fear (Psalm cxviii.), for Thou hast said: Wo to him by whom the scandal cometh (St. Matt. xviii.).*

## STATION XXI.

*And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them, that they may be one as we also are one (v. 22).*

*I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be perfect in one (v. 23).*

Commentators of great name, such as St. Hilary, the Jesuit Cardinal Toletus, and Father Ribera, S.J., understand these words of our Lord in reference to the Blessed Eucharist. The glory which Thou hast given Me by uniting the Divine Nature to My Human Nature, I have given to them by uniting My Body and Blood and Divinity with them in the Sacrament of My Love: *I in them, and Thou in Me.*

*That they may be one, as we also are one, and that they may be made perfect in one.* This is what St. Paul teaches. *The Chalice of Benediction which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? And the Bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the Body of the Lord? For we being many, are one Bread, one Body, all that partake of one Bread (I Cor. x.).* When we eat the bread of this earth, we change it into our own flesh and blood; but St. Paul teaches us, that by all feeding on the Bread of Heaven, we all become changed by Its Divine power, and become *one Bread, one Body.*

## STATION XXII.

*That the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast also loved Me (v. 23).*

A. If then we make the proper use of the Divine Banquet of the Blessed Eucharist, receiving It worthily and receiving It frequently, we become more and more changed into Christ Jesus, and we all have one mind and one heart; and the men of this world—*tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine (Ephes. ii.),* and perpetually urged on by the father of lies, who *was a murderer from the beginning (St. John viii.),* to hate one another, and to raise up self on

the ruins of others—when they see peace and security and charity and self-denial reigning in Christ's Church, have their eyes opened, and acknowledge with St. Peter: *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God* (St. Matt. xvi.). *Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of Eternal Life* (St. John v.).

B. "*Attendite.*" Stay here a little while, and let us ask ourselves, are we making use as we ought of the Divine Banquet? Is it working in us the unity of faith and the unity of heavenly charity? Are we by being true members of His Body, drawing many others to Christ Jesus? Or are we afflicting most grievously the Heart of our Lord, by scandalising the weak by our want of charity, and driving them further away from Him? *Wo to the world because of scandals. For it must needs be that scandals come: but nevertheless, wo to the man by whom the scandal cometh* (St. Matt. xviii.).

C. *And (that) the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me.*

All the love that our Lord has for us comes from His Eternal Father. He is living on earth in order that by seeing Him, we may come to know His Father. *Philip, he who sees Me, sees the Father.* If our Lord has loved us so well as to deliver Himself up for us, our Father Who is in Heaven has also loved us so well as to give His only Son for us. When we look therefore for the cause of all that love which our Lord has had for us, we have to ascend higher to His Father and our Father, His God and our God. It is because His Eternal Father has with infinite love created us to His own image, and made us His children, that we have so great a value in the eyes of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore He wishes our daily and hourly prayer to be: *Our Father, hallowed be Thy Name.* "May all men love and cherish Thy Name of Father."

## STATION XXIII.

*Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me ; that they may see My glory, which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me before the creation of the world (v. 24).*

A. *That where I am, they also may be.*

He is loving to the end. This ardent prayer from His most compassionate Heart He lets them hear as a preparation for the sorrow that is coming. He wishes that this assurance, *I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given to Me may be with Me*, may come back and back to their troubled souls when all seems lost.

B. *They also whom Thou hast given Me.—My glory, which Thou hast given Me.*

Our Blessed Lord never tires of acknowledging that all comes to Him from His Father, and declaring how much His Father has loved Him.

“*Vere dignum.* It is truly right and just and fair and salutary that always and everywhere we give Thee thanks, Holy Lord, Father Almighty, Eternal God.” We ought to be able habitually to say most heartily: *Laudamus te, benedicimus te*—“We praise Thee, O God, we bless Thee, we adore Thee, we give thanks to Thee”.

C. How wise it would also be to cherish this conception of the poor, and of our neighbours: *They whom Thou hast given me, O my God.*

## STATION XXIV.

*Just Father, the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me (v. 25).*

A little before, His prayer was: *Holy Father*, sanctify them, keep them in holiness. Now He appeals to the justice of His Father, and He wishes His faithful Apostles to know that through His merits, and because His disciples become one with Him, they can in His name

claim their reward as their just due. Thus St. Paul is not afraid to write: *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown, which the Lord, the Just Judge, will render to me in that day: and not only unto me, but to them also that love His coming* (2 Timothy iv.).

STATION XXV.

*I have made known Thy name to them, and will make it known*  
(v. 26).

“I will make it known more fully when the Holy Spirit sent by Me shall come.”

“Fulfil Thy promise, O Lord, also in us. *Show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.* Grant us a strong faith to believe in His name. Make known His name of Father to us.”

STATION XXVI.

*That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them* (v. 26).

A. That the grace of the Holy Spirit may be in them; because the Holy Spirit is the love wherewith the Father loveth His Son. Hence St. Paul writes: *The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, Who is given to us* (Romans v.).

*Veni Creator Spiritus. Fons vivus, ignis, charitas, et spiritalis unctio.*

B. *And I in them.*

Here our Lord again returns to the Blessed Eucharist, and with these words ends His prayer, and brings to a close this most holy Eucharistic solemnity.

*So they did eat, and were filled exceedingly, and He gave them their desire* (Psalm lxxvii.).<sup>1</sup>

*Man ate the Bread of Angels* (Psalm lxxvii.).

*Let the just feast, and rejoice before God, and be delighted with gladness. Sing ye to God. . . . God in His Holy Place, God Who maketh men of one manner to dwell in a house.*

<sup>1</sup> See Communion, Quinquagesima Sunday.

*The mountain of God is a fat mountain. A mountain in which God is well pleased to dwell: for there the Lord shall dwell unto the end (Psalm lxxvii.).*

## SCENE XI.

## FAREWELL TO THE SANCTUARY.

*And a hymn being said they went out unto Mount Olivet (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*And when they had said a hymn they went forth to the Mount of Olives (St. Mark xiv.).*

*A. A hymn being said.*

We have already seen that the hymn here referred to may have been said immediately after the Holy Mass as a thanksgiving service. It is, however, possible that our Blessed Saviour wishes, at the end of the First Night Watch, to close the sacred scenes enacted in the Cenacle, which were never to be forgotten in time or in eternity, with a special thanksgiving, in keeping with the hymn of praise prescribed at the end of the ancient Pasch, that type and figure now gone by and passed away for ever—its place is found no more. We have seen that some students of Jewish rites are of opinion that the psalms recited at the end of the legal Pasch were the 113th, the *In exitu Israel*, and the four Psalms immediately following. Others, however, incline to the view that the song of praise was made up of the three or four Psalms at the end of the Psalter.

If these Psalms formed the parting hymn immediately before leaving the Supper-Room, we may contemplate the great devotion inspired into "the little flock" when Jesus the High Priest, acting as their Precentor, begins with all the ardour of His inflamed Heart to recite such words as these:

*Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle. Let His praise be in the Church of the Saints.*

*Let Israel rejoice in Him that made Him; and let the children of Sion be joyful in their King.*

This would be a most devout farewell of the disciples to the holy sanctuary where they have received two ineffable gifts: the first, the Body and Blood of the Lord; and the second, the power to do what the High Priest Jesus did.

## SCENE XII.

## PREPARATION FOR DEPARTURE IN THE GUEST-ROOM.

## STATION I.

## HOLY MARY.

*They went forth to the Mount of Olives (St. Mark xiv.).*

The entire celebration, including the Pasch of the Old Law, and the Pasch of the New and Everlasting Covenant, is now ended.

Our Blessed Saviour may have to lay aside some special robes which He wore during the Holy Sacrifice. The Apostles, too, may have to put off the pilgrim's garment, or some other that they put on for the sacramental ordination. There is also, as we have said, the Most Holy Sacrament to be with becoming love and reverence carried for reservation to the place prepared for It. There may be moreover the sacred vessels, and the consecrated chrism to be laid by in a suitable keeping-place.

“*O vos omnes*”—*O all you who pass by the way*, while all these things are being arranged, stay a little, turn aside for a while to watch and to listen; for the hour of the great conflict is now close at hand. And we may contemplate during these short moments of preparation how our Lord has gone aside with His Holy Mother to say a parting word to her; to ask her to repeat once more her consent to all that He is about to do and to suffer. For still His wish is to be to the end most filial, most reverent, most lovingly subject to her. “Say once again, Holy Mother, the word you said to the faithful Archangel, St. Gabriel; the word you have never retracted.” And she would say now, in quite a new sense, and with quite a new fervour, and filled with quite a new grace: O my Son, O my God, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to Thy word.*

## STATION II.

## THE GUEST-ROOM.

*They went forth (St. Mark xiv.).*

A. And now all has been properly arranged, and they are gathered in the large Guest-Room around their Divine Master, ready to go forth to Gethsemani.

It is night; but the bright, full moon that is lighting up Mount Sion and Mount Moriah and Mount Olivet and Mount Calvary is, oh, how deceptive! It gives no sign or token or warning by which men may know that the dark hour of danger and dread struggle is come.

*Man shall go forth to his work and his labour until the evening.* Our Blessed Lord has ended His working day. He has worked, teaching and healing and doing good, till the late evening.

B. Now *Thou hast appointed darkness and it is night: in it shall the beasts of the wood go about.* The spirits of darkness with the prince of this world at their head are now abroad and at their work. For a little hour they were coerced, and there was around the holy altar a great tranquillity. That hour of peace and privilege is past.

Unseen, the jealous and malignant spirits, who through envy worked the ruin of Adam and Eve, have now their malicious eyes fixed on these fishermen raised suddenly to an elevation immeasurably beyond that of man in Paradise. This presence of the wicked spirits is soon felt.

## STATION III.

*There was also a strife amongst them which of them should seem to be the greater (St. Luke xxii. 24).*

A. What, so soon after the Holy Mysteries! so soon after First Communion! so soon after being raised to the priesthood!

Pious persons are often greatly inclined to despond if immediately after a retreat made fervently, or after Holy Communion, they are surprised into an outburst of

temper, or some other similar fault. They are inclined to jump at once to the conclusion that the retreat and their devotion was all a delusion; but our good God may judge far otherwise. *With what circumspection, O Lord, hast Thou judged Thy own children!* (Wisdom xii.). He looks carefully round about (this is *circumspection*) to find all excuses or palliating circumstances before He judges. Moreover, He never fails to take into account all the malignant envy of the tempter who labours so hard to dupe us and seduce us into sin.

We are then to keep in mind the teaching of spiritual masters on this subject.

1. As there are acceptable times, and days of special grace and salvation, so there are times of special temptation when the practice of virtue is much more difficult. There are pleasant months in summer and autumn when it is more easy to keep good health; so are there also the cold and raw and bleak and dreary days of winter when it is very easy to become ill and sometimes very hard to keep well.

Within the soul there are similar changes of weather, which are not under our control. There is the time of *Consolation* and the time of *Desolation*. Of these two spiritual states St. Ignatius has treated very fully and very accurately in his Spiritual Exercises.

2. From the comparison just used certain conclusions can be drawn.

(a) It follows that, if Consolation is like sunny weather, and Desolation like dark winter, these two states of soul come by *God's ordinance*, and we cannot by our efforts secure sunshine for our souls, nor can we by willing it hinder Desolation from visiting us.

(b) It follows also that we are not necessarily more holy, because our soul is in the sunlight of Consolation, nor less pleasing to God because in dark Desolation. It requires an effort of our faith to believe firmly this most important truth. For we are ever apt to think that any suffering that comes is a proof of God's displeasure, and that things agreeable are marks of His special favour.

(c) A prodigal who comes back to His Father in Heaven has sometimes a larger measure of Consolation to help him in the weakness of his new beginnings. On the other hand, brave and faithful soldiers of Christ are sometimes more tried by Desolation, in order that they may gain greater victories over Satan.

3. St. Ignatius mentions, in detail, some of the principal effects of spiritual Consolation.

(a) It awakens internal emotions whereby the soul begins to be inflamed with love for its Creator and Lord: so that it can no longer love the things of this earth merely for their own sake, but only as means for arriving at its Creator.

(b) It moves to tears, which help the soul towards love for our Lord, tears of contrition for sin, tears of compassion for the sufferings of Christ, or tears caused by any other consideration connected with God's service and glory.

(c) Another effect of spiritual Consolation, not always so sensible, that is, not always accompanied by pleasant feelings, is an increase of faith, hope, and charity. Magdalen at the Cross may have had a great increase of faith and love and yet no pleasant feelings, but on the contrary much pain and agony of heart. Such strong compassion, though so painful, comes under St. Ignatius' idea of Consolation.

4. *Desolation*, he goes on to say, is the opposite to *Consolation*.

If *Consolation* is a sunshine from Heaven, *Desolation* may be compared to Egyptian darkness, which the spirits of evil are permitted to spread over the soul.

Like the Egyptian darkness, it is not mere darkness, but, we may say, a poisoned darkness, that seems to affect the will as well as the understanding.

The Egyptian darkness is described in the Book of Wisdom (c. xvii.) as *a night which came up from the lowest and deepest Hell. A heavy night, an image of the darkness that was to come.*

So St. Ignatius tells us—and he knew it from his own bitter experience—that with *Desolation* comes a darkening of the soul, trouble in the soul, a drawing to things low and earthly: an unquiet state of agitation and temptation, tending to weaken confidence, so that the soul feels itself to be without hope, without love, and altogether sluggish, lukewarm, and sad, and apparently separated from its Creator and Lord.

5. When we are in this state, our spiritual guides tell us, we must not give up our prayer or spiritual exercises—*Make not haste in the time of clouds* (Ecclus. ii.); but we naturally answer: "But prayer is now impossible". We require to be strongly assured that God has not abandoned us, nor withdrawn all grace—that we can still pray; and that prayer made now—because more difficult—is much more powerful than prayer in time of sunshine.

6. St. Ignatius adds that God permits *Desolation*.

(i.) Sometimes to waken us out of a state of spiritual sluggishness.

(ii.) Sometimes in order to give us opportunity of winning more *future* glory by fighting here bravely without *present Consolation*.

(iii.) Sometimes to make us know experimentally that it is not in our power to command, whenever we will, pious and devotional feelings and tears, and to prevent us from "building our nest in another man's tree"—that is to say, ascribing to ourselves what is a pure effect of God's compassion for our weakness,

7. St. Ignatius strongly advises those suffering *Desolation* not to fight their battle alone, but to seek counsel from some spiritual guide. The devil is a seducer who trusts entirely to fraud, and dreads nothing so much as exposure to the light.

8. Priests and others who have to guide souls might be unsafe guides if they had not themselves in *Desolation* become acquainted with infirmity.

Pious lay people also, if not occasionally schooled by *Desolation*, might be inclined at times to turn Reformers, and undertake the work of Œcumenical Councils.

B. Our *great High Priest*, then, *Jesus the Son of God*, Who is going to allow Himself to taste all the bitterness of *Desolation*, and to be compassed with infirmity, knows how to have compassion on His disciples when they are *ignorant and err*. He does not with *one rough word* crush them for so soon coming down from the high thoughts He has been pouring into their souls ; but with great meekness and charity teaches them and teaches us.

#### STATION IV.

*And He said to them : The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and they that have power over them are called beneficent. But you not so. But he that is the greater among you let him become as the younger ; and he that is the leader as he that serveth. For which is greater, he that sitteth at table, or he that serveth ? Is not he that sitteth at table ? But I am in the midst of you as he that serveth* (vv. 25—27).

A. *The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them.*

What more appalling, what more calculated to freeze the blood than the records of the abject servility exacted by despots : "*Morituri te salutant, Cæsar*". "We, the doomed ones, the men about to be butchered to make a holiday for you, we come to bow down before your throne, and wish you prosperity, before we go to death." And, what is passing strange, the men who will not stoop to serve their good God, are the most ready to grovel in the dust before a man in power.

When the people of Israel, tired of theocracy, clamoured for a king, God said to His servant Samuel, who was then the judge in Israel: *They have not rejected thee, but Me, that I should reign over them. Now therefore hearken to their voice, but yet testify to them and foretell them the right of the king that shall reign over them. He will take your sons and put them in his chariots, and will make them his horsemen and his running footmen to run before his chariots. Your daughters he will take to make him ointments and to be his cooks and bakers. And he will take your fields and your vineyards and your best olive-yards, and give them to his servants.*

The answer of the foolish people was: *Nay, but there shall be a king over us* (1 Kings viii.).

B. *They that have power shall be called beneficent.*

Lord Chancellor Audrey, the unworthy successor of Blessed Sir Thomas More, used to shed tears while haranguing the Parliament on the virtues and heavenly qualities of their gracious Sovereign Henry VIII.

C. *But you not so. But he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger.* Men say sometimes that Christianity is a failure. Because we are grown familiar with the wonders wrought by Christianity, as we are with the sunlight, we think less of them. Has nothing been effected when the greatest potentate on earth, the Vicar of Christ, glories in being called, *Servus Servorum Dei*?

With what jealous care have the founders of Religious Orders provided that neither high offices, nor age, nor past services shall be a pretext for lording it over others, or a title to flattery and adulation! Has Christianity taught us nothing?

D. *I am in the midst of you as he that serveth.*

Lucifer's defiant motto is, *I will not serve.*

Man, too, created to serve His Creator, refused to serve. Neither fear of Hell nor hope of Heaven could move his pride to bow down. Then said the Son of God, *Behold,*

*I come. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, as one that serveth.* And multitudes of Christian men and women follow after Him, led on by the charm of His meek and humble Heart.

STATION V.

*And you are they who have continued with Me in My temptations. And I dispose to you, as My Father hath disposed to Me, a Kingdom; that you may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and may sit upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (vv. 28—30).*

A. *You are they who have continued with Me in My temptations.*

What! instead of severely reprimanding their ambitious strife!

St. Paul well understood the Heart of his Master when he wrote: *Charity doth not think evil.* Our Lord will not observe the present fault, but looks back, from the present, to all their past fidelity.

“Most merciful Lord Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, teach us to be blind to the evil that men may do to us, and only to remember their kindness.”

How very far astray we have gone when we actually see evil that does not exist, and accuse men rashly and wrongfully!

B. *I dispose to you a Kingdom.*

Our Lord knows how the unseen spirits are plotting ruin against the souls of His little flock, but His charitable meekness baffles their plot. He safely protects the hearts of His disciples against earthly ambition. *I dispose to you a Kingdom.* Even as My Father is preparing a Kingdom for Me, I am preparing thrones for you. You need not be troubled about precedence. You are all to *sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

C. We too must learn this good method of weaning men's souls from earthly things, by putting vividly before them better things—the beauty of the Lord, and the goodness and the joys of life everlasting with Him.

## STATION VI.

*And the Lord said: Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not, and thou being once converted, confirm thy brethren* (vv. 31, 32).

A. *Satan hath desired to have you.*

And now our Lord reveals something to them, concerning their own position, beyond what their eyes can see, but which He sees most clearly; how Satan and the wicked spirits of darkness are at this very moment glaring on them with their malicious, murderous eyes, and longing to destroy them. As St. Peter afterwards wrote: They are *seeking whom they may devour* (1 St. Peter v.). They are only restrained by that watchful Providence which takes far more care of each child of Heaven than of the birds and the lilies, and does not allow the tempter ever to afflict any beyond their power of enduring. Satan had to ask permission each time he exerted his malice against Job; and each time God decreed how far the tide of troubles might roll, and no farther.

B. Observe; Satan has desired to have *you*, all the Apostles. I have prayed for *thee*. This special prayer is for His future Vicar, who is to be allowed to fall through weakness, that his presumption may be for ever cured; but his faith is not to fail.

## STATION VII.

*Then Jesus saith to them: All you shall be scandalised in Me this night. For it is written: I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be dispersed* (St. Matt. xxvi. 31).

A. *All you shall be scandalised in Me this night.*

If we should chance to hear that a priest just ordained had committed some great crime, we might be inclined to despair of God's religion.

At what period in the history of the Church was the

look-out more dark than on this Holy Thursday night? All His newly-ordained priests, His own chosen ones, trained so assiduously by Himself, His Bishops, His Apostles elect, His own Vicar, all shall be scandalised.

But *charity hopeth all things*, when those who love not have lost all hope. Our Blessed Saviour in time past told His disciples how He saw Lucifer through pride fall from Heaven like lightning. He knows that pride also ruined all His first plan for man in Paradise. *You shall be as gods*, was the promise that allured the first man and woman away from fidelity.

The one thing therefore that He now dreads for His new creation is pride. He is not dismayed or cast down at the sight of weakness in His disciples, because He well knows that virtue *is perfected in infirmity* (2 Cor. xii.). His Heart *hopeth all things, endureth all things, beareth all things*.

He pleads, in favour of His little ones, the terrible fierceness of the assault upon them; and that if the shepherd be struck down, it is not wonderful if the flock be scandalised and scattered. He knows that the storm will soon cease to rage, and that then the fire kindled in the Cœnaculum, which now seems stamped out and extinguished for ever, will burst forth again from the ashes, and fill the whole world with its bright light.

B. *All you shall be scandalised.*

This word *scandalised* is sometimes misused and misunderstood. In certain districts men say, Such a one is *scandalising me*, when they mean that he is slandering me, and giving me a bad name.

Or again, when men are indignant, or disgusted, or shocked at something that they hear, they sometimes say, *I am scandalised*, whereas, in reality, they are often much more scandalised when they are listening to language that does not shock them, but pleases them.

A scandal then is a stone, or other obstacle, that makes one stumble, or fall. A neighbour scandalises us if he, by

telling us some news, moves us to sin by resentment, or by uncharitable judgments, or by thoughts against the angelical virtue. If we were shocked and indignant at hearing such words, we should be less scandalised. We are scandalised because we are not shocked, but listen with pleasure, and either commit a sin, or give up some good which we were going to do.

#### STATION VIII.

*But after I shall be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee (v. 32).*

St. Ignatius advises us to cheer ourselves, and others also, during the dark hours of Desolation, by calling to mind that sunshine will soon come back if we keep up our courage, and fight manfully.

*Resist the devil and he will fly from you*, is a truth to be treasured up for the time of trial. We see in the words we are considering how our Saviour, knowing what a dark hour is at hand, reminds His little flock that a better time is soon to follow. *After I shall be risen, I will go before you into Galilee.*

#### STATION IX.

*And Peter answering, said to Him : Although all shall be scandalised in Thee, yet not I ; I will never be scandalised. Lord, I am ready to go with Thee to prison and to death (St. Matt. xxvi. ; St. Mark xiv. ; St. Luke xxii.).*

A. The hour of great temptation is clearly come. Our Saviour has just warned St. Peter that Lucifer and his legions of wicked spirits are waiting and watching to see if they may find a chance of sifting His little flock as wheat—that is to say, of trying their fidelity with all manner of temptation, in the hope that they may prove to be only chaff, and not good wheat. *He boasteth that he hath the knowledge of God. Let us see then if his words be true ; and let us prove what shall happen to him ; and we shall know what his end shall be. Let us examine him by outrages and*

*tortures* (Wisdom ii.). Here we have the mind of Lucifer; his malicious desire to outrage God and His Christ by ruining their work, their image. To destroy fidelity and love in the souls of these chosen disciples would be a triumph beyond price to him.

But the wicked spirits are in presence of their Lord and Master, at Whose Name every knee must bend in Hell, as well as on earth and in Heaven. Their power for mischief is restrained. Later on, when the Sacred Passion has borne its fruits in the souls of these chosen ones, Satan will be permitted to try his strength and his cunning against them, that the victory of these fishers of men may cover the powers of darkness with unbearable confusion. But now, in their weakness, our Blessed Saviour will not permit temptation beyond their strength.

B. And yet, even so the tempter gains some way. St. Ignatius, well-trying in warfare against the wiles of Satan, tells us that the wicked spirits study each individual, just as a besieging general studies the beleaguered town to find out the weak points.

Satan has therefore carefully studied the man who is hereafter to become his chief enemy on earth, the Vicar of Christ, the Prince of His Apostles, and Father of all the faithful. He has found out that Simon Peter's ardent nature which helps him towards great love, on the other hand favours self-reliance and presumption and obstinacy of mind. But Satan's cunning is short-sighted. Did he but know how the charity of Christ will out of Peter's fall work peace on earth and glory to God, he would be loath indeed to tempt him. The Blessed Apostle had ever before his mind in after years the lessons of this sad and sacred night. Therefore did he write to the flock of Christ those wholesome counsels: *Be you humbled under the mighty hand of God. Be sober, and watch, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour* (1 St. Peter v.).

C. That the temptation from Lucifer is violent appears

from this, that our Lord had already, before the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist, warned Simon Peter that he would fall that night, and that warning must have had good effect, since later on, after the Holy Communion, Jesus said: *You are clean, because of the word I have spoken to you.* Notwithstanding this, he now repeats his fault with aggravation; he not only declares that he will never be scandalised, but he prefers himself before the rest, and protests: *Although all be scandalised in Thee, yet not I.*

Let us note, however, that this sin of St. Peter's is one which presupposes love for Christ Jesus. If there were not love in his heart for his Master, he never would imagine that he would die for Him. For such sins the charitable Heart of our Saviour can find excuses much more easily than for those which are all made up of selfishness and pride and sensuality, without any admixture of love.

And yet even when we fall into these blacker sins, the disciple who leaned his head on the Sacred Heart of Jesus tells us to remember that *we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just.*

"If this be so, Lord Jesus, if Thou canst plead for us when our sins are as red as scarlet, till they are made white as snow, *with what circumspection,* with how much tender compassion and consideration and remembrance of all Thy past love wilt Thou deal with Thy own Apostle!"

#### STATION X.

*And Jesus saith to him: Amen, I say to thee, to-day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice (St. Mark xiv.). The cock shall not crow this day till thou thrice deniest that thou knowest Me (St. Luke xxii.).*

*In this night, before the cock crow, thou wilt deny Me thrice (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*But he spoke the more vehemently: Although I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee (St. Mark xiv.).*

St. Mark enables us to interpret St. Matthew and St. Luke.

He writes: *before the cock crow twice.* That is, before the second crowing of the cock, which will take place at some interval after the first.

St. Matthew and St. Luke are in accord with this, if we interpret them to mean that St. Peter will deny three times before the crowing of the cock be completed.

A. *Speaking as one that hath power*, our Lord foretells accurately the day, the hour, and the circumstances of the denial; but Peter, carried away by the strong consciousness within him that he loves his Master, forgets that his Master is a prophet, and much more than a prophet; forgets too his own profession, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God*, and treats the loving admonition with irreverence.

With reason the Holy Spirit gives us all this most friendly counsel: *In whatever day you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts.* Because the voice of the Lord does not come to us as a *whirlwind*, or an *earthquake*, or a *fire*, but as the whisper of a *gentle breeze*, we often give no heed to it; and yet any word of His can do what all the tongues of angels and men joined together could not effect. Every word of His, though it seems to be but a little seed, yet out of it can grow a universe, and a Heaven, and life everlasting. What a loss, what a calamity, what an inconceivable folly and recklessness it is when such a word—a word from the mouth of our good God, our wise God, our Almighty God—is rejected, and, as far as in us lies, made void!

#### STATION XI.

*And in like manner said all the disciples (St. Matt. xxvi. 35).*

A. *All we like sheep have gone astray.* Like sheep, without reflection, we follow a leader. On the day of Samson's death, THE PRINCES OF THE PHILISTINES were making merry, and offering *great sacrifices to Dagon their god, and saying, Our god hath delivered our enemy Samson into our hands.* And THE PEOPLE SEEING THIS, *praised their god and SAID THE SAME (Judges xiv.).*

When the Wise Men brought the news that a King was born, *Herod was troubled, and ALL JERUSALEM WITH HIM.*

We who are so proud, so fond of independence, so unwilling to be subject to our God, yet are most ready to give ourselves blindly to the leadership of a man. Nay, we are not content till we have a man as our leader. *Give us a king*, we clamour with the Jews when they were tired of having God as their King and their Lawgiver. And the Lord answers most unwillingly, *I will give them a king in My wrath.* And we, the children of God, become the slaves of a man, and of Lucifer.

B. Observe how Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, is silent, and does not harshly or even severely rebuke the irreverent reply of His disciples to His salutary warning. His Heart prays in great compassion for them, but He speaks not. *There is a time to keep silent and a time to speak* (Eccles. iii.).

## STATION XII.

*And He said to them: When I sent you without scrip and purse and shoes, did you want anything? But they said, Nothing. Then said He to them, But now he that hath a purse let him take it, and likewise a scrip; and he that hath not, let him sell his coat and buy a sword. For I say to you that this that is written must yet be fulfilled in Me: And with the wicked was He reckoned. For the things concerning Me have an end* (St. Luke xxii. 35—37).

A. *Now he that hath a purse let him take it.*

He is now giving them to understand that the hour of turmoil and confusion is come; an exceptional time of danger and persecution, during which ordinary rules will be in abeyance. "Formerly, I sent you without scrip, and you never were destitute; you could live on alms. But when Satan is for a while let loose, *Whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth a service to God* (St. John xvi.). Persecution will so rage that unless the evil days *had*

*been shortened no flesh should be saved* (St. Matt. xxiv.). But the ever-watching providence of our Father will shorten these days of tribulation *for the sake of the elect.*"

In these days, then, of persecution our Lord forewarns His disciples, you will no longer be able to go about welcomed because you are My disciples. According to human wisdom, you will want scrip and purse, and a sword also.

In the history of the Church, we see these prophetic words fully verified. For in the days of persecution the Apostles of Christ have been obliged to be *prudent as serpents* as well as *simple as doves*. Like the great St. Athanasius, they have followed their Divine Master's counsel, *When they persecute you in one city, flee into another.*

At the same time, while taking wise precautions, He will have them not fear *them that kill the body and are not able to kill the soul* (St. Matt. x.). For now, as always, their Father in Heaven knows what their need is; and they are to Him much more precious than the birds of the air, which He never forgets.

*B. But now he that hath a purse let him take it, and likewise a scrip.*

From our Lord's own practice with His disciples, we see that there are times when His Apostles are to lay aside these precautions of human wisdom, and go without scrip; and, what is more wonderful, not to premeditate what they are to say before kings and princes; but trust to the Divine promise that it will be given them what they are to say.

At other times He and His Apostles and His Religious Orders have purse and scrip. Judas was the unfaithful keeper of our Lord's purse. He *having the purse, carried the things that were put therein* (St. John xii.).

And His disciples who shall go over the world till the end of time to preach the Gospel, though in exceptional times they can trust, and must trust, that the Spirit of God will give them what they are to say, yet, as the ordinary rule, they will be bound to use all industry and

diligence that they may teach aright the Gospel of Christ, and not their own conceits.

C. *Let him sell his coat and buy a sword.*

These words of our Saviour have to be reconciled with what He says later in the same night to St. Peter: *He who taketh the sword shall perish by the sword.* "Why, O Lord," St. Ambrose writes, "dost Thou bid me bring a sword, and forbid me to strike?"

His solution is that it might be wise to let assailants see that we have the means of punishing enemies, though we do not wish to make use of our power.

Other commentators understand our Lord to wish to convey to His Apostles, that the danger at hand is so great that men of human prudence would say that a sword would be more necessary even than ordinary meat and drink. We have already seen how oftentimes He uses words that are misunderstood, and speaks parables and proverbs which are not to be interpreted rashly, but with care and circumspection and humility. He *giveth understanding to little ones* (Psalm cxviii.), but *the proud He hath scattered in the conceit of their heart* (St. Luke i.).

He follows throughout His teaching His Heavenly Father's plan: *Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones* (St. Matt. xi.). The little ones who are humble can always, through the light of the Holy Spirit and the teaching of Holy Church, arrive at the true sense of our Lord's words: but *the rich*—those who are too much content with their own intellect—*He hath sent empty away.*

D. *For the things concerning Me have an end.*

The disciples little think how rapidly that end is coming.

We too must learn to say the same words concerning ourselves: *The things concerning me have an end.*

Even if we live to be old, the end commonly seems to come suddenly, and before it was expected.

E. The saints taught themselves to reckon little of things that *have an end*, and to keep their esteem for things everlasting.

F. As the present life is soon to have an end, wisely indeed does St. Paul advise us: *It is now the hour to rise from sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than when we (first) believed* (Romans xiii.).

And again: *See therefore, brethren, now you walk circumspectly, not as unwise, but as wise, redeeming the time* (Ephes. v.).

How can time be redeemed? If a man is making for a train, and falls down and thus loses some time, he tries hard to regain what is lost by walking or running more quickly than he would otherwise have done. In the Collect for the feast of St. Stanislaus Kostka, we are taught to redeem time by working very diligently. The young saints who in few years reached to great holiness, condemn the long lives of the remiss and the slothful (Wisdom iv.).

### STATION XIII.

*But they said, Lord, behold here are two swords. And He said to them, It is enough* (v. 38).

Some commentators think that they were two large sacrificial knives used in the immolation of the lamb. Others maintain that they were swords.

A. *He said to them, It is enough.*

Our Blessed Saviour knows all that is to happen to Malchus, and sees good reasons for allowing Peter and the rest to remain in their error about the sword.

Azarias was walking in the midst of the flaming furnace when he said the words which we too must say in gladness:

*Blessed art Thou, O Lord; all Thy works are true, and Thy ways right, and all Thy judgments true.*

“Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. He is well known to thee, and beloved by thy whole heart. Mother of God, pray for us sinners. Show us the Blessed Fruit of thy womb, Jesus, that we may love Him with some share of thy love.”

## CHAPTER II.

## THE SECOND NIGHT WATCH.

## SCENE I.

## THE WAY TO GETHSEMANI.

*And going out He went according to His custom to the Mount of Olives ; and His disciples followed Him (St. Luke xxii.).*  
*When Jesus had said these things He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where there was a garden, into which He entered with His disciples (St. John xviii.).*

Some holy and learned interpreters of the Sacred Scriptures seem to say that the strife among the Apostles, which we have been considering, and the prophetic warnings which our Saviour uttered so solemnly of the dangers that were to come that night, were incidents which occurred during the walk from the Cœnaculum to Gethsemani ; but we are perhaps justified in following the order which we find in St. Luke's narrative. For it is after he has recorded the conversation which arose out of the strife, and how our Lord then foretold the scandals to come, that he writes the words : *Going out He went according to His custom to the Mount of Olives.*

## STATION I.

A. *He went forth with His disciples.*

If the common tradition be correct, we are at the night of the 24th of March, according to our modern calendar. And, as far as we can calculate or conjecture, it is about nine o'clock, that is, about the beginning of the second night watch, when Jesus leaves the Cœnaculum. In the Jewish calendar we know that it is the fourteenth day of the month of Nizan, which *shall be to you the beginning of*

- A. TOMB OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.  
B. ENTRANCE TO THE GROTTA OF THE AGONY.  
C. HIGH ROAD FROM JERUSALEM TO BETHANY.  
D. CEDRON TORRENT.  
E. PLACE WHERE OUR LORD WAS SEIZED.  
F. STONE WHERE THREE APOSTLES SLEPT AND WHERE JUDAS KISSED JESUS.  
G. PLACE WHERE JESUS WEPT.  
H. WHERE HE TAUGHT THE PATER NOSTER.  
I. PLACE OF THE ASCENSION.  
J. WHERE THE EIGHT APOSTLES WERE LEFT.  
K. GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.



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months. It shall be the first in the months of the year (Exodus xii.).

At this season in Jerusalem, a chill evening and a cold night succeed to the warmth and bright sunshine of the mid-day. The full moon is shedding its tranquil light on Mount Sion, Mount Olivet, Mount Moriah, and Mount Calvary; names which before to-morrow's sunset will be graven in characters of heavenly light never to be effaced, and set as a seal on the heart of the Bride of Christ, His Holy Church, and as a seal upon her arm.

This still moonlight, we have seen, is most deceptive. It suggests nothing but peace and repose, and gives no sign or indication whatsoever that the greatest, the fiercest, the most stupendous death-struggle that shall ever be decided in this world is about to begin; we may say is begun.

Lucifer was not only infuriated with envy and malice against God's new creation when he assailed the first man and woman in Paradise; but he and the rest of the fallen angels, moreover, looked upon Adam and Eve with unspeakable scorn and contempt, because they were beings of a lower grade, and made out of the slime of the earth. It was in order to confound and scatter these proud spirits in the conceit of their hearts that the Lord God decreed that they were to be conquered and crushed this time not by their faithful compeers, Michael, and Gabriel, and the rest, but by a Man and a Woman of the race that they contemned so much.

*Duello conflixere mirando.* Death and life, light and darkness, are to meet in a contest that the blessed angels shall gaze upon with silent amazement. Now therefore the second Adam and the second Eve are ready, and the fight is commencing.

B. *Going out He went, and His disciples followed Him.*

The fight, we may say, is commencing, because now, apparently, our Saviour, Who has been pouring out His Heart so abundantly in farewell words of comfort and of love, walks in deep silence, and His disciples follow Him.

In the Cenacle He promised: *I will ask the Father, and He will send you another Comforter.*

*Another Comforter*, He said, because till now He has been their Comforter above measure. But now the Comforter shall want comfort, and sore shall be His need.

Let us in spirit follow our Lord, watching carefully, listening attentively—and trying reverently to read His thoughts.

*Anima Christi, sanctifica me.*

The Cenacle, as we have seen, stands in the south-west corner of the city. Gethsemani, the *country place or farm in which there was a garden*, lies due east of the city and north-east of the Cenacle. The brook of Cedron, dry in the summer months, and a torrent in the rainy season, flows down the narrow valley of Josaphat, between the eastern wall of the Holy City and Mount Olivet. Midway between the southern and northern extremity of this eastern wall, at the base of Mount Olivet and close to the high-road which skirted the torrent Cedron, lies *the country place which is called Gethsemani*. As we are told, there are eight gardens there, and one of them belongs to the Blessed Virgin. The sepulchre of her parents stood then where now the church stands, which, like many other sacred sanctuaries, has been wrested from the Catholics and is held by Schismatic Armenians.

C. Silently then Jesus is walking eastward through the quiet streets. His path lies close to the Palace of the Priests, but He knows that He is secure, because His hour is not yet come. From Mount Sion He descends by steps into the lower quarter called Ophel, where the poor are gathered; and thence, through a gate in the south-eastern angle, He leaves the city, for the last time as a free man. The next time that He passes through the gates another shall lead Him as a prisoner.

As soon as He goes out of the city, He at once descends the steep pathway that leads to the little bridge over the Cedron. After to-night the pathway shall have a new name. In times to come it is to be known as the road of the Captivity. Jesus, the Son of David, and the most obedient and loving Son of the Eternal Father, is now walking in silence and in sorrow past the spot where, even as late as the sixteenth century, passers-by were wont to

cast one stone more on the heap near the so-called monument of Absalom, saying as they moved on: "Accursed Absalom the Parricide! Accursed they who wickedly persecute their parents!" Jesus has now passed that tomb, and is bending His steps northward under the high walls of the city, when at a distance of about one hundred and fifty yards from the Garden, and not far from the brook Cedron, He halts and breaks the silence.

## STATION II.

*He said to His disciples: Sit you here, till I go yonder and pray (St. Matt. xxvi. 36).*

From what follows we see that this word was not addressed to all, but only to eight of the eleven who were with Him. There is no memorial chapel standing on the spot, but the site is pointed out, and the plot of land adjoining has been secured, in the hope that a sanctuary may be there erected.

### A. *Sit you here, till I go yonder and pray.*

Contemplate the thoughtful and compassionate care of our Saviour for His disciples. He knows that their weakness could not bear the sight of His infirmity: they would be overmuch scandalised and shaken. Despite His own trouble, He is full of solicitude for them.

"*Attendite.*" This we must not fail to note; for sorrow easily demoralises us, and renders selfishness more intense and quite deadens sympathy for others.

B. Nay, at times, sorrow when very great hurries men into hopeless despair. Hence St. Paul directs that the chastisement of the scandalous sinner at Corinth shall not be prolonged unduly. *To him that is such a one this rebuke is sufficient that is given by many. So that contrariwise you should rather pardon and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow (2 Cor. ii.).* Overmuch sorrow easily destroys hope, and brings in despair, which blights and kills all the virtues. Hence it is that our Blessed Saviour not only gave to Holy Church the power of forgiving sins, but added on a most necessary

kindred power of remitting by Indulgences, wholly or in part, the temporal punishment which so often remains due to sin after the guilt has been forgiven. In His infinite charity He extends to us the full benefit of our communion with the saints, He allows His own superabundant atonement, and the unspeakable sufferings of His Blessed Mother, and the blood of the martyrs, and the penances of saintly monks and hermits and innocent virgins to be used in payment of our debts ; and Holy Church requires us to believe that this merciful arrangement is most wholesome and salutary for Christian people. Surely so, since it removes that great danger of our being swallowed up by overmuch sorrow and depression, if we had to pay unaided and alone the vast debt which often remains due after a valid absolution has taken away the guilt of sin. Purgatory too, where we can do penance without incurring fresh guilt and without despairing, is another invention of the charity of our Father in Heaven and His beloved Son, our Saviour.

In this holy hour, however, we see that sorrow cannot conquer either hope, or love, or compassion in the Heart of Jesus. *Many waters cannot quench charity ; neither can the floods drown it* (Cant. viii.).

C. *And Thou hast taught Thy people, O Lord, by such works that they must be just and humane* (Wisdom xii.). Good Christian parents and Superiors learn from the charity of our Saviour not to prolong punishment unduly, nor to remember too long offences once punished, lest overmuch sorrow swallow up the offender committed to their care.

### STATION III.

*And He taketh Peter and James and John with Him*  
(St. Mark xiv. 33).

A. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, are cousins of our Saviour, but flesh and blood can be of little help now. They have, however, better gifts than the ties of kin. They, with Peter, were on Mount Thabor, and their

faith was there strengthened, so that they can better bear the spectacle of their Master's great prostration. It is believed also that on these three He conferred in the Cenacle the fulness of sacerdotal power and grace by consecrating them as Bishops.

It is not then a chastisement, but a great privilege and an earnest of signal graces to come, when our Saviour chooses any of His disciples to be with Him in sorrow.

Even if we have not strength to drink the bitter chalice with Him, yet if we even watch with Him in His sorrow and listen to His sighs, He is most grateful, and virtue will surely come out from Him and grow in us.

B. *And He taketh Peter and James and John with Him.*

As with these three companions He walks slowly northward under the eastern wall of the city high above Him, He well understands, though His disciples do not, what is the meaning of the unusual sounds of life that come to-night from the area of the Temple and the barracks of the Roman Guard beyond. Ordinarily, Jerusalem is still after nightfall. For on this point, at least, God's ordinance prevails: *The sun ariseth, and man shall go forth to his work and to his labour until the evening. Thou hast appointed darkness, and it is night, in it shall all the beasts of the woods go about* (Psalm ciii.). On this exceptional night, however, men who have become *like to senseless beasts* are desecrating and profaning the sacred stillness of the dark hours. His Prophet was speaking as our Lord's mouthpiece when he said: *Tribulation is very near—for the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful man is opened against Me. They have spoken against Me with deceitful tongues, and they have compassed Me about with words of hatred, and have fought against Me without cause* (Psalm cviii.). Within His meek and humble Heart our Lord is saying: *My people, what have I done to thee? In what have I molested thee?*

C. *He taketh Peter and James and John with Him.*

He is now close to the country place, the farm called

*Gethsemani.* He is on the spot where five days ago He was seated on the ass's colt, and listening to the loud *Hosanna to the Son of David*, and *Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord*. That was His brief hour of consolation. Now the dark hour of desolation is settling on His soul. The change is no surprise to Him. *My Heart hath expected reproach and misery* (Psalm lxxviii.).

## SCENE II.

## THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANI.

## STATION I.

*There was a garden, into which He entered with His disciples* (St. John xviii. 1).

A. He has reached the battlefield which He Himself has chosen. It was in the garden given by God to the first Adam and the first Eve that Lucifer won his terrible victory. Of set purpose Jesus Christ, the second Adam, has bent His steps to this modest Garden of Gethsemani, which is the possession of His Blessed Mother, the second Eve. It is here that He has planned to begin the second conflict which is to make good all that was lost in the garden of man's ruin. Being Himself made after the form of the first Adam, He has planned that the Redemption also shall be worked on the same lines as the Fall. In a garden, therefore, His Passion shall begin; and when all is consummated, in a garden close beside the Cross His Sacred Body shall be laid.

B. *There was a garden, into which He entered with His disciples.*

To His legions of blessed angels, Jesus has now signified that Lucifer and the powers of darkness have permission to approach Him, and put forth their strength against Him, as far as the decree of His Eternal Father allows. The spirits of evil need no urging. Long have they wistfully watched this weary and emaciated and exhausted Man. They know the preparations which under

their guidance are in progress against Him—within bow-shot, inside the Temple area and the Roman Prætorium. But what they do not know is that they are entering into an insane conflict, ruinous to their kingdom; a conflict with their God, Who saw them *fall like lightning out of Heaven.*

That He is a Just Man, and a Prophet, and the Messiah, and the Christ, they have found out. That much well they know; but that He is the Word made Flesh they do not know. The secret of His conception in the womb of His Virgin Mother has been carefully hidden from them. And, therefore, believing that they are going to struggle with one who, however holy, is not more than a mortal man, they are bold and daring and hopeful, and put forth all their energy and exert all their intellect to work His overthrow.

#### STATION II.

*There was a garden, into which He entered with His disciples (St. John xviii.). And He began to fear and to be heavy (St. Mark xiv.). He began to grow sorrowful and to be sad (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*A. He began to fear and to be heavy— to grow sorrowful and to be sad.*

This is the evidence that Jesus, to Whom all power is given, has Himself given the signal that the conflict may be commenced. For till He says the word, and gives permission, *There shall no evil come to Thee, O Lord. Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night, of the arrow that flieth in the day (Psalm xc.). The sun shall not burn Thee by day, nor the moon by night (Psalm cxx.).* For where else, if not in Thy Most Sacred Heart, is that secure *Tabernacle of God with men*, that Heaven, where death has no power to come, *nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow?* (Apoc. xxi.).

*B. He began to fear and to be heavy—to grow sorrowful and to be sad.*

Doubtless it was from the three chosen witnesses that

the Evangelists afterwards learned what they wrote down for us. St. Peter remembered and told St. Mark how their loved Master in that hour *began to fear and to be heavy*; others repeated to St. Matthew that He *began to grow sorrowful and to be sad*. They only told what their eyes had seen and their ears heard.

For in the moonlight they can see how the paleness of death has overspread His sacred face; and that a look of inexpressible distress and anguish has quite disfigured the beauty of His countenance. "We saw Him," they would afterwards tell, "*we saw Him, and there was no beauty in Him, nor comeliness: no, nor even sightliness*. We were dismayed and horror-stricken and scandalised; for we heard Him sobbing as if His Heart would break, and saw His tears falling fast, and all His strength apparently gone from His wasted Body, for His footsteps were faltering, and His limbs all trembled; and we were sore afraid that we were going to see Him sink down on the sward never to rise again, when He turned to speak to us with His choked and broken voice."

### STATION III.

*And He saith to them: My Soul is sorrowful even unto death*  
(St. Matt. xxvi. 38).

A. Here, for the first time, they have the explanation of His deep silence since He left the Cenacle. We must bear in mind that our guides and masters in the study of the Sacred Passion remind us that we are not to pass these words by as if they are only a figure of speech. They understand them to be an exact account of what is going on within our Blessed Lord. It may probably be that permission is given to Satan to spread over His Sacred Soul that *heavy night* of desolation which comes up *from the lowest and deepest Hell* (Wisdom xvii.). Or else the natural power of fear and sadness and heaviness of heart are now permitted to work upon Him to the fullest extent.

However this may be, we must accept the words in their strict sense, and believe that He is enduring, in its most aggravated form, all the anguish and distress which sometimes oppresses the dying, when the great agony sets in and the soul must perforce go forth from the body. He alone among men, a holy writer observes, without dying endured all the bitterness of death. So much so, that had it not been already decreed that Jesus shall not die here, but on Calvary at the ninth hour, there is certainly in this hour enough of sorrow and anguish at work within His breast to cause the *silver cord* of life to snap, and the *golden fillet* of health and beauty to *shrink back* for ever; and the *pitcher* that holds His life-blood to be *crushed at the fountain*; and the *wheel* of His Nativity to be *broken upon the cistern* and stopped short in its course (Eccles. xii.).

“O Jesus, sorrowful for me unto death, penetrate my soul with the truth of Thy word: *Blessed are they that mourn with Thee.*”

#### STATION IV.

*And He saith to them: My Soul is sorrowful even unto death. Stay you here and watch with Me* (St. Matt. xxvi).  
*And when He was come to the place, He said: Pray, lest you enter into temptation* (St. Luke xxii.).

A. *He said: Pray, lest you enter into temptation.*

We must notice how sorrow and sadness and fear in all their intensity can never turn our Lord's Soul one hair's breadth from perfect love. In the prophetic description of this night watch He says to us: *The waters have come in even to My Soul. I am come into the depths of the sea: and a tempest hath overwhelmed Me* (Psalm lxviii.).

Now we are constantly reminded in the chronicles of this world, that when men are to such an extent worked upon by great fear and sadness that they commit suicide or some other great crime, they are commonly held by

their fellow-men to be comparatively blameless, because, so it is said, they were labouring under temporary insanity. The Holy Spirit also describes fear as *nothing else but a yielding up of the succours from thought*. These words mean that fear so paralyses the soul that it can no longer help itself with reasoning. All these paroxysms, however, of fear and sadness which are supposed to madden, are not like the load that is in this hour oppressing our Saviour's Soul. He can safely say to all of us who contemplate Him: Stay a little while, *and see if there be sorrow like to My sorrow* (Lament. i.).

B. Yes, sorrow and fear are doing all that they can do; but still He can with all His Heart and all His thought take care of His disciples.

His sorrow is a sorrow unto death. It is a sorrow strong enough to break His Heart and cause death. But it is not a sorrow that can conquer His charity, which is *strong as death*, and stronger. *The waters have come in even unto* (His) Soul. True; but as His Holy Spirit has told us: *Many waters cannot quench charity: neither can the floods drown it*. To Him, more than to all others, His Eternal Father has *given a commandment concerning His neighbours*. And in the beginning of the Book it is written that He will do most perfectly this will of His Father, as every other. Never for one moment can He think of *saving His own Soul only* (Esther iv.) from sorrow and anguish. On the contrary, the one sole cause why He is in this extremity of anguish is because *He loved me and delivered Himself up for me*.

C. When the winds and the waves were raging on the lake in Galilee, one word from Him commanded them all. So it is now. The passion of fear is strong; sadness is strong; sorrow is strong; but though these passions rise to their topmost height, they never will conquer the charity in His Heart; the voice of His love will ever be dominant and supreme over them.

D. *He said: Pray, lest you enter into temptation.*

He does not tell us to pray not to be tempted. For our life must be a warfare, and we must be soldiers, and must fight a good fight. But oh! how earnestly He desires that when Satan comes to tempt, and so to allure us away from our God, our Lord, our Creator, our loving Father, our most merciful Redeemer, we may not listen to the temptation, or enter into it, or go over to the side of Satan and agree with him, and make ourselves his subjects and his slaves.

E. *Stay you here and watch with Me.*

*Watch with Me.* Keep a vigil with ME; watch as a friend watches by the sick-bed of a suffering friend. Let ME have at least the comfort of knowing that some of those I love are remembering ME in My sorrow. *Remember Me, think of Me, for without any fault am I come out from the bosom of My Father and cast into this extremity of sorrow. But even this small solace He does not get. 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* (Psalm lxxviii.).

F. *Watch with ME.*

It ought not to be hard to watch with our Saviour. To spend the night sleepless and watchful in weary longing for the dawn, and full of anxious thoughts, all this is grievous indeed; but if our Saviour is watching with us and we are watching with Him, surely all is changed.

In the Cenacle He said: *You shall be scattered and shall leave Me alone, and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.* May we not say words akin to these: "In sorrow I am not alone, because Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, is always with the suffering"? Remain with Me, for I will carry the yoke with you, and so *My yoke will be sweet and My burden light.*

G. *Stay you here and watch with Me.*

They were standing on the slope of Mount Olivet, very near the base, when our Blessed Saviour spoke these words. A bed

of hard smooth rock, about two feet from the ground, is shown as the spot where the three disciples rested. If we are looking at this bed of rock with our backs turned on Jerusalem and our faces to Mount Olivet, the ancient olive trees that are still standing are on our right hand; and the Grotto into which our Lord retired to pray is on the left, and a little behind us. It is somewhat nearer the high-road than the stone is on which the Apostles slept. To reach this Grotto, our Saviour had to descend rather abruptly about thirty or forty feet; but still it was not distant more than a stone's cast from the resting-place of the Apostles. To the entrance of the Grotto there is a descent of about twenty feet, and then from the entrance a flight of twenty-seven steps leads down to the spot where our Saviour prayed. The olive gardens, which gave the Mount its name, have in great measure disappeared. Water was not abundant in Judea. We can see in many places of Holy Writ that a well was a valuable possession. At the present day, the writers of guide-books take care to tell travellers where they are likely to find a good spring of water. The number of cisterns found in and around Jerusalem is quite wonderful. The small number of well-springs throughout the country is scarcely less wonderful. The olive gardens, therefore, planted in terraces, were irrigated by artificial means. As, then, this artificial irrigation has in great measure been abandoned throughout Judea, Mount Olivet and many other hillsides stand now quite bare of trees. There are very few new plantations to be seen, and, on the other hand, a large number of persons go out of the city every day to dig up even the roots of trees, wherever they can be found, for firewood.

The Mount of Olives, then, stands very bare and rocky. But in an enclosure made by the careful Franciscan Fathers, there are still standing eight ancient olive trees, some of the trunks of which have to be supported by masonry. These trees are believed to have been on the spot on the night of our Lord's Agony, or at least to have sprung out of the ancient trunks. And there is this strong argument in favour of the belief, that from the third century up to now there is a chain of reliable evidence in favour of this tradition. These trees are, as we might expect, held in great veneration by the faithful. To prevent their being destroyed by pilgrims anxious for relics, it was necessary to raise a wall round them; and, moreover, heavy censures have been promulgated by the Holy See against all who attempt to cut or injure them.

The Grotto of the Agony is much wider and somewhat longer than the Grotto of the Nativity at Bethlehem. It measures about forty feet by thirty; and may be twelve or fourteen feet in height. It is, of course, arranged as an Oratory, and the Holy Sacrifice is continually offered there; but the Grotto or cave remains more in its natural state than does the Grotto of Bethlehem. There is not much more than the thickness of a

wall dividing this Grotto from the ancient Sepulchre of our Lady, now changed into a chapel.

One reason, among others, why some paintings of the Agony in the Garden are less satisfactory, is that the painters depart from the tradition, and represent our Saviour as praying, not in a cave or grotto, but in the open air, with nothing above Him but the canopy of heaven.

### SCENE III.

#### THE GROTTTO.

##### STATION I.

*And He was withdrawn from them a stone's cast, and kneeling down He prayed (St. Luke xxii.). And when He had gone forward a little, He fell flat on the ground, and He prayed (St. Mark xiv.). And going a little further, He fell upon His face, praying (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*A. And when He had gone forward a little.*

We must not forget what we have been told, that Jesus was already, before His Passion began, very much worn and emaciated. We may therefore contemplate Him making His way down the rough incline with very great difficulty. And though the three Apostles have been directed to stay where they were, yet we may perhaps assume that St. Peter and the sons of Zebedee, seeing how their beloved Master is tottering as He walks, follow Him a little way and offer Him help, till at length Jesus enters the Grotto where He wishes to make His prayer. Now it is that they see Him first sink down on His knees; and afterwards, as St. Mark relates (probably as he heard it from the eye-witness, St. Peter), *He fell flat on the ground.*

Then doubtless they understand from some sign given, or without a sign, that their Master wishes to be alone; and they go back in sadness to the bed of stone, where they lay themselves down. A little while surely they pray as their Master had bidden, but weariness and sadness cut

short their prayer too soon, and oppressive sleep overcomes them on their hard bed.

## STATION II.

*He fell flat on the ground, and He prayed* (St. Mark xiv. 35).

A. As He sinks down upon His knees, and then *falls flat on the ground*, with His sacred face pressed against the earth, we must once more call to mind that word He had just uttered: *My Soul is sorrowful even unto death*; and those other words afterwards written by the inspired Evangelist: *He began to fear and to be heavy, to grow sorrowful and to be sad.*

Fear (*pavere*), heaviness, weary tedium (*tædere*), sadness (*mæstus esse*), and a sorrow unto death (*tristis*), are bowing down His worn Body to the ground.

“*Attendite.*” Full of anguish as this spectacle is, it is better far to go to this house of mourning than to any house of feasting. When Simon Peter said on Thabor: *It is good for us to be here! Let us make three tabernacles*; the inspired Evangelist adds: *He knew not what he said.* But if we come in spirit to the Grotto of the Agony, and say: *It is good for us to be here!* no inspired voice from Heaven will ever chide us, nor tell us that we know not what we say.

*It is good for us to be here, because by the sadness of His countenance, by the sadness of His sacred face pressed down to the earth, the mind of the offender is corrected* (Eccles. vii.).

The mind and the heart of the poor sinner will be corrected and converted and changed here. It is wise to stay here: *The heart of the wise is where there is mourning, and above all where the Lord Jesus, our Saviour, our Surety, our Brother, is in an agony.*

B. *He began to fear and to be heavy, to grow sorrowful and to be sad.*

We are to look upon Him attentively; to listen to His sighs and His words, to watch His movements; to

read, as well as we can, His secret thoughts; to gauge and measure, as far as we are able, the length, the breadth, the height, and the depth of His distress; and to think in wonder as we watch Him, that in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, He can, if He pleases, entirely deliver Himself. He can shake off at once all suffering, all infirmity, and rise up in happiness ineffable. But with all His Heart He chooses and elects to be here, because *He has loved me, and delivered Himself for me.* We must then reflect and see what kind of thoughts rise up in our own minds.

While we contemplate His prostration, St. Ignatius bids us specially form strong desires for the grace of compassion, but compassion rightly understood, which consists not in some tender and pleasant emotions, but in a heavenly strength that makes us willing to share His sufferings. For what is compassion, what is sympathy, but a state of suffering with another who is suffering?

C. *He began to fear, to be heavy, to grow sorrowful, and to be sad.*

To fear! "If so," a faithful servant of our Lord exclaims, "If so, how is it written: *Who is like to Thee among the strong, O Lord? I studied that I might know this thing. It is a labour in my sight*" (Psalm lxxii.).

One good answer is suggested by a word written by St. Denis the Areopagite. He speaks of the ALMIGHTY WEAKNESS OF HIS GOODNESS during the Passion. "True it is, dear Lord: '*magna est ut mare contritio tua*'—*Great as the ocean* is Thy crushing sorrow; and well may the Prophet ask: '*Quis medebitur tibi*' (Lament. ii.)—*Who shall heal Thy deep wounds?*" Yet nowhere else is His great power and strength manifested as here in the ALMIGHTY WEAKNESS OF HIS GOODNESS. The oppressive thoughts come in upon His Soul like the waves of a great ocean; and every one of these oppressive thoughts has a darkness and a poison added to it by the wicked spirits who are for the hour the *gods of this world* (2 Cor. iv.).

But still, "never can the waters of this great ocean *quench* Thy charity, Lord Jesus, neither can the *floods drown it*."

He is fallen *flat on the ground*: yes, full of fear and heaviness and sadness and sorrow; yes, but all the while He is not the conquered one, but the conqueror; the *strong man armed*, than whom no stronger can come; the giant that shall run on His way rejoicing.

As then we stand in the Grotto of Gethsemani, it is to contemplate most reverently this ALMIGHTY WEAKNESS OF HIS GOODNESS.

D. *He began to fear and to be heavy.*

But now, again, asks His disciple, "If He is full of fear and weighed down by heaviness of heart, what is to become of my faith? How can I say to Him: *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God?* Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ; Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father?"

In answer, the holy and humble men who put this question give us this answer; that when the Eternal Son of God undertook to be our Saviour, it is an essential part of His plan that He is to be truly and really a man, a son of Adam, made after the model of the first Adam: "*Corpus autem aptasti mihi*"—*Thou hast fitted a Body to Me*, Thy only-begotten Son.

This is His word to His Eternal Father. A true human Body He is to have, and a true human Soul.

But this is not enough; for this difficulty still remains: how can a human body and a human soul suffer pain and sorrow, when fitted and united to the Son of God? The blessed in Heaven will, after the final resurrection, have true human bodies and true human souls; but the body that was *sown in corruption, shall rise in incorruption*: *sown in weakness, it shall rise in power* (1 Cor. xv.). So, too, will the glorified soul be changed; *nor mourning nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away* (Apoc. xxi.). If this is to be so, because the blessed shall then be with God, and in the enjoyment of the Beatific

Vision, or as St. John expresses it, if *they shall be like to God, because they see Him as He is in Himself*, how comes it that Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, the Man-God Who, every hour and every moment, sees God as He is in Himself, can have a Body and Soul that are not at all times entirely exempt from weakness and sorrow and mourning? To this question, one way of replying is to answer as the Prophet Ezechiel answered God: "*Domine, tu nosti*"—*Thou knowest, O Lord* (Ezech. xxxvii.).

"Thou knowest, Lord, how and by what means Thou hast conquered all obstacles in order to be true God and true Man; in order to be God, and yet to suffer and die; in order to be God and yet High Priest among men, *tempted in all things like they are*" (Hebrews iv.).

What we know is this, that when He resolved to become Man, the Angel said to His Blessed Mother: *No word shall be impossible with God.*

That God should become a Man, that God should die, that a woman should be God's own Mother, is so far above all created thoughts, and all that created intelligence could look for, that, after this, when we hear of the countless miracles and prodigies worked in Christ's Eucharistic Life, we need only make this one reply: *No word shall be impossible with God.*

It was not a wonder that on Thabor *His face did shine as the sun*. The daily and hourly miracle is that the Sacred Body and most holy Soul are not always resplendent with the glory of the Divinity.

E. *He began to fear.*

This much is, however, quite certain, that no passions can disturb our Saviour, except by His permission. The passions are sometimes divided into natural passions and moral passions. The body is naturally affected by cold and heat. When therefore the body suffers from cold or heat, this is natural passion. Cold and heat do their work quite independently of man's will; and there is no

moral fault in being affected by cold or heat. It is *God Who makes His sun to shine upon the good and the bad*, and neither just nor unjust *shall stand against the face of His cold* (Psalm cxlvii.).

Then come the moral passions, so called because through their influence man becomes better or worse, less holy or more holy. Such are the passions of fear, of sadness, of anger, and the rest.

With regard to all these passions, natural and moral, it is quite certain that they cannot affect our Lord unless He Himself wishes to be affected by them.

We read of the monarch Assuerus, that not even his queen could enter his presence until he called for her. So may we say of all human passions that they cannot trouble the Soul of our Lord unless at His command. Hence we have seen that in the story of the raising of Lazarus it is written that *He troubled Himself*. The winds and the waves obey Him, and so must cold and heat, fear and sorrow, heaviness and sadness, and every other passion be ever completely subject to Him. They cannot affect Him but when He wills it, and as much as He wills it.

F. *He began to fear.*

A holy writer has explained this action of fear and sadness on the Soul of our Lord by this comparison. A military prince, ambitious to excel in sword-play, picks out the most expert swordsman in his army, and commands him to put forth all his skill while fencing with him, and promises to reward him well for doing so. He is quite content to bear defeat, and even severe scars, if only he can gain his point, and become a perfect swordsman.

So is it now. An hour ago our Lord said to His disciples: *Have confidence, I have overcome the world* (St. John xvi. 33). He now wishes also to be able to say to all His followers in time to come, "Have confidence in the hour of temptation, for I have overcome the tempter". And therefore, desirous that we may all know that *He* (can) have *compassion on our infirmities*, He has resolved

to be *tempted in all things as we are, but without sin* (Hebrews iv.); that is to say, to experience in Himself the effect of our passions; to let our passions rise within Him, like a sea-storm; nay, to allow Satan to intensify, as far as he can, these human passions; but still to conquer them all by His love, strong as death.

G. *He began to fear.*

We have seen how Tertullian describes God our Father as labouring and studying with infinite diligence when He was creating Adam, because the first man was to be a likeness of the perfect Man Who was to come, Jesus Christ, the Man-God. In Christ, then, all is perfection. As, therefore, the more perfect eye sees better, and the more perfect and delicate ear hears better, so His perfect Heart, and His most perfect sensitive nature can, when He permits the passions to work, suffer far more acutely and intensely than the natures of ordinary men can suffer.

No heart on earth ever felt kindness or unkindness as the Sacred Heart of Jesus does.

Here then we may find an answer to a question put by St. Laurence Justinian: "Can joy then be sad? Can strength be afraid? Can courage be timid? Can the glorified suffer tediousness? Art Thou the Lord of hosts, and yet fearful?"

The first part of the answer Isaias furnishes: "*Oblatus est quia ipse voluit*"—*He was offered as a Victim because Himself willed it.* He is offered to death, and He is exposed to all the raging of a storm of passions, because Himself wills to be *tempted in all things as we are.* Divine strength cannot fear, Divine glory cannot suffer heaviness, unless through charity and love it wills to suffer, and exerts its almighty power in order to become capable of suffering fear and sadness.

Secondly; but having once Himself elected to be tempted, and to suffer from the different human passions, there never was on the earth one so fitted for extreme

suffering as He is. Next to Him comes His own Blessed Mother, because her sinless soul and immaculate body are so perfect a copy of the Soul and Body of her Divine Son.

H. Then, as we are taught in contemplation to study not only the outward person, but also the inward thoughts, we are allowed to try in our poor way to find out, *if we can*, what are the chief objects that are presented to our Lord's Soul to awaken fear and sadness and heaviness of Heart.

Some of our spiritual guides answer:—

1. *Fear* is awakened by His coming Death, and the terrible circumstances of His Death.

2. Oppression and most weary *tediousness*, by the sight of all the opposition which He shall encounter from men and devils in His work of redeeming those He loves so much.

3. *Sorrow* unto death is caused by the sight of sin; sin past, sin present, sin to come; the offence, the displeasure, the dishonour, the ingratitude, the treason and treachery and malice heaped upon His Eternal Father by sin.

I. *He began to fear.*

By His own permission, then, the natural fear of death is working on Him. As it is natural to men to feel cold and heat, hunger and thirst, so is it natural to fear with great fear the wrench that separates soul from body; that cruel wrench which tears asunder two companions which God joined together, and did not intend to be sundered.

For death had no place in the original programme of our Creator. *Death is only the wages of sin* (Romans vi.). It is to our earthly father, Adam, not to our Father in Heaven, that we are indebted for death. *By a man came death* (1 Cor. xv.). *By one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death, and so death passed upon all men* (Romans v.). More than any man that ever lived, our Saviour Jesus, lying here on the ground, is suffering the fear of death.

In our case, when the fear of death comes, there is this alleviation, that we know that when we die we are receiving the just reward of our deeds. All through life we are accustomed to the thought that death is due to us. But neither the Body nor the Soul of our Lord Jesus have ever done any evil that subjects them to the bitterness of death. By God they were joined together, and neither man nor fallen angel have any right to sever what God has so joined.

Slavery is doubly and trebly bitter to one not born to it; to one like holy Joseph, the loved son of a good father in a happy home, who, without crime, is most cruelly consigned to all the sufferings of a slave. *Without any fault I was stolen away out of the land of the Hebrews. Put Pharaoh in mind to take me out of this prison* (Gen. xl.). So may we say, that by all rights Jesus was not born to die, nor created to die. Death had no claim over Him.

Sad indeed was the moan of that hapless King of Amalec, Agag, when he was brought out to die, and stood shivering with fear, and sighing out his sad parting words, "*Siccine separat amara mors?*"—*Does bitter death sunder and sever in this way?* But these sad words give us no idea of the anguish which, by His permission, the thought of coming death is causing in the Soul of Christ Jesus.

Ecclesiasticus exclaims: *O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to the man who hath peace in his possession! to a man that is at rest: and whose ways are prosperous in all things, and that is yet able to take meat!* (Ecclus. xli.). This is all most true. But still, never to any prosperous man in this world did the remembrance of death bring fear and anguish so intense as that which is this night weighing on the soul of this weary and famished and exhausted Man of Sorrows, Who has fallen there *flat on the ground*, but not to be *at rest*.

It is a historian of the early Christian days, Hegeppus, who records an ancient tradition, that on the spot where our Lord lies in the Grotto, a plant sprang up, on

the leaves of which were read the words: *O mors quam amara es!*—"O death, how bitter art thou!"

If this miracle was wrought, it cannot be surprising. For our Lord surely wishes men to know well and understand that He has thoroughly tasted and sanctified and conquered all the extreme bitterness of death.

Holy writers tell us, as we have seen, that not only on Calvary did He taste all the bitterness of death, but that in the Garden, when He utters that word, *My soul is sorrowful unto death*, He is already going through all the anguish that death causes.

J. *He began to fear.*

And it is not only the natural fear of death that is disturbing His Sacred Soul.

The stillness of the night-time, and those sounds of preparation which come from the Temple area and the barracks, and are breaking the silence; the close proximity too of the Prætorium and Calvary, all are helping to imprint upon His imagination a most vivid picture of those countless shapes of woe and suffering that are to be crowded into the watches of to-night, and the watches of to-morrow. *The waters have come in even to My Soul. I stuck fast in the mire of the deep: and there is no sure standing. I am come into the depths of the sea, and a tempest hath overwhelmed Me* (Psalm lxxviii.).

K. *And He began to be heavy.*

As we have seen, our masters tell us that it is the knowledge of all the opposition which men and wicked spirits will make to His loving plan, which heaps upon His Sacred Soul a load of depression, heaviness, and unspeakable disgust, and tediousness.

The father of lies, who had words ready from Holy Writ when he was tempting Jesus in the wilderness, now also while urging the thought of Judas' treason, and the little progress in holiness of the other disciples, has again the Sacred Text ready: "*Quæ utilitas in Sanguine Meo?*" —*What profit is there in My Blood?* (Psalm xxix.).

“Your boast was that You would draw all men to Yourself. Have You done it? If so, why did You say this very night, that men *have both seen and hated Me and My Father?* Who wrote for You those words in the Psalm—for from whose mouth are they supposed to come, if not from Yours,—*They are multiplied above the hairs of My head who hate Me without cause. My enemies have grown strong who have wrongfully persecuted Me?* (Psalm lxxviii.). Your own chosen people, will they follow You? Will they stand by You? What mean these words: *I am become a stranger to My brethren, and an alien to the sons of My Mother. They that sat in the gate spoke against Me, and they that drank wine made Me their song?* (Psalm lxxviii.). You have not forgotten, for Your Mother has often told You of it, the old man’s prophecy concerning You: *This Child is set for the ruin of many.* And Yourself, You told Your own people plainly: *If you believe not that I am He (the Messiah), you shall die in your sins.* To what purpose have You spoken? They have not believed in You, and You know well that the sentence is written: *Let them be blotted out of the Book of the living* (Psalm lxxviii.). ‘*Quæ utilitas in Sanguine Meo?*’”

L. *He began to be sorrowful and to be sad.*

But sin is the special object that weighs down His Soul with crushing sorrow great as the sea. Of all other men the inspired Prophet asks: *Who understands sin?—“Delicta quis intelligit?”* But not of Christ Jesus can this be said. The Soul of this Man of Sorrows lying here on the earth, has the most complete and perfect knowledge of all the hideous malice of sin, and all the infinite displeasure and indignation and anger it awakens in His Eternal Father. He understands all this most perfectly from eternity, as Son of God. But now He, as God made Man, in a new way, understands experimentally: for He has, at this moment, the sins of the world laid upon Him.

M. Were His Soul as limited in its capacity as ours, the intolerable pressure of this overwhelming load of sin

would do away with and annul every other painful impression. For we see that from our narrow souls, if we may so speak, a great terror drives out a lesser fear. Men forget the fear of money losses, and fling their property overboard, when the storm, wrecking the ship, brings death present before their eyes. So, too, at times, imminent disgrace and suffering make men forget even the terrors of death. Our little souls have only room for one great fear at a time. But in the Soul of Jesus, there is ample space for all the different shapes of anguish. They are all within, and one does not impede another.

But among them all, immeasurably more oppressive than the rest, is sin—the consciousness that He is for the present lying there, under the eyes of His Eternal Father as the Sinner, the representative of the sinful family—for His Eternal Father *hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all* (Isaias liii.).

N. "*Attendite.*" Let us beg light to understand the length and breadth and height and depth of this terrible chastisement. *He hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all.* For, the guilt alone excepted, everything that belongs to sin, and is connected with sin, is heaped on Him. The shame, the confusion, the fear, the anguish, the intense desolation, the unbearable weight of His Father's displeasure, all this is upon Him, and it would be only a relief if the mountains would fall upon Him, and the hills would cover Him, and deliver Him from this position.

To St. Paul was made a revelation of what this position is. He writes to the Corinthians that the Eternal Father made His Divine Son, *Who knew not sin*, become SIN, *that we sinners might become the justice of God in Him* (2 Cor. v. 21). He is become SIN. The brazen serpent, therefore, which by rights is the emblem of Satan, is now the type and emblem of Jesus in His Passion, because throughout His Passion He is always, guilt excepted, the sinner's other self. He is personating sin and the sinner, and bearing the displeasure of His Father, and all the other

effects of sin. He is crushed down to the ground by the intolerable sense of the hatred His Eternal Father bears to sin, to the sins of that guilty race to which He belongs, and which He has undertaken to represent.

It will help us to realise a little His position if we call to mind how a good loyal father has sometimes been made to endure the cruel, pitiless reproaches of his sovereign for the crimes his son has committed.

A father is identified with his son because he is his father, but immeasurably more is the Lord Jesus, Who lies here, identified with the sinner. For He has Himself, knowingly and deliberately, in the very strictest sense, undertaken to be his proxy. And His Eternal Father has taken Him at His word, and *the chastisement of our peace is upon Him. And the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all.*

*O. He began to fear and to be heavy.*

None of the disciples are witnesses of the prostration of their Master in the Grotto. A little later, it is too much for their weakness even to see Him, a prisoner in the hands of the soldiers. They shall be scandalised in that hour. Their confidence and trust in Him shall be shaken. How if they had seen Him not merely held forcibly as a prisoner by men, but apparently Himself given up to the human passions of fear and sadness? This would have been a far greater stumbling-block. For a man bound with cords and chains by others, may still be very strong and courageous in his own soul. But in the Grotto all seems to the eye and the ear to prove internal weakness.

P. If human wisdom, or even the wisdom of angels, had been consulted before the Sacred Passion began, the wisest might have said, *Absit hoc a te!* "Forbid, O Lord, this prostration and depression. It seems to be a degradation of Thy infinite dignity."

But (1) St. Chrysostom answers, "He listens more to the urgent demands of His charity than to what is due to His dignity".

Then (2) a few days later He said near Emmaus, *Was it not necessary that Christ should suffer?* His meaning was: "If you study the Sacred Books, will you not see clearly in them that if the merciful design of My Father is to be carried out, it is quite necessary that His Christ is to be a Man of Sorrows?"

But then the further question arises: "Why does the all-wise and all-good God will that His Divine Son should be cast down into these lower depths of humiliation?" Lower depths, because, as has been said, when He is in the hands of His enemies, He still stands erect; He is all the while the Giant rejoicing to run His way; but now there are no soldiers here, no armed servants; all His prostration seems to come from His own internal passions, and He is crying aloud for help, which He never does later when men are torturing Him.

One answer is, that it is quite true that the signs of weakness are greater now than on the morrow. To the eye of human wisdom, therefore, there seems to be more degradation here.

But when once we know that our Saviour lies here in these depths, simply because He loves *us*, and is choosing the best method of drawing *us* out of the depths; then what seems like the lowest degradation ceases to be a scandal, and helps powerfully to make us comprehend what St. Paul calls *the breadth and length and height and depth of His charity*.

We are contemplating weakness—yes, but the *almighty weakness of His goodness*, which will conquer Satan, and soften our hard hearts, and win for countless multitudes of men and women grace to conquer the strongest efforts of the tempter.

Q. He says, then, that it is necessary for Him to suffer. But why so? Because, in order to carry out His Father's designs, He wishes to be to us:

*The Way, the Truth, and the Life.*

1. *The Life.* St Thomas, in the well-known words of

his hymn, teaches us that our Lord could have redeemed us by one drop of His blood. Indeed, one tear, one prayer, any one act of His as Man, would have sufficed. For as in our social life we see that a book given by some great hero who is dazzling the world derives from the giver a value immeasurably beyond its intrinsic worth, so we can understand that as every one of our Lord's acts, whether He eats, or drinks, or walks, always is the act of the God-Man, and is always animated by perfect love for His Father, so every act necessarily is of an infinite value, and quite sufficient to obtain our forgiveness. So that by shedding one tear He could have worked our redemption, and brought within our reach justification and eternal life. Had He then adopted this method, He would have been entitled to be called our Life.

But moved by His boundless love and compassion for us, the Eternal Father decreed that His Divine Son shall not win our forgiveness in this easier way, simply through the reverence due to His infinite dignity, but shall redeem by a process much more painful to Himself.

It is decreed, therefore, that He is to pay back the debt, the whole debt, due from the sinner.

"*Quæ non rapui tunc exsolvebam*" (Psalm lxxviii.). Then did I pay back that which I did not take away, but which the sinner owed.

As Jacob put on Esau's garments to secure the blessing that belonged to his brother, so Jesus Christ, *the First-born among many brethren*, is to put on the garment of His sinful brethren, in order to bring down on Himself, as far as may be, the full weight of the sinner's malediction. One reason why this plan is expedient and necessary, is that He wishes to be to us not only the Life, but also *the Truth*.

2. *The Truth*, for by enduring His Passion, He teaches us many truths.

(a) First, the father of lies has tried to persuade men that Jesus is not really a Man, and therefore cannot

really suffer. It would have been far easier to have spread this fatal deception if our Saviour had won our forgiveness by one tear. It is when we seriously contemplate His sufferings that we believe firmly and beyond doubt that He is truly a Man, with a human Soul and a human Body.

(b) Again. He wishes most earnestly to convince us of the great truth that He loves us and has loved us. If we are slow to believe this fundamental truth now, though we see His sufferings, what would be our fatal incredulity if we had not the sacred scenes of the Passion to contemplate?

(c) Moreover, one of our greatest difficulties is to understand the true nature of sin.

Nowhere else can we get so much light thrown on sin and the consequences of sin as while contemplating these scenes of the Sacred Passion. For that great truth is continually brought before us: *If in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?*

And so His Cross becomes, as St. Augustine calls it, not only, "the altar of sacrifice," but also the *Cathedra docentis*: our Master's pulpit, and His chair of doctrine.

(d) One other truth of incalculable value which Jesus teaches to His disciples while prostrate in the Grotto is this, that to feel intensely fear and heaviness and desolation and sadness, and to be visited by all manner of distressing temptations, is quite compatible with close union with God, and high sanctity. Like the pains of the body, the inward agony of desolation is one of the penalties of sin. But through the Passion of our Lord all is made new. The sufferings of the martyrs are no longer a penalty, but the very highest privilege. Even so, the bitterness of desolation, instead of being a mark of God's displeasure, is oftentimes a share of the chalice granted as a special favour to a faithful servant.

Who among the countless saints of God would have been able to follow the teaching of the Holy Spirit—*Make*

*not haste in the time of clouds. Wait on God in patience. Take all that shall be brought upon thee : and in thy sorrow endure and in thy humiliation keep patience* (Ecclus. ii.)—had they not learned the great lessons taught by our Divine Master while He lies in His Agony in Gethsemani ?

But we want still more than this. It is not enough for our weakness to be taught. Therefore He resolves to become for us *the Way*, and our companion on the way.

### 3. *The Way.*

*Take up your cross and follow Me*, is His short, plain, and loving direction to each of us who wishes to reach the Eternal Home of God. *Follow Me.*

He has become *Man* to be our companion through the *burden and heat of the day* on earth. *My yoke is sweet*, He says. But "how can a yoke be sweet, dear Lord?" Yes, for if He walks ever by our side, and becomes our help-mate, bearing the yoke with each of us, then indeed the yoke is made sweet and the burden light.

Surely, we do not think enough of the wonderful way in which our journey up the mountain of God is made easy by companionship with Jesus and His Blessed Mother.

A timid man has to cross by night a lonely moor. It is absolutely necessary for him to go, but no amount of argument can induce him to face the terrible darkness. Fear takes from him all the *succours of thought*. But if a kind and courageous friend, who knows the way well, and is brave and well armed, offers to be his companion across the dark solitude, all difficulty is at an end ; he starts at once. Our God had tried in vain threats and promises and very heavy punishments to induce men to walk steadily on the road to Heaven ; but all was in vain till the Son of God became Man and gave Himself to each of us as our companion.

*Blessed be the Lord day by day. The God of our salvation will make our journey prosperous to us. Our God is the God of salvation* (Psalm lxxvii.).

## STATION III.

## THE PRAYER.

*He fell upon His face, praying and saying: My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*He fell flat on the ground, and He prayed that the hour might pass from Him. And He saith: Abba, Father, all things are possible to Thee, remove this chalice from Me, but not what I will, but what Thou wilt (St. Mark xiv.).*

*Kneeling down He prayed, saying: Father, if Thou wilt, remove this chalice from Me, but yet not My will, but Thine be done (St. Luke xxii.).*

A. *My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me.*

Pious and painstaking commentators have studied much to ascertain precisely what is here the petition of our Blessed Lord.

Some writers have found so much difficulty in harmonising the fear and heaviness and sadness of our Saviour with His Divine strength and His perfect obedience to His Father's will—always so prompt and so loving—that they have suggested that some errors have doubtless crept into the Sacred Text. But this surmise finds no favour with the holy guides and teachers whom we are following.

B. The biographer of St. Catherine of Siena states that our Lord revealed to her that His prayer was that the delay might be abbreviated, and that His blood might quickly and at once pass from Him for the salvation of men.

That such a desire is in the Soul of our Lord cannot be doubted. For we remember His words in the Cenacle: *With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you:* and again, His former words, *I have a baptism wherewith to be baptised. And how am I straitened until it be accomplished?* This interpretation also fits in with the words of our Saviour to the traitor, who was to become the leader of the midnight raid upon the Garden, *What thou dost, do quickly.*

Again, if this explanation be accepted, the profuse sweat of blood which came on in the Grotto may be considered an answer to this cry of our Lord's Heart, desiring to begin quickly to pour out the chalice of salvation.

C. The most approved commentators, however, while they do not deny that this thought is in our Lord's mind during His desolation in the Grotto, as it was before, yet do not consider that this interpretation is adequate and sufficient to account for such words as we have in our version: *Remove this chalice from Me*. They consider it as certain that one part of our Lord's prayer—a conditional part—is that, if consistently with His Father's will and His Father's glory He can escape from facing the horrors that are before Him, this may be done.

Let us observe in passing that in the Greek text of St. Luke's Gospel the prayer of our Saviour is expressed even more reverently than in the Latin, or in our version. Translated literally, the prayer in the Greek is: *Father, if Thou wilt to transfer this chalice from Me: but yet, not My will but Thine be done*. The Latin text and our version make our Lord utter an explicit petition: "*Si vis, transfer*"—*If Thou wilt, remove this chalice*. In the Greek, we read: *πάτερ, εἰ βούλει παρενεγκεῖν*—*If Thou wishest to transfer: without any explicit petition*.

#### D. *Let this chalice pass from Me.*

What does the word *chalice* here mean? Our Lord Himself seems to tell us when later He says in the Garden: *The chalice which My Father hath given Me shall I not drink it?* The *chalice* here must mean: "The bitter Passion which in all its details has been arranged for Me by My Father".

We have already seen that though the Passion appears to be the work of wicked men inspired and guided by the spirits of darkness, yet all the designs and plans of these enemies have been, we may say, revised by the Divine Providence, and are so ordered that they shall in every detail subserve to what the Eternal Father wills. Consequently, the bitter *chalice* comes in the end to Jesus,

mingled and prepared by His Father, with the bitterness augmented or tempered just as the merciful designs of God's charity require.

E. But the *chalice* has a further meaning. For our Blessed Saviour has in the Cenacle been giving to His little flock the chalice of His Blood to be their drink; and this draught is to strengthen them and inebriate them.

*Passio Christi, conforta me. Sanguis Christi, inebria me.*

Therefore our Blessed Saviour is first to drink the bitter *chalice* of His Passion, and then His Passion, with all its sorrows and all its merits, is to pass with His Sacred Blood into the souls of His disciples.

F. Hence we may see how, possibly, the pious interpretation of St. Catherine of Siena may fit in with the more critical rendering of the commentators. Our Lord's petition may be that if the *chalice* of His Blood may, conformably with His Father's will, pass from Him *quickly and at once*, without His being obliged to go through all the weary delay, and all the sins, and all the horrors of treachery, and base weakness, and falsehood, and malice, and cruelty, that are before Him, this may be done.

G. The horrors from which the Soul of our Saviour is shrinking are, as careful interpreters teach us :

1. Death.

2. Death with the accompaniments that are in store for Him.

He Himself enumerated these accompaniments, or circumstances, a week ago when near Jericho.

1. *The Son of Man shall be betrayed* to the Chief Priests and the Scribes.

2. They shall condemn Him to death.

3. They shall deliver Him to the Gentiles.

4. They (the Gentiles) shall mock Him and spit on Him.

5. They shall scourge Him.

6. They shall kill Him.

7. St. Matthew adds : He shall be crucified.

All these seven cruel details are oppressing the most

gentle and loving and sensitive Heart of Jesus. We have already seen that no heart ever felt kindness or unkindness as much as His Heart does. Therefore, to be betrayed by His own chosen disciple; to be condemned to death by His own Priests; to be delivered up by His own Priests and people to the Pagan Romans whom His Priests and people dread and detest; to be handed over by them to the pitiless Gentiles, purposely and expressly in order that He may be more heartlessly and cruelly mocked and scourged, and at last be put to death by the most terrible form of execution that has been till now invented—these are, we may say, the headings of the chapters in the terrible story which is to be compressed into the watches of this night and the watches of to-morrow.

H. Then too, as we know, worse than all these outward torments, the displeasure of His Eternal Father, the anger of His Father against sin and the sinner, is to weigh Him down, during the long, slow hours of this night—slow with a slowness that we cannot measure—before He can begin, as it were, to run His way as a giant.

Therefore, as we may observe, in St. Mark's narrative we read: *He prayed that the hour might pass from Him.* These words, doubtless, may mean the whole time of His Passion; but may they not also imply that the heaviest burden weighing on Him is the desolation of these long, long hours in the Grotto?

I. For we must not forget that He is passing through the anguish of desolation in its most aggravated form. When the interpretation of our Lord's prayer, given by St. Catherine of Siena, was just now under consideration, it was said that as He had all through life been straitened with a most vehement desire to be baptised in His Blood, He must still be of the same mind in the Grotto. And this must be quite true; for in His loving desire to do the work given to Him by His Father, He is the same Jesus that He was yesterday and heretofore. But still,

that also is most true which we read in the 29th Psalm concerning the state of a soul in consolation, contrasted with its thoughts while the darkness of desolation is spread over it: *In my abundance (when grace and strength from Heaven abound) I said: I shall never be moved. O Lord, in Thy favour Thou gavest strength to my beauty.* But the hour of sunshine is past, and now *Thou turnest away Thy face from me and I became troubled.* Here in this hour the face of His Father is turned away from Jesus, the Man Who represents sin and all the race of sinners. All that the lash and the thorns and the nails can do, is not to be compared with the torment of this exile.

J. *I have always feared God,* holy Job wrote, *as waves swelling over me; and His weight I was not able to bear* (c. xxxi.). Alas! he knew nothing, nothing at all, of the weight of the swelling waves that have entered into the Soul of our Lord, and overwhelmed Him (Psalm lxxviii.). What wonder that the Holy Spirit tells us that *the patient man is better than the valiant; and he that ruleth his spirit better than he that taketh cities* (Prov. xvi.). The patient man, that is, the man suffering and enduring with constancy, is stronger and more courageous than the valiant man who rushes upon his enemies. Throughout His Sacred Passion, our meek Saviour is conquering Satan, and gaining possession of the earth *by endurance.* He allows all His enemies to let loose their malice against Him: and when all is consummated, they are exhausted and can do no more, and He remains unsubdued, and the triumphant conqueror.

But we must observe still further that the Holy Spirit adds: *He who rules his spirit is better than he who taketh cities.* In other scenes of the Passion, we shall find our Lord enduring all things from His enemies, but here we find Him ruling His own spirit; allowing His human passions to put forth their strength within His breast, but ruling them all, and remaining always the same Jesus, the same unconquered Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, and obedient to His Eternal Father unto death.

Again, then, we must remind ourselves of the word of a holy Saint, that we are in Gethsemani contemplating the OMNIPOTENT INFIRMITY OF HIS GOODNESS.

K. There are, then, two parts in the prayer of our Lord : one conditional, the other absolute. The first is, *If it be possible may this chalice pass from Me* ; and, according to the different interpretations, this means :—

(a) If it be possible, may the grace of redemption pass from Me into the souls of men without My tasting all the bitterness of death.

(b) Or, if death must come, then, if it be possible, may it not be accompanied with all the horrors that I see before Me.

(c) Or, if it be possible, may the chalice of My Blood pass from Me quickly and at once, without any long hours of delay.

(d) Or, if it be possible, let My enemies begin their work, and let this terrible time of anguish under the displeasure of My Father pass from Me.

(e) Or, if it be possible, *tantus labor non sit cassus* : let not My Blood be unprofitable to so many ; let not the plentiful redemption be rejected by My people, or by generations to come.

(f) Or, if it be possible, may the chalice of My Blood pass from Me without sin, without malice, without blasphemy, without sacrilege, without Deicide.

L. But above all these conditional petitions rises the loud cry that is entirely absolute and without any possible condition annexed, *Nevertheless, My Father, not as I will, but as Thou.*

This is the prayer which, in presence of all the fears, and all the sadness, and all the heaviness, and all the sorrow at work within Him, He pours forth with His *whole Heart*, with His *whole Soul*, with His *whole Mind*, with His *whole strength*.

M. Well have spiritual writers observed that it is only during these internal conflicts, first in the Garden and

afterwards on the Cross, that our Blessed Saviour cries aloud to His Father for help. During the scourging, during the crowning, during the crucifixion, no such cry for help is heard. The conclusion is that the anguish of internal desolation, during which Satan is permitted to act upon the soul, is far more distressing and overwhelming than the pains inflicted by men on the body.

N. And while we thus fix the eyes of our mind on His great sorrow, and listen to our Lord saying to us: *Come and see if there be sorrow like to Mine*, let us also keep in mind St. Paul's word: *He loved me and delivered Himself up for me*. It is for me that He is enduring this extreme anguish.

*For me*. He is lying down here on the ground, ready to be the helpmate of every poor sinner; to be yoked to every one burdened with sin, and the effects of sin; to join His own great contrition to the light and trivial sorrow for sin that passes, if we may so speak, over the surface of our souls.

*For me*. Look well, then, and do according to the model; strive to share His great contrition. Look well, till some glimmer of light comes to show what sin must be. Look well, till a strong faith grows, that if the innocent soul suffers in this way for sin not its own, more terrible immeasurably will be the *weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth* of the real sinner if when the *harvest is past and the summer is ended, we are not saved* (Jerem. viii.).

#### STATION IV.

##### THE COMFORTING ANGEL.

*And there appeared to Him an Angel from Heaven, strengthening Him* (St. Luke xxii. 43).

A. Is this chosen Angel the Prince of the heavenly host, St. Michael, or the Angel of the Incarnation, St. Gabriel? *Domine, tu nosti*—Lord Jesus, Thou knowest. Some holy Fathers lean to one opinion, some to the other. The Holy Spirit, Who judged it right to tell us the name

of the Archangel who announced the Incarnation to our Lady, has not thought it necessary to reveal to us which of the blessed spirits was selected for the work of comforting our Lord.

B. Holy writers are, as we might expect, lost in amazement at the spectacle of a creature sustaining and strengthening and comforting his God. When St. Gabriel brought to our Lady God's proposal that His Son should become her Son, before giving her answer, she asked the prudent question: *How shall this be done?* and the Archangel, after giving her the explanation of the mystery, summed up all in this short sentence: *No word shall be impossible with God.* In these words we must look for the solution of all the difficulties which meet us in contemplating the Life and Death of Jesus Christ on earth, and His Eucharistic Life also. There is nothing too high to be said of God made Man; and, putting sin aside, there is nothing so lowly that it cannot be found in the Life and Death of the Man-God. What can be said so startling as St. Paul's words, when he describes Him as *one tempted in all things like as we are, without sin*; and when he tells us that *God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh?* Therefore this is only one instance, among countless others, of the exertion of Divine power whereby God has enabled His only Son to suffer—without sin, indeed—but after the manner of sinful men, and to be reduced by suffering to a condition in which a creature can console his God. *No word shall be impossible with God.*

How could the disciples, on the Palm Sunday, say to the owner of the ass and the colt: *The Lord hath need of them?* How can the Lord have need of our possessions, when it is expressly written, *Thou art my God, because Thou hast no need of my goods?* (Psalm xv.). The answer is: *No word shall be impossible with God.* Now that He has for love of us become Man, there is no longer any word impossible. Till now, we may truly say, God was encompassed round about by impossibilities. God could not suffer, God could

not be weary, God could not be poor, God could not die. But now that He is God and Man, nothing is too high for Him nothing too lowly—except sin.

C. Holy writers, however, go into the question a little further, and ask: How could an Angel comfort our suffering Lord?

When God is pleased to act upon *us*, His power is unlimited: He can kill, He can raise to life; He can wound, and He can heal; His word can reach, as St. Paul writes, *into the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also and the marrow*; causing everywhere light in darkness, health in sickness, life in death.

But our holy guides and masters tell us that the blessed Angel who comforted Jesus had no power to work any internal change in His Soul, but could only spread out, as it were, before His mind certain thoughts or facts which He had permitted the thick veil of desolation to hide for the time.

When Satan tempted Him in the wilderness, he showed Him from the mountain *all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them*. So now the blessed Angel is empowered to spread out before His Soul certain words of Holy Writ containing promises which shall counteract the depressing fears and the heaviness which Satan has been labouring to increase.

“*Quæ utilitas in sanguine meo?*”—*What profit is there in My Blood?* (Psalm xxix.)—the tempter has been urging. But now the blessed Angel baffles the tempter by recalling glorious promises: *If He shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long-lived seed, and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in His hand.*

*Because His Soul hath laboured, He shall see and be filled: by His knowledge shall this My servant justify many.*

*Therefore will I distribute to Him very many, and He shall divide the spoils of the strong, because He hath delivered His Soul unto death* (Isaias liii.).

*The wolf shall dwell with the lamb: and the leopard*

*shall lie down with the kid: the calf and the lion and the sheep shall abide together, and a little child shall lead them.*

*They shall not hurt nor shall they kill in all My holy mountain, for the earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the covering waters of the sea (Isaias xi.).*

And then, moreover, even as we say to Holy Mary, *Hail, the Lord is with thee!* so might the blessed Archangel console our Lord's oppressed Soul by a similar word: "Thy Blessed Mother, Lord Jesus, is always with Thee; always full of grace, and all generations shall call her blessed, and she shall crush the serpent's head. In her at least Thy Life and Death shall work a plentiful redemption."

D. Thus then the blessed Angel may comfort his own God; because God is become Man, *and no word shall be impossible with God.*

We may contemplate the rest of the heavenly choirs looking on with ineffable wonder and contentment while their privileged companion is thus exercising his admirable office.

*We* need not, however, envy the blessed Angel, since *we* too are so blessed during our short day of power here on earth, that every hour we can comfort the Heart of our Saviour.

Who is there among us that cannot kneel before the tabernacle of our Hidden God and say with truth—oh, too much truth!—that awful word uttered by the Roman Governor: *I have power, Lord Jesus, to crucify Thee, and I have power to set Thee free*: power to comfort Thee and console Thee unspeakably?

"*Attendite.*" For indeed we ought to spend a long time in examining how we use this great power over our Lord Jesus Christ. Are we crucifying Him? Are we comforting Him? He hath need of us; sore need of us. Are we helping Him? or cruelly neglecting Him?

E. *And there appeared an Angel comforting Him.*

In the Latin text we read that the Angel appeared to

Jesus: *Confortans eum*: and we naturally incline to say in our language that the Angel was *comforting Him*. We must dwell a little upon our word *comfort*. For words as time goes on often lose their original meaning, till at last they mislead us.<sup>1</sup>

There are, then, two ways of *comforting* one who is suffering.

One is by removing the causes of his suffering, by relieving bodily pain, by proving that some torturing fear is quite groundless; by giving an alms that averts impending ruin.

The other, and oftentimes the better way of *comforting* is by *strengthening* the sufferer, so that he can now bear what before was becoming too heavy a burden.

Both methods of *comforting* are good, very good. Our Lord used both. Good physicians sometimes *relieve or remove pain*, sometimes *strengthen the sufferer* so that the body can better endure cold and heat and pain. St. Peter Claver also laboured hard, sometimes to diminish the sufferings of the negroes, sometimes to school them so that they could bear even worse trials.

In our common parlance, when we speak of comfort and comforting, we are often thinking merely of a lessening of pain and suffering.

We lose sight of the Latin word "*Confortare*," whence our word *comfort* is derived; so that while the Latin means to strengthen and to render manly, our comforts and comfortable life frequently have anything but a

<sup>1</sup> It is observed that in the opening of his spiritual retreats St. Ignatius sets before us this fundamental principle: "Man was created to praise God our Lord, to show Him reverence and to serve Him". Why, it is sometimes asked, does he not rather begin with the great commandment: Man was created to love God our Lord?

One answer may be: that with the practical wisdom which is apparent throughout these Exercises, he keeps in mind that many come to retreat with an entirely false conception of the word *love*. At the close of the retreat, when the soul has been well schooled, he proposes a special contemplation that explains the true character of *love*, and excites a desire for *true love*: but many at the commencement of a retreat might be misled, and mistake sensible consolation, or some passing emotion, for heavenly love.

strengthening effect, their tendency being rather to enervate.

F. In the present instance it is evident that the blessed Angel comforts our Lord, not by taking pain away, but by presenting thoughts that may add strength to endure. He was comforted, Venerable Bede says, "by seeing the greatness of the future fruit, not by any lessening of the anguish of present pain". This is evident; for immediately after the Angel's visit, we read, *Being in agony, He prayed the longer.*

This word *agony* we borrow from the Greek language, in which it signifies a struggle, a conflict. In our language we commonly use the word to express the struggle which seems to go on between life and death before the soul is forced to leave the body, and so, therefore, the word gradually comes to mean any great pain of soul or body.

#### STATION V.

#### THE AGONY.

*And being in an agony, He prayed the longer (v. 43).*

A. *Being in an agony.*

Therefore the conflict, if we may use the word, in the Soul of our Blessed Saviour is not brought to an end, but intensified after the Angel's visit, yet so that His blessed Soul is strengthened to endure the increased suffering; not strengthened by the addition of new power, but strengthened because certain thoughts and considerations have been presented to the Soul of our Saviour which for a time had, by His permission, been covered with a veil.

B. *Being in an agony.*

When we speak of agony, or conflict, in the Soul of our Lord, we must not forget what our spiritual guides teach us, that between His sensitive nature that fears death and torment, and His will which is ever most closely united to the will of His Father, there is no real conflict.

In our souls a strong passion fights against our reason for the mastery, and too often succeeds in inducing the

will to rebel against conscience. But in the Soul of our Lord, all the passions of fear, sadness, and the rest, though intensified to the utmost limit, are in perfect subjection to right reason, and there is no shade or shadow of that rebellion which sin produces in *our* souls.

A holy writer has explained the state of our Lord's Soul by this comparison. An exceedingly good father here on earth holds the office of a judge; and after carefully hearing the evidence against his own son, must pronounce sentence. His mind is now thoroughly convinced, and he sees most clearly where his duty lies; and all conflict is at an end. His feeling for his son is as strong as ever, but there is no rebellion at work. His will is, if we may so speak, quite undivided, and he wholly and entirely approves of the course that his duty points out to him.

C. *And being in an agony, He prayed the longer.*

If the Cross is *Cathedra docentis*—our Lord's pulpit, whence He preaches to all men—we may say too of the Grotto in the Garden that it is His school-room, where He gives us lessons of inestimable worth.

*The waters, He says, are come in even to My Soul, and a tempest hath overwhelmed Me* (Psalm lxxviii.); but, as we have seen already, *many waters cannot quench charity; neither can the floods drown it* (Cant. viii.). Never for one moment is His Heart so engrossed with His own sorrows as to forget our souls. If later, when His Body was as mangled as His Soul is now bruised and wounded, He could say: *Weep not over Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children*: we may be quite sure that this is His thought now also. For His charity does not change. Deliberately, and with an eternal forethought, if we may use the word, He has elected to sacrifice Himself for us. He has resolved to deliver up (to betray—*tradere*) His own Body and His own Soul to sorrow and anguish and death, because He values more the treasure He wishes to buy, than the price He intends to pay. The soul of man is now before Him more prominent and more vivid than any sorrow of His own.

In this hour, therefore, well does He remember that Satan will spread the darkness of desolation over the souls He loves: and that, when they are in that state, he will try to make them believe that God has abandoned them; and that prayer is no longer useful, or even possible. All the while, this lying spirit, more cruel than any savage beast, is the weakest and the basest of cowards, and will fly away dismayed, if man, or woman, or child will only resist him. Therefore it is that the Holy Spirit has taken care to record for our use that word: *Being in an agony, He prayed the longer.* And from this hard bed upon the ground, our Blessed Saviour says to us most earnestly, most imploringly: *Look and do according to the pattern.* REMEMBER ME when things go ill with thee. *Resist My enemy and your enemy, the father of lies; for most certainly he will fly from you covered with shame intolerable.*

When in anguish pray the longer. *Believe in God and He will recover thee. Ye that fear the Lord wait for His mercy. Ye that fear the Lord hope in Him, and mercy shall come to you for your delight* (Eclus. ii.).

D. Satan often tries to persuade us to be impatient with God, to lose heart and to say with the men of Bethulia: *If after five days be past there come no aid, we will do the things which you have spoken; that is, yield ourselves up to God's enemy and ours.* Let us remember how wisely holy Judith rebuked those despairing men: *Who are you that tempt the Lord? You have set a time for the mercy of the Lord, and you have appointed Him a day according to your pleasure. But forasmuch as the Lord is patient, let us be penitent for this same thing, and with many tears let us beg His pardon* (Judith viii.). When keeping the Holy Hour in this Grotto, the faithful in their contemplation learn that great lesson: *Patience is necessary for you. For yet a little, and a very little while, and He that is to come will come, and will not delay* (Hebrews x.).

## STATION VI.

*And being in an agony, He prayed the longer (St. Luke xxii.). Again the second time He went and prayed, saying: My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, but I must drink it, Thy will be done. And He prayed the third time, saying the self-same word (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

A. In the first prayer of our Lord there were two parts:

- (1) *Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me:*
- (2) *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou.*

The first part of the petition, as we see, is only conditional. It is the expression of the wish of His sensitive nature, which wish is not urged at all unduly. A holy writer has made use of this comparison to illustrate the prayer of our Lord. In a Council of Bishops, if there were a small minority, all very loyal and docile, they might express a very strong desire for some measure that would be good for their dioceses, but at the same time be perfectly willing and resigned to agree with the majority in what is best for the general good.

So here we see in our Lord's second prayer, that the wish of the minority—that is, the cry of His subordinate and perfectly subject sensitive nature—is no longer heard. His prayer is now entirely that the will of the Father be accomplished.

*B. My Father, if this chalice may not pass away, unless I drink it, Thy will be done.*

*Pass away* (Latin, *transire*, Greek, *παρελθεῖν ἀπ' ἐμοῦ*). Is our English version the best that could be? The Greek words lend themselves better to the sense revealed to St. Catherine: "If the chalice of My Blood cannot pass from Me into the souls of men". That word to us so sacred, "transubstantiation," does not mean the passing away of the substance of bread, but the change of one substance into another. The first prayer of our Lord therefore may have meant, not that the chalice might merely *pass away* from Him, but, if there is any way by which the chalice

of salvation, the chalice of My Blood, the fruits of My Redemption, can *pass from Me into the souls of men*, without My drinking slowly and to the dregs the bitter cup before Me, may this be done; still, *not as I will, but as Thou*.

C. *And He prayed the third time, saying the self-same words.*

Therefore, a repetition of the same words is not always a vain repetition.

There are not many words in the short prayer which our Blessed Saviour has given us to be the prayer of our whole lifetime on earth: *Pater noster*, etc. But each word is the heavenly bread on which the soul of man is to live. We ought, therefore, often and often to repeat the words, each so full of nourishment, and repeat them thoughtfully, begging the assistance of the Holy Ghost, that light may come to our minds and our hearts. *Veni, lumen cordium.*

D. *Saying the self-same words.*

When the soul is very much in earnest and full of intense desires, it does not want many words. The blind men knew well what they wanted, and they stuck fast to their short petition: *Son of David, have mercy on us—Lord, that I may see.*

The man who obtained the loaf at midnight did not win his petition by varying his words, but by importunate perseverance.

E. Neither does our Saviour advise us to use many words.

*When you are praying, speak not much, as the heathens do. For they think that in their much speaking they may be heard (St. Matt. vi.).* We do not need talent, nor eloquence, for prayer, but only an earnest desire.

## STATION VII.

*And His sweat became as drops of Blood, trickling down on the ground (St. Luke xxii. 44).*

A. The words seem to imply that already, before this, drops of sweat had been forced from the pores of our

Lord's Body by the anguish of His Soul. We see the cold sweat gather on the forehead of the dying, and we know how fear or anxious suspense will sometimes cause profuse perspiration to burst from the body.

Now, however, His sweat changes and *becomes as drops of Blood*. Does this phrase mean that the drops became like to blood, though they were not really blood? The holy Fathers and the learned commentators and the sense of the faithful are all in agreement in rejecting this interpretation. All believe that the words mean a sweat of real blood. So that St. Athanasius writes: "Anathema to him who denies that there was a sweat of Blood".

B. There is not only real blood, but further, the Greek word here used, *θρόμβοι*, which is rendered by our word, *drops*, signifies blood not very serous or watery, but blood thickened, and in what is called a grumous state. If blood in this condition flows down to the ground, it must be coming in very large quantities from the body, otherwise it would not flow, but would stand in globules or clots.

C. *As drops of Blood trickling down on the ground.*

St. Ignatius in his Exercises takes for granted that the garments of our Saviour are first drenched with this Blood, before it can trickle down on the ground. If so, this, too, would show that the quantity drained from the Sacred Body must have been exceedingly great.

D. *His sweat became as drops of Blood.*

This difficulty has been raised, that fear naturally drives the blood to the heart, so that the face becomes pale and the extremities cold. Thus it is that we speak of the *cold* sweat on the forehead when the agony of death sets in. One answer given to this objection is that we cannot judge from the ordinary action of fear what effect it would produce when intensified. For while moderate light helps us to read, light too intense may blind us. Food, also, and drink in moderation maintain activity of mind, but in excess they stupefy.

E. Another answer given is, that we need not believe that fear is the sole and entire cause of our Saviour's sweat of Blood.

One holy writer on the Sacred Passion has used this illustration to explain our Lord's condition. In the mill there are two stones grinding, the upper and the nether. If, then, in the wine-press, in like manner, there was a pressure from above and a pressure from below, the stream of grape-juice would be the result of the two. This is our Lord's condition; as He lies prostrate in prayer, there is within Him a double pressure. There is the pressure from below, from the sensitive nature which is causing fear and heaviness; but there is from above, the much stronger pressure of His infinite charity, which is longing that His Blood may flow, and love that conquers everywhere, in every detail of His Passion, now conquers fear also, and forces out His Sacred Blood.

If this be admitted, then this sweat of Blood may be considered, as we have seen, a partial answer to that cry of His Heart, that the time may be shortened, and that His Blood may pass quickly from Him into the souls of men.

F. *Being in an agony.*

Is His Blessed Mother in the Grotto when the drops of Blood are trickling down upon the ground? Writers on the Sacred Passion take it for granted that she is not. They argue from ancient custom, that like other virtuous women, she would not walk abroad after dark. This reasoning, however, is not conclusive. For are there not at times exceptions even to prudent and wholesome rules? Our Blessed Lady, walking upon the earth, is a quite exceptional and most unearthly work of God. She stands alone, the Blessed one among the women whom Eve had deprived of blessedness. She is the Lily among the thorns; the Immaculate among sinners; the Fleece plentifully bedewed with the graces of Heaven, when all around is parched and dried up. So that, had she gone with her

Divine Son to the Garden, in this point also she would have been an exception to ordinary rules.

She is the Most Prudent of Virgins, oh, yes! but heavenly and Divine prudence soars high above human prudence, and becomes merged in the folly of the Cross. Who so prudent as her Son Jesus? Yet where was human prudence when He betrayed Himself and all His rights, and became Surety for us sinners?

She is the Prudent Virgin; but her prudence, like her Divine Son's prudence, knows that there is a time to remain hidden and a time to walk abroad. So that, had she gone with her Divine Son to the Garden, as has been said, she would have been an exception to ordinary rule.

Holy women, it is argued, shrink from being abroad at night; and yet, the night was very far spent, and the day was very near its dawning, when Judith, who was a holy woman and the chaste type of the Virgin Mother, passed through the city gate and went down the hill *clothed with the garments of her gladness, and sandals on her feet, taking her bracelets and lilies and earlets and rings with her and decked with all her ornaments* (c. x.).

She was a holy woman, very holy; but because she was holy, she understood from above that the time of peace has its rules, and the time of fierce battle has other rules.

As Holy Mary is the second Eve, and as it stands in God's primeval decree that she is to share largely in the second great conflict with Lucifer, which is begun to-night; and as it is written in the very beginning of the prophecy that the enmities are to be between her and the serpent, it would be passing strange if she is to have no prominent share in the night watches of the Passion.

The fact, moreover, that the Garden belonged to her might render it probable that she could be there, and still sufficiently sheltered and retired.

A well-known modern painter represents her as watching through the window of her apartment in Jerusalem

the return of her Divine Son from Gethsemani. The holy Fra Angelico, on the other hand, in one of his paintings places her in the Garden near the sleeping disciples.

The Abbess Mary of Jesus (d'Agreda), according to the account she gives of her visions, sees our Blessed Lady in Jerusalem following in spirit every step and every movement of our Lord in the Garden. As He has three disciples with Him, so she has Magdalen and two other devout women. When He goes into the Grotto, she retires alone into her chamber, and prays in union with Him and shares all His agony. When He visits His disciples, she goes to her three companions to encourage them to pray.

This account harmonises with the common opinion that she is not, in body, present in the Garden, and also satisfies the mind of those who think that the second Eve must have had her full share in every stage of the Sacred Passion.

It seems repugnant to think that there was any scene of the great conflict in which the woman, the Blessed among women, the second Eve, did not take her part. *Can I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?*

G. While then her Divine Son is lying prostrate in the Garden and being baptised with the baptism of His Sacred Blood for which His Soul has been yearning, we may contemplate our Blessed Lady also, with her Mother's heart bleeding; compassion working within her so strongly that it is as if she too was bleeding drop for drop.

It has been stated by a devout and learned writer in our days that at times during the Sacred Passion the tears that fell from her eyes were tears of blood.<sup>1</sup> This statement is found in a Revelation our Lady herself made to St. Bridget. We also meet with it more than once in the Revelations recorded by the Venerable Mother Mary of Jesus (d'Agreda).

H. We are permitted then to kneel down near her, as

<sup>1</sup> Father Frederick W. Faber, in *The Foot of the Cross*.

we contemplate her Son in His Agony. For it is not good for us to be alone when we gaze on His suffering—*Væ Soli*. If we are alone, and left to our own pusillanimity, the Sacred Passion may become a scandal to us. Withering fear may take possession, and blight heavenly hope and love. The heart may turn away hardened and scared.

But if we contemplate beside the Blessed Mother, and with her watch the Passion of her Son, we may expect an increase of faith, hope, love, and contrition.

And so, near in spirit to the Blessed Mother, with our eyes we are watching the prostrate form of our Saviour, and marking how His Sacred Body writhes on the ground—as the agonising writhe when death is coming—for He is in this hour, we must not forget it, sorrowful unto death, and tasting all the bitterness of death. And when at times He lifts for a moment His Sacred Head, we see in amazement that anguish and distress have driven away beauty from His pale and blood-stained face. Tears, and agony, and blood, and the dust of the earth have so changed His features that *His look (is) as it were hidden and despised* (Isaias liii.). We can see neither *comeliness* nor even *sightliness*.

He looks like *one struck by God*. What wonder that the disciples are scandalised in Him! that the horrible fear occurs: “The Pharisees may be right. They call Him a seducer, an impostor, and one that has a devil!”

His own Apostle wrote in after times still stronger words of His condition: *Christ hath redeemed us, being made a curse for us* (Galat. iii.).

I. St. Ignatius advises us at times to forget other thoughts, and fix our minds on this one: how much Jesus is suffering—how much and in how many different ways. “*O vos omnes,*” He says Himself—*Give heed and see if there be sorrow like unto My sorrow.*

Whilst then we are watching with our eyes, our ears also are listening to His heavy breathing, to His long-drawn sighs, to His loud sobbing, to His moans of distress.

*I am become*, His Prophet says for Him, *I am become a worm*, a writhing worm, and *no man*.

“ Oh, stay a little while, and see if there be sorrow and distress and agony like My sorrow and My agony.”

J. The wise political calculating man of the world turns away impatient. Whose is the fault ? he asks. He should have counted the cost. He was offered, we are assured, because He willed it Himself. Why does He now complain ?

But His Blessed Mother would answer for Him : Oh, blame Him not. My Son Jesus is offered, true, because He willed it. But how could He not will it ? He sees the children created by His Eternal Father perishing for ever. He hears the children of His own Father weeping and wailing for ever in the prison house of Lucifer.

How can He do otherwise than will to offer Himself ? For He loves His Father, and He loves men created by His Father, and because He loves, He delivers Himself up for men.

Nor does He now repent, nor does He complain. The cost He has well counted. All the agony of this hour He foreknew perfectly when a Child in my arms. He does not repent, He does not complain ; He suffers. His Human Body and His Human Soul—they are suffering ; but all the while His whole Heart and His whole Soul, and all His strength are crying out : *Father, Thy will be done*.

K. The legions of the blessed angels are also watching in silent wonder the spectacle in the Grotto. *They* are not accusing their King of having rashly encountered trouble of which He has not measured the length, the depth, the height, the breadth. No, as the Jews said when they saw Jesus weeping at the grave : *Behold, how He loved him* : so now, the choirs of the Cherubim and Seraphim, and the archangels and angels as they watch the tears of blood trickling down on the ground, and all the distress of His Sacred Body, and all the agony of His

Most Holy Soul, in words of most reverent rapture cry: Behold, how He loves man! Behold, the worth of man for whom He pays such a price! And they understand more clearly than ever how precious in the eyes of their God is the soul of man committed to their guardianship, and they bless their God for trusting them with that commission.

*L. His sweat became as drops of Blood.*

And now—is Holy Mary too much absorbed in her grief to turn to us and say a word to us while we kneel beside her? No, surely, for her heart is like her Son's. He, throughout His Passion, is mindful of His disciples; and she, however deep the sword of sorrow is piercing, will still think, with all her Mother's pity, of her children.

*M. What word, then, does she say to us?*

1. She says from her full and overflowing heart: My children, *see how He loved you.*

2. She says, after long silence and many heavy sighs and many tears: My children, know your worth, for *you are bought with a great price.*

3. She says again, after long prayer for us—in union with the prayer of her Jesus and our Jesus—she says most earnestly and most kindly: *Forget not the kindness of thy Surety (Ecclus. xxix.). Put (Him) as a seal upon thy heart, as a seal upon thy arm (Cant. viii.).*

4. Lastly, full of a Mother's tender solicitude, she adds: My children, look on *Jesus, the author and finisher of faith; think diligently on Him that endured such opposition from sinners against Himself (from the unseen sinners, the wicked spirits) that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds. For you have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin (Hebrews xii.).*

*N. You have not yet resisted unto blood. The kingdom of Heaven, our Lord said, suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away (St. Matt. xi.).* We are soldiers, and we stand in presence of three determined enemies, *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life.* In other words, our warfare is against the world and the flesh, aided by all the

cunning and trickery of Satan. *Put ye on the armour of God*, St. Paul writes. *For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places* (Ephes. vi.). Soldiers in presence of strong enemies do not expect to win the battle with feeble wishes. Neither must we be surprised if a few faint-hearted prayers which we ourselves scarcely expect to be heard, cannot decide the day for us. *Thou art a man of desires*, our Lady's Archangel said to Daniel, God's faithful servant. The holy saints knew that their Master prayed *with a loud cry and with tears*, and even with tears of blood. If sin is still mastering us, we have the explanation: *You have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin*. A man says sometimes: My passions are too strong for me! and he blames God for creating him with passions. He forgets that after the Fall our Creator had to change His plans. He has in His infinite charity formed a new plan by which all that was lost can be regained, and more. But in this new plan it is an essential part that we fight a good fight, and those that are brave and resolute never find their passions too strong for them; nor yet the devil, who is essentially cowardly. *Resist the devil, and he will fly from you*.

O. *Being in an agony, He prayed the longer*.

Holy writers ask this question: Wherefore did our Lord pray to His Father for help, seeing that He is God equal to the Father, and seeing, moreover, that all power is given to Him even as Man? They answer that from the moment of His Incarnation, His fixed purpose is to depend wholly on His Father's will. Whatever power He may have, still, *In the head of the book it is written of Me that I should do Thy will; O my God, I have desired it, and Thy law in the midst of My Heart* (Psalm xxxix.). *As far as the east is from the west*, He casts from Him every kind of solace and relief, save what His Father wishes to provide for Him. He knows how His Eternal Father feeds the sparrows and clothes the lilies; and He never for a moment

forgets that to His Father He is more, infinitely more, than they.

P. Another question asked by devout and diligent students of the Sacred Passion is this: How far is the prayer of our Lord in the Grotto heard and granted?

They answer (1) that His prayer is heard as far as He Himself wishes it to be heard. When He prayed beside the grave of Lazarus, He said to His Father: *I know that Thou hearest Me always.* And to St. Paul it was revealed, *that when in the days of His flesh with a strong cry and tears He offered up prayer, He was heard for His reverence* (Hebrews v.).

*For His reverence:* that is, either on account of the humble reverence with which he prayed; or because of the reverence due to His dignity and His holiness. All the absolute and unconditional prayers of our Lord are therefore heard.

But it has been already explained, how when a Senate or Synod presents a petition to a Sovereign or to the Pope, the petition is the wish or prayer of the majority, in which the minority also acquiesce; but certain wishes of the well-regulated and loyal minority are not pressed or urged. So in our Lord's case. His absolute prayer, which is heard and granted, is the cry of His charity. The cry of His fear and heaviness, is, as it were, the cry of the most loyal and right-minded minority, which is not urged. It is not an absolute wish, only conditional: *If it can be done, let this chalice pass from Me.*

Q. Three wishes, therefore, or inclinations, as we have seen, are in our Lord's Heart.

1. The wish of His natural fear, that shrinks from death.

2. The wish of His sensitive nature, which shrinks from the horrors that are to accompany His Death.

3. The wish of His charity, that His Father's will may be accomplished perfectly, and that His Passion may not be fruitless in the souls of men,

The first and second conditional wishes are not accomplished ; but the Archangel sent to strengthen Him, assures Him that His third wish shall have ample fulfilment, and that His Father's will shall be entirely accomplished ; that His Father shall be glorified in every detail of the Passion ; that neither men nor wicked spirits shall prevail in any one single point against the will of His Father ; that His Passion shall bring forth most abundant fruit ; for *if He shall lay down His life, He shall see a long-lived seed, and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in His hand.*

R. St. Ignatius recommends us to dwell sometimes, while we contemplate, on this thought : "This is all for me". We must try to believe more and more firmly this great truth, which arms us well against all hopeless thoughts, and enkindles the fire of love.

(a) *All this contrition is for me and for my sins.* How far short, then, my contrition is of what it should be !

Blessed Mother of sorrows, pray for me now and at the hour of my death, that I may see clearly, while I look on the agony of thy Son, the truth of that word : *Know thou and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God* (Jerem. ii.). Alas ! I knew not what I was doing. I know not yet how evil and how bitter a thing my sin was. I sinned and said : *What harm hath befallen me ?* I sinned, and how little as yet have I realised the force of those words far more applicable to me than to the Jews : *Is this the return that thou makest to the Lord, O foolish and senseless people ? Is not He thy Father that hath possessed thee, and made thee, and created thee ?* (Deut. xxxii.).

*According to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, O Lord, blot out my sins. For I will declare my iniquity and will think for my sins* (Psalm xxxvii.).

(b) *All this contrition is for me,* to be added to mine. Therefore, when I go to the sacred tribunal, I have something better to rely upon than my own feeble act of contrition. Jesus Christ, my Surety, my Saviour, is

uniting all His great contrition with my most insufficient sorrow.

*S. Being in an agony, He prayed the longer.*

St. Ignatius also wishes us to draw from contemplation on the Life and Death of our Lord an increase of love for Him and affectionate devotion towards Him.

St. Bernard writes: "More than all else does the chalice which Thou didst drink render Thee loveable to us. This easily and entirely wins to itself our love. It is the mystery which most surely attracts our devotion; most justly claims it; holds it clasped most closely; and most ardently inflames it."

*T. Being in an agony, He prayed the longer.*

*Look and do according to the pattern.* Before we leave the Grotto, let us gather together from our Blessed Lord's example a few lessons as to how we ought to pray.

1. *He fell flat on the ground, and He prayed* (St. Mark xiv.).

*Before prayer prepare thy soul* (Ecclus. xviii.): so is it said to us. What better preparation than humble reverence, reverential humility? Therefore we must try to enter on prayer with great reverence and humility.

St. Francis Borgia, beginning his prayer, used to put himself in spirit at the feet of Judas, till he remembered that our Lord had been there; and then he set about looking for some other place more suited to his unworthiness.

Some pious persons always prepare for prayer by a hearty act of contrition for their sins.

(a) St. Ignatius directs us all, when praying in private, to make, at the distance of a pace or two from our place of prayer, some act of external reverence and humiliation, before we go into the Divine presence.

Some, before they begin their prayer, surround themselves in spirit with a group of poor sinners, to remind themselves that they belong to the number.

(b) Our Blessed Lord advises us when we are called to a feast to make for the lowest seats. Prayer is conversa-

tion with God, and becomes a true feast, if God makes Himself known to us. Wise, then, are they who place themselves low down on the last seat at the beginning of their prayer.

(c) If we find ourselves discontented because we have no sensible consolation, is not this a sign that we took too high a position when we began prayer ?

(d) How came the pagan centurion to say so wisely : *Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter into my house ?* If we have abused many great graces we have more cause than this centurion had to humble ourselves exceedingly.

(e) How did St. Peter so soon, in the beginning of his training, learn to say so becomingly : *Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man ?*

(f) Preparing for prayer, and still more for Holy Communion, should we not make time to say attentively and earnestly and perseveringly : *Whence is this to me that my Lord should come to me ?* and converse with me ?

2. *He saith : Abba, Pater.* Holy Job, when suffering desolation, said : *O God, I cry to Thee and Thou hearest me not. I stand up, and Thou dost not regard me. Thou art changed to be cruel towards me, and in the hardness of Thy hand Thou art against me (c. xxx.).* These words give us only a faint idea of the weight of God's displeasure under which the desolate Soul of Jesus lies crushed ; and yet all the while hope and confidence is unshaken. *Abba, Father !* is the cry of His Heart. The firm assurance that God Who is chastising Him is His most loving Father, never wanes, never grows dim.

(a) So must we come to prayer with great hope. *If any man want wisdom, let him ask : but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.*

(b) Prayer ought to ascend like a sweet-smelling incense. *Let my prayer be directed as incense in Thy sight (Psalm cxl.).* If hope is wanting, dark smoke remains, but the fragrance is gone.

(c) Above all things God wants us to believe that He is a true Father. To the stiff-necked Jews, ever rebellious, He says: *Therefore at the least from this time call to Me, Thou art my Father* (Jerem. iii.).

We cannot too earnestly, or too often, cry from our hearts: *Our Father, hallowed be Thy Name.* "May we all believe much more vividly in Thy Name of Father."

(d) And surely we ought also to find time to say: "Lord Jesus, hallowed be Thy name of Saviour and Redeemer. May we all have grace to believe firmly that Thy Sacred Wounds cry louder than our sins."

(e) St. Chrysostom would have the poor sinner say to God, "My Father, I have cast away all the feelings of a son; but Thou canst not cast away the thoughts of a Father".

### 3. *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou.*

This word is omnipotent in prayer. When from our hearts we wish God's will to be done rather than ours, we fill Him with a grateful and intense desire to do our will if it may be.

(a) We take delight in the Lord when we make such a prayer lovingly: and His promise is, *Take delight in the Lord and He will give thee the requests of thy heart. Commit thy way to the Lord, and trust in Him, and He will do it* (Psalm xxxvi.).

### 4. *And being in an agony, He prayed the longer.*

In how many different ways has our Lord impressed upon us that we must persevere in prayer? *Yet if he shall continue knocking, I say to you, although he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say to you: Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you. For every one that asketh receiveth: and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened* (St. Luke xi.).

## SCENE IV.

THE STONE BY THE GROTTO. THE THREE DISCIPLES.

## STATION I.

OUR LORD'S FIRST VISIT TO THEM.

*And He cometh to His disciples and findeth them asleep (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*And when He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow (St. Luke xxii.).*

A. Our Lord has trained His disciples to do for God what so many men do for the world, that is, to walk *hard ways*; to toil by day and watch by night. They are not men clothed in soft garments and feasting sumptuously every day.

*The fulness of the rich*, the Holy Spirit tells us, *will not suffer him to sleep*. But, "Sleep is sweet to the labouring man". These disciples are men of labour, who are weary at night and ready for sleep. But now, moreover, weariness of soul is added to fatigue of body. *He found them sleeping for sorrow*. For nature is glad to forget her troubles for a while in sleep, and awakes with a heavy heart when a day of sorrow is coming.

B. *When He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples.*

Contemplate our Blessed Saviour interrupting His earnest prayer, raising up His wasted and weary Body slowly and with difficulty from the ground. Follow Him in spirit as He walks feebly and with uncertain steps up the incline to the mouth of the Grotto, and then up the steep, rough path towards the stony bed where His disciples are sleeping. Pale, very pale, is His sacred face. *His aspect is hidden*. The grace and beauty that was there till now is hidden under haggard disfigurement. We wonder as we watch Him making this effort when so exhausted.

Alas! how often has a small measure of fatigue hindered us from going to converse with God in prayer, or to do

some work for Him! But weariness does not hinder God from coming to man to care for him.

*C. He rose up from prayer.*

We are surprised, too, to see Him break off His prayer—such a prayer, on which so much depends, and at such an hour, too, when help from Heaven is so sorely needed.

But does He interrupt His prayer? How can He, if He teaches us to pray always?

But even if He did, what wonder were it that He Who has come out from the bosom of His Father to be with men, breaks off converse with His Father to go to men, to take care of His weak disciples, as a mother would rise at night to nurse her sick child!

*D. He cometh to His disciples.*

*Stay you here and watch with Me,* He said to them an hour ago.

An hour ago! Oh, what an hour! For them it has been a short hour. But for Him, which of us can measure the long minutes of that hour? St. Peter tells us what was revealed to him concerning time. *Of this one thing be not ignorant, my beloved, that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years.* The sorrows, the sadness, the heaviness of heart, the desolation of many generations to come have been crowded into that hour in the Grotto. *He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him* (Isaias liii.).

And as, a few days ago, He came to the fig-tree, hoping, as it were, against hope, in His extreme exhaustion, to find a little refreshment there, so now He comes, bowed down with sorrow, carrying upon Him the sins of the world, and hoping against hope to find a little solace from the compassion of His chosen disciples; and oh, how grateful would He be to those beloved ones if He had found them watching and remembering Him! Contemplate Him as He stands looking down on the sleepers, His sensitive Heart feeling most keenly His disappoint-

ment. For *weeping* He hath wept in the night, and His tears are on His cheeks; there is none to comfort Him among all that were dear to Him (Lament. i.).

E. *He found them sleeping.*

Disappointed He is, but not angry. When all shall be ended, He shall judge these three disciples, and He will not remember that they slept during His trouble; He will only remember that they remained with Him in His temptation, and that, if they slept, it was through sorrow caused by following Him.

#### STATION II.

*And He saith to Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? What, couldst thou not watch one hour with Me? (St. Matt. xxvi.; St. Mark xiv.).*

A. *Simon, sleepest thou?* "Hast thou forgotten how one hour ago thy love was so strong that thou couldst go to prison with Me and thou couldst die with Me? Canst thou, then, even now sleep, during My Agony, when My need is so great?"

B. *Simon, sleepest thou?*

"After My warning that Satan is desiring to riddle thee, canst thou sleep quietly in presence of such an adversary?"

C. *Simon, sleepest thou?*

"After thou hast heard from My lips that thou shalt be scandalised in Me this night? When all our close intimacy and loving friendship is about to be shaken, and dashed to pieces, canst thou sleep so deep a sleep?"

D. *Simon, sleepest thou?*

"Hadst thou no ears to hear when I said to thee once and again: *This night before the cock crows twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice?*

"After such a foretelling, was there no need of thought and prayer to avert such ruin? Was there nothing to do but to sleep?"

All this and more our Saviour might with justice have

said. Oh, let us note attentively how His meek Heart is content with one gentle word: *Simon, sleepest thou?*

E. *O vos omnes*—"Oh, all you who pass by the way heedless," stay here to look at the disciples of Jesus sleeping. For the Holy Spirit is saying as we gaze: *What is that that hath been? The same thing that shall be! The children of this world are more prudent than the children of light. They do not slumber and sleep when great danger is nigh, "but Thy disciples, Lord Jesus, do". Who is blind, He asks, when temptation and sin and ruin is near, but My servant? Who is deaf, but he to whom I have sent My messengers, to warn them that enemies are near? Who is blind, but the servant of the Lord?* (Isaias xlii.).

Every one else watches in the night when the house-breakers are near.

F. *Simon, sleepest thou? Canst thou not watch one hour with Me?*

The one great and lifelong hope of every good Christian is that he will be permitted to spend his eternity with Christ Jesus.

And yet, even His own chosen ones, His special friends and familiars, cannot watch with Him in His hour of trouble; for *the corruptible body is a load upon the soul, and the earthly habitation presseth down the mind that museth on many things* (Wisdom ix.).

Holy men and women who have begun to know Jesus Christ, and have tasted and seen *that the Lord is sweet* (Psalm xxxiii.), take care to be abstemious, lest the pampered body should become, more than need be, *a load upon the soul*. They even grudge their bodies the necessary food and repose; and one of their earnest prayers is: *From my necessities, deliver me, O Lord* (Psalm xxiv.).

St. Ignatius holds it to be a fundamental principle of the Gospel that we are bound to use all creatures, such as money and time and food and sleep and the rest, honestly, as means, as helps to the work we have to do for God. We are created for God; *all other things are created to help*

us to praise God, to reverence Him and to serve Him. Hence diet, as all other things, ought to be so regulated that it shall help the soul to pray and to work; and not *press down too much the mind that museth on many things.*

G. *Canst thou not watch one hour with Me?*

How new, how startling, how cogent this appeal becomes to us, now that our most loving Saviour is living close to us in the tabernacle, in order to be near us and ever ready for us! *Canst thou not watch one hour with Me?*—He says to us, most meekly indeed and humbly from His tabernacle, but also most earnestly and urgently; for He sees how greatly we need to watch and pray. Well He knows how all the powers of darkness are busy night and day, to prevent that honour, that reverence, that ardent love to which His littleness in the tabernacle and the *almighty weakness of His goodness* so well entitles Him. The theatres and ball-rooms and concert-halls are studiously made most brilliant and attractive that they may lure away Christian men and women from the Sanctuary of the Blessed Sacrament. The old ways of dealing with unseen wicked spirits are revived, and new ones invented, to turn men's minds away from communion with their Hidden God, and with His Blessed Mother, and His saints and angels.

H. *Canst thou not watch one hour with Me?*

Before we turn away and reject this modest petition of Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, let us reflect once more on the triumphant jeering of the wicked spirits as they go about on their rounds of malice and blasphemy. *On a certain day, we read in the Book of Job, when the sons of God came to stand before the Lord, Satan also was present among them. And the Lord said to him: Whence comest thou? And he answered and said: I have gone round about the earth and walked through it (Job i.).* From the context we gather that Satan was there to boast that he has been in every part of the world, and has everywhere found that God is

neglected by the men whom He created to replace the fallen angels, and that he, Satan, is supreme master. The malicious exultation of this enemy of God and men is a thousand times greater now when he can persuade men to neglect and ignore Jesus Christ in His tabernacle, the prison of His love; and to cover Him with dishonour and opprobrium.

Grateful, therefore, most grateful, is His meek and humble Heart to those who take a little trouble to solace Him by being present at Holy Mass, and finding some time to watch with Him.

I. *Simon, sleepest thou?*

Judas can watch by night to gain his thirty pieces of silver. The Priests and Ancients can watch to work out the design of their envy. Children of the world watch readily for pleasure or for money. "For Thee alone, my God, I am unwilling to watch." *Tibi soli peccavi.*

### STATION III.

*Watch ye and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak* (St. Matt. xxvi. 41).

This is the warning word of vital importance which our Lord has come from the Grotto to speak to the three disciples and to all of us. For we are all present to His Heart; and to each of us He says: Even if the mother can forget her child, *yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in My hands* (Isaias xlix.).

A. *Watch and pray.*

Because He speaks mildly, we forget the infinite earnestness with which He is uttering this admonition: *Watch and pray.* We must ever keep in mind the principle, "*Non in commotione Dominus*" (3 Kings xix.), that is to say, the Lord does not always visit us in earthquakes and whirlwinds. He is not like a short-lived, weak, and fearful man, who acts and speaks in haste and anger, because he is conscious how small his power is and how short his

time. The eternal and all-powerful God has no need to be in a hurry, or nervously excited. *Thou being Master of power, judgest with tranquillity, and with great favour disposest of us, for Thy power is at hand when Thou wilt* (Wisdom xii.). He judges and speaks with tranquillity; but every word has, according to our way of expressing ourselves, been weighed and considered from eternity; and therefore, whenever we hear a word from Him, surely we ought not to harden our hearts.

B. *Watch and pray.*

If the word He spoke, *Let there be light*, had been by some malicious power rendered void, who can calculate the loss and the detriment and the confusion that would have followed? If these words, *This is My Body; This is My Blood; Thy sins are forgiven; Lazarus, come forth*, could fall to the ground baffled and blighted and ineffectual, who can measure the calamity and ruin?

Yet there is no word that comes from the mouth of God that is not unspeakably precious, as these words are. Alas, we fools! we heed not the words of our Lord Jesus, infinitely wise, infinitely loving, and all-powerful, because He speaks to us in kindness and in tranquillity.

C. *Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.*

Had St. Peter through that one hour watched with his Master, how many bitter tears of anguish, and how many hours and nights of painful lamentation might he have been spared! True, indeed, in his case, the inventive love of his Master found out a means of changing his sin by loving contrition into a glorious ornament of heavenly glory. But in our case, how good and prudent an economy it is to *prevent sin by watching one hour*, rather than to have to *lament sin through many long hours of bitter remorse*; and then to begin again lamenting and crying out: *Wash me yet more, O Lord.*

D. *Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.*

Pious persons are sometimes tempted to think that

they gain no good by going to Mass and receiving Holy Communion. Never till Judgment comes shall we know how many times we have escaped entering into temptation by having been present at Holy Mass, or by having received Holy Communion.

In certain conditions of spiritual health, when a man's virtue is weak, and habits of sin have long prevailed, we may predict with tolerable certainty that if he perseveres in attending Holy Mass and approaching to Holy Communion regularly and frequently, he will abide in the grace of God; but if he omits through sloth to strengthen himself with the Bread of Heaven, he will relapse very soon into grievous sin.

So, too, with our regular daily prayers: if we are faithful to them, the day goes on happily according to God's ordinance; but if we will not watch a little time with our Lord, we fall into many venial sins of the tongue, or sins of thought. The Prophet asks: *What is the meaning that my beloved hath wrought much wickedness in my house?* (Jerem. xi.). The answer is: We did not pray, and therefore entered into temptation.

*E. Pray, lest you enter into temptation.*

It is wonderful to observe with what diligence Satan labours to induce us, if we will not abandon prayer entirely, at least to put off and delay our prayers. What does he gain by this? Two great advantages:—

1. In the first place, Christ is dishonoured. It is a great confusion indeed to a father of a family to find that to his wife and children every one else is more welcome than he is; that all others are quickly attended to, but he left to the last. So, too, does it give great contentment to the malice of Lucifer, when he can so easily persuade us to write a letter first, or read a book, or prolong a conversation, and not till later on, perchance not till the last drowsy moments before bed-time, say hurriedly the unwelcome prayer to our God.

2, Besides this, Satan knows well that a prayer said

early and in good time *prevents sin*; but a prayer said later on oftentimes only *laments sin*. It is a homely proverb but a true one, even in spiritual life, that "a stitch in time saves nine".

F. *The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

But how if even the spirit be not willing? Then assuredly we must pray much more till we find ourselves *in carefulness not slothful, in spirit fervent, serving the Lord* (Romans xii.).

And when through earnest prayer we find ourselves thus fervent in spirit, then we must still pray and not faint: knowing that even when *the spirit is willing, the flesh is* (very) *weak*; and needs much more strengthening before we can be *doers of the law*.

#### STATION IV.

*And going away again, He prayed* (St. Mark xiv. 39).

A. Tranquilly but most earnestly He has spoken the necessary word; and He goes back to pray—to pray for these three loved ones, and not for them only, but for us too, and for all men. For of our Saviour it is written: *He began to do and to teach*. If then He teaches us to pray lest we enter into temptation, we may be quite sure that He prays with infinite zeal for us that we may not enter into temptation.

"*Misericordiæ Domini quia non sumus consumpti*"—*The mercies of the Lord that we are not consumed; because His commiserations have not failed!* (Lament. iii.). If our Blessed Lord were not always *living to intercede for us*, if every time we forget ourselves, and neglect to help ourselves, He also could forget us, long ago we should have been consumed.

#### STATION V.

*And He cometh again, and findeth them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy* (St. Matt. xxvi.).

*And when He returned, He found them again asleep (for their eyes were heavy), and they knew not what to answer Him (St. Mark xiv.).*

A. In his dream, Jacob saw a ladder, and the angels ascending and descending by it; and the Lord leaning upon the ladder.

This represents the work of our Guardian Angels ever coming from God to us, and from us going back to God. And so we see in the lives of apostolic saints that they go from prayer to work, and from work to prayer.

The angels and saints learn their wise practice from what we see here. Our Saviour is God-Man and the Man-God. He is one Person with two Natures. Both natures are now His, both dear to Him beyond all price. For ever, therefore, according to our human language, His Heart turns from His Father to His little flock, and then, from men, His brethren, back to His Eternal Father.

He is the Mediator, the never-tiring "Go-between," reconciling God our Father with men, and men with God our Father.

Quærens me sedisti lassus,  
Tantus labor non sit cassus.

Wearily He sought for me,  
May His toil not fruitless be.

B. *He findeth them sleeping.*

We complain sometimes that we pray and that no answer comes. Little we know how often our Lord comes to give us the answer in abundant graces, and finds us sleeping and incapable of hearing Him or speaking to Him.

C. *They knew not what to answer Him.*

Our Lord awakes them because He is truly and earnestly desirous that they should watch and pray, and so avert coming danger.

But if so, some one might ask, why does He not do something that shall startle them and rouse them, and render them wide awake and on the alert? In this, as in

a thousand times a thousand other instances, we see how our God does, meekly and with tranquillity, enough to help us—enough and much more than enough—but at the same time will not, beyond a certain point, interfere with natural causes and with our free-will. *The earth He has given to the children of men.* They are the managers in this world, and God suggests to them, and counsels them, and gives them all help most willingly, but treats them and all their rights most delicately.

Again, when we are considering the action of our God, we must always remember that word of our Lord: *Trade till I come.* God is, we may say, limited and restricted in giving graces by the fact, that for reasons infinitely wise, holy, and charitable, we are created to *trade*, to *earn by our own industry the increase of grace.* St. Paul has expressed this truth in this word: *He who soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly. He who soweth in blessings, shall also reap in blessings* (2 Cor. ix.).

D. *He findeth them sleeping.*

We do not gather that our Lord did more this time than awaken them. No words of His are recorded.

So it is, when our Lord has spoken to us already sufficiently and clearly, and we do not listen, charity sometimes compels Him to grow silent, lest we abuse more grace.

Then, again, when He finds us drowsy and indisposed to listen, He is silent, and goes away to wait for a better moment. How patiently He waited for the long-desired hour when Augustine would at last listen to Him! Then at length He spoke and poured into his now docile soul all the accumulation of graces which his faithful mother, St. Monica, had been storing up during so many years of prayers and tears.

E. *They knew not what to answer Him.*

“*Attendite.*” Stay a little while watching the distressful state of the disciples, not knowing what to answer to their Master. They are awake enough to know that they have

not carried out His injunction, but still are oppressed with their heaviness of heart and drowsy sadness.

Look attentively at the picture; for it is only a picture, a faint image of what is to come. *What shall I do, we may well ask with holy Job, when God shall rise to judge? and when He shall examine, what shall I answer Him if He is then compelled to say to me: Is this the return thou makest to the Lord, O foolish and senseless people? Is He not thy Father that hath possessed thee, and made thee, and created thee? (Deut. xxxii.).*

F. *They knew not what to answer Him.*

And what shall I answer, if I have not loved my Saviour, when I hear all the blessed saying, "Amen, amen, *If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema*"?

G. What shall I answer, if I find myself classed with those who are saying: *The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved?* (Jerem. viii.).

H. What shall I answer, when before all creation it is made evident that *He loved me and delivered Himself up for me*, but all in vain, if I never loved Him in return?

I. What shall I answer, when I find out that throughout my lifetime, every day and every night, He was for me imprisoned in the tabernacle, wishing to become my food, and to be to me my faithful, my own God?

J. What shall I answer, when it is made clear to me that His Mother was also my compassionate Mother?

K. What shall I answer when I see it in a blaze of light that even when I was in the depths of my sins, had I been only merciful to other poor sinners there would have been mercy in abundance for me?

A writer on the Sacred Passion who has diligently collected old traditions, tells us that after the second visit of our Lord, the disciples did not lie down any more, but sat with their knees bent; but that still, even in that position, they were overcome by sleep.

## STATION VI.

*And leaving them, He went again, and He prayed the third time (St. Matt. xxvi. 44).*

A. Let us contemplate our suffering Saviour going now for the third time with feeble and faltering steps down this steep and rugged path back to the Grotto of Agony.

*What is man, human advisers would say to Him, that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that Thou dost visit him?*

Why continue this thankless task of saving men, when Thy own chosen ones, trained and schooled by Thy own care, make so little response to all Thy love?

His answer has long ago been given. *Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the child of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I FORGET (Isaias xlix.).* Of the very best father and mother on this earth, our Lord said: *If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from Heaven! (St. Luke xi.).*

*Sursum corda.* From all that we see then in this world of strong parental love, and the devotedness of friends, let us conjecture, a little, at least, what the love of our Lord must be towards us. The workman is much better than his work. If parental love is so consoling and beautiful to behold, the Creator of loving parents is more beautiful than they. *By the greatness of the beauty, and of the creature, the Creator of them may be seen, so as to be known thereby (Wisdom xiii.).*

*Leaving them He went again.*

B. *What is man that Thou art mindful of him, Lord Jesus? Why toil, why go painfully backwards and forwards seeking to win me? Holy Church says: Quærens me sedisti lassus. Thou wert travelling in search of me when Thou didst sit down weary by the well. But here Thou art seeking me, and never sitting down to rest; seek-*

ing me painfully and returning back to pray for me in agony.  
 "May Thy toil not fruitless be."

"Holy Mother of God, show us the Blessed Fruit of thy womb, that all His labour for us may not be in vain." *O magnify the Lord with me, and let us extol His name together. Come ye to Him to be enlightened, and your faces shall not be confounded* (Psalm xxxiii.).

*C. And leaving them He went again, and He prayed the third time.*

See how the meekness of our Redeemer conquers by enduring. *Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.* In the end He will succeed, and will gather these disciples, and through them many more, to His Heart; and the fire that He came to cast on the earth will from His Heart enter theirs. A Heart less loving than His might be tired out when its own chosen ones seem to refuse to listen, *like the deaf asp that stoppeth her ears, which will not hear the voice of the wizard that charmeth wisely* (Psalm lviii.). But our Saviour Jesus ever does what He teaches. *Be not overcome by evil; but overcome evil by good* (Romans xii.). *If thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat; if he be thirsty, give him water to drink* (Proverbs xxv.). *Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you; bless them that curse you; pray for those that calumniate you* (St. Luke vi.).

It was one of the three who are sleeping here, that said ere now to his Master: *Lord, how often shall my brother offend against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith to him: I say not to thee till seven times, but till seventy times seven times.*

And if our God will have us thus be so good to enemies, and if He Himself is abundantly patient and gentle with malicious enemies, how immeasurably more compassionate will He be with His own, who are not in malice, but only overcome by infirmity! *If Thou didst punish Thy enemies with so great deliberation, giving them time and place whereby they might be changed from their wickedness, with what circumspection hast Thou judged Thy own children!* (Wisdom xii.).

## SCENE V.

MOUNT MORIAH. THE COURT OF THE TEMPLE.  
THE ROMAN BARRACKS.

*Judas also who betrayed Him, knew the place: because Jesus had often resorted thither together with His disciples (St. John xviii. 2).*

A. A few weeks later St. Peter, *rising up in the midst of the brethren—the number of persons was about a hundred and twenty—told them that Judas was the leader of them that apprehended Jesus (Acts i.).*

For this reason, among others, *the enemies of a man are they of his own household (Micheas vii.),* because those who live in his house know all his habits, and his secrets, and his weak points where he is vulnerable. They who live with us day by day generally know us well; so much so that commonly from their judgment of us we may conjecture reasonably what our sentence will be at the judgment seat of Christ.

Judas, therefore, knows our Lord's secrets. The Priests and Ancients, though they have watched Him so narrowly, and issued strict order, that all who know His place of abode shall give information, yet evidently know nothing; and are helpless, till Judas comes to be their guide.

As the Roman Prætorium stood on Mount Moriah, immediately to the north of the Temple, and adjoining to it; most probably the Priests and Rulers, who wanted to have help from the Roman garrison, had given orders to their servants and retainers to assemble in the outer court of the Temple, called the Court of the Gentiles. Here, moreover, they are much nearer to the place which Judas has named as the resort of Jesus, than they would be at the Palace of the Priests. Here, then, on Mount Moriah, not more than two hundred yards distant from the Garden of Gethsemani, they are actively making preparations.

B. Watch the magnitude of these hostile preparations: *For wickedness is fearful.* The Rulers think that they cannot

take precautions enough to secure Jesus, Who has escaped out of their hands so often.

*A great multitude with swords and clubs—with lanterns, torches, and weapons.* If these clubs are like what the peasants of the country are seen carrying in the present day, the swords might well be dispensed with. The Jews were notoriously bold in battle, and merciless; and an enemy struck by the heavy knob at the end of the clubs would scarcely need a second blow to end his life. As the Romans had taken away the power of life and death, and as the Rulers were anxious that the people should believe that the death of Jesus is the work of the Romans, it may be that on this account they did not arm their servants with swords, but only with clubs and staves.

C. Consider Judas in his new position of leader and captain. Mark how he is despised and mistrusted and narrowly watched lest he should play false and escape; and is made to understand that it will go ill with him if he prove a traitor to his new masters as he has done to Jesus. But still he is the leader, and he is obeyed when he urges them to make preparation diligently. Always hoping to earn a larger pay, he is exaggerating the importance of his services. He is quite sure, so he tells them, that to take Jesus will be a far more difficult enterprise than it was for the Philistines to secure Samson. Though the moonlight is bright, yet he insists that there must be an ample provision of torches and lanterns, as he knows the ground well. Besides the dark woods there are very many caverns and grottoes, where Jesus may easily hide Himself and escape.

From the walls that skirt the Temple area on the east, Judas can point out the Garden accurately to the Priests and Ancients; and with the Roman officers plan the midnight attack. He knows every detail; how many disciples Jesus will probably have with Him, and what amount of resistance they may make. They are all determined men and strong, and resolved to die with their

Master. Simon, the chief man, is especially daring. No precaution can be too great. His own life especially will be in the utmost danger. Beyond all doubt, he is badly paid for the risk he is running. The Romans pledge themselves to make short work both of Master and disciples if there be any resistance. In any case the Priests and Ancients are resolved that His disciples must be made prisoners with their Master, and reserved for heavy chastisement. Unhappy men! They *devise vain things. There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord* (Prov. xxi.).

The undertaking then is made to appear so difficult, and the chances that Jesus will make His escape so great, that though the Priests have got together a large number of servants and followers, armed with clubs, and equipped with lanterns and torches, and though they have also at their command the body of police known as the Temple guard, yet all this does not suffice. They must have help from the hated Romans; and by representing the great importance of the enterprise, and the exceedingly dangerous power and influence of Jesus the Nazarene, and the great probability of a seditious rising of the multitudes now gathered in Jerusalem, they secure the services of a Roman cohort.<sup>1</sup>

Some judicious commentators think that the cohort mentioned by St. John would probably not consist of less than five hundred or six hundred men. To us it may seem incredible that such a force should be set in motion, to secure one prisoner. But we must remember that word of wisdom already quoted: *Wickedness is fearful*. The Jewish Rulers are strained to the highest pitch, and are in a fever of malicious desire to see Jesus dead, and in extreme terror that He will escape.

They know, moreover, how much the people are devoted

<sup>1</sup> "*Cohors ergo et Tribunus*" (St. John xviii. 12). Some writers, however, think that these words do not necessarily mean a Roman cohort; though the names, Cohort and Tribune, ordinarily belong to the Roman army.

to Him, and how easily they may be moved to rise up on His behalf.

D. The question occurs, why they have put off His capture to such a late hour of the night?

They are not losing time willingly. It was already night when Judas came to the Palace of the Priests with the news that the convenient time is come. Then the Chief Priests have to despatch messengers to the other Priests, to the Ancients, to the Scribes and Pharisees, in order to gather together as large a body of servants and retainers as possible. After this, from their palace on Mount Sion to the Temple area and the Roman barracks, they have a walk of half an hour. Arrived at the Prætorium, they have to spend time in persuading the incredulous and scornful Romans that there is a necessity for calling out the Roman Guards. The necessary permission is perchance not easily obtained at this time of the night. Despite, therefore, all their eager haste, the silent hours are passing rapidly, and the midnight is drawing near before all their preparations are ready. The hour, as well as the place, has been selected by God's providence. *According to Thy ordinance*, O God, this holy night is going on.

E. It is the opinion of some holy writers that the Incarnation took place at midnight. A tradition to this effect may have been known to them; or they may have based their opinion on the words of Wisdom applied by Holy Church to the Divine Infant: *While all things were in quiet silence, and the night was in the midst of her course, Thy Almighty Word leaped down from Heaven from Thy royal Throne* (Wisdom xviii.). It is also thought that at midnight Jesus was born. At the same hallowed hour it is convenient that He should give Himself into the hands of His enemies.

F. We may be sure that the Rulers do not wish for any useless delay. No doubt they are well content that the people should be sunk in deep sleep when they set out to arrest Jesus: for, as we remember, the Evangelists record how in their Council held two days ago, in the court of

Caiphas, while decreeing to put Jesus to death, they said expressly: *Not on the festival-day, lest perhaps there should be a tumult among the people.*

But meanwhile, the traitor, their captain, is continually repeating to them the admonition given to himself. *That which (you do) do it quickly.* He knows the habits of Jesus well. If they make not haste, He will cross Mount Olivet to Bethany, and the work of capturing Him will become immeasurably more difficult, if not impossible. Doubtless, as the Garden is so close at hand, he has his scouts watching, who tell him that no party of twelve men have as yet left Gethsemani to cross the hill. He may even know that eight of them are still sleeping by the roadside near the bridge.

All the while he is walking *through hard ways.* In bitter vexation he is again gnashing his teeth to find that his new masters are paying a much larger bribe to induce the Roman captain to undertake this most unwelcome and degrading duty, than the wretched price so grudgingly promised, and not yet paid to him, for his great services.

What wonder that the Holy Spirit tells us that men engaged in such unholy work as this, if they go out of this world unrepentant, spend their eternity in that hopeless moan: *We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction: and have walked through hard ways. We fools! We fools! The serpent deceived me!*

## SCENE VI.

### THE GARDEN.

#### STATION I.

*And He cometh the third time, and saith to them, Sleep ye now, and take your rest. It is enough: the hour is come; behold, the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners (St. Mark xiv. 41).*

A. *He cometh a third time.*

“Yes, three times, and seven times, and seventy times

seven times, and countless times beyond, compassionate Lord Jesus, Thou hast come to our souls, looking to see if there be some fruit on the barren tree, and then, at the prayers of Thy Blessed Mother and Thy saints, who are only echoing the pleading of Thy own Heart, Thou hast gone away to wait once more for a better time." *We know that Thou art a gracious and merciful God, patient and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil* (Jonas iv.).

B. *He saith to them, Sleep ye now, and take your rest. It is enough.*

Commentators differ in their interpretation of these words.

1. Some think that when our Lord comes, His coming wakes the Apostles, and that thereupon He bids them sleep on, and take more rest; and waits by their side, Himself watching and praying, till the soldiers are near, and that then He says, *It is enough*, and with these words awakes them thoroughly.

2. But perhaps a more probable interpretation is, that when our Saviour arrives the third time, the Apostles have been waked up by the noise of the soldiers, who are beginning to march out from the Beautiful Gate, which is within bow-shot of the place where they have been sleeping.

The eight others who were left near the bridge, a little way to the south, have also, no doubt, heard the tumult, and seen the glare of torches on the hill, and are running in terror to the Garden, to seek protection at the side of their Master.

In this hour then Jesus says to the three, with such a holy irony as might come from His meek and tender Heart, *Sleep now, and take your rest.* That is, now, if you have heart to sleep, and courage to sleep, if you can sleep, and will sleep, you can take your rest. But immediately, dropping all irony, He adds, *It is enough.* You have slept enough, now you must rouse yourselves. *Sleep is now at an end. The hour is come.*

C. We must not fail to fix well in our remembrance how gracious all the time, and how patient He is. He does not say one word to upbraid them. He might have reminded them of the prophecy: *I looked for one that would grieve together with Me, but there was none; and for one that would comfort Me, and there was none* (Psalm lxxviii.). But His most compassionate Heart knows that already they are very sad: and *the bruised reed He (never) will break* (Isaias xlii.).

*He knoweth our frame, He remembereth that we are dust* (Psalm cii.). St. Ignatius lays it down as a certain rule, that when we are trying earnestly to be faithful to our Lord, rough and discouraging words never come from Him to our souls, but from the father of lies.

D. *The hour is come: behold, the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

What here seems to affect most the tender and sensitive Heart of our Saviour is, not what He is going to suffer from the soldiers and servants, but that He *shall be betrayed*.

“*Attendite.*” Once again, dwell a little on that sentence, which His prophet spoke for Him. *If My enemy had reviled Me, I would verily have borne with it. But thou, a man of one mind with Me, My friend and My familiar, who didst take sweet meats together with Me: in the house of God we walked with consent* (Psalm liv.).

How much more terrible to the Heart of our Lord a traitor is than an open enemy, who has never been a friend and a familiar!

*We have all been on the footing of friends, because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you* (St. John xv.). *The uncertain and hidden things of Thy wisdom, Lord Jesus, Thou hast made manifest to me* (Psalm l.). We have been admitted to the Table of our Lord to eat of the sweet meats with Him. Nay, much more than that. We have been allowed to become one with Him, by taking His Flesh to be our meat indeed,

and His Blood to be our drink indeed. Oh, how content the blessed souls in Purgatory are to prolong their time of contrition, for having betrayed here on earth the Lord Jesus, so *gracious* a God, so *merciful*, so *patient*, of so *much compassion*, and so *easy to forgive evil*.

*E. The hour is come : behold, the Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of sinners.*

*The hour is come.* When does that hour now come, when Jesus is betrayed into the hands of sinners? Alas! when does it not come? May it not come at any hour between the rising of the sun and the going down thereof, and again from the sunset to the dawn? For when is there an hour that the priest at the altar is not working the stupendous miracle of transubstantiation? When is there an hour when men, women, and children may not approach in crowds to receive as their food the true Body of Christ Jesus, and His Sacred Blood and His Soul and His Divinity? *Sumunt boni, sumunt mali.*

“May the Sacred Heart of our Lord cast more and more of His burning fire on this earth, that we may all be moved to make reparation for all the outrages offered to our hidden God.”

## STATION II.

*Rise, let us go : behold, he is at hand who will betray Me*  
(St. Matt. xxvi. 46).

*A. Rise, let us go.*

Till now, then, the disciples have been sitting: He has been standing.

*I am in the midst of you,* He said this evening, *as He that serveth.* So is it still. We are the masters. Our Lord Jesus waits on us, and is our servant.

We are created to serve the Lord, but in good truth, as His devout disciple has said, He serves us much more than we serve Him.

“O Jesus! O Son of Mary! O serving Man! O lowly

Servant of men! draw our hearts to the omnipotent weakness and lowliness of Thy goodness!"

B. *Behold, he is at hand who will betray Me.*

*He who will betray Me.* What a position! Man seeks for distinction and eminence. Mark how in the mind of our Lord, *he who will betray Me* stands prominent and foremost among thousands. The chosen Apostle, now degraded and outcast—*he who will betray Me.*

We are taught that certain sacraments imprint a character, a mark, a sign, which death does not efface, which all the fire of Hell does not burn out, which remains resplendent in Heaven throughout eternity. Any one who bears this mark, this badge, this character, if he dies a sinner, will throughout eternity be pointed out as one who betrayed Jesus.

C. *He is at hand.* By this time, we may suppose, the eight who had remained near the torrent have joined our Lord, and all the eleven stand gazing in great fear at the steep heights opposite, and so close to them, where the soldiers and the armed crowd are passing quickly through the gate, with lamps and torches in unnecessary abundance added to the moonlight.

D. *He is at hand.* The disciples are silent, utterly paralysed, their eyes fixed on the great crowd, and the glare of the torches rapidly drawing near. We are told that animals at night, when they hear the roar of the lion prowling, become motionless through fear, and cannot fly. But the suspense is very short. The traitor is at hand.

E. Yet let us not forget how easily our Lord could pass unseen with His disciples through the very midst of the armed multitude had it pleased Him to do so. *He is offered,* He is made prisoner, solely and entirely *because He willed it.*

## SCENE VII.

## THE MARCH TO GETHSEMANI.

*Judas therefore having received a band of soldiers, and from the Chief Priests and the Pharisees servants, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons (St. John xviii.).*

*As He yet spoke, behold Judas, one of the Twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs sent from the Chief Priests and the Ancients of the people (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*And while He was yet speaking, cometh Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the Chief Priests, the Scribes, and the Ancients (St. Mark xiv.).*

*As He was yet speaking, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the Twelve, went before them. (St. Luke xxii.).*

If we read attentively these different narratives, we gather these details.

1. That the *Chief Priests*, the *Ancients*, the *Pharisees*, and the *Scribes*, are all taking part in the war against the Lord, and against His Christ.

2. St. John, writing later than the other Evangelists, states a fact omitted by them, that in addition to the servants furnished by the Priests and Pharisees, Judas had received a band of soldiers, *apparently not provided by the Priests*; therefore, not merely the police of the Temple guard, but a cohort of Roman soldiers—a band of soldiers—and, from the *Chief Priests and the Pharisees, servants*.

3. St. John writes that *Judas received* these soldiers. From which we may see that he is taking the lead, that they are put under his orders, that probably he had gone with the Priests and Ancients to ask the Roman authorities for the use of the soldiers, and was himself the spokesman to represent the difficulties of the enterprise, and the necessity for a strong guard.

Some painters represent the traitor as a man more refined in appearance, and better dressed than the other Apostles. He was not a Galilæan fisherman, as most of them were. He was a Jew of Judea, the only one among the Twelve, Judas of Kerioth. His ill-gotten money, perchance, enabled him to have better garments, and more culture, and more comforts than the others had.

A. On this holy night, then, Judas is placed in an unenviable prominence. He is holding a brief, short-lived authority and leadership. Possibly there are among the Priests and Ancients some who are envious of his precedence. In such cases we are often inclined to ask:

*Why doth the way of the wicked prosper? Why is it well with all them that transgress and do wickedly? (Jerem. xii.).* We have the answer in the 72nd Psalm. *When they were lifted up, Thou hast cast them down. How were they brought to desolation? They have suddenly ceased to be they have perished by reason of their iniquity (Psalm lxxii.).*

Each of us here has his short day of power and authority; but in this short day, by the way in which we use our power over our own Creator, we determine whether the long, the never-ending eternity, shall be for us happiness and life everlasting with our God, or slavery everlasting with Lucifer.

4. St. John is also the only Evangelist who mentions that the multitude of servants carried lanterns and torches.

5. Judas, as leader, and knowing the way, walks down the hill in front of the multitude. *Judas, one of the Twelve, went before them.*

6. While the crowd of servants have their clubs and lanterns and torches, the Roman soldiers have their swords, which they will most gladly use if there is any rising of the Jewish people, or any resistance. They had willingly, at Pilate's bidding, mingled the blood of the Galilæans with their sacrifices (St. Luke xiii.); and if there were a prospect of cutting down some of the Jewish multitude, whom they despise, they would perchance be more content than they are now to give up their night's rest to go in pursuit of one foolish impostor from Nazareth.

B. The gate in the Eastern wall, which is nearest to Gethsemani, is the Shusan Gate, or Beautiful Gate, afterwards called Golden Gate. Through this gate, which, as we have seen, is opened during the Paschal solemnity, Judas leads the cohort and the armed multitude. Many of the Chief Priests and Ancients, as we shall afterwards see, are marching with the crowd, directing and urging them forward, and keeping a close eye on the traitor. He leads the way in

front, but close to him are the watchers appointed to see that he does not escape among the trees in the valley.

C. As the armed multitude pass through the Eastern Gate, through which, five days before, our Saviour rode in His humble triumph, the Priests and Ancients have some consolation for the chagrin they endured that day, while compelled to listen to the Hosannas of the people. "We shall soon see whether this time He comes blessed in the name of the Lord. Not many Hosannas will welcome Him to-night."

Under the guidance then of the traitor, who well knows the road, the Roman soldiers, followed by the armed multitude, need not more than a few minutes to march down the steep pathway from the Golden Gate to the Bridge. They cross the torrent and the high-road, and at once they are among the trees at the base of Mount Olivet, and close to the Garden of Gethsemani. The traitor points out the cave belonging to the Blessed Mother where Jesus is to be found. Thither they rapidly bend their steps, and now they have reached the sacred spot.

END OF THE SECOND NIGHT WATCH.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE THIRD NIGHT WATCH.

## SCENE I.

## GETHSEMANI. THE TRAITOR.

## STATION I.

*Judas therefore having received a band of soldiers, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and clubs, lanterns and torches (St. John xviii. ; St. Matt. xxvi.).*

A. "*Attendite et videte.*" Let us stay a little while to contemplate this armed multitude hurrying eagerly to the holy Garden.

*Why, the Holy Spirit asks, why have the people devised vain things, and the princes met together against the Lord and against His Christ? (Psalm ii.).* What can be a more *vain thing*, more useless and superfluous, than this large armed force? If Jesus is willing to deliver Himself up for us, troops are not needed. Abraham had no strong guard when he led Isaac to the mountain of sacrifice. This obedient son went whithersoever his father led. Of the times that are now coming, the happy days of Christ's reign on earth, the Prophet has foretold, that the wolf, the leopard, the calf, the kid, the sheep, shall all be so tame that *a little child shall lead them* (Isaias xi.). Jesus, Who is here to-night, is the source and beginning, the author and the model of all this docility. As His hour is come, and He now wills to deliver Himself up, one little Jewish child would be enough to take Him prisoner and

lead Him as a *sheep to the slaughter*, as a lamb to the shearer.

B. *A great multitude with swords and clubs, lanterns and torches.*

Call to mind how vain and abortive all the plots and plannings of these Rulers and Ancients against Christ have hitherto proved. *There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord* (Prov. xxi.).

They resolved that they must catch Him in His speech, and they set their best men to do this; but all in vain.

Again, after much deliberation they decreed that He is not to be arrested or slain on the festival-day; and, lo! on the festival-day He shall be arrested and put to death.

Moreover, with all prudence and caution they came to a resolution that nothing must be done that might excite a tumult of the people; and yet, here in the stillness of the midnight, is a tumultuous and disorderly rabble assembled, which will most surely disturb and excite the people if God's providence be not watching over their sleep.

And now, a large force is ready; much money has been paid for their services; the campaign is planned; all the positions are to be occupied where escape is possible; and an abundance of lanterns and torches have been secured by fair means and foul—for the hour is so critical, the danger so great, that they cannot afford to be scrupulous—all these preparations, however, all the plans, all the swords and clubs and lanterns and torches are utterly vain and superfluous. The light of the full moon is ample for all that is wanted.

Indeed, there is light far more than enough for these princes and rulers. For they who are doing evil hate the light, and must hate the light. He whom they are seeking with torches is the *Light of the world*. Little they think of that word which is written: *Darkness shall not be dark to Thee, Lord Jesus, and night shall be light as the day* (Psalm cxxxviii.).

There is no need at all that the soldiers be posted. Not one torch is wanted. For, as we remember, our Lord said a few minutes ago to His disciples: *Rise up, let us go; behold he that will betray Me is at hand.* And here at the gate of the Garden He now stands awaiting the traitor and the multitude; much more desirous of being a prisoner than they are to seize Him; and saying, to His Father, *My Heart is ready, O God, My Heart is ready.*

## STATION II.

*Jesus therefore knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth* (St. John xviii. 4)

A. From the stone on which the three Apostles had been sleeping to the gate of the Garden the distance is only a few yards. As He walks thither, and stands expecting His enemies, let us devoutly watch and listen.

His step does not falter now. His limbs are not tottering. From His sacred face the traces of the Agony have passed away. He that gave leave to the storm to disturb His Sacred Soul, has with a secret injunction bidden the winds to be still, and there has come a great tranquillity.

Knowing quite well, as St. John writes, *all things that should come upon Him, He went forth*; tranquil and gracious, and beautiful above the sons of men, as a bridegroom coming out of his bride chamber (Psalm xviii.). St. Jerome and others think that at this moment His Sacred Body appeared more than ordinarily beautiful and majestic.

B. *Jesus therefore went forth.*

When in after-times the Apostles look back upon this holy hour, and remember Him walking forth, full of grace and dignity, do they not say to one another: "Is not this the scene which the Prophet saw in his vision and said: *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 lxiii.). When the three are

telling how haggard, how prostrate, how woe-begone He was during the Agony, the eight are incredulous: for they recollect how He walked forward to the gate *in the greatness of His strength: this Beautiful One in His robe.*

A short hour ago He was coming to Peter for a little comfort and sympathy. Now, when the Prophet asks: Who is this Beautiful One? he gets this answer: *I am a defender to save.* He is going forth now like a giant, glad to run on His way.

C. *Jesus therefore went forth.*

And as they continue afterwards to read the prophetic words: *Why then is Thy apparel red? and Thy garments like theirs that tread in the wine-press?* well they remember the large blood-stains on His dress which they notice to-night; and none but the Blessed Mother can give them any explanation of them. She can point out the solution in the word that follows: *I trod the wine-press alone.*

But, He was not alone, the eight will perhaps say to one another; Peter was with Him, James was with Him, John was with Him. But Simon Peter, with tears falling as he answers, says: I was with Him, true, but no comfort to Him. He came, and came again, and said, *Simon, sleepest thou?* Simon, *watch and pray;* but the prophetic word came true: *I looked for one that would grieve together with Me: but there was none* (Psalm lxxviii.).

D. *Jesus went forth.*

As our Lord walks—the *Beautiful One in His blood-stained robe*, and *in the greatness of His strength*, “*Sursum corda!*” let us try to bring home to ourselves how infinitely beautiful He is in the eyes of His Eternal Father; how ineffably dear He is to His Holy Mother, and how the blessed angels plead for us, saying: O God, *look on the face the beautiful face, of Thy Christ.*

E. And as in contemplation we are often to reflect on ourselves, from the distress and depression of Christ Jesus during His Agony, let us call to mind how thoroughly

prostrate and helpless our souls seem to be when our God hides His face from us in time of desolation ; and yet, if we follow the counsel of the Holy Spirit: *Wait on God with patience, join thyself to God and endure* : how we rise up from our painful prayer wonderfully strengthened, and full of hope !

## STATION III.

*As He was yet speaking, behold, a multitude and he that was called Judas, one of the Twelve, went before them (St. Luke xxii.). And he that betrayed Him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He ; lay hold on Him, and lead Him away carefully (St. Mark xiv.).*

*A. Judas, one of the Twelve, went before them.*

To the Priests and Rulers the traitor pretends that he walks in front merely to act as guide. But he has another secret plan which he does not disclose to them. By hastening on in front, he can reach Jesus and the eleven before the Rulers arrive with their armed men. He can thus appear to have no connection with these enemies. "He has been transacting quite another business. It is a mere chance that he arrives when they are coming." He is one of those described by Ecclesiasticus, who say : *Who seeth me ? Darkness compasseth me about, the walls cover me and no man seeth me.* So long a time he has been with his Master, and yet he knows not that His eye *seeth all things, looking into the hearts of men, into the most hidden parts* (Ecclus. xxiii.).

"Most compassionate Lord Jesus, grant that I be not of those *who love darkness rather than the light* : but glad that *Thou hast proved me and known me : Thou hast known my sitting down and my rising up. Thou hast understood my thoughts afar off. And Thou hast foreseen all my ways. Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit ? or whither shall I flee from Thy face ?*" (Psalm cxxxviii.).

*B. He gave them a sign.*

St. Mark writes : *He had given them a sign.*

So that the sign may have been agreed upon some time before, or at the last moment when they are approaching the Garden. In either case, we can see what a cruel advantage a traitor possesses when he ceases to be a pretended friend, and declares himself an enemy. He can make war as no other enemy can. A holy writer on the Passion has said that as when the terrible Judgment is coming, many signs and forewarnings will prepare for it; so too is it in ordinary wars: men are aware that an enemy is coming; but a traitor gives no sign. The storm bursts without any gathering of clouds to caution men. The traitor kisses and stabs in the same moment. *Joab said to Amasa: God save thee, my brother. And he took Amasa by the chin with his right hand to kiss him. But Amasa did not take notice of the sword which Joab had, and he struck him in the side, and shed out his bowels to the ground; and gave him not a second wound, and he died (2 Kings xx.).* As David afterwards said on his death-bed: *He shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war on his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet.—Let not his hoary head go down to Hell<sup>1</sup> in peace (3 Kings ii.).*

“O most merciful Lord Jesus, Who hast called us to be of Thy household—a *chosen race, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people*—by Thy bitter Passion save us from the sin of treachery against Thee.”

C. *He that betrayed Him—gave them a sign.*

A question occurs: Why was it necessary that Judas should give the sign whereby Jesus is to be recognised? The Priests and Pharisees have often seen Him. But two days ago they held long discussions with Him. What need of a sign?

1. One answer given is that James the brother of John, and cousin of our Lord, bore a strong resemblance to Him, and therefore a mistake is possible.

2. A second answer is drawn from a passage in the works of Origen, where he records that a tradition existed

<sup>1</sup> To Hell—to the grave, to the lower regions.

that Jesus oftentimes changed the appearance of His countenance according to the dispositions of the persons with whom He conversed. This at least is certain, that after His Resurrection His own disciples were sometimes with Him without recognising His features.

3. Then, besides, Judas may have had hopes of securing more money by exaggerating his own importance. He may have urged upon the Priests and Ancients that as Jesus had often before escaped from their hands, and passed away unnoticed, every possible precaution is necessary to secure Him now; and that no one that is not most intimate, can be sure of not being deceived by the changes of His features.

4. Then, moreover, we have to bear in mind that Judas is so much in the possession of Satan, and under his power, that our Lord did not hesitate to say, even at an earlier stage when his wickedness had not reached its present height: *One of you is a devil*. He is following a special inspiration of his master when he resolves upon the plan of delivering over Jesus to death with a kiss.

D. *Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He: lay hold on Him, and lead Him away carefully.*

We have seen in the Gospels, that both before the Pasch, and again during the Supper, *Satan entered into Judas*. With regard to this expression, St. Augustine writes: "Whenever we think or do anything evil, be it little or great, there can be no doubt but that we have the wicked spirit urging us on". But there are degrees in his action against us. Sometimes, as a writer describes him, he is the bird-catcher, arranging the nets, these nets being all those things that gratify the *lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*. Sometimes he works on the imagination, the fancy, the senses, and even is permitted to take possession of the body. At times, as is the case with Judas, his mastery is so complete, that it resembles the power of Divine grace in great saints. St. Paul, for instance, was so subject to God that he could

say, *Christ liveth in me*. And our Saviour in the Cenacle promised that He and His Father would make their abode in the souls of His disciples. Even so, the Holy Ghost describes the present condition of Judas by saying that Satan *entered into him*. No wonder that we find him acting with malice really diabolic; he is hating infinite goodness and charity and compassion *without cause*. It is even thought by some writers that as Satan entered into the body of the serpent in Eve's garden of Paradise to work the fall of Adam, so now in the garden of the second Eve he enters into the body of Judas and takes possession, in order to bring about the death of the second Adam.

#### STATION IV.

*And when he was come, immediately going up to Him, he saith, Hail, Rabbi, and he kissed Him. And Jesus said to him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss? (St. Luke xxii.; St. Matt. xxvi.; St. Mark xiv.).*

I. In the Revelations of St. Bridget we read that Judas was a man of low stature. From the words of St. Peter in the Upper Chamber: *Being hanged, he burst asunder in the midst*, we gather that he was obese and heavy.

II. It is thought by some Biblical students that he did not approach till after Jesus had spoken to the multitude; but against this opinion there seems to be (1) the word of St. Mark, *When he was come, immediately going up, he saith*; and (2) that wish which he is supposed to have had, to arrive before the multitude in order to appear not to belong to the crowd of enemies; and (3) St. Luke's word that he walked in front of the crowd: *He went before them*.

A. *Immediately going up to Him, he saith, Hail, Rabbi, and he kissed Him.*

*"O vos omnes attendite et videte."* O all you who go by the way, stop a little while, and see if there be sorrow like to My sorrow. *Da amantem*, St. Augustine writes: "Give me one that loves, and he will understand". No one that has not learned from the Heart of Jesus to love tenderly, can understand the wound inflicted by that treacherous kiss

from His fallen Apostle. He does not complain of Caiphas, or Pilate, or Herod, or the Priests, as feelingly as He grieves over this treason: *If My enemy had reviled Me, I would indeed have borne it. But thou, a man of one mind, My guide and My familiar* (Psalm liv.).

B. Neither do we find anywhere in Holy Writ any such doom pronounced against Annas, or Pilate, or Herod, as the appalling doom that is to be the outcome of this treacherous kiss; a doom, however, that is no wish of the Heart of Jesus, but only a melancholy prophecy of what the traitor has fixed for himself, and what Jesus his Judge will be obliged to ratify—most unwillingly, for *not from His Heart shall He afflict or cast off the children of men* (Lament. iii.). Of Judas, then, it is written, as we know from St. Peter's word in the Upper Chamber: *Set thou the sinner over him, and may the devil stand at his right hand. When he is judged, may he go out condemned. May there be none to help him, because he remembered not to show mercy, but persecuted the poor man and the beggar, and the broken in heart, to put Him to death* (Psalm cviii.).

*He persecuted the broken in heart.* Yes, because, as St. Peter afterwards tells us, Judas *was the leader of them that apprehended Jesus*. He is guiding and animating all this persecution of the *poor man broken in heart*. As far as depends on him, by this kiss he puts it into the power of the Priests to work their will against Jesus. In this moment, the first part of our Lord's prophecy at Jericho has its fulfilment. *The Son of Man shall be betrayed to the Chief Priests.*

C. *He saith, Hail, Rabbi, and he kissed Him.*

Being low of stature, he cannot kiss Jesus unless Jesus bows down to accept the kiss, and perchance return it with infinite charity and compassion.

We have a proverbial saying that "extremes meet": here we have diabolic malice and the Divine charity of the Heart of Jesus meeting, and united as if for a kiss of peace. When the Son of God became Man, Heaven and

earth met together and were joined. As the Psalmist says: *Mercy and truth have met each other, truth is sprung out of the earth, and justice hath looked down from Heaven* (Psalm lxxxiv.). That was a meeting and a kiss that gave glory to God on high and peace and joy to men; but this sacrilegious kiss, between sin and charity, can it bring joy or triumph to any save to the spirits of darkness, and those who are the children of their father the devil? Yes: peace will come to men, and infinite glory to God from the charity and humility with which Jesus submits to this treacherous kiss.

D. *He kissed Him.*

Some holy writers observe that we have no record of any other man being permitted to kiss the face of Jesus. It is, however, of course assumed that the Ever-Blessed Mother kissed her Divine Child. We read, too, that Magdalen was allowed to kiss His feet. Some writers are of opinion that Judas was only doing what all the Apostles did when they returned to His side after an absence; but others, as has been said, think that this sacrilegious kiss was a special invention of Satan and the traitor, in order that a refinement of torment might thus be added to the persecution of the poor man, the broken in heart.

E. *He kissed Him.*

His *madness is according to the likeness of a serpent, like the deaf asp that stoppeth her ears, which will not hear the voice of the charmers, nor of the wizard that charmeth wisely* (Psalm lvii.).

He will not hear the voice of the charmers—for more than one have laboured to soften him. Our Blessed Lady, we are told, was specially kind and courteous to him; and doubtless, Simon Peter and John the Beloved, and the rest who loved our Lord, when they heard bitter words from the lips of this miserable man, were inspired by their Master to endeavour to soften his hard heart. These were the charmers whose voice he would not hear. Our Lord Himself, ever a *gracious and merciful God, patient and of*

*much compassion, and easy to forgive evil, is the wizard who charmeth wisely : but all in vain.*

“ From the power of the devil, deliver us, Lord Jesus. From anger and hatred, and all ill-will, deliver us, Lord Jesus. From the spirit of covetousness, deliver us, Lord Jesus. Blessed Mother of God, by all the anguish which the kiss of Judas brought to thee, save us from being traitors to thy Divine Son.”

*F. He kissed Him.*

And thus, he has completed his sin. Its beginning was the love of money. In him St. Paul's word is verified to the fullest extent : *The desire of money is the root of all evil.* A writer on the Sacred Passion suggests as an epitaph that might have been written on the unblessed grave of the traitor : *They that will become rich fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition (I Timothy vi.).*

*G. He kissed Him.*

And by this act he becomes entitled to thirty pieces of silver. A few days ago he himself valued the spikenard of Magdalen at three hundred denarii. He now gives up his apostleship, the bishopric that was to come, his companionship with our Lord and our Lady, and, more than that, he gives up the Body and the life-Blood of Jesus, all for thirty pieces of silver. Some who have contemplated the Sacred Passion carefully, observe that Satan offered our Lord the kingdoms of this world, and all their glory, if He would even once bend His knee and adore him. How comes it, then, they ask, that he procures so small a pay for Judas? For doubtless he could have secured for him a larger offer. The answer given is that Judas is already thoroughly the slave of Satan, and slaves do not need to be allured to do service by large bribes. They are commanded, and they obey; and any small wages are sufficient for them.

*H. He saith, Hail, Rabbi, and he kissed Him.*

To His face he speaks these honeyed words. A few minutes ago, behind His back, when he imagined that Jesus heard not, he said, and said again and again, *Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He ; hold Him fast, and lead Him away carefully.* That word, *Hold Him fast*, will be remembered and not forgotten ; chains and cords shall do their work unmercifully to carry out this injunction of the guide and leader.

Oh, how much torment does Judas add to the persecution of *the poor man broken in heart* by that cruel order, *Hold Him fast, lead Him away carefully !*

I. *He saith, Hail, Rabbi, and he kissed Him.*

We must from time to time pause to reflect on ourselves. It will be wise to lay up in our memory the words of Judas in presence of his Master, and his words behind His back : *Hail, Rabbi, and he kissed Him*—this to His face ; *Whomsoever I shall kiss, that is He ; lay hold of Him, and lead Him away carefully*—this behind His back.

“With Thee, Lord Jesus, and in Thy presence, *I will think over all my years, in the bitterness of my soul*, and lament those most miserable moments when before the face of my neighbour I have spoken fair words to him ; but behind his back joined with his cruel enemies and been a leader amongst them. What wilt Thou say to me, Lord Jesus, when Thou comest to judge ? For what I have done to Thy little ones, I have done to Thee.”

J. *Jesus said to him, Friend, wherefore art thou come ?*

Here again, they who think much on the Sacred Passion observe that we do not find it recorded that Jesus ever addressed any other disciple by the sacred name, “Friend”. He did say in the Cenacle to all collectively, *I have called you friends*, but we don't read that He singled out any one, and called him Friend. To Judas alone He says, Friend, and He fully means the word. As far as it rests with Him, Judas was to be His friend, a most intimate friend. But Judas is of a mind widely different. He has counted and calculated, and is ready to give up Jesus entirely and for

ever, and to betray Him to cruel enemies for thirty pieces of silver. *Hold Him fast, and lead Him away carefully.*

“O man! O sinner!” our God says in sorrow, “*My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways* (Isaias lv.). *For My own sake, I love, and must love, the child I created; yet the child I created has not loved Me. I have brought up children and exalted them, but they have despised Me*” (Isaias i.).

K. *Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?*

*I am the truth*, Jesus had said; with Him every word that He utters is truth. If He speaks a kind word, it is spoken with truth and sincerity, and charity ineffable; and therefore when we profess love, it contents Him above measure if our profession is true. If we vow love, a loving obedience or blessed poverty, with desire He desires to find truth and reality in our vow. *An unfaithful and foolish promise*, the Holy Spirit tells us, *displeases Him. It is much better not to vow, than after a vow not to perform the things promised* (Eccles. v.).

The kiss of peace, then, is to Him most sacred, and the kiss of treason anguish beyond measure. He is quite willing and glad to shed His Blood, if we will only give Him true love and friendship. *Give, My son, thy heart to Me* (Prov. xxiii.). In Holy Communion He gives all He has most precious; Himself, His Body, and His Blood; but with yearnings unspeakable He desires that when we approach to receive, we may give Him love for love.

When, therefore, His own disciple betrays with a kiss, and when the Most Holy Sacrament of His Love becomes only a profane mockery, a wound is driven into His Heart more cruel than the nails, or thorns, or the lash inflicted. “If I must be hated, let My overt enemies hate Me, and I can endure it; but let not My own *betray Me with a kiss.*”

L. *He kissed Him.*

And this is the preconcerted signal. Jesus said that

evening in the Supper-Room : *By this shall all men know that you are My disciples if you have love one for another.* In that same hour Judas is giving a very different sign by which men shall know his Master, Jesus of Nazareth. "The Man Whom I shall kiss treacherously is Jesus of Nazareth." That is to say, He is the Christ ; He is God. Were He not the *gracious and merciful God, patient and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil*, man would not be so daring as to kiss Him treacherously. It is on account of "the almighty weakness of His goodness" which so strongly attracts the good, that sinners become so bold. "*Tibi soli peccavi.* I dare not, O my God, treat an earthly king, an earthly master, an earthly friend, or an earthly equal, as I treat Thee."

M. *He kissed Him.*

And this is to be a sure and certain sign. As soon as they see this sign they must lay hands on Him at once and lead Him away carefully. But, all in vain ! As in every other instance, the plots and counsels of men against the Lord are all foolish and vain and void. Judas has given the sign, but no one stirs. No one is taught by it. No one sees Jesus, or knows where He is. Their eyes are held. *There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord* (Prov. xxi.). Judas can will evil, but he has no power to deliver up Jesus. Neither shall any device or contrivance of the Rulers enable them to seize Him.

They shall have the power they wish for, but not through Judas, nor through the Roman cohort ; He shall be delivered up solely because He Himself wills it, and when He wills it, and in the way He wills it.

N. *Friend, wherefore art thou come ?*

We may stay a little while reflecting on ourselves.

Christians sometimes forget the precept of our Lord, *If thou offer thy gift at the altar and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar and go first to be reconciled with thy brother : and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift* (St. Matt.

v.). They come to the altar to receive His Sacred Body without first being properly reconciled with their offended neighbour. In such a case our Lord may well say: *Friend, wherefore art thou come?*

Again, before He gave His Sacred Body to His disciples, He said to them, *You are clean*. If then we approach the Holy Table without cleansing our souls well, He will say to us: *Friend, wherefore art thou come?* Or if we go to the altar on a certain day, merely because others are going, and because we fear to be notorious, and without discerning the Body of the Lord, *touched with sorrow* of Heart He will say: *Friend, wherefore art thou come?*

O. *He saith, Hail, Rabbi, and he kissed Him.*

Let us contemplate our Blessed Lady, who is watching and listening, and with all the intensity of her motherly heart pouring forth a prayer that this one treacherous kiss of Judas may to the end of time be repaired by the tender devotion of innumerable souls to the Sacred Face and to the wounds of her Son.

## SCENE II.

“WHOM SEEK YE?”

### STATION I.

*Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth and said to them: Whom seek ye? They answered, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith to them, I am He. And Judas also who betrayed Him stood with them. As soon therefore as He had said to them, I am He, they went backward and fell to the ground (St. John xviii. 4—6).*

To St. John, who wrote much later than the other Evangelists, to supply details omitted by them, we are indebted for this incident, of which they make no mention.

A. *And Judas who betrayed Him stood with them.*

The design ascribed to him, of passing himself off as innocent and taking his place among the other Apostles, is entirely baffled by this word of our Lord: *Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?* His treason, he sees,

is found out. It is not safe for him to face the anger of the Eleven: *Wickedness is fearful—a troubled conscience always forecasteth grievous things* (Wisdom xvii.). Therefore he falls back among his new friends. He has entirely failed in his undertaking to make known Jesus, but he can still perhaps earn his money by zealously urging them *to lead Him cautiously* and take care that He does not escape. The blindness by which the eyes of the multitude are held, so that they do not recognise Jesus, is one wonder more added to those of the Supper-Room, to shake the unhallowed courage of the traitor.

B. *Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him.*

Yes, knowing all things, and every thought, every word, every act that shall add to His anguish between this moment and the ninth hour to-morrow; knowing all, and accepting from the hand of the Father every detail of His Sacred Passion, He goes forward—*this Beautiful One, in His robe, walking in the greatness of His strength*—the strength of His love, stronger, far stronger than death and than suffering.

St. Jerome and other holy Fathers, as has been said, think that as He walks forward to face the multitude, His beauty and majesty are made more manifest than usual. Let us contemplate Him as He stands alone on the slope, the moonlight and the torches casting their light upon Him, and in full view of all His enemies as they come up from the torrent.

The Psalmist has in our Lord's person described the scene: *Many dogs have encompassed Me: the council of the malignant hath besieged Me* (Psalm xxi.).

If Judas has strongly urged a noiseless advance in order to surprise Jesus, the admonition, like all other plans and devices, is vain.

For they come on tumultuously with noise and clamour. As the Psalmist writes, *They have opened their mouths against Me as a lion ravening and roaring.* But now as they draw near, and all suddenly see Him standing *beautiful in His robe,*

and in the *greatness of His strength* and majesty, every voice is hushed, and there is not an ear in all the multitude that does not hear with astonishment and breathless attention His clear and tranquil voice as He utters the question: *Whom seek ye?* In the front ranks, as we shall see later, stand many of the Chief Priests and Magistrates and Ancients. From them comes the answer: *Jesus of Nazareth.*

C. *Whom seek ye? Jesus of Nazareth.*

Alas! deceptive words! To that question, *Whom seek you?* the very holiest answer: *Jesus of Nazareth.* The Wise Men from the East are seeking Jesus of Nazareth. Disconsolate Magdalen has this very question put to her: *Whom seekest thou?* She too is seeking *Jesus of Nazareth.*

Most lovingly of all the Ever-Blessed Mother with St. Joseph sought Him sorrowing, the same *Jesus of Nazareth.*

*Bene quæritur*, a holy writer observes, *et male quæritur.* We may adapt St. Thomas' words:

Quærent boni, quærent mali,	The good, the bad, both seek, both find,
Sorte tamen inæquali,	But not with outcome of one kind,
Vitæ vel interitus.	In Heaven above, in Hell below
	The good find life, the wicked wo.

His faithful servants seek and find Him, and with Him every good.

His wicked foes, too, seek and find, but in Him their ruin.

*This Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many.*

"Merciful Lord Jesus, wearily Thou hast sought for us. Grant us grace to seek for Thee perseveringly, and to find Thee and Thy salvation."

D. *Jesus saith to them, I am He.*

How earnestly would Holy Mary say, if her voice might be heard: "My children, you have found Him. *Come, let us adore and fall down: and weep before the Lord that made us*" (Psalm xciv.).

E. *I am He.*

"*Non in commotione Dominus*"—There is no anger in

His voice. "Even when Thou judgest, O Lord, *being Master of power, Thou judgest with tranquillity*;" and so now being Master of power, He speaks with great tranquillity and with great compassion. *I have pity on the crowd*, He said formerly. Much more pity has He now on the multitude enslaved by their malicious rulers; and in pity and mercy, in order to check them in their course of wickedness, He causes His word to enter, *more piercing than any two-edged sword, and to reach unto the division of the soul and the spirit; of the joints also and the marrow* (Hebrews iv.).

F. *As soon, therefore, as He had said, I am He, they went backward and fell to the ground.*

Glad indeed had our Saviour been if when they heard Him say, *I am He*, they had of their own will come forward and fallen on their faces to adore Him.

But now against their will they reel backwards and fall to the ground. Yet not in anger has He spoken. The Psalm tells us that when He wills *He looketh on the earth and maketh it tremble* (Psalm ciii.). With one glance, one wish, He could make the earth open under their feet, or *with one rough word destroy them all* (Wisdom xii.). But His wish is not at all *the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live* (Ezech. xxxiii.).

As they lie prostrate and fear-stricken, His compassionate Heart speaks to each of them: *Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways. And why will you die, O house of Israel?*

G. *Jesus said to them, I am He.*

St. Augustine suggests this thought: If in the day of His weakness the voice of the Lord can *break the cedars; yea, break the cedars of Libanus* (Psalm xxviii.), what will be the effect of His words when He shall come in His majesty and give judgment?

*If Thou shalt observe iniquities, Lord Jesus, who shall stand it?*

Quantus tremor est futurus,  
Quando Judex est venturus,  
Cuncta stricte discussurus!

Alas, what fear and trembling then,  
When Jesus comes to judge all men!

“In that day of judgment deliver us, O Lord.”

H. *Jesus said, I am He.*

Many in that crowd had never heard His voice before. His first word to them takes effect : but to us our God has spoken “*multifariam multisque modis*”—at sundry times and in divers manners—I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, and you have not obeyed Me (Jerem. xxxv.).

I. *Jesus said, I am He.*

And to each of us He will say as soon as we die, *I am He*. It was to Me you gave to eat and drink. *I am He* that was hungry, *I am He* Whom you visited, *I am He* Whom you clothed. And His word will then have an effect more overpowering than in the Garden. Oh, how blessed those faithful servants of Jesus who die saying to Him, *Bring my soul out of prison that I may praise Thy name. The just wait for me until Thou reward me* (Psalm cxli.).

J. *Jesus said, I am He.*

“Come to Me, you who labour ; for *I am He* Who can refresh you. Even if the sinner be dead, let him come to Me, for *I am the Resurrection and the Life : I am He* Who can call him from death to life.” When we rebel against suffering, He says most compassionately, “*I am He* that sent it, will you not drink the chalice *with Me*, for I am wounded and bruised for Thee ?”

K. *I am He.*

At Holy Communion some crave inordinately for sensible consolation, and are downcast because they find it not. If our Lord might be heard, He would remind us that the Blessed Eucharist is a remembrance of His Passion. “I that come to you, *I am He* that suffered Agony in the Garden for you ; *I am He* that died on a Cross for you.” You are receiving Jesus Crucified. Must you then abound with comfort and consolation ?

L. *They went backward and fell to the ground.*

*Pierce my flesh with Thy fear, O Lord. The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord. It shall go well with him that feareth the Lord* (Ecclus. i.).

Does this miracle awaken salutary terror in the souls of those lying here on the ground?

Does the courage of the Roman soldiers falter? For men can be brave in battle against their fellow-men, and yet wither away for fear when God shows His power. Do they grow more and more displeased with the unholy work for which their rest is broken? That centurion who is to receive so much grace on the morrow, is he prepared for conversion by the holy fear inspired as he lies on the ground? How many are touched by grace we know not. It is evident that very many remain obdurate. Like Pharaoh, the moment the hand of God ceases to strike, they harden their hearts.

#### STATION II.

*Again therefore He asked them: Whom seek you? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered: I have told you that I am He. If therefore you seek Me, let these go their way. That the word might be fulfilled which He said: Of them whom Thou hast given Me, I have not lost any one (vv. 7—9).*

*A. Again He asked, Whom seek you?*

Are His enemies risen again to their feet when He puts this second question? Or is it perchance the quiet tranquillity with which He speaks that gives back courage to them, and makes them think that the danger is over? It was a saying among the ancients, that nothing dries so quickly as a tear. Fear also passes away quickly when the cause is no longer present. St. James speaks of a man *beholding his own countenance in a glass, and he went away and presently forgot what manner of man he was* (c. i.). Certain it is that impressions are effaced from the mind as quickly as from the sandy shore when the tide comes in. In desolation we forget what we were in consolation. In consolation it is difficult indeed to realise how weak we were in time of temptation. Only those rendered prudent by Divine grace carry out the teaching of Ecclesiasticus:

*Remember poverty in the time of abundance; and the necessities of poverty in the day of riches (c. xviii.).*

B. *They answered, Jesus of Nazareth.*

"*Attendite.*" If these enemies, despite such a check, persevere in seeking Jesus to their own ruin, should we yield to small difficulties, and turn back, and cease to seek for Him, when with Him we find all else? Have we not His sure promise, *Seek, and you shall find?* But as He has given us great strength of will, He requires that we seek with a strong will and persevering importunity.

*The Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence.*

C. *I have told you that I am He.*

The first time this word only scared and terrified and bewildered. We may observe how a word from our Lord produces at different times different effects. Now, apparently, they hear it without terror.

In many different ways our Lord is used to speak. To His servants well disposed His words bring peace and courage and love. To them He says: *I know the thoughts that I think towards you, thoughts of peace, and not of affliction* (Jerem. xxix.). To them His words are: *Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, and called thee by thy name. Thou art Mine* (Isaias xliii.).

"Speak to me, and *correct me*, Lord Jesus, *in mercy* (Psalm cxi.), but *rebuke me not in Thy indignation, nor chastise me in Thy wrath* (Psalm vi.) by being silent to my soul."

D. *If therefore you seek Me, let these go.*

From these words we gather that the preconcerted plan between Judas and the Rulers is to seize the Apostles as well as their Divine Master. *Remember*, our Lord said in the Cenacle, *remember My word that I said to you: If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.* This shall certainly be so to the end of time. True and faithful disciples shall ever share with their Master the enmity of the wicked and of Satan.

Still the hour for this is not yet come. Jesus, according to the plans of the Eternal Father, is to tread the wine-

press alone. *Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now, but thou shalt follow hereafter* (St. John xiii.).

E. This is the third miracle worked by our Lord in the Garden to soften the heart of Judas and His other enemies.

First, Judas gives the sign agreed upon, but in vain. Their eyes are held.

Secondly, He casts them all on the ground.

And now, thirdly, He lays a command on them which takes away from them all power of executing what they have resolved upon, and what they so much desire to do. They are determined to seize the disciples,

But must *let them go*.

F. This incident we must keep well in mind throughout our contemplation of the Sacred Passion: for it brings home to us this most necessary lesson, that even when the prince of darkness and wicked men seem to have all power, yet God is always the Lord of the storm. What truth do we need more often than this, when the enemies of Christ are persecuting His Bride the Church?

*He said the word, and there arose a storm of wind, and the waves thereof were lifted up, they mount up to the heavens, and they go down to the depths:*

*They were troubled, and reeled like a drunken man: and all their wisdom was swallowed up.*

*And they cried to the Lord in their affliction, and He brought them out of their distresses. And He turned the storm into a breeze; and its waves were still; and they rejoiced because they were still; and He brought them to the haven which they wished for.*

*Let the mercies of the Lord give glory to Him, and His wonderful works to the children of men* (Psalm cvi.).

G. *If therefore you seek Me, let these go.*

The Apostles have a work to do for Him on earth. They are to gather in the harvest in gladness for which He has sown in tears. They are to die with Him later, but not now; for they are to be the seed of His future Church. St. Paul quotes the prophetic words of Isaias: *Unless the Lord*

of *Sabaoth* had left us a seed, we had been made as *Sodom*, and we had been like to *Gomorrha* (Romans ix.).

It was commanded in Deuteronomy : *If thou find as thou walkest by the way a bird's nest in a tree, or on the ground, and the dam sitting upon her young or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take her with the young* (Deut. xxii.). They are not to take both the Christ and His Apostles, but must leave a seed.

H. *Thou shalt not take her with the young.*

Words akin to these our Saviour now speaks to the wicked spirits : Me you may seize ; I deliver Myself up to your power. But all My brethren whom you have hitherto enslaved, you shall set free and *let go*. *He shall deliver the poor from the mighty ; the needy that had no helper. He shall save the children of the poor, and shall humble the oppressor.* Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, takes upon Him the iniquities of us all, and goes forth to meet Lucifer, and, by enduring meekly, conquers him : *I broke the jaws of the wicked man, and out of his teeth I took away the prey* (Job xxix.). *He was wounded for our iniquities ; He was bruised for our sins ; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him,* AND BY HIS BRUISES WE ARE HEALED (Isaias liii.).

“ By Thy bitter Passion and Death, Lord Jesus, deliver us from hardness of heart.”

Eia Mater, fons amoris,	Holy Mother, fount of love,
Me sentire vim doloris,	Send me sorrow from above,
Fac, ut tecum lugeam.	Make me mourn and weep with thee.

I. *That the word might be fulfilled which He said : Of them whom Thou hast given Me, I have not lost any one.*

In His parting prayer, after instituting and offering the Holy Sacrifice, He had said : *Those whom Thou gavest Me, have I kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition.* Our Lord may lose His disciples in more ways than one. If they should be slain, He would lose them. If they withdraw from Him and cease to follow Him, without, however, turning against Him, He loses them as chosen disciples. If they fall away by great sin, and persevere in

sin, as Judas has done, and become sons of perdition, then He loses them entirely and for ever.

When we hear the words spoken in the Cenacle: *I have not lost any one but the son of perdition*, we naturally interpret that our Blessed Lord is speaking of losing disciples through their apostasy; but here St. John tells us that He also intended to express that none of His Apostles would be taken from Him by force.

Some of the holy Fathers, however, think it probable that He foresees that if seized and tortured while their faith is in its present weak state, they would yield to persecution and fall away from Him, and so be lost in the worst sense.

J. *Of them whom Thou hast given Me, I have not lost any one.*

Secure indeed, and most blessed is he *who dwelleth in the aid of the Most High*, and shall abide under the protection of our Lord Jesus. For He is *the strong man armed, who keepeth his court, and those things are in peace which he possesseth* (St. Luke xi.). For never can there come a stronger than He to wrest them from Him.

“Guard us, O Lord, as the apple of Thine eye. Guard us from our own inconstancy, for we are prone to evil.”

K. *Of those whom Thou hast given Me, I have not lost any one.*

Parents and those in authority may occasion the loss of those under their charge by over severity, or over indulgence; by want of watchfulness, by not correcting.

Again, we may lose good and true friends, whom God has given to us, by an outburst of temper: *He that upbraideth his friend, breaketh friendship* (Ecclus. xxii.); or again, by ingratitude, or by abusing their trust.

If we have lost friends, what have we done to regain them? *Although thou hast drawn a sword at a friend, despair not, for there may be a returning* (Ecclus. xxii.).

If we have occasioned the loss of any souls committed to us, what have we done to win them back? It will be

a grievous weight upon our conscience at death if we have lost those whom God gave to us, and done nothing to repair the loss.

## SCENE III.

## MALCHUS.

## STATION I.

*Then they came up, and laid hands on Jesus and held Him.*

*And they that were about Him, seeing what would follow, said to Him : Lord, shall we strike with the sword ?*

*And one of them struck the servant of the High Priest, and cut off his right ear.*

*Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it, and struck the servant of the High Priest, and cut off his right ear.*

*And the name of the servant was Malchus. And Jesus answering said, Suffer ye thus far (St. Matt. xxvi. ; St. Luke xxii. ; St. John xviii.).*

A. The order of these details seems to be :

1. Some of the servants who are with the Priests and Ancients in front of the soldiers come forward and lay hands on Jesus. It is even probable that some of the Priests themselves rush forward to seize Him.

2. The Apostles, who are close to Him, make resistance and say : *Lord, shall we strike with the sword ?*

3. Without waiting for His answer, Peter draws his sword, and aims a heavy blow at Malchus.

4. Thereupon our Saviour says calmly, but as one having power and authority : *Suffer ye thus far.*

B. *Suffer ye thus far.* Some commentators understand these words as addressed to Peter and the disciples, enjoining abstention from all violence. But others are of opinion, and this opinion seems more probable, that our Lord is speaking with authority to the Rulers and their servants, and bidding them for the present to unhand Him, as He has not yet given them permission for His capture. He wishes to use His hands in healing Malchus, and He

wishes also, in His infinite compassion, to open the blinded eyes of the multitude, by showing them that they cannot have any power over Him but what He gives them.

1. Some students of the Holy Scriptures raise the question whether St. Peter had a sword. They think it unlikely that he had, and conjecture that he wounded Malchus with one of the large sacrificial knives used in the immolation of the Lamb. But there does not seem to be any good reason why we should not adhere to the more obvious sense of the Gospel narrative. Our Blessed Saviour says, *He that hath not, let him sell his coat, and buy a sword.* The disciples take His words literally, and answer, *Lord, behold here are two swords.* And He said to them, *It is enough.* It is not anything surprising, that two swords are found in the house of the owner of the large and well-appointed guest-chamber. Neither is it surprising that St. Peter, who believes that danger is near, and who is resolved to die with his Master, girds himself with one of the swords.

St. John, who is supplying details accurately, writes: *Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it.* St. Matthew's words are equally clear: *One of them, stretching forth his hand, drew out his sword.* St. John afterwards tells us that our Lord said to him: *Put up thy sword into the scabbard.*<sup>1</sup>

2. St. John, who wrote long after the others, is the only one who gives the name of St. Peter: the other Evangelists use words such as these: *One of them struck the servant.* When they wrote, Malchus and his friends might possibly have sought to be revenged, had they known who struck the blow. When St. John wrote, St. Peter was out of their reach, and Malchus may have been converted to Christianity.

3. Some of the holy Fathers are of opinion that St. Peter, when he struck the blow, fully intended to kill the servant who dared to lay hands on his Divine Master, and they ask the question whether by this act he incurred the guilt of mortal sin.

St. Augustine thinks that he sinned grievously. St. Chrysostom, St. Leo, Venerable Bede and others think not; as he knew how Phineas had been commended for striking a death-blow. They therefore commend his zeal in striking, and his humility and obedience in putting up his sword.

4. Why did not the soldiers strike down St. Peter with their swords? From the context it seems to be clear that the Priests and Pharisees and their servants were to the front, and the soldiers in the background, to be used when needed. It is quite probable, as has been said, that some of the infuriated Priests were themselves among the first to lay hands on Jesus.

Then why did not the servants use their clubs to avenge

<sup>1</sup> The Greek word *μάχαιραν*, however, used here and in the other passages, does not help us much to determine the sense. At different times it seems to have been used for a sacrificial knife, or a dagger, or the short, curved sword.

Malchus? Doubtless they would have done so had not they been overawed by our Saviour's command: "*Sinite modo*"—*Suffer ye thus far*. Speaking calmly, but with authority, He makes them understand that they need not retaliate, that no harm is to come from the blow.

Some interpreters are of opinion that the servants had already bound Him when He said these words: *Suffer ye thus far*, and that His meaning was, "Suffer Malchus to come to Me," or, "Suffer Me to stretch out My hand to him".

According to the interpretation which we are following, our Lord for the moment forbids all violence, and also forbids them to lay hands on Him till He gives permission.

### C. *Simon Peter struck the servant of the High Priest.*

If St. Peter does sin through over zeal, consider how often, how very often, we sin through want of zeal in God's honour and our neighbour's salvation.

Catholics are sometimes afraid to observe the precept of abstinence lest men should notice them; afraid to approach Holy Communion because others are not going, and they will be considered singular; afraid to check discourses about things of which St. Paul writes: *Let them not be so much as mentioned among you, as becometh saints*. So, too, when an absent man is assailed by a venomous tongue simply because he is absent, and therefore powerless to defend himself, we might often silence the calumniator or detractor by a word or a frown; but we dare not. We fear men more than God; we forget the word that our Blessed Saviour spoke: *Every one that shall confess Me before men, I will confess him before My Father Who is in Heaven. But he that shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father Who is in Heaven* (St. Matt. x.).

Again, what more prolific source of evils in the Church of Christ than a want of zeal in those who hold authority either in domestic life or public life, and suffer abuses to multiply unchecked? The Prophet of the Lord, speaking as if he were an enemy, says: *All ye beasts of the field, come to devour; all ye beasts of the forest. The watchmen are all blind, they are all ignorant; dumb dogs not able to bark: seeing vain things, sleeping and loving dreams* (Isaias lvi.).

## STATION II.

*Jesus therefore said to Peter : Put up thy sword into the scabbard : the chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it ? (St. John xviii.).*

*All that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Think-est thou that I cannot ask My Father and He will give Me presently more than twelve legions of angels ? How then shall the Scripture be fulfilled, that so it must be done ? (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*A. How then shall the Scripture be fulfilled, that so it must be done ?*

Our Lord is referring to the prophecies concerning Him ; such, for instance, as Jeremias (Lament. iv.) : *The breath of our mouth, Christ the Lord, is taken in our sins.* (Isaias liii.) : *He shall be led as a sheep to the slaughter ;* and the prophetic word of Zachary, to which He alluded in the Cenacle : *Strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered* (c. xiii.).

*B. How shall the Scriptures be fulfilled ?*

We must not think that, in order that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, the enemies of Christ are in any way forced or urged or moved from above to do as they did. The Prophets under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit merely wrote down what God's omniscience sees being done by men, long before their life on earth is begun. Our Lord now quotes these prophecies in order to strengthen the weak faith of His disciples, by reminding them that all that is about to happen has been foreknown and permitted.

*C. Put up thy sword.*

He gives St. Peter, His future Vicar, a very careful instruction to guide him and many others in time to come ; and while He speaks, the Priests and Ancients, though full of a mad desire to seize Him, yet, on account of His command, stand powerless, and offer no interruption. He teaches St. Peter and all of us that *He is offered because He*

willed it. By Thy ordinance, O Lord, the day goeth on, for all things serve Thee (Psalm cxviii.). And according to Thy ordinance and Thy good pleasure every incident of this holy night is regulated. *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father? But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore, for you are better than many sparrows.* The Holy Church, His Bride, shall have a better protection than the sword can give. *I will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, nor by horses, nor by horsemen (Osee i.).*

D. *Put up thy sword.*

*For I desire not the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: return ye and live.* While St. Peter is carried away by his impetuous zeal, our Blessed Saviour is saying to the hearts of His enemies: *My people, what have I done to thee? Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will I not forget thee (Isaias xlix.).*

E. *Put up thy sword. The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?*

“Attendite.” Let us learn from the Blessed Mother of God to lay up this word in our hearts, that it may be a holy waking thought for every morning of our lives. How sacred each day will become if as we wake we can say from our heart: *The chalice which our Father in Heaven has mingled for me to-day, and given to me, shall I not drink it?*

And what thought can arm us against the terrors of death so well as this: It is the chalice which my Father has mingled for me?

F. *The chalice which My Father hath given Me.*

But some one might answer: I can accept what God sends; but I cannot submit to the injustice of men.

Contemplate then our Lord: and mark what men are doing to Him; yet He calls it all *the chalice which My Father hath given Me.*

For His Passion, as has been already said, was planned by the wicked spirits in Hell; and afterwards, their plan was, under their inspiration, adopted by the princes of the people in Jerusalem. But all these plans are, to use our human language, revised with infinite care by the Providence of God, which watches every hair of our heads. Devils and men are allowed to execute just so much of their designs as fits in with the loving, merciful decrees of our Father in Heaven. Satan and his dupes on earth would like to seize the Apostles, and riddle them, and sift them, and *examine them by outrages and tortures* (Wisdom ii.); but they cannot have their will; they must *let them go*. Later, they will want to break the bones of the Lamb of God, but this *desire of the sinners shall perish*. *You shall not break a bone of Him*.

“Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us *now* and at *the hour of our death*: that *now* we may carefully lay up in our hearts this word: *The chalice which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?* and that when the bitterness of death is come, we may find strength and nourishment and life for our poor souls in this word that *proceedeth from the mouth of thy Son, our God*.”

God gave life; God takes it away; and He knows how to mingle sweetness with the bitterness of the chalice. *Blessed be the name of the Lord* (Job i.).

G. *Put up thy sword. For all that take the sword shall perish with the sword.*

Out of love for our self-preservation then, if not for any higher motive, we must abstain from anger and violence and revenge. If we strike with the sword, the sword will strike us. If we curse another, a curse will come upon us. For *with the same measure that you mete withal, it shall be measured to you again*. Far more wise are they who follow faithfully our Lord's teaching. *Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that calumniate you* (St. Luke vi.).

On such men nothing but blessings, the very choicest blessings, come down from Heaven.

H. *Thinkest thou that I cannot ask My Father and He will give Me presently more than twelve legions of angels?*

“*Attendite.*” Let us for a little while contemplate the docility and singular obedience of the holy angels, who stand with *the high praises of God in their mouth and two-edged swords in their hands* (Psalm cxlix.). Their most humble reverence for their King, their fidelity, their gratitude, their burning love, are beyond our thoughts. Nothing but *high praises* of their Lord are in their hearts; and one of them could, if God so willed, sweep away all the armies of Rome, as easily as the host of Sennacherib; but their one desire is that the will of their God be done on earth and in Heaven. They look on, therefore, in humble meekness, while a few foolish and senseless men heap outrages and torture on their beloved Lord. They are the same blessed spirits whom St. John in after-days saw *fall down on their faces and adore God, saying, Amen. Benediction and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving, honour and power and strength to our God, for ever and ever; Amen.* They are of the same mind now. But they endure all in most obedient inactivity; each of them saying with their King: O holy God, *not as I will, but as Thou.* And as they contemplate with reverential love the beauty of our Saviour’s charity, they can only repeat the word: *Who is like our God?*

I. *More than twelve legions of angels.*

And we must not forget how in our days also these blessed spirits look on full of a holy envy at us who have in this world the monopoly, the sole right, of doing God’s work for Him here. Gladly indeed would they, if they might, nurse the sick for Jesus Christ, and teach His little ones; but *God hath given this earth to men*, that they may earn an abundant outpouring of His love throughout eternity, by being good to Him in the person of His little ones during their short day of privilege here.

J. *More than twelve legions of angels.*

How safely may we, when in trouble, commit our cause to our God. For which of the two is better, to trust with Simon Peter to our poor sword, or to God's twelve legions of angels? And then, again, what are all the blessed angels, when compared to the infinite power and greatness of Him Who stands here in presence of these misguided men? If with the breath of His mouth He can lay them in the dust, does He need help from the host of Heaven?

*For great power always belonged to Thee alone, and who shall resist the strength of Thy arm? For the whole world, of angels and men, before Thee is as the least grain of the balance, and as a drop of the morning dew that falleth down upon the earth (Wisdom xi.).*

### STATION III.

*And when He had touched his ear, He healed him*  
(St. Luke xxii. 51).

A. *Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you.* This is what our Saviour taught; and what He teaches He always does. Malchus had been foremost to lay hands on Him, and, to please his miserable masters, was ready for every kind of outrage. Jesus has no outrages for him, nor *one rough word*.

We see Malchus sometimes painted as lying on the ground, felled by the heavy blow struck by St. Peter. If so, he is doubtless full of terror that each moment may bring a second and a fatal blow. But his cries and his moaning from the pain of his wound, attract no pity from his fellows. His one friend is Christ Jesus, Whom he was eager to drag to death.

“O Jesus, meek of Heart, give us grace to be meek and charitable with Thee.”

Contemplate our Blessed Saviour stooping down to Malchus; calling him by his name, speaking kind words to win his misguided heart.

Oh, let us look and do according to the pattern. *Love*

*your enemies, do good to them who hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that calumniate you.*

**B. He healed him.**

Here is another great grace offered to Judas and to the poor sinners present; another great miracle added to those already worked, to bring light to their minds and to soften their hearts. Let us reflect on our own case. We say daily to our God: "Thou watchest over me with incomparable love, every moment bestowing favours and preserving me from evil". Therefore does Holy Church continually inculcate that "ever where and at all times" we ought to be giving thanks. Yet how often, oh, far too often, we remain unmoved, as these unhappy men do, by the mercy and charity of our God!

C. It would be a great consolation if we knew that Malchus, when the sacred hand touched his wound and restored his ear to its place, was at the same time touched in his heart by grace, as the leper and the blind were when Jesus healed them. On this point we have no certain information. Some writers represent him as remaining hardened and taking active part in the outrages heaped on our Saviour; others assume that grace healed his soul when the hand of our Lord healed his wounded head.

"O merciful Jesus, fulfil Thy promise in our regard: *I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh*" (Ezech. xi.).

**D. When He had touched his ear.**

Observe how completely our Lord seems to human eyes to be at the mercy of His enemies when He is stooping down in the midst of them to heal Malchus, but no one can lay hands on Him, or strike, because He has not yet given the permission. He is quite safe, for *Thy power is at hand when Thou wilt* (Wisdom xii.).

## STATION IV.

*And Jesus said to the Chief Priests and Magistrates of the Temple, and the Ancients that were come unto Him: Are you come out as it were against a thief with swords and clubs? When I was daily with you in the Temple you did not stretch forth your hands against Me (vv. 52, 53).*

*A. Are you come out as it were against a thief?*

We must contemplate the calm tranquillity of our Lord in the midst of these furious enemies. They are on fire with impatience to seize Him, and He is more desirous than they are that all may be done quickly. But He will leave nothing untried that may induce them not to harden their hearts; and they are compelled to listen to His expostulations. They cannot touch Him, or arrest His speech.

*B. Jesus said to the Chief Priests and Magistrates of the Temple, and the Ancients that were come unto Him.*

From these words, then, we know that many of the leading men are there to take part in His arrest. They do not leave this work to underlings. They have had a busy day, and yet they grudge not the hours of their rest. *We have wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways.*

“Ever-Blessed Mother of God, pray for us sinners, that we may have grace to learn from the enemies of thy Son and the children of this world to work for Him with some share of the energy which they put forth against Him.”

*C. When I was daily with you in the Temple.*

*I sat daily with you in the Temple, St. Matthew writes.* Never does our Blessed Saviour cease during His Passion to reason with these men who are duped by the father of lies. He is now trying to induce them to reflect, and to ask themselves how it is that though they were in the past so enraged against Him, yet they never were able to seize Him when He sat with them daily in the Temple teaching the people. *With desolation is all the land made*

*desolate, because there is none that considereth in the heart.* He is striving to get them to *consider in their hearts* how utterly unprotected, to all appearance, He was in those days, and how completely at their mercy; and to ask themselves what it was that then held them back from satisfying their vengeance. What but His holy will? His hour was not then come.

D. While we contemplate, we must store up in our minds and hearts all the different words and works by which our Lord here in the Garden labours to move the free-will of the sinner, that he may be converted and live. *What is it that hath been done? The same that shall be done* (Eccles i.). He is now the same Jesus as then; and says now, to the poor sinner deceived by Satan, as earnestly as then: *Why will you die?*

*He dealeth patiently for your sake, not willing that any should perish, but that all should return to penance* (2 St. Peter iii.).

E. *When I was daily with you in the Temple.*

If sin were not poisoning the minds and hardening the hearts of these miserable men, our Saviour's word would bring home to them how blameless and inoffensive His life has been; how He has spent His days in teaching the people and healing all manner of diseases, and how *He did all things well* (St. Mark vii.). But now these things *are hidden from thy eyes* (St. Luke xix.). *They understood not concerning the loaves, for their heart was blinded* (St. Mark vi.).

“O Lord Jesus, by Thy bitter Passion, have mercy on us. Chastise us not in Thy wrath. Do not say to Thy Angel of Justice: *Blind the heart of this people, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes*” (Isaias vi.).

F. *Are you come out as it were against a thief, with swords and clubs?*

*Thou, O Lord, shall laugh at them* (Psalm lviii.). “When you were just now lying on the ground, what did swords and clubs avail you?”

“ *When I was daily with you, was I a thief and a robber? or if I was then evil, had you in those days no swords and clubs to use against Me?* ” He is labouring to induce them to *consider in their hearts*, that they may be converted and live. And greatly is the Heart of our Lord now consoled, when we *consider in our hearts* and meditate on Gospel truths, and remember the Sacred Passion, and contemplate all the scenes of His sorrow.

G. *But that the Scriptures may be fulfilled* (St. Mark xiv.).

Ever mindful of those around Him, our Lord again recalls to His disciples and the Priests and the Ancients that all that is going on has been foreknown and foretold. This is one more effort to rescue His enemies from the power of Satan, and to lessen the effect of temptation on the souls of His disciples.

#### STATION V.

*But this is your hour, and the power of darkness* (v. 53).

A. *This is your hour.*

Now at length, *touched with sorrow of Heart inwardly*, after having *shown many good works* to His people, after multiplying signs and wonders, after reproving, entreating, and rebuking *in season and out of season, in all patience*, He at last says to the determined sinner: “ Be it done to thee according to thy will ”. *This is your hour.*

With grief of heart the good father at last yields to the foolish and perverse and ungrateful and unfilial wish of his prodigal son, and gives him *the portion that falleth to him.*

Man does indeed *an evil and a bitter thing*, when at last by a terrible perseverance he constrains his Creator to abandon him. *My people heard not My voice, and Israel hearkened not to Me. So I let them go according to the desires of their heart: they shall walk in their own inventions* (Psalm lxxx.). Thrice blessed those two disciples, who, on the contrary, constrained their Lord to stay with them.

When at length, after resisting our madness with infinite mercy, our most compassionate Father ceases to speak, and

lets us go according to the desires of our hearts, it is *a day of wrath, a day of tribulation and distress, a day of calamity and misery, a day of darkness and obscurity, a day of clouds and whirlwinds* (Sophonias i.).

And yet it is actually in this terrible time that men say: *I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me?* (Ecclus. v.). Oh, how evil and bitter a thing it is to sin and to prosper!

*Why then, holy Job asks, why then are the wicked advanced and strengthened with riches? Their cattle have conceived and failed not; their cow has calved and is not deprived of her fruit. Their little ones go out like a flock, and their children dance and play. They take the timbrel and the harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth.* His answer to this question is short, but terrible beyond all thought. *In a moment they go down to Hell* (Job xxi.).

*The Most High, the Holy Ghost tells us, is a patient rewarder.* He has the long eternity before Him, and He need not be in a hurry to reward us here. Still less need He be quick to chastise the poor sinner here. *Thou judgest with tranquillity, O God.* For there is no cause for haste. Eternity, never-ending eternity, is long enough to reward Thy faithful servants and, alas! long enough to chastise the impenitent.

B. *This is your hour, and the power of darkness.*

We must notice how *self* and *darkness* go together. When man seems to be reigning and ruling, in reality the prince of darkness is reigning and ruling. Man can never be lord and master. He is created to serve. If he will not serve God, he must of necessity be the slave of Lucifer. Just as every Church that will not obey Christ's Vicar, necessarily becomes the slave of the tyrannical State, so it is with each man's soul; we never can have independence. Either we willingly submit to our God, or we become the most wretched slaves of the prince of darkness.

C. *This is your hour.*

"Oh, say this word, Lord Jesus, in a merciful sense to

us. Remind us that it is still our time of privilege in this world, in which, by serving Thy little ones, we can serve Thee, and every hour win more and more of Thy everlasting gratitude and love."

*D. And the power of darkness.*

Jesus is the light of the world. Sin brings darkness. Our Lord was weeping near this spot a few days ago, and saying to Jerusalem: *If thou hadst known the things that are for thy peace. But now they are hidden from thy eyes.* Culpable blindness is, in this world, one of the worst chastisements of sin. When the eyes of the body are blind, men long for their cure. When the soul is blind, men have no desire for a cure. They have no sense of their misery. *Thou sayest, I am rich and made wealthy, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and blind and naked. I counsel thee, anoint thy eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see (Apoc. iii.).*

*E. It is your hour, and the power of darkness.*

By this word, our Blessed Saviour at length gives final permission to men, and to the wicked spirits, to do their will, so far as their will fits in with the designs of His Eternal Father. *They will do out of malice, what the Eternal Father out of infinite charity and mercy permits to be done.*

From this moment to the hour of the evening sacrifice to-morrow, when all shall be consummated, men have permission to afflict His Sacred Body; and the spirits of darkness have permission to afflict His Most Holy Soul.

He has said, and it shall be done. Therefore has He given a charge to His holy angels, only so far to restrain the action of men and the princes of darkness, that they shall not impede the designs of His Eternal Father.

F. Before He speaks this word, *It is your hour*, He has carried out in practice His own teaching. For He is the wise King *about to go to make war against another king, who first sits down to think whether He is able to meet him, who with twenty thousand cometh against Him.*

Most prudently has He calculated. In the Garden,

He gave leave to all the human passions of fear and sadness and weariness to help the adversary by setting every obstacle before Him. He has well counted the cost, and now, *knowing all things that (shall) come upon Him*—every hair of His Head that shall be plucked out; every part of His Body that shall be bruised; every outrage that shall afflict His Heart—He says to the Eternal Father: *My heart is ready*: and to men with all meekness and charity: *This is your hour*.

G. *This is your hour, and the power of darkness.*

More than once Jesus had spoken of this coming hour. *I must work the works of Him that sent Me while it is day. The night cometh when no man can work* (St. John ix.).

*If a man walk in the day he stumbleth not. But if he walk in the night he stumbleth* (St. John xi.).

*Thou hast appointed darkness, Lord Jesus; and it is night. In it shall the beasts of the woods go abroad, the young lions roaring after their prey* (Psalm ciii.). Men, no longer human, men made like to senseless beasts, are around Him; *they have looked and stared upon Me* (Psalm xxi.).

## SCENE IV.

### THE SEIZURE.

#### STATION I.

*Then the disciples all leaving Him, fled* (St. Matt. xxvi. 56).

A. All understood, both His disciples and His enemies, that our Lord's last word, *This is your hour*, is a permission to men to execute their wicked wish, as if He had said: *Be it done according to your will*. By this word He accepts all those details which He specified a week ago, near Jericho. *Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and (1) the Son of Man shall be betrayed to the Chief Priests and Scribes; (2) and they shall condemn Him to death; and (3) Shall deliver Him to the Gentiles; (4) to be mocked, (5) and scourged, (6) and crucified* (St. Matt. xx.).

B. The Apostles are taken unprepared. They enter into the temptation, and scandal begins. They have been forewarned more than once; but they have not *considered in their heart* the warning words of the Lord their Master. They have not watched and prayed that they may not enter into temptation. Simon Peter had never realised, never believed, that anything like this could come to his revered Master.

*Fear is nothing else but a yielding up of the succours from thought.* We may say the same of some other temptations. Unless men say most heartily and most earnestly, O God, *lead us not into temptation*, when they come into presence of temptation they imagine themselves to be spell-bound; they seem unable to help themselves with reasoning. Drunkards believe themselves to be very firmly resolved until temptation is present. Then they become all at once utterly reckless. Hence the reason why our spiritual guides insist on the absolute necessity of flying from certain temptations. They know well that in these cases: *He that loveth danger shall perish in it* (Ecclus. iii.).

C. *Then the disciples all leaving Him, fled.*

Had the Apostles listened more to our Lord's warning that *the flesh is weak*, and prayed very earnestly, what would have been the result? Clearly it is our Lord's will that they be set free. But this He would have managed for them without their having afterwards the life-long sorrow that they had wounded His Heart by leaving Him and fleeing away.

Yet, the boundless charity of the Heart of Jesus turns even their infirmity unto good. He uses the sins and weaknesses of men as the manure which is to help the fig-tree to bear better fruit. *O felix culpa!* the blessed angels will say in after-years, as they contemplate the contrition of Peter and the rest.

D. *The disciples fled.*

Still we may in contemplation dwell on the extreme pain which Jesus feels when His Apostles leave Him and flee

away. For we must bear in mind what has been already said, that as when eyesight is very perfect it can perceive objects much more clearly than weak eyes can, so the perfect Heart of our Saviour is sensitive in a far higher degree than all other human hearts. Kindness and unkindness affect Him as they affect no other. Loving as He does, He desires with infinite desire a return of true and tender love. And therefore it is quite possible that the desertion of His Apostles is a more painful wound than any inflicted on Him by the armed multitude. It was He who said that word: *The enemies of a man are they of his household.* They can inflict the severest wounds.

E. *The disciples leaving Him, fled.*

Stay a little while longer, and dwell on the loneliness of our Lord. We can gather from the Psalms how much His most affectionate Heart felt the desire to be consoled by sympathy from His own. *I looked on the right hand and beheld, and there was no one that would know Me. There is no one that hath regard to My Soul (Psalm cxli.). I am become as a man without help. Thou hast put away My acquaintance far from Me. They have set Me an abomination to themselves (Psalm lxxxvii.). And they that were near Me stood afar off (Psalm xxxvii.).*

We may go in spirit to console our Lord in those sanctuaries where He lives in His tabernacle solitary and neglected.

F. Many poor sufferers complain that they are left in loneliness. Our Blessed Lord takes good care to share this kind of sorrow with men, as well as every other. How ready His Heart is to welcome the lonely if they will only come to Him. *Come to Me, I will refresh you.* In the Cenacle He said: *You shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone. And yet, I am not alone, for My Father is with Me.* How truly also can every sufferer now say: *I am not alone; for Jesus is with me. I am with Him in tribulation.*

G. *I am not alone, for My Father is with Me.* We may add as a comfort to our Blessed Lord: Thou art not alone,

Lord Jesus, for Thy ever Blessed Mother is also with Thee, The Lord is with thee, Mary; and thou art with thy Lord in His loneliness.

## STATION II.

*Then the band (Cohort) and the Tribune, and the servants of the Jews took Jesus, and bound Him (St. John xviii. 12).*

### A. *The Cohort and the Tribune.*

The other Evangelists are more brief: *They holding Jesus led Him to Caiphas. Apprehending Him they led Him.* St. John, writing later, adds details by which we see that the soldiers, under the orders of their commanding officer, have joined the servants, and take part in the arrest of Jesus. We have seen that the Priests and Ancients and their servants have hitherto been in front. The soldiers are in reserve ready to quell any resistance, or any rising of the people. Now when it is clear that there is to be no resistance, why are the soldiers brought into action? A very probable answer is found in the text already cited: *Wickedness is fearful; a troubled conscience always forecasteth grievous things (Wisdom xvii.).*

The Priests and Ancients have been burning with a feverish impatience to lay hands on Jesus, but He has been talking to them with a leisurely calmness and tranquillity, and all the while they have felt their utter powerlessness against Him; they see that He is too strong for them. In that they are right. They must then have help from the well-trained Roman troops. Here they are wrong. The Roman troops are as helpless as themselves till Jesus says the word: *It is your hour.* When once He has spoken the word, "Let it be done according to your wicked will," the most feeble and decrepit of the Ancients is equal to the task of holding Him and leading Him.

### *The band (Cohort) and the Tribune.*

These are names used in the Roman armies,<sup>1</sup> and therefore

<sup>1</sup>St. Mark xv. 16. They called together for the crowning of thorns the whole *Cohort*. These are Pilate's Roman guard.

some commentators take for granted that the Jewish Rulers in their excessive and feverish eagerness had thought it necessary to secure the help of the Roman guard. Others, however, and among them one of the latest writers on the Sacred Passion, bring reasons to prove that the Romans took no part in this midnight arrest; and that the only soldiers present were the Temple guard under their officers or magistrates. They quote an example from the Book of the Maccabees in which the word Cohort is applied to the troops of Judas Maccabeus; and from St. Luke's narrative (xxii. 52), it is clear that the *magistrates of the Temple* were present. The Greek text calls them *στρατηγούς*, a word which shows that they were military officers who commanded the Temple guard, a body of police which the Romans still permitted the Jewish Rulers to maintain.

On the other hand, in favour of the opinion which we are following that the troops present were the Roman guard, it may be said (1) that we do not anywhere find the magistrates of the Temple called Tribunes (*χιλιάρχους*). (2) If we read attentively the Latin and the Greek text of St. John xviii. 3, it seems clear that Judas received from the Chief Priests a body of servants, but not from them the soldiers. A literal translation of the Greek and Latin text would be: *Having received the Cohort* (according to one Greek text, *the whole Cohort*), *and from the Chief Priests servants*, etc. (3) From Ludolf the Carthusian's book on the Passion, we might be inclined to think that he had a copy of the New Testament more explicit in this passage than our own Vulgate, for he quotes the words in this way: *With the Cohort received from the Governor*.

*B. Then the Cohort and the Tribune, and the servants of the High Priest took Jesus, and bound Him.*

St. Ignatius directs us (1) to look at the persons; or (2) to listen to their words; or (3) to attend to their actions; (4) sometimes, to note how much and in how many ways our Lord is suffering; (5) sometimes, how entirely voluntary His suffering is; how easily He can deliver Himself but will not; (6) and sometimes to dwell on the thought that He is suffering all this for me.

Afterwards, whichever of these six points we may make use of, we are to reflect on ourselves and try to gain some practical fruit.

As soon, then, as Jesus speaks the word: *This is your hour*, (1) His Apostles yield to fear and flee away. The prophecy is fulfilled: *Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered* (Zach. xiii.). (2) His enemies understand that they can now lay hands on Him.

If we try to listen with our ears, we hear no word from

our Lord. For the present He has ceased to speak. The Prophet foretold this to us. He is made prisoner *because He willed it, 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 liii.). More than once we have considered that inspired word: *Thou, being Master of power, judgest with tranquillity, and with great favour disposest of us; for Thy power is at hand when Thou wilt* (Wisdom xii.). With His enemies the case is quite the opposite. They feel no security in their power; and therefore there is no tranquillity, all is hurry and tumult. *The mouth of the wicked, and the mouth of the deceitful man is opened against Me. They have spoken against Me with deceitful tongues; and they have compassed Me about with words of hatred* (Psalm cviii.).

C. *They have encompassed Me about with words of hatred.*

From the Priests and Scribes, and Pharisees above all, there is an uncontrolled outburst of *words of hatred*. To realise its character, we must call to mind the inspired word: *By the enmity of the devil death came into the world, AND THEY FOLLOW HIM THAT ARE OF HIS SIDE.* Death in all its terrible forms, murders, assassinations, wholesale slaughter in battle, and executions on the scaffold: all these and much more are the outcome of diabolic envy; the envy which the fallen angels bear to man, God's image, created to fill the place left vacant by their sin. But this envy of the devils against the first Adam and the first Eve is feeble child's play compared with the rage and malice that has kept *Hell below in an uproar* (Isaias xiv.) since Lucifer first set his evil eye on God made Man, and on the woman who is the Mother of God.

This being so, these most unhappy Priests and Scribes, as, beyond all others they are Satan's dupes and his creatures, his children, his ministers, his apostles, and entirely of *his side*, so do *they follow him* and are full of his spirit. *You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you will do* (St. John viii.). *Envy* we may

emphatically call the diabolic passion; and in them the spirits of darkness are inflaming this diabolic passion to its very utmost height.

Add to this, that *revenge* is now working alongside with *envy* in their breasts. For it is only the third day since Jesus publicly, before the people, in the Temple area, uttered so solemnly, so forcibly, so repeatedly, and with such overwhelming authority, wo upon wo against them: *Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.*

Now their turn is come: "Wo to you, Jesus of Nazareth!" they are shrieking. "Wo to you, seducer, blasphemer, son of Beelzebub! Now shall we know who is the hypocrite, and the whited sepulchre, fair to the eye, and full of filth within!"

"From anger, hatred, and all ill-will, O loving Heart of Jesus, deliver us."

D. Then again, *the mouth of the wicked is opened against Me*, because there is a wild shout of triumph. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem, King *Herod was troubled*; and, it is written, *all Jerusalem with him*. *Why all Jerusalem?* Because men who will not serve their Creator, are ever most eager to become the grovelling slaves of a fellow-man, and of Lucifer. So is it now. These Rulers of the people are, as we have seen, slaves of Lucifer; and they in turn have their slaves, their servants who are bound to earn their poor wages by exulting when their masters exult. Now, therefore, these miserable servants are crowding round; bringing up the torches to cast a bright light on the Prisoner; and, as if they had won a glorious battle, and come upon a rich spoil, they are uproariously passing from mouth to mouth the cry: "They have found Him! They have seized Him! The false Prophet is captured." *All they that saw Me have laughed Me to scorn; they have spoken with their lips, and wagged their heads* (Psalm xxi.).

Poor wretched dupes of Satan! Children of God changed into slaves of Lucifer, and of Lucifer's slaves!

How well would it fare with them if they would change their allegiance and become servants of Jesus of Nazareth.

“From the snares of the devil deliver us, Lord Jesus; and give us grace to give good heed to Thy holy Word. *How can you believe who receive glory one from another; and the glory which is from God alone you do not seek*” (St. John v.).

*E. They took Jesus and bound Him.*

And now, besides listening with our ears, we must watch with our eyes. For though these Priests and Pharisees, when there is question of God's service, say and *do not*; yet now, when yielding their service to their father, the devil, they both say and do; and their cruel deeds go beyond their words of hatred.

*Do it quickly; lead Him carefully*, is the cry. And these slavish servants abound in zeal, and multiply cords and ropes, and chains and fetters. But the Roman soldiers scorn these Jews and their handiwork; and thrust them aside to employ their own more trained and skilful appliances that shall render escape impossible.

*F. They bound Him.*

“*Attendite.*” By the aid of the bright moonlight and the flaming torches, contemplate for a little while, before the tumultuous march begins, our Saviour's probable condition as far as we can gather it from those who have diligently collected details from ancient writers and from the revelations left on record by holy persons. An iron collar with two strong chains attached to it is made fast round His neck. His arms are tightly pinioned behind His back; and His wrists bound together by cords so tightly knotted that His Sacred Blood is flowing from the wounds they cause. His legs, too, are fastened together with shackles intended to render all movement painful and escape impossible. Round His Body, again, ropes are drawn so straitly that His breathing is much impeded. *Wickedness*, we have seen, *is fearful*; and fear is cruel. The terror lest Jesus once again escape is so great that

cords and ropes and chains and fetters are all applied with most useless and superfluous cruelty.

Then, moreover, as His injunction to His own disciples in the past was: *Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes*, we may doubtless take for granted that He practises to-night what He taught, and comes barefoot to begin His last journey. In the Cenacle all wore sandals, to remind them that they are God's people, free from bondage. But now Jesus is not a free Man. He is become a bondsman, the *useless*, the *stubborn* slave that *will not be corrected by words* (Prov. xxix.); *the outcast of the people* (Psalm xxi.).

G. *They took Jesus and bound Him.*

"*Attendite.*" Let us try, as St. Ignatius advises us, to measure, as best we can, how much our Lord is suffering. The second stage of His Sacred Passion is begun. During the night-watch just ended, unseen spirits were afflicting His Soul. Now men, under the guidance of these same spirits, are continuing their work. The knotted cords are eating into His sacred flesh; the ropes are galling His swollen limbs. With labour He is drawing His breath. The heavy boots of the soldiers are crushing His bare feet. But this is only a part. For they are *doing* as well as *saying*. Those who study diligently all that has been written on the Passion remind us that we are not to think when we read of blows and buffets and outrages, that what is written once, only happened once. From the revelations vouchsafed to our Lord's devout servants, it is clear that it was not only on the *Via Dolorosa* that our Lord fell to the ground, and not alone in the servants' hall was He bruised and spit upon. We may be quite sure that the clubs and staves and iron gauntlets, and the ropes which are in the Garden in such plenty, are used incessantly to multiply heavy blows and bruises, for *by His bruises we are healed*.

To some holy souls it has been revealed how many times our Saviour fell to the ground during His Sacred Passion, either from heavy blows, or through stumbling.

What wonder if they whom He cast a short while ago on the ground, now take their revenge and fell Him with heavy blows to the earth ?

We read, too, that the Priests were the first to spit on His sacred face. This form of insult we may be sure is not forgotten in the Garden.

*Væ victis* : wo to the conquered ! wo to the fallen ! was in those days an approved maxim. But never till now has there been a fallen man, a conquered man, so given up to outrage and ignominy and cruelty as Jesus of Nazareth is, Who yet is neither fallen nor conquered. For by His meekness He shall conquer.

H. *The Cohort and the Tribune and the servants took Jesus and bound Him.*

He is bound, but not conquered ; He is conquering, and shall possess the land.

Many are the blows that fall upon Him. Very many the words of hatred poured out against Him. Yet, His Heart does not say that there is one too many. " Yet, more, O Lord, yet more ! " was the response of St. Francis Xavier when our Lord showed him what he was to endure. With desire infinitely more intense the Heart of Jesus is crying out : " Yet more, My Father, yet more ! " And oh, *do it quickly, do it quickly*, is His humble prayer to men : for *how am I straitened till it be accomplished ?* As we have seen, He had no mind at all to redeem the world, as He might do, through the infinite value of one precious tear dropping from the eye of the Son of God made Man. As He is betraying Himself and all His Divine rights in order to be able to suffer, so, too, He is robbing His sufferings of their right to have an infinite value, and has resolved, as if their worth were only measurable, that there shall be a proportion both in quantity and variety between His sufferings and the multiplied sins of men.

I. *They bound Him.*

As we contemplate Him bound and chained, let us remind ourselves once again that He is the Mediator, the

go-between. He has to reconcile God with man, and man with God. One part of His work is easy, that is, to move the Eternal Father to forgive man. For, the instant the Father looks on the face of His Christ, out of the infinite reverence due to God made Man, and to Man Who is God, His Father is perfectly appeased, and angry no more with the fallen race.

But now Christ Jesus the Mediator must turn to men and incline their hearts to turn back to their Father Who is in Heaven. Here begins His labour beyond measure. Now must He exert His infinite Wisdom and His inventive Charity, that into the Watches of the Passion, by night and by day, there may be crowded sorrow so multiplied, so varied, so heart-rending, that one or other of the many scenes shall have power to draw every kind of sinner back to his God.

This night and the coming morrow are most carefully planned so that the proud man shall witness doings and sufferings that shall wean him from all love of pride.

The sensual sinner, too, must be so scared and terrified by what he sees that he shall renounce the lust of the flesh.

The lover of rule shall find himself in presence of spectacles that shall render the pride of life odious to him, and poverty most dear.

The hopeless sinner shall see sights and hear words that shall bring back the life of hope, and the warmth of love to his frozen heart.

All poor sinners, moreover, shall with their eyes and ears take in the great truth, that they must strike their breasts and do penance.

This is the cause why men and the powers of darkness are permitted to have their hour. Our Saviour Jesus wishes to present Himself to us as the Man of Sorrows in so many shapes of woe and suffering, that no heart shall be able to harden itself against the melting influence of His charity. *There is no one that can hide himself from His heat* (Psalm xviii.).

It is not therefore the anger of God that requires all the blood, all the wounds, all the sorrows of the Sacred Passion. It is the charity of God that multiplies shapes and forms of sorrow in order that one or the other of them may succeed in moving men to understand how evil and how bitter a thing it was when they abandoned the infinite Goodness of their God, and went over as traitors to Lucifer.

J. *The Cohort, the Tribune, and the servants of the Jews took Jesus.*

These men we see with our eyes. But we must pass beyond what the eye can see or the ear hear. First, then, with the eye and ear of our faith we must see and hear *the spirits of wickedness* who are working against Jesus, far more busily than men are.

Then, secondly, we must penetrate into the mind and Heart of our adorable Saviour Himself, and contemplate how with an energy and activity beyond that of His restless enemies, He is praying and desiring with desires insatiable, that wounds and sorrows be multiplied in His Soul, and on His Body, till every sin that man has committed, or shall commit, is not only cancelled and outweighed and blotted out, but quite forgotten in the beauty and glory of the graces and virtues that abound in the redeemed soul which sin once disfigured; and till, moreover, for every want and weakness and disease of man's soul medicinal grace is provided in profusion; in fact, till redemption is truly and really abundant, passing far beyond a mere reparation of the ruin caused by the Fall. *For not as the offence, so also the gift. For much more the grace of God and the gift, by the grace of one Man Jesus Christ, hath abounded* (Romans v.).

Then lastly we must raise our contemplation to the Eternal Father, Who, yielding to the desires of His Divine Son, mingles the bitter chalice for Him, and lays upon Him the iniquities of us all.

K. *They took Jesus and bound Him.*

And most humbly and lovingly He calls to us, *O all you who pass by, stay a little while and see if there be sorrow like to My sorrow!* But still, forget not, that if My wounds and bruises are many, yet there is not one too many, nor yet enough to satisfy the desire and prayer of My Heart!

*Not too many* to make men see what Lucifer is, and what manner of master he will be to them if they choose to spend their eternity in his prison-house.

*Not too many* to prove to incredulous and despairing men that I love them, and *for My own sake* will forgive their sins.

*Not too many* to wean fallen men and blinded men from the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life.

*Not too many* to move the forgiven sinner still to be a mourner and a penitent for his forgiven sins.

*Not too many* to enkindle in the heart of My servants the fire that is in My own Heart, and which I came to cast upon the earth.

*L. The Cohort and the Tribune and the servants bound Him.*

"This time," they are crying round Him, "this time He shall not escape." And their boast seems to be a truth. This at least is quite true, that this time *He will not* escape. But, that *He shall* not escape, that these knotted cords and ropes shall render escape impossible, this is as far from truth as light from darkness. If in His secret soul He whispered the slightest wish, *Let us break their bonds asunder* (Psalm ii.), the chains and ropes would become like Samson's bonds, *threads of web*. But never will He by word or wish break these bonds. "For purposely and from choice, *I am become as a Man without help* (Psalm lxxxvii.). In days past when they cast hands on Me, I passed through the midst of them. For then My hour was not come." Now His hour is come.

"*Your hour is come,*" He said to them just now, but if it is their hour, still more is it HIS HOUR. Hence St. John afterwards wrote, *Knowing that HIS HOUR was come*. Yes, at last His long-desired hour is come, and He is able

to work out in detail the plan of redemption. In this hour then: *They have set Me as an abomination to themselves; I am delivered up, and I came not forth* (Psalm lxxxvii.). Why this change of plan? why pass through their hands previously and not now? For this reason, among many. That He foresees how, in time to come, men contemplating this scene, His chains, His bonds, His bruises, the drops of sweat gathered on His brow in consequence of the straitened cords—shall be powerfully attracted by *the almighty weakness of His goodness*. In their inmost hearts as they gaze on this prisoner, this bondsman, *this Man without help*, they will say and say most heartily: “Take, O Lord, take all my liberty!” He sees how enemies that one day loved to bind Him, shall be changed into devoted servants, and become so strengthened, so inebriated by His Sacred Passion, and His Blood, that they shall be able to say: *Now, behold, being bound in the Spirit, I go to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there, save that the Holy Ghost in every city witnesseth to me, saying that bands and afflictions wait me in Jerusalem. But I fear none of these things, neither do I count my life more precious than myself* (Acts xx.). Well may our Divine Saviour say: *I have made all things new*, if weak men, by looking at Him in His bonds, can be so filled with the virtue that comes out from Him that for His sake they can welcome chains, *and fear none of these things*.

M. *They took Jesus and bound Him.*

And so when the spirits of wickedness, and men their agents, resolve on binding Jesus, His Heart at once responds: “*Fiat mihi*”—be it done to Me according to your will. For He sees in this hour the long line of poor sinners, whose chains are to be upon them not only during the watches of one night and one day, but throughout the never-ending eternity; and He knows how His chains and bonds will break the everlasting chains of these hapless dupes of Satan; and how they, set free by His bonds, shall spend their eternity, not under the power of the

accursed spirits of darkness, but singing for ever and ever the canticles of gratitude and love: *Thou hast broken my bonds, I will sacrifice to Thee the sacrifice of praise* (Psalm cxv.).

N. *They bound Him.*

He knows too that His faithful, after seeing Him bound, as a man that hath no help, will feel sure, when, on behalf of their persecuted brethren, they are crying out: *Let the groans of the fettered (gemitus compeditorum) come in before Thee*, that He never can forget His suffering little ones: since they know that we have not a High Priest Who cannot have compassion on our infirmities, but one tempted in all things, like as we are (Hebrews iv.).

O. *And they bound Him.*

Yes, and while He stands bound under the walls of His Holy City, in the moonlight, and among the olive-trees, and with the flaming torches waving round Him, and quite alone among His enemies—while they looked and stared upon Me—all this time He has the joy set before Him, which the comforting Angel brought back to His mind, that a long line of men and women, moved by this scene, and by the bonds and chains of His captivity, will not be content to be bound only by His precepts and commandments; but will add on other straiter shackles and more precious bonds, binding them closely to Him, and to His Holy Mother, in voluntary poverty, chastity of choice, and most willing and complete obedience.

*All shall be made new*, and man who heretofore said, *I will not serve*, now glories to style himself: *I, the prisoner of Jesus Christ* (Ephes. iii.).

P. *They took Jesus and bound Him.*

“Alas, my Lord and my God, if Thou art bound, if Thy power is lessened by man's foolish will, so much the worse for me! so much the worse for us all.

“May Thy hands never be bound, Lord Jesus, our Saviour! May Thy enemy and our enemy never be able to say: *I have prevailed against Him!* May Thy Kingdom

come, Lord Jesus! All the days of my life, let not my will but Thine be done, my Lord and my God."

*Let us sing a hymn to the Lord, let us sing a new hymn to our God. O Adonai, Lord, great art Thou, and glorious in Thy power, great in the OMNIPOTENT WEAKNESS OF THY GOODNESS, and no one can overcome Thee (Judith xvi.).*

Q. *They bound Him.*

The Holy Spirit speaks of the *bonds of darkness, the chains of darkness*. We must not forget that we habitually are bound in *bonds of darkness*. Too often are the things hidden from our eyes *that are to our peace*. Even our sins become hidden and we cease to see them. We have need to cry out earnestly: *From my hidden sins cleanse me, O Lord*. Hidden sins are preventing the love of our Lord from growing more rapidly in our soul. For ourselves then, and for our neighbours too, we must often beg heartily that the bonds of our Lord may deliver us from the bonds of darkness.

R. *They bound Him.*

Jesus, when He came as an Infant into this world, had before Him the whole earth; all its cities, all its palaces. The blessed angels could prepare His cradle wherever it pleased Him. Out of all the dwelling-places existing, He selected the stable at Bethlehem with its Crib. Even so has He now chosen this spot, this hour, to stand here alone and friendless, and to be bound here, and chained and beaten and bruised here. For He knows that men will remember this hour and this place, and will look at Him in this condition, and that virtue will go out from Him to them. Therefore does He now stand meek and *dumb as a lamb before his shearer* (Isaias liii.).

S. Holy Mary, Mother of God, in the stable you bound your divine Child in swathing bands. By those bands, and by the cords and chains that bind Him now, obtain grace for us to break loose from the bonds of sin.

Solve vincla reis,  
Profer lumen cæcis.

Break the chains that bind,  
Bring light unto the blind.

## STATION III.

*Then His disciples leaving Him, all fled away*  
(St. Mark xiv. 50).

Whither did the disciples go? Where did they seek a refuge? Tradition agrees with what we should naturally expect from the nature of the ground. Mount Olivet is behind them to the east. Some writers think that they took the road over this hill, in order to hide at Bethany. But is it likely that, eager to escape, they would face a high hill? Then, secondly, the walls of Jerusalem are in front of them to the west, with a very steep pathway to be climbed, and they doubtless believe that the soldiers who came by that road, will return by the same. So that their flight would certainly not be in that direction. Then, on their right hand, the road from Gethsemani to the north, through the Valley of Josaphat, also suddenly becomes very steep. The only level road, then, is the remaining one on the left hand to the south. This one, according to tradition, they chose, and it seems natural that men in a state of terror would do so. Escape would appear to them impossible by any of the other three steep roads. On the south side of the city, the caverns are still shown in which the scared disciples hid themselves. Some of these have recently been purchased by a Religious Order in the hope that they may be made into a holy sanctuary.

*A. The disciples leaving Him, all fled away.*

We may follow them to their hiding-place, to contemplate their condition. Oh, what a night of trouble, of sorrow, of shame, of bewilderment, of remorse it is to them! The little flock is scattered, and left without their Shepherd. Drawn closely to Him by a strong attracting grace, they have remained with Him in His temptations. Seeing His many miracles, they have acquired a supernatural dependence on Him. They have clung to Him, and borne with Him *the burden of the day and the heat*. Now, for the first time since they left all things to follow Him, there is a terrible separation. True, they were without Him on the sea, during the midnight storm; but only for a short time. He soon came back to comfort them. And besides, on that night it was no fault of theirs that He was not with them. They had not fled away to leave Him a prisoner in the hands of His enemies. They went at His bidding into the boat, and very soon they found

Him again. But to-night they have all, by their own choice, fled away from Him and left Him alone among His enemies. Later in life, indeed, they will be able to look back with a calm sorrow and with grateful hearts upon this night; each of them will be able to say: "O Lord Jesus, *it is good for me that Thou hast humbled me. Before I was humbled, I offended* (Psalm cxviii.). In the Cenacle, alas, I said with so much senseless presumption: I am ready to die with Thee, Master. *I never will deny Thee.*" For when Simon Peter said it, *In like manner said they all* (St. Mark xiv.). And they will shed tears of loving contrition when they remember how meekly their Master urged them to pray, and warned them that, though the spirit was willing, the flesh was weak. "Ah me! little I knew how weak I was."

But to-night all is trouble and fear and remorse. Bitter tears are falling from their eyes. They have no mind now to sleep. *Wo, wo is me! the light of our eyes, the comfort of our life, is gone!* "O Master, we having all things together with Thee, *ought not to have let Thee go from us*" (Tobias x.).

And now come back to their minds those terrible words He spoke so solemnly a week ago, which then made no impression: *We go to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed to the Chief Priests and Scribes.*

"We could not believe it. So often have we seen Him deliver Himself out of their hands; we never thought that they could take Him. Wo, wo to us! For if this is come to pass, the rest too will all be true: *They shall condemn Him to death; He shall be crucified.* Oh! better for us to have been drowned that stormy night upon the sea, than live to go through this unhappy night! *Alas, alas! the breath of our mouth, Christ the Lord, is taken, and taken for our sins; to Whom we said so often: Under Thy shadow we shall live*" (Lament. iv.).

Some one, perchance the privileged one, *James, the brother of the Lord*, might suggest: "He gave us a sure promise that He would not leave us orphans". But the

answer comes too quickly : " He has not left us. It is we who have left Him. Oh, most dismal night !

" How can we show ourselves any more in presence of the Blessed Mother ? She will not look at us. She will turn her face away from us ! "

All this while, their Divine Master is most mindful of His promise : *I will not leave you orphans*. He has given His angels a special charge over His little flock, to comfort them and guide them, and not suffer the spirits of wickedness to tempt them beyond their strength. Earnestly His most compassionate Heart has been pleading for them : " Father, forgive them ". And His Most Holy Mother, who is in the closest union with Him, her heart beating with His, she too is, with all the tenderness of the best of mothers, pleading : " Father, forgive them ".

Our Lord has good reason to say to the poor sinner, crushed by the thought of his sin : *Have confidence* (St. John xvi.). *For My thoughts are not your thoughts* (Isaias lv.). It is the father of lies who tells you so urgently that I am the *austere man* who will take vengeance. But, *I know the thoughts that I think towards you : thoughts of peace and not of affliction. You shall pray to Me, and I will hear you. You shall seek Me, and you shall find Me* (Jerem. xxix.). Remember My word : *You now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice* (St. John xvi.).

## SCENE V.

### THE WAY OF CAPTIVITY.

#### STATION I.

*And they brought Jesus to the High Priest* (v. 53).

A. Observe how quickly this story is told. How few words are needed. If we merely read and pass on, how little we know of what happened during the journey. The pages of the Holy Gospel are like the surface of the earth beneath which precious mines lie hid. With great reason does our Blessed Saviour call to us : " *O vos omnes—O you*

who are passing by, stay a little while to watch, to listen, to consider in your heart, and so find out the treasures hidden under the words that you have so often skimmed over, leaving the heavenly riches they contain unnoticed and unheeded”.

“*Attendite.*” Pause on your way; make this a halting-place.

The Priests have no intention of returning to the city by the straight steep path immediately in front of them. They came down by it, but will not go back by it, because they wish to have Jesus in their own keeping for the night; to examine Him at their leisure, and prepare their indictment against Him before they give Him up to the Romans. This they can do better in the palace of the High Priest. Instead, therefore, of directing their march straight up the steep path to the Golden Gate, they choose the road, so tradition tells us, which is now known as *the Road of the Captivity*. It ascends the precipitous side of Mount Moriah, but obliquely, bearing to the south. By this road they climb the hill, but at the same time pass down along the eastern wall to its southern extremity. They are, probably, going back into the city by the way along which our Saviour and His disciples walked from the Cenacle to the Garden. They enter into Jerusalem by a gate at the south-eastern angle, and pass through the lower quarter of the city called Ophel, south of Mount Moriah and the Temple. Here, as has been noted, the poor, who were more favourable to Jesus, had their dwelling-places.

Passing through Ophel, the Priests with the multitude arrive at the flight of steps leading up from the lower city to a gate through which they enter into what we may call the high town on Mount Sion. Going westwards from this gate for about a quarter of a mile, they arrive at the enclosure, within which stands the Palace of the Priests in the south-west corner of the city, about two hundred yards from the Cenacle where our Saviour supped.

Mount Sion is the highest part of the city. David was the first who gained possession of this stronghold, till then occupied by the Jebusites. The name Jerusalem is supposed by *some* writers to be a compound,—formed out of the two names, Jebus and Salem. *David took the castle of Sion; the same is the city of David. And David dwelt in the castle, and called it the city of David* (2 Kings v.). The ground lying northward, a little lower than the fortress of Sion, is sometimes called “the Daughter of Sion”.

Between Mount Sion and Mount Moriah on which the Temple stood, runs a very narrow valley called Tyropœon. A bridge across this narrow valley connected the Temple with Mount Sion.

Some modern students are calling in question all these old traditions here given with regard to the position of Mount Sion. They bring arguments to prove that what is commonly called

Mount Moriah, on the eastern side of the city, was the ancient Sion. But this new theory is not accepted by those who seem best informed on questions of ancient topography; and the arguments adduced in favour of it are not convincing.

Following, then, the commonly received opinion, we can calculate that from Gethsemani to the Palace of the Priests, our Blessed Lord was dragged a distance of about a mile.

The way, as we have seen, for half the distance was up a very steep hill; and we may assume that the road was rough and rugged. It was not a highway for carriages. No carriage could be dragged up that steep. If the Romans have made a road for military purposes, it is a rugged one paved with rough-hewn blocks. If there is no Roman road, but only one of the ordinary bridle-paths, from the nature of the ground it is, most probably, very rocky and covered with loose stones.

### *B. They brought Jesus to the High Priest.*

From what has been said, we can begin to form some notion of the amount of suffering which is hidden under these words: *They brought Jesus to the High Priest.* Very soon after starting they cross the torrent of Cedron. A tradition tells us that there the words of the 109th Psalm have their fulfilment: *He shall drink of the torrent in the way.* In one of the recorded revelations we read that the guards in charge of Him, either because the low and narrow bridge was crowded, or from sheer cruelty, threw Him into the torrent and dragged Him through it. The old tradition harmonises so far with this account, that we find the belief still existing that our Saviour, when He fell, left the impress of His knees on a stone in the brook.

### *C. He shall drink of the torrent in the way.*

From these words, must we conclude that our Saviour did actually drink of the water when He fell in the torrent? or is this only a figurative way of expressing that He was dragged through the water? Of one thing we may be quite sure, that after the profuse sweat of blood in the Garden, and all the extreme exhaustion of the preceding days, His agonising thirst has already set in; and our Blessed Saviour may have thought it well to slake His thirst a little.

If so, we cannot fail to see how dearly bought the

little refreshment is. The Prophet Amos wrote a word that often came true in the history of the Jews, and still more often during the persecutions of the Christian Church. *Your festival days shall be turned into lamentation and mourning* (c. viii.). We see, too, in the lives of the saints how even their repose and refreshment is mingled with mourning. And if we knew all the details of our Lord and our Lady's sojourn on earth, we should surely find that this is much more the case with them. Every hour of their life, even the hours of rest and refreshment, are all coloured by those tints of hallowed sorrow, which from Calvary are now spread over the whole of the redeemed world.

As we have seen, the Ever-Blessed Mother, if not present in body, is, through the light sent down on her from Heaven, witnessing every detail. As, then, kneeling by her side, we see her frame quiver when our Lord falls in the torrent, and how she sinks down prostrate with Him, we need not fear to speak to her, for she knows full well that our need is greater than her Son's; that the real sinners are more to be pitied than He Who only carries our sins and our griefs.

Eia Mater, fons amoris,  
Me sentire vim doloris,  
Fac ut tecum lugeam.

Holy Mother, source of love,  
Send down sorrow from above,  
That my heart may mourn with thee.

"Thy tears of compassion, Holy Mary, are thy Son's true refreshment. Obtain for our hard hearts some little share of thy holy grief."

D. *They brought Jesus to the High Priest.*

*With desolation*, the Prophet of Lamentation writes, *with desolation is all the land made desolate because there is no one that considereth in the heart* (Jerem. xii.).

In contemplation we are endeavouring to *consider in the heart*; to use our reason, and to use, also, our heart, while we watch and listen.

And so, when we have but a few brief words set before us: *They brought Jesus to the High Priest*, we do not con-

fine ourselves to the minimum that lies on the surface, but endeavour, as wisely as we can, to reach to all that must be underlying this upper crust. This is what our masters in spiritual life exhort us to attempt. Helped by grace from above, we use our natural powers, and consider in our hearts the brief story given to us.

In order, then, to consider wisely in our hearts the journey of our Lord, we must help ourselves from other parts of the sacred narrative. From the known we must reach to the unknown.

From those portions, then, of the sacred story where more detail is given us, we see clearly that the men who have Jesus in their power, and that the spirits of wickedness who are guiding and directing, and most of all, that our Blessed Saviour Himself and the Eternal Father, wish an amount of suffering which is simply beyond all our power of measuring, to be crowded into the short watches of this night and of the morrow. We may therefore safely conclude that it is difficult, very difficult, for us to exaggerate the torments inflicted on our Saviour during His progress from Gethsemani to the house of the Priests.

We must not, however, forget that He is desiring every one of these torments, and most heartily welcomes them. So, too, doubtless, does His Blessed Mother heartily desire them as He does, and with Him welcomes them all. For she, too, knows that *the chastisement of our peace is upon Him*.

E. We gather, then, from the revelations vouchsafed to the holy, that during this journey, as on every other, our Saviour fell several times to the ground.

“*Attendite.*” Surely we may well stay a little while to contemplate one at least of these heavy falls.

They are dragging Him hurriedly up the rough and steep path. With His legs shackled and impeded, He cannot be properly said to walk; He is being dragged along, and His bare feet at every step are being bruised and wounded by the stones and the heavy boots of the

soldiers. His arms, tightly bound behind Him, can give Him no protection, no help. Therefore, whenever He falls, His sacred face is grievously bruised and wounded by the stones.

But the stones are not cruel enemies; they do no more than what needs must be. But men, with their hard hearts, add on much that is not necessary.

*Wickedness, we have seen, is fearful, and fear is cruel.* Jesus, their prisoner, is not in terror; but they, His masters, are in grievous terror, for they are excited and strained to the highest pitch by the fear that He will escape. "Make haste, guards; do it quickly; lead Him most carefully," are words frequently repeated with feverish impatience. And while they are in this state of frenzy, a false step, a stumble, still more, a sudden heavy fall to the ground, excites them as if it were an attempt to escape. And at once every stumble and every fall is mercilessly chastised, as if the prisoner had made a desperate attempt to rescue Himself.

They have clubs and staves in abundance, and they use them. The ropes, too, are not only useful to drag Him along, but to chastise Him grievously when He startles them by falling. We learn, too, from some revelations, that whenever He falls, it is by the hair of His Sacred Head that they drag Him to His feet again.

F. If, therefore, we consider in our hearts the wounds and bruises on His bare feet—from the stones, from the kicks, and from the heavy footsteps of the soldiers and servants; then also the bruises and wounds on His Head from the falls, and from the strokes of the ropes and sticks, and from the plucking out of His hair; also the multiplied wounds and bruises in His Body from heavy blows, and the tight cords and chains and ropes, we shall surely see that already even at this early stage of His Passion, the words of the Prophet are having their fulfilment in Him: *The whole head is sick, the whole heart is sad. From the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no soundness therein, wounds and bruises and swelling sores. They are not bound up, nor dressed, nor fomented with oil (Isaias i.).*

And all this while, neither He nor His Blessed Mother wishes for one wound, one bruise the less. For they both have fixed in their hearts the words that strengthened Him in the Garden : *By His bruises we are healed. Because His Soul hath laboured, He shall see and be filled* (Isaias liiii.).

G. "*Attendite.*" Stay yet a little while watching and listening. Listen to the sound of His heavy fall ; listen, too, to the sound of His sacred face striking against the rock. "Oh," He says to us with most humble and most meek Heart, as He lies prostrate, "*Tantus labor, non sit cassus.* Let not My painful journey be all in vain, all without fruit. Stay with Me till virtue goes out from Me to you."

The sick woman said so wisely : *If I shall touch only His garment, I shall be healed* (St. Matt. ix.). Now, then, if I draw near and reverently look upon and touch, not His garment, but His sacred wounds and bruises, surely virtue will come out from Him more abundantly than from His seamless garment. As I see blow after blow bruising His Body, I shall gain strength to bear with some meekness the slight rebukes, the unkind words that have heretofore seemed to me so unbearable.

H. And also, as He falls to the ground, He says to me, and His Blessed Mother joins Him, "*Weep not for Me.* Oh, there are worse falls than Mine. *I saw Satan fall like lightning out of Heaven.* I see My own disciples fall."

Let us think how grievously we have fallen, and think, too, of others who are fallen. If the bruises of His fallen Body heal the wounds of our fallen souls, great indeed will be His consolation.

I. And as we look on with pity and with sadness, while, with many curses and imprecations, they lift Him by the hair of His Head, His most loving Heart is saying to us : "Oh, do not be cruel to the fallen, *lest such a one be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow*" (2 Cor. ii.).

J. And as we see Him rise, and fall, rise again and again fall, and as again we hear the sound of the heavy

blows, and again hear *the words of hatred*, and again see the hair torn from His Sacred Head in the attempt to raise Him, once more He says to us, *Weep not over Me*, nor over My falls, for they are not too many; but weep over My little ones, who renounce Lucifer and go back to him, are forgiven and again go back to him: *The dog is returned to his vomit: the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire* (2 St. Peter ii.).

K. *They brought Jesus to the High Priest.*

Here, too, we observe once more, as they drag Him with noise and tumult through the streets of Ophel, where the poor are living, how the inspired word is again proved to be true: *There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord* (Prov. xxi.). Great care was to be taken, so they decreed, lest there should be a tumult among the people. And lo, in their senseless intoxication, they are doing the things most suited to cause a rising and a tumult, were not God's angels keeping the city.

L. *They brought Jesus to the High Priest.*

While we contemplate our Divine Master thus dragged along by men, alas! we hear the voice of the Holy Spirit saying: *What is it that hath been? the same that shall be. What is it that hath been done? The same that shall be done.* This dismal scene has not passed away. It recurs and is perpetuated. We still possess a terrible power over our God, akin to that permitted on this night to these Jews, and we are men of the same fallen family that they were of. The same unseen spirits of wickedness are always urging us also to outrage Christ Jesus. What is there, St. Augustine asks, that one man does that another man may not do, if not helped by Him by Whom all men are made? We are all, as has been said, so created that none of us can walk alone, or exist by himself. Our God, Who created us, must every instant keep us in being, must hold us together, must ward off annihilation, must maintain life and activity, and help us in every work we do, every word we speak, every thought we think. For *how could anything*

*endure if Thou wouldst not, or be preserved if not called by Thee ? (Wisdom xi.).*

If, then, I lift my hand to feed myself, my Creator is helping me, else I could not do it. If I go upwards towards Heaven, or if I go downwards towards Hell; if I travel in the morning to meet the sunrise; if I walk on the land or sail on the sea, everywhere, O my God, *shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.* So that if I abuse the free-will and the power given to me by the great God Who made me, I not only sin in His presence, under His eye, and before His face—*malum coram te feci*—but I am actually using the help He is giving me against Him. I am using His assistance to offend Him grievously, and to give Him infinite displeasure in the presence of all His enemies.

M. *When thou shalt be old,* Jesus said a few days later to St. Peter, *thou shalt stretch out thy hands, and another shall bind thee and lead thee where thou wouldst not.* With the great God there is no old age, no decrepitude. It is while He is in the full glory of His eternal strength and power and wisdom and holiness, that I, a foolish, senseless sinner, bind Him, and lead Him whither He would not. I make use of His co-operation as if He were my tool, my instrument, to do my own bad will, and to sin against Him.

Hence this most meek and humble expostulation of our Lord addressed to us: *I have not caused thee to serve with oblations, nor wearied thee with incense. But thou hast made Me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied Me with thy iniquities (Isaias xliii.).* But because He is ever a *gracious and merciful God, patient and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil (Jonas iv.),* He adds at once, *I am, I am He that blot out thy iniquities for My own sake, and I will not remember thy sins (Isaias xliii.).* And then with the infinite condescension of a Father Who is both Creator and Redeemer, He adds: *Put Me in remembrance, and let us plead together; tell if thou hast anything to justify thyself (Isaias xliii.).* I will not then spend my time in casting stones at these

stiff-necked Jews, but I will strike my breast as I contemplate, and say again and again in humility, *Peccavi*. "I have sinned, my God, and done evil before Thee. For I have made Thee serve me in my sins, and have wearied Thee with my iniquities."

## STATION II.

*A certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body: and they laid hold on him. But he casting off the linen cloth fled from them naked (vv. 51, 52).*

St. Mark is the only Evangelist who records this incident. If it had no other importance, still it would help us to see how one holy writer is not merely transcribing the Gospel of another. We might be inclined to think that St. Mark's Gospel is merely an abridgment of St. Matthew's. But in his narrative we meet with many words and facts not found elsewhere. St. Peter, who was his guide as he wrote, probably remembered this fact and communicated it to St. Mark.

### A. *They laid hold on him.*

This fact shows that our Blessed Lord's enemies are in a feverish, excited state, and quite ready to seize all His disciples, if so permitted. But every hair of their head is numbered. *If you seek Me, let these go their way.* This is His command; and so it shall be done. They have leave to seize and bind Jesus; but not the disciples, nor any one else; and therefore not this young man. *Thou art my Protector and my Refuge, my God.* For the present, no one is to be struck or wounded by the hand of man on account of Jesus; He must tread the wine-press alone. Later, they shall be bound and bruised and slain for His sake. In this hour those who love Him—and high above all the rest, His Ever-Blessed Mother—shall suffer through compassion. Love shall wound them; but not the hand of His enemies.

### B. *But he casting off the linen cloth fled away naked.*

So we read the holy Patriarch Joseph, when the wicked woman caught the *skirt of his garment, he leaving the garment in her hand, fled, and went out.* Our forefathers had

to leave home and country and friends and possessions to flee away to save their faith. Happy they who at the voice of God, and at the voice of conscience, are ready to cast off all and follow the friendly warning.

“By Thy bitter Passion, O Lord, give strength to those whom Thou art calling into Thy Church, that they may have courage to follow the call; and not go away sad because they have *peace in their possessions.*”

*A certain young man.*

The question is asked who this young man was. Some writers answer that he was St. James, others say St. John. But others again consider these conjectures quite improbable, since St. Mark in the sentence immediately preceding writes, *Then His disciples leaving Him, all fled away.* Moreover, they think it very unlikely any of the Apostles would have come from the Cenacle attired in this way. It seems more probable that he was of those who resided in one of the houses near the Garden, and, being waked from his sleep by the tumult, came out to see what was going on; and having probably known our Lord, Who often resorted to this Garden, was interested in His fate, and followed to see what might happen.

## SCENE VI.

### THE HOUSE OF ANNAS.

*But they holding Jesus, led Him to Caiphias the High Priest, where the Scribes and Ancients were assembled (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*And they brought Jesus to the High Priest; and all the Priests and Scribes and the Ancients assembled together (St. Mark xiv.).*

*And apprehending Him, they led Him to the High Priest's house (St. Luke xxii.).*

*And they led Him away to Annas first, for he was father-in-law to Caiphias, who was the High Priest of that year (St. John xviii.).*

*And they led Him to Annas first.*

In these four narratives we notice that St. Matthew states that they led Him to Caiphias. St. Mark seems to agree with St. Matthew's account. He does not indeed mention Caiphias by name; but when he states that they led Him to the High Priest, and immediately adds that *the Priests and Scribes and*

*Ancients assembled*, we naturally understand that he is speaking of Caiphas, who was the High Priest of that year, at whose house the members of the Sanhedrim met. That they met there we learn from St. Matthew's statement, and also from other passages in the Gospels.

St. Luke's narrative also we naturally, though not necessarily, interpret as meaning that they led Him to Caiphas, the High Priest of the year. St. John, however, writing much later, and with a view to supplying some details omitted by the other Evangelists, and clearing up some obscurities, mentions distinctly the fact passed over in silence by the other three Evangelists, that they led Him first to Annas. He adds in verse 24: *And Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas the High Priest.*

There can be no doubt that St. John's account is the more complete one. All commentators agree that our Saviour was led first to the House of Annas.

But at this point, a question arises with regard to which their opinions differ.

How long did our Lord remain there, and what incidents took place in the house of Annas? Some of the ablest and most esteemed interpreters, such as Father à Lapide, and Father Toletus, S.J., afterwards Cardinal, think that no stay at all was made at the house of Annas; that the Priests and Ancients took Jesus to his door, or sent Him thither closely guarded, while they went to make preparations for their Council, merely in order that Annas, who was the arch-enemy of Jesus, and the guiding spirit of this attack upon Him, might have the satisfaction of seeing Him a prisoner.

These interpreters consider that the words of St. John, *Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas*, need not necessarily be considered to stand exactly in the context to which they belong. Historians sometimes, they say, write parenthetically a sentence of this kind: "I should have mentioned that Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas". They consider that this is St. John's meaning. They quote, too, a passage which we have already considered, namely, the words of St. Matthew and St. Mark, where, after relating that Judas came with the armed multitude, St. Matthew adds: *He that betrayed Him GAVE them a sign*, but St. Mark writes: *He that betrayed Him HAD GIVEN them a sign*. Here, they argue, it is evident that the Evangelists, whether they say *gave* or *had given* (*dedit, dederat, ἔδωκεν, δεδώκει*), do not mean to fix exactly the moment when Judas determined on this signal. So now, too, they say, St. John when he writes, *Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas*, does not intend to fix the moment when Annas sent Him, but only to state the fact that he did send Him. Consequently the words may mean, Annas had already sent Him. So then, according to this view, Annas after just satisfying his eyes by looking at Jesus in chains, sent Him on at once to Caiphas and the members of the Sanhedrim. Cardinal Toletus, who is a careful and very learned commentator, adduces in confirmation

of this opinion the fact that St. Cyril evidently quotes from a copy of the Gospel in which this passage differed from our Vulgate, as the words in question, *Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas*, occur immediately after the words, *They led Him first to Annas*.

These commentators who thus depart from the more obvious and natural interpretation of St. John's narrative, do so because they find it difficult to reconcile what comes after in St. John's account with what is written by the other Evangelists. For St. John seems to record the first denial of St. Peter as taking place in the house of Annas; whereas the other Evangelists represent all the denials as taking place in the house of Caiphas. Add to this, that St. John uses the expression, *The High Priest asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine*. They take for granted that this title, the High Priest, signifies Caiphas, and no other.

Against this interpretation, however, there is this weighty argument, that we are so often told by our guides and masters that St. John is more exact in fixing time than the other Evangelists are; and that he aims more than they do at preserving the right chronological order.

Then with regard to the title, *the High Priest*, it is quite clear that St. John gives the title to others besides Caiphas. Thus, chapter xix. 6, though our English version has these words: *The CHIEF Priests cried, Crucify Him*, whereas it gives to Caiphas the title *HIGH Priest*; yet in the Greek and Latin text we find no such distinction. Caiphas is the Pontifex, *ἀρχιερεύς*; and the Priests who cry "Crucify" are Pontifices, *ἀρχιερείς*. The only difference that St. John makes when he speaks of Caiphas, is that he calls him *the High Priest* (Pontifex, *ἀρχιερεύς*) of that year.

From what we have already seen it is clear that in consequence of the despotic tyranny of Herod the Great, and of the Romans who deposed several High Priests, and would not permit them to hold the office for life as their predecessors had done, there were now in Jerusalem many who kept the title of High Priests.

When for instance St. John writes: *The High Priests and servants cried, Crucify Him*, these words certainly imply that there were present a considerable number of High Priests.

Among these deposed High Priests Annas was eminent; because he had been rightly appointed, and had held the office for some years, and was still considered the High Priest *de jure*. Moreover, he was learned in the law, and a man of authority. When therefore St. John writes that *the High Priest* questions Jesus, there is no reason why we may not suppose that he is speaking of Annas, and not of Caiphas.

With regard to St. Cyril's text of the Holy Gospels, it is enough to say that Holy Church has preferred the Vulgate, which seems to state clearly that our Lord remained some time in the house of Annas.

Then lastly, with regard to the difficulties which arise out of the denials of St. Peter, one suggestion found in the writings of Euthymius, and adopted by some modern commentators, seems to offer a satisfactory solution.

If, according to this suggestion, we suppose that the house or palace of the High Priest was a large building, such as would have befitted the office, before it was degraded by Herod and the Romans, it would not be unnatural to suppose that Caiphas, the High Priest of the year, had his abode either in the centre of the building or in one of the wings; and that Annas, his father-in-law, and the most eminent man among the High Priests, had his home in the other wing of the building, or in some adjacent building within the enclosure. The traditional sites still pointed out for the two houses are near enough to admit of this supposition. If we admit this conjecture, then we shall have *one gateway and one courtyard (atrium) common to both houses.*

Arrived then at the great gateway, we may suppose, a certain portion of the multitude disperse and go home. We are not obliged to believe that the whole Roman cohort of six hundred or a thousand men, and the whole crowd of servants and retainers all make their way into the Palace. As soon, then, as the gates are opened, a sufficient guard of soldiers, doubtless, with the servants, enter, first, into the covered hall wherein was the porter's lodge, and thence pass into the *atrium* or courtyard, which is surrounded by a covered colonnade or corridor, but in the centre is open to the air. Here many of the servants remain; and here St. Peter and the other disciples afterwards join them.

Meanwhile the guards, obeying the orders of Caiphas, or other Priests, lead our Lord to the wing of the building in which Annas lives. It is believed that he is now already far advanced in years, and therefore had not taken part in the proceedings at Gethsemani. He is supposed to have been disturbed from his sleep by the escort who brought Jesus to him, and by Judas, who was anxious to receive his money.

This opinion, which is adopted in the chapter that follows, avoids all difficulties arising out of St. Peter's denials. For, according to this theory, they all take place, as we shall see, in the *atrium* which is common to both the two houses—the house of Annas and the house of Caiphas.

*They led Him away to Annas first.*

From what we have already seen, it is probably about half an hour after midnight when they reach the house of Annas. Consequently, the supposition that the old man had retired to rest and is asleep is not improbable. It is fully supported by a tradition which still survives in Jerusalem, that in order to prevent all possibility of escape, the soldiers and servants in charge bound Jesus tightly to an olive-tree, while they were waiting till the High Priest was ready to receive them. An olive-tree is still pointed out, as growing on the spot where our Lord was then bound.

STATION I.

A. *They led Him to Annas first.*

We may then stay a little while to look at our Blessed Saviour bound by His own people to the olive-tree. It was at this hour of midnight that He broke the bonds of their slavery in Egypt. At this hour, too, the Word became Flesh through love for His people. At this hour He appeared in the midst of His chosen people, as a little Child, in the stable, hoping thus to win their hearts. At this hour He escaped out of the grasp of the tyrant Herod, who was their cruel enemy and murdered their children. Now they have bound Him fast to the tree, and He in His Heart is saying to Sion : *Put Me in remembrance, and let us plead together, tell if thou hast anything to justify thyself* (Isaias xliii.). *Many good works have I showed you from My Father : for which of these works do you bind Me to the olive-tree ?*

B. What a heavenly revenge is the revenge of our Lord Jesus ! Many and many a time—times without number, will He despatch His ministers in the midnight hour, to soothe with the consecrated oil of His olive-tree, the soul of the man that is about to die and go to judgment.

C. And, as He stands bound, He is remembering too, how in the years that are future to men, but present to Him, poor sufferers without number will be lying sleepless in their sick-beds, or in prison, or homeless on the frozen earth ; and His image as He stands there chained, and wounded, and bruised, worn by fatigue and exhaustion, and tormented with excessive thirst, will bring grace and consolation to their midnight sorrows. For His wish is to leave no moment of the night or day without its special balm and oil, which sufferers can draw from the fountains of their Saviour.

Anima Christi, sanctifica me,  
Corpus Christi, salva me,  
Passio Christi, conforta me.

D. "Lord Jesus, bound to the olive-tree, Holy Mary is Thy olive-tree. For ever she will be with Thee, at Thy side, *like the fair and beautiful olive-tree of the plain.*"

## STATION II.

### THE HOUSE OF ANNAS—THE INSIDE.

*The High Priest therefore asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine (St. John xviii. 19).*

A. It was with Annas, we are told, that the traitor made his bargain. It is from him that he expects the wages of sin. Naturally, therefore, he is here with the foremost, eager to be the first, and to let his great chief know how well he has laid his plans and carried them out; and how reasonable it is to double and treble his fee. But if he expects fair words and generous gratitude from this hoary contriver and abettor of wickedness, who will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven himself, nor suffer others to enter, he will be grievously disappointed—*the desire of the wicked shall perish*. The *venom of the asp* is under the arch-sinner's tongue; and Judas receives in plenty curses and *words of hatred* for disturbing his rest.

Christ does not suffer *the eye of the widow to wait* for the alms she wants, but it pleases the malicious High Priest well to torture the traitor with hope deferred, and to reduce the promised *wages* of sin to the very least that can be.

B. After some delay, then, the hoary Chief of the Ancients is ready, and Jesus is unbound from the tree, and hurriedly dragged into the presence of the High Priest. Possibly, too, some of the ropes and cords that might hinder Him from speaking are by the command of Annas loosened, that the prisoner may be better able to answer his subtle questions. This conjecture is suggested by the words that we shall meet with presently. *Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas*. For these words may mean that His chains and bonds are once more adjusted and fastened before He is sent off. Some writers say that, according to

ordinary usage, the chains of prisoners were removed while they were in presence of their judge ; but that terror lest He should escape deprived Jesus of this relaxation.

C. *The High Priest therefore asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine.*

Annas is a man considered learned and well versed in Jewish law. He is, moreover, old, and very experienced and shrewd. As has been said, he has been the leader, the ruling director among the Antichrists. He knows quite well that he is not the judge who is to preside at the trial of Jesus. That is the work of Caiphas. But Joseph Caiphas, his son-in-law, is a child in iniquity compared with himself. Therefore he thinks he will be rendering a great service to the Council, if by clever questions he can elicit answers that shall deserve death and crucifixion. Only forty-eight hours have gone by since the best of his compeers spent the livelong day in the attempt to catch Jesus in His speech. Their labour was utterly useless, but Annas had not then brought his own intellect and legal shrewdness to bear: he had remained in the background advising and directing. Now it is his turn to enter the lists. *O man*, St. Paul exclaims, *who art thou that repliest against God?* "O foolish wise man," we may say to Annas, "who art thou that darest to question thy God?" He will find, as all others have done, that *there is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord.*

D. *The High Priest therefore asked Jesus of His disciples and of His doctrine.*

*Of His disciples*, in order to be able to prove to Pilate that Jesus has secretly been gathering together a powerful and dangerous party.

*Of His doctrine*, that he may be able to convict Him of subverting the Law of Moses.

The Holy Ghost has long ago revealed (Wisdom ii.) a very detailed description of what is to go on this night in the arraignment of Christ Jesus.

One part of the programme of these judges is: *Let us*

*lie in wait for the Just.* This is what Annas is proposing to do now. He is going to lay snares for Jesus, by his captious questions. But in vain!

Our Lord knows that Annas is not God's delegate in this Court. He is not the appointed official judge. He is volunteering private, amateur inquiry which will not speed on the work of redemption. Annas will only fritter away precious moments, and multiply sins. The loving Heart of Jesus will cut short this mischievous delay.

### STATION III.

*Jesus answered Him: I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in the synagogue and in the Temple, whither all the Jews resort, and in secret have I spoken nothing. Why askest thou Me? Ask them who have heard what I have spoken unto them: behold, they know what things I have said (vv. 20, 21).*

A. *In secret I have spoken nothing.*

Yet we know that our Saviour spoke by night with Nicodemus: and a week ago *He took unto Him the Twelve*, and told them in private what was going to happen to Him in Jerusalem. Moreover, He has this very night held a long discourse to His disciples only, at the Supper. Then besides, did He not charge His Apostles to preach hereafter from the housetops what they had heard from Him in secret? This, then, is one of the many passages in our Lord's Gospel which teach us the necessity of reading the words with reverent care and humility, and of seeking the aid of a master while we read.

His meaning is that He has not in secret taught any doctrines other than those which He has preached publicly. All His Creed and all His Code are fully known.

B. *Why askest thou Me?*

His answer, then, is an unanswerable rebuke to the judge who is questioning Him. If Annas knows the law, he surely ought to know this much, that it is not legal

to bind and chain a man first, as guilty of blasphemies, and then begin to examine him on his doctrine, in order to find out matter for accusation. Witnesses ought to be ready who have heard him preach treason or blasphemy.

Annas is silenced, utterly silenced and confounded. This illegal and useless questioning is brought suddenly and peremptorily to an end. Our Saviour is now, as heretofore, *teaching as one having power.*

The great leader, the expert in the law, the chief guide and ruler in the conspiracy against Jesus, is proved to be ignorant of his duty; and his troubled face shows the confusion and vexation that is working within.

*C. Why askest thou Me? Ask them who have heard what I have spoken.*

The Beloved Disciple tells us that when Jesus went forth in the Garden to meet the multitude, *He went forth knowing all things that should come upon Him.* He knew, therefore, among the rest, all that was to pass at the house of Annas. Now, therefore, He is fully conscious of all that this just and necessary and fearless answer shall bring upon Him.

*“Attendite.”* Here, then, we may well stay and look at our Blessed Saviour in wonder, and listen in most reverent astonishment till we find virtue coming out from Him to us, and feel that His Sacred Passion is strengthening us.

*Fear not,* was one of our Saviour's injunctions to His disciples. *Beware of men, but fear them not.* How often and how often we lack the freedom and the courage of our Master when we are in presence of men!

Have we no duty to the absent maligned within our hearing? Owe we nothing to the souls of our own brethren, the children of our own Father, when they are being scandalised before us by irreligious words, by immodest words, by calumnies against the religion of our Lord?

Guilty silence is one of the ways by which we become

partners in the sins of others. Those who hold authority are specially liable to incur guilt by a weak and sinful silence. *His watchmen*, the Prophet complains, *are all blind ; they are all ignorant, dumb dogs, not able to bark* (Isaias lvi.).

If we are blind and ignorant, and do not know the right word to speak when religion is attacked, we are causes of scandal.

It is while contemplating the Sacred Passion that we understand how wide the difference is between meekness and weakness.

A modest Christian child like St. Agnes can truly say in presence of her judges : *I have understood more than all my teachers. I have had understanding above Ancients* (Psalm cxviii.).

#### STATION IV.

*And when He had said these things, one of the servants standing by gave Jesus a blow, saying, Answerest Thou the High Priest so ?* (v. 22).

A. St. John Chrysostom and other early Fathers seem to take for granted that this servant is Malchus. Possibly a tradition to this effect had reached them.

If so, Malchus remembers his wound more than his cure. Our Blessed Saviour's Heart, on the contrary, is ready to forget and forgive all we do against Him, but remembers for ever the little services we render.

"O Jesus, make our hard hearts like to Thine."

B. St. Cyril conjectures, on the other hand, that the servant is one of those who on a previous occasion were sent to apprehend Jesus, and came back saying : *Never did man speak like this Man*. For uttering such a word, he has been, ever since, under a cloud, and is now anxious to win back favour by special zeal for the honour of the aged High Priest. His servility goes beyond what his master does, but perhaps not beyond what he would like to do.

If this be true, we may learn a lesson from this wicked

prudence. If this servant is eager to undo the good he has done by much evil-doing now, how much more wise and more pleasant, too, it will be for us to repair the wrongs we have done to our Master by multiplying good works in His honour.

*C. One of the servants gave Him a blow.*

Our English version does not tell us as much as the Latin does. *Alapa* conveys to us the notion of a slap in the face with the open hand. Many commentators, either from revelations made or from tradition, think that it was not a slap in the face from a naked hand, but from a gauntlet. They think that this is clear from the image on St. Veronica's veil. If this be so, the servant is one of the Temple guards, who are armed.

Careful writers tell us that the blow is so heavy that our Saviour falls to the ground under it. If we bear in mind the exhausted state in which He came to His Passion, and then the increase of weakness caused by great loss of Blood, and all the torture of His journey from Gethsemani, it is not hard to believe that He is struck down to the ground. For ordinarily during His Passion, He allows natural causes to have their full effect on His Sacred Body; and only checks and limits the counteracting power of His Divinity.

*D. One of the servants gave Jesus a blow.*

Is our Saviour conquered by being felled to the ground? Human wisdom would answer, Yes, unless He calls down fire from heaven on the sacrilegious offender. But our Saviour replies: *My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways* (Isaias lv.). His method is to conquer by meekness, by endurance. Perfect meekness, according to His Gospel, is perfect victory. If we give way to anger and resentment even a little, we spoil in some degree the glory of our victory. If we give way entirely to revenge, we are ourselves entirely conquered by him who has struck us.

*"Attendite."* This is one of the high and more difficult

lessons of the Gospel of Christ. When, through the virtue that comes out from Christ, a martyr is able to say on behalf of those who are stoning him, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*, this miracle worked by the grace of Jesus Christ brings forcibly home to us what St. Paul calls *the supereminent greatness of His power towards us* (Ephes. i.).

Again and again we must say with unshaken hope: *Passio Christi, conforta me*—"Crucified Jesus, strengthen me".

*E. One of the servants gave Jesus a blow.*

While contemplating this heavy blow, is it not the time to pray earnestly for an increase of devotion to the sacred Face of Jesus?

What a powerful prayer we have in the words of the Psalmist: *O God, our Protector, look down upon us, and on the Face of Thy Christ* (Psalm lxxxiii.).

And how earnestly the Ever-Blessed Mother responds to us: "O my child, look thou also on the Face of thy Christ, thy Jesus, thy Brother, thy Surety, thy Lord and thy God. Look on His bruised Face, for in His bruises thou art healed."

*F. One of the servants gave Jesus a blow.*

As this is done by a servant in the presence of his master, unless the High Priest rebukes with condign severity the lawless outrage, he becomes by guilty silence a partner in the sin. As men are so prone to be slavish in presence of those in power, masters can oftentimes, if they will, easily repress evil. *The king that sitteth on the throne of judgment, scattereth away all evil by his look* (Prov. xx.). But Annas utters not one word of reproof. This servant is to him a friend in need. He has stepped in at the moment when his master is put to the blush, and covered with confusion by the wise answer of Jesus.

Let us learn a lesson. To save his master from confusion, this slave commits a great crime. The disciples of Jesus have often been so strengthened that they have courageously screened their neighbour from confusion and

danger, by bringing chastisement on themselves. Our proto-martyr, St. Alban, put on the dress of the one sentenced to death, and died a martyr in his place. Even before he had seen the Sacred Passion, the blind man restored to sight brought great trouble on himself by speaking a courageous word on behalf of Jesus. Alas! have I ever, on the contrary, brought confusion and pain most unjustly to others, by screening myself and denying my own guilt?

G. *One of the servants gave Jesus a blow.*

Let us watch with our eyes and mark how Jesus is first struck down, and then beaten because He falls, and dragged by the hair of His Head to His feet again.

*The anger of man worketh not the justice of God* (St. James i.).

Even so, at times, a timid child is corrected with so much anger and severity that fear brings a lie of excuse to its lips, and then the severity and chastisement is doubled and trebled because the terrified child has told a lie.

#### STATION V.

*Jesus answered him: If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil: but if well, why strikest thou Me? (v. 23).*

A. The Heart of our Saviour has compassion on these enslaved and blinded servants, who worship their blind guides on earth, and have no fear or worship for their God.

By His calm and fearless fortitude, He is saying to them: "*Sursum corda*"—Fear not, ye children of God, your earthly masters. *Fear not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in Hell* (St. Matt. x.).

All through the Sacred Passion, He is teaching by word, by work, by suffering. He is the Priest teaching, as well as the Victim suffering.

The firm and reasonable answer of our Saviour has produced the desired effect. Annas has no longer any wish to

waste the precious moments by asking his clever questions. He has been publicly disgraced; and the gross illegal outrage committed against Jesus will not help to restore his prestige as a *master in Israel*. He is glad to escape from his position, and to throw the heavy burden and difficult task on another. For what task can be so difficult or what burden so heavy, as the hopeless task of finding guilt in Him in Whom *there is no sin, and Who taketh away the sins of the world?*

“Take Him to the High Priest,” he says hurriedly, “as the case does not concern me. I am not the judge. Away with Him! make haste! do it quickly.”

B. Our Blessed Lady says meekly to us, “If my Son Jesus has spoken evil to thee, or done evil to thee, give testimony of the evil. But if He has spoken well and done well to thee, why strikest thou Him?”

## SCENE VII.

FROM ANNAS TO CAIPHAS.

### STATION I.

*And Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas the High Priest*  
(St. John xviii. 24).

A. It is probably about an hour after midnight when Annas gives this order. “*Attendite.*” With our eyes let us look at our Saviour standing, *dumb as a lamb before his shearer*, while they quickly make fast every rope, every cord, every chain, and every fetter. We must try to measure the pain and torment caused by every fresh knot made, and every tightening of the cords. We must notice His swollen and livid face, bruised by the heavy blow. He goes out in a worse plight than when He came in, and more the Man of Sorrows. The prophetic word is being already very much verified, *the whole head sick, the whole heart sad.*

“Our Father Who art in Heaven, look on the Face of Thy Christ. Look on all His wounds and forgive us our sins. Mother of God, look on the Face of thy Christ and pray for us sinners.”

*To Caiphas the High Priest.*

There are, as we have seen, many High Priests or Chief Priests. Caiphas, no doubt, has a pre-eminence, but they are all styled Pontifices and Principes Sacerdotum, as much as Joseph Caiphas is. This being so, would our version be more correct, if it were written, *to the High Priest Caiphas* or *to High Priest Caiphas*? When there are many captains, we do not say to Titus the Captain, but to Captain Titus, Captain Caius. It may be argued, however, that, as Caiphas is *the High Priest of this year*, he has a right to a special title: *Caiphas the High Priest*. Otherwise the correct form would appear to be: High Priest Caiphas: High Priest Annas. This is noted on account of the opinion of those who contend, that the High Priest who questioned Jesus about His disciples and His doctrine must have been Caiphas.

*B. Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas the High Priest.*

The journey this time is short, through the grounds, as we are supposing, within the enclosure. Probably the way lies through the outer court, where the servants are assembled, and where by this time Peter has perhaps arrived. From this court Jesus is dragged up the steps that lead to the central hall, for the court is *below*, as St. Mark tells us. Here, in the judgment-hall, Caiphas and a certain number of the Sanhedrim are impatiently waiting.

Short as the journey is, we may be sure, while contemplating, that the sufferings of Jesus are neither few nor light. Their aim is to lead Him hurriedly and carefully. Strong men are holding the two chains attached to the collar round His neck. Strong men, too, are holding the chains or ropes round His waist. Some writers think that, according to custom, each leg or arm is chained to a slave or a soldier, to render security more secure. The Rulers *have devised vain things*, precautions most useless.

“Not out of necessity, O Lord our Saviour, art Thou going to judgment, but solely because Thou willest by Thy bands to break our chains.”

Daniel speaks of our Lord as *Christum Ducem*. “Be Thou ever, Lord Jesus, our leader! May we never be blind guides leading our blind selves. May we never give ourselves up as slaves to be led by wicked men.”

*C. Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas.*

Is Judas still leading and guiding? Our enlightened masters think not. His little hour of importance has come to an end. It is thought that he has stayed behind to wring his poor pay from the unwilling grasp of Annas. One strong reason for this conjecture is that the presence of Judas in the courtyard with the servants cannot well be reconciled with all that is narrated of St. Peter. Judas would at once have convicted him.

The unhappy traitor is then arguing, and entreating, and enforcing his claims to larger pay; describing all the dangers he has run; insinuating that all is not safe yet; that his services may still be wanted. But in vain! Once more, *the desire of the wicked shall perish.*

Annas slowly and grudgingly counts the pieces one by one; and Judas puts them one by one into the scrip whence he has so often stolen the pittance of the poor. When, therefore, he finds that there is no hope whatever of extracting one piece more from him who is his match in covetousness and wickedness, he begins to feel that his *summer is ended.* The traitor's office and importance is no more. And as he goes out into a lonely place to count once more his gains, and to look again at the price of blood, the word of the Psalm comes true: *The wicked shall see and shall be angry, he shall gnash with his teeth and pine away* (Psalm cxi.). O Judas! What have you lost? What have you gained?

D. "Mother of God, turn thine eyes of mercy towards us, and show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, that we may not betray Him and sell Him for a vile recompense."

SCENE VIII.

THE HALL OF CAIPHAS.

STATION I.

*And they brought Jesus to the High Priest; and all the Priests and the Ancients and Scribes assembled together (St. Mark xiv. 53).*

*A. All the Priests and the Ancients and the Scribes.*

According to the opinion of judicious commentators the members of the Great Council of the Sanhedrim who were known to be favourable to Jesus, such as Nicodemus, Joseph, and Gamaliel, had not been summoned to this midnight Council. Still so many are present that the Evangelist writes: *All the Priests and Ancients and the Scribes assemble.*

We may, however, observe that St. Matthew and St. Mark are the only Evangelists who record the transactions of the court held at midnight; and that these two Evangelists, on the other hand, do not give the details of the second sitting held early in the morning, which are recorded only by St. Luke.

St. Matthew, therefore, and St. Mark may perhaps be considered to be speaking inclusively of both sittings when they say that *all* were present. The common opinion of students seems to be that at the morning council there is a fuller gathering of the Sanhedrim; and that at the first sitting only the more active and bitter enemies of Jesus are present.

St. John, after recording that Annas sent Jesus to Caiphas, says nothing more of the nocturnal proceedings against our Lord in the court of Caiphas.

*B. All the Priests and the Ancients and the Scribes.*

“Alas!” exclaimed our dying Cardinal, eminent in Church and State, “had I but served my God as I have served my King!” These Jewish Rulers have been working hard for several days in this warfare against Jesus; but

they are ready still to give up their night's rest. When all is over to-morrow night their wives and daughters will compassionate them, and offer them refreshing cordials after so much hard labour. The Holy Spirit tells us that, if they die impenitent, they will spend their eternity making this moan: *We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways. What hath pride profited us? (Wisdom v.). We fools! The serpent deceived me.*

“Mother of God, thou art wakeful and watching to-night with thy Divine Son. Pray for us poor sinners, that we may begin to toil and watch for His sake as willingly as His enemies work and watch to harm Him.”

C. *All the Priests and the Ancients and the Scribes.*

Thanks be to the Passion and Death of Christ, all things have been made new. Countless men and women have had the grace to work and watch for Christ's sake, even as His enemies do against Him. His word is fulfilled: *In the day-time the Lord hath commanded His mercy; and a canticle to Him in the night (Psalm xli.).* By day they work for His poor and for sinners; and at night, gathered round the altar of the Hidden God, they sing the praises of our God Who created us, our God Who redeemed us, the Holy Ghost Who sanctifies us.

“Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.” *In the day-time His mercy, and a canticle to Him in the night.*

## STATION II.

*And the Chief Priests and the whole Council sought false witness against Jesus that they might put Him to death (St. Matt. xxvi. 59).*

A. While some have been arranging the arrest of Jesus, others have been running about to find false witnesses to depose against Him. With promises and bribes and threats they have laboured hard to get evidence ready

for this midnight arraignment. The Scribes and Priests are experts in the law. They know that no man *that* is to be slain shall die but *by the mouth of two or three witnesses* (Deut. xvii.). One will not suffice. Therefore they have most actively and diligently sought throughout the city for witnesses.

B. *They sought false witnesses.*

*Heresy* is a Greek word that means "picking out". A heretic picks out of the Gospel so much as pleases him, and disregards the rest. Oftentimes we are *in our practice* heretical. Our Blessed Saviour, three days ago, strongly inveighed against the Priests and Ancients: *Wo to you, hypocrites, because you tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left the weightier things of the law.* They must have witnesses, this the law prescribes; and the proceedings are to be judicial. Annas was out of order in his unprofessional questions, but this is to be an official act of the Council. There must be legality. There must be witnesses. So much they pick out from the law. But they turn their back upon the command: *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.* They ignore the precept: *Thou shalt not receive the voice of a lie* (Exodus xxiii.). They forget entirely what is written: *If a lying witness stand against a man accusing him of transgressions—when after most diligent inquisition they shall find that the false witness hath told a lie against his brother, they shall render to him as he meant to do to his brother. Thou shalt not pity him, but shalt require life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot* (Deut. xix.). If they accepted and venerated the whole law, they would know that they themselves and their suborned witnesses ought, for this night's work, to be crucified, because they are using false witnesses to bring about the death of Jesus by crucifixion. Heresy that picks out one truth, and leaves aside many, is the arch-enemy of truth; and virtue that rigidly enforces a minor precept and sets at nought the great commandments of God's law, is vicious hypocrisy.

*C. The Chief Priests sought false witnesses.*

*Oh, how is the gold become dim, the finest colour is changed! (Lament. iv.).*

In the days of Moses it was prescribed: whenever there is a hard and doubtful matter in judgment, and thou see the words of the judges vary, thou shalt come to the Priests and thou shalt ask of them, and they shall show thee the truth of the judgment, and thou shalt do whatsoever they shall say that preside in the place that the Lord shall choose, neither shalt thou decline to the right hand nor to the left (Deut. xvii.).

The judgment of the Priest is to be so truthful that you must not decline from it to the right hand nor to the left. And now all the Priests are seeking false witnesses. This is one proof among many that their knell has rung. The time foretold by Malachy is come. The Lord is saying to the Priests of the Levitical order: *I have no pleasure in you.* It was during the first watch of this night that the Lord of glory—now a prisoner—established the new Priesthood according to the order of Melchisedech. These High Priests are His no more. *I will not receive a gift from your hands. This is to you, O Priests, who despise My name (Malach. i.).*

“Blessed Mother of God, pray for the Church of thy Son, committed to thy guardianship, that His Priests may be clothed with justice and may not betray truth!”

## STATION III.

*The Chief Priests sought false witnesses against Jesus, but they found not, whereas many false witnesses had come in. For many bore false witness against Him, and their evidence was not agreeing (St. Matt. xxvi. ; St. Mark xiv.).*

*A. Many false witnesses had come in, and their evidence was not agreeing.*

Though the night is far spent, yet the Priests and Ancients have worked so earnestly that they have got together many witnesses.

One zealous Ancient has brought in a witness to swear that Jesus forbade the people to pay tribute to Cæsar. Another has found men ready to prove that He was stirring the people to sedition.

Several of the Scribes and Priests have come across witnesses who can render signal service, because they can bring forward very strong cases in which Jesus set at nought the Law of Moses. He violated the Sabbath grossly. He would not allow the adulteress to be punished. He consorted with scandalous sinners. And whereas the Law enjoins: *With all thy heart fear the Lord and reverence His Priests*, Jesus of Nazareth has habitually, before the people, reviled the Priests and brought them into contempt. Nay, worse than this, He has sought to seduce the people by working false miracles through the power of Beelzebub.

We must look with our eyes and listen with our ears, while these witnesses come forth one by one and are interrogated. The Scribes and Ancients and Priests have schooled them all and taught them what they are to say, and promised them good pay if they do well; and are now listening in nervous anxiety, and intruding leading questions in the hope of reconciling conflicting statements. Eagerly they watch every witness. But *unless the Lord build the house, in vain have they laboured who have built it*. It is the Tower of Babel over again. The Lord said: *It is one people, and all have one tongue, and they have begun to do this, neither will they leave off from their designs till they accomplish them: therefore their language was confounded* (Genesis xi.).

*Their evidence was not agreeing.* One witness refutes the other. "*Attendite.*" We must not pass away hastily from this scene of confusion and failure. Once more we learn this lesson: *There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord.—The desire of the wicked shall perish.*

**B. Many bore false witness against Him.**

The dark hours are passing quickly away, and these wise men are saying once more to each other: *Do you see that*

*we prevail nothing?* (St. John xii.). Each one brings forward the excellent witness that he has found, sure that this one at least will settle the case. And at each new failure and contradiction the vexation and rage and confusion of the disappointed judges is increasing. *The wicked shall see and shall be angry, and he shall gnash with his teeth, and pine away* (Psalm cxi.). Each Priest, each Scribe, each Ancient is disgusted at the silly blundering of the others. The great guiding spirit, Annas, has come in, and is not at all more humble on account of his own failure. He is merciless in his scoffing at the inconceivable stupidity of his colleagues. If Caiphas at a former meeting said so arrogantly to his fellows: *You know nothing*; what manner of words come now from the bitter chagrin and feverish disgust of this proud leader of the proud! The morning is coming quickly. It is an essential part of their programme to have Jesus of Nazareth condemned by the Roman Governor and crucified before the city is well awake: *Lest perchance there should be a tumult among the people*. And behold! they have not got one case ready to be presented to Pilate. "Why has the precious time been utterly thrown away on the silliest trifling? What will the Roman care whether the Nazarene breaks the Sabbath or not? What is the Sabbath to him? Why do you not bring witnesses that can prove some danger to Roman authority?"

"Of what possible utility is it to lose the precious hours in discussing whether He forbade tribute to Cæsar, when you every one know that three days ago He said before you all and before the people: *Give to Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar?* The case has been utterly mismanaged. If Jesus of Nazareth escapes and brings ruin on us all, you must thank yourselves for it."

The inspired writer tells us that some months later, when these same Priests and Scribes were listening to St. Stephen, *they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed with their teeth*.

We want stronger words to express their frenzy now. It was He Who is now and always meek and gentle and loving, infinitely beyond the sons of men, who said to them erewhiles: *You are of your father, the devil; and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning* (St. John viii.).

“From anger, hatred, and all ill-will, deliver us, Lord Jesus.”

Virgo singularis,  
Inter omnes mitis,  
Nos culpis solutos  
Mites fac et castos.

Virgin mid all virgins bright,  
And of the meek most meek,  
Free us from the chains of sin;  
And make us meek and chaste.

#### STATION IV.

*And last of all there came two false witnesses: and they said: This man said, I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and after three days to rebuild it* (St. Matt. xxvi. 60, 61).

These witnesses are alluding to what passed in the beginning of our Lord's Public Life, when for the first time He drove the buyers and sellers out of the Temple. On that occasion *the Jews said to Him* (some of the present judges were doubtless among them): *What sign dost Thou show to us seeing Thou dost these things? Jesus answered and said to them: Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up. The Jews then said: Six and forty years was this Temple in building, and wilt Thou raise it up in three days? But He spoke of the temple of His Body. When therefore He was risen again from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this: and they believed the Scripture, and the word that Jesus had said* (St. John ii.).

A. *Last of all there came two false witnesses.*

They have just arrived. Some untiring Scribe or Priest has at last traced them and found them; and there are two of them as the law requires. *By the mouth of two or three witnesses shall he die that is to be slain.* We have two, thank God! and their evidence is most conclusive. They exult as one *who has found much spoils* (Psalm cxviii.). *But the hope of the wicked is as dust which is blown away with the wind, and as a thin froth which is dispersed by the storm; and a smoke that is scattered abroad by the wind* (Wisdom v.).

For a moment hope revives in the Council; and the assembled wise men listen attentively to the new evidence. But after hearing a few words, Annas and the clear-sighted among the unhappy men, are more bitter and contemptuous than ever. "Why," they scream out, "*their witness does not agree!* Is this your boasted evidence, so all-sufficient?"

"*Their witness does not agree.* And even if these men you bring to us did agree, how could a silly tale like this go before the Roman Governor? Do you wish him to set us all down as a gang of imbeciles? If a knavish impostor says He can build the Temple in three days, will the Roman crucify Him for such a speech? Besides, we know well that He did not say that He could destroy the Temple in three days. His words were: *Destroy this Temple, and after three days I will rebuild it.* And it was perfectly well known that this was a challenge to us. He dared us to put Him to death; for if we did, He would rise again in three days. Instead of wasting time in senseless blundering, get to business. Take His challenge, and see whether He will rise again."

All these bitter thoughts and many more are no doubt muttered under their breath, in order that Jesus may not hear, nor understand their plans.

The prayer is being heard: *Let them be turned back and confounded that devise evil against Me* (Psalm xxxiv.). What a fearful awakening from their dream when after death comes the Judgment; and this same Jesus of Nazareth is the Judge, and they the guilty prisoners!

Juste Judex ultionis,

Most just Thy wrath against us, Lord  
Jesus,

Donum fac remissionis,

But from Thy Heart be merciful and  
forgive,

Ante diem rationis.

Before the great accounting day shall  
come.

There is silence in the judgment-hall; the silence of helpless bewilderment. These Scribes and Rulers, *cut to*

*the heart*, hang their heads. If they hear a stir, they turn their eyes in a nervous hope that somebody has something to propose.

STATION V.

*And the High Priest, rising up in the midst, asked Jesus, saying: Answerest Thou nothing to the things that are laid to Thy charge by these men? (St. Mark xiv. 60).*

A. *Answerest Thou nothing?*

If that be true which is told us, that Annas was an able and a shrewd man, and his son-in-law, Caiphas, only his weak tool, Annas cannot have been proud of this new impotent device of his son-in-law. For what does it amount to? "The witnesses have proved nothing. We have not one single accusation to go before Pilate. But possibly the prisoner can be got to say some word that will criminate Himself, and help us out of our difficulty." Are not these men of that class described by St. Paul, *when they knew God they have not glorified Him as God, or given thanks, but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened? For professing themselves to be wise, they became fools* (Romans i.).

Caiphas is the High Priest of the year, looked up to as a wise guide; and yet his words amount to this. "We can get no evidence from our witnesses wherewith to crucify you. Will not you, Jesus of Nazareth, come to our assistance, and say something that may help us to accuse you?"

*Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.*

*From them that resist Thy right hand, keep me (O God), as the apple of Thine eye* (Psalm xvi.).

STATION VI.

*But Jesus held His peace, and answered never a word*  
(St. Matt. xxvi.; St. Mark xiv.).

A. *Jesus held His peace.*

Contemplate our Blessed Lady, who sees and hears

all that is passing, and also knows the mind and secret thoughts of her Son Jesus. With what deep veneration she is admiring and reverencing and blessing the heavenly silence of her Son, which is conquering all His enemies.

B. Contemplate also the blessed angels looking with unspeakable contentment on Jesus *dumb as a lamb before his shearer* : refuting all His enemies by His silence.

We imagine, when we are accused, whether rightly or wrongly, that if we make no answer all is lost. The father of lies often persuades us that if we do not tell lies and deny the accusation and swear falsely, ruin must come.

C. *But Jesus was silent.*

"*Attendite.*" Oh, what a useful, what a necessary word is this one dictated by the Holy Spirit : "*Jesus autem tacebat !*" *Jesus was silent ! Jesus held His peace !* The Romans boasted of their Dictator who conquered by delaying action ; and modern soldiers have eulogised masterly inactivity. More useful to us will be the study of the meek and victorious silence of our Saviour. If I am silent when accused, I am saying to my God in secret : *Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause from the nation that is not holy : deliver me from the unjust and deceitful man. For Thou, O God, art my strength. Send forth Thy light and Thy truth* (Psalm xlii.). Which is better for me, that I plead my own cause, or that God defend me ? If I am silent when accused, God not only speaks *for* me, but also speaks *to* me in prayer. *I said, I will take heed to my ways ; that I sin not with my tongue. I have set a guard to my mouth, when the sinner stood against me. I was dumb, and was humbled, and kept silent from good things, and my sorrow was renewed.*

Now observe the reward of this meek and humble silence : *My heart grew hot within me : and in my meditation a fire shall flame out* (Psalm xxxviii.). If God is silent towards us in prayer, it may be that we are not silent enough when blamed. "*Jesus autem tacebat,*"

D. *Answerest Thou nothing ?*

See how all these most unwise Councillors fix their eyes on Jesus during this appeal from the High Priest. *They looked and stared upon Me* (Psalm xxi.). In spite of His chains and bonds they feel in the core of their hearts, and in the marrow of their bones, that they are in presence of their Master. *Do you see that we prevail nothing?*

E. *Answerest Thou nothing?*

All the while the silence of His tongue is speaking powerfully; His chains are speaking; His pale face is speaking; His weary Body is speaking—wearily, yes, most wearily, for He has been dragged hither faint and exhausted; and He is now standing all this long while that the judges are seated.

What are His chains and His silence saying? What lesson are they teaching? This much at least they have effected: they have driven out of this cruel world that maxim: "*Væ victis*"—*Wo to the conquered*. Jesus was an Infant, to make infants honourable. He was poor, to make the poor man revered. He is now a Man of Sorrows, to make sorrow an enviable privilege. And He is now a prisoner, to raise and sanctify the condition of the chained captive. As He stands silent in His bonds, He sees many future disciples hurrying away in gladness to the Moorish dungeons, to put on the chains of the captive, and set the cherished prisoner of Christ free.

Alas! what can make our blood run cold, if not the fate of prisoners as they were under fallen and unredeemed men? The Roman Tribune, we read, was favourable to St. Paul, and wished to rescue him from the fury of the jealous Jews who were beating him. Yet how did he show his pity? *He commanded him to be bound with two chains, and that he should be scourged and tortured, to know for what cause they did so cry out against him*. If scourges and tortures are for the innocent and uncondemned, what is in store for the sentenced criminal? "*Væ victis!*" Our Saviour Jesus has compassion on all bondsmen, most of all on poor sinners who are slaves to Lucifer. Sinners they may

be ; but His Heart cannot endure to see the child of His Eternal Father given over for ever to the cruel malice of those spirits that are without pity, without hope, without love. Therefore He Himself said to those princes of darkness and wickedness : *It is your hour* ; and He allowed Himself to be chained, *and compassed with infirmity*, and to be tried and tempted by Lucifer as his other captives are —always, however, *without sin* (Hebrews iv.).

“O Ever-Blessed Mother, watching and listening, listening to the silence of thy chained Son which pleads for us :

Solve vincla reis,  
Profer lumen cæcis,  
Mala nostra pelle,  
Bona cuncta posce.

Burst the chains that bind us,  
Let not darkness blind us ;  
Sin drive far away ;  
For all blessings pray.”

F. *Jesus was silent.*

*Thanks be to God, Who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ* (1 Cor. xv.). Thanks be to the chains, the silence, the meekness of Jesus. Christian judges do not now go out with the armed mob to arrest the prisoner by night. They do not spend their day and night in finding false witnesses. They do not hurry the prisoner to death in one clandestine midnight sitting. Neither do they chain and bruise and wound and torture the unconvicted.

Yet men sometimes say that Christianity is a failure.

May God in His infinite mercy save us from going back to the days when men were *merciless murderers of their own children* (Wisdom xii.); when the rights of a King were : *He will take your sons and put them into his chariots and make them his running footmen to run before his chariots, and your daughters he will take to be his cooks and bakers : and he will take your fields and your vineyards and your best olive-yards* (1 Kings viii.), and when his miserable slaves had to bow down and worship the monarch before they murdered one another to give him a holiday.

“*Thanks be to God, Who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ, bound in chains and silent and meek.*”

G. *Answerest Thou nothing?*

No, nothing; because the Priests and Scribes and Ancients have not as yet brought forth their real grievances and their genuine accusations against Jesus.

They know quite well themselves that He never has sinned against the Romans; never forbidden tribute; never stirred up the people.

But they know well that they have complaints against Him which to them are bitter realities.

The Holy Spirit has revealed to us their real indictment against Him, and admitted us behind the scenes, to listen to their true complaints and accusations which are not recorded in the Gospel. Great light is thrown on the arraignment of Christ Jesus to-night and to-morrow by the detailed account in the Book of Wisdom: *They have said, reasoning with themselves, but not right: Let us lie in wait for the just.*

1. *Because He is not for our turn: He is contrary to our doings; and upbraideth us with transgressions of the law: and divulgeth against us the sins of our way of life.*

*He is become a censurer of our thoughts. He is grievous unto us even to behold; for His life is not like other men's, and His ways are very different. We are esteemed by Him as triflers, and He abstaineth from our ways as from filthiness, and He preferreth the latter end of the just (Wisdom ii.).*

This is the first count in the real indictment, and, thanks to their own wickedness, every word of it is true. They do not *reason with themselves right*, when they imagine that Jesus hateth them personally, but they are quite right in saying: *He is not for our turn. He is contrary to our doings. He divulgeth against us the sins of our way of life. His life is not like other men's.* Every word of this impeachment is most true. They have still ringing in their ears His public denouncement three days ago, of their hypocrisy and other hideous vices.

2. Then they have a second grievance:

*He boasteth that He hath the knowledge of God.*

He has been preaching a new Gospel, and calling us children of the devil, because we do not adhere to it. He has told us arrogantly that we shall die in our sins if we do not believe in Him and take Him for our Master.

3. But His third crime is more intolerable than all :

*He calleth Himself the Son of God. He glorieth that He hath God for His Father.* Again and again, with our own ears, we have heard Him preach, *I and the Father are one.*

“Is this to go on? are the people to be all seduced? Are the Romans to step in, and set us all aside that Jesus of Nazareth may reign?”

At this stage then of the proceedings there is, we may be sure, much wavering, much vacillation in the minds of some of these Priests and Scribes and Ancients, and, in consequence, some more deliberations in private.

For, first we must bear in mind that our Blessed Saviour, though not speaking to them, is pleading incessantly for them in His Heart, that they may break away from slavery to Satan: *Why will you die, O house of Israel? Be converted and do penance for all your iniquities, and iniquity shall not be your ruin* (Ezech. xviii.).

Then secondly, *wickedness*, the Holy Spirit tells us, *is fearful, and a troubled conscience forecasteth grievous things.* There are doubtless some present who, seeing the breakdown of all the evidence, begin to be out of conceit with their work, and very mistrustful of success. But against the suggestions of these timorous men that they have no case that Pilate will listen to, and the rest, Annas and the other more resolute sinners rise up in arms. The Holy Spirit has revealed to us the tactics and policy of these strong men, the giants in iniquity: *Let our strength be the law of justice: for that which is feeble is found to be nothing worth* (Wisdom ii.).

“Away with feebleness,” they insist. “Let us not be afraid or weak! Why trouble about witnesses? Let us go in a body as early as possible, as soon as ever the day breaks, to the Roman. If we show him that we are all

resolved, he will never dare to withstand us. We must have no traitors among us. Our case is a most clear one: and cannot be gainsaid. For,

1. "The impostor sets us at open defiance, and slanders us publicly before the people.

2. "*He boasteth that He hath the knowledge of God.* Moses and all the prophets are entirely cast aside; we must all believe in Him, and bow down to Him forthwith, and accept His Gospel.

3. "*He calleth Himself the Son of God, and God equal to Jehovah.* Is this no crime? Are the scrupulous ones here present, who wish to guide and rule our counsels, are they prepared to put up with this blasphemy?" Possibly, some one or other of the Councillors expresses a doubt whether all this be true and quite certain; or perhaps Annas thinks in his mind that some may doubt its correctness; in either case this point can at once be settled. No time must be lost, they are coming fast to the end of the third watch of the night.

"Ever-Blessed Mother of God, watching with thy Son Jesus, and one in heart with Him, pray for us sinners that we may love Him and serve Him by day, and love Him and serve Him by night."

H. *But Jesus was silent.*

"Merciful Lord Jesus, many times and far too often have I been silent when Thou hast spoken to me. Silent and deaf: *like the deaf asp.* But Thou, O Lord, *wilt not cast off for ever. According to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my iniquity, and be not Thou silent to me, O my God, lest if Thou be silent to me I become like them that go down into the pit*" (Psalm xxvii.).

All these waverers, then, must be convinced by positive proof that He is guilty of the most heinous blasphemy.

## STATION VII.

*And the High Priest said to Him : I adjure Thee by the living God that Thou tell us if Thou be Christ the Son of God (St. Matt. xxvi.). Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed God ? (St. Mark xiv.).*

A. As we have seen, Annas and others wish this question to be put solemnly that the timorous and hesitating may be made firm and resolved. Did Satan also and the spirits of darkness inspire this question? If so, they are unconsciously and unwillingly doing the work of God. This is an instance in which we see most clearly how all the efforts of His enemies *work together unto good* for Christ Jesus.

This is by far the most important charge against Him : *He calleth Himself the Son of God.*

*For a good work, they said to Him heretofore, we stone Thee not : but for blasphemy : and because that Thou being a Man, maketh Thyself God (St. John x.).* Nothing so important for the cause of our Lord as that it should be made quite clear that this is His capital crime.

*Out of the mouths of sucklings, Lord Jesus, Thou canst draw perfect praise ; and so too out of the mouths of Thy malicious enemies, canst Thou draw Thy glorious truth and Thy justification.*

B. *I adjure Thee that Thou tell us.*

*There is a time to keep silence and a time to speak.* While witnesses were deposing against Him, Jesus has been silent, *dumb as the lamb before his shearer.* *He opened not His mouth.* Now it is a time to speak.

1. Because the High Priest, appealing to Him officially, questions on a point that rightly comes under his cognisance. *Jesus, it is written, began to do and to teach.* It is always so. He does what He teaches. Even when crying out : *Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees !* He inculcated reverence and obedience to God's delegates in their official capacity, however unworthy their private life may be.

2. Caiphas, fearing that Jesus will still maintain silence, uses words of great power: *I adjure Thee by the living God.* Who likes to refuse the poor man who begs in the name of the living God? or even in the name of the Blessed Mother?

Our Blessed Lord Himself bound Himself by this promise: *Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My Name, that will I do. If you shall ask Me anything in My Name, that will I do.* When we ask in the name of Jesus, we adjure God solemnly and He listens, listens most willingly.

*In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth,* St. Peter will say soon to the lame man, *Arise, and walk* (Acts iii.); and sickness and infirmity will reverence the Holy Name and obey.

“I exorcise thee, unclean spirit,” the minister of Christ Jesus will say at the font of Baptism, “I exorcise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; therefore, demon accursed, acknowledge thy sentence, give honour to the true and living God, and go out from this servant of God.” And the wicked spirit will depart.

Our most charitable Saviour in the midst of His great sorrow is charitably teaching all of us this holy lesson, to reverence the name of God; to do quickly and willingly what is asked and what is commanded in the Holy Name of God.

3. Then thirdly, He desires to preach the great truth, the great fundamental truth, that *I am the Son of the Blessed God,* made Man for love of you. *For this,* He will say tomorrow, *For this came I into the world, that I should give testimony of the truth.* His Cross is to be, as we have seen, *Cathedra docentis*—the chair of our teacher; and all through His Sacred Passion, everywhere, at every step, He is doing, He is suffering, He is teaching. Well He knew that the word He preaches here in the midnight to a few will be preached from the housetop to many *till the consummation of the world.*

C. *I adjure Thee that Thou tell us.*

Mark how they all now hang on His lips. They who have no patience with their own colleagues who speak, are breathless now. *They looked and stared upon Me.*

D. Let us observe also the unspeakable solace that this question brings to our Blessed Lady, who, as we have seen, is through her Mother's privilege, and as the second Eve, watching and listening and sharing every sorrow. At last she hears a word spoken that befits the mouth of the High Priests, and will enable her Son to preach the word of life.

#### STATION VIII.

*Jesus saith to him : Thou hast said it (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*Jesus said to him : I am (St. Mark xiv.).*

A. St. Augustine, St. Thomas, and other holy writers, doubt whether this form, *Thou hast said it*, is equal to a positive affirmation, or only an appeal to their own inward convictions. Thus, they say, when Judas asked: *Is it I, Lord?* Jesus answered *Thou hast said it*; giving an answer that he would understand, but not affirming so clearly that the rest would know that Judas was the traitor. So, too, when Pilate asked: *Art Thou a king?* Jesus answered, *Thou sayest that I am a king.* And Pilate after having this answer, says: *I see no cause in Him.* If the answer of Jesus was a clear affirmation, these writers contend, Pilate would have had cause to condemn Him for assuming royalty.

Other holy and learned commentators, however, consider that this form is a well-known Hebraism, and equivalent to an affirmation. In whatever way this question be decided, it is clear in the present instance from St. Mark's account that our Saviour answered with a decided and unmistakable affirmation: *I am.*

*Jesus said to him, I am.*

As we listen most attentively, we observe how our Blessed Lord does not reply in haste, but after a pause, and with great deliberation, and very solemnly, and with a voice

that fills the soul of His Blessed Mother, and all His holy angels, with a most peaceful contentment.

B. *Jesus said to him, I am.*

“High Priest of Israel, and you that sit in the chair of Moses, you adjure Me in the name of God My Father to tell you; and I now therefore do tell you: *I am the Son of the Blessed God.*”

And with this word goes a grace that is offered to the heart of every one listening. And the word of the Lord, *living and effectual and more piercing than any two-edged sword, reaches unto the division of the soul and the spirit, and the joints also, and the marrow.*

Those who have been wavering are shaken in their purpose, and the vigilant guardian angels whisper to each of them: *Be converted: cast away from you all your transgressions by which you have transgressed, and make to yourselves a new heart: and why will you die, O house of Israel?* (Ezech. xviii.). Knowing how grace is working in the hearts of these dupes of Satan, our Blessed Lord, Who wishes not at all the death of the sinner, adds other words and new graces.

#### STATION IX.

*Nevertheless I say to you, hereafter you shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven* (St. Matt. xxvi. 64).

A. That is, though you now ask this question in derision, and scoffing at Me; and though at present I seem to be a *Man without help*: yet I remind you again that this is so only because I will it, and because I choose to say to you: *It is your hour.* You were not My masters when I with one word cast you on the ground in the Garden; and when this short hour of yours is past, I shall again show Myself to be your Master.

B. *You shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the power of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*

These Priests and Scribes have heard and have read

what the Prophets wrote concerning the day of the Lord that is to come ; and they have preached to the people of this great day : *For the day of the Lord is great and very terrible, and who can stand it ?* (Joel ii.). *That day is a day of wrath, a day of tribulation and distress, a day of calamity and misery, a day of darkness and obscurity, a day of clouds and whirlwinds, a day of the trumpet and alarm—and I will distress men—because they have sinned against the Lord* (Sophonias i.).

Our Blessed Saviour, then, rendering good for evil, reminds them of truths familiar to them ; and His words, uttered so solemnly, are, they feel in the depths of their souls, the words of one Who speaks with power and authority. Grace fights a good fight in the hearts of these blinded dupes of Lucifer ; some are much inclined to do justice to Jesus, *so powerful in word and work*. But, alas ! *all we*, the Prophet writes, *like sheep have gone astray*. *Like sheep*, the Psalmist also wrote, *like sheep they are laid in Hell*.

*Like sheep* : for sheep unreflecting follow a leader. And men when they have neglected the sweet calls of Jesus, Who wishes to gather them even *as the hen gathers her chickens*, immediately go and enslave themselves to a man, and follow a leader. Such now, too, these Judges are in presence of their Chief, their ruling spirit. They lift up their eyes to see what they read on the face of Annas. His mind is still what it was. *That which is feeble is found to be nothing worth*. "Let us have no feebleness here, no traitors. Any one who is disposed to turn faint, and hark back, let that man be marked. *Let our strength be the law*."

The good seed that was sown and had sprung up a little, is withered by the frown of this one man, and forthwith, *like sheep*, they tamely follow the lead. They are the self-same men to whom Jesus, full of pity, said in times past : *How can you believe who receive glory one from another, and the glory which is from God alone you do not seek ?* (St. John v.).

STATION X.

*Then the High Priest rent his garments, saying: He hath blasphemed. What further need have we of witnesses? Behold now you have heard the blasphemy. What think you? (vv. 65, 66.).*

A. *The High Priest rent his garments.*

For, Caiphas, along with the rest, looks to Annas, and from his fierce countenance learns what he is to do and say. Alas! poor fallen, outcast priests, *rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God, Who stands before you; for He is gracious and merciful, patient and rich in mercy, and ready to repent of the evil. Who knoweth, but He will return and forgive? (Joel ii.).*

B. Observe how every step in this conspiracy is illegal.

The midnight trial is illegal. The haste is illegal. Those wise in Jewish law tell us that ample provision was made in that law for the protection of the prisoner. Here judges and counsellors are turned into accusers and persecutors and pursuivants and executioners. And now the High Priest rends his garments.

This too is, so some commentators think, a breach of the law.

*The High Priest, that is to say, THE PRIEST, the greatest among his brethren, upon whose head the oil of unction hath been poured, and whose hands have been consecrated for the priesthood, and who hath been invested with the holy vestments, shall not uncover his head (or) rend his garments (Levit. xxi.).<sup>1</sup>*

C. *The High Priest rent his garments.*

Only three days ago Jesus meek and humble of Heart said to Caiphas and his colleagues *Hypocrites, blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!* This High Priest, this blind guide of the rest, is scandalised by the words of Jesus, and not shocked and terrified and confounded at the sight of his own iniquities.

<sup>1</sup> Some interpreters, however, think that this prohibition only refers to the case of mourning for the dead, and does not apply when blasphemy is uttered.

“O compassionate Lord Jesus, hear the prayer of Thy Blessed Mother for us poor sinners, and say to our hearts with power and authority: *Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy*” (St. Luke xiii.).

D. *He hath blasphemed.*

This word meant more in that hour than it does in our conversations now. For the law was stern. *He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die: all the multitude shall stone him, whether he be a native or a stranger. He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, dying let him die* (Levit. xxiv.). These men who are setting all law at defiance, mean this law to be fulfilled to the letter, and are plotting far more, against their neighbour, Jesus of Nazareth.

With them, *He hath blasphemed*, means “He shall die”.

On a certain day in time past, Jesus had reminded them that they who are not innocent are not wise if they throw stones at the guilty. But they are now following the teaching of another master, whose constant effort it is to keep us all judging others and doing the things we judge, because he knows that God will never depart from that most just and necessary rule: *With the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again. Judge not and you shall not be judged. Condemn not and you shall not be condemned* (St. Luke vi.). *Judgment without mercy to him who hath not done mercy* (St. James ii.).

“O Ever-Blessed Mother of mercy, pray for us sinners, that if we sin we may have, at least, grace not to judge and condemn others for doing what we do ourselves.”

#### STATION XI.

*What think you? But they answering, said, He is guilty of death* (v. 66).

A. *What think you?*

Hear this murderous question put to each of these unhappy men; murderous, a thousand times more, to their souls than to the Body of Jesus. Observe the fierce eye of

Annas, how he watches that no one shall escape without answering. For he is one who will not enter himself the Kingdom of God, and is bent on not suffering others to enter. *That which is feeble is found to be nothing worth.*

Listen, as the question is put officially to each one : *What think you?* Let us mark with sorrow how, at the voice of a man lower and more degraded than themselves, these children of God, these Priests and Scribes and Ancient men fling away all strength, all courage, all sense of right ; trample on the good seed but now cast into their souls ; and, while recording angels write down in sadness, utter, with suicidal tongues, their own doom : *He is guilty of death.* Yes, each of them, one by one, pronounces the official sentence : *He is guilty of death ;* and this official sentence is their own sentence. *He hath blasphemed : He is guilty of death.*

*B. He is guilty of death.*

This sentence is welcome to the unseen spirits of wickedness. For as yet they know not that they are in conflict with God made Man. St. Paul calls the mystery of man's redemption worked out by the Incarnation, *the wisdom of God in a mystery. A wisdom which is hidden, which God ordained before the world unto our glory : which none of the princes of this world knew : for if they had known it, they would never have crucified the Lord of glory* (1 Cor. ii.). By the *princes of this world* commentators understand him to mean not only the Jewish Rulers, and Pilate and Herod ; but the unseen rulers of *the world of this darkness.* When Satan said to Him on the pinnacle of the Temple : *If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down,* he was conjecturing and trying to make out what degree of sanctity was in the Soul of Jesus. He used the word " Son of God " in the sense afterwards adopted by his disciple, the arch-heretic Arius ; but he does not yet understand that Jesus is God made Man, otherwise he never would have tried to compass His Death. Some holy writers are of opinion that as the

Sacred Passion goes on, the spirits of darkness begin to suspect that He is more than man, and therefore begin to wish much to prevent His Death by inducing Him to descend from the Cross. At present they think Him to be only a man; and that by killing Him they will stop the work He is doing. They are aware of what our Lord said three days ago that unless the days of persecution were shortened, *no flesh should be saved*. Therefore, by persecuting Jesus and killing Him, they hope much to check the work of salvation.

C. *He is guilty of death.*

After this, *Sursum corda!* we must lift our thoughts much higher and hear in the councils of the Eternal Father the sentence of death ratified against Jesus, the Incarnate Son of God, the Son of the Ever-Blessed Virgin Mary, Who has taken on Himself the sins of the world, and therefore has chosen to be *guilty of death*. Glory be to the Father, *Who so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting* (St. John iii.).

D. *He is guilty of death.*

And then in His own most Holy Soul, our Blessed Saviour Himself, as He hears voice after voice repeat the sentence: *He is guilty of death*: with infinite love, ratifies it. He says a word akin to that which He on the morrow will put into the heart of His crucified companion on Calvary: *We are receiving the just reward of our deeds*. I have chosen to become *sin* for My brethren, for My fallen family. The Father has laid upon Me the iniquities of them all. *Upon Me let all this iniquity be*. Let Me die, and lay down My life that I may see the promised *long-lived seed*, that I may *gather together in one the children of God that were dispersed*. Let Me be lifted up from the earth that I may *draw all things to Myself*.

E. And there is also a true sense in which we too may join in the verdict, and say that the Lamb of God deserves to die, and the Ever-Blessed Mother deserves to see Him

die. For who but the sinless are really worthy to die and to suffer for sinners? Out of His infinite charity He shares His privilege and His glory with His martyrs. He allows them to drink the chalice with Him; to suffer and to be slain. They die indeed for His sake, for the sake of their own good God; but Jesus dies for the sake of the ungrateful sinner. Who but the Holy of Holies is worthy to die such a death of love? Who but His Immaculate Mother is worthy to be standing by, pierced with *the sword of sorrow* while she looks on such a death of love?

*“Hail, full of grace, blessed art thou amongst women: and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Blessed is He Who is worthy to lay down His life for us sinners. Blessed art thou who art worthy to be the Mother of the Crucified.”*

#### STATION XII.

*Then did they spit in His face (v. 67).*

A. Some writers who have made a study of Jewish law, and of the Talmud, and of the ancient customs of the Jews, tell us that it was the usual practice for the judges to rise from their seats and spit in the face of the condemned criminal; and they are of opinion that this savage usage was rigorously enforced now. The Priests, then, and the Ancients and Scribes, before they retire set an example to the servants whom they are leaving in charge, and give vent to their hatred and scorn and envy and malice, by covering His sacred face with their phlegm. They answering, said, *He is guilty of death. Then did they spit upon Him.*

Some commentators think that we may accept this narrative as it stands, and assume that His judges sentenced Him, and immediately began to spit upon Him.

*I have not turned away My face from them that rebuked Me and spit upon Me (Isaias 1.). O God, our Protector, look on the Face of Thy Christ.*

“O Blessed Mother, turn thine eyes of mercy towards us and show us the sacred Face of thy Son Jesus.”

B. Then for a brief space before separating, they confer together: “You must be weary,” they say one to another: “we have had a long day of work and a hard day”. So are they saying still in the everlasting prison-house if before death their hearts were not contrite. Yes. *We walked through hard ways* during those miserable days; *and we wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity.*

Now meanwhile they must have some repose—but short.

The word of Annas is again repeated: *That which is feeble is found to be nothing worth. Let our strength be the law of justice.*

“There must be no wavering: no time lost. Messengers must at once during the night summon all the absent members of the Great Council, those only excepted who cannot be relied upon. All must be in their place with the daybreak. Witnesses we do not want. There is not one amongst them fit to appear before the Roman. But if he sees that we are agreed, and resolved, and bent upon it, he will not dare to oppose us, he will *let our strength be the law of justice.* Jesus of Nazareth will be crucified before the people are awake, AND THEN WE CAN HAVE OUR FESTIVAL DAY IN PEACE.” Even so, Zares, wife of Aman the great chancellor, and the rest of his friends, counselled him: *Order a great beam to be prepared: and in the morning speak to the king that Mardochai may be hanged upon it, AND SO THOU SHALT GO FULL OF JOY WITH THE KING TO THE BANQUET. The counsel pleased him, and he ordered a big gibbet to be prepared* (Esther v.). Severe and stern orders are given to the servants and the guards to watch their Prisoner carefully. It will be an evil night for them if He escapes, and so the Priests and Ancients retire; bidding each other good night! “So far we have succeeded! Farewell.” Some writers, however, are of opinion that some of them remain for a time to take part in the orgies of the servants.

C. "*Attendite.*" We may stay yet a little while to store up a lesson for ourselves. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour* is a commandment, made much more sacred in our Lord's new law of charity. As we contemplate in this judgment-hall, the precept ought to grow most dear to us.

"*Recogitabo tibi, Domine, annos meos.*" "I will recount to Thee, Lord Jesus, my years gone by, to deplore the miserable hours when I bore false witness, or encouraged others to bear false witness against the absent." For now I know that if I do it against one of His least brethren, my Saviour will class me with those who brought false witness against Himself. That *lex talionis*, the law of reprisals: *a tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye*—is not abolished in Christ's Gospel, but perfected; enforced in a much more rigorous way. If I do harm to the absent by false witness, or detraction, that harm will all come down on me, *heaped up, pressed down, and flowing over*. If I encourage a tale-bearer to malign the absent, I become at once partner in his sin, and in the curse that rests upon his sin.

And here let us not forget, that though he who calumniates me behind my back sins and is guilty; yet it is not he who does me the greatest injury, but the tale-bearer who comes to tell me what my neighbour has said against me. It is he who scandalises me, that is, gives occasion to my sin and stirs up revenge within me by telling me of the wrong done me. *The whisperer and the double-tongued is accursed. THE TONGUE OF A THIRD PERSON has disquieted many. It hath destroyed the strong cities of the rich. He that hearkeneth to it shall never have rest, neither shall he have a friend in whom he may repose. The stroke of a whip maketh a blue mark; but the stroke of a tongue will break the bones* (Ecclus. xxviii.). We must not forget this word. IT IS THE TONGUE OF A THIRD PERSON, who comes to bring tales to me, that does the evil.

D. As the judges retire, the Heart of our Lord and

the heart of His Holy Mother, ever joined to His, are praying for them. For it was out of the abundance of His Heart that His mouth spoke that lesson: *Pray for those who calumniate you.*

*They opened their mouth wide against Me; they said, Well done, well done! our eyes have seen it. Let them not say in their hearts: It is well, it is well, to our mind. Neither let them say, We have swallowed Him up. Let them blush and be ashamed together who rejoice at My evils (Psalm xxxiv.).*

With infinite compassion our Saviour prays, for their sakes, that they may not exult in their sin.

## SCENE IX.

### THE COURT BELOW. ST. PETER.

Already we have seen something of the plan of the Priests' Palace and the arrangement of the buildings. A few words more may be useful. Those who are learned in Jewish architecture explain for us the Gospel text by the knowledge which they have derived from other sources.

1. Coming from Gethsemani, those leading Jesus arrive first at the gateway where the portress is.

2. They enter into a covered hall; the outward hall or vestibule, in which is the porter's lodge. In our English version, this outward hall is spoken of as *before the court* (St. Mark xiv.). A more literal translation from the Greek would be: *He went forth into the outward hall* (*εἰς τὸ προαύλιον*). Our English version is a literal translation from the Latin—(*exiit foras ante atrium*).

3. Passing on from the covered hall, they find themselves in the open courtyard (*in atrio, ἐν τῇ αὐλῇ*) (St. Mark xiv.). This court, we are told, was ordinarily surrounded by a covered colonnade.

4. From this court a flight of steps leads to the judgment-hall of the High Priest.

This we gather from St. Mark xiv. 64: *When Peter stood in the court below.*

5. A question arises, Where was the fire lighted? Our English version of St. Luke's Gospel has the words, *in the hall*. In St. Mark's Gospel, we read that he was warming himself in the *court below*. In St. Matthew, *Peter sat without in the court*. Was the fire, then, in the covered hall or in the open court? The Latin and Greek text settle this question, for we find that where our version has the word *hall*, and also where our version

has the word *court*, the Latin in both places has *atrium* and the Greek *αὐλή*. Therefore our English version, St. Luke xxii. 55: *Where they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall*, would, it seems, be more correct if it were, *in the centre of the courtyard*.

Here we must go back to the early part of this third watch of the night, which is now coming to a close, namely to the time when the armed multitude have left Gethsemani and are dragging our Saviour up the steep hill.

#### STATION I.

*And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple*  
(St. John xviii.).

*But Peter followed afar off* (St. Luke xxii.).

A. Let us fix our thoughts on Simon Peter. His heart has become very sad, when he finds that he has fled from his Master in His hour of danger and sorrow. More than all the rest, he professed fidelity unto death.

He stops in his flight. He cannot bear to go further. He must return and see what happens to his Master, for Whom he has a true love. From the revelations made to holy persons, we gather that the thought too of abandoning the Blessed Virgin in this time of great danger added greatly to the distress of the Apostle. Perhaps, also, his impetuous spirit is reviving somewhat, and he is upbraiding himself for not having used his sword more perseveringly.

B. *Peter followed afar off.*

His courage, however, is much abated by the sudden scare that moved them all to take to flight.

He does not venture to do more than follow *afar off*. For him who aimed a death-blow at the High Priest's servant there will be no mercy if he is recognised and made prisoner.

Time was when he could not bear to be far from his Master. *Lord, bid me come to Thee upon the waters*, he said in his impatience to be with Jesus. All that eager love will return again. But in this hour he is not inclined to draw too near: *he followed afar off.*

C. *Peter followed afar off.*

The words suggest a thought to spiritual writers, that it is better in every way to follow Christ closely, than to keep afar off. Our cowardly nature tells us that it is easier to meditate for a few minutes than for an hour. But experience proves (1) that as flies keep away from a cauldron that is hot, but draw near when it cools; so the devil keeps away from the fervent who resist him, and molests perpetually those who are lukewarm. Then (2) that our Blessed Saviour delights in being generous to those who are generous to Him, whilst with the niggardly He will be niggardly: *With the holy Thou wilt be holy; with the perverse Thou wilt be perverted* (Psalm xvii.).

But if God holds His hand, and helps but sparingly, spiritual life becomes dreary indeed; and a temptation easily prevails. Our Saviour said last week at Jericho, that *from him who has little grace that little will* be quickly taken away.

*And so did another disciple.*

St. John alone mentions this other disciple. Students naturally ask, "Who is he?" A very common opinion is, that St. John does not wish to give his own name, but that he was the companion of St. Peter; and that he was known to the High Priest, either because, as some say, he had sold to Caiphaz a plot of land that was near Tiberias; or, as others think, because, as a fisherman, he had supplied the Priest's house with fish.

Other commentators think it very unlikely that a poor fisherman of Galilee was known to the High Priest. They prefer to think that *the disciple known to the High Priest* must have been Nicodemus, or Joseph of Arimathea, or some one else of a higher station.

Two reasons occur that cast a doubt on his being St. John: (1) when he speaks of himself in the narration of the Supper, he calls himself *the disciple whom Jesus loved*. Would he not have used the same title here? (2) If it was St. John, would he not have remained with Peter in the court below? There is no trace of his presence there.

Still we find it taken for granted in the revelations recorded by holy persons that it was St. John.

STATION II.

*And Peter followed Him afar off even into the court of the High Priest (St. Mark xiv.).*

*Simon. Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. And that disciple was known to the High Priest, and went in with Jesus into the court of the High Priest. But Peter stood at the door without. The other disciple, therefore, who was known to the High Priest, went out and spoke to the portress, and brought in Peter (St. John xviii.).*

St. John, as usual, supplies details omitted by the other Evangelists. Were it not for his help, it might be difficult to understand how Peter gained admission into the palace.

A. St. Peter is by nature bold and impetuous, and rushes into danger. Who but he would wish to leap into the waves to meet our Lord? Who would draw the sword single-handed to resist an armed multitude? He is now once more running into a grave danger of a worse kind. In the former case the life of his body was imperilled. Now his soul is in great danger. Moreover, in the midnight storm on the lake, he asked permission of our Saviour, nay more, asked for a command, before he threw himself into the danger. In this midnight storm, far more awful, he acts without his Master's counsel and sanction.

Most wisely Holy Church teaches us to pray often that "all our words and works may begin always from Thee, O Lord, and by Thee be happily ended".

B. *The other disciple went and brought in Peter.*

Thanks to the charity and humility of the Heart of our Lord, He has not single-handed completed the redemption of each one of us; but left us all a little work to do for ourselves and for one another. *I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His Body which is the Church (Coloss. i.).* Each one thus may become a Jesus, a Saviour to his neighbours. Through the communion of saints one faithful servant already safe in his

eternal home goes out, we may say, to bring in another, still fighting his battle on the earth. Who can conceive the everlasting gratitude of the blessed to those who have by prayer, by penance, by labour, helped them into Heaven? And yet their gratitude is as nothing at all compared with the infinite and everlasting thanksgiving of Christ Jesus, Who says throughout eternity: What you did to My little ones, you did to Me.

### STATION III.

*The maid, therefore, that was portress saith to Peter: Art not thou also one of this Man's disciples? He saith, I am not (St. John xviii. 17).*

*Art thou one of this Man's disciples?*

I. Are we obliged to believe that the portress put this question at the moment when Peter was entering? Reading hurriedly, we should probably think that this was the case, but St. John does not say so; and later on we shall see reason to think that it was not then, but afterwards, that she indulged her unhappy curiosity.

For the question is discussed: how many times did St. Peter deny our Lord? The commonly received opinion is that he denied thrice; and it is thought by judicious commentators that our Blessed Saviour sanctioned this opinion by afterwards requiring three professions of his love from St. Peter.

Other writers, however, have taught that he denied seven times, and certainly more than three denials seem to be mentioned in the Gospels.

One thing, however, which strongly favours the common opinion is that all the Evangelists record three distinct denials, and none of them more than three. It happens more than once that we find in one Evangelist a denial not related by the others; but as they all mention three, and no more, it seems highly probable the tradition was that the Saint denied three times.

The two conflicting opinions have been reconciled in this way. St. Peter repeated his denials on *three separate and distinct occasions*, but on each occasion he was questioned more than once and denied more than once.

II. The commentators further notice progressive degrees in his denials.

*a.* On the first occasion it was a simple denial: *He said, I am not (St. John xviii.).*

b. On the second: *He denied WITH AN OATH that I know not the Man* (St. Matt. xxvi.).

c. On the third: *HE BEGAN TO CURSE AND SWEAR that he knew not the Man* (St. Matt. xxvi.).

We may then endeavour to arrange the several denials mentioned in the Gospels into three groups, or, in other words, try to determine the three occasions on which they took place.

#### STATION IV.

*The maid, therefore, that was portress saith to Peter: Art not thou also one of this Man's disciples? He saith: I am not. Now the servants and ministers stood at a fire of coals and warmed themselves. And with them was Peter also standing, and warming himself* (St. John xviii.).

*And when they had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall (the court) and were sitting about it, Peter was in the midst of them. Whom when a certain servant-maid had seen sitting at the light, and had earnestly beheld him, she said: This man also was with Him. But he denied, saying: Woman, I know Him not* (St. Luke xxii.).

*And he sat with the servants at the fire and warmed himself. Now when Peter was in the court below, there cometh one of the maid-servants of the High Priest. And when she had seen Peter warming himself, looking on him she saith: Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied, saying: I neither know nor understand what thou sayest* (St. Mark xiv.).

*And going in he sat with the servants that he might see the end. And there came to him a servant-maid, saying: Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied before them all, saying: I know not what thou sayest* (St. Matt. xxvi.).

Here we have from the four Gospels the denial that is put in the first place by each Evangelist. There seems to be no reason why we may not assume that the servant-maid who questions in all these four cases, is one and the same person, namely, the portress, who when she has finished her work at the door, and let all in who are to come in, naturally goes to the fire to warm herself with the rest—for *it was cold*, as St. John writes. Even from St. John's narrative this harmony of the four narratives looks

very probable. For though, on the one hand, he seems to join on the question put by the portress to the entrance of St. Peter—*The other disciple spoke to the portress and brought in Peter. The maid therefore that was portress saith to Peter, Art thou not also one of this Man's disciples?*—yet if we observe what follows we see that he indicates that Peter was at the fire when the portress questioned him. *He saith, I am not. Now the servants and ministers stood at a fire of coals, because it was cold, and warmed themselves. And with them was Peter also standing, and warming himself.*

Here then we have for contemplation the story of St. Peter's first fall, and the composition of place. St. John, indeed, writes that he *was* STANDING at a fire of coals. St. Matthew and St. Mark write that he SAT with the servants. This slight discrepancy is accounted for if we suppose that there are not seats enough for all the large party of servants assembled, and that some are sitting, some standing. St. Peter sometimes finds a vacant seat, and sometimes is obliged to stand.

A. *Whom when a certain servant-maid (the portress) had seen sitting at the light, and had earnestly beheld him, she said: This man also was with Him.—Art thou not also one of His disciples? Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. Thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. He saith: I am not.—Woman, I know Him not. He denied before them all, saying: I know not what thou sayest.*

Wise commentators hold that the Evangelists do not always intend to give the exact words spoken, but rather the sense. We need not, therefore, believe that this portress said all these words here given; but if she did, there would be nothing in the repetition, and in the mixture of questions and affirmatives, contrary to the nature of inquisitive curiosity.

All the Evangelists are agreed that a woman takes the lead in this outburst of unhallowed curiosity. It is from a woman, in the first place, that the scandal cometh to the future Vicar of Christ. "*Dux fœmina facti.*" On the other hand, holy writers remark that there is no instance mentioned in the Gospels of a woman taking any part in the outrages heaped on our Lord during His Passion. On the contrary, women showed compassion and stood by the Cross. There remains, however, the sad coincidence that in the beginning the Fall was in great measure helped on by a woman: and in the new creation of Jesus Christ

scandal comes to His Vicar through a woman. But to this must always be added, that the Blessed among women has abundantly and superabundantly repaired the damage done by woman.

*B. Art thou not one of this Man's disciples ?*

We must notice how the mischief originates in idle curiosity. To this woman it matters nothing at all who or what this stranger is. How little heed we give to our Saviour's word: *I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak they shall render an account of it at the Day of Judgment.*

An idle word seems to us so harmless; but we see in this courtyard, how terrible the outcome may be. If the palace had crumbled, if Jerusalem had been destroyed by earthquake, this would have been a small catastrophe compared with the fall of this holy Apostle, the future Vicar of Christ. The woman seems to speak but a passing word; but when we read of St. Peter's after years, and his enduring contrition through all the time of his exile on earth, we can see the truth of St. James' comparison, that one idle question from the restless tongue can cause a distress like the vast conflagration that grows out of a spark of fire.

Terrified by idle and unnecessary questioning, children often sully the bright innocence of childhood, and become liars. An idle question destroys fidelity, and induces the faithless tongue to betray grave secrets; an idle curiosity encourages the tale-bearer to divulge some news which engenders a life-long quarrel and bitter hatred.

If there were no curious questioners there would be few calumniators, detractors, and backbiters. There is great truth in our homely proverb: "Ask me no questions, and I will tell you no lies". Ask me no questions, and I will not sin myself by my tongue, and you will not sin by listening, and will not sin by repeating and propagating the slander or detraction which you learn from me.

Restless curiosity turns the tongue, the ears, the eyes, and all the senses into instruments of iniquity.

St. Bernard wrote a treatise on the degrees of pride; and he sets down as the first degree, curiosity of the senses. Why so? Because, he says, if we were humble and saw our own sins, we should not care much to busy ourselves about our neighbour's concerns.

C. *When a certain serving-maid had earnestly beheld him.*

Alas, how much earnestness do Christian men and women sometimes waste deplorably to find out some secret which they ought not to know! They become unpaid and unblessed detectives.

#### STATION V.

*As he went out of the gate, another maid saw him, and she saith to them that were there: This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath: That I know not the Man (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*And he went forth before the court; and the cock crew. And again a maid-servant seeing him, began to say to the standers-by: This is one of them. But he denied again (St. Mark xiv.).*

*And after a little while another seeing him, said: Thou also art one of them. But Peter said: O man, I am not (St. Luke xxii.).*

*And Simon Peter was standing and warming himself. They said therefore to him: Art thou not one of His disciples? He denied it, and said: I am not (St. John xviii.).*

Here we have the four denials that are put in the second place by the four Evangelists. We have to arrange them as well as we can in their proper order.

1. *After a little while (St. Luke).*

Therefore some interval—not a very long one—separates the second denial from the first.

2. *As he went out of the gate (St. Matt.).*

Does this mean that St. Peter went out of the enclosure into the street?

Clearly not. St. Mark's words explain St. Matthew's : *He went forth before the court.* As has been already said, a literal translation from the Greek renders the phrase more intelligible : *He went forth into the hall or vestibule* (the *προαύλιον*).

3. As he went forth into the hall the cock crew. This is the first crowing of the cock, supposed to have taken place at some uncertain time after midnight.

Considering these different passages, and drawing our inferences, we may perhaps arrange the incidents in this order.

1. After the first denial at the fire, St. Peter's soul becomes troubled. Remorse is tormenting him, and he becomes restless. He is, moreover, afraid of being questioned again. He therefore withdraws from the group gathered round the fire, and goes, through the interior gate, from the court into the hall, to see if he can there escape notice. He cannot as yet make up his mind to leave the building. He still retains that desire which he had when he came in : *Going in he sat with the servants that he might see the end.*

2. It is not, however, easy for him to remain unnoticed. To use St. James' comparison, a spark of fire soon spreads if there is combustible matter lying about ; and so does a word spread quickly, where gossiping is rife. It has gone about among the servants that one of the disciples of Jesus is among them, and Peter has been pointed out as the one. To his dismay, then, as he is passing through the gate into the hall, he hears once more the dreaded words : *This man also was with Jesus of Nazareth. This is one of them ;* and on this occasion also, *the stone of stumbling and the rock of scandal* is the idle and restless curiosity of a woman. This time he is so terror-stricken and confused that *he denied with an oath : I know not the Man.*

Finding then that there is no safety for him in the hall, he thinks it better to try to lose himself in the crowd in the courtyard ; and therefore makes his way back to the fire. No sooner is he returned, and *standing and warming himself*, than some of those here say to him : *Art thou not one of His disciples ? He denied it and said, I am not.*

A. *Thou also art one of them.*

With much compassion we can contemplate St. Peter wandering about in this distressing uncertainty : *He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea which is moved and carried about by the wind* (St. James i.). The grace of the Holy Ghost is what steadies us : *Virtute firmans perpeti.*

B. *After a little while.*

When we yield to temptation and fall, unless we rise very promptly and very thoroughly, a second and worse fall is more easy than the first. Those who put off confession after a first sin forget that until they are restored to God's grace by a good absolution, the devil has much more power over them. The father of lies, knowing this advantage that he has, always endeavours to persuade one who has fallen, that he must delay before making a confession; that it is not decent or reverent to go at once to confession; that time is required for preparation. But time is not the appointed preparation for absolution. If one rises, and quickly makes strong acts of faith, that God is a merciful Father, that the wounds of Jesus are crying louder than his sins, and if with a firm hope he hastens to confession, this is a much better preparation for absolution than slow delays can be. We must never forget this teaching of our spiritual guides, that Satan cares little for the victory he gains when a sin is committed, unless he can persuade the fallen man to commit a second and worse sin, by casting away hope. If a man sins and rises quickly with a strong hope, Satan flies away full of confusion and chagrin.

C. *Simon Peter was standing and warming himself.*

How easy it is to fall again if we remain in the same danger! Even when we confess rightly and are validly absolved, still it is rash and reckless and a great presumption to go back at once, without necessity, to the place where it is so difficult to walk without meeting *the stone of stumbling*.

D. *They said therefore to him : Art thou not one of His disciples ?*

How great is the power of companionship! *We have all gone astray like sheep.*

If the good keep together in guilds and sodalities, they climb together the mountain of God, and enter Heaven in legions. So is it with the worldly and the wicked; they become sinful by the contagion of example and conversation. Hence the Psalmist says: *They are laid in Hell*

*like sheep*: the whole flock perishing together. St. Peter has been accustomed to companionship with our Lord, with the Blessed Mother of God, with Christ's chosen ones. He is now quite out of place. *What concord hath Christ with Belial?* (2 Cor. vi.).

Surely we are much inclined to underrate the power that companionship has over us. In the old times, God ordered peremptorily the extermination of wicked men and women, lest His people should be tainted by companionship. How strongly, too, does St. Paul speak: *Bear not the yoke with unbelievers. What part hath the faithful with the unbeliever? Wherefore go out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord* (2 Cor. vi.).

Some say: "I am yoked with an unbeliever, but we get on very well together". When a Catholic and an unbeliever get on well together, too often the Catholic has met the unbeliever half-way; and unconsciously agreed to suppress a certain amount of his creed. The saying is true: "Tell me a man's companions, and I will tell you his character". The familiar proverb says the same thing in more homely words: "Birds of a feather flock together".

**E. He went forth before the court, and the cock crew.**

It is worthy of note, that the first crowing of the cock seems to produce no effect on the mind of St. Peter. He does not heed it. So is it with sermons and good books, and even such a miracle as our Lord worked in the Garden; unless grace works inwardly, the voice speaking outwardly has no more power than the *sounding brass and tinkling cymbal*.

**F. He denied with an oath.**

We must observe, too, how sin grows. Job said, *Man born of a woman never continueth in the same state*. This is true of the spiritual life also. The holy man is ever planning new *ascensions in his heart* (Psalm lxxxiii.), and Satan is never content with conquests gained. He works perseveringly, till he has induced his victim to seal his doom by death-bed despair.

## STATION VI.

*And after a little while they came that stood by, and said to Peter : Surely thou art also one of them, for even thy speech doth discover thee. Then he began to curse and to swear that he knew not the Man (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*And after a while they that stood by said again to Peter : Surely thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean. But he began to curse and to swear, saying : I know not this Man of Whom you speak (St. Mark xiv.).*

*And after the space as it were of one hour, another certain man affirmed, saying : Of a truth this man was also with Him, for he is also a Galilean. And Peter said : Man, I know not what thou sayest (St. Luke xxii.).*

*One of the servants of the High Priest (a kinsman to him whose ear Peter cut off) saith to him : Did I not see thee with Him in the Garden ? Again therefore Peter denied (St. John xviii.).*

1. These are the four denials, which the four Evangelists set in the third place. There seems to be no difficulty in taking for granted that they all belong to one and the same occasion.

2. *After the space as it were of one hour* (St. Luke). There is, therefore, an interval of about an hour, between the second and third denial. The first and second probably come somewhat more close together.

St. Matthew and St. Mark's word, *After a little while—after a while*, may be interpreted by St. Luke's *After the space of an hour*.

3. It is not stated here that St. Peter is still at the fire, but it seems clear that he is in the midst of the servants, as several take part this time in questioning him : *They came that stood by and said : Surely thou art one of them ?* (St. Matt.).

*They that stood by said again to Peter* (St. Mark). *Another certain man affirmed* (St. Luke). *One of the servants (a kinsman of him whose ear Peter cut off), saith to him : Did I not see thee with Him in the Garden ?*

4. All the persons here mentioned may form part of one group, and ask these questions, or make these affirmations quickly following one another.

5. At what time of the night does this occur ?

St. Mark is the only Evangelist who tells us that our Lord when prophesying in the Cenacle, used the words : *before the cock crow twice*. He also is the only one who records that after the first denial, *the cock crew*.

The question arises : Is there every night a first and a second crowing of the cock at a fixed hour? Opinions on this point vary. Some well versed in natural history tell us that the first crowing was the effect of the tumultuous arrival of the soldiers and servants, which awoke the cocks from their sleep. Adopting this opinion, we may perhaps fix the first denial and the first crowing of the cock shortly after 1 o'clock in the morning, the second denial perhaps half an hour later, at 1:45. The third denial then, and the second crowing of the cock, would come towards the end of the third night watch, that is, towards 3 o'clock, A.M., according to our reckoning.

*A. He began to curse and swear.*

On this third occasion also, we notice how sin grows. *He began to curse and swear that he knew not the Man.* He calls God to witness that he is speaking the truth, and he utters imprecations against himself, if he is speaking any falsehood.

“Mother of God, Refuge of sinners, pray for us sinners, that we may not sin; but if we are so unhappy as to sin, that we may not allow sin to abide in our soul, and grow; but may quickly remember that *we have an Advocate with the Father, thy Son, Jesus Christ the Just*” (1 St. John ii.).

*Let not the sun go down upon your anger,* St. Paul writes. Ought we to lie down at night to sleep, with sin of any kind unforgiven? Theologians hold it to be a grave sin, if a priest, by refusing to hear a confession when he can do it, causes a man to remain even one night in mortal sin. If so, how terribly is he duped, who, after sin, is persuaded by the father of lies to remain weeks and months without absolution. Unclean animals wallowing in the mire give some faint conception of the depravity of such souls. The Holy Spirit mentions among the rewards attached to almsgiving this one: *From the merciful all these things shall be taken away, and they shall not wallow in sins* (Eccclus. xxiii.).

*B. Again therefore Peter denied.*

St. Ambrose and another holy Father seem to think that St. Peter did not sin grievously. The few who follow

this opinion try to show that there was something mysterious in his words when he denied. They quote, too, the instance of Chusai, who, in order to befriend David his master, pretended to have renounced him and gone over to Absalom. They say that St. Peter was carried away by his great desire to *see the end*, and to know all that should befall his beloved Master, and through fear of being turned out, used equivocal words. St. Chrysostom, however, St. Augustine, and with them most other commentators on the Gospel, hold that the blessed Apostle was permitted to fall grievously.

C. They give some reasons why his fall was permitted by Divine Providence.

1. That the Church of Christ may have a Pastor who *can have compassion on them that are ignorant and that err : because he himself also is compassed with infirmity*. St. Peter is naturally self-reliant and impetuous. A man of that character when placed in authority might be inclined to lord it over his subjects, as the *Kings of the Gentiles do*. Christ Jesus, on the contrary, lays down for His Vicar this rule : *He that is the leader, let him become as he that serveth* (St. Luke xxii.).

2. Our Lord, Who makes all things, even sin, co-operate unto good for His elect, foresees, moreover, what an example to His Church will be the life-long contrition and penance of His Vicar. So that the blessed angels will be able to say : *Felix Petri culpa*.

3. The fall of Peter and his contrition will effectually cure all the jealousy of the other Apostles and disciples, and make them see that with our Lord, *the race is not to the swift* : but that He chooses and elects the lowly.

4. We remember also the principle laid down by our Lord to St. Paul : *Virtue is perfected in infirmity*. Our Lord having seen Lucifer fall through pride, and Adam and Eve sin because they wish to be as gods, abhors pride ; and tolerates sin in order that the remembrance of sin may cure pride.

**D. Again therefore Peter denied.**

We may call to mind some events that prepared the way for his fall.

1. When our Blessed Saviour said to Peter, *Whither I go thou canst not follow Me now*, he answered with some want of humility: *Why cannot I follow Thee? I will lay down my life for Thee.* Our Blessed Saviour, however, has compassion on him, and thinks more of the love that dictates this answer than of the admixture of presumption by which the bright gold is dimmed.

2. When our Saviour said: *All you shall be scandalised in Me this night*: again Peter answered: *Although all shall be scandalised in Thee I will never be scandalised.* Here again love is spoiled by self-reliance and self-esteem, which moves him to set himself above the rest.

3. Again our Lord rejoins: *This night thou wilt deny Me thrice.* St. Peter, with too much irreverence, holds to his own judgment: *Yea, though I should die with Thee I will not deny Thee.*

4. In the Garden our Saviour earnestly warned him to pray, and spoke to him by name! But St. Peter did not then believe that the flesh was so weak.

5. Lastly, as Josue, because he did not first consult the Lord, was tricked into a pernicious alliance with the Gabaonites, so St. Peter, without counsel or inspiration from his Master, enters rashly into the house of Christ's enemies and has evil communication with very unfit and unblessed companions.

From all that has passed in the courtyard it seems tolerably clear that neither Judas nor the disciple who came with Peter, was there during the denials. The other disciple who came with Peter *and who was known to the High Priest*, has probably been allowed to go up to the judgment-hall, to witness what passes there.

## STATION VII.

*And he began to curse and to swear, saying : I know not this Man of Whom you speak. And immediately the cock crew again. And Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said unto him : Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt thrice deny Me (St. Mark xiv.).*

*And the Lord turning looked on Peter : and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, as He had said : Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice (St. Luke xxiii.).*

A. By this time, as we have seen, the trial of Jesus in the hall above is ended, and sentence pronounced: *He is guilty of death.* The Priests and Ancients have handed Him over to the custody of the servants, and the guards of the Temple, and have retired to rest. These guards have the strictest orders to shut Him up most carefully in the dungeon reserved for great criminals. They therefore lead Jesus down the steps from the hall of judgment to *the court below.* In order to reach the dungeon whither they are leading their prisoner they pass through this courtyard. The fourth watch of the night is near at hand. That is to say, it is close upon three o'clock in the morning, and St. Peter has just uttered with oaths and imprecations the words: *I know not the Man of Whom you speak.* For the last time, yes, thanks to the infinite charity of our Lord, for the last time in all his life, he has denied his Master, when suddenly he sees the procession passing through the door of the judgment-hall and coming down the steps. They hasten along the courtyard towards the dungeon. His Divine Master's back is turned towards him. The second cock crow has begun, but he heeds it not. With trouble and misery in his heart his eye is now riveted on his Lord, and he sees Him beaten and bruised and cruelly dragged along, and passing away from him, it may be for ever. Suddenly Jesus turns round and fixes His Eyes for a short moment on the eyes of His Apostle, and then turns back again to walk on His way to His prison.

Once more the crowing of the cock is heard; but this time it cannot pass unheeded. It is like the voice of the trumpet that shall wake the dead to life. It is like that loud cry at Bethany that brought Lazarus out of his grave.

B. *In divers manners* our Blessed Saviour can speak to us. In this hour His silent eyes have spoken a word as powerful as that word uttered in the beginning: *Let there be light*. Some holy servants of the Lord favoured with revelations concerning the Sacred Passion seem to think that, after the passing of Jesus, some hours of agonising attrition passed, before the fallen Apostle was restored to grace and love; but the opposite opinion is well supported, that St. Peter's restoration to grace and love was instantaneous. *In ictu oculi*, at the first glance from our Saviour's Eye, that thick darkness, *come up from the lowest and deepest hell*, is scattered and cleared away—and for ever. *Night shall be no more*, Apostle of the Lord, *thy sun shall go down no more: and thy moon shall not decrease: for the Lord shall be there for an everlasting light. Iniquity shall no more be heard in thy land—salvation shall possess thy walls; and praise thy gates—I am the Lord, thy Saviour and thy Redeemer* (Isaias lx.).

Some penitents pass through a long period of attrition to reach this loving contrition; but, as has been said, it is thought that St. Peter was raised at once from sin to fervent love.

C. *The Lord turning looked on Peter.*

Till the Lord turned and looked on him, the crowing of the cock had no effect. St. Luke tells us the order of this great conversion. *The Lord turning looked on Peter, and then he remembered the word of the Lord: Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice.*

No voice, not the voice of man or angel, can raise us from death to life till the Lord turns and looks on us.

*“Deus tu conversus vivificabis nos.”* *Thou wilt turn round, Lord Jesus, and wilt bring us to life. Show to us, also, Thy mercy and grant us Thy salvation* (Psalm lxxxiv.).

“Turn Thine eyes of mercy on us, Lord Jesus, and show us Thy Father and our Father, Thy God and our God, Whom we have offended and abandoned.”

“Turn thine eyes of mercy towards us, Holy Mother of God, and show us the blessed fruit of thy womb Jesus, Whom we have betrayed and denied.”

#### STATION VIII.

*And Peter remembered the word which the Lord had said to him, and he began to weep (St. Mark xiv.).*

*And going forth he wept bitterly (St. Matt. xxvi.).*

*And Peter going out wept bitterly (St. Luke xxii.).*

There is a different reading in some copies of the Greek text, which interpreters render: *Covering his head he wept.*

#### A. *Going forth he wept bitterly.*

One immediate effect of his conversion is that he hastens away from the occasion of his fall. His heart is turned again entirely to his Master, but he does not stay any more *to see the end*. His eyes are opened to see his own frailty; and every other wish must give place to the preservation of his soul from further sin.

Domine Jesu, noverim me: noverim te.

Give me grace, Lord Jesus, to know all my own badness and weakness; and all Thy goodness, compassion, and charity.

B. *He began to weep.* Early Christian writers tell us that his tears and his contrition ceased not till he expired on his cross. He was a penitent, a man of compunction through life. Pulse, we are told, was his food. The ground, or a hard board, his bed. And wherever he is spending the night, in bed or in the fishing-boat, at the hour of the cock crow his tears begin again to flow. Nicephorus the historian states that his eyes were habitually bloodshot through his continual weeping.

C. *He began to weep.*

His advice to Bishops, in after years, is that they are not to rule as *lording it over their clergy, but being made a pattern of the flock from the heart.* He was an admirable pattern of humble penance to the Church; *the hidden man of the heart in the incorruptibility of a quiet and a meek spirit* (1 St. Peter iii.). The effect of his penitential and contrite and humble life was so salutary, that, as has been said, holy souls might well exclaim: *Felix Petri culpa.*

An ancient writer treating of the 50th Psalm, *Miserere*, says to David: "By causing tears to flow down the cheeks of generations to come, you have perpetuated your own tears, so that they are never dried up. It was a great grace to all mankind that a man sinned who so thoroughly atoned for his sin." Even so, may we say that it has greatly served the Christian Church to have for its first shepherd one who had fallen, and been such a pattern of compunction and penance.

D. *He went out and wept bitterly.*

Appearing on a certain day to St. Bridget, St. Peter speaks to her of his fall. "As often," he said, "as I recollected how much I had sinned, and how I denied Him, I wept bitterly, because I now had learned to love perfectly; and tears were a gladness to me, and as savoury food. Have you not heard how completely forgetful I had become? For I had been thoroughly instructed in the ways of the Lord; and had bound myself by oath to live and die with my God. Yet when questioned, at the first word of a woman I denied the Truth. And why? Because God left me to myself; and I did not know myself.

"But what did I do afterwards? Then indeed I began to study myself; how of myself I was nothing; and I arose and ran back to God, the Truth, Who imprinted on my heart such a remembrance of His Name, that never after, either when scourged, or when standing in the presence of tyrants, could I forget Him."

E. *He wept bitterly.* We are sometimes ashamed to

confess our sins; but we see here that if to sin is shameful, to confess our sins is glory to God and great honour to ourselves.

Men sometimes ask whether their forgiven sins will be made known at the Judgment. We have the answer in this scene. The sins of St. Peter and St. Magdalen and all other penitents are changed by contrition into bright jewels. One reason why lost souls will cry out in such anguish, *We fools!* is this, that they see now how easily they could have repented and won mercy, as others did who had sinned as much as they had.

*F. Going out, he wept bitterly.*

We must beg of the Blessed Apostle to obtain for us some share of his lasting compunction; that we may treasure up that word of the Holy Ghost: *Be not without fear about sin forgiven* (Ecclus. v.); understanding, however, the Sacred Word aright; for we are not told to live always doubting anxiously whether our sins be forgiven; but, even if we knew by revelation that our sins are forgiven, not to cast aside the remembrance of them, but to continue in the spirit of holy fear and compunction. With Zacheus we must say: *I will repay four-fold.* "I will repay abundantly the wrong I have done to my God, and to my neighbour." *Be not without fear about sin forgiven; and lay not sin upon sin.*

Observe the last words: *Lay not sin upon sin.* Because, if immediately after confession we cast our sins behind our back, and think no more of them, there is every danger of relapse, we shall *lay sin upon sin.*

*G. Going out, he wept bitterly.*

We must also beg of the Blessed Apostle to obtain for us the grace not to be content with attrition; and not to rest till we have secured for our souls that loving contrition which blots out sin even if absolution cannot be had; yes, and before absolution is pronounced, provided we have the desire of sacramental confession as soon as it is practicable.

*H. He wept bitterly.*

*Who like the Lord our God, who looketh down on the low things in Heaven and on earth, lifting up the poor out of the dunghill? (Psalm cxii.).*

Who but our most gracious and patient God, *easy to forgive evil*, could have devised this plan by which we can, through contrition, change our sins into everlasting jewels, which the *thief cannot steal, nor the moth consume?*

I. *He wept bitterly.*

We hire masters to teach us many things. We must not forget this one thing necessary, to learn to weep for past sins. It behoves us to make a study of contrition; to understand well what a true act of contrition is. Oh, what a cruel disappointment it is at a very critical examination to find that we have prepared the wrong matter! Infinitely more to find at the Judgment that we have brought with us spurious contrition instead of genuine. Patiently and perseveringly we must learn our lesson till we are able to say from our hearts: I am sorry, truly sorry, that I have offended—

1. My good God.
2. My loving Creator and my Father.
3. My most merciful Redeemer.
4. Further, we must examine carefully when we prepare for confession whether we have joined to our sorrow good *hope* in the abundant redemption of Jesus Christ; whether we have a firm confidence that His wounds will cry louder than our sins, and win for us, not only forgiveness for the past, but abundant strength against future dangers.

5. We must also test our contrition by seeing diligently whether we have a good and sufficient purpose of amendment.

6. Then, too, we must wisely consider whether, with Zacheus, we wish very much to repair all the wrong we have done to God and to man.

7. One very sure sign of contrition is when the penitent is able to say humbly with the Prodigal: *I am no longer worthy to be called Thy son: make me as one of Thy hired*

*servants.* And when with the Good Thief, we can accept troubles and sufferings and shame saying: *We are receiving the just reward of our deeds.*

8. Lastly, while begging earnestly and with persevering importunity for loving contrition, we must carefully reject the delusion that the words, *Rend your hearts and not your garments*, mean that outward penance avails nothing. No outward forms, it is true, can profit, if there be not interior grace; but as interior diseases of the body show themselves on the surface, and inward good health manifests itself in the brightness of the eye and freshness of the countenance, so inward contrition must break forth into outward penance. And, moreover, we gather from the lives of the holy, that the grace of strong, loving contrition is, as a rule, granted in reward for deeds of outward penance. *Sacrifice a sacrifice of justice and hope in the Lord* (Psalm iv.). Hope, and love, and loving contrition grow out of humble practices of penance.

J. The question is asked: Did St. Peter lose his faith during those unhappy hours in the outer court? The holy Fathers and learned commentators seem to be unanimous, or nearly so, in their answer: that his faith did not fail, according to the prophetic word of our Saviour: *I have prayed for thee that thy faith may not fail.* He had not the firmness to profess outwardly. He sinned, as many Christians afterwards sinned, under persecution, by a want of courage. And this outward denial was often called apostasy, but like other grievous sins, the outward sin might be committed without destroying inward faith.

K. Holy writers commenting on that word of our Lord: *And thou when thou shalt be converted, confirm thy brethren*, observe, that not only by preaching and teaching the faith did he confirm his brethren, but also greatly by his persevering contrition and practice of penance.

L. *He wept bitterly.*

How well he afterwards repaired his sin by loving

much, he himself disclosed to St. Bridget. "So fervent was I in my hatred of sin, so fired with zeal to promote holiness, that if I could have converted the whole world to God, I would not for a moment have spared either my life or labours."

M. St. Mark in his Gospel twice mentions that St. Peter was at the fire *warming himself*. As St. Peter told him many other things that we read in his Gospel, was it he who wished this fact to be recorded, which he afterwards deplored? We may be sure that this thought would intensify his contrition, that he was warming himself while his Master was in chains and covered with bruises. There are times when self-indulgence seems more unpardonable. Urias could not be persuaded to go into his house to eat and drink and sleep, while his general and his fellow-soldiers were lying on the battlefield.

We spend our lives going round about the holy altar on which the Sacred Passion is perpetuated. So that when we indulge ourselves unduly, we have reason to lament with St. Peter that we are warming ourselves while our Lord is in chains and covered with bruises.

N. The story of our Lord's life is told in two words: "*Subditus erat*"—*He was subject*. These other two words: "*Calefaciebat se*"—*he was warming himself*, is a short epitome of a selfish, sensual life. Even in prayer, sometimes, love of our own comfort predominates.

As in these chapters some thoughts have been borrowed from the book called *The Mystic City of God*, by the Venerable Mother Mary of Jesus, commonly called Mary of Agreda (the town in which she lived), it is necessary to give some information about her and her writings. When they were first published, one of the official censors appointed to pronounce upon them was Father Andreas Mendo, of the Society of Jesus. From Father de Backer's Catalogue we learn that this Father de Mendo lectured on Sacred Scripture with distinction at Salamanca; was Rector of the Irish College in the same city; was appointed Preacher before the Court; and was author of several works on Moral Theology, on questions of Canon Law, and other subjects.

His commendation of the writings of the Abbess is very strong :

"As I read them through, emotions of astonishment and admiration were as many as there are lines in the volumes. I have learned more from these volumes concerning the questions treated in them than I have from the many books which I have in the course of years studied with persevering diligence. This is due to the clearness, the cleverness, the depth of thought with which the subjects are handled. It is easy to see that the doctrine is from Heaven; and that a supernatural hand is guiding the pen. The book is a precious mine which has been discovered to enrich the Church.

"One thing excites surprise: that a woman could write such a masterly work in which is discovered a rare knowledge of all the Sacred Books; and in which great light is shed on many passages in the Holy Scriptures, and many interpretations suggested which are a wonder, when we consider that the writer had never been trained by a course of theological studies.

"Scholastic questions are also frequently explained tersely and with great clearness. Nowhere do we discover traces of temerity or ignorance.

"She wrote these volumes simply out of deference to the commands of her Superiors; and also in obedience to commands from our Lord and His Holy Mother.

"The commands from her Superiors were not given till the spirit of Sister Mary of Jesus had been carefully studied by appointed confessors, who were eminent theologians. The Superiors of the Order, moreover, did not act in haste. Nothing was published till several years after the death of the Abbess, and after her writings had been again submitted to a severe censorship."

The Jesuit Father continues: "By her own unaided powers, the Venerable Mother could never have comprehended mysteries so abstruse. Human imagination could not of itself sketch out such scenes. Human intellect could not have produced so admirable a harmony. Pious meditations could not have linked together such a precious chain.

"To give my assent to the publication of these writings I wanted no other persuasion than the reading of the volumes; and I think they will have the same effect on others.

"True it is that many events and much information about the prerogatives of our Lady, not found in other writings, are met with here; but let any one read the work through, and, I think, all suspicion of rashness will disappear. It has pleased God to communicate many lights to St. Catherine, St. Bridget, St. Teresa of Jesus, and in later years to Marina d'Escobar. The hand of God is not shortened. One thing that inspires confidence in the writings of the Venerable Abbess is the fact that for twenty-five years she was, by dispensation, re-elected to govern her convent, and continued in office till her death, with great satisfaction both to her Superiors and her subjects.

"By the providence of God it happened that the General of the Franciscan Order assisted her on her death-bed, and testified

warmly to her remarkable obedience, her profound humility and singular patience; which virtues justified the high idea commonly entertained of her sanctity. It was he who, after looking at her writings, wished them to be again carefully revised, in order that her own Sisters in Religion, and the faithful outside also, might benefit by them."

**END OF THE THIRD NIGHT WATCH.**

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE FOURTH NIGHT WATCH.

From 3 to 6 A.M.

## SCENE I.

## THE DUNGEON.

## STATION I.

*And the men that held Him, mocked Him and struck Him*  
(St. Luke xxii. 63).

A. The command of the High Priests, before they retire to rest, is again and again repeated and enforced with stern threats, that Jesus of Nazareth must be guarded and watched with the utmost strictness, lest He escape. Wo to His keepers if they are negligent !

The Rulers are, as usual, devising *vain things against the Lord, and against His Christ*. All the guards may safely retire to rest with their masters. Every door may stand open. One little child is strong enough and wise enough to keep Jesus safe, for He Himself wills to be a captive. But "Alas! Sion," He is saying in His Heart, *these things are hidden from thy eyes*.

B. Therefore, having led Him through the outer court to the prison, they there carry out their orders with merciless severity.

In the account which the Spanish Abbess, Mary of Jesus, has left of this scene of the Passion as shown to her, the prison is described as an underground dungeon, reserved for the worst criminals.

According to that ancient cruel rule, "*væ victis*," this dungeon is so arranged as to aggravate all the sorrows of

the doomed prisoner. The light of Heaven can scarcely enter; the fresh air not at all.

The stench from long-accumulated filth has poisoned the confined air. In the middle of that rocky floor stands a pillar of about two feet in height. This pillar is said to be one of the three still preserved in Jerusalem and Rome.

As it is seen by the Abbess, it appears to be like a pointed rock projecting from the ground. To this pillar an iron ring is attached, and to this ring His wrists are tightly tied. His legs are also bound to the pillar. Secured in this way, He cannot lie down, and cannot stand upright, but must remain bent double. Some of the more active of the Priests and Ancients wait there to see the orders carried out; and during the whole time spent in leading Him to the prison, and making Him secure, the word of the Evangelist is abundantly verified: *The men that held Him, mocked and struck Him.*

Like everything else during the Sacred Passion, this work is done quickly. The Priests and Ancients, as soon as they feel sure that His escape is impossible, make haste to quit the fetid air. But before they go, they pour out parting words of derision and blasphemy. "You will not be able, Jesus, to do much towards building up the Temple to-night." "You will want your twelve legions of angels to help you."

*"Jesus autem tacebat." He opened not His mouth. He is dumb as a lamb before his shearer.*

They depart, and the door is locked and barred, and our Lord remains, to our human eyes, alone. Our poor wisdom would say that the word is fulfilled: *I am become miserable and bowed down to the end* (Psalm xxxvii.).

C. But, as He said in the Supper-room: *I am not alone.* The blessed angels are all watching round their King. And in the narrative from which some of these details are taken, we are told that full of pity for the exhausted and weary Body of their Lord tortured by this new cruel

device, the blessed angels beg to be allowed to loosen the bonds of their King. But His meek answer is like His word in the Garden: "*Sinite modo*". "Let things go on. It is not too much. I am the Sinner: Do not pity Me. Pity those who do not know Me and will not love Me."

But there are other spirits there, besides the twelve legions from Heaven. The spirits of darkness are watching most earnestly, and are not at all content with what has been done. They want neither sleep nor rest. They have still much work to do. It is their hour; but their short hour is passing quickly. They are in haste.

## STATION II.

*And some began to spit on Him, and to cover His face, and to buffet Him, and to say unto Him: Prophecy; and the servants struck Him with the palms of their hands (St. Mark xiv.).*

*And the men that held Him, mocked Him and struck Him. And they blindfolded Him and smote His face. And they asked Him, saying: Prophecy, who is it that struck Thee? And blaspheming, many other things they said against Him (St. Luke xxii.).*

### A. *They blindfolded Him.*

The Holy Spirit has revealed to us elsewhere the explanation of the scene that follows. The Priests are tired out, and the Ancients. The soldiers are long since asleep in the barracks. The servants, too, want rest like their masters. But the fallen angels, rulers of the darkness, want no rest, and cannot rest. They have most urgent work to do. Every moment Lucifer is becoming more and more restless, and more determined to find out who and what Jesus is, whether only a holy man, or something more than man. He heard Him say to the High Priests, *I am the Son of God*; and he is filled with inexpressible eagerness to know what this word means. Is it a vain

boast? Is there truth in the title? And if truth there be, how much truth? To what extent is He Son of God?

B. As has been said, the revelation made by the Holy Spirit in the Book of Wisdom, lets us penetrate the veil of separation that hides the unseen world from us, and be present at the deliberations of these malicious spirits. What is their plan? *He calleth Himself the Son of God. He glorieth that He hath God for His Father. Let us see then if His words be true: let us prove what shall happen to Him, and we shall know what His end shall be.*

*For if He be the true Son of God, He will defend Him, and will deliver Him from the hands of His enemies.*

*Let us examine Him by outrages and tortures that we may know His meekness and try His patience.*

*These things they thought, the Holy Spirit adds, and were deceived, for their own malice blinded them (Wisdom ii.).*

Here we have the plan of Lucifer fully detailed, and it corresponds exactly with what we read in the accounts given by the privileged servants of our Lord, of what was shown to them.

Lucifer, then, and his colleagues are watching most attentively the bearing of our Saviour under suffering, in order to see if they can find some traces of unholy impatience. Hitherto they have not discovered the smallest sign of imperfection; but they think that enough has not been done to conquer His endurance. Therefore they strongly urge His gaolers to heap on more atrocities: *Let us examine Him by outrages and tortures that we may know His meekness and try His patience.*

C. The head warder, therefore, who is in charge, and entrusted with the keys, moved by these instigations of the unseen spirits, picks out some of the most degraded and brutal among his fellows; and possibly, too, calls back one or another of the Priests and Rulers who are still lingering about, and invites them to go down to enjoy some special pastime, and make some further experiments on the prisoner.

For the sake, then, of indulging their malicious cruelty, they descend to the underground dungeon and brave all the filth and stench and infected air.

*It is your hour, our Saviour said, and the power of darkness.* In every scene of the Passion we must keep in mind that the unseen spirits of wickedness and darkness are inspiring and guiding and goading to madness the cruelty and malice of the men who are their dupes, and whom they despise.

“From the snares of the devil, O Lord, deliver us.”

D. *They blindfolded Him and they asked Him, saying: Prophesy, who is it that struck Thee?*

“*Attendite.*” Our Lord’s Divinity has been outraged in the judgment-hall above, now Lucifer directs his ministers to blaspheme and scoff at Him as a Prophet.

E. *And blaspheming, many other things they said against Him.*

Those who have considered these words of St. Luke have at times been in doubt whether they mean that blasphemies too indecent to be written are uttered against our Lord. The writings of the Spanish Abbess which have been referred to give us a useful light on this point.

It was shown to her that in this scene of the Sacred Passion, where the servants are acting without any authority, or any forms of law, the spirits of darkness see their opportunity, and strongly urge their dupes and ministers to strip our Saviour of His clothes and try His meekness and His patience by adding indecency to cruelty; but this is not to be. For, in the first place, our Blessed Lady is, as has been said, present in spirit at every scene of the Passion, seeing every detail, hearing every word, and through an effort of the Divine power, feeling every blow and every insult most vividly. As the second Eve she is allowed to drink so largely with her Son of the sacred chalice, that every bruise and wound inflicted upon His Body is in due measure reproduced in her. So much so that, when the cords tied tightly round the wrists of Jesus are inflicting

cruel agony on Him, she is sharing pain to such an extent that the Abbess, in her vision, sees the drops of blood oozing from under the finger-nails of our Lady's hands. To her also, as to St. Bridget, it is shown several times during the scenes of the Passion, that the tears falling from the eyes of the Blessed Mother are drops of blood.

Thus then, as might have been expected, the primeval prophecy is having its fulfilment during this night as well as on the morrow. The woman is enduring the fierce assault of the prince of darkness by the side of the second Adam, her Son: *The dragon shall persecute the woman as well as the Man* (Apoc. xii.).

*F. And blaspheming, many other things they said against Him.*

But this is not all. A further light is communicated to this holy servant of God in her contemplations, by which she sees that not only is the Ever-Blessed Mother present, and witnessing and sharing everything suffered by her Divine Son, but moreover for the greater humiliation of Lucifer, he is made to feel throughout the Passion that, as the first Eve was his dupe and his ally, the second Eve is his determined enemy, with power to baffle him. Consequently, whenever Satan attempts anything not in keeping with the decrees of the Eternal Father, it is through the will of Holy Mary that he is coerced and humbled and compelled to desist.

Hence, as it was made known to this holy Abbess, the blessed Angels throughout the Passion not only abound in reverence and obedience to their King, but also, by God's appointment, with most loyal and tender reverence wait upon their Queen, who is conscious of their presence; and their orders are to execute every wish of her heart.

In this hour, therefore, as at every other moment of the Passion, when she sees the spirits of wickedness goading men on to add indecency to cruelty, at once her rebuke and peremptory command scares and confounds

them, and they are conscious that all persistence is vain. As she said to her God : *Be it done according to Thy word ;* so now His decree in her favour is : “ Be it done, Blessed Mother of My Son Jesus, according to thy word ”.

*By me, His handmaid, He hath fulfilled His mercy, which He promised to the house of Israel, and He hath killed the enemy of His people by my hand this night (Judith xiii.).*

G. *Some began to spit on Him.*

These picked men, therefore, these privileged tormentors, these willing ministers of Satan, are obliged to content themselves with carrying on more thoroughly the work of outrage begun in the judgment-hall above by their masters and models, the High Priests and Ancients. They loosen, then, the ropes that fasten the wrists of Jesus to the strong iron ring, and now use the low column as a chair of torture and mockery for Him. It is His Prophet's chair.

And first they do as they had seen their masters do. They draw near one by one, and in the foulest and coarsest way they can, they cover His sacred face with spittle and phlegm ; the difference between the works done here and the outrages in the judgment-hall being that there His tormentors had some pretence of legality. Here all is low and brutal lawlessness.

In the 68th Psalm, which tells us so many things concerning the Sacred Passion, we read : *They that drank wine made Me their song.* These men who have not only to watch, but to brave the foulness of this dungeon, may very probably have fortified themselves with wine to give them nerve for their labour. They may be these men foreshown in the Psalm : *They that drank wine made Me their song.*

H. *SOME BEGAN to spit on Him and cover His face and buffet Him, AND THE SERVANTS struck Him with the palms of their hands (St. Mark xiv.).*

In this passage we notice that the Evangelist seems to have before his mind two classes of tormentors : *SOME buffeted Him, and THE SERVANTS struck Him with the palms of their hands.*

As has been said, therefore, it is possible that even here in this place of horrors, some of the desecrated Priests, or the Ancients, are still taking part in the orgies ; or else it may be that the Evangelist is throwing together into one sentence what was done upstairs by the Rulers, and what is done here by the servants.

This at least is certain : that some with their clenched fists strike heavy blows upon His Body ; and some with their open hands strike Him on His sacred face ; and holy writers remind us that in such cases the hand may mean a soldier's gauntlet.

Again, commentators also notice that the Greek text need not necessarily mean a slap with the hand—but it might be that they struck His face with their sandals.

*They hated Me without cause* (St. John xv.).

I. *Some began to cover His face.*

To the Heart of our Blessed Saviour each new torment is a precious gain. He has foreknown and has accepted and welcomed each outrage, each blow ; and they who have been specially enlightened while contemplating the Passion, tell us that the fire that is burning in His Heart, despite the bruises and blows and spittle that are disfiguring His sacred face, lights up His features with a beauty and a glory that is beginning to amaze and terrify the unfortunate dupes of Satan who are being urged on to test His meekness and prove His patience. Their bad courage is about to fail them, when the father of lies whispers that it is only the power of Beelzebub and magical trickery that is altering His countenance, and that they must defeat this artifice by covering His eyes, which they have not courage to look upon.

A filthy cloth, then, as foul as everything else in this dungeon, is found ready there. It is used, doubtless, first to wipe His face that they may not soil their hands when they strike Him, and then it is tied as a veil over His eyes, that they may begin a new series of cruelties.

J. *They blindfolded Him and smote His face; and they asked Him, saying: Prophecy, who it is that struck Thee?*

“*Attendite.*” *O ye who pass by, stay here a little while.* Actors on the stage appear at different times in new costumes and new characters. The Sacred Passion is the great drama planned by the everlasting charity of God to draw the hearts of men to Himself. Therefore it is arranged that our Saviour shall be presented to us in many different shapes and forms of sorrow, and speak to us in such *divers ways*, that at last, in one way or the other, our hearts may be moved.

This picture of our Saviour blindfolded and buffeted is, among the rest, planned for our good with infinite charity and wisdom.

“*Fac cor amans Jesu mei*—Loving Heart of Jesus, do this for us, grant us grace that all the labour and the study of Thy everlasting charity, and all Thy suffering may not be in vain.”

K. *They blindfolded Him and smote Him.*

Listen to the shouts of laughter when any one strikes a more cruel blow or utters a more coarse blasphemy. *All they that saw Me have laughed Me to scorn: they have spoken with the lips and wagged the head. They that drank wine made Me their song. They have looked and stared upon Me* (Psalm lxxviii. and xxi.).

L. Observe, too, with the eye of faith how Lucifer and his colleagues are watching most intently each new outrage, to see if it provokes any impatience; and then at once, not losing their terrible courage, suggest still further cruelties and mockeries.

“O God, our Father in Heaven, *look on the face of Thy Christ: lead us not into temptation.* From the snares and cruelty of the devil, Lord Jesus, deliver us. Grant us to serve Thee with some share of the courage and perseverance wherewith Lucifer sins against Thee.”

M. *They blindfolded Him.*

Let us take notice how these unfortunate men, and more

especially any Priests and Ancients that may be present, persuade themselves that our Lord cannot see them; and with what derision they scoff at all His miracles and His character of Prophet; and how insultingly they challenge Him to prove His pretensions just by one single prophecy; and how they triumphantly and oracularly pronounce that His silence is proof positive that He is an impostor. Satan is wiser than they. The patient silence of our Lord is more and more disturbing him, and inclining him to the opinion that this Jesus of Nazareth may be more than man.

Again and again the wicked spirits say, as they gaze on Him, words akin to those spoken by their dupes, the Priests and Ancients: *Do you see that we prevail nothing?*

“O good Lord Jesus, gracious and compassionate, take from our foolish hearts every desire to prevail against Thee. *May Thy Kingdom come. May Thy will be done.*”

N. *They blindfolded Him and smote His face.*

Let us turn our eyes to the Ever-Blessed Mother, who is watching and listening and laying up all in her heart.

Alas! she knows that all this is only a beginning.

*What is it that has been done? The same that shall be done.* Does she not know how we so often and so habitually still live on under the impression that our God, our Father, does not see, and does not know, our acts, our words, our thoughts? They said: *How does God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?* (Psalm lxxii.).

Most of all, she sees us live on under the delusion that our Hidden God in the Blessed Eucharist is blindfolded and does not see us.

Oh, with what earnestness and perseverance ought each of us, priests and people, to repeat the cry which Holy Church encourages us so much to send up to Heaven: “O good and sweet Jesus, imprint on my soul lively sentiments of faith, hope, and charity”.

O. *They blindfolded Him and smote His face.*

We must also notice how the repeated blows and bruises are disfiguring the sacred face more and more, so that

the prophecy is being thoroughly fulfilled: *His look was as it were hidden and despised.*

If then the Eternal Son of God can thus look like an outcast—no beauty in Him, *no comeliness, no sightliness, so that we should be desirous of Him*—what wonder if His holy servants here on earth are often seen on their sick-beds, or on the scaffold, or in the rags of their poverty, as if they were a fit reproach for men, and stricken by God? While contemplating Jesus in this disfigurement, we must learn to value the unsightly rags of His poor, and the disfigurement of the death-bed. *Look not on His countenance. Nor do I judge according to the look of man: for man seeth those things which appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart* (1 Kings xvi.).

*P. They blindfolded Him and smote His face.*

In the story of holy Job we notice how Lucifer's insolent retort to God is that he has not been permitted to put forth his whole strength against His servant, so faithful to his Creator—otherwise he would certainly lose patience and curse God.

The spirit of the prince of darkness is now the same, only much intensified, ever full of hope that the next outrage, more cruel than all before, will at last conquer this Man made of the dust of the earth.

*Q. They blindfolded Him and smote His face.*

The Prophet of the Sacred Passion sets before us one more torture which no doubt is applied in this hour, though not mentioned in the Gospel:

*I have given My Body to the strikers and MY CHEEKS TO THEM THAT PLUCKED THEM. I have not turned away My face from them that rebuked Me and spit upon Me* (Isaias l.).

Plucking out the hair from our Lord's beard is doubtless one of the cruel outrages inspired by the malignant spirit, whose whole strength is now put forth in order to test by outrages whether the patience of Jesus is more than human. *Let us examine Him by outrages and tortures. He calleth*

*Himself the Son of God. Let us see then if His words be true.*

*“Jesus autem tacebat”—He opened not His mouth.*

*R. They blindfolded Him and smote His face.*

*And I have given My cheeks to them that plucked them.*

The unseen spirits of wickedness can devise no further torment at present. With unspeakable vexation and trouble they are forced to say again: *Do you see that we prevail nothing?* In times past when He came near, they cried out: *What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Son of God? Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?* Immeasurably more is His unalterable humility and meekness tormenting now these spirits of pride and malice.

*“From the snares of the devil, deliver us, O Lord.”*

*S. They blindfolded Him.*

Of the Blessed Mother we may say in the Prophet's words: *Weeping, she hath wept through the night, and her tears are on her cheeks.* Yet, while she contemplates the victory which the meekness of her Son is winning over the infernal powers, her heart, with ineffable contentment, is saying: *My soul doth magnify the Lord, my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.*

Let us join our hearts with hers. *Thanks be to God, Who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

In international contests the champion who wins, wins for his whole nation; all are proud of him. So, too, our most loving Saviour, our Brother, is fighting and winning, not for Himself alone, but for the whole fallen and enslaved family.

*“Benediction and glory and honour and praise be during this fourth watch of the night to this silent and victorious meekness of Christ Jesus, and to the humble and loving compassion of His Blessed Mother.”*

## STATION III.

*Then they did spit in His face and buffeted Him*  
(St. Matt. xxvi. 67).

A. These savage men are tired out. These lovers of brutality, these experts in cruelty, these human beings possessed by unseen wicked spirits, they are all worn out. They, like their masters, feel a want of repose; and oh, wonder inconceivable! such is the length and breadth and height and depth of the charity and the meekness of our God, the Creator of these men, and their Father in Heaven, that He is ready to wait upon them, to conduct them to their rest; to maintain the stillness of the night for them, that they may find repose. *Who is like the Lord our God, gracious and patient and easy to forgive evil?* Oh, with what infinite joy would He forgive if men would turn to Him!

B. They are tired out, and so they take off the filthy clout from His eyes, and they begin their parting mockeries, asking Him: why He would not speak? why He would not tell who struck Him?

They add also their parting blows and slaps and buffets, and, as they had wiped His sacred face in order to strike without soiling their hands, so now that their work is done, in order to leave Him as they found Him, once more they cover His sacred face with phlegm and spittle.

What can they do worse? Among the Jews, spitting in the face was the extreme of indignity. When Moses cried to God for his sister struck with leprosy: *O God, I beseech Thee heal her. The Lord answered him: If her father had spitten upon her face, ought she not to have been ashamed for seven days at least? Let her be separated seven days without the camp* (Numbers xii.).

So that a child on whom her father had spitten is classed with the unclean lepers, to be separated for seven days. Jesus has been spitten upon by the sacred lips of

the Priests, from which nothing but truth is supposed to come. More strongly than by words, the lips of the Priests have declared Him a leper and an outcast.

But "*quanto vilior tanto carior,*" the more He is outraged, the more dear He is to His watching Mother, and to the blessed angels, and to His Eternal Father.

C. *They blindfolded Him.*

All the work, however, done in this dungeon has been unauthorised and lawless; they must now, therefore, before they withdraw, besides spitting on His face, put all things back in the state in which they were when the Priests saw the gate of the dungeon closed and barred.

Once more, then, Jesus is bound; His wrists tightly fastened to the iron ring in the low column; His legs also bound to it with ropes. Thus they leave Him—as far as human eye can judge—*miserable and bowed down, a Man of Sorrows, acquainted with infirmity—a Man without help—the poor Man of the broken heart.*

D. "*Attendite.*" It is a fitting place to do what St. Ignatius recommends, to let our hearts give a little time to count up and measure all the different varieties of shame, of pain, of reproach, of outrage, which our Saviour, our Brother, the representative and Redeemer of our fallen race has undergone in this dungeon, and by which He has sanctified the fourth watch of the night. Mark the strained and most painful position chosen for His weary and exhausted Body; the suffering and agony caused while the cords and ropes are being fastened again; count the bruises from the blows and buffets; notice the livid marks on His pale and swollen face. Reckon up how many times He has been spit upon. Keep in mind, too, the multiplied words of blasphemy; and remember that foul, begrimed rag that covered His eyes; and forget not the sickening stench from the filth accumulated in that dungeon of pitiless cruelty, which reminds Him of the many who have been here saturated with suffering.

All their torments are now present to His most tender Heart. *O all you who pass by, He says to us most humbly, come and see if there be sorrow like to My sorrow.*

“Come and see, too, whether I love you or not. Come and plead with Me, and see if there be anything more that I ought to do for your soul.

“I have suffered many things in this dungeon. For which of them all do you shun Me, and neglect Me, and keep aloof from Me, as from an austere enemy?”

“Mother of God, pray for us sinners.”

*E. They blindfolded Him and smote His face.*

In this last watch of the night is fulfilled in a special manner the word of Jeremias: *He shall give His cheek to him that striketh Him. He shall be glutted with reproaches* (Lament. iii.). “*Saturabitur opprobriis.*” The Latin word conveys to our mind the idea: He shall be saturated with insults and outrages. That is to say, it is not only His Body and His sacred Face that are bruised and tormented, but the cruelties penetrate and reach to His tender and sensitive Heart. Through and through, as we say, He is bruised and wounded, and a Man of Sorrows, whose Body and Soul are steeped in pain and anguish. *Great as the sea is Thy destruction, Thy crushing sorrow. The waters encompass Him, and, He says, are come in even unto My Soul* (Psalm lxxviii.).

*F. They smote His face.*

And all the while, from the beginning to the end, He is not conquered, but is conquering. Though the waters are flooding His Soul, *many waters cannot quench charity, nor the floods drown it.* Picked men, selected tormentors, eminent in heartless cruelty and brutality, have been powerfully helped by all the malicious inventions of Satan, but all in vain.

*Do you see that we prevail nothing?*

And, as has been said, His victory is all for us. *Thanks be to God, Who gives us the victory through Christ Jesus.* If we only stay a little while and look at Jesus fighting this

our battle, virtue comes out from Him to us, and we too shall conquer the wicked spirits.

*G. They smote His face.*

What wonder that our Saviour, after having fought in this way and conquered Satan so thoroughly, expects us also to conquer him? He cannot but require from us patience and meekness and charity and a forgiving spirit, quite beyond heathen virtue. If all these scenes of the Passion could be blotted out, there might be something plausible in our excuses for our anger: "He provoked me; what could I do? No man could bear to be so insulted." But if these scenes of the Passion, the night watches and the day watches, are not gone by or forgotten, but are rendered perpetual and everlasting, these flimsy excuses for our anger will never avail us.

When we are brooding over our small grievances, St. Paul stops our mouths by saying: *Think diligently upon Him that endured such opposition from sinners against Himself; that you be not wearied, fainting in your minds. For you have not yet resisted unto blood—striving against sin (Hebrews xii.).*

Anima Christi, sanctifica me.  
Passio Christi, conforta me.

*H. They blindfolded Him and smote His face.*

One part of our Blessed Saviour's most charitable plan is to colour with His sorrows every watch of the night and every watch of the day. For He well knows that Lucifer, our adversary and His adversary, goes about never tiring, every hour of the day and every hour of the night, *seeking whom he may devour*. Our *wrestling* is not only against men, who sometimes grow tired and want rest and sleep, but against *the rulers of the world of this darkness: the spirits of wickedness*, who never slumber and never sleep. Every hour of the day, and through all the watches of the night, we want help from our Saviour Jesus Christ, through Whom God has given us the victory.

What wonder, then, that to match the sleepless activity of Satan, He has instituted the perpetual, never-failing Sacrifice, in which, every hour from dawn to sunset and from the setting of the sun to the daybreak, He will Himself be on the altar, offering up all His Sacred Passion for us, and, by His sufferings and His Blessed Mother's compassion, crushing the serpent's head?

“Praise and thanks be every instant to the Most Holy and Most Divine Sacrament of the Altar!”

I. After such a charitable provision, now that every Christian sufferer and every tempted man can by looking on Jesus, the Man of Sorrows, draw strength out of His wounds, what wonder that He bids us all, in spite of Lucifer, hope always in Him, *from the morning watch until the night*, and through the dark hours of the night until the sunrise!

What wonder that He solemnly promises to His servants: *The sun shall not burn thee by day, nor the moon by night (Psalm cxx.). Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night, of the arrow that flieth in the day, of the thing that walks abroad in the dark, or of the noon-day devil (Psalm xc.).*

J. In this last watch of the night then, as at every other time, the spirits of wickedness are wakeful, and watching to see if perchance they can tempt the sleepless. The image of Jesus blindfolded and buffeted and spit upon is to such a powerful protection, if they are only so blessed as to make use of it.

*In the night I have remembered Thy name, O Lord Jesus, and have kept Thy law (Psalm cxviii.).*

K. If we think often and wisely of the watches of the Sacred Passion, we shall find ourselves more and more drawn to help the souls for whom He died by works of mercy during the day, and by prayer at night. *In the day-time the Lord hath commanded His mercy, and a canticle to Him in the night (Psalm xli.).*

About a quarter of a century has passed away since the death of the good old man who was long the champion of

the Catholic poor in this country. It was his habit, whenever he woke in the night, to rise from his bed and kneel down to say :—

Sancta Mater, istud agas,  
Crucifixi fige plagas,  
Cordi meo valide.

Do this for me, Mother blest,  
Firmly fix within my breast,  
Jesus with His Cross and wounds.

He wished not to forget the watches of the Passion by night or by day.

L. Speaking of the manna, the Wise Man writes, that though it could not be destroyed by fire, yet *being warmed with a little sunbeam, it presently melted away*. He adds the reason for this prodigy : *that it might be known to all that we ought to prevent the sun to bless Thee, O God, and adore Thee at the dawning of the light* (Wisdom xvi.). Does not the remembrance of Jesus bowed down in His dungeon, with His chains and fetters upon Him, and His face disfigured, plead with us still more persuasively to *prevent the sun* and to bless and adore Him *at the dawning of the light*? The first streaks of the daybreak are messengers which come to us, as Martha came to Mary, and whisper gently : *The Master is come and calleth thee—It is the hour for us to rise from sleep*, and hasten to visit Jesus in His narrow prison on the altar, where we are reminded of all His wonderful works, and among the rest, of His condition in the dungeon at the dawning of the light.

*O God, my God, to Thee do I watch at break of day* (Psalm lxii.).

M. Often we say to our Blessed Lord : “*De profundis*” —*Out of the depths I have cried to Thee, O Lord, Lord, hear my voice : may Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.*

“Now, dear Lord, Thou art the Suppliant.” “Out of the depths I have cried to thee, O man, My brother, child of My Father, Whom I have loved so well ; hear My cry, let thine ears give heed to My pleading.

“Only remember Me : for I was stolen away during the night from the peaceful garden of My Mother, and

from the olive-trees ; and here, without fault of Mine, was cast into this dungeon. Only remember Me, and do Me this kindness to put men, who are My masters, in mind, not to take Me out of this dungeon, but to remember Me."

N. *I am become like to a pelican in the wilderness. I am like a night-raven in the house. I have watched and am become as a sparrow all alone on the house-top. All the day long My enemies reproached Me, and they that formerly praised Me did swear against Me.*

"*Attendite.*" Let us stay yet a while to contemplate our Blessed Saviour *all alone* ; not on the house-top, but in His deep and dark and loathsome dungeon ; watching and praying—oh, so earnestly—for us ; waiting for the dawn that He may go forth again to His work of redemption, desiring that the moments be abbreviated, that the chalice of His Blood may quickly pass from Him into our souls.

O. *All alone !* Yet, He says once more : *I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.*

*I am not alone*, because My Ever-Blessed Mother is with Me, watching and praying and suffering with Me.

*I am not alone*, because all My future disciples are with Me—a long-lived seed—who will from this hour remember Me and watch with Me.

"*Fac cor amans Jesu mei.* Oh, grant, most loving Heart of Jesus, that we may be of the number of those who watch with Thee and remember Thee."

P. *He shall sit solitary and hold His peace, because He hath taken it up upon Himself* (Lament. iii.).

Not one murmur, nor one complaint, escapes from the Heart of our Lord. *He knew all things that were to come*, when He offered Himself to the multitude in the Garden. He has carefully counted the cost ; and of His own will *hath taken it all upon Himself* ; because *He loved me*, and most freely and most willingly *delivered Himself up for me.*

Q. May the spectacle of Jesus bound and fettered cure

our souls of their cravings for undue liberty! May His sacred face, bruised and outraged, give us grace to abhor that sensual worship wickedly given to the wanton face, and wickedly coveted by the wanton face!

May the sacred eyes blindfolded obtain tears of true contrition for our eyes, and grace to turn them away that *they may not see vanity!* (Psalm cxviii.).

The torn and dishevelled hair of our Saviour has moved multitudes of Christian women to follow St. Peter's counsel: *Whose adorning, let it not be the outward plaiting of the hair, or the wearing of gold, but the incorruptibility of a quiet and meek spirit* (1st Peter iii.).

Queen Esther had never contemplated the scenes of the Passion; nor did she know as well as we do how in the prison-house of Hell there shall be *weeping and gnashing of teeth*; yet of her we read: *Fearing the danger that was at hand, she had recourse to the Lord. And when she had laid away her royal apparel, she put on garments suitable for weeping and mourning; instead of divers precious ointments, she covered her head with ashes and dung, and she humbled her body with fasts; and all the places in which before she was accustomed to rejoice, she filled with her torn hair. And she prayed to the Lord the God of Israel, saying: O my Lord, help me a desolate woman, and who have no other helper but Thee* (Esther xiv.).

R. *Sursum corda.* Contemplate how the vigilant providence of the Eternal Father is all the while watching most carefully over His beloved Son, in Whom He is well pleased; and how He has given His angels a charge over Him. *Wisdom forsook not the Just when He was sold: but delivered Him from sinners. She went down with Him into the pit. And in bands she left Him not till she brought Him the sceptre of the Kingdom, and power against those that oppressed Him; and showed them to be liars that had accused Him, and gave Him everlasting glory* (Wisdom x.).

S. "O Lord Jesus, bound, deliver us poor sinners from our bonds.

“O Lord Jesus, waiting in the dungeon for the day-dawn, make haste to help the expecting souls of Thy servants in Purgatory.

“O Lord Jesus, watching for us at the daybreak in Thy tabernacle, draw our waking thoughts to Thee.”

## SCENE II.

### THE JUDGMENT-HALL.

#### STATION I.

*As soon as it was day the Ancients of the people and the Chief Priests and Scribes came together, and they brought Him into their Council (St. Luke xxii.).*

*And when morning was come all the Chief Priests and Ancients of the people took council against Jesus, that they might put Him to death (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

*And straightway in the morning, the Chief Priests holding a consultation with the Ancients and the Scribes, and the whole Council (St. Mark xv.).*

*A. The Chief Priests with the Ancients and the Scribes and the whole Council.*

Here then we have, as the commentators teach us, a full meeting of the Great Council of the Sanhedrim. Those who are acquainted with Jewish law tell us that it was enjoined that in capital causes, when there was question of death, the whole Council must be assembled. The midnight meeting was on this count illegal; and also because it was held, contrary to law, during the night-time. All defects, therefore, are now to be rectified.

Messengers have been busy since the cock-crow. All have been warned that the business is most urgent, and that for many grave reasons a full attendance is necessary. One of the many reasons is, as has been said, that they wish to have a legal and valid sentence of death. Another, and still more urgent, is that they want to have such an

imposing gathering of the important men of Jerusalem as shall overawe the Roman Governor.

*B. The whole Council.*

It is, however, taken for granted that some few who are, in secret, disciples of Jesus, or inclined to become so, are absent; either because as known partisans they were not summoned; or because, if summoned, they do not wish to take any part in the sacrilegious proceedings. Joseph of Arimathea is one of these: a *Councillor*, St. Luke writes, *a good and a just man (the same had not consented to their counsel and doings)* (St. Luke xxiii.). These last words might perhaps imply that he was present in this Council, and in vain protested against the unjust sentence.

Nicodemus and Gamaliel also think as Joseph does.

One or two other names are added by some authors.

*They brought Him into their Council.*

Where was this Council held?

We are told that before the coming of the Romans, when the Great Council of the Sanhedrim had authority to pronounce sentence of death, it was prescribed that for the trial of capital causes they must meet within the precincts of the Temple; but when the power of life and death was taken away from them, they no longer considered this solemnity necessary. Some writers, however, think that even now, in the days of our Lord, they held their court for the trial of great criminals in a hall near the Temple; and from the fact that Judas brought his money to the *Chief Priests and Ancients* and cast down the pieces of silver in the Temple, they conclude that the meeting of the Sanhedrim took place in this hall near the Temple.

Other commentators, however, are of opinion that the morning meeting is held in the same judgment-hall of the Palace of the Priests where the condemnation was pronounced the night before. This opinion we shall follow, as it seems to fit in well with the Gospel narrative, and what is related of Judas can, as we shall see, be reconciled with it.

As we reckon the first watch of the day from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m., and as the daybreak on this first Good Friday came a little earlier than 6 a.m., this Council in the early morning may, for convenience' sake, be joined on with the wicked work of the night.

*C. The Chief Priests holding a consultation with the Ancients and the Scribes and the whole Council.*

We may contemplate the unholy activity and promptness of these unhappy Councillors, who are *met together against the Lord and against His Christ.*

If *they* are willing, after their labours of yesterday and their night watching, to cut short their sleep in the early morning in order to persecute Jesus, how grateful will He be to us if we deny ourselves, and rise betimes to do Him a most welcome honour by assisting at the Holy Mass, in which His Sacred Passion is renewed; a most welcome honour, because it gives Him the plea He desires for filling us with benediction.

D. *As soon as it was day.*

When we meet in the early hours, we say to each other: Good-morning! Good-day! How unreal and worthless these greetings sometimes are! For they cannot bring a blessing on an unblessed day. If these evil Councillors salute each other with such good wishes for the day, we have a melancholy specimen of the mockery that can be enacted by lying tongues.

### SCENE III.

#### THE DUNGEON.

##### STATION I.

*The Chief Priests and the Scribes came together and they brought Him into the Council (St. Luke xxii. 66).*

A. *They brought Him into the Council.*

These words agree well with what the holy Abbess in her narrative of the Passion records, that those who had seen Jesus the night before in His dungeon, are anxious that all should now see to what a plight their arch-enemy, the great Prophet so dreaded, has by a little firmness and boldness been reduced. They all therefore go down in a body to the underground prison, to bring Him from thence. When the bars are drawn and the gate opened, at the first sight of the *Man without help, bowed down and miserable,*

so haggard and so disfigured, and so wasted away, they are taken aback and scared; and cannot believe that ill-usage has made such a change. But after a while, when assured that this is really Jesus of Nazareth, Who was so bold, so arrogant, so defiant three days ago, they break out into uncontrolled derision.

“Samson broke his bonds. Jesus does not seem to be a Samson.

“He fed five thousand with loaves; He would have been glad, we imagine, of one loaf during this night.

“*He hoped in the Lord. Let Him deliver Him*, and we will believe.

“*He is the Son of God. Let Him save Him, seeing He delighteth in Him.*”

*All they that saw Me have laughed Me to scorn; they have spoken with the lips and wagged the head* (Psalm xxi.).

“This spectacle here before our eyes is, beyond all doubt, proof convincing that He is an impostor and seducer. Make haste, bring Him to judgment. *Do it quickly. Lead Him carefully.*”

Yet some of these miserable men were doubtless present when Jesus said to the man with the withered hand: *Stretch forth thy hand, and he stretched it forth, and it was restored to health even as the other* (St. Matt. xii.). To the hearts of these men His Heart is now saying: *Is My hand shortened that I cannot redeem? or is there no strength in Me to deliver?* (Isaias l.). *But now (these things) are hidden from thy eyes* (St. Luke xix.).

#### B. *The Priests with the whole Council.*

Meanwhile our Blessed Lady sees all and hears all. But the Sacred Heart of her Son is speaking a word of comfort to her and reminding her of the prophetic promise *Because His Soul hath laboured, He shall see and be filled. The Lord was pleased to bruise Him in infirmity. Not for ever shall He remain bowed down and miserable. The will of the Lord shall be prosperous in His hand* (Isaias liii.).

Though these unhappy Rulers are scoffing now at the

sight of His misery, yet the memory of this misery will draw many hearts to Him.

*I have spoken to you, God said of old, I have spoken to you, rising early and speaking, and you have not obeyed Me (Jerem. xxxv.).* But in the days that are to come, hallowed by the Passion of Jesus, He will speak early in the morning, bent down to the pillar in the dungeon, and many, very many, will hear, and rise in haste to come to Him.

*Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth (1 Kings iii.).*

## SCENE IV.

### THE JUDGMENT-HALL.

#### STATION I.

*All the Chief Priests and Ancients of the people took counsel against Jesus, that they might put Him to death (St. Matt. xxvii. 1).*

A. They hasten back to the judgment-hall. Jesus is let loose from the pillar, but is still tightly bound, and with His chains upon Him. In this condition He is dragged quickly up the steps and through the courtyard into the presence of His judges. For so they command: Make haste and lead Him carefully.

His own Divine heart is also saying: *Do it quickly. With desire I have desired the dawn of this Pasch; this first Good Friday.*

B. Were the Prophet Daniel here he would now lift up his voice as he did when Susanna had been sentenced and was being led to death: *Standing in the midst of them he said: Are you so foolish, ye children of Israel, that without examination or knowledge of the truth, you have condemned a daughter of Israel? Return to judgment, for they have borne false witness against her (Dan. xiii.).* Oh, with what heavenly earnestness would he call upon these morning judges to reverse and undo the wickedness of the night: *Return to judgment, for they have borne false witness against Jesus of Nazareth.*

But, alas! the judges of the night are now again the judges in the morning, and they are only here to ratify their sin, and spread their iniquity to others.

*They took counsel against Jesus, that they might put Him to death.*

*O ye kings, understand : receive instruction, ye that judge the earth (Psalm ii.).*

## STATION II.

*They brought Him into the Council, saying : If Thou be Christ, tell us (St. Luke xxii. 66).*

A. This is supposed to be the legal trial. The judges are now here lawfully assembled to try their Prisoner. But, we notice, no witness is called now. Not a word is said about forbidding tribute, or disturbing the people, or pulling down the Temple. All this trifling is discarded ; and the one question about which they are really in earnest is put at once, *Art Thou the Christ ?*

This is precisely what has been arranged in Heaven. This question well pleases the Heart of our Lord. This question gives contentment to the soul of His Ever-Blessed Mother. The listening angels, also, are glad to hear this question solemnly put. Let us, too, join heartily and say with her and with them : *Tu rex gloriae, Christe. Tu Patris sempiternus es Filius.* The spirits of darkness alone are not content.

It gives them no pleasure that this is the only sin found in Jesus.

B. *Art Thou the Christ ?*

We may kneel humbly before the altar, and when the Sacred Host is elevated, ask most reverently : *Art Thou the Christ, Lord ?* Oh yes, I believe, *help my unbelief.*

C. *Art Thou the Christ ?*

We may ask it of the poor man who begs. For most solemnly does our Lord Jesus say to us that, whether we say "Yes" or "No" to His poor delegate, we say it to Him.

“O my most merciful Lord Jesus, how shall I endure it if at the Judgment Thou shalt say to me, *I was hungry, and you gave Me not to eat?*”

D. *Art Thou the Christ?*

Put the question, again, to him who has wronged us, and been an enemy: “*Art thou the Christ?* For if so, if the Lord identifies Himself with you, and says that if I touch you I touch the apple of His eye, oh, go in peace! for I have no quarrel with you. If you wronged me, you did not know what you were doing. May the Lord forgive you fully, and bless you!”

E. *Art Thou the Christ?*

Ask it of His Vicar? “*Art thou His representative?* As His Father sent Him, has He sent you? Is His Holy Spirit giving testimony with you and through you?” If so, I believe; O my Lord, *help my unbelief.*

### STATION III.

*And He saith to them: If I shall tell you, you will not believe Me. And if I shall also ask you, you will not answer Me nor let Me go* (vv. 67, 68).

A. Not one of these blinded men is so blind as not to see, *that never man spoke* in their presence as this Man speaks. The Man whom they just now saw *bowed down and miserable, and acquainted with infirmity*, He stands erect—“*inter mortuos liber*” (Psalm lxxxvii.); the only one free in presence of so many dead men, dead with the death of the soul—*free among the dead*, and speaking *as one that hath authority* over all His judges.

B. *You will not let Me go.*

And we must notice how meek His words are; how they all come from the abundance of His charitable Heart, desirous to soften their hearts of stone; desirous to move these unjust judges to reason calmly and judge justly.

C. *You will not let Me go.*

He wishes to bring home to them that no matter what

He says, what arguments He brings, what proofs He gives, what witnesses He calls, what miracles He works, they will not set Him free. Their wills are fixed and resolved on His death.

He has heretofore wrought before their eyes wonders such as no other man has wrought: *If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin: but now they have no excuse for their sin. If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father* (St. John xv.).

D. "*Attendite.*" Greater things than these unhappy men saw we have seen. Greater wonders have been wrought for us.

*"Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy: blot out my iniquity: for had the things been done for others that have been done for me, long ago they would have done penance, and long ago they would have loved Thee fervently."*

#### STATION IV.

*But hereafter the Son of Man shall be sitting on the right hand of the power of God* (v. 69).

A. At the midnight trial, our Lord reminded the Priests and Ancients of the Judgment to come. He does so now again in His great charity and compassion. For He knows that the thought of this terrible accounting day oftentimes baffles all the efforts of Satan, and deters the tempted man from consummating his sin.

Let us call to mind some of the sacred words which set before us how salutary it is to remember the Judgment.

1. *In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin* (Ecclus. vii.). Against all kinds of sin, then, the thought of the Judgment is a powerful medicine.

2. It is efficacious when we are tempted to anger and hatred—how common a danger!

*Remember thy last end, and let enmities cease* (Ecclus. xxviii.).

3. It prevents us from being unjust to servants, or hard on the poor.

Holy Job tells us that he never dared to act unfairly to his man-servant, or maid-servant, or to *deny to the poor what they desired.*

*For what shall I do when God shall rise to judge : and when He shall examine, what shall I answer ? (Job xxxi.).*

B. Another word to be laid up in our hearts is : *Judge not and you shall not be judged.* In the whole of the Sacred Books is there a more wonderful promise than this ? If we have only the sense to abstain from judging severely and condemning a fellow-sinner, no worse than ourselves, we shall have nothing to fear when this Judgment comes, for which our Lord so much desires us to prepare. If we do not avail ourselves of this marvellous promise, we shall have good reason to make that everlasting moan : *We fools ! We fools !*

#### STATION V.

*Then said they all : Art Thou then the Son of God ? Who said, You say that I am. And they said, What need we any further testimony ? For we ourselves have heard it from His own mouth (vv. 70, 71).*

A. *Art Thou then the Son of God ?*

Our Blessed Saviour had not called Himself the Son of God. His words are : *The Son of Man shall be sitting on the right hand of the power of God.*

But they have known in time past that He does claim to be the Son of God. Three days ago, they heard Him prove unanswerably from the Scriptures that the Christ was to be something more than a mere son of David. And our Blessed Saviour stated at the Supper that they had full and sufficient knowledge that He was the Son of God : *They have both seen and hated both Me and My Father.*

We know, moreover, from the revelation in the Book of Wisdom, that this is their one supreme grievance : *He*

*maketh Himself the Son of God. He boasteth that He hath God for His Father.*

The watchful and overruling providence of God takes good care that it be made clear and evident that He is put to death not as a malefactor, but because *He maketh Himself the Son of God.*

*B. What need we any further testimony?*

St. Peter exhorts us all to live so that we suffer not as wrong-doers, but as followers of Christ: *For this is thanksworthy if for conscience towards 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 thanksworthy before God* (1 St. Peter ii.). We sometimes complain loudly if made to suffer when we think that we have not deserved it; we say, we could bear it if we had done wrong. But when these are our dispositions, should we bear it at all more patiently even if we had sinned?

A very common and very bad state of soul is when we will not suffer patiently, whether we are guilty or not.

A much better state is that of the Good Thief, who willingly accepts what he has deserved: *We indeed justly, for we have received the due reward of our deeds.*

The highest and best state of all is that of those who with their Divine Master willingly suffer persecution, merely because they are children of God and true to Him.

*C. What need we any further testimony?*

No! Witnesses are not wanted; for they are not come to seek for truth, but *that they might put Him to death* (St. Matt. xxvii.). No; it is most true that from the beginning they needed no witnesses at all. The calling of witnesses was a superfluous and vain folly, just as the armed force was that sallied out to seize Jesus. Pilate the Roman will want to have witnesses, to prove that He is a malefactor against Roman laws; of such they have none. But to prove that He calls Himself the Son of

God and is the Son of God, they have His own profession; they have His miracles; they have the voice of His Father from Heaven, heard at the Jordan, and again at the Temple four days ago.

*We ourselves have heard it from His own mouth.* Yes, both now and oftentimes before. It is certain beyond all doubt that He claims to be and is the Son of God. Therefore the whole Council now ratifies and legalises the unjust and illegal sentence of the midnight: *He is guilty of death.*

D. *Art Thou the Son of God?*

Not then as a malefactor is our Lord to die; for He is the innocent Son of God. But for this and for this only He deserves to die, that *He loved me and delivered Himself up for me.*

Our Blessed Lady is listening; and if we would listen to her, she would say to each of us most lovingly and earnestly: *Forget not the kindness of thy Surety, for He hath given His life for thee* (Ecclus. xxix.).

“Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.”

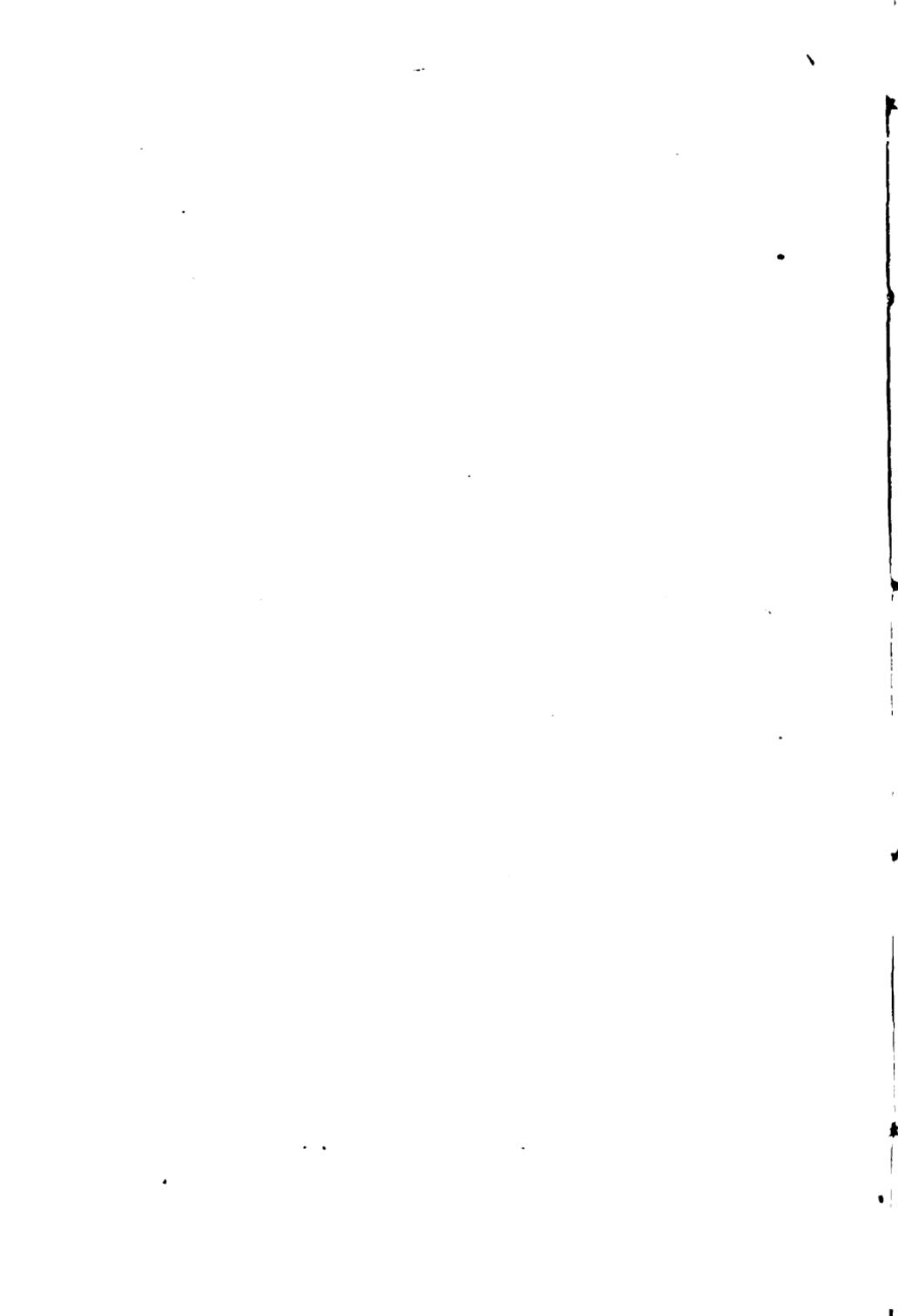
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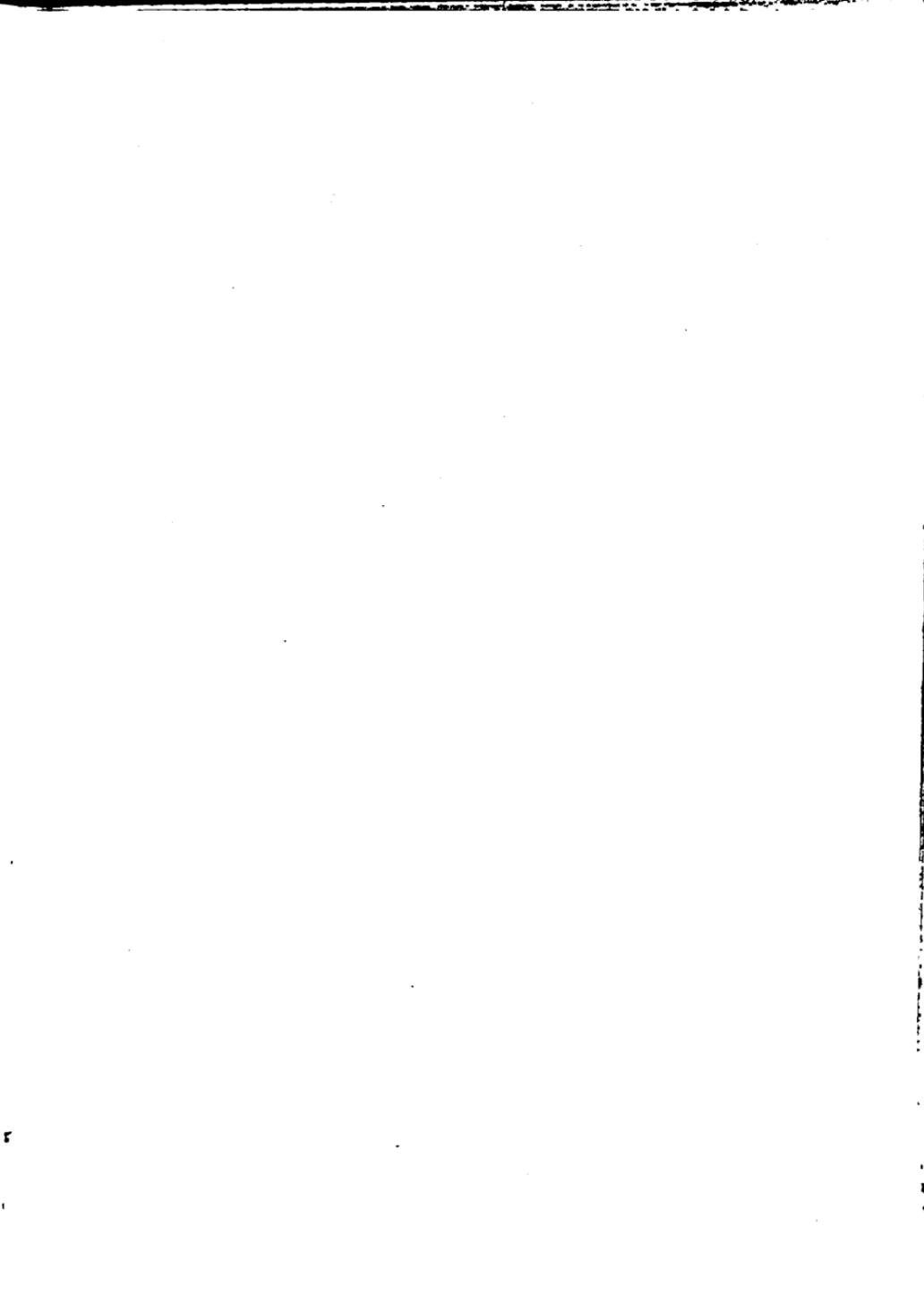
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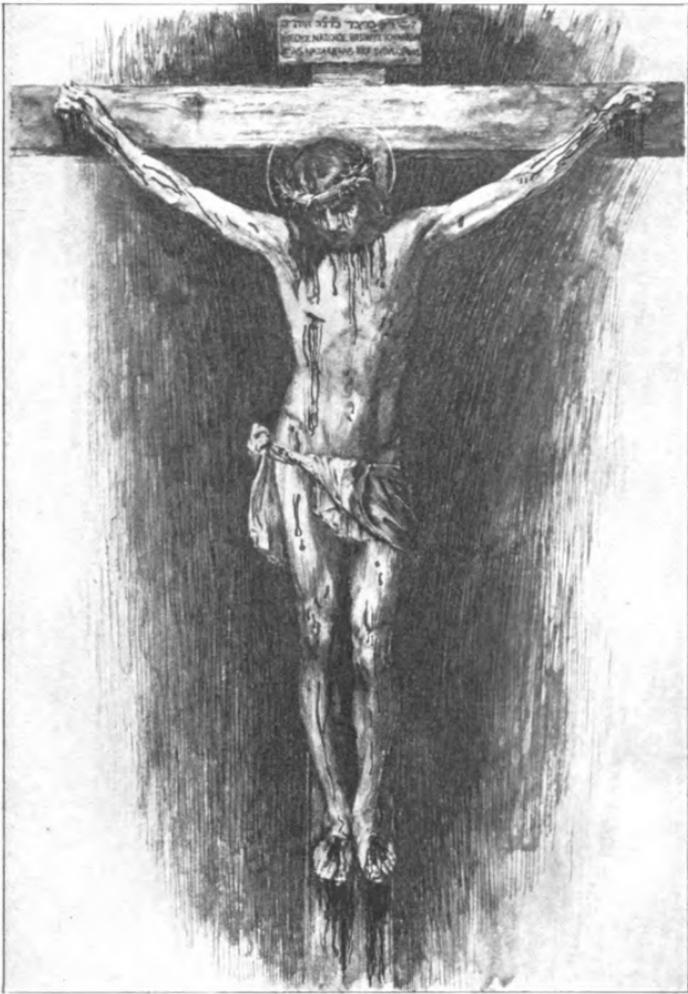
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WITH

BEFORE AND AFTER







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*ELEVENTH EDITION*

*VOL. II.*

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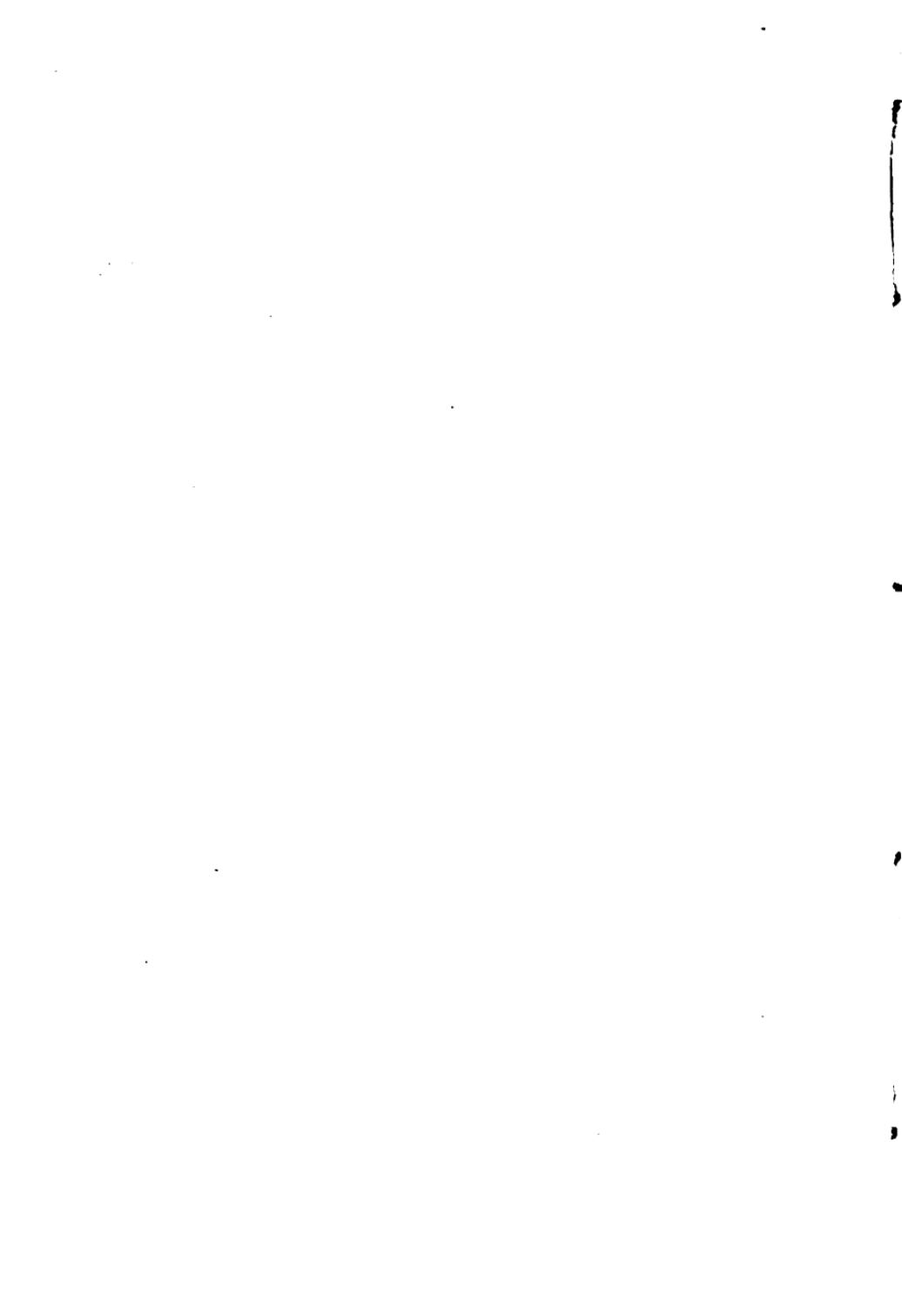
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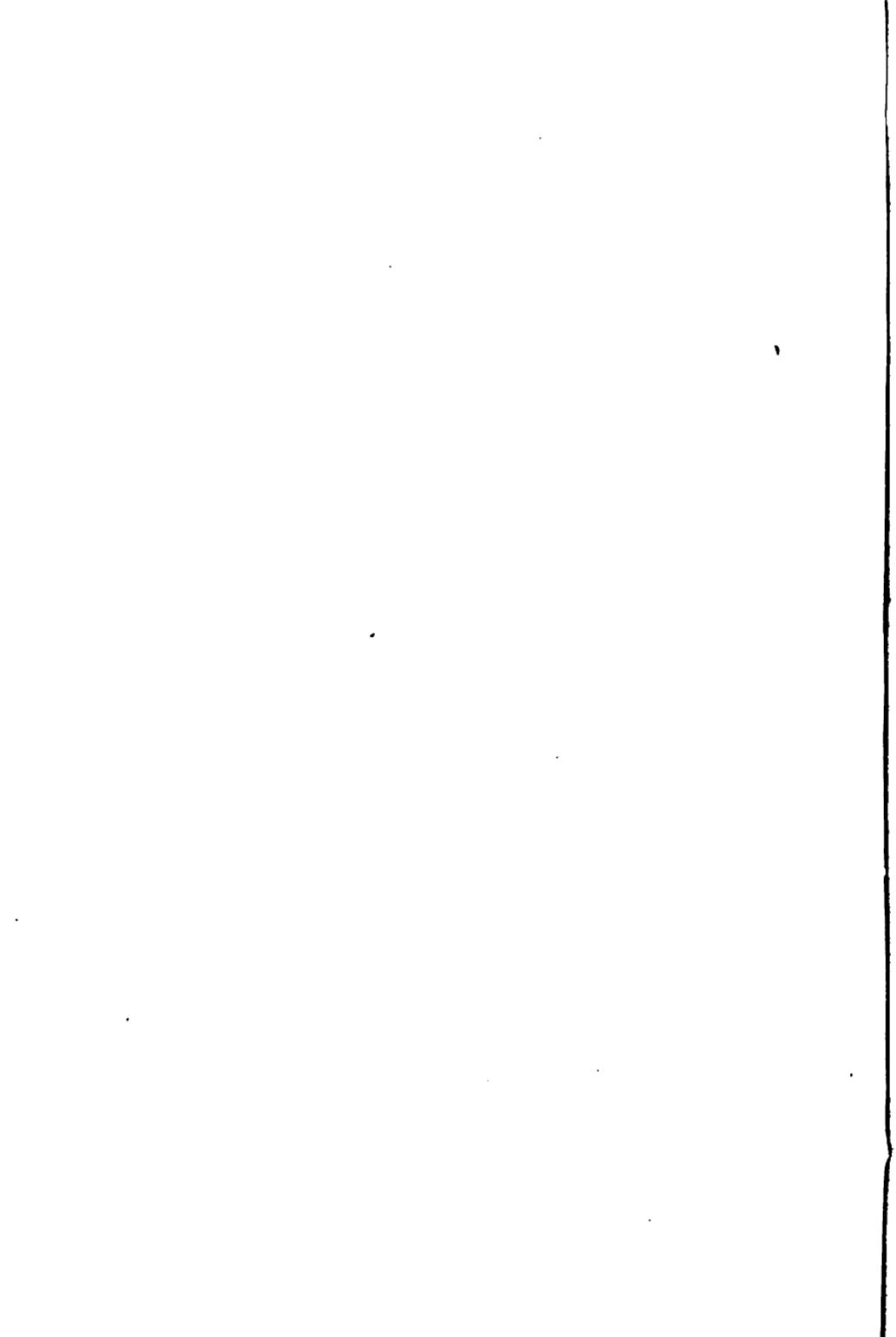
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## CHAPTER I.

### THE FIRST MORNING WATCH.

From 6 to 9 A.M.

#### SCENE I.

FROM THE PRESBYTERY TO THE PRÆTORIUM.

#### STATION I.

*And straightway in the morning, the Chief Priests holding a consultation with the Ancients, and the Scribes, and the whole Council, binding Jesus, led Him away and delivered Him to Pilate (St. Mark xv.).*

*And the whole multitude of them rising up led Him to Pilate (St. Luke xxiii.).*

*And they brought Him bound, and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate, the Governor (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

*Then they led Jesus from Caiphas to the Governor's hall. And it was morning (St. John xviii.).*

#### A. *The whole multitude of them.*

Eager as they are to see Jesus crucified, yet some of them doubtless cannot help pausing to ask each other: "What shall we say to the Roman? We have not one single witness with us! What will he think of us?"

Annas, their despotic master, and others of more hardened conscience, answer at once: "Away with these doubts! Look at our numbers. All the ruling men are here. No one is absent. We shall let Pilate see that we are resolved. He will not dare to withstand us! When there are such multitudes gathered in Jerusalem, he will think twice before he provokes a sedition by resisting us. It would be an outrage against the nation. Be quite sure

that we shall have Jesus crucified before the rabble in Ophel know what is going on. Take care that the Cross be ready. We shall have our Pasch in peace."

They judge rightly. They prevail nothing against Christ Jesus. Neither shall they prevail against His servants when He shall have strengthened them. But their numbers will overcome and overwhelm the weak, time-serving worldling.

Therefore the whole multitude of them set out on the march.

*Number not thyself among the multitude of the disorderly. Remember wrath; for it will not tarry long. Humble thy spirit very much (Ecclus. vii.).*

*B. Binding Jesus, they led Him away. They brought Him bound.*

We hear once more the warning word given by Judas, earnestly repeated: *Lead Him carefully.* "Now that the day is come, the people will be astir; there is more danger of a rescue." Every cord, then, and every rope is tightened. The strong chains are put into the hands of strong men. *They humbled His feet in fetters, the iron pierced His Soul (Psalm civ.).* When, heretofore, our Blessed Saviour by the lake set free the man possessed, who when the fit came on him *was bound in chains and kept in fetters (St. Luke viii.),* well He knew that to set the sinner free, He must Himself put on the sinner's chains and fetters.

"Compassionate Mother of God, watching His chains and fetters, and by compassion wearing them and feeling them, pray for us poor sinners, that every morning of our lives we may become more strictly bound by His Commandments and His sacred wishes."

*C. The whole multitude of them.*

All was to be done secretly and quickly, before the people should be awake from their sleep; and yet from one end of the city to the other they will march as a noisy rabble, as if designedly to wake up the people.

*There is no wisdom, no counsel, no prudence, against the Lord (Prov. xxi.).*

*They led Jesus from Caiphas to the Governor's hall.*

The Palace of the Priests, as has been said, stands in the south-west corner of the city, on Mount Sion. The Fortress or Castle of Antonia, where the Prætorium is, stands just above the Temple area in the north-eastern corner of the city.

The tumultuous procession may therefore go down through the gate from Mount Sion into the lower city, and crossing the narrow valley or ravine, the Tyropæon, turn northward and go up by the street that skirts the Temple enclosure, or else, as some students of ancient topography assume, they may cross the bridge over the Tyropæon, which joins Mount Sion with the Temple, and then go northward through the Temple grounds. This route is shorter; we may assume then that the Rulers, in their eagerness to see the end quickly, choose this shorter road.

*D. From Caiphas to the Governor's hall.*

This route also suits their views in another way. They are the men who like to pray in the corners of the streets. As they pass the Temple, it is the hour of the morning sacrifice: *This is what thou shalt sacrifice upon the altar: Two lambs of a year old, every day continually. One lamb in the morning, and another in the evening (Exodus xxix.).*

Some writers, learned in the Books of the Rabbis, tell us that the Pharisaical Priests loved to be present at this sacrifice, there to say aloud, with show and notoriety, what were called the Phylactery prayers, perhaps because the broad Phylacteries were pompously displayed on the occasion.

Therefore as the solemn days of the Pasch are begun, it suits the capricious consciences of these men, for whom our Saviour has no better name than *Ye hypocrites*, to show themselves this morning in the Temple, that all may know that they are godly men rendering a great service to God by handing over Jesus of Nazareth to Pilate for crucifixion.

*E. They brought Him bound.*

Meanwhile, as we are told, the Blessed Mother has been watching in the Cenacle, watching every hour, and

listening. When the day dawns *her tears are on her cheeks; for in the night weeping she hath wept* (Lament. i.). John has come to her. It has been assumed in the past contemplations, that he entered with Peter into the Palace of the Priests, and stayed in the judgment-hall till Jesus was condemned. When he saw the doors of the dungeon closed upon his Master, he left the building and went quickly to the Cenacle close by, to find the Ever-Blessed Mother, and at her feet he pours out his grief for having fled away from her Divine Son. Heartbroken as she is, she can comfort him; and now bids him stay near to her till all is over. He is now to accompany her and the three devout women who are with her; for it is her wish to go forth and see her Son Jesus. "*Deus, Deus meus, ad te de luce vigilo*"—*My God, my Son, to Thee do I watch at break of day.—My soul panteth after Thee, O God. My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God: when shall I come and appear before the face of God?* (Psalm xli.). John's contrite heart is melted within him by her goodness in giving him this charge. With the greatest care and solicitude he conducts her through the crowd of loiterers that is gathering, and through the servants running to and fro, that she may be as near as possible to her Son Jesus.

Then is fulfilled the prophecy of Holy Simeon, *that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed*. Some see her and recognise her, and are moved to great compassion. Others, on the contrary, reproach her: "She had not known how to train her Son: otherwise He would not be in such a plight to-day". *The mouth of the wicked is opened against me. Instead of making me a return of love, they detracted me: but I gave myself to prayer* (Psalm cviii.).

Besides the careful protection of John, she has the blessed angels guarding their Queen; for her Son has given them a charge over her to take care, that while she fixes her eyes on Him, she strikes not her foot against a stone. With all our hearts let us join in spirit with the blessed angels, and humbly greet her.

“*Ave! Hail, full of grace: thy Son Jesus, thy Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, because thou art the Mother of this Blessed Son, and allowed to drink of His chalice with Him.*”

*F. They brought Jesus bound.*

With her eyes she watches, and with her ears she listens, and with her heart she loves and suffers.

She sees Him now dragged violently backwards by one rope, then as violently forward by another. Nothing escapes her watchfulness; every detail goes into her heart and is there laid up. Each time that His bleeding feet stumble she sees and notes it. She hears the heavy fall; marks how His unprotected face strikes against the hard stones; and how severely He is chastised with sticks and ropes for troubling the march and delaying their haste by falling. And her compassionate heart shares all His torture as they drag Him again from the ground by His dishevelled hair: *The places in which before He was accustomed to rejoice, He filled with His torn hair.*

Virgo Virginum præclara,  
Mihî jam non sis amara,  
Fac me tecum plangere.

Virgin mid all virgins bright,  
Do not bid me from thy sight,  
Make me mourn and weep with thee.

G. And we must remember also what we have learned from the revelations recorded by holy contemplatives, that His blessed angels have not only a charge to protect the Mother of God, but also to obey the behests of their Queen.

For she follows the march, not only as a Mother sharing every sorrow, but also as the Valiant Woman watching with her fearless eye every movement, every attempt of Lucifer, to rebuke him if need be; and the secret prayer of her heart is: *Give me constancy, my God, in my mind that I may despise him; and fortitude that I may overthrow him. For this will be a glorious monument to Thy name when he shall fall by the hand of a woman (Judith ix.).* We may also bear in mind what we are told, that to strengthen her for the work

of this Good Friday, so that she may be able to walk to the Mount of God, and see all to the end, she carries still within her by a special privilege, the Divine Bread, the Most Holy Sacrament received in the Cenacle.

Some, no doubt, who see her pass by, and are being already prepared for conversion and sanctity, as they gaze on her, are *astonished and admire her beauty exceedingly. But they ask her no question, only they let her pass, saying: The God of our fathers give thee grace, and may He strengthen all the counsel of thy heart with His power, that Jerusalem may glory in thee, and thy name may be in the number of the holy and just.* And one or another of the standers-by answer: *So be it: so be it* (Judith x.).

*Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.*

## SCENE II.

### JUDAS IN THE VALLEY OF HINNOM.

#### STATION I.

*Then Judas, who betrayed Him, seeing that He was condemned, repenting himself* (St. Matt. xxvii. 3).

#### *Repenting himself.*

As has been already said, it seems quite improbable that Judas was in the court below with Peter during the denials; for surely he would have tried to earn more money by convicting Simon. Where then was the traitor? Was he in the Judgment-hall above? This is possible. He may have witnessed the condemnation. He may even have been admitted among the privileged, to witness the orgies of the dungeon. But there are difficulties in this supposition. For it seems necessary to take for granted that the other disciple who arrived with Peter and gained him admittance, was in the Judgment-hall, and not in the courtyard below, since it seems highly improbable that if he had been present Peter would have denied so boldly. If Judas then had been in the Judgment-hall, he would have recognised this other disciple and betrayed him. For these reasons the opinion which we have been following seems more probable, that as soon as the traitor had received his wages from Annas, he did not care to stay longer among his new masters, who were showing their contempt for him, and having used him, were now glad to cast him off. He, therefore, as we suppose, left the building and

went down from Mount Sion into the Valley of Hinnom, south of the city, there to console himself by brooding in the moonlight over his thirty pieces of silver.

*A. Repenting himself.*

*How are they brought to desolation!—as the dream of them that awake* (Psalm lxxii.).

The terrible awakening has begun in the soul of Judas. Suddenly the thirty pieces have lost all their charm. He finds no joy in them. His poisoned heart, like a diseased stomach, rejects the food it craved.

The Holy Spirit speaks of the "*inconstantia concupiscentiæ*"—*the fickleness of concupiscence*. What so changeable as the poor soul that is enslaved by passion and by Lucifer? *A wave of the sea which is moved and carried about by the wind* (St. James i.).

Jesus Christ is Truth, and changes not. *Jesus Christ yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever*. But Satan, the father of lies, entirely unsays to-day what he urged yesterday as absolutely certain. Till this moment, Judas has been vehemently assured that his wages would bring him great contentment. He has lived in a dream of enchantment. Suddenly the dream is scattered and dispersed, and for ever; because that fallen angel who now has special charge from Lucifer to watch *the traitor* to the end, has ceased to urge one lie and begun to urge another quite opposite.

The old story an hour ago was that "he would still be an Apostle; no one would know his treason; no harm would come to Jesus". Now this pleasant picture is entirely blotted out; and the unseen spirit of lying has begun to whisper: *All is lost*. And as Satan had texts of Holy Scripture ready for Jesus in the wilderness, so has the tempter now told off to complete the work of ruin, texts in plenty ready for Judas in the Valley of Hinnom.

"It is written," the tempter whispers, "it is written: *My iniquity is greater than that I may deserve pardon*" (Genesis iv.). The lying spirit is careful not to add that not out of the mouth of God does this word come.

*B. Judas, who betrayed Him, repenting himself.*

It will be useful to note carefully the change come over the soul of Judas. Money, as has been said, can no longer charm him. The hatred that raged within him against his Master has died down. Jesus is now an innocent Man. So that, by rights, it ought to be comparatively easy for him now to repent. It was when the Prodigal could no longer find happiness in his passions that he turned back towards his father's house.

But the spirits of darkness understand their warfare. They have only laid aside weapons less sure, to attack with one more murderous.

For a time it serves their purpose to persuade men to say: *I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me?* (Ecclus. v.). For so they secure the multiplication of sins, grievous indeed, but yet reparable. But when the moment for the great, supreme, and decisive struggle comes, they rely entirely on hopeless and final despair; for that is irreparable. They know perfectly well that so long as heavenly hope lives in the soul, they have not prevailed. So long as the sinner is able to say: *In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped*—for though great and many my sins, Thy mercies are greater and more multiplied—so long is that sinner sure of forgiveness and salvation.

Every truth, therefore, that has till now been carefully hidden from the soul of the duped Apostle, is in this hour suddenly brought forward and magnified, and coloured, and distorted.

“Did He not tell you long ago that you are a devil? Did He not do all that could be done to soften your heart? When He warned you so often to your face that you were going to betray Him, how could you continue hardened? And remember, too, all your hypocrisy; how you spoke out so loudly for the poor while you were robbing them. You are the man described in the Psalms, who pretended to be of one mind with Him and to pray with Him: *In the house of God we walked with consent.* ‘All is lost.’ Your

fate has been long foretold: *His bishopric let another take, may there be none to help him. He loved cursing, and it shall come unto him; he would not have blessing, and it shall be far from him, because he remembered not to show mercy; but persecuted the poor man and the broken in heart.* Besides, this Jesus is beyond all doubt the Christ, and the Son of God. His Mother is the holy woman who was to come. You have persecuted them both. It is entirely due to you that He is to die, and that her heart is broken. You betrayed Him; you kissed Him; you were the leader; you have had your money. *All is lost.*"

*C. Judas repenting himself.*

But the Sacred Heart of our Lord is as merciful now as ever; and the Blessed Mother is still pleading; and the Angel sent from her is refuting every lie of the tempter; reminding this poor sinner that he, more than all others, has had ample proof that Jesus is a *gracious and merciful God, patient and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil* (Jonas iv.).

*I have laid up*, O Lord, the Psalmist wrote, *Thy words in my heart, that I may not sin* (Psalm cxviii.). O, with what care and diligence must we lay up in our hearts some at least of the many, many words our God has spoken to prevent us from consummating our iniquity by refusing to hope in His boundless mercy!

Spiritual writers tell us that the last act of the soul before death is to turn its gaze backward on the life that is closing, and if in that supreme hour it can bear the sight of sins committed and say: "My God, Thy mercies are greater than my sins; Lord Jesus, Thy wounds call more loudly for mercy than my crimes for justice; Mother of God, pray for us sinners, for thy prayer will prevail": if this heavenly hope, through the merits of Christ Jesus, is living in the soul, all is well. The tree shall fall to the right side: *and in what place soever it shall fall, there it shall be for ever* (Eccles. xi.).

*Martha, Martha, thou art troubled, thou art busy about*

*many things; one thing is necessary.* Whatever other business we may have, we must find time to secure for our death-beds genuine hope, true hope, heavenly hope, sufficient hope.

D. Never must we rest till we are able to say; *I have laid up Thy words in my heart, O Lord, that I may not sin by despair.*

1. Easy it is to find such words; for He has said: *As I live, I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live* (Ezech. xxxiii.).

2. He has said: *Be converted, and do penance for your iniquity: and iniquity shall not be your ruin* (Ezech. xviii.).

3. He has said: *It is commonly said if a man put away his wife, and she go from him and marry another man, shall he return to her any more? Nevertheless, return to Me, saith the Lord, and I will receive thee.—Therefore at the least from this time call to Me: THOU ART MY FATHER* (Jerem. iii.).

4. He has said: *I—I am He that blot out thy iniquities FOR MY OWN SAKE: and I will not remember thy sins.*

A very loving mother forgives for her own sake, because she longs to have her prodigal back at home with her. She is more punished by his absence than he is. "Your sins may be very heinous," our God says to us, "but, *for My own sake* I wish to forgive them all."

5. And so when Sion said of old: *The Lord hath forsaken me; and the Lord hath forgotten me:* at once He repelled the calumny, saying: *Can a woman forget her infant? and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee* (Isaias xlix.).

6. He said, too, when His people had provoked Him by most heinous and multiplied crimes: *Let every man of you return from your evil ways, and make your ways and your doings good.* And when His people answered: *WE HAVE NO HOPES: we will go after our own thoughts, and we will do every one according to the perverseness of his evil heart:* our God exclaimed in horror, at this blasphemous despair: *Ask among the nations: Who hath heard such horrible things, as the virgin daughter of Israel hath done to excess? Shall the*

snow of Libanus fall from the rock of the field? or can the cold waters that gush out and run down, be taken away? (Jerem. xviii.). If the snow and the streams, and the sunlight and the stillness of the night go on, much more surely will the mercy and the compassion and the patience and the love of our God for His children continue and endure.

7. And even when life seems utterly wasted, and the soul a mere ruin, what does our God do? He takes us to the potter's workshop, where the earthen vessel lies smashed to pieces, and while *the potter turning made another vessel, as it seemed good to his eyes to make it*, our God says to us, *Cannot I do with you as the potter, O house of Israel? Cannot I create over again a clean heart and a right spirit?*

8. Then, above all, we never must forget that, day and night, our Saviour Jesus Christ is *ever living* on the altar to *intercede for us*, and saying, *Father, forgive them.*

9. Neither does the Blessed Mother of God ever forget by day or by night that she has a charge from her dying Son to be a Mother and a refuge to the poor sinner. She *neither slumbers nor sleeps* to whom it is committed to watch over the disciples of her Son.

10. We must also lay up in our hearts that wonderful word spoken by our Saviour when penitent Magdalen was at His feet: *Thou hast judged rightly. He to whom He forgave most loveth Him most.* For if this golden rule be true, is it not also true that the man who has wronged his God more by committing many sins, ought to forbear more than others from outraging his gracious and patient God by adding the crowning crime of all—the sin of despair, which blasphemous against that infinite mercy which is *above all his works?*

E. *Judas repenting himself.*

Meanwhile Judas is wavering and straying about through the Valley of Hinnom; now reminded by his good Angel that the Ever-Blessed Mother is near, and urged to find her out; now assured by the tempter that she never can forgive him the sorrow that he has brought on her

Son. His soul tossed about by conflicting thoughts, his footsteps wander to and fro. Now he hurries forward towards the Cenacle, now he retraces his steps. And perchance, too, Simon Peter—for he, too, is in the Valley of Hinnom—crosses the path of this tempest-tossed wreck, and the good Angel whispers earnestly to the despairing man: “Follow him. Go and weep with him; for he can have compassion”.

Alas! how thoroughly all could be repaired if he would only give his consent that the Ever-Blessed Mother shall put forth her power for him!

*F. Judas, who betrayed Him, repenting himself.*

Ah me! if it was night when he left the Supper-Room, what name have we for the darkness now in his soul?

*For whereas wickedness is fearful, and a troubled conscience always forecasteth grievous things, he is scared by the passing by of beasts, or the noise of stones tumbling down from Mount Sion (Wisdom xvii.).*

His thoughts are even more uncertain, more restless and wavering than his footsteps.

*G. Judas, who betrayed, repenting himself.*

What a night of thankless toil and weariness and misery! Have not the wicked good cause to repeat for ever in the prison-house: *We wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction, and have walked through hard ways?*

Oh, if Judas were working and watching for Jesus and His Holy Mother, instead of working and watching for Lucifer, how blessed this night would be for him! And how enviable a man would he be!

“Mother of God, show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, that we may ever work for Him and watch for Him till death, and never betray Him.”

*H. Judas, who betrayed Him, repenting himself.*

This much at least the good Angel achieves, for this has been decreed in Heaven, that Judas shall go back and declare publicly that Jesus is just and innocent. For so shall it be throughout the Passion to the end. The prayer

in the Cenacle shall be accomplished: *Father, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee.*

From the mouths of His enemies, from the Heaven above, from the hard rocks, and from the very centre of the earth beneath, a voice shall come to proclaim that Jesus is no malefactor, but only deserves to die because in His charity He loved us and delivered Himself up for us.

Early then at break of day, Judas comes back to the Palace of the Priests, and there learns the news that Jesus is condemned, and he sees the procession marshalled; and fixes his troubled eyes on the *Man of the broken Heart* Whom he has persecuted. He sees, too, the Ever-Blessed Mother of Sorrows, and he is wavering still, and with a double mind: "Shall I—shall I not beg her forgiveness?"

A little while, and he is hurried away by the crowd, his body jostled to one side and the other, and his soul tossed, *like a wave of the sea which is moved and carried about by the wind.*

"O poor sinner, be wise. *If to-day thou shalt hear the voice of the Lord, harden not thy heart*" (Psalm xciv.).

Judas reaches the Temple in the hour when the High Priests are hastening in for a brief visit—to proclaim aloud their prayer, and so make known to men their righteousness.

### SCENE III.

#### THE TEMPLE. JUDAS.

##### STATION I.

*Then Judas, who betrayed Him, seeing that He was condemned, repenting himself, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the Chief Priests and Ancients, saying: I have sinned in betraying innocent blood. But they said: What is that to us? Look thou to it. And casting down the pieces of silver in the Temple, he departed (St. Matt. xxvii. 3—5).*

A. According, then, to the opinion which we are following, this disorderly crowd pass rapidly to the east,

and going through the gate of Sion pass down the flight of steps and cross the bridge over the narrow gorge, the Tyropœon, and reach the Temple area. They turn their steps to the north, and in a few minutes are at the gate of the Temple, where the natives of Jerusalem and the Paschal pilgrims are gathering for the morning sacrifice. It is the last time that the lamb shall be slain according to God's ordinance. By to-morrow's daybreak all types and shadows are passed away for ever. "*Umbram fugat veritas.*" *Christ our Pasch is sacrificed.*

"Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us and grant us Thy peace.

"Ever-Blessed Mother, obtain for us grace to hasten gladly to our most holy morning Sacrifice."

*B. They brought Jesus bound.*

Once again, we notice *how iniquity has lied to itself*. Care was to be taken exceedingly that the sleeping people be not disturbed, lest perchance there should be a rising; and lo! this noisy rout hurrying along scares away all sleep and quiet, and invites sedition; but *Jesus of Nazareth is passing by*, and He bids the waves be still.

*C. Then Judas brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the Priests and Ancients—and casting down the pieces of silver in the Temple, he departed.*

Two things are certain from this passage.

1. That Judas brought back the money to those who gave it, that is, to Annas and Caiphas and the others who are heading the procession.

2. That he cast *down the pieces of silver in the Temple*.

But a question arises, where did he meet the Priests this morning? Some think that it was at the Priests' Palace that he expressed his bitter remorse, and that when rejected there he went across the city to the Temple.

Others, as has been said, are of opinion that the morning Council was held in a hall hard by the Temple; and that Judas found the Priests and Ancients there, and from thence passed over to the Temple, which was close at hand.

According to the opinion which we are following, the High Priests and Pharisees who are heading this tumul-

tuous march, being hypocrites, wish most specially on this solemn occasion, to be seen saying their phylactery prayers, and to pose as holy men, and therefore on their way to the Prætorium they make a short halt at the Temple gate, and go in to thank God "that they are not like other men," and above all, not like this wretched miserable Seducer, Jesus of Nazareth, Whom they have conquered at last, and exposed and brought to justice. *For that which is feeble is found to be nothing worth* (Wisdom ii.).

D. We may contemplate our Saviour led in to the Temple and watching for a little while the offering of the Lamb. "Oh, do it quickly," His Heart is saying to men. "I am the Lamb of God. On Me be all the iniquity of My people. Let this chalice of My Blood pass from Me!"

And His Heart is remembering too His own words: *My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves.*

"Ever-Blessed Mother of God, obtain for us grace to love the beauty of God's house."

E. *Judas brought back the thirty pieces of silver.*

Neither does the Son of God forget the promise He made on the day of the dedication of the first Temple: *I have chosen and have sanctified this place, that My eyes and My Heart may remain there for ever* (2 Paral. vii.).

"*Popule meus, quid feci tibi?*"—O My people, what have I done to thee, or in what have I molested thee, that I am driven out of My house to be delivered up to the Gentiles?

*And they have compassed Me about with words of hatred* (Psalm cviii.).

"No Hosannas to-day, Jesus of Nazareth. Where are all your admirers? There are no children crying after you! Yet the stones do not speak as you said they would! And where is your scourge with which you beat the poor people? It is your turn now to feel the lash." And the slavish servants gladly take their cue from their masters' ribaldry and give them pleasure by using their ropes and sticks to chastise His insolence for daring

without the permission of the Priests to drive out the buyers and the sellers.

F. And now the High Priests go in and take their position—to utter aloud their phylactery prayers—and Jesus of Nazareth is placed before them in the eyes of the assembled pilgrims and natives of Jerusalem, that all may see how the hand of God has stricken Him, and that all may join with them in thanksgiving that the Great Seducer and False Prophet has been found out and brought to justice.

*We give Thee thanks that we are not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers. We fast twice in a week, we give tithes of all we possess (St. Luke xviii.).*

#### STATION II.

*Then Judas, seeing that He was condemned, brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the Chief Priests and Ancients, saying: I have sinned in betraying innocent blood (vv. 3, 4).*

*A. I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.*

Little reverence has he for their solemn phylactery prayers. Little credit for sanctity will they win among the bystanders by their hypocritical devotion, if he can gain a hearing.

Rudely and roughly this man whom they have wronged—this Apostle whom they have bribed to turn traitor, and to become a Deicide; this wretched fallen Apostle whom they cajoled, and helped on to ruin—rudely enough and without ceremony, breaks in upon their mock devotion, and publicly proclaims aloud to all present that they are there merely to hide with the mask of piety the hideousness of the murder they are perpetrating: *I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.*

Judas is standing on the ground where three days ago he heard his Master say, in tones never to be forgotten, to these very Priests and Ancients: *Ye hypocrites! Ye whitened sepulchres! fair only to the eye, filled within*

with filthiness and death! He heard, he remembers, he believes every word, as now he confronts them, and, while the crowd around listen in breathless surprise, pours out his terrible confession, which his tortured conscience cannot suppress any more, but must cast forth.

*I have sinned*, he says slowly and solemnly, *I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.*

As he speaks, every word sinks into the guilty souls of these Antichrists, who will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven themselves, nor suffer any others to enter. Each word is like bitter wormwood and the gall of dragons to them. The domineering Rulers are struck dumb with confusion, and with terror too, lest some Daniel shall stand up and cry out: *Return to judgment; for they have borne false witness* (Dan. xiii.): and convict them of shedding innocent blood, and require blood for blood. *For wickedness is fearful and forecasteth grievous things* (Wisdom xvii.). Listen, and mark the fierce anger and the scorn in the tones of Judas, as with his eyes glaring on them, he publishes aloud his guilt and theirs.

*I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.*

B. "*Mercator pessimus*," Holy Church calls Judas; the most foolish of traders! the very worst of bargainers! of all merchants the most silly, the most thoroughly duped! Who ever gave up so much? Who ever received so poor an exchange? *The men of riches have found nothing in their hands* (Psalm lxxv.).

Yet was he most kindly, and most clearly, and not once but oftentimes, warned to be on his guard.

We must with all our hearts pray again and again: "O merciful Lord, lead us not into temptation".

For, as St. Augustine says so truly, "There is nothing that one man does, which another man may not do, if not helped by Him, by Whom all men were made".

*What is this that hath been done? The same that shall be done!* (Eccles. i.).

C. *I have sinned.* Alas, poor dupe of Satan! do not waste words on these blind guides of the blind. Hasten to the retired corner where the Mother of God is contemplating all that passes; throw yourself at her feet; say to her that hallowed and privileged word: *Peccavi*; and then, lifted up and encouraged by her powerful maternal prayer, pass on next to the feet of your compassionate Master, and there with a holy presumption—for what does heavenly hope look like but a holy miraculous presumption quite above this world?—gladden His crushed Heart by making again your short confession: *Peccavi*; and surely you also, as well as the guilty King, shall hear the answer: *The Lord hath taken away thy sin.*

*But, alas! now these things are hidden from thy eyes.*

D. It behoves us to notice carefully what it is that is wanting in this confession of Judas; for it looks like a true and genuine confession. David says, "*Peccavi*," and is forgiven. Judas says, "*Peccavi*," and he is not forgiven. What is the explanation?

Among other points of difference in these confessions, we may note these two—

1. David made his confession to the Prophet duly sent by God to forgive him: but Judas confessed to the rejected Priests in whom now God has no pleasure.

2. David's confession was made with hope, and therefore, like good coin, had the image of the King stamped upon it. Judas made a confession hopeless and unloving. Heavenly hope has not stamped the image of his Redeemer upon it.

Oh, how careful we should be, when we confess and beg absolution, to see that through good and genuine hope the contrition of Jesus be joined to our poor sorrow.

STATION III.

*But they said: What is that to us? Look thou to it (v. 4).*

A. *What is that to us?*

The loud protest of the traitor, as has been said, appals and confounds these haughty Rulers. Of the queen from the far country, we read that when she came into the presence of the glory of Solomon *there was no more spirit in her*. So now the voice of the great despair is like a death-knell to these arch-sinners. *There is no more spirit in them*. They are publicly disgraced and made infamous in the presence of the people and before the face of Jesus of Nazareth. They have no wish at all to continue their pompous prayers; but only to slink away, as they did once before, on this very spot and in this morning-time, when Jesus stooped down to write an extract on the ground from the dark story of their lives. Not knowing what to answer, filled with trouble and chagrin, they hastily mutter out the words: *What is that to us? Look you to it;* and hastily turn their backs on these unwelcome admonitions, and affect to be too busy, too much in haste, to attend to Judas.

Once more the crouching slaves of these degraded masters—men such as he was who struck Jesus in the face—come to the rescue, and interpose to drive the insolent intruder away; and will not suffer him to trouble these sacred High Priests and Ancients in this solemn and busy hour.

B. *What is that to us?*

Better, better far, a thousand times better for those High Priests and Ancients, had they laid aside their unholy work to attend to the task that best becomes the Priest of God, the raising up of the fallen!

C. *What is that to us?*

Is that your deliberate and final answer to this despairing sinner, ye Priests of the Most High God? If from yesterday's sunset to the nightfall of this day, there were no other sin of yours to be kept on the record than

this one, yet pause a little while and think: will you be glad of this word to the fallen outcast when you shall stand to be judged? Many a time in the synagogue have you read, or heard, the very words which the Judge of the living and the dead will address to you: *Wo to the shepherds of Israel that fed themselves: should not the flocks be fed by the shepherds? You ate the milk and you clothed yourselves with the wool, and you killed that which was fat: but My flock you did not feed. The weak you have not strengthened, and that which was sick you have not healed: that which was broken you have not bound up: and that which was driven away you have not brought again: neither have you sought that which was lost: but you ruled over them with rigour and with a high hand. And My sheep were scattered because there was no shepherd, and they became the prey of all the beasts of the field* (Ezech. xxxiv.).

Will you still say, *What is that to us?* in that hour when you are listening to this irrevocable denunciation of your most criminal neglect of duty towards the fallen sinner!

D. *They said: What is that to us? Look you to it.*

Have they then so soon and so entirely forgotten the words that Jesus addressed to them three days ago: *Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men, for you yourselves do not enter in, and those that are going in you suffer not to enter. Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, because you go round about the sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made you make him the child of Hell two-fold more than yourselves* (St. Matt. xxiii.). This outcast traitor is one of your proselytes, whom you have won over to your doings; is it no concern of yours, whether he dies in his sins or returns by repentance to his Master?

Priests and Ancients, *receive instruction*, and beware. Your Lord and your God, and your Judge, Whom you here hold in bonds during your short hour of rule and authority, is saying to you: "What you have done to the least and most wretched of My little ones you did it to Me"; and far

more readily will He at the great day of reckoning forgive the Wounds you have left on His own Body, than the incurable wounds and eternal death you have brought on the souls created and ransomed by Him.

E. *Look you to it.*

This is their verdict. Outcast Apostle! fallen sinner, pursued unremittingly by the tempter, and urged on to the abyss of everlasting hopelessness! *Look you to it.* Manage your own concerns, decide your own doom. You must stand alone, and alone struggle against all the cunning and the treachery of him who is the father of lies and a murderer from the beginning. Entirely they forget the word: *The lips of the Priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth* (Malach. ii.). Alas! "*Væ soli.*" *Wo to him that is alone. It is better that two should be together than one. If one fall he shall be supported by the other. Wo to him that is alone, for when he falleth he hath none to lift him up* (Eccles. iv.).

And if there is wo for him that is alone and falleth, what is in store for the strong and the mighty who were there to help, and whose sacred duty and whose office it was to help, and they left the fallen sinner to perish alone? Their sentence is written: *Horribly and speedily will He appear to you; for a most severe judgment shall be for them that bear rule. For to him that is little, mercy is granted; but the mighty shall be mightily tormented. For God will not except any man's person, neither will He stand in awe of any man's greatness: for He made the little and the great, and He hath equally care of all. But a greater punishment is ready for the more mighty. To you, therefore, O Kings, are these my words, that you may learn wisdom and not fall from it* (Wisdom vi.). For one short day, Priests and Ancients, till the evening sacrifice shall be offered, it is your hour, your will shall prevail. But pause in your work, be wise in time! Harken to the Holy Spirit saying to you: *Say not, I have sinned and what harm hath befallen me! For the Most High is a patient rewarder* (Ecclus. v.).

F. *What is that to us ?*

If these Priests of the Old Testament had not rejected our Lord, they would, no doubt, have become consecrated Priests in His new Church, and would have had that heavenly power entrusted to them: *Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them*: and if they were ever tempted to say to the sinner confessing his guilt: *What is it to us ?* they would have seen St. Paul start up at once with tears in his eyes to take the sinner's part, and saying with emotion: *Who is weak and I am not weak ? Who is scandalised and I am not on fire ?* (2 Cor. xi.).

The sin committed may be heinous and black, and one to be severely reprov'd, but he adds, with his heart on fire: *To him that is such a one this rebuke is sufficient that is given by many. So that contrariwise you should rather pardon and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with over-much sorrow. For which cause I beseech you that you would confirm your charity towards him* (2 Cor. ii.).

## STATION IV.

*And casting down the pieces of silver in the Temple, he departed* (v. 5).

A. He ought not to depart. He does well to cast away the price of his sin; but before he departs he ought to appeal from the merciless sentence of these Priests to the Heart of Him Who is the Lord and Master of these Priests. Judas, for the last time on earth, sees his Master standing straitly bound, the Just Man, Whose innocent Blood he has betrayed; the Just Man, and his most merciful Master and Redeemer, to Whom he may most assuredly appeal. Magdalen was more out of rule and out of place when she fell at the feet of Jesus in the middle of the banquet, than Judas will be now if he falls down and clasps the feet of his Lord here in His own house, His house of prayer and mercy. Jesus will not answer:

*What is it to Me?* For on this very day He is the Lamb of God, and His Eternal Father has *laid on Him the iniquities of us all*. Jesus will not say: *Look you to it*; but will take up this dark sin with the rest of His burden, and will *blot out the handwriting of the decree that is against the traitor; fastening it to the Cross*.

B. *Casting down the pieces of silver.*

*O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions!* As long as a man has *peace in his possessions*, he shudders with horror when death comes, and cries out: "*Siccine separat amara mors?*"—Is bitter death going to tear me thus away from all my loved possessions? But, *O death, thy sentence is welcome to the man that is in need; and to him whose strength faileth, who is in a decrepit age; and that is in care about all things, and to the distrustful that loseth patience* (Ecclus. xli.). In this last case, the world abandons men before they give up the world. They only give up what they can no longer relish. So it is with Judas, he has no longer *peace in his possessions*. He *is in care about all things*. Remorse, not tempered by hope, is swallowing him up. He is *distrustful*; full of terror and remorse; and he has not patience to set all to rights by penance.

C. *Casting down the pieces of silver.*

Oh, how blessed are those who, while they have still a relish for the things of this world, give them up willingly and cheerfully for God's sake; and do not wait till death comes to wrench from them, against their will, all their dear possessions!

How much, how exceedingly does God love *a cheerful giver*, who in the spirit of love gives back to his Creator what his Creator has given in love to him!

What an unspeakable privilege it is for us to be able to give something to our God!

"Ever-Blessed Mother, help us to bless thy Son, Who, when He had no need at all of us, has become poor purposely that we may be able to give Him alms."

And never must we forget the lavish, the inconceivable munificence with which our God repays the man who lends Him freely what He wants from us. *He shall have a hundred-fold in this life, and life everlasting* in the better world. It is as if God were the poor, needy creature, and man His bountiful god.

“Mother of God, pray for us now that we may give up in heart, at least, and also in act, if our good God wishes it, our poor possessions, before they abandon us. Pray for us too, in the hour of death, that the bitter Passion of thy Son may enable us to welcome death when it comes to strip us and consume us.”

*D. Casting down the pieces of silver in the Temple.*

In the Temple Jesus Christ appeals to us for His poor. In the Temple He pleads with us for His own wants, for He wants to work out the salvation of men. To do that He must have the Church as His home. He wants the Altar of Sacrifice. He wants His tabernacle. He wants the juice of the grape and the grains of wheat. He wants the sacred vestments. He wants the tribunal of penance. He wants the pulpit. He wants the holy font. He wants the sacred music—full and loud, sweet and becoming. He wants a sanctuary that shall attract the hearts of poor men. He wants the holy oil for the dying. He wants Christian children to be trained for the Priesthood. He wants alms wherewith to educate them.

May we have grace to love the beauty of God's house; and to love the poor; and above all, to love Jesus become so poor in His tabernacle, in order that we may have the glory of helping Him. May we have the grace to cast down willingly and cheerfully in the Temple what the traitor flung down out of a bitter necessity, and with so bad a grace.

*And went and hanged himself with a halter.*

1. As we read this passage, our first impression is that there is no break in the story; that Judas goes immediately from the Temple to the gloomy valley on the south side of the city, and

there without delay puts an end to his life. This opinion, which naturally suggests itself as we read, is the one most commonly followed.

2. In the writings, however, of one or two early Fathers, stories are found, which have not gained much belief, that Judas survived some years, wandering about a *vagabond and a fugitive* on the earth; that he was a dropsical man, and in the end was crushed to death by the wheels of a waggon. On the other hand, an opposite story, still less believed, is also found in the pages of an early Father, that Satan induced Judas to hasten his death by telling him that if he died before Jesus, he would obtain pardon from Him in the other world.

3. St. Peter, when addressing the meeting in the Upper Chamber after the Ascension, added other details about the death of Judas.

*Being hanged, he burst asunder in the midst: and all his bowels gushed out* (Acts i.).

In this passage, instead of our reading, *being hanged*, which is taken from the Latin Vulgate, "*suspensus*," the Greek text has the words, *πρηνής γινόμενος*—literally, "being, or becoming, prone". The Anglican version, following the Greek text, renders these words: *being cast headlong*. To reconcile these different readings, one esteemed commentator suggests that as the place where Judas died was both hilly and rocky, he probably stood on a ledge of rock while he fastened the rope round his neck, then flung himself off the rock, and by the weight of his body broke the branch, or the rope, and fell to the ground on his face, *prone*. His bursting asunder is accounted for in one of two ways: (1) that he was an obese, heavy man, and that the drop caused the rupture: or (2) that as he fell to the ground with his face downwards, he came in contact with one of the projecting rocks or sharp stones, which abound there, and thus burst asunder.

## SCENE IV.

### THE DEATH OF JUDAS.

#### STATION I.

*He went and hanged himself with a halter* (St. Matt. xxvii. 5).

A. We may notice with profit how in the end his death is entirely his own work. The Priests have, no doubt, provoked him; and grossly neglected to help him in his hour of need; and they thus become partners in his crime. The unseen tempter also persuades and urges him to

self-destruction ; but it is he himself, and himself alone, that commits the suicide.

This must always be so. Suicide, as the word tells us, must always be the work of the man who kills himself. If others use violence and hold his hand and force him to wound himself, this is not suicide, but murder committed by them. It is essential to the notion of suicide that a man kills himself. This remark, though quite obvious, is not useless, for it sets before us this most important truth :

*Sin is always a suicide.*

When we sin we are oftentimes persuaded that all the blame attaches to others. "My father provoked me." "My employer for whom I worked would not pay me my wages, and so made me dishonest." "I was driven by ill-usage to take to drink."

Now, the people around us can, it is true, provoke us or persuade us, as Eve persuaded Adam ; but neither man, nor angel, nor devil can *make us sin, or drive us into sin*. We have a proverb, that one man may lead a horse to the water, but ten men cannot force him to drink. This may be true, or may not ; but it is absolutely true that not all the men on earth, nor all the devils in Hell can compel any one man to sin. God, Who created free-will, can of course destroy or control the will, but that He does not do ; and no one else can do it.

Therefore *sin is always a suicide*. If I am provoked or persuaded by others to sin, they become partners in my sin ; but I myself, and I alone, inflict the mortal wound on my soul and effect the suicide.

*Destruction is thy own, O Israel (Osee xiii.).*

Sin is then completely and entirely our own act. If men around us provoke us with their tongues, or cast stones at us, it still rests entirely with each of us whether we will, with St. Stephen, say : *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge*, and die a glorious saint ; or, yielding to the most gross and clumsy artifices of the father of lies, resolve that

because others are wronging us, we will add on to their wrong-doing an outrage, a terrible crime against ourselves, ten thousand times worse, nay, immeasurably worse than all that others can do to us.

If ever then we sin, and lay all the blame of our sin on others, we shall have sooner or later to deplore our folly: *We fools! we fools! the serpent deceived me.*

*Destruction is thy own, O Israel. My sin is all my own.*

B. HE WENT AND HANGED HIMSELF.

St. Ignatius presses upon us in the beginning of his Exercises this fundamental truth: *Man is created to save his own soul.* No one else can save my soul for me, and no one else can lose my soul for me. Salvation or damnation must be my own work.

C. *He went and hanged himself.*

*With what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again.*

If I betray my God, or if I am a traitor to God's image, my neighbour, I end by betraying myself. Judas has turned traitor—against his own body and his own immortal soul, and betrayed them with unspeakable cruelty. All the wrongs he brought on his Divine Master shall be undone and repaired a thousand-fold. *Eye hath not seen* how every wound and sorrow shall be changed into heavenly jewels. But the suicide of Judas, his treason against himself, is for ever, and beyond all remedy or repair. With great reason, as well as with infinite charity, did our Saviour say: *Weep not over Me*, but weep over the poor sinner.

*He went and hanged himself.*

St. Peter afterwards, in the Upper Chamber, added these words: *Thou, Lord, Who knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two (Joseph the Just or Matthias) Thou hast chosen to take the place of the ministry and Apostleship from which Judas hath by transgression fallen, that he might go to his own place.* Commentators generally understand these last words to mean that Judas had fallen from his Apostleship to go to his own place, that is to perdition which he merited. If, however, we consider the Greek text, is it not possible that the sense is: "Show, Lord, whether of these two Thou hast chosen to go to his own place," that is,

show whether Joseph or Matthias is to be the Apostle, that he may go and preach in the country which shall be assigned to him?

## SCENE V.

### THE TEMPLE.

#### STATION I.

*But the Chief Priests having taken the pieces of silver said : It is not lawful to put them in the corbona, because it is the price of blood. And after they had consulted together, they bought with them the potter's field to be a burying-place for strangers: For this cause, that field was called Haceldama, that is, the field of blood, even to this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias the Prophet, saying : And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him that was prized, Whom they prized of the children of Israel. And they gave them unto the potter's field as the Lord appointed to me (St. Matt. xxvii. 6—10).*

*Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremias.*

The words here quoted from Jeremias are not found in any of the writings of Jeremias that have come down to us; but St. Jerome testifies that he found the words in a book of Jeremias shown to him by a Jew; which book, however, has no place among the canonical books of Holy Church. That some writings of the Prophets and Apostles have been lost seems quite certain; and therefore we are not obliged to adopt the suggestion of some commentators that the name of Jeremias is inserted in the Sacred Text instead of the name of Zacharias, in whose prophecy are found words that may be those alluded to by St. Matthew, though perhaps this is somewhat doubtful.

The words read in the eleventh chapter of Zacharias are these: *And they weighed for My wages thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said: Cast it to the statuary (the potter), a handsome price that I was prized at by them! And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and I cast them into the house of the Lord, to the statuary.* The Lord is making known to Zacharias the coming rejection of the Jews, whom He calls *the flock of the slaughter*, that is, a race doomed to destruction. Zacharias is ordered to personate Christ, and act as shepherd of the flock. As shepherd *I took*, he says, *unto Me two rods: one I called BEAUTY, and the other a CORD (Zach. xi).* These two rods represent the two ways in which God endeavoured to lead the Jews aright, sometimes by the rod

of Beauty, that is, gentleness and love, sometimes by the Cord, the lash of severity and the bonds of captivity. Then the Prophet, acting thus in the person of Christ, as shepherd, goes on to say: *I took My rod that was called BEAUTY, and I cut it asunder to make void My Covenant, which I had made with all people, and it was made void in that day* (Zach. xi.). This signifies that when the Jews finally rejected all the loving and most merciful efforts of our Saviour to win them, the Covenant of mercy was at an end, and the Prophet adds, *And so the poor of the flock that keep for Me, understood that this is the Word of the Lord.* That is to say, a certain number among the poor will be faithful to Christ, and understand that the rejection of the Jews is God's decree.

And then the Prophet, speaking still in the person of Christ, says to the people: *If it be good in your eyes, bring hither My wages, and if not, be quiet.* That is, if you have still any wish that I should continue to be your Shepherd and rule over you, even with the rod of fear, bring Me My wages. Give Me some return for what I have done for you. Show Me some reverence at least, if you have no love. *If not, be quiet* (as we say—"leave it alone"). That is, if you don't choose to give Me My fitting wages, I shall not compel you to do so: use your free-will. *It is your hour, and the power of darkness.*

*And they weighed for My wages thirty pieces of silver.* They are not willing to give Me the reverence, the honour, the love that are My proper wages. All that they will give is thirty pieces of silver, in order that they may secure Me and put Me to death. In Exodus xxi. it was ordered that, if an ox belonging to one man gored the male or female slave of another man, the owner of the ox should pay in compensation thirty pieces of silver. And this sum is the only price, or wages, that the stiff-necked people are willing to pay. Therefore, *the Lord said to Me: Cast it to the statuary* (the potter, the man who models figures from clay), *a handsome price that I was prized at by them! And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and I cast them into the house of the Lord, to the statuary* (or the potter). And then the Prophet cuts asunder the second pastoral rod, that was called a CORD, to signify that God would no longer attempt, even by severity, to bring back the people to their duty, but would allow the disruption begun under Roboam, to be thoroughly completed by the Romans, who are to scatter Juda and Israel over the face of the earth, and leave not one stone of the Temple on another.

In the Prophet's picture, observe that our Lord considers the thirty pieces paid to Judas, who has been till now His bursar, as belonging to Him, or as if they had been paid to Him, and He exclaims, *A handsome price that I was prized at by them!* It shows how vile He is become in the eyes of men, that they only offer thirty pieces for Him; and His Apostle is willing to accept that price for Him. He, however, will not ratify the compact. He does not suffer His treacherous bursar to retain this money, which is such an insult and outrage. Nor must it remain in the

treasury of the Temple, which is His house. It must go to the potter to buy a burying-ground for strangers. Thus some good will come of it. Our Lord, therefore, entirely rejects the compact.

*A. It is the price of blood.*

Joseph, who was a type of our Lord, was sold by his brethren for twenty pieces of silver to the Ismaelites. They sold him because *Juda said to his brethren: What will it profit us to kill our brother and conceal his blood? It is better that he be sold to the Ismaelites, and that our hands be not defiled. For he is our brother and our flesh* (Genesis xxxvii.). But Jesus is sold by His own Apostle, and bought by His own Priests and people, in order that He may be killed and crucified. They do not say, *What will it profit us to kill our brother?* They, on the contrary, in their blindness think that all will be gained for them by His Death. *It is expedient that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not* (St. John xi.).

*B. A handsome price that I was prized at by them!*

St. Ignatius, in his meditation on our sins, sets before us as a matter for sorrowful meditation the very small price for which we give up our God. If there were two Gods, and I abandoned the one who created me and to whom I belong, to go over to the other God; this would be treason, but still I should be giving up one God for another equally good. But when we sin, the case is very different. *Be astonished, O ye Heavens, at this; and ye gates thereof be very desolate, saith the Lord. For My people have done two evils. They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have dug to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water* (Jerem. ii.). To turn our back on God is one great evil. But when we turn our back on our Creator and our Father, in order to gain, not another good God, but the gratification of some passion which is so vile that even if not forbidden we ought to shun it and abhor it on account of its baseness, we add a most hideous aggravation to our guilt. We abandon our God, the inexhaustible and ever-

lasting Fountain of living waters, in order to have our revenge gratified for a few minutes, or for a short-lived sensual pleasure: *A handsome price that I was prized at by them! We fools, we fools! The serpent deceived me.*

C. *But the Chief Priests having taken the pieces of silver, said: It is not lawful to put them in the corbona, because it is the price of blood* (St. Matt. xxvii.).

Mark well how inconsistent, how illogical a deluded conscience can be. Only three days before Jesus said to those very men: *Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel* (St. Matt. xxiii.). They commit unhesitatingly the sins "they are inclined to," and affect to abhor those "they have no mind to". The corbona was the great alms-box, or treasury of the Temple, into which the widow cast her mite, that the poor might share her last farthing. Out of this treasury of God and of His poor the Priests did not scruple to take sacrilegiously the widow's alms to pay it to Judas as the price of the Just Man's innocent Blood; they gave the alms of the poor to procure the murder of the poorest of the blessed poor. But now that this unhallowed money is forced back upon them, their conscience does not permit them to put back into the corbona what they sacrilegiously stole out of the corbona.

"From the leaven of the Pharisees, the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, deliver us, O Lord.

"From a false and deluded conscience, deliver us, O Lord.

"From the snares of the devil, deliver us, O Lord."

*And after they had consulted together, they bought with them the potter's field to be a burying-place for strangers* (St. Matt.). A tradition, which seems well authenticated, tells us that the clay in the potter's field had a marvellous power of consuming quickly the bodies of strangers buried there; and that in after years St. Helena covered over half the field, and changed it into a vast vault, with several openings in the roof, through which the bodies of Christian pilgrims were let down for burial. The writers who give us this information add moreover that, when she

became aware of the wonderful power this earth had of consuming the flesh buried in it, she sent several ship-loads of the soil to the Campo Santo in Rome, where it preserved its power; but only over the bodies of strangers, for whose benefit the field was at first purchased. The well-known Jesuit writer, Pather à Lapide, after copying this statement from an ancient writer, adds his testimony to its truth: "I have often visited the Campo Santo at Rome, and heard from the parish priest and his attendants, and from other Romans, that the facts stated are correct".

*After they had consulted together.*

Are we to suppose that the Chief Priests held this consultation, and resolved on buying the potter's field while on their way to Pilate? This is not probable. St. Matthew is the only Evangelist who mentions the episode of the remorse of Judas. He inserts here the consultation of the Priests because there was no other opportunity of alluding to it.

*For this cause that field was called Haceldama, that is, the field of blood, even to this day (St. Matt.).*

St. Peter, in his discourse in the Upper Chamber, says: *He indeed (Judas) hath possessed a field of the reward of iniquity; and being hanged, burst asunder, and all his bowels gushed out. And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the same field was called in their tongue Haceldama, that is to say, the field of blood (Acts i.).*

Some Protestant commentators, who love to see discrepancies in different parts of Holy Writ, assume that these two stories do not agree. For St. Matthew writes that the field is called Haceldama, because the money spent upon it is *the price of blood*: while St. Peter, as they interpret, says that the name was given because Judas there committed suicide. But does St. Peter say this? According to tradition, the field, Haceldama, was not the scene of Judas' death; nor does St. Peter assert that it was. He merely states the two facts: (1) that Judas possessed the field; and (2) that he hanged himself. The field then is popularly called Haceldama for two reasons: (1) because the money paid for it is blood money; and (2) because the field belonged to the unhappy suicide.

St. Peter in his discourse says: *He (Judas) possessed the field,* and this passage is one of the reasons which induce some to think that Judas survived some time, and was the owner of the field. But this supposition is commonly considered quite improbable. St. Peter's words may merely mean that the field was bought with money that had been his.

SCENE VI.

FROM THE TEMPLE TO ANTONIA.

*And the whole multitude of them rising up, led Him to  
Pilate (St. Luke xxiii.).*

*And they brought Him bound, and delivered Him to Pontius  
Pilate the Governor (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

*And they led Jesus . . . to the Governor's hall (St. John  
xviii.).*

*To the Governor's hall (Prætorium).*

I. A question here meets us : where is the Governor's hall, or Prætorium ?

Some writers and lecturers take for granted that Pilate was living in the Palace of Herod the Great, and that the Prætorium was there. This magnificent Palace stood on the west side of the city, close to what is now called the Jaffa Gate. One of the towers which formed part of this Palace is supposed to be still standing, and goes by the name of the Tower of Hippicus. It was spared by the Romans during the siege which changed Jerusalem into a ruin, in order that men in after times might form some idea of the strength of the fortifications which in vain resisted Roman valour.

This theory, however, is contradicted by the well-established and ancient tradition that the Prætorium to which our Saviour was led was attached to the Castle of Antonia, which stood at the north-east corner of the city, immediately to the north of the Temple precincts, and abutting on them. It is from this spot that all pilgrims begin the Way of the Cross. It is here that the arch called the arch of the Ecce Homo is shown, and the Chapel of the Flagellation. There seems to be no good reason for abandoning this venerable tradition. The number of those who recede from it is small. They are chiefly modern Protestant writers.

The Roman Governors not unfrequently preferred to fix their abode at Cæsarea by the sea, another creation of Herod the Great, and a monument of his desire to curry favour with the great men of Rome by honouring their names. When, however, they visited Jerusalem, they might, no doubt, ordinarily dwell in the grander palace of Herod on the western side; but during the Paschal season when a vast crowd of excitable Jews, very impatient of Roman rule, were gathered in and around Jerusalem, it was very natural that they should prefer to be with the Roman soldiers in the strong fortress of Antonia, whence they could watch and control every movement in the Temple grounds and in the whole city.

2. Consequently, the *multitude* of Priests, Ancients, Scribes, Pharisees, and their retainers, who are leading Jesus to the Governor's house, when they leave the Temple, have only to advance northward, a very short journey of a few minutes, in order to reach the great gateway leading into a courtyard which lies to the north of the fortress. If the students of ancient topography be correct, the procession of the Priests and Ancients walked past the western side of the Castle of Antonia into a large square or forum, and there on their right hand found the gateway that led into the Lithostrotos, the large paved courtyard which was on the north side of the Castle and the Prætorium.

3. As all the Temple buildings, and the colonnade around, have been remodelled on a magnificent scale by Herod the Great, and as the Castle of Antonia is also his work, our Blessed Saviour, as He is dragged along, is surrounded on all sides by memorials of that unblessed King who massacred the Innocents in the hope of rendering the Blessed Mother of God childless.

4. This fortress which King Herod enlarged and strengthened, and called Antonia in memory of his patron, Mark Antony, was originally built by the Machabees, and called Baris. After Herod's improvements, Josephus describes it, in exaggerated terms, as like a city from its size and the accommodation it afforded to the soldiers of the garrison; and like a palace from its magnificence. It covered, we are told, an area of one hundred yards square. The rock on which it stood was, Josephus writes, seventy-five feet high, and the sides of this rock were faced with marble, which not only served as ornament, but also rendered it well-nigh impossible for an enemy to scale the walls. From this rock the fortress rose to a height of sixty feet, with a turret at each angle. One of these turrets on the south side was a little more than one hundred feet high; and from thence the Roman soldiers could command a view of the city, and especially the Temple grounds; and there were two flights of steps by which they could descend rapidly into the Temple area and crush at once any disturbance. There was also an underground passage connecting the fortress with the Temple.

On the northern side of the fortress, between Antonia and Mount Bethesda, a deep artificial fosse had been dug to render the Castle more impregnable.

5. The Prætorium, we are told, was not within the fortress, which was reserved as a stronghold where the Governor and the Roman Legion could have a safe refuge in any time of disturbance. The Governor's hall and offices were in a separate building, standing on a much lower level than the Castle, and connected with Antonia by drawbridges or galleries.

6. Careful students of ancient topography generally place the fortress at the north-west corner of the Temple enclosure. In this they are following the guidance of Josephus. This Temple enclosure had been, as has been said, much enlarged by Herod, and at the time of our Lord was, it is supposed, about

fifteen hundred feet long from north to south, and nine hundred broad from east to west, and in the opinion of these writers, the fortress occupied about two hundred feet of the northern boundary of the Temple area, and projected another hundred feet to the west. The remaining six hundred or seven hundred feet along the northern side of the Temple area were occupied by the Prætorium and other offices.

7. On the opposite side to the Temple, that is to say, on the northern front of Antonia and the Prætorium, there was a large courtyard or square, paved, we are told, with reddish stones, and called in Greek, *Lithostrotos*, in Hebrew, *Gabbatha*.

In this *Lithostrotos* there stood a raised tribunal, from which the Governor at times administered justice.

A flight of marble steps, venerated now in Rome as the *Scala Santa*, led from the balcony in front of the Prætorium down to the *Lithostrotos*.

8. The Castle of Antonia stood just outside the northern wall of the city, commonly called the Second Wall.

The more ancient wall known as the First Wall, is supposed to have been built by David or Solomon.

It ran due west from the wall of the Temple area to the Palace of Herod the Great, on the western side of the city.

Later, as the city grew to the North, the Asmonean Princes found it necessary to build the Second Wall.

Outside this second wall a large northern suburb had in time sprung up on the slope of Mount Bethesda, which, as has been said, was separated from Mount Moriah by a deep cut, partly natural, partly artificial. For the protection of this suburb, King Herod Agrippa, about twelve years after our Saviour's death, built a wall known as the third wall. Between the third wall of Agrippa and the first wall of David and Solomon, a second, as has been said, had been built by the Asmonean Princes, the successors of the Machabees, to protect houses which had been built outside the old first wall.

9. In the great northern suburb on Bethesda, which Agrippa afterwards enclosed, the Romans, following their usual practice, constructed, we are told, a large forum for assemblies of the people. This forum was probably contiguous to the west side of the *Lithostrotos*, and close to the ancient northern wall of the city.

10. Advancing then from the Temple grounds northward, the Priests and Ancients pass by, as has been said, the Castle of Antonia on their right hand and go into the forum, and thus arrive at a gateway, also standing on their right hand, which leads them into the *Lithostrotos*.

Arriving at this gateway they face to the right, and walk down eastward past the northern front of Antonia, and arrive at the *Scala Santa*. There they stand with their faces turned southwards, looking up to the doorway through which they impatiently expect the Governor to come out to them.

11. Pontius Pilate, we are told, was a descendant of Pontius,

King of the Samnites, who defeated the Romans in battle. Some think that he acquired the surname of Pilate by some exploit in war. He was the sixth Procurator who governed Judea since its annexation to the Roman province of Syria. He had been about nine years in office on the first Good Friday. Till his time the seat of government had been at Cæsarea by the sea, so called to distinguish it from Cæsarea Philippi, built by Philip, one of Herod the Great's sons, and *Tetrarch of Iturea and the country of Trachonitis* (St. Luke iii.). Like the rest of the Herodian family, he gave a Roman name to his new city.

Pilate was the first who quartered the Roman Cohorts in Jerusalem; and exasperated the Jews to the highest pitch by ordering the Roman Eagles to be displayed there. Their remonstrance was so determined that Pilate was on the point of ordering a massacre of them; but in the end he thought it better to yield. On two other occasions, however, he did command his soldiers to use their swords and daggers. St. Luke alludes to one of these affrays: *There were present at that very time some that told him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices* (xiii.). This massacre, supposed to have taken place in the Temple grounds, and apparently not many months before, must still be fresh in the memory of the Rulers. Another similar massacre of Jews is mentioned by Josephus, when the Roman soldiers with their daggers killed many of them. Pilate had, moreover, excited great odium by taking money out of the Temple Treasury for public works.

The Priests and Ancients, therefore, cannot now be very partial to him, nor he to them. But as they have before prevailed over his will by showing a bold front, they trust that the same plan may succeed now. They are, moreover, doubtless aware that he has been reprehended by Tiberius for not conciliating the Jews, as the Romans tried to do with all tributary nations.

#### STATION I.<sup>1</sup>

*Then they led Jesus to the Governor's hall. And it was morning: and they went not into the hall, that they might not be defiled, but that they might eat the Pasch* (St. John xviii. 28).

*It was morning.*

I. If we suppose that the procession started from the Priests' Palace at the beginning of the first morning watch, about 6 A.M., according to our reckoning, it would be probably drawing near to 7 o'clock when they arrive at the Prætorium.

<sup>1</sup> It might be well here to refresh our memory of St. Ignatius' method of contemplating the Sacred Passion. See vol. i. pp. 16—18.

II. As we have taken for granted that a Roman Cohort helped last night in the arrest of Jesus, we must suppose that the Governor had previously been informed that a very dangerous and seditious malefactor was abroad, who might easily create disturbance among the crowd assembled in Jerusalem. He is therefore already somewhat prepared, when a messenger arrives, sent forward in haste, to tell him that all the principal men of Jerusalem are about to wait on him on urgent business; that they have captured the dangerous Leader of the seditious; that it is most important that the case be heard at once before the people can have time to attempt a rescue.

The Priests and Ancients add a further urgent request that the Governor will not oblige them to enter the Judgment-hall, as they would by so doing incur a legal defilement, and would be in the eyes of the people unfit to take part in the eating of the Pasch in the evening.

*A. They led Jesus to the Governor's hall. And it was morning.*

From the high turret of the fortress Antonia, Pilate's officers can see the multitude when they are still at half a mile's distance, crossing the Tyropœon, from Mount Sion to the Temple grounds. The Governor is informed that this large gathering is approaching. As we have seen, he has had some experiences of these Jewish demonstrations, and therefore has his guards in readiness.

Men say sometimes that Christianity has worked no good. This much it has at least effected. It has taught many Christian rulers that they must be God's faithful stewards. Such men, therefore, take care not to begin the important business of the day without assisting at the Holy Mass if they can, or, at least, without an earnest cry to their God for light, for guidance, for strength, for rectitude. "Prevent, we beseech Thee, O Lord, our actions—forestalling them by Thy inspirations, and carry them on by Thy gracious assistance, that every word and work of ours may begin always from Thee, and by Thee be happily ended." Such prudent and faithful servants whom *the Lord hath placed over His family*, are well convinced *that we ought to prevent the sun to bless Thee, O God, and adore Thee at the dawning of the light* (Wisdom xvi.).

Pilate's good Angel is doubtless whispering words akin to those of our Saviour last night in the Garden: *Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation.* Sore is the Governor's need of prayer to strengthen him.

*Seek not to be made a judge unless thou have strength enough to extirpate iniquities: lest thou fear the person of the powerful, and lay a stumbling-block for thy integrity. Be not faint-hearted in thy mind. Neglect not to pray and to give alms* (Eccclus. vii.).

*They went not into the hall, that they might not be defiled: but might eat the Pasch.*

Commentators may truly say of this passage: *I studied that I might know this thing; it is a labour in my sight* (Psalm lxxii.).

We have already seen in the chapter on the Last Supper something of the question which is raised: Why have they to eat the Pasch to-night? Why did they not eat it yesterday evening, as our Lord did?

Moreover, why are they doing profane work to-day, as this is the first day of the Paschal solemnity which is to be observed as a Sabbath day? *The first day shall be holy and solemn, and the seventh day shall be kept with the like solemnity. You shall do no work in them except those that belong to eating* (Exodus xii.). In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month, *shall be the Phase of the Lord: and on the fifteenth day the solemn feast* (Numbers xxviii.).

It seems quite clear that they are not keeping the Friday as the solemn feast-day; and are not abstaining from servile work.

What is the reason?

In addition to what has been already said in the chapter just mentioned, we may here notice some points as a help to a solution.

I. The word *Phase of the Lord* is found in Holy Writ applied not only to the eating of the Paschal lamb, but to the other celebrations prescribed for the seven days of the Azymes, or unleavened bread. *Thou shalt sacrifice the Phase to the Lord thy God, of sheep and oxen: thou shalt not eat it with leavened bread* (Deut. xvi.).

So too we find in the account of the Pasch celebrated so solemnly by Josias (2 Paral. xxxv.) that the King gives to the people for the celebration, besides the lambs and kids, *of other small cattle thirty thousand*: and that the eating of the roasted Phase and the eating of the boiled peace-offering make up one celebration. In the Book of Numbers also (xxviii.) we read that what is done on the first day of the Azymes is to be repeated on all the other days: *So shall you do every day of the seven days.*

This being so, it is not surprising that the Priests and Ancients, many of whom are Pharisees, and wish to pass for

very righteous men and strict observers of law, desire to appear quite clean even for the celebration of the second evening.

II. Then besides, as the celebration on the Friday evening begins the great Sabbath-day—for the Sabbath which occurs within the seven days of the Azymes is especially solemn and called the Great Sabbath—they might very naturally wish to pass before the people as free from defilement for such a service.

III. These conjectures, however, though they may possibly account for the words of the Evangelist, *that they might eat the Pasch*, yet do not explain how it happens that the Priests and Ancients are not keeping the first day of the Azymes as a solemn festival day on which they must abstain from all servile work. The Evangelists speak of the Good Friday only as the Parasceve; that is, the *preparation day* for the Great Sabbath; the vigil of the Great Sabbath. If it had been a solemn festival day, as solemn as the Sabbath itself, they would surely have referred to it as such.

The most probable answer to this difficulty seems to be that rightly or wrongly a custom had been introduced whereby, when the first day of the Azymes fell on the eve of the Sabbath, the festival was transferred to the Sabbath in order to avoid the inconvenience of having two days of strict obligation without a break between.

IV. Our Blessed Saviour, then, celebrated the Paschal supper on the day prescribed in the Law: and the day on which He died was *de jure* the solemn festival day of the Pasch—the first day of the Azymes; the fifteenth day of the month Nizan. Whether the High Priests had sufficient authority to transfer the feast to the day following is a question of no great importance to us. If they were going beyond their powers, this was not their only nor their greatest transgression.

V. *That they might not be defiled.*

Some writers think that the Jews incurred legal defilement by transacting any business, at any time, in the court of a Pagan judge. Others limit this liability to the Paschal time. Others, again, are of opinion that the danger of legal defilement in this instance arose merely from the case being one in which blood would be shed.

B. *They went not into the hall, that they might not be defiled.*

St. John afterwards wrote: *Jesus did not trust Himself to them: for that He knew all men—He knew what was in man.* How well He knows the hearts and secret thoughts of these Rulers blinded by pride! His words of last Tuesday are still ringing in their ears: *Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!* They are anxious to make the

Roman Governor believe that they are righteous and scrupulous men, who *strain out a gnat*. Before the ninth hour he will see clearly enough that they can swallow a camel. *Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You make clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but within you are full of rapine and uncleanness. Hypocrites! you tithe mint, anise, and cummin, and have left the weightier things of the law: judgment, and mercy, and faith* (St. Matt. xxiii.).

“Merciful Lord Jesus, Who knowest all men, and art the *Searcher of hearts*, give us grace to detest *the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.*”

C. *They went not in.*

We may contemplate their feverish excitement as they stand at the bottom of the steps looking up to the doorway; doubting whether the Governor will or will not condescend to come to them; and their bitter murmurs at the delay; and their curses and words of execration. All their peace of mind and contentment is at the mercy of this Pagan, who loves them not at all.

Meanwhile, Pilate is between two minds. Shall he or shall he not comply with the wish of these men whom he scorns? *He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea which is moved and carried about by the wind* (St. James i.). In the end, the remembrance of the Emperor's command, that he is to conciliate the subject people, or some other politic motive, determines him to humour the Rulers.

“Ever-Blessed Mother, pray for us, that the grace of thy Son may keep our wills firm and constant *in the law of the Lord*, that we may not become *like the dust which the wind driveth from the face of the earth*” (Psalm i.).

SCENE VII.

IN THE LITHOSTROTOS BEFORE PILATE.

STATION I.

*Pilate therefore went out to them (St. John xviii. 29).*

The doors are at length opened, and, not without the protection of his guards, the Governor comes out; and first from the balcony he surveys the multitude: the High Priests in the foreground; Annas, whom he deposed, and Caiphas, and all the notable men of the city. His eyes also rest on Jesus, so mercilessly bound and chained, looking so pale and so disfigured. The Blessed Mother with John and Magdalen and the other sorrowful women are behind. Holy Mary, with all her mind and all her heart, is watching and listening: *No particle of the good gift escapes her.* After his careful survey, the Governor comes down some of the steps, expressing, perchance, to his officers beside him his contempt for the rabble, and for the hubbub they are making about such a poor Prisoner; and the barbarity with which they are treating Him.

As he draws near, the noise in the crowd is hushed.

“Mother of God, pray for us sinners, that we may have eyes to see, and ears to hear.”

STATION II.

*Pilate therefore went out to them and said: What accusation bring you against this Man? They answered and said: If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up to thee (vv. 29, 30).*

A. *What accusation bring you against this Man?*

This is a fair and reasonable question; one that a judge could not fail to ask who had any share of that sense of justice which helped so much, it is thought, to win for Rome the empire of the world. Some years later, when the Jews were thirsting for St. Paul's blood, Festus,

the Proconsul, said to King Herod Agrippa I told them (the Jews) *that it is not the custom of the Romans to condemn any man, before that he who is accused have his accusers present, and have liberty to make his answer, to clear himself of the thing laid to his charge* (Acts xxv.). There is nothing, then, at all amiss in the Governor's question.

But the Priests and Ancients are *cut to the heart* by it. They are not come to be catechised. They do not want the Roman to play the judge, and investigate. What wonder! These are the men of whom Jesus said to Nicodemus, *Men love darkness rather than the light. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light.* It is not to find light and truth that they have been watching last night, and have risen before the dawn, and hurried so fast to the Prætorium. *Their feet are swift to shed blood.* Their present work is very evil. Consequently, they hate and abhor the light, and all investigation. When therefore they hear the Governor questioning, at once *their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. The poison of asps is under their lips* (Psalm xiii.). After interchanging for a moment their glances full of anger, and turning their eyes to their leader Annas, to see what instructions they can get from his features, they chime in at once with the words they hear him saying, and cry out noisily together :

B. *If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up to thee.*

Of accusations they have but one: *He calleth Himself the Son of God.* Pilate's ears are not prepared as yet for this charge. He would answer at once, as a Roman Proconsul answered later, when a disciple of Jesus was brought before him: *If it were some matter of injustice, or a heinous deed, O ye Jews, I should with reason bear with you; but if they be questions of words and names of your law, look you to it. I will not be judge of such things. And he drove them from the judgment-seat* (Acts xviii.).

They have not come to give one single proof. They are in a state of extreme tension. They cannot brook

any contradiction. The Roman must be browbeaten. They have done it before. They can do it again. "When we come here in a body—all the influential men of Judea—what business has he to doubt our word? Does he not know that by lifting our finger we can raise the people? Let him mind what he is about!"

*Let our strength be the law of justice (Wisdom ii.).*

*C. If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him to you.*

We have examined already, most fully. We here declare Him to be a malefactor. What more evidence do you require? Is an uncircumcised heathen daring to call in question our sentence?

*Thou wast born wholly in sin, and dost thou teach us? (St. John ix.).*

*The anger of man worketh not the justice of God; nor does it even satisfy a Roman's very imperfect sense of justice.*

*D. If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered Him up to you.*

In these Watches of the Sacred Passion the whole history of human wickedness is epitomised. *What is it that hath been done here to-day? The same that shall be done.*

Men are still, every day, browbeating and terrifying the weak till they sacrifice conscience and yield to their tyrants.

*E. If He were not a malefactor.*

We may consider, too, how often men still accuse the absent, and bring no proof at all, and allow no investigation; and deem it an insult if their slander is not accepted without question.

*If He were not a malefactor, do you think I would have said so? Do you mean to accuse me of telling a lie?*

From the 14th Psalm we learn that it is a sign of predestination when one has courage not to take up in such a case *a reproach against his neighbour*: and when *the malignant accuser is brought to nothing* (Psalm xiv.).

F. *If He were not a malefactor.*

Let us contemplate meanwhile the Heart of our Blessed Lord and the Heart of His Holy Mother, how they are pleading intensely for Pilate, that he may have grace to judge justly. We have seen in how many ways, and how many times Jesus appealed to Judas, and strove to win him. Now the charity of His Heart is turned upon Pilate. *He hath given His angels charge over him, to counteract the wicked inspirations of Lucifer.*

This is the great day of battle. *Mors et vita, duello conflixere mirando.*

The struggle in this hour is for the soul of the Roman Governor all of a sudden so assaulted with temptation. *They have opened their mouths against Me as a lion ravening and roaring* (Psalm xxi.).

“Mother of God, pray for us sinners, that in our day of conflict we may not enter into temptation.”

G. *What accusation do you bring against this man?*

We have to reflect on ourselves. If we would make leisure, and give the Blessed Mother opportunity, she too would perchance say to us with most persuasive earnestness, “*What accusation do you bring against my Son Jesus? What fault do you find in Him that your dislike for Him is so strong? Why do you shun Him? Why do you dread so much to be alone with Him? What is the cause that you will not watch one hour with Him? In what has He molested you? Answer me*” (Micheas vi.).

We know the one answer. *He is a censurer of our thoughts. He is not for our turn. We are esteemed by Him as triflers.*

“O Mother of Mercy, pray for us that we may never wish His thoughts to become like our thoughts, but rather that our hearts may become like to His.”

## STATION III.

*Pilate therefore said to them: Take Him you, and judge Him according to your law. The Jews therefore said to him: It is not lawful for us to kill any one. That the word of Jesus might be fulfilled which He said, signifying what death He should die (vv 31, 32).*

A. If Pilate were a man as firm as the Proconsul Gallio afterwards was, he would have stuck to his question: *What accusation do you bring? If it (be) some matter of injustice, or a heinous deed, I (shall) with reason bear with you.* But if they have no proof of crime committed, he will drive them *from the judgment-seat.* Pilate, alas! is not firm; he is a weak man; a man by no means strong in justice. Theologians divide sins into sins of malice, sins of weakness, and sins of ignorance. We have all the kinds of sin exemplified to-day: in the Priests and Ancients we see malice; in Pilate weakness; in the people ignorance and weakness.

“From the weakness of Pilate, O Lord, deliver us.”

B. *Take Him you, and judge Him.*

It was a gross outrage to a Roman Governor to ask him to sentence a prisoner at their bidding, and without trial. The Governor is quite alive to the arrogance and insolence of their bearing towards him. It would not at all displease him to mingle some more Jewish blood with the Paschal sacrifice; but he has some of that self-command which politic men can put on: he has been reprimanded by Tiberius, and he is dealing with the powerful men of Judea, and he sees determination in the scowling eyes and angry faces. He knows well that want of courage and boldness is not a characteristic of the Jews. If he had ordered his legionaries to disperse the gathering, he would not have deserved blame; but as he has not courage to end the discussion in the right way by driving them away *from the judgment-seat*, he seeks to get rid of the unpleasant

business by apparent courtesy. *Take Him you and judge Him.*

Under ordinary circumstances, the subject race would be flattered and gratified if a cause were thus entrusted to them by their Roman masters; but Pilate does not understand the present temper of the Sanhedrim. They do not want any form of trial. They have already tried and judged Jesus. They want His death, and death by crucifixion; and they want, moreover, to be able to tell the people that it was not they who put Him to death, but the Roman Governor. Most indignantly they said afterwards to the Apostles, *You have a mind to bring this Man's Blood on us* (Acts v.).

C. *Take Him you and judge Him.*

We have here one instance of the many which show how the overruling providence of God is guiding the storm that is raging, and making all things *co-operate unto good*. For though this answer of Pilate is not what would have come from an upright and just judge, yet it compels the hypocrites who hate the light to reveal their hidden purpose: "We don't ask for a trial. We have come to have His Blood. We have power to judge Him, but not to crucify Him."

From the mouths of children He can draw perfect praise, and from the mouths of lying men He can draw truth.

D. *It is not lawful for us to kill any one.*

Here then we have the real answer to Pilate's question: *What accusation have you against this Man?* Accusation, none. We are come to require of you to crucify Him.

*It is not lawful for us to kill any one.*

The common opinion seems to be that the Romans had taken away from the Jewish tribunals the power of life and death. But if so, some ask, how did they stone St. Stephen? And more than once they took up stones to kill our Lord. How explain this?

To this difficulty one answer given is, that they still retained power to kill blasphemers. But if this were so, would they not

at once last night have stoned our Lord when they all pronounced Him guilty of blasphemy? Or if, through fear of the people, they abstained from so doing, Pilate at least, when later he finds that the real charge against Jesus is that He is a blasphemer, would certainly have got rid of this most unwelcome business forced upon him, by telling them that they have power to condemn blasphemers, and therefore must not trouble him.

A more probable answer, perhaps, is that they have no right to kill; but when they stoned St. Stephen, as on other occasions, they were carried away by that lawless spirit and that hatred of Roman rule, which at length brought Titus and his legions under their walls.

Another less probable answer is also given, that they retained their power over life and death, but considered it wrong to exercise this power during the days of the Azymes. Had this been their difficulty, Pilate would surely have told them to wait for a few days, and thus have got rid of his most unwelcome task.

*E. It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.*

It is a great grievance with these Rulers that the Romans have taken from them the power of killing. It is not the Romans, but our good God Who has laid on *us* the commandment: *Thou shalt not kill*. In this instance, as in all others, He only forbids things which we ought ourselves to loathe and detest, even if they were not forbidden. As He is Supreme God, even if He commanded very hard things, and forbade things wholesome and salutary, yet we as poor insignificant creatures have no right to resist: *I the Lord have created him. Wo to him that gainsayeth his Maker*. But because He is not only our Creator, but our Father, and our gracious and merciful and loving God, He never does command aught but what is most desirable for us; and never forbids anything that we ought not to detest and shun even if it were not forbidden.

He orders us to love Him and love our neighbours. He forbids us to kill, to hate, to be proud, and to be drunkards. Have we reasonable cause to complain of such commands and such forbiddings?

*I have run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart (Psalm cxviii.).*

F. *It is not lawful for us to kill any one.*

Our Blessed Lady, if we will listen, will counsel us to lay this word up in our hearts. It is not lawful—it is highly unlawful—to kill or wound the soul of any of God's children, our brethren.

“O Merciful Mother, pray for us, that with Zacheus we may say from our hearts: *If I have wronged any one, I restore him four-fold.*”

G. *That the word of Jesus might be fulfilled which He said, signifying what death He should die.*

About a week or ten days ago, as we have seen, our Saviour had called aside His twelve Apostles near Jericho, and prophesied to them in presence of the traitor: *The Son of Man shall be betrayed to the Chief Priests and Scribes; (2) and they shall condemn Him to death; (3) and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles; (4) to be mocked, and (5) scourged, and (6) crucified.*

Three of these six prophecies are already fulfilled.

H. *It is not lawful for us to kill any one.*

So now things are apparently at a deadlock. Strong graces are being offered to Pilate, through the prayer that is ascending from the Heart of our Lord and the heart of His Mother. Apparently he will adhere to Roman justice; he will not sentence Jesus to death without trial.

The Priests and the Ancients, on the other hand, are resolved that trial there shall not be. After the failure of the witnesses last night, the word went forth: No more judicial inquiry. Their reliance is, and must be, on the dignity and majesty of their presence. “This will certainly overawe the Governor; and he will yield at once.” They are disappointed.

It will help us, if we bear in mind the prayer of our Lord in the Cenacle: *Father, the hour is come. Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee.* There are, then, two desires in our Lord's Heart: one, that He may quickly be baptised in His Blood; the other, that His enemies may gain no triumph whereby the souls of men shall suffer

scandal; that throughout the Passion He may be glorified, by being fully recognised as innocent; and that wickedness may be brought to naught. *Let them be confounded and ashamed that seek after My Soul. Let them be turned back and be confounded that devise evil against Me* (Psalm xxxiv.).

In this hour, then, these wise Rulers are confounded and put to shame and *turned back*.

Their plan of carrying all before them by their august presence has, like their other designs, failed entirely. They are obliged to turn back to their first plan, which they abandoned last night as hopeless. They must bring some accusations.

“O compassionate Mother of God, pray for us sinners that we may be confounded and ashamed and filled with true contrition for those miserable hours in which we devised evil against our God, and against thy Son. May the most just, and most high, and most amiable will of thy Son and our Lord be done for ever.”

#### STATION IV.

*And they began to accuse Him, saying: We have found this Man (1) perverting our nation; and (2) forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar; and (3) saying that He is Christ the King* (St. Luke xxiii. 2).

A. Their minds, then, are in utter confusion. Suddenly, quite against their intention, they are compelled without plan, without order, without any proof ready, without any appointed spokesman, to pour out with clamour and disorder all the absurd and improbable accusations which last night they abandoned as hopeless.

1. *We have found Him perverting the people.*

Were Gallio the Proconsul here he would say: “This is a vague charge. If it means exciting them to be disloyal to the Romans, where is your proof? If it means that He is teaching some doctrines contrary to your law; then *it is a question of words and names of your law; look you to it.* I

*will not be a judge of such things." And he drove them from the judgment-seat.*

2. *And forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar.*

Pilate knows perfectly well that with the exception of the Herodians—that faction which follows the fortunes of the Herods—all the Jews, and most of all the Ancients and Rulers, would bless the man that forbade tribute to Cæsar. This lie is transparent.

3. *Saying that He is Christ the King.*

For this charge there may be some foundation. This emaciated and exhausted Man may be some fanatical enthusiast who pretends to royalty; but *it is not the custom of the Romans to condemn any man before that he who is accused have liberty to make his answer, to clear himself of the thing laid to his charge.* He will therefore on this point examine the Prisoner.

B. *They began to accuse Him.*

*What is it that hath been done? The same that shall be done.* We have set before our eyes on this Good Friday a specimen chapter that is to be continually reproduced in the history of this sinful world.

While we contemplate, we are looking at our own days, and our own passions, and our own iniquity.

We must notice then how utterly false, and unjust, and shameless men become when a prey to envy and hatred and malice. *Their throat is an open sepulchre which pours out poison. Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. There is no fear of God before their eyes (Psalm xiii.). The tongue is a fire; a world of iniquity; an unquiet evil, full of deadly poison (St. James iii.).*

While listening to the calumnies of these enemies of our Lord, we must in sorrow bear in mind what He has revealed to us, that His Sacred Heart feels every word we utter against our neighbours as if said against Himself.

Am I doing anything to heal the wounds caused by my tongue and to repair four-fold the evil I have wrought by it?

C. *We have found this Man forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar.*

St. Paul's words are verified here: *Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest. For thou dost the same things which thou judgest* (Romans ii.). The dishonest suspect others of dishonesty. The unchaste accuse others of immorality. Proud men inveigh against pride. Self-willed men denounce tyranny.

These hypocrites have never ceased opposing the Roman tribute; and did their best to draw from our Lord's lips a condemnation of the odious impost. And now He deserves death because He has forbidden tribute to Cæsar. *Let them be clothed with confusion and shame, who speak great things against Me* (Psalm xxxiv.).

*Thou art inexcusable, O man. For thou dost the things which thou judgest* (Romans ii.).

D. *They began to accuse Him.*

While so many tongues are reviling our Blessed Lord, we can turn to our Blessed Lady, who in her heart is saying: *My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Jesus.*

"Holy Mother of Sorrows, obtain for us grace to say most heartily: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. *Benediction and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and strength to our God for ever and ever, Amen*" (Apoc. vii.).

#### STATION V.

*Pilate therefore went into the hall again, and called Jesus*  
(St. John xviii. 33).

A. The Governor, helped by the grace given to him, has a wish to be just. He will examine the Prisoner. Some of his guards come down the steps of the Scala Santa to fetch Jesus. The Priests and Ancients surround them and warn them earnestly that He is a most noted Seducer; that He deals in witchcraft; that He may at any moment attempt an escape; that they must lead Him

most cautiously, and not spare Him. Perchance too they bribe the Romans with money to be on their side against Jesus. The guards, seeing the heavy chains, the ropes, the cords, and how they have *humbled His feet in fetters*, scoff at their fears of an escape, and lead Jesus at once up the steps into the hall.

B. *Pilate called Jesus.*

“*Væ victis.*” Hard is the lot of the weak and the fallen! We must mark how much suffering is caused to our Blessed Saviour’s weary and worn Body by the journey up this long flight of steps. If Pilate’s clemency and justice inflict so much suffering, what shall his injustice and iniquity do?

Moreover, as our Saviour climbs, if we see Him tottering and stumbling, we must not forget that the real cause is that *the Lord has laid upon Him the iniquities of us all.*

C. *Pilate went into the hall and called Jesus.*

Let us observe with what intensity of compassion our Blessed Lady watches every step of her Divine Son as He ascends; and how she listens to every rough word and every blow from the soldiers, who rebuke Him if His step falters.

We read in the contemplations of the Venerable Mother d’Agreda, that our Blessed Lady, as she saw Him fall on the way to the Priests’ Palace, was so overpowered by the outrages and cruelties heaped upon Him, that she sent one of her attendant angels to ask most reverently of Him whether instead of honouring His Father by these terrible falls, He would not consent to glorify Him by substituting a humble compliance with her motherly desires that the heart-rending spectacle of His falls might not be so frequently reproduced; and we are told that the wish of Holy Mary was complied with; so that the falls became less frequent till He made His last journey along the *Via dolorosa.*

D. In this wish of our Blessed Lady an important truth is contained which is inculcated by St. Thomas and

other theologians, that as the love of His Eternal Father was always infinite in our Divine Lord, any act of His, however trivial in our eyes, gives as much glory to His Father as the worst sufferings of His Passion. Our Blessed Lady, the Seat of Wisdom, fully understands this truth, and therefore is not desiring anything that diminishes the glory of her God.

*E. Pilate went into the hall and called Jesus.*

As we contemplate our Blessed Saviour dragging His worn Body with so much difficulty up these steps, we must again and again call to mind the cause of so much labour and anguish: *He loved me and He delivered Himself up for me.*

And we may hear His Holy Mother saying most feelingly to each of us, "My child, *Tantus labor non sit cassus*—May all His toil not fruitless be".

*Blessed is the man whose help is from thee, Mother of God, in his heart he hath disposed to ascend by steps in the vale of tears. The lawgiver shall give a blessing. They shall go from virtue to virtue. The God of gods shall be seen in Sion (Psalm lxxxiii.).*

To reach our place in Heaven we must climb the mount of God; rising *from virtue to virtue*—and keeping ourselves unspotted from this world (St. James i.). *Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord, or who shall stand in His holy place? The innocent and clean of heart (Psalm xxiii.).*

If while climbing we grow faint, our Blessed Saviour says to us most compassionately, "I am yoked to you. I am climbing with you. I can compassionate your infirmities." *For we have not a High Priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities; but One tempted in all things, like as we are, without sin (Hebrews iv.).*

## STATION VI.

*Pilate therefore went into the hall again, and called Jesus and said to Him: Art Thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered: Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or have others told it thee of Me? (vv. 33, 34).*

A. *Art Thou the King of the Jews?*

St. John wrote many years after: *There are also many other things which Jesus did: which if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written.* We must, therefore, always bear in mind that only a few things are recorded and many omitted.

Pilate, when he heard the accusations so hotly urged by the Priests and Ancients, would probably ask, Where are your witnesses? Finding that no evidence at all is forthcoming on the first charge—*we have found Him perverting the people*—he sets it aside as vague and unmeaning. The second—*forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar*—reveals to him at once how badly in want of an accusation the Rulers must be, since they pretend to wish for His death, merely because He opposes the tribute, whereas he knows well that they would be proud of any man who did this. From this charge he begins to see clearly that Jesus is the victim of the malice of these men whom he hates and despises.

Then, moreover, we cannot suppose him to be ignorant of passing events. St. Luke tells us that Chusai, the wife of Herod's steward, was a disciple of Christ. So too may there be disciples in the court of Pilate. It is commonly believed that his wife, Claudia Procla, though allied, it is said, by blood to the Roman Emperors, was already a believer in Christ. From her and others Pilate may have learned much. He has been in office all during the Public Life of Jesus. A few days ago, on the Palm Sunday, he and his soldiers could see from Antonia every step of the triumphal procession of our Lord

from the moment they crossed the summit of Olivet to its arrival at the Temple. It is impossible, then, that he should not have heard much concerning Jesus of Nazareth.

Now, moreover, he has watched in wonder and with admiration His patience under insult and outrage, His gracious manner, His dignified bearing, the beauty of His features; for though His Face is bruised and defiled with spittle and dust, yet as sometimes the eyes of men are held so as not to know Him, so too at times special light is given so that men can see that He is *beautiful above the sons of men*: and this day is Pilate's special day of privilege and grace. St. Paul writes: *God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able: but will make also with temptation ISSUE, that you may be able to bear it* (1 Cor. x.). We must notice the phrase: *Will make with temptation ISSUE*: that is, will send with temptation so much grace as will secure a glorious issue, if the tempted man chooses to resist.

As then temptation exceptionally great comes to Pilate this morning, we may be quite sure that there is a far greater outpouring of grace. The most compassionate Heart of Jesus is pleading for him *with groanings unspeakable*. Holy Mary's eyes of mercy are shedding many tears for him. A blessing and a curse is set before him; it rests with his will to choose whether Jesus shall be to him his resurrection or his ruin. By the coming of the sunset he can either be a great saint, or a most wicked sinner. One part of to-day's wondrous conflict is a struggle between Jesus and Mary on one side, and Lucifer and his brood on the other, for the soul of this heathen man, this child of God, this image of God, at present indeed damaged and begrimed, but capable of complete restoration.

*I will put enmity, Lucifer, between thee and the Woman: her seed and thy seed.* It rests with Pilate to choose whether the Woman and her seed shall conquer. *God made man from*

*the beginning, and left him in the hand of his own counsel. If thou wilt keep the commandments, and perform acceptable fidelity for ever, they shall preserve thee. He hath set water and fire before thee : stretch forth thy hand to which thou wilt. Before man is life and death, good and evil, that which he shall choose shall be given him. For the wisdom of God is great, and He is strong in power, seeing all men without ceasing. The eyes of the Lord are towards them that fear Him ; and He knoweth all the work of man. He hath commanded no man to do wickedly, and He hath given no man license to sin (Ecclus. xv.).*

The eyes then of the Lord and His Heart are fixed in mercy on the Roman Governor ; more anxious infinitely that he choose life and not death than the best of mothers is for the preservation of her loved child. *He hath commanded no man to do wickedly.* He does not permit for one moment either men or the unseen spirits to coerce the free will of Pilate. *He hath set water and fire before thee, stretch forth thy hand to which thou wilt.*

But, "O Pilate, child of the Eternal Father, with desire He is desiring that thou make choice of that fire which He is come to cast on the earth. And He is ready to die to-day that it may be enkindled in thy heart." *For Thou lovest, O Lord, all things that are, and hatest none of the things which Thou hast made, for Thou didst not appoint or make anything hating it (Wisdom xi.). "As I live, I desire not that Pilate should die in his sins, but that he turn from his way and live" (Ezech. xxxiii.).*

*B. Art Thou the King of the Jews ?*

Not then in an unfriendly mood does Pilate put this question ; but with some sympathy and some respect, and a conviction that Jesus is a persecuted victim of the malice of the Sanhedrim ; perchance because He is of royal lineage, and thus above them. For in truth there is royalty and grace and dignity in His bearing. "Art Thou then the King of this people, *de jure* ? Art Thou the lineal descendant of David and the ancient Kings ? Or

art Thou one of those they talk of, selected by their God to govern? Hast Thou been putting forward Thy claims to sovereignty?"

C. *Jesus answered: Sayest thou this of thyself, or have others told it thee of Me?*

Our Blessed Saviour's Heart is, as has been said, full of compassion for the Roman Governor. He is most desirous to incline him to justice. By the mouth of the Psalmist He had long ago said: *Receive instruction, you that judge the earth* (Psalm ii.). That word His compassionate Heart is now whispering into the soul of Pilate. He answers therefore with great calmness and gentleness and deliberation: *Sayest thou this of thyself, or have others told it thee of Me?*

This answer is intended to set the Governor thinking and reasoning. "If I had really claimed to be the earthly King of the Jews, you as Governor must have known through your officials what I was doing. Have you heard of any attempt on My part to seat Myself on the throne?" Possibly the Governor may, on the contrary, remember to have heard how on a certain day when Jesus had fed miraculously the multitude, they wished *to take Him by force and make Him king* (St. John vi.), and that *He fled into the mountains alone*, to escape royalty and popular commotion.

For we must observe that this question put by our Lord implies that Pilate is very well informed of all that has gone on.

"If you then, Pilate, have never of your own knowledge been aware that I was claiming royalty, you can be sure that this accusation is only a slander invented by My enemies, whose malice you have already discerned."

So too does Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, reason with us. "Oh, in whatever day we hear His voice, may we not harden our hearts."

## STATION VII.

*Pilate answered : Am I a Jew ? Thy own nation, and the Chief Priests have delivered Thee up to me : what hast Thou done ? (v. 35).*

*A. Am I a Jew ?*

The Governor perceives clearly the force and wisdom of our Saviour's answer. He is ashamed of having even asked whether He had ever publicly claimed royalty : but excuses his question on the ground that Jesus may have some secret or mysterious title to royalty known to the Sanhedrim, though not to him, an outsider. "There may be some secret question of words or titles between you and them of which I know nothing."

Pilate, then, has now had a sufficient answer. He has been reminded that of his own knowledge he is quite sure there has not been treason, no outward usurpation of royalty, nor any pretension to royalty whatsoever. He ought now, by good right, to say at once and do, as Gallio the Proconsul afterwards said and did : *If there only be question of words and names (titles), look you to it. I will not be judge of such things. And he drove them from the judgment-seat.*

But Pilate is not prepared to walk so straightforward, or to follow so promptly the right path. We must contemplate him carefully, for he is a type everywhere and at all times reproduced. *What is it that hath been ? The same that shall be.*

The Governor is what St. James calls *double-minded*, and therefore *inconstant in all his ways* : he is, as we say, "a man between two minds".

Even in the holy there are two forces struggling ; Jesus spoke of them last night in the Garden : *The SPIRIT is willing, but the FLESH weak.* St. Paul speaks of *the law in my members, and the law in my mind.* In good men the spirit triumphs ; in very bad men, such as the Pharisees and Scribes and Judas, the law of the members has triumphed

completely. Between these two extremes is found the man of two minds, *inconstant in his ways, like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried about by the wind*: the weak good man, who this hour wishes very much to be virtuous, but the next shrinks from the cost.

Elias was dealing with double-minded men when he said: *How long do you halt between two sides? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him.* To the Bishop of Laodicea our Lord sends a message something akin to the words of Elias: *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would that thou wert cold or hot* (Apoc. iii.). Does Elias really wish them to declare for Baal, rather than remain between two minds? Does our Lord really wish His Bishop to be cold, rather than neither cold nor hot? One answer to this question may be, that as He is come to cast fire on the earth, He wants as His helpers men whose souls are hot. Ecclesiasticus tells us how a hot soul works: *A hot soul is a burning fire; it will never be quenched till it devours something* (c. xxiii. 22). Christ wants disciples who being on fire themselves will spread the Divine fire to others. A man neither hot nor cold cannot do this. Therefore, in the first place, he is useless: *They are become unprofitable altogether; there is none that doth good; no not one* (Psalm xiii.). But moreover, secondly, he is worse than useless; he is in the highest degree dangerous; because he passes as a friend of Christ; and outwardly stands in the ranks of His army. Now, any good general would rather have such men in the enemy's ranks than in his own. As long as they are in his army he counts on them and trusts to them, and because he is leaning on a broken reed, he will fall in the critical moment. We shall see before the day is over all that our Lord suffers from one neither hot nor cold.

“Heart of Jesus, inflame our hearts. Passion of Christ, strengthen us.”

What can be more dangerous to Christ our Lord, or to any other leader, than to have a man apparently one

of His intimate familiars, who yet has not a good word for Him, who is neither hot nor cold? Men cannot help saying, "Here is one who knows Him well, yet cares nothing for Him".

Pilate, then, is between two minds. He has a leaning towards Jesus. No evidence is brought against Him. There is clearly a malicious conspiracy against Him. A Roman ought to be just. Therefore, if he were a single-minded man, he could say: *Causa finita est*, and drive the Jewish multitude from his tribunal. But he sees another side to the question. These Priests and Ancients are powerful in Jerusalem. It is their Paschal season, the favourable moment for risings of the people. Tiberius enjoins conciliation of the natives. Tiberius knows well how to chastise offending officials. Therefore he *halts between two sides*.

B. *Thy own nation, and the Chief Priests have delivered Thee up to me. What hast Thou done?*

Pilate, then, is seeking to serve two masters. He has before his mind a very strong case in favour of Jesus; and his good Angel is urging him to act upon it. But his will is also anxious to content these influential Jewish Rulers; and consequently his will sets his intellect to work to look out for good reasons on their side. And lo! the tempter has one ready, and a very strong one:

"*Thy own nation, and the Chief Priests have delivered Thee up to me.*

"*Thy own nation, who are so intense in their nationality, have yet found it necessary to deliver Thee up to me, a heathen, whom they loathe and abhor: What hast Thou done?*

"Your own know you far better than I do; and with their intense Jewish feelings, they would never turn against you all in a body without some grave cause. *What hast Thou done?*

"Detesting the Romans as they do, and worshipping everything Jewish, they surely would not deliver you up to

me unless there has been some very heinous crime committed. *What hast Thou done ?*

“On the contrary, if I had seized you to punish you, they would have been inclined to rouse the people to rescue you. *What hast Thou done ?*”

“*The Chief Priests have delivered Thee up to me.*”

“And mind, it is not only an outcry of a low rabble. The very best men of your nation are here against you. All the Chief Priests, whose lips, they say, speak truth, and who are in such veneration—*What hast Thou done ?*”

Pilate's argument is very strong. How true is our Lord's word: *The enemies of a man are those of his household.*

Outsiders have a right to say, if his own people are all against a man, there surely is a *prima facie* case against him. Don't we say that the voice of the people who know us is the voice of God ?

And, moreover, in those days, though the Romans will not condemn the prisoner till he is proved guilty, yet to a great extent they will treat him as guilty till he proves his innocence. So much so that, not many years will elapse before St. Paul will be bound with thongs to a pillar in this very Castle of Antonia, to be scourged and tortured, not because he has been found guilty of any crime, but simply because there is an outcry of the people against him, that he may be forced to declare *for what cause they should so cry out against him.* It was only when he let them know that he was a Roman citizen that *they departed from him that were about to torture him.* If, then, Pilate chooses to halt between two sides, he can find reasons for doing so.

*C. Thy own nation hath delivered Thee up.*

Here is a word that we Catholics should consider in our hearts. It is not the heathen, it is not the heretic, it is not the persecuting tyrant, that works ruin. They can do little till His own people betray Jesus.

Proverbs are commonly useful truths. "Lord, save me from my friends," that is, from apparent friends who are neither hot nor cold.

D. *What hast Thou done?*

If some strangers could come from another region into this world of ours, and see our Blessed Saviour in His tabernacle neglected and shunned, and quite unpopular amongst His own; would they not say in wonder: *Lord, what hast Thou done?* How hast Thou alienated Thy own from Thee?

E. He Himself asks us this same question: *My people, what have I done to thee?*

*I planted thee a chosen vineyard, all true seed: how then art thou turned unto Me into that which is good for nothing, O strange vineyard?* (Jerem. ii.).

*Many good works have I shown to thee;* for which of them all art thou so thoroughly estranged and turned away from Me?

This is a labour in My sight; and unable to find any satisfactory explanation, our Lord Himself by His Prophet puts this most strange and startling question: "*Numquid redditur pro bono malum?*" (Jerem. xviii.)—Is it become the rule that evil must be returned for good?

F. *Thy own nation and the Chief Priests.*

*Shall there be evil in the city,* the Prophet Amos asks, *which the Lord hath not done?* The holy Doctors of the Church have written words that justify us in asking another question like to this: *Shall there be evil in the Church which the Priest of the Lord hath not done?* *To you, O Priests, who despise My name—I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts.*

"From none," St. Gregory writes, "does the Lord endure greater wrong than from His Priests."

*You are the salt of the earth,* our Lord says to His Priests. A good Priest, like salt, saves others from corruption. Therefore: *Salt is good.* But, He adds, *if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is*

*neither profitable for the land nor the dunghill, but shall be cast out* (St. Luke xiv.).

Therefore (1) a bad, unworthy Priest is useless as salt that has lost its savour. He cannot keep others from corruption.

2. His own cure and conversion is difficult. For if *the salt* that is to save others from corruption *lose its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned* again? If the strong men fall down, where shall we find stronger to defend them?

3. As living bodies propagate life, and dead bodies spread infection and death; so good Priests spread holiness, and a bad Priest spreads vice.

4. The Arians, Nestorians, Lutherans, and so many others, could say with truth: *All we have gone astray like sheep.* The Bishop, or the Priest led, and we followed.

5. What wonder that when the Lord gave that terrible order to *the man clothed with linen, with a writer's inkhorn at his reins: Utterly destroy old and young;* He added this word: *And begin ye at My sanctuary!* (Ezech. ix.).

6. When the Ember-days come round, oh, that the Prophet's voice could cry to us all: *Blow a trumpet in Sion; sanctify a fast; call a solemn assembly; gather together the people,* that with the Priests and ministers they may *weep and say: Spare, O Lord, spare Thy people* from the scourge of unworthy Priests. *May Thy Priests be clothed with justice* (Joel ii.).

7. In the Canticle of the Children, which Priests recite after Holy Mass, we say: (1) *Ye sons of men, bless the Lord;* then (2) *Let Israel* (the people of God) *bless the Lord;* then (3) *All ye Priests of the Lord, bless the Lord.* We should grow in fervour as we go on. When those who are mere sons of men sin, they have less light than the house of Israel, the children of the Church; and the children of the Church in their turn do not abuse grace as much as the Priest who sins.

## STATION VIII.

*Jesus answered: My Kingdom is not of this world. If My Kingdom were of this world, My servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but My Kingdom is not from hence (v. 36).*

A. *My Kingdom is not of this world.*

Mark the earnest attention and surprise with which Pilate listens to these words. For with the words a grace goes into his soul. Otherwise he would laugh with great derision—as he looks on this Man so worn and wobegone, so helpless in His chains—to hear from His livid lips these words: *My Kingdom*.

A pleasant jest indeed, he and his officials might well think it, to hear this wretched Prisoner talking of *My Kingdom*. For to men *who sit in darkness* there is no kingdom, no palace, no home, no resting-place outside this world. With reason does the Holy Spirit tell us that whenever they see men die, to them as a matter of course, *their departure (is) taken for misery, and their going away from us for utter destruction* (Wisdom iii.). But now, our Lord is pleading for Pilate; and Holy Mary, too, is joining her Mother's cry for his soul; so that a grace is going into his heart with every word that comes from the mouth of Jesus; and he is not inclined to scoff.

He is quite satisfied that this is no foolish pretender to earthly royalty; and that He never has forbidden tribute to Cæsar. From his own guards, moreover, he has learned that the midnight expedition to Gethsemani, and the alarm raised about a possible fierce resistance, was a sheer fabrication. Pilate, therefore, takes in all the truth of that argument: *If My Kingdom had been of this world, My servants would certainly strive that I might not be delivered to the Jews.*

## STATION IX.

*Pilate therefore said to Him : Art Thou a King, then ? Jesus answered : Thou sayest that I am a King. For this was I born, and for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony to the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice (v. 37).*

**A. Pilate therefore said to Him : Art Thou a King, then ?**

He is between two minds. These Jews cling much to their old royalty. This Man may be by birth a Prince ; or He may be one of those they boast of as having a mission from their God. On the other hand, He may be a mere visionary. It is quite clear that, as He says, He has no kingdom in this world. It is very perilous to espouse His cause against these determined, obstinate men of the Sanhedrim, who might have very considerable influence with the Emperor.

**B. Art Thou a King, then ? Jesus answered : Thou sayest that I am a King.**

We may be quite sure that with the words came a grace to enlighten Pilate's mind and to incline his will, otherwise flesh and blood could not reveal to him that this poor Prisoner is a King.

How widely and fatally we stray when we trust too much to our senses !

1. They never tell us that Lazarus, starving and covered with sores, is soon to be one of our Lord's saints in Heaven, one of His blessed poor whose suffrage will have such power for us or against us in our day of need. And yet our Lord's earnest advice to us is, *Make friends of the mammon of iniquity*, that is, by almsgiving ; *that when you fail they may receive you into everlasting dwellings* (St. Luke xvi.).

2. Again, while we are at the altar, the sight, the touch, the taste, the smell mislead us, and tell us that there is nothing before us but bread and wine. Only through our ears does the heavenly truth sink into our souls : *This is My Body ; this is the chalice of My Blood.*

3. And also, not one of our senses tells us that our neighbour is really and truly the delegate, the envoy, the proxy, the second self of Jesus Christ. Oh, had I realised that by a wounding word spoken to the least of my brethren, I wound Jesus in the apple of His eye! Oh, had I known that by helping and serving the very least of these little ones, and poor ones, and wretched ones, I could win from the lips of my Judge that word: *You did it to Me!* But, alas! these things were hidden from my eyes.

C. *Art thou a King, then?*

I must make leisure to kneel before the tabernacle, and ask humbly and perseveringly: *Art Thou, O hidden Lord Jesus, art Thou a King?* For if Thou art a King, where is Thy honour? There I must stay knocking till it be opened unto me, till Thou shalt bring home to my heart Thy presence and all Thy love, and till with a most lively faith and ardent devotion I can say, "Yes, my Lord, *Tu rex gloriæ Christe*". "May Thy Kingdom come, more and more."

From a far country the Wise Men came asking this one question: *Where is He that is born King of the Jews?*

I need not ask that question; for I know where He is. I have only to believe, and believe more firmly.

St. Helen found the Holy Cross buried deep down in filth, and the emblems of Satan reared triumphant over its dishonoured grave. What place has my King, Jesus Christ, in my heart? Is He enthroned? Or is He cast down deep under the refuse of this world, that self may reign, and Satan, in His stead?

D. *For this was I born; for this came I into the world, that I should give testimony of the truth.*

Often and often in these days of unbelief and indifference to truth, we must repeat our conviction that our Lord is the Truth, and cannot love anything but truth. Satan, on the other hand, because the very opposite to Jesus, is essentially the father of lies. He multiplies false religions without number, to suit men's craving for novelty. He

has great contentment in every shape of falsehood. Truth alone he abhors and persecutes. We must convince ourselves, and do our best to explain it to others, that there cannot be any real sanctity agreeable to God, which is not founded on truth; that the multiplication of religions is not at all a necessary adaptation of the Gospel to different nationalities and the character and temperament of different races, but a murderous device of the father of lies to thwart the will of our Saviour Jesus, that all men shall come to the knowledge of the truth and be made one, by one faith in one Shepherd. God our Saviour *will have all men come to the knowledge of the truth* (1 Timothy ii.).

*E. For this was I born, that I should give testimony of the truth.*

*“Attendite.”* It is our duty as children of the Church to persuade men around us that Jesus Christ became Man to teach truth; and that therefore every revealed truth is most precious; that the spirit of heresy, which accepts some truths and sets aside others, is entirely wicked and blasphemous. If truth is not essential, fools indeed were all the martyrs who died in cruel torments rather than sacrifice one truth.

*F. For this was I born, that I should give testimony of the truth.*

We may all in due measure say this word. We are all born again, and made children of God, not for our own advantage merely, but that we may spread truth among other men. All Christians are in a real sense the salt of the earth, and the leaven that is to leaven the world.

Are we fulfilling our mission? On every side we are surrounded by men wandering in search of truth. How easy it is to give them a great alms by helping them to find truth!

St. Augustine, we are told, had written up in his dining-room a caution to his guests not to indulge in detraction. Situated as we are in this country, we need to be, in the same way, continually put in mind of St. James's golden

sentence: *My brethren, if any of you err from the truth, and one convert him; he must know that he who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins* (c. v.).

#### STATION X.

*Pilate saith to Him: What is truth? And when he said this he went out again to the Jews* (v. 38).

A. *What is truth? And he went out.*

Grace is continually passing from the Heart of Jesus into Pilate's soul, enlightening and moving. And the Blessed Mother of God is pleading as a true Mother for him. *The light of justice* is dawning on him; *the sun of understanding* is rising upon him. He is drawn, and there is a great struggle going on within him when he asks that question: *What is truth?*

Alas, why does he not wait for the answer? "Why, Pilate, go away, and not stay to prolong at all costs this most golden opportunity, the most *acceptable time* in all your life? Your other works will wait for you; *but Me*, Jesus meekly says to him, *you have not always with you.*"

"Do not go away," his holy wife, Claudia Procla, would say to him; "but on the contrary, compel Him to stay with you." The grace in his soul is a spark of heavenly fire. Oh, if not most carefully nursed, it will be extinguished. How pathetically the poets describe the benighted shepherd in the snowdrift; he struggles on through the darkness till he is within a few feet of his own little cottage, and then he loses heart and sinks down to die in the snow. Oh, had he but known that safety is so near; so near!

B. *He went out.*

It is the father of lies who whispers urgently into Pilate's soul that the Rulers are growing restive and will not brook further delay.

How often, how perpetually does he use again this

successful trick when Jesus Christ wishes to speak to a soul for which He has great grace prepared! A voice that seems friendly whispers, "You have bought five yoke of oxen, you must say, *pray hold me excused*: you must go to your farm; you really cannot stay with Him".

All the while Satan is thinking of the hour when he will stand at the judgment-seat to accuse you; and when Jesus asks, *What commutation will you give (Me) for your soul?* he will answer scoffingly: *Five yoke of oxen*. This was the *one thing necessary*.

### C. *What is truth?*<sup>1</sup>

In our days it is very much the fashion to ask this question with a sigh, as if men were desiring earnestly to find truth but cannot. The fault is cast upon God. "It is He Who does not make the truth clear enough. Men are only too eager to find truth, but have no grace."

And yet we have God's own declaration that He desires all men to be saved, and to *come to the knowledge of the truth*.

Of Himself, again, our Lord says, *I am the Truth and the Life*.

The two must go together. Truth and life. No truth, no life. If God is holding back truth from men who are seeking, He is refusing life and salvation to men who crave for it. If so, most assuredly He is not our Father, nor is He a God infinitely good. This thought, then, that men wish for truth and cannot find it, is only one of the many lies spread by the father of lies.

As faith is the beginning of man's salvation, the foundation and root of all justification, "without which it is impossible to please God" (Council of Trent), we may be quite sure that it is a grace that God gives most willingly and most reluctantly takes away. Of this grace, He says most emphatically, *ask and you shall receive, seek and you*

<sup>1</sup> Some one has studied the letters in the words of Pilate's question as we find it in the Latin Vulgate: "*Quid est veritas?*" and has discovered that by transposing the letters, you can get this answer; "*Est vir qui adest*".

*shall find.* Indeed, we may perhaps often hope that one who really wishes to believe, already has a good measure of faith, or, at least, is *not far from the Kingdom of God* (St. Mark xii.).

It is not God Who puts obstacles when men wish to believe. For He never unsays that word He spoke by His Prophet concerning His Church: *A path and a way shall be there: this shall be to you a straight way, so that fools shall not err therein* (Isaias xxxv.).

Wherein, then, lies the difficulty? Our Lord revealed it when He said: *Unless you become as little children you shall not enter the Kingdom of Heaven* (St. Matt. xviii.).

To believe in God, Whom we do not see, we must first believe in man His delegate whom we do see. Men who are full of secret pride in their own intellect want to arrive at God's truth without being taught by men. So do they also want to be forgiven by God, without confessing to men.

Our Lord makes it an absolute condition of salvation that we believe in man His delegate: *Go ye and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved: he that believeth not shall be condemned* (St. Mark xvi.). *If he will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican* (St. Matt. xviii.).

D. *When he had said this he went out.*

"*Recogitabo tibi annos meos.*" I will think over in Thy presence, my Lord Jesus, my years gone by, to deplore those sad moments when after praying a little while I suddenly broke off my prayer at the instance of the father of lies, and did not persevere asking for the grace Thou wast desiring so much to give.

When the mother of Bethlehem lost her children, *she would not be comforted, because they are not.* I desire graces for a little while; but before I have paid the proper price, I break off my prayers, and go away to find comfort in other things—a book, a letter, a conversation, or my meals; and my hunger and thirst for grace have died out.

## STATION XI.

*He went out again and saith to them : I find no cause in Him*  
(v. 38).

A. *I find no cause in Him.*

Better undoubtedly had he stayed within, communing with Jesus; but we see that grace has so far prevailed that he has courage to say this word: *I find no cause in Him.*

Oh, how blest if he had ended here with this wise word! The pagan Romans could admire *Justum et tenacem propositi virum*—a man of rectitude who could stick firmly to his purpose. Pilate ought, at this stage, to do as Gallio afterwards did—he *drove them from the judgment-seat* (Acts xviii.).

B. *I find no cause in Him.*

In reality, Pilate as a just judge ought to go even further. He ought in all justice and equity to remind these Priests and Ancients of their own law against a false witness: *Thou shalt render to him as he meant to render to his brother—that others hearing may fear, and not dare to do such things. Thou shalt not pity him, but shalt require life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot* (Deut. xix.). As a just judge the Roman Governor ought to have punished severely this wicked conspiracy of proud, envious, and most unjust men. But he is not single-minded. He is not one who loves truth and justice and goodness and nothing else. He is between two minds, he will not yield to the Jews; but neither will he offend them. Therefore he takes the mid-way course; he goes to parley with his enemies and God's enemies. Later his good wife begged him to *have nothing to do with this just Man, Jesus*. How happy for him had she been able to persuade him to *have nothing to do with these enemies of Jesus!* Do not stand paltering and dallying with them. *Who will pity an enchanter struck by a serpent? Or any that come near wild beasts? So is it with him that keepeth company with a wicked man, and is involved in his sin* (Ecclus. xii.).

How much we all need St. Paul's warning word: *Evil communications corrupt good manners!* (1 Cor. xv.). Men feel so sure of themselves; and that they shall never fall. They are fascinated by the company, but they are quite sure that they hate the sin. What more astonishing than Samson's helpless paralysis of the will! He sees quite clearly the murderous intent of Dalila, the treacherous Philistine woman, and yet goes on playing with the danger till he perishes.

C. *I find no cause in Him.*

*What is it that hath been done? The same that shall be done.*

The penitent confesses the grievous fall. I am really sorry. I never will repeat the sin; but do not ask me to break off abruptly from him or her; I do not like to hurt their feelings. I cannot bear to appear unkind to one who has been so good to me. When in this frame of mind, we are often trying to do what Pilate is trying in vain to do: to serve two masters and please them both. Our Saviour said a little while ago: *No servant can serve two masters.* This rule is most of all true and certain when the masters are as irreconcilable enemies, as Christ and Lucifer are. Our Lord adds the reason: *For either he will HATE the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and DESPISE the other.*

When then the sin was committed, the child of God *despised* God and adhered to Satan. When the sin is confessed and renounced and absolved, this is a return to God, and Satan is supposed to be thoroughly *despised*. But if the penitent stops short and says: I wish to return to God, but I do not wish to break with my accomplice; I cannot offend him or wound his feelings; not unfrequently this is only an attempt to do what Jesus says cannot be done, an attempt to adhere to God without despising or displeasing God's implacable enemy—a wish to stand well with both.

D. *I find no cause in Him.*

Judas the traitor was the first to proclaim openly the

innocence of Jesus. The Roman Governor now follows; and his is a very public testimony. He is, as it were, preaching from the housetop the truth that he has learned in secret. This is a part of the plan as approved in Heaven. Jesus is not to suffer as a malefactor.

We sometimes imagine that we could bear better a slight or chastisement, if we had done something to deserve it.

But can this be true? If I have done something to deserve it, I have sinned. Do I gain grace to be more patient by sinning?

Doubtless God may give me grace to be contrite and to accept due chastisement for my offence; but this grace must come to me from God. Sin of itself cannot help me to be patient. If then God must give this grace, which grace will He give more willingly: grace to bear with Christ when there is no cause in me; or grace to bear after I have given cause by sinning? The first is the higher and better grace. *If doing well you suffer patiently, this is thank-worthy before God. But what glory is it if committing sin and being buffeted for it you endure?* (1 St. Peter ii.).

*E. I find no cause in Him.*

We may lay up this word for our own use. "Blessed Mother of God, pray for us sinners, that we may thoroughly adopt it.

"I find no cause in thy Son Jesus, Holy Mary, why I should not praise Him.

"I find no cause in Him why I should not reverence Him.

"I find no cause in Him why I should not serve Him.

"I find no cause in Him why I should not greatly fear with a holy fear to offend Him.

"I find no cause in Him why I should not always and in every place hope in Him.

"I find no cause in Him why I should not love Him with my whole heart.

"I find no cause in Him why I should not for His sake love my neighbour for whom He died."

F. *I find no cause in Him.*

For the works of God are perfect, and all His ways are judgments (just and wise and well-considered). God is faithful and without iniquity; He is just and right (Deut. xxxii.).

#### STATION XII.

*But they were more earnest, saying: He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place. But Pilate hearing Galilee, asked if this Man were of Galilee? And when he understood that He was of Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him away to Herod, who was also himself at Jerusalem in those days (St. Luke xxiii.).*

A. *But they were more earnest.*

May we have grace to learn from the enemies of Christ, to be earnest and more fervent. Not long before His Death, He said in Galilee: *The children of this world are more prudent than the children of light (St. Luke xvi.).* Not only more prudent, but often more in earnest.

If God is only silent when we pray, though He gives no positive refusal, we often cease to pray and give up making an effort. These men have from Pilate a positive rejection of their suit, which sounds quite like a decisive and final answer; but they only grow more earnest.

How consoled our Blessed Lord was when the woman of Canaan did not cease praying when He seemed to reject her petition in words so severe: *It is not good to take the bread of the children and to cast it to the dogs.* His own Heart, loving to give grace, inspires her how to answer: *Yea, Lord, for the whelps also eat of the crumbs (St. Matt. xv.).*

B. *But they were more earnest.*

Why are bad men earnest, and Christ's servants remiss? Do they earn better wages than we?

1. Certainly not in the next world. Their everlasting wail is: *What hath pride profited us? We fools! The light of justice hath not shined unto us: the sun of understanding hath not risen to us (Wisdom v.).* But to His faithful ser-

vant our Blessed Saviour says at the Judgment: *Enter into the joy of thy Lord.* He made a prayer before He died which was heard: *My Father, I will that where I am, those also whom Thou hast given Me shall be* (St. John xvii.). They shall be with Him, and, St. John tells us, *shall become like to Him, because (they) shall see Him as He is.* They shall become like to Him in wisdom, in holiness, and in charity. Their perfect and everlasting bliss we can only believe, we cannot picture it. St. Paul saw a glimpse of it, but how much does he communicate to us? He merely tells us that *he heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter* (2 Cor. xii.). And he adds the words, so familiar indeed, yet so deserving of much meditation: *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him* (1 Cor. ii.).

2. But what of the present world? Surely the wicked thrive better here!

That sometimes they fare sumptuously every day and wear purple, we know. That they have at times more opportunities of gratifying *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*, is certain.

But, on the other hand, we know that *the eye by seeing and the ear by hearing* can never give contentment to the soul (Eccles. i.); and neither can man live and be made happy merely by the food he eats. *Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God* (St. Matt. iv.). Again we know from the Holy Ghost in what way the wicked in the next world tell the story of their own career: *The way of peace we have not known.* For even in this world, *a troubled conscience is always fearful, and forecasteth grievous things.* And what word more familiar than the inspired word of Isaias: *There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord. The wicked are like the raging sea that cannot rest, and the waves thereof cast up dirt and mire* (c. lviii.).

On the other hand, to those who make the greatest sacrifices for Him, and therefore appear to men to be the

most miserable of all, He promises that even in this life they *shall have a hundred-fold*, to say nothing of life everlasting in a better world.

C. *He stirreth up the people.*

How easily our Lord could, by multiplying loaves and fishes and changing water into wine, have stirred up the people, and gathered round Him a crowd of followers before whom these Priests and Ancients must have hidden their heads! But all His effort is to stir up men's hearts to charity. *Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you. Bless them that curse you, and pray for them that calumniate you.*

*"Excita, Domine, corda nostra—Stir up our hearts, Lord Jesus, with a strong and active and earnest and persevering love for Thee and for Thy little ones."*

D. *He stirreth up the people.*

Have these accusers so soon forgotten the word He spoke last night; *Put up thy sword*; and how lovingly He healed the ear of Malchus; and with what meekness He permitted them to rise from the earth when He had cast them down; and to come round Him and seize Him?

E. *Pilate asked if the Man was of Galilee.*

On one point Pilate's will is strong, he wishes strongly to save his own skin; to rid himself of the consequences of authorising a murder; and at the same time to screen himself from the vengeance of the Jewish Rulers. This earnest will of his, therefore, quickens his intellect to discover possible expedients. It suddenly flashes across his mind that if Jesus is a Galilean he can transmit the whole case to Herod. What will then be the result? "Herod may gratify the Jews and put Jesus to death. If so, let him look to it. I, Pilate, shall not have done it. On the other hand, Herod may set Him free. Then the Sanhedrim will vent their rage on Herod; not on me. Moreover, if I compliment Herod, the Tetrarch of Galilee, by sending this case to him, the quarrel now rife between him and me will be at an end."

Here, then, he sees clearly ; on this point he is single-minded ; and accordingly he acts with vigour and without hesitation, and listens to no protest. Roman soldiers are at once told off to conduct Jesus bound to Herod. The Rulers are chagrined and mortified and filled with bitterness at this fresh delay ; but the Roman Governor, they see clearly, is resolved, and they must submit. And so, too, they will submit if Pilate will only be as bold and determined for truth and justice as he is for his own interest. *Resist the devil*, St. James writes, *and he will fly from thee.*

We often tremble at the fierceness of the devil's assaults. We forget the teaching of Holy Church and the saints : that the devil is only fierce when dealing with cowards, and flies away full of confusion and vexation if courageously resisted.

*F. He sent Him away to Herod.*

Pilate is not wicked enough to say "Yes" to the Jews ; not firm enough to say "No". He tries a middle course, which satisfies neither our Lord nor His enemies ; a temporising makeshift, which staves off for a little, a very little, the evil hour, but in the end repays the Jews and Lucifer with good interest, *pressed down and flowing over*, for the delay caused to them.

## SCENE VIII.

### FROM PILATE TO HEROD.

*He sent Him away to Herod* (St. Luke xxiii.).

As there are five Herods mentioned in the New Testament, a short account of the family may prevent confusion.

I. Herod the Great, the founder of the family, was not of Jewish origin. He was an Idumean, and he adopted the Jewish religion out of policy. After him his family took their place among the Jews. He owed his subsequent elevation to the favour of the Romans. Mark Antony and the other triumvir, Octavian, afterwards the Emperor Augustus, were his chief patrons. By his ten wives he had a large and wicked family. We know the names of nine of his sons. The eldest, Antipater, in order to secure the succession for himself, persuaded his

father to put to death his two half-brothers, Alexander and Aristobulus, who were very popular among the Jews because their mother, Mariamne, Herod's second wife, was the lineal descendant, through the Asmonean Princes, of the Machabees. Herod knowing himself to be an alien, was jealous of all who were of this glorious Jewish lineage. He therefore began by putting to death Hyrcanus, his wife's father; then also his wife, Mariamne, and her two sons. He afterwards became afraid of their accuser, his eldest son, Antipater, and about the time of the massacre of the Innocents, ordered him also to be murdered. As a third wife he married another Mariamne, daughter of the High Priest, Simon. By the use of torture, he procured some evidence that she was privy to a conspiracy against him, and thereupon disinherited his and her son, Herod-Philip. This Herod-Philip therefore lived and died in obscurity. He is only known as the husband of that wicked wife, Herodias, who left him to marry his half-brother, Herod-Antipas, taking with her that dancing daughter, Salome, who procured the death of St. John the Baptist.

This Herod-Antipas was the son of Herod's fourth wife, Malthace, a Samaritan. She was also the mother of Archelaus, who was therefore full brother to Herod-Antipas. By his fifth wife, Cleopatra, a woman of Jerusalem, Herod the Great had another son, Philip, the Tetrarch mentioned by St. Luke (c. iii.).

II. Therefore of the sons of Herod the Great, those mentioned in the New Testament are (1) Archelaus, Tetrarch of Judea when the Holy Family returned from Egypt, afterwards degraded by the Romans for his barbarous cruelty; (2) Herod-Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee, who murdered St. John and mocked our Lord; (3) Philip the disinherited, whose wife, Herodias, abandoned him; and (4) Philip, the Tetrarch of Iturea and the country of Trachonitis (St. Luke iii.), who bore a better character as a ruler than his brothers.

Then in the next generation we have Herod-Agrippa the First, grandson of Herod the Great, and son of the murdered Aristobulus. He built the third or outer wall of Jerusalem, about twelve years after our Lord's Death; and he it was that put to death St. James, and had St. Peter in prison.

His son, Herod-Agrippa the Second, was the one before whom St. Paul preached (Acts xxv.). In the war that ended in the destruction of Jerusalem he sided with the Romans, and then retired into private life and spent the rest of his days in Italy, with his sister Berenice.

He was the last Prince of his race. In him ended a very unblessed family. Some of the daughters rivalled the brothers in the scandal of their lives: Drusilla, the wife of Felix, the Roman Governor before whom St. Paul preached, was sister of Agrippa the Second and of Berenice, and abandoned her legitimate husband to marry, in violation of Jewish law, the Gentile, Felix, who offered her riches and higher position as a bribe;

Josephus speaks of Berenice also as a woman of very questionable character.

Herod-Antipas, who murdered St. John Baptist, is the one to whom Pilate is now sending Jesus. A few years later he quarrelled with his nephew, Herod-Agrippa the First, and went to Rome to procure his dethronement; but Agrippa had more powerful friends, and obtained a sentence of degradation against his uncle, Herod-Antipas, who ended his days in banishment, with the miserable Herodias. He had previously sustained a heavy defeat in battle from the father of the lawful wife whom he had discarded to take Herodias.

Agrippa was then put in possession of his uncle's province of Galilee. Other grants were afterwards added by the Romans; so that he ended by having almost as large a kingdom as that of Herod the Great; but he did not long enjoy it. After ordering the execution of the gaolers of the prison from which St. Peter escaped, he died, as we read in the Acts, struck by an Angel of the Lord, and eaten up by worms.

The history of this unhappy family is a striking proof of the Gospel truth referred to in the last Station, that worldly prosperity and happiness of mind do not necessarily go together.

## STATION I.

*He sent Him away to Herod, who was himself at Jerusalem in those days (St. Luke xxiii. 7).*

In what part of Jerusalem was Herod's home? How far distant was it from the Prætorium?

Three opinions have been advanced. The first, that he was occupying the Palace of Herod the Great on the west side of the city; a little to the south of Golgotha. This opinion seems quite improbable. For since the annexation of Judea by the Romans, this magnificent palace was their property, and the ordinary residence of the Roman Governor. It is quite unlikely that Pilate would put it at the disposal of his enemy, Herod.

A second opinion, and one more commonly received, is that through a marriage with the heiress of the Asmonean Princes, the successors of the Machabees, the Asmonean Palace had come into the possession of Herod's family; and he was now residing there. In many maps of ancient Jerusalem, the Asmonean Palace is seen at a little distance to the west of the Temple, and south-west of the Prætorium.

The third opinion, which is found in modern guide-books, and backed by the local tradition in Jerusalem, places the site of Herod's Palace at about eight or ten minutes' walk to the north of the Prætorium, beyond the Lithostrotos and the Forum, in the new city built in Bezetha, and afterwards walled in by Agrippa.

In this uncertainty we may follow the local tradition; and thus the road from Pilate's house to Herod's will be northward, and for part of the way up an incline.

Some writers say that Jesus was led to Herod by the direct route, but brought back by a longer way.

Since our Lord left the Cenacle last night at the beginning of the second watch, He has already made three journeys: the first to Gethsemani, of about a mile; the second from Gethsemani to the Palace of the Priests, about the same distance; but for half the way up a very steep hill. The third journey, early this morning, was from the Priests' Palace to the Prætorium, a little under a mile. This fourth journey to Herod will be, according to the opinion we are following, perhaps a short half-mile to the north, outside the ancient walls, into the new suburb not yet enclosed.

*A. He sent Him away to Herod.*

We are to look as well as we can at the persons; to listen to their words; to watch their actions; to note how much our Lord is suffering; how completely His Divinity seems to be hidden and set aside, in order that He may suffer; and lastly, that He is suffering for me because He loves me.

*B. He sent Him away to Herod.*

The Priests and Ancients set out on this journey with their minds very much disturbed, full of bitter resentment against Pilate, who has publicly disgraced them, paying no respect to their dignity, and giving no credit to their solemn affirmation. They had hoped to see Jesus crucified by this time. *Let all My enemies be ashamed and very much troubled* (Psalm vi.). Their malice against our Lord is intensified. They redouble their entreaties and warnings, and perchance their bribes, to the Roman soldiers to induce them to bind and shackle Him so that escape be impossible: *Do it quickly; lead Him cautiously.*

*C. He sent Him away to Herod.*

Our Blessed Lady, as we learn from the contemplations of those holy souls to whom special light has been granted with regard to the Sacred Passion, has in this journey, as in every other scene throughout the day, a place secured

for her by the blessed angels, where she is near her Son, and can see and hear what passes.

D. *He sent Him away to Herod.*

The crowd is growing larger. For the news is reaching the different quarters of the city that Jesus is made prisoner. At the sight of the great change wrought in Him, His disfigurement, His wretched plight, His chains, His fetters, the heavy blows so often dealt out to Him, and with entire impunity, His utter helplessness when dragged hither and thither and cast upon the ground—their souls are scandalised; their faith is staggered. “The Priests, then, were right after all. He is found out.” *I am become a reproach to them: they saw Me and they shook their heads* (Psalm cviii.). As little children blessed Him and cried Hosanna five days ago, so now, we are told, little children are encouraged to throw stones and filth at Him. “My Father, *they have persecuted Him Whom Thou hast smitten, and they have added to the grief of My wounds*” (Psalm lxxviii.).

E. *He sent Him away to Herod.*

Let us remember how wisely the blind men of Jericho took advantage of the acceptable time when they heard the news: *Jesus of Nazareth is passing by*. We must leave our yoke of oxen and other cares and concerns, to follow this procession, watching and listening. What can we do better than place ourselves in spirit near Holy Mary, and as we walk on, looking at her and her Divine Son, say in our hearts with Holy Church:

O quam tristis et afflicta  
Fuit illa benedicta  
Mater unigeniti.  
Eia Mater fons amoris,  
Me sentire vim doloris  
Fac ut tecum lugeam.

Oh, how sad, and wobegone,  
Is she now—that blessed one,  
The Mother of this only Son.  
Mother, Source of charity,  
Share thy holy grief with me,  
Let me walk and weep with thee.

F. *He sent Him away to Herod.*

This is the second journey of Jesus and His Blessed Mother, since the daybreak; and it is still early in the morning.

Through the weariness and extreme exhaustion of the Divine Son and the Most Holy Mother, may we have the grace to put ourselves to trouble in the early morning, to console our Blessed Lord by being present at the Holy Mass.

G. *He sent Him away to Herod.*

Watch also the Priests and Ancients during this journey—how they are racked with fear. For Herod, they know, bears no love to them. He will not bow to them. He has little to fear or hope from them. Neither has he any cause to persecute Jesus. *Destruction and unhappiness in their ways: and the way of peace they have not known. They have not called upon the Lord: there have they trembled for fear, where there was no fear* (Psalm xiii.).

## SCENE IX.

### IN HEROD'S PALACE.

*And Herod seeing Jesus was very glad; for he was desirous of a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to see some sign wrought by Him* (St. Luke xxiii. 8).

*He hoped to see some sign wrought by Him.*

Some writers tell us that one of the signs which Herod wished to see wrought was the cure of Salome, the daughter of Herodias, who after procuring the death of St. John the Baptist, had been struck with palsy, and was still paralysed.

### STATION I.

*And Herod seeing Jesus was very glad* (v. 8).

A. It is, for more reasons than one, a bright hour for Herod. The Roman Governor has sent on a messenger with a note announcing to the Tetrarch of Galilee that, because it concerns Jesus the Galilean, "he is referring to him a cause of great importance. Of what great moment the case is, he will see from the interest which all the members of the Sanhedrim, and the great men of Jeru-

salem take in it. He is glad to commit such a weighty business to his enlightened discernment." This mark of confidence on the part of the haughty Roman pleases Herod much. He and Pilate had been at enmity for some time on a question of the boundaries of their jurisdiction. This message puts an end to the discord. He and the Governor will be able to entertain each other as of old. The Herods are all noted for their Roman proclivities. The Psalmist prays: *The just man shall correct me in mercy, and shall reprove me, but let not the oil of the sinner fatten my head* (Psalm cxl.). Herod does not adopt this prayer, either as to the first part or the second. He did not at all wish the just man, John the Baptist, to correct him or reprove him; and he does not now at all object to be fattened with the sinner's oil of flattery. He is most delighted with this graceful condescension of the proud Roman Governor.

B. *Herod was very glad.*

Again, he is much pleased to have this unexpected visit from Jesus of Nazareth. *He has heard many things concerning Him.* Naturally; as so many of our Lord's miracles were worked in Galilee, and so many of His disciples are natives of Galilee.

Moreover, there may be others attached to his Court, besides Joanna, the wife of his steward, Chusai, who are disciples of Jesus. This at least we know for certain, from St. Luke and St. Matthew, that when our Lord was preaching in Galilee, *Herod the Tetrarch heard of all things that were done by Him* (St. Luke ix.), and as he is said to have grown superstitious since the murder of St. John, he may think that there is truth in the report that John has come to life again: *He said to his servants, This is John the Baptist: he is risen from the dead* (St. Matt. xiv.). *And he sought to see Him* (St. Luke ix.).

A short while before the Passion some of the Pharisees came to say to Jesus: *Depart, and get Thee hence, for Herod hath a mind to kill Thee*; but commentators think that this

was a lie of the Pharisees, who wished thereby to induce Jesus to quit Galilee and go into Judea, where they could better entrap Him. There is no proof that Herod was hostile to Jesus. He killed St. John reluctantly, only to please Salome and her wicked mother. He has been anxious to see Jesus, and now is greatly pleased to know that He is coming.

Herod, then, is in good spirits. This is for him an unexpected gala-day.

He resolves to receive the Sanhedrim in state. For though he and his brothers are called Tetrarchs, perhaps because they each inherited only a fourth part of the dominions of their father, Herod the Great, yet they were practically petty kings.

We may then contemplate Herod in his robes, and seated on his throne, his crown on his head, Herodias at his side, and possibly the paralysed dancing girl brought in to be ready for her cure. His guards are drawn up around him. Herod may have inherited some of his father's handsome features and noble bearing; he certainly has his tastes for luxury and magnificence, as well as a large share of his vices.

Some writers think that the presence of his guards is not merely for show and ornament, but also as a protection in case the members of the Sanhedrim, for whom he has no reverence, should create disturbance. The Evangelist speaks of his guard as an army. The Greek text adds to the difficulty; it has the plural, "armies". We read that he maintained an army of foreign mercenaries. But it is not credible that the Roman Governor would tolerate in Jerusalem the presence of an army not subject to himself. As the Herod family was generally loyal to Rome, he might not be sorry that Herod should have a strong guard to act in concert with him in case of any outbreak of the Jews.

## STATION II.

*And he questioned Him in many words (v. 9).*

A. As has been said, Herod has no hostile feeling to Jesus; and no love or reverence for the Jewish Priests

and Ancients. He is, like his father before him, a Jew only by policy. He wishes much to see a miracle. He is anxious to pose as the friend of Jesus. And the very sight of all the chains and ropes, and the marks of Jewish cruelty which he sees upon Him, make him doubly inclined to take His side.

B. *He questions Him in many words.* "You have wrought many wonders in my states, I believe. You changed water into wine at Cana, did you not? And you raised the dead young man at Naim, I understand; and you gave him back most kindly to his mother. Is not this so? You have also cleansed, I am assured, lepers by the hundred. I have heard nothing but good of you. I am sorry indeed to see you in this trouble; but I am quite sure you have done nothing to deserve it. I know that you have many enemies who persecute you; merely because you are a great Prophet. That is not my mind: I am entirely your friend. You can thoroughly reckon on my support. I believe you to be a great Servant of the Lord. I am quite sure, then, that you will be willing to work some sign here such as you have so often worked in my kingdom; in order that I may be able to set you free at once. You will not, I hope and trust, be unwilling to do for me what you have done for the poorest. If you will raise to health and strength one sad sufferer stricken with palsy, all shall be set right at once. Your innocence will be beyond doubt, and your accusers will be confounded."

Some writers add, that water is brought in to be turned into wine; and that Herod promises to make Jesus his partner in the government, and his heir to the throne also, if He will work the desired miracle: and actually orders a crown to be set on His Head.

C. *He questioned Him in many words.*

And while he is speaking, we notice how envy and jealousy and raging malice is torturing the disappointed souls of the Rulers. *Let them be confounded and ashamed together that seek after My Soul to take it away. Let them be*

turned backward and ashamed that desire evil to Me (Psalm xxxix.).

And yet all their fears are vain. *They trembled for fear, where there was no fear* (Psalm xliii.). Jesus is here chained, because *He willed it*.

Herod will not set Him free, because He wills not to be set free. They shall see their wish carried out to the end, because their wish is His wish. They wish to crucify Him. He wishes to die on His Cross.

### STATION III.

*But He answered him nothing* (v. 9).

*He answered him nothing.*

*For to God the wicked and his wickedness are hateful alike* (Wisdom xiv.).

Herod is glad to see Jesus. He has been long seeking to see Him. He is disposed to be a friend to Him in His hour of need. A very little condescension will suffice to gain him entirely. Yet our Lord has not one word for him.

Under circumstances somewhat similar, the Jews on a former occasion made up to God, as we say, and wished to be familiar with Him. *They seek Me from day to day, and desire to know My ways, as a nation that hath done justice, and hath not forsaken the judgment of their God. . . . They are willing to approach to God. Why have we fasted, and Thou hast not regarded? have we humbled our souls, and Thou hast not taken notice?* The Lord's answer to their advances is the word addressed to His Prophet: *Cry, cease not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their wicked doings, and the house of Jacob their sins* (Isaias lviii.).

To wish to approach to God, and to be intimate with Him, while we are wallowing in sin, is a presumption and hypocrisy that God detests. *Offer sacrifice no more in vain; incense is an abomination to Me. Your assemblies are wicked. My soul hateth your new moons and your solemnities; they are*

become troublesome to Me, I am weary of bearing them. And when you stretch forth your hands, I will turn My eyes from you, and when you multiply prayers, I will not hear, for your hands are full of blood (Isaias i.).

What then? Is it true what the blind man said, that God does not hear sinners? God most gladly hears them when they are praying for grace to rise from their sins, and for pardon of their sins. But when they have no intention of repenting, and yet expect special favours from God—such as happy marriages, the cure of their bodily diseases, success in their speculations and enterprises—their prayer is not pleasing.

*Delight in the Lord*, the Holy Spirit says to us, and *He will give thee the petitions of thy heart* (Psalm xxxvi.). But to the sinner God hath said: *Why dost thou declare My justices, and take My covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest discipline, and hast cast My words behind thee* (Psalm xlix.).

As soon as the sinner repents, all is changed. *Wash yourselves, be clean, cease to do perversely, and then come and accuse Me. If your sins be red as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow. If you be willing, and will hearken to Me, you shall eat the good things of the land* (Isaias i.).

Herod has had great graces; many instructions from St. John the Baptist; and he *knew him to be a great and holy man, and he heard him willingly*. After all these graces, to gratify two fiends in woman's shape, and rather than make the dancing girl sad, and cast a shade on the merry-making of his flatterers, he murdered him than whom *no greater had risen among those that are born of woman*. And he has not repented, but is still wallowing in sin. Therefore Jesus, Who spoke many salutary words to Pilate, has for Herod nothing but terrible silence.

*"O merciful Lord, we have sinned: to us belongeth confusion of face; but to Thee, the Lord my God, mercy and forgiveness* (Daniel ix.). *O Lord, do not chastise me in Thy wrath* (Psalm vi.). *Be not Thou silent; O Lord, depart not from me."*

## STATION IV.

*And the Chief Priests and the Scribes stood by earnestly accusing Him (v. 10).*

These men are regaining courage. They perceive that Jesus is making no effort to conciliate Herod, and that the pride of the man accustomed to flattery is much wounded. They seize the opportunity eagerly to press their accusations.

*Their throat is an open sepulchre, pouring out poison and infection.*

Some writers think that they raked up the story of the coming of the Wise Men, and reminded Herod Antipas that his great father looked on Jesus as a dangerous rival. "It is moreover quite certain that His influence at present in Galilee is so great that any day it may become a danger. Besides, it cannot be very pleasant for Herod to have one going about Who passes Himself off as John the Baptist come to life."

Now, however, as all through the Sacred Passion, their wisdom, their counsel, their prudence, can avail nothing. Herod recognises no crime in Jesus. His only offence is that He has by His silence wounded the pride of this lustful sinner.

## SCENE X.

## FROM HEROD TO PILATE.

## STATION I.

*And Herod with his army set Him at nought : putting on Him a white garment, and sent Him back to Pilate. And Herod and Pilate were made friends that day ; for before they were enemies one to another (St. Luke xxiii. 11, 12).*

A. *Herod set Him at nought.*

*The rich man, if thou give, he will make use of thee : and if thou have nothing he will forsake thee. If he have need of thee, he will deceive thee, and smiling upon thee will put*

*thee in hope ; he will speak to thee fair and will say : What wantest thou ? And at last he will laugh at thee. And afterwards when he seeth thee, he will forsake thee and shake his head at thee (Ecclus. xiii.).*

Herod has known much about our Lord ; quite enough to convince him that He is at least a great prophet ; but because Jesus will not speak *to him*, He is a fool.

So oftentimes, though God has created and redeemed, and is daily opening His hand and filling *every living creature with benediction* (Psalm cxliv.), yet, because He has not given **ME** what I ask for, " He is not a good God. His promises are not true ". So too, with God's revelation, because I do not understand, it cannot be true.

#### B. Herod with his army.

Herod is a very degraded man of a low type, yet he has an army of followers.

I am too proud to bear a wise correction. Nobody shall insult me with impunity ; and yet I am prepared to grovel, and become one of Herod's followers ; to applaud with him when he calumniates the absent, to smile when he is obscene, or scoffs at religion.

The child of God knows not his own worth when he worships a degraded man, and forgets that he was *bought with a great price. Since thou becamest honourable in My sight, thou art glorious* (Isaias xliii.).

St. Paul's rule ought to be ours : *We speak, not as pleasing men, but God* (1 Thess. ii.).

#### C. Herod mocked Him, putting on Him a white garment (from the Greek, a bright robe).

Among the Romans a man who was asking for the votes of the people wore, while canvassing, a white garment (he was *candidatus*). St. James blames the Christians who pay special court to a man in church, because he comes in wearing a gold ring and a *white garment* (bright robe), in our Douay version, *fine apparel*.

Herod, adopting Roman customs in order to please Pilate, dresses Jesus as a mock King—a pretender, a claimant.

He is one of those described by Isaias : *Wo to you that are wise in your own eyes, and prudent in your own conceits. Wo to you that are mighty to drink wine, and stout men at drunkenness ; that justify the wicked for gifts, and take away the portion of the just from him* (Isaias v.).

Concerning Jesus, God's revelation is this : He is the *brightness of His glory, the figure of His substance ; Who has emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant ; that is, stripped Himself of all His dignity to become a Man, tempted in all things like as we are* (Hebrews iv.).

The judgment, on the contrary, of this proud vain man, Herod, is that He is a foolish pretender to greatness. A proud and vain man like Herod cannot well pronounce any other judgment. The silence wherewith Jesus has answered all his eloquence, and his attempts to be fascinating, is a great public humiliation in presence of his courtiers, in presence of Herodias, in presence of the Great Council of the Sanhedrim. Jesus has set him at nought. *In His sight the malignant is brought to nothing* (Psalm xiv.).

From this great disgrace there is no escape except by making Him out to be an idiot. "I expected to meet with something noble, and to hear words such as I used to hear from John. John was in truth a great man. This is a weak-minded simpleton."

Possibly Herodias and her daughter suggest the idea of sending Him through the streets in the dress of a mock king ; and the proud man, scattered in the conceits of his heart, is well pleased with their proposal ; for by it he is reinstated. If Jesus is only a poor weak-minded idiot, His silence casts no stain on the majesty of the King.

*Two things, Lord Jesus, humble of Heart, I have asked of Thee ; deny them not to me before I die. Remove far from me vanity and lying words* (Prov. xxx.).

**D. Herod sent Him back to Pilate.**

Contemplate our Blessed Lord dressed as a foolish impostor.

And notice that this is not at all the verdict which the Priests and Scribes want. Once more they are full of trouble. They wish Jesus to be sentenced as a wicked, malicious criminal that must be crucified; and not let off as a fool. *They have been confounded because God hath despised them* (Psalm lii.).

E. *They mocked Him, clothing Him with a white garment.*

Yet this verdict, this word uttered off-hand, "Put a fool's dress on Him," might well satisfy cruelty; for it means quite a new outburst of blows and outrages and insults and blasphemies, as He passes along through the crowded streets; quite a new Passion, beyond our imagining. More than ever, now, even little children will be urged to make reparation for the blessings which children uttered, by pouring out curses, and casting stones and filth at Him. The multitude is largely increased. Herod's judgment is heartily accepted. No indignity is too great for a fool, and an arrogant pretender. Every outrage is lawful.

*O all ye who pass by the way, attend, and see if there be sorrow like to My sorrow—He shall put His mouth in the dust. He shall give His cheek to him that striketh. He shall be glutted with reproaches. He shall (walk) solitary and hold His peace, because He hath taken it upon Himself* (Lament. iii.).

F. Holy writers take for granted that as our Lord walks in silence, He is often in His Heart repeating those Psalms which the Holy Spirit dictated as prophetic pictures of His Sacred Passion.

His Sacred Heart during these processions through the streets is bleeding for His poor followers who are being scandalised, and, by the example and threats of the Rulers, are induced to join with His enemies against Him.

*I am become a reproach to My enemies, and very much to My neighbours; and a fear to My acquaintance. They that saw Me without, fled from Me. I am forgotten as one dead from the heart. I am become a vessel that is destroyed. For I have heard the blame of many that dwelt round about.*

*While they assembled together against Me they consulted to take away My life (Psalm xxx.).*

G. And our Blessed Lady is sharing all the anguish of every footstep.

Virgo virginum præclara,  
Mihi jam non sis amara,  
Fac me tecum plangere.

O Virgin without peer,  
Do not refuse to hear,  
Share with me tear for tear.

*H. Herod sent Him back to Pilate.*

Once more we must notice how blindly men follow a leader. Whatever Herod says, his army says. What the Chief Priests say and do, that the multitude says and does. Who is there among us that may not have a following? We are watched when we know it not.

If we influence any one for good, our Lord is full of unbounded gratitude. A Protestant lawyer became a Catholic a few years ago, and told a Catholic barrister that he had been much impressed by noticing how faithful he was to Friday abstinence.

If we scandalise even one of His little ones, our Lord says from His Heart, "Wo".

*I. Herod mocked Him, putting on Him a white robe.*

King Ezechias in his great sickness prayed: *Lord, I suffer violence; answer for me.* But immediately he corrects himself, saying: *What shall He answer for me, when He Himself hath done it?* (Isaias xxxviii.). So now, while contemplating our Lord's suffering derision in His white robe, we cannot forget that He has done worse to Himself when, for our sakes, He put on the disguise of His white garb in His Eucharistic Life, and is exhibited in this condition to be neglected and despised, and *glutted with reproaches.*

*My Heart hath expected misery and reproach.*

"Turn, Blessed Mother, thine eyes of mercy towards us, and show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, in His Hidden Life upon the altar."

*Adoro te devote latens Deitas!*

J. *And they were made friends that day.*

Friends, and partners in a bad day's work. Yet, when they meet to banquet together, they excuse each other. "We could not act otherwise. It was all Jewish malice!" *If thou didst see a thief, thou didst run with him; and with adulterers thou hast been a partaker* (Psalm xlix.).

*Incline not, Lord Jesus, my heart to evil words, to make excuses in sins, with men that work iniquity; and I will not communicate with the choicest of them. The just man shall correct me in mercy, and reprove me: but let not the oil of the sinner fatten my head* (Psalm cxl.).

We must rather resolve, while we contemplate His Sacred Passion, to be friends and partners of all who are friends of our Lord, and love Him—I am partner of all who fear Thee, and that keep Thy commandments (Psalm cxviii.).

K. *They were made friends that day.*

Much more, while contemplating the Passion, must we make friends with all our enemies. We must not rest content till we can truly love our enemies, and do good to those who hate us, and bless those that curse us, and pray for those who calumniate us.

Every day of the year is for us a Good Friday. Every day we must forgive, and love our enemies.

L. *Herod sent Him back to Pilate.*

If Herod was glad when Pilate sent Jesus to him, not so Pilate when Herod sends Him back again.

*If thou blow the spark, it shall burn as a fire: and if thou spit upon it, it shall be quenched* (Ecclus. xxviii.). In the early morning the tumult was but a spark of fire compared to what it has grown to now. The Priests and Ancients come back as if they were wronged and injured men, who have a right to reparation. The Roman has made fools of them by parading them through the streets. He must make amends by compliance. And now they are no longer afraid of a tumult among the people. The multitude are backing them. Pilate has gained nothing. His trouble is doubled and trebled. The Rulers have come back more resolved, more reckless, more irreverent, more prepared to browbeat.

The tree of life grows out of a small seed. Great havoc and ruin out of a small spark of fire. *He that contemneth small things* (the small beginnings of temptation) *shall fall by little and little* (Ecclus. xix.).

“Lead us not, O merciful Lord, into temptation. Grant us grace not to enter little by little into temptation.”

## SCENE XI.

THE PRÆTORIUM. THE PAVED COURT, OR LITHOSTROTOS.

### STATION I.

*And Pilate calling together the Chief Priests and Magistrates and the people, said to them : You have presented to me this Man as one that perverteth the people : and behold, I, having examined Him before you, find no cause in this Man of those things wherein you accuse Him ; no, nor Herod neither, for I sent you to him, and behold, nothing worthy of death is done to Him* (St. Luke xxiii. 13—15).

A. *Pilate calling together the Chief Priests and Magistrates and the people.*

Little pleasure does it give to this weak man to see this great wave rolling in on him. His perplexity is multiplied. The situation is becoming every hour more alarming. But he still confides in his own powers and resources.

Till now only the Priests and Ancients and leading men have been admitted within the gate into the court of the castle, the Lithostrotos. Now he also calls in *the people* ; and trusting to his powers of persuasion, he harangues them from the tribunal that stands there. He calls in the people in the hope that they may side with him and strengthen his hands against the Priests and Ancients.

B. *Behold, I find no cause in Him ; no, nor Herod neither.*  
Observe : Judas has acquitted Jesus of all crime ; Pilate

has done the same; Herod has virtually declared Him innocent. Pilate now again ratifies the verdict: *I find no cause in Him.*

Our human prudence does not think that our Lord acts wisely when, in the presence of so many accusers, He remains silent—“*Jesus autem tacebat*”. But, O Blessed Lord, how abundantly the providence of Thy Eternal Father takes care, *that Thou mayest overcome when Thou art judged* (Psalm 1.).

#### STATION II.

*I will chastise Him, therefore, and release Him* (v. 16).

##### A. Chastise and release.

Observe, how at once Pilate's *last state* is become *worse than the first*. All of a sudden, in his panic, the sense of justice, honour, mercy, and compassion, has become so deadened, that he is not ashamed to utter the words: *I will chastise Him and release Him.*

If such a sentence were heard in one of our courts of justice in this country from the lips of a judge: *I find no cause in Him*, neither does the other judge to whom the cause has been remitted: *I will chastise Him, therefore, and release Him*: with what an irrepressible storm of indignation would the words be received! That judge would never again dare to show his face. “He is innocent, quite innocent, but to satisfy you I will chastise Him,” that is, “I will have Him scourged”. We have seen how St. Paul's expostulation prevailed at once: *Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman and uncondemned?* (Acts xxii.). By rights, Pilate's friends ought to have pressed round him and urgently said: “How can you think of scourging a Jew, here, in the midst of His own people; a Man that is innocent and has been revered as a Prophet, and a Man that is utterly uncondemned?” But no such voice is heard. Pilate's new expedient is listened to in sullen silence. Again he is labouring to serve two masters, and it cannot be done.

He wishes to let Jesus go because He is innocent; and because he as a Roman Governor and servant of the Roman Emperor, dreads to condemn an innocent Man. On the other hand, he wishes to satisfy the Sanhedrim, and therefore is willing to chastise Jesus, and chastise Him most cruelly. The result is that he satisfies neither. Our Blessed Saviour cannot be satisfied with anything but what is just and right. On the other hand, the Chief Priests and Magistrates cannot be satisfied unless they see Jesus crucified.

So far from contenting them, this proposal of Pilate only renders them doubly determined to have their will. For they perceive at once that Pilate has taken a great plunge downward. To meet them half-way, he has made a rapid and a deep descent. They have only now to persevere and show a bold front, and the weak man will sink down deeper and deeper into the abyss.

Again, then, Pilate has utterly failed in his hope of effecting a compromise between right and wrong, between Christ and Antichrist. Once more is our Lord's word proved true: *No man can serve two masters* (St. Matt. vi.).

B. *I will chastise Him and release Him.*

Pilate's frame of mind illustrates what St. Ignatius means by his first degree of humility. He says that the first degree of humility *necessary for salvation* consists in this: that I am so subject to my Creator that I will not, even to gain the whole world, *deliberate* (*enter into deliberation*) about committing a mortal sin.

Does this mean that I must be in such a state *that I cannot be tempted* to commit a grievous sin? Certainly not, as the holiest *may be tempted*.

Does it mean that to be in the *first degree of humility necessary for salvation* I must be so firm that temptation takes no effect upon me? Certainly not; for even if temptation has some effect, so that I commit a venial sin by not being prompt and faithful enough in rejecting it, yet I still remain in the state of grace, and if I die in this

condition I shall be saved; whereas St. Ignatius lays it down that I am not in the state necessary for salvation if I *deliberate* about committing a mortal sin.

We can understand what he means by *deliberating*, from what we see in Pilate. His state of soul throughout is that of a man *deliberating* about mortal sin. He wishes to do right if he can conveniently do so. He is not willing to do wrong for a small price; but if he has to lose much by doing right, or can gain much by doing wrong, he is ready to give up God and conscience, and do the wrong.

C. *I will chastise Him and release Him.*

Pilate is in the position of a man defending a besieged fortress. A strong outer wall has been taken by the enemy; he is becoming more timid; the enemy more bold and resolute. If Elias the Thesbite were by his side with his strong faith and upright heart, he might still lead Pilate to victory with his burning words: *How long do you halt between two sides? If the Lord be God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him* (3 Kings xviii.).

Or if Pilate would listen to the teaching of the Prisoner before him, he would come off gloriously triumphant: *Seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you* (St. Matt. vi.). But he is, as we have seen, a *double-minded man*. He wishes to do right, but will not take the plain straight road of duty; he is clinging to the hope that by his own cleverness and shrewdness he can find another by-path that will lead him right.

How many are there at this day who wish, in a way, to arrive at truth! They could have it at once if they would become docile and listen to the infallible teaching of Christ's Apostle; but this appointed method, plain, easy, and sure, they will not adopt; yet they are ready to study and read Church history, to travel and look at the Eastern Church, to put themselves in communication with the Old Catholics of Germany. This state of mind represents the second

class in St. Ignatius' meditation on the Three Classes : the men who are ready to do many things for salvation, but *not the one thing necessary*.

Pilate has therefore to find out some new plan, some new tactics.

### STATION III.

*Now on the festival-day he was wont to release unto them one of the prisoners, whomsoever they demanded. And there was one called Barabbas, who was put in prison with some seditious men, who in the sedition had committed murder. And when the multitude had come up, they began to desire that he would do as he had ever done to them (St. Mark xv.).*

*He had then a notorious prisoner that was called Barabbas (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

*Barabbas, who for a certain sedition made in the city, and for a murder, was cast into prison (St. Luke xxiii.).*

*And when the multitude was come up, they began to desire that he would do as he had ever done.*

The order then of the incidents is perhaps this: Pilate has called the people into the Lithostrotos, and taken them into council. Unnerved by the sight of the crowd, and the bold, angry aspect of the Rulers, he utters these words of wicked weakness: *I find no cause in Him. I will chastise Him therefore, and release Him.* This word, *I will release Him*, reminds the people of their Paschal privilege. They are not all intent on one object, as the Priests and Ancients are. Forgetting, therefore, for a while, the great question which is alone of interest to the Rulers, their minds go off to their privilege: and *they began to desire that he would do to them as he had ever done.* It does not seem that as yet they have at all determined what prisoner they shall release.

Pilate, who is entirely intent on getting out of his own troubles by finding a middle course between justice and injustice, when he hears the wish of the people, falls in

with it at once. His intellect, sharpened by his strong wish, sees in this petition of the people a door unexpectedly opened for his escape.

#### STATION IV.

*They, therefore, being gathered together, Pilate said: Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus, that is called Christ? (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

*Will you that I release to you the King of the Jews? For he knew that the Chief Priests had delivered Him up out of envy (St. Mark xv.).*

Once more the prayer is heard: *Let them be confounded and ashamed that seek My Soul.* The Priests and Ancients are humbled to the dust. The Roman Governor turns his back abruptly on them; puts their wish completely aside, and leaves it entirely to the people to decide what is to be done with Jesus. Moreover, to show more clearly his scorn for them, and that he is fully alive to their envious malice, he puts the question in the form the most galling to them: *Will you that I release to you the King of the Jews?*

Then again, though he is quite aware of the custom that he is to release one prisoner, *whomsoever they demanded*, yet he tries to make them ignore the will of the Priests and Ancients, and vote according to his wish, by only giving them a choice between two: Jesus—Who is innocent and much esteemed, and only a prisoner because the Rulers are jealous of Him—or Barabbas, a notorious criminal and murderer.

Lastly, after calling on them to choose, he puts a leading question to them, in order to suggest the answer which he wishes for: *Will you that I release to you the King of the Jews?*

This appeal then to the people for a plebiscite, is gall and wormwood to the Rulers.

If the people suddenly cry out: *Release Jesus!* the cause of His enemies is lost irreparably. Pilate will most

certainly side with the people against them. But the people, as usual, wait for a leader to direct their suffrage.

For a time they give no response. They look at one another, and break up into groups discussing the question. Some time must be allowed for them to make up their mind.

Another incident occurs which allows the time wanted.

#### STATION V.

*As he was sitting in the place of judgment, his wife sent to him, saying: Have thou nothing to do with that just Man. For I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him (St. Matt. xxvii. 19).*

*A. I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him.*

It was, as we have seen, at an early hour, probably before seven o'clock, that the news reached Pilate that the members of the Great Council were coming to wait on him on very urgent business. Possibly he was aroused from his sleep to receive the message, and was not on that account any the better pleased to meet the early intruders. Claudia Procla, his wife, would not perhaps consider it necessary to rise so early. For it appears that it was after Pilate's departure to attend to business, that she was visited with the dream that terrified her. For, had this happened during the night, she would have warned her husband before the trial began; and, moreover, she does not say that the dream came during the night, but *this day*.

Some holy Fathers think that this alarming dream was caused by Satan, who was beginning to perceive that he had made altogether a false move in procuring the death of Christ. But the more common and more probable opinion is that the dream was sent by God. If Satan had already resolved on preventing the Jews from consummating their crime, the spirits of darkness would, we should imagine, have worked upon the minds of the people and moved them to oppose the Priests and Ancients, who alone were thoroughly determined on the Crucifixion. Claudia

Procla's name is found in the calendar of the saints; and therefore a simple and obvious explanation of the dream is, that it was sent as a grace to her, and also, on account of her prayers and good dispositions, as one more great grace to her husband. Some writers, such as Origen and Tertullian, imagine that Pilate was in the end converted to Christianity. St. Augustine seems to be of the same opinion, but these Fathers have on this point a large majority against them. We may, however, safely assume that great graces are to-day given to Pilate; for in the case of Judas we see clearly that our Lord *at sundry times and in divers manners spoke* (Hebrews i.) to his heart to induce him to be converted to his God; and Pilate being in ignorance needed more help; and, because he had not abused so many graces, was more likely to get the necessary helps.

*B. Have nothing to do with this just Man.*

How did the Governor receive this warning word from his good wife? In the disturbed state in which his mind was, it may have made an impression. As we have seen, he is one *that wavereth, and is like a wave of the sea carried about by the winds* (St. James i.). Here is a very strong wind sent from Heaven to turn his course back into the right direction, and undo the mischief already done. Does he hasten off to his wife, who counselled so wisely, and confer with her? If so, she sees by his looks and gathers from his words that he is already far more than half conquered. And she uses the most earnest entreaties with many tears to move him not to consummate this terrible crime. And for the moment, perhaps, he is persuaded, and makes promises that he will do nothing but what is right.

On the other hand, though he may feel the full weight of her counsel, yet he may not be at all prepared boldly to adopt it, but will wait to see how events shape themselves. In this supposition, he is perhaps unwilling to let her know the impression that her words have made; and may affect to resent her interference, and send her back some impatient message. However this may be, we have good hope that her soul turns in prayer to God to beg for mercy for herself and her husband; and that if he gives her no comfort or contentment, the Heart of our Saviour from

His bonds is speaking to her, and giving her many graces in return for the good alms she has given Him, in His hour of need, by speaking in His defence. Holy writers tell us that Claudia Procla was afterwards a disciple of Christ, and that her name is found in the Greek calendar of Saints. Commentators suggest that she may be the Claudia mentioned by St. Paul: *Eubulus and Pudens and Linus and Claudia salute thee* (2 Timothy iv.).

#### STATION VI.

*And the Governor answering said to them: Whether will you of the two to be released unto you? But they said, Barabbas. But the Chief Priests and Ancients persuaded the people that they should ask Barabbas and make Jesus away (St. Matt. xxvii.). But the Chief Priests moved the people that he should rather release Barabbas to them (St. Mark xv.). The whole multitude together cried out, saying: Away with this Man, and release unto us Barabbas (St. Luke xxiii.). Then cried they all again, saying: Not this Man, but Barabbas (St. John xviii.).*

*A. The Chief Priests and Ancients persuaded the people—moved the people.*

Mark once more how *a little leaven*, as St. Paul writes, *corrupts the whole mass* (1 Cor. v.). The men who maliciously hate Jesus are few. The many follow their leaders *like sheep*. And yet a child like St. Agnes, who loves God, conquers the very greatest potentates of this world: *Through Thy commandment Thou hast made me wiser than my enemies. I have understood more than all my teachers. I have had understanding above Ancients* (Psalm cxviii.).

*B. Not this Man, but Barabbas.*

When Esau heard his father say: *Thy brother came deceitfully and got thy blessing*, we read that *he roared out with a great cry, and being in a great consternation wept with a great cry* (Genesis xxvii.). What wonder! But what is his roar of indignation and consternation compared with the wail and the howl and the gnashing of teeth with which

this senseless multitude when *laid in Hell like sheep* will greet their Priests and Rulers who moved them and persuaded them to make that terrible choice and say: *Not this Man, but Barabbas?*

Here on earth, when one scandalises another, and they sin, they call it love and affection. By what name will they call it at the judgment-seat?

*Esau always hated Jacob, and he said in his heart: The days will come of the mourning of my father, and I will kill my brother Jacob* (Genesis xxvii.). What wonder if this unhappy multitude, when they discover that they have been duped by their blind guides, these whitewashed sepulchres, these hypocrites, who would not themselves go into the Kingdom of Heaven and would not suffer any others to enter, what wonder if they should hate them with a life-long hatred and tear them limb from limb, for having persuaded them to choose Barabbas and reject their own Jesus?

*C. The Chief Priests persuaded the people.*

Consider, too, the amazing energy, the untiring industry, the giant efforts, and the perseverance wherewith these Priests and Ancients work to bring about this result; how diligently they use the time given to them, while Pilate is busy with Procla, sending their servants in every direction, and going themselves among the people to gain their vote. *We have walked through hard ways, we have wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity and destruction* (Wisdom v.). Mark how true our common saying is: "Where there is a will there is a way".

"O good Lord Jesus, if we loved Thee as Thy enemies hate Thee, we too could move and persuade the multitude, and they would cry: Not Barabbas, but Jesus."

*D. The whole multitude together cried out, saying: Away with this Man; release unto us Barabbas.*

And the most loving and compassionate Heart of our Saviour is answering: *O My people, what have I done to thee? or in what have I molested thee? Answer Me* (Micheas vi.). And the blessed angels are in sadness repeating the

words of Moses : *Is this the return thou makest to the Lord, O foolish and senseless people ? Is not He thy Father that hath possessed thee and made thee and created thee ?* (Deut. xxxii.).

“When I was with you in the wilderness feeding you with the loaves and teaching you and curing your diseases, you did not cry : *Away with Him !* When you met Me on the Mount of Olives five days ago and led Me to the Temple, you cried, *Hosanna to the Son of David !* You did not cry : *Away with Him !* But now you are blindly following blind guides ” (St. Matt. xv.).

E. *Not this Man, but Barabbas.*

*What is it that hath been done ? The same that shall be done* (Eccles. i.). Oh, what scene of the Passion is more often reproduced than this competition between Jesus and Barabbas ? And, alas ! with the same results, *Not this Man, but Barabbas.*

Sometimes we sin by surprise ; as when we suddenly give way to irritation and anger. Such sins do not heap upon our Lord so much dishonour and disgrace as does a calm, cold-blooded preference of Barabbas and rejection of Him.

F. *Not this Man, but Barabbas.*

If a wife abandons her husband because he is a poor man, and joins herself to one who is a prince, she acts very wickedly ; but we see what her temptation is ; for she gains by her sin money and position.

But if a princess abandons a royal husband, who is, besides, a good and gifted man, to unite herself with a leper, her wickedness is much more inexplicable and unintelligible. Even so, if we abandoned God our Creator and Redeemer, in order to go and serve some other God, there might be some palliation for our treason ; but when we forsake Christ Jesus to gain only Barabbas, we can give no reason for our crime except the everlasting wail, *We fools ! we fools ! The serpent deceived me !*

G. *Not this Man, but Barabbas.*

*Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and ye gates thereof*

*be very desolate, saith the Lord. For My people have done two evils. They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that hold no water (Jerem. ii.).*

*My people have done two evils.* For (1) it would be an infinite evil to forsake our God even if we could get by so doing a Paradise or Heaven that should be ours for ever.

Then (2) even if it were possible to give the love of our hearts to Barabbas—to sensual pleasures, or to revenge, or to money, or to cruelty, or to gluttony—without losing the possession of our God, it would be a great evil to give our love and worship to such things for which our hearts are not created.

But (3) when we give up our God, and get no exchange but Barabbas; and when we are quite content with Barabbas, and make ourselves happy with him, and completely turn our backs on our God, and forget Him and ignore Him entirely, then indeed we *have done two evils.*

#### H. *Not this Man, but Barabbas.*

We must notice the degrees in this preference.

1. Sometimes it is a question of deliberate mortal sin; and then we give up our God entirely and for ever, in order to obtain some short-lived and base gratification.

2. Sometimes it is a case of deliberate venial sin. I am not asked to renounce God entirely, and for ever; but only to displease Him, to dishonour Him, to offend Him, by setting at naught His commandment and His will to a certain extent, which our conscience tells us to be only venial.

3. Then lastly, there are cases in which there is not question of breaking a commandment, but only of what is called inordinate action, by which we refuse to deny some unreasonable inclination or appetite, though by so doing we shall give more pleasure and more glory to our good God.

A good father oftentimes wishes his children to consult him as to their movements, and their expenditure, though he does not command them to do so. So God creates us,

wishing with an infinite desire that always and at all times we should show Him filial reverence and affection and the love of preference. If, then, the case arises, as it often does, that I can either gratify some taste or appetite—not because I see some good motive for so doing, but merely to please myself and satisfy my inclination—or, on the other hand, my conscience tells me that I can please God and be of use to Him by doing instead some work of mercy or going to Holy Mass; if in such a case, because there is no special command given to me by God, I resolve deliberately to follow my own unruly inclination, and read or converse, or spend my money or my time, or eat, or sleep, merely because I am so inclined, without caring to give pleasure to my Creator, this is inordinate action, not directed to the service or praise of my Creator. In such action there is always a clear and distinct preference for gratifying self rather than giving pleasure to my God, my Creator, my Father, my Redeemer, my Lord Jesus Christ.

*I. Not this Man, but Barabbas.*

We can contemplate our Blessed Lady listening to these words. To her we continually say, *Hail, the Lord is with thee*; and one part of our meaning is that the Lord in her takes the place which self usurps in us. Her heart, her tastes, all her inclinations, her whole will is for her Son and her Lord. He is always present to her heart, and her one desire is to give pleasure to Him always and in every place. Never has she once in her life, in order to please herself, given the least displeasure to her Son. Never has she in any way, however small or slight, shown a preference of herself or of any creature.

Most earnestly we must cry to her, “Mother of God, pray for us sinners. For (1) it is thy office as Mother of God to bring Him forth in our hearts, that He may reign in place of self: and (2) even if thou wert not bound as Mother of God and Mother of men to bring Him forth in us, yet out of charity, as thou art full of grace, and full of

love for thy Son, share with us some of thy motherly love for Jesus, that the cry of our hearts may ever be: 'Not Barabbas! not any creature! not self! but Jesus Christ, my God, my Redeemer, Who loved me and delivered Himself up for me!''

J. *Not this Man, but Barabbas.*

We must frequently and diligently exercise our souls in making acts of loving preference for Jesus, such as the saints made. The Psalms and New Testament abound with them. *For what have I in Heaven? and besides Thee, Lord Jesus, what do I desire upon earth?* (Psalm lxxii.).

*Better is one day in Thy courts above thousands* (Psalm lxxxiii.).

Lord Jesus, *not my will be done, but Thine. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as in Heaven.*

*I opened my mouth and panted, because I longed for Thy commandments. My eyes have fainted after Thy salvation. I have loved Thy commandments above gold and the topaz* (Psalm cxviii.).

*God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom the world is crucified to me, and I to the world* (Galat. vi.).

*I am sure that neither death, nor life, . . . nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord* (Romans viii.).

K. *Not this Man, but Barabbas.*

"*Sursum corda.*" In Heaven too the question has been asked by the Eternal Trinity, which shall be released—Jesus the innocent Lamb of God, or man the sinner? And the answer of the Eternal Father has been, Not Jesus, but the sinner. And the Divine Son promptly answers, Yes, My Father, behold I come. *And He loved me and delivered Himself up for me.*

L. Men would think it an unbearable calamity to be condemned to death unjustly that another may be set free; but in reality one so treated may be a most privileged

saint, permitted to drink the chalice with his Divine Master.

M. *Whom will you that I release to you, Barabbas, or Jesus Who is called the Christ?*

Some writers think that Barabbas also bore the name of Jesus; and that therefore Pilate distinguishes Jesus Barabbas, and *Jesus Who is called the Christ*. The name of Barabbas is commonly interpreted, Son of the Father. The poor sinner is become by the Incarnation the brother of Jesus and the son of the Father. How gladly would our Blessed Lord welcome Barabbas as one of His brethren and as a son of His Father. Even if I have been like Barabbas in the past, I can now be a Jesus, and help to save others.

END OF THE FIRST MORNING WATCH.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE SECOND MORNING WATCH.

9 A.M. to 12.

## SCENE I.

## THE LITHOSTROTOS.

## STATION I.

## THE SCOURGING.

*I will chastise Him therefore, and release Him (St. Luke xxiii.).*

*I find no cause of death in Him: I will chastise Him therefore, and let Him go (St. Luke xxiii.).*

*Then, therefore, Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him (St. John xix.).*

I. The question has been discussed whether our Blessed Lord was scourged twice or only once. We are told that the Romans used to scourge all criminals sentenced to crucifixion; and had we only St. Matthew and St. Mark to guide us, we should be inclined to think that Pilate, after passing sentence, did, according to custom, order Jesus to be scourged. St. Mark writes: *And so, Pilate, being willing to satisfy the people, released to them Barabbas, and delivered up Jesus, when he had scourged Him, to be crucified.* St. Matthew writes: *Then he released to them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered Him unto them to be crucified.* These narratives seem to point to the ordinary mode of proceeding, a scourging after sentence and before the crucifixion. But St. John, as we have seen, wrote his Gospel later, and with a view of adding some details omitted, and making some doubtful points more clear. His narrative, then, seems to make it plain that Pilate ordered a scourging before he passed the sentence of death. And St. Luke seems to corroborate St. John by telling as that Pilate twice expressed his intention of scourging Jesus and then releasing Him: *I will chastise Him therefore, and let Him go. I will chastise Him therefore, and release Him.* It is not to be a scourging preparatory to death, but a severe chastisement that shall satisfy the people and be a

substitute for death. We must therefore conclude that either there were two scourgings, one before sentence and one after; or adopt the common opinion that as there had been already a scourging, and one of unusual severity, the Priests did not clamour for a second, but were glad to hasten on to the Crucifixion.

II. Scourging was a chastisement sanctioned by the Law of Moses, but under certain restrictions. If the Judges see that the offender is worthy of stripes, they shall lay him down and shall cause him to be beaten before them. According to the measure of the sin shall the measure also of the stripes be. Yet so that they exceed not the number of forty: lest thy brother depart shamefully torn before thy eyes (Deut. xxv.).

From this passage we see, firstly, that the stripes are not to exceed forty; so that when St. Paul tells us that he received five times from the Jews forty stripes less one, this means that he five times was scourged with the greatest severity allowed by the law. Those who study the Rabbinical Books tell us that they find it there prescribed that thirty-nine lashes are to be the largest measure of chastisement; that of these, thirteen are to be administered on each shoulder, and thirteen in front, on the chest.

Secondly. From the words of Deuteronomy we see also that the criminal was to be laid down flat on the ground, or perhaps on some low table or couch, so that the executioners could stand on the right side or left as required, and the criminal could be turned over to receive the stripes on his back or in front.

Thirdly. We further gather from these words in Deuteronomy that this was a very severe punishment; so much so, that the stripes were to be counted, lest thy brother should depart shamefully torn from before thy eyes, so that if the prescribed number of lashes was exceeded the victim ran risk of being shamefully torn.

III. The Romans were not limited to any fixed number of stripes. Neither did they lay the criminal down as the Jews did. Sometimes they stretched him upright on a frame or rack, and beat him either with rods which the lictor carried, or with the flagrum, one heavy lash like the Russian knout; or with the flagellum, or scourge, which consisted of several thinner cords. From the Acts of the Martyrs we see that these cords were often weighted with lead.

IV. Not unfrequently the sentence passed was that the criminal be scourged to death. Again, on the other hand, we are told, money was sometimes given to bribe the executioners to hasten death. This could easily be done. It is said that one blow of the heavy Russian knout suffices to break the spinal cord, and so cause instant death.

The executioners, however, we find, in different countries have their rules and regulations, and are trained to inflict great torture without endangering life. In the English prisons, it is said, that the men who have to use the cat practise on block-

figures in order to learn how to inflict pain without risk to life. In a manual, printed, we are told, in Russia a few years ago, for governors of gaols, precise directions are found for those who have to flog criminals. After the fifth stroke the skin must be rent, and after that, each stroke must deepen the wound or make a new one of a certain breadth, so that at the end of the flogging the back shall be entirely raw.

V. The flagellum, made of several thinner cords, was considered more painful than the flagrum with one heavy lash, or than the flogging with rods, as each cord made its own separate wound. And thus the cat-o'-nine-tails, it is said, inflicts more torture than the Russian knout, though the latter is wielded, we are told, with such cruel skill that each blow tears away skin and flesh from back and front. It is quite certain that in our own courts offenders dreaded flogging far more than any other chastisement. It was deemed so cruel a punishment that there has been a national uprising against it. It is only permitted now when criminals have been guilty of savage violence; and it has been found that it deters hardened offenders in a way that no other punishment does. In England, as we know, formerly the use of the lash was common. In ancient Rome, masters and mistresses could order their slaves to be scourged with what Horace calls *horribili flagello*. And we are told that when masters shrank from using their terrible power, their wives were less merciful.

VI. One of the arguments used by those who voted for the abolition of this punishment in the army, was that it was so degrading. And when it was afterwards proposed to pass a Bill through Parliament to enact flogging as the punishment for brutal husbands who barbarously ill-treated their wives, the proposition was rejected, because, it was said, a husband once flogged through evidence given by his wife would never forgive her in after years. This seems probable enough.

One who witnessed in the early part of this century the public flogging of a prisoner at the cart-tail, used to describe how the cart was violently shaken by the convulsion of the howling sufferer each time the lash fell, and how the skin of the victim was seen sticking to the cords as the executioner passed them through his fingers after each lash. A navy officer, not long dead, used to tell that as he was standing to witness a flogging, the sentenced man, already tied up, turned round to the officer in command and asked him one favour: "Do not let the left-handed man flog me". One reason for this petition might be, that the left-handed man would deal the lashes on parts of the back not touched by the right-handed man. The Jewish law, as we have seen, provided that no part should be without a wound; and the Roman executioners, we are told, dealt their blows with great deliberation, under the supervision of an officer, who saw that the chastisement was thorough. It was, however, enacted by Roman law that no Roman citizen

could be sentenced to be scourged with the flagellum. Citizens might be beaten with the lictor's rods; but the terrible punishment of the lash was reserved for slaves.

*A. Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

"*O vos omnes*"—*O all who go by the way, give heed a little while, and see, and listen.*

The words of the Gospel are very few: we can very quickly read them and pass on to other things: *Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him*; we can read them and at once forget them. What words afford a better example of the difference between merely reading, and *considering in the heart* or contemplating, than these words: *Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him*? Till we contemplate, how little do we know of the Sacred Passion! The words lying on the surface cover rich mines of sacred treasures, which are entirely lost unless we make time to reach them by thought, and study, and contemplation.

Sancta Mater istud agas,  
Crucifixi fige plagas,  
Cordi meo valide.

O Holy Mother, grant my prayer:  
Fix in my heart, engraven there,  
The wounds of Jesus crucified.

*B. Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

From these words the question has arisen, did Pilate himself inflict any stripes on our Blessed Lord? Some of the holy Fathers so interpret. Venerable Bede holds it as certain that he did; but the common opinion of commentators seems to be that no Roman Governor would dare to degrade his office by becoming the executioner.

Therefore these words remind us, while contemplating, of that important truth, *qui facit per alium facit per se*—that is, when we get something done, either by commanding, or counselling, or persuading, or in other effectual ways, it is as if the act were our own. We become full partners in the work done, whether it be good or evil.

"Blessed Mother of God, pray for us, that we may always be able to say, *I am partner, O Lord, with those that*

*fear Thee* (Psalm cxviii.); and that we may not in any way become guilty of the sins of other men. *From the sins of others spare Thy servant*" (Psalm xviii.).

C. *Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

Our Blessed Lord is then to be scourged, not according to Jewish law, but according to Roman custom. And from the Latin word *flagellavit* we see that the *flagellum*, or scourge, is to be used. The chastisement is not to be such as might be inflicted on a Roman citizen; that is to say, not a flogging with rods, but with "the horrible scourge," such as slaves only have to endure.

Jesus is not then laid down flat, as Jewish law prescribes, but is standing. As has been said, the Romans sometimes fastened the criminal about to be scourged to a frame, or rack, and with ropes and pulleys stretched his legs and arms. But this is not done in our Saviour's case. Tradition tells us that He is fastened to a pillar; and the common opinion is that it is a low pillar, not more than two feet and a half in height; one of three still preserved as sacred relics.

To an iron ring then on the top of this pillar He is fastened by His wrists. It is further stated, that His position was more than once changed for the convenience of the executioners; His sacred hands being bound to the pillar sometimes in front of Him, sometimes behind His back. In either case His Sacred Body is bent down, and the position is most distressing.

D. *Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

We may, with St. Bridget, contemplate our divine Lord in humble obedience taking off His clothes at the bidding of the executioners.

According to the contemplations of St. Bridget, our Lord was entirely stripped of His clothes. In the writings of the Venerable Abbess d'Agreda, on the contrary, we read that our Lady assured her several times that, at her prayer, the executioners were restrained all through the Passion from stripping Him entirely:

How are we to account for this discrepancy, and others similar, which we meet with in narratives that are commonly called Revelations?

1. One answer may be that we have not always the exact words of the holy contemplatives. The text of St. Bridget's contemplations, for instance, must, apparently, have undergone in republication some alterations, as we find it sometimes stated by grave authors on her authority that the number of lashes inflicted on our Lord was about four thousand five hundred, sometimes over six thousand.

2. Besides, we must bear in mind that these holy servants of God do not themselves claim for their writings the character of infallible revelations. Thus the Abbess d'Agreda, when she writes at the command of her Superiors, says that what she writes may be considered only as pious contemplations.

3. With regard to such pious contemplations in which holy souls are much helped by Divine light, St. Ignatius in his Rules for the Discernment of Spirits, gives us very valuable instruction. He teaches us that not only when an angel speaks to the soul, but even when God Himself, our Creator, speaks directly to one of His faithful servants, His visit is commonly of short duration; but it may leave the favoured soul in a state of intense happiness; and during this blissful aftertime, the soul, while dwelling on the words spoken by God, may enlarge upon them, and interpret them, according to its own pre-existing habits of mind. If this be done, and if all these thoughts be afterwards committed to writing, the result may be that though all that is written is good and pious and edifying, yet all is not revelation.

Discrepancies therefore found in such writings do not prove that they are all impostures. They may be the contemplations of holy persons who in time of prayer have been very much helped by the grace of the Holy Ghost; and therefore they may be of great use to others; but as the Holy See has not pronounced that all that is found in such writings is revelation, we are not bound to accept them as such; nor are we to be astonished if we find them at times differing one from another. We shall see later that eminent theologians have no scruple in rejecting at times statements found in the contemplations of St. Bridget, such as we have them extant at present.

*E. Then Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

"*Attendite.*" We may watch our Blessed Lord, now stripped of His clothes, presenting willingly His sacred hands, and laying them on the low pillar to be bound.

In His Sacred Heart He is saying, *My Heart is ready, O My God, My Heart is ready.* Last night, He came forward, we read, in the Garden to meet the armed multitude, *knowing all things that should come upon Him.* Nay, all

His life through He has perfectly known what this scourging is to be. How could He not? Since it is His own charity that has in the end determined that it shall be, and what it shall be.

The scourging is one of the few details of His sufferings of which He spoke in time past. *The Son of Man shall be betrayed, mocked, spit upon, scourged, and crucified.* These are the great features of His Sacred Passion, which have never been away from His Mind or His Heart. *I am prepared for scourges; and My sorrow is always before Me* (Psalm xxxvii.).

*My sorrow is always before Me.*

Our most compassionate Lord has many sorrows in His Heart. One of these is that most afflicting thought, "*Quæ utilitas in sanguine meo?*"—*What profit is there in My Blood?* (Psalm xxix.). *My eyes have failed in weeping for the destruction of the daughter of My people* (Lament. ii.).

*I am ready for scourges;* and the load of sorrow on My Heart would be all turned into joy if My people would listen to the voice which speaks to them from every wound: My people, *know thou and see that it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee to have left the Lord thy God* (Jerem. ii.).

F. *Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

The low pillar, we are told, stands at the north side of the Lithostrotos, the side furthest removed from the Governor's house.

Contemplate the executioners binding the sacred hands to the pillar, as usual, with merciless severity. For the injunction is again and again repeated: "*Lead Him carefully; make all safe*".

Once more He stands, as last night in the dungeon, His back bent, His Sacred Head bowed down. To the eyes of men the word of the Psalm is well fulfilled: *I am become miserable, and am bowed down even to the end* (Psalm xxxvii.). *I am become as a Man without help* (Psalm lxxxvii.).

It is said that on either side there is a raised step, on

which the executioners stand, in order to deal their stripes more effectively.

*G. Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

Some writers tell us, on the authority of St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi, that as many as sixty executioners took part in the scourging, relieving each other, two at a time. At first the number seems an extravagant exaggeration. But if there be truth in the statement so commonly accepted among the faithful—that the scourging lasted an hour, and the lashes amounted to six thousand, or thereabouts—even if the executioners employed are as many as sixty, each of them must administer about one hundred lashes; and as they are animated and urged to put forth their strength, it may easily be that owing to the fatigue relays are frequently needed. Moreover, if blood-money is distributed to the executioners, the soldiers themselves will arrange that there shall be as many employed as possible. It is also plain, that if the number of the lashes is to be so great, no study, or skill, or deliberation is necessary to secure that the whole body shall be bruised and wounded and torn. To inflict six thousand lashes in the hour, one hundred lashes must be dealt every minute. The number of stripes will certainly do all that skill and deliberation could have effected. Besides, as the wish of the Pharisees and Ancients is to produce speedy death, it matters not how quickly the blows fall.

*H. Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

Besides the statements found in the writings of holy contemplatives and others, we have what may be more useful in contemplation, weighty reasons which render it highly probable that the scourging is severe and cruel beyond all ordinary examples. One is that the soldiers have been told what the Governor's wish is. This is Pilate's last expedient for extricating himself from a position most troublesome, and possibly highly dangerous.

His plan of sending Jesus to Herod failed entirely. The competition with Barabbas was equally abortive. So that

now if he cannot satisfy the fury of the Priests and Ancients by this scourging, the choice before him will be either to condemn to death a Man not only innocent, but highly esteemed, and thereby possibly incur the merciless severity of Tiberius; or, on the other hand, to set at defiance all the leading men of Jerusalem, who are so resolved and so excited, and can easily hurry the people into a sedition, which is equally likely to draw down on his head the vengeance of the Emperor.

*I will chastise Him and let Him go.* Here then is the last hope of this most weak and unhappy Judge. Doubtless he was thought an enviable man when promoted to be Procurator of Judea; and yet any true friend would say, *Seek not to be made a judge, lest thou fear the person of the powerful, and lay a stumbling-block for thy integrity* (Ecclus. vii.).

St. Augustine writes: "Pilate did this, we must believe, with no other view save that the Jews might be satiated with His torments, and think that enough had been done, and no longer rage for His death" (Tract. cxvi.).

*I. I will chastise Him and let Him go.*

On the other hand, the Priests and Ancients, hearing this announcement in sullen silence, at once in their secret hearts make answer: "Chastise Him, yes; but let Him go, never". Anxious therefore though they be to have Jesus crucified, yet as they see clearly that they cannot depend on the inconstancy of the double-minded Governor, their one fixed purpose at present is that Jesus shall never come away from the pillar alive, to be set free. Whatever, therefore, they can effect by bribes they scruple not to do. They who afterwards gave the guards money to move them to say that the Sacred Body had been stolen away, will surely be liberal now in order to see Him dead. For they are in a perpetual agony of fear lest He should, in one way or another, escape out of their grasp. Here then we have another strong argument to prove that the accounts given of the scourging are well founded,

*J. Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

Again, commentators consider the third verse of the 128th Psalm to be a prophetic description of the scourging. *The wicked have wrought upon My back: they have prolonged their iniquity.*

*The wicked have wrought upon My back*: that is, the executioners stand over Him as smiths over the anvil, dealing blow after blow with the strength of their strong arms. The Hebrew words bear an interpretation still more appalling. St. Jerome renders them: *Ploughing, they ploughed upon My back*, or furrowed My back.

And for the words: *They prolonged their iniquity*, St. Jerome has: *They prolonged the furrow*. The Syriac version: *They prolonged their ploughing*.

The executioners prolong their terrible work beyond all ordinary measure; first, through their slavish wish to please the Governor; secondly, because they are urged on by the entreaties and bribes of the Rulers; and lastly, because, too, their natural cruelty is whetted and instigated by the unseen spirits, whose watchword is still: *He calleth Himself the Son of God. Let us see if His words be true. Let us examine Him by outrages and tortures* (Wisdom ii.).

*K. Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

It will help us also to form a true notion of the scourging, if we call to mind that the Paschal lamb, last evening, was a picture of what the Sacred Body becomes to-day. While the skin of the lamb was being torn off, and while the flesh was being roasted at the fire, and by the fire converted into one large wound, our Blessed Saviour recognised in that which He saw the story of what He is to undergo to-day.

*L. Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

Again, the familiar words of Isaias, though in their primary and direct sense they describe the state of the sinful people, yet as Christ Jesus is to-day personating the sinner, and has *laid upon Him the iniquities of us all*, they are also a faithful picture of His present condition at the

pillar: *The whole Head is sick, the whole Heart is sad. From the sole of the foot unto the top of the Head there is no soundness in Him, wounds and bruises and swelling sores. They are not dressed, nor bound up, nor fomented with oil* (c. i.). This prophetic picture, we may take for granted, proves to be most accurate. For the soles of the feet to which the lash does not reach are already sorely bruised and wounded. The crown of thorns, as well as the lash, will abundantly wound the top of His Head. The stripes that are now being inflicted reach to every other part of His Sacred Body. For we must bear in mind what we are told, that they more than once changed His position, so that the stripes might reach the front part of His Sacred Body as well as His back. And as the lashes are really guided by His own charity, we may apply the words of the Psalmist, and say: "There is no part of His most innocent flesh that can escape from the burning fire of His love" (Psalm xviii.).

And not one wound is *dressed or bound up or fomented with oil*. Alas! they shall all be aggravated, and fretted, and irritated beyond all thought.

*M. Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

We must bear in mind also that word of the 21st Psalm: *They have numbered all My bones*. This may be a description of the stretching of His limbs on the Cross, and the emaciated state of His Sacred Body, which rendered it possible to count His bones; but holy contemplatives, who have had so much light about the Sacred Passion, assure us that the wounds made during the scourging are so deep that the bones are often visible; and that pieces of flesh as large as the human hand have been torn away by the lashes.

*N. Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

It will help us also to call to mind the word of Deuteronomy already quoted: *According to the measure of the sin shall the measure also of the stripes be. Yet so that they exceed not the number of forty; lest thy brother depart shamefully torn before thy eyes.*

If, then, the number of stripes far, very far, and quite appallingly, as is commonly believed, exceed forty, we may be quite sure that our Lord, our most loving Brother, our Surety, when let loose, *departs shamefully torn.*

“Blessed Mother, obtain for us grace to keep this Sacred Body, *shamefully torn*, before the eyes of our soul and as a seal on our hearts.”

*O. Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

We must likewise reflect on the other words just quoted: *According to the measure of the sin shall the measure also of the stripes be.* For to-day: *The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all.* To-day *He (is) wounded for our iniquities; He (is) bruised for our sins; the chastisement of our peace (is) upon Him; and by His bruises we are healed.*

*According to the measure of the sin shall the number of the stripes be.*

In this case, then, the sin is above measure. The innocent Lamb of God has undertaken to atone for all our sins.

True, as has been said, one tear, one sigh, any one act of God made Man, would suffice to take away at once all the anger of His Father from our fallen race; but what would it have availed that God should be willing to forgive sin, if man is not willing to renounce sin? *Jesus is the Mediator, the go-between.* He has to deal with God and with man. When He addresses His Father, His prayer is heard at once, *for His reverence.* But then He has to win men also. For this, He has to undo all the immeasurable mischief wrought by the poison of sin in their souls.

“Blessed Mother of God, pray for us sinners.” Else how shall we ever form a notion of what thy Divine Son has to effect through this scourging?

He has to undo, we say, the work that sin has done; but we are met at once by the inspired question: “*Delicta quis intelligit?*”—*Who understands sin?* Are we not taught that we are so blind about sin that the ordinary

inclination of men is to say: *I have sinned and what harm hath befallen me?* (Ecclus. v.).

This is most true. And this very delusion of our miserable blindness is the very first effect of sin which our most compassionate Saviour is labouring and suffering to dispel. As we listen, each stroke of the lash says to us: *Say not, I have sinned and what harm hath befallen me? for the Most High is a patient rewarder.* The lash has not touched me yet, and therefore I say, *What harm hath befallen me?* But though the mercy of God is patient, most patient, most unwilling to strike, most desirous that we repent in time, before our turn comes, yet most surely our turn will come. Our most meek and humble Saviour is now saying to each of us; *Remember My judgment: for thine also shall be so: yesterday for Me, and to-day for thee* (Ecclus. xxxviii.). *What is this that hath been done? The same that shall be done.* For, it is written, and it is an irrevocable word: *Many are the scourges of the sinner* (Psalm xxxi.). The innocent Body of Jesus is now under the lash only as our proxy; and only to induce us to consider in our hearts, and ask ourselves the question: *If in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?* If Lucifer's work upon this innocent flesh is so terrible, so appalling, what shall be the condition of a disciple of Christ in the everlasting prison-house—*exiled from the providence of God*, and given over to the will of the spirit of wickedness, to be beaten *with many stripes, because he knew the will of his Master and did not prepare himself to do it?*

We are dismayed, and sickened, and inclined to be incredulous when we hear the details of the scourging, but, after all, the end of this hour must come. *All things concerning Me*, Jesus said last night, *have an end* (St. Luke xxii.). Very soon the youthful stranger will step forward boldly to cut these cords, and by the hour of the evening sacrifice this mangled Body will have ceased to suffer. But when will the ninth hour of rest come in the prison-house of the lost? Never! When will any stranger enter there

to interfere with the cruelty and malice and hatred and tyranny of Lucifer? Never! This, then, is our Lord's first desire, to rouse us out of our fatal delusion that we can sin with impunity. *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom* (Psalm cx.). And surely this awful scene may well awaken some salutary fear.

*P. Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

Then, too, our Saviour Jesus has to cure the worst of all the deadly wounds which sin has left in our souls, the wound of hopeless despair.

Yes, undoubtedly, with one tear the Divine Son could have appeased His Father's wrath; but would one tear have brought back hope to our dead souls? It is not His Father that demands all this agony, but our cold and blind and insensible and selfish hearts have to be convinced and persuaded that our God loves us; that He wishes to forgive us; that He Himself has paid our debt. Therefore is every one of the lashes wanted; there is not one too many.

*Q. Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

Then, besides, there are three terrible powers to be conquered: the gods of the earth; before whom Lucifer persuades so many men to worship. They are: *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life* (1 St. John ii.). In other scenes of the Sacred Passion we see our loving Redeemer grappling with the other concupiscences. Here He is struggling with *the lust of the flesh*. In other scenes we see Him condemned and outraged as Son of God, as Prophet, as King. Here He is chastised as a man, as if a guilty man of flesh and blood. Here He is conquering the tyranny of the flesh. Is this an easy task? Could one tear from His eyes win this victory?

We read that a third part of the host of Heaven joined Lucifer in his sin of pride, and fell like lightning into Hell. Is it too much to conjecture that a third part, at least, of those who shall weep and wail for ever are cast into Hell through the unconquered *lust of the flesh*?

God sent the Flood to drown this vice *because all flesh had corrupted its ways upon earth* (Genesis vi.), but the Flood was powerless. God, too, showered down fire upon the Cities of the Plain to consume this vice. But fire could no more prevail than the waters of the Flood.

Then, when all seemed hopeless, our Divine Lord said to His 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.* He and His Blessed Mother are come to make war on Lucifer, and to make war on the three great powers which are allied to Lucifer, and maintain his kingdom—the *lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.* Have confidence, our Saviour said last night, *I have conquered the world.* Have confidence, He says to us in this hour, as the lash falls on Him, I am conquering the flesh.

And though His Blessed Mother's heart and her whole being are torn and writhing and agonised through her intense compassion, yet to every lash, as it falls, she says: *Fiat*—so be it; because she knows that, through this cruel scourging, the promise shall have its fulfilment which her Son in the days gone by has with ineffable delight explained to her: *After her shall virgins be brought to the King. They shall be brought with gladness and rejoicing. They shall be brought into the temple of the King* (Psalm xlv.); and throughout eternity they shall *follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.* Then shall the blessed choirs of Heaven in ecstasy sing: *How beautiful is the chaste generation!* And they shall sing: *Salvation to our God Who sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb:* because they know well that this chaste generation, so beautiful, of Christian men and women, is *purchased from among men, the first-fruits to God and to the Lamb* (Apoc. xiv.); and they know, too, that *the wine that germinates virgins* and inebriates the martyrs is no other than this Sacred Blood which the lash is drawing from the *fountain of the Saviour, our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Which of you, the Prophet asks, can dwell with devouring*

*fire, which of you shall dwell with everlasting burnings?* (Isaias xxxiii.). We may here add another question: If the lash is nowadays proscribed by such a universal *plébiscite* as too cruel and unendurable, how do we make up our minds for the sake of a bodily pleasure to go into the everlasting prison-house, where we know well, the unfaithful servant is to *be beaten with many stripes?* (St. Luke xii.).

Which of us can face the scourge that Lucifer there wields—*exiled from the eternal providence*: with no angel there to limit the strokes lest we be *shamefully torn?*

Our God has three rods that He makes use of: the rod of *discipline*, which He uses in mercy to give us wisdom; the rod of His *indignation*, with which He chastises sinners here on earth, to bring them to repentance; and the rod of His *fury* and *vengeance*, which is reserved for the land of forgetfulness, where there is *only weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth*; where sin lives on without repentance.

Alas! once more let us consider in our hearts how here on earth sensual sinners solemnly profess their undying love for one another. What name will they find for their accomplice, when they are given over to Lucifer to *be beaten with many stripes?*

R. *Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

Another text that helps us to form to ourselves a notion of the scourging is that word of the Prophet who saw the Sacred Passion in vision: *There is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness, and His look was as it were hidden and despised. We have thought Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted* (Isaias liii.).

*We have thought Him as it were a leper.* So that if we might see together, side by side, our Blessed Saviour, as His Blessed Mother sees Him now, and holy Job, after Satan had *struck him with a grievous ulcer, from the sole of his foot even to the top of his head*, we should say of both: "Oh, yes, indeed; *struck by God and afflicted*". The cruelty of Satan is let loose on both: but his malice towards Jesus of Nazareth far surpasses his hatred of holy Job.

What word is there in holy Job's description of his sufferings that has not its fulfilment in our Lord ?

*What shall I do ? If I speak, My pain will not rest, and if I hold My peace, it will not depart from Me* (Job xvi.). If our Blessed Saviour moans as the lash falls, that does not give Him rest ; if He stands silent, the agony does not depart from Him.

*They have opened their mouths upon Me, and reproaching Me they have struck Me on the cheek. They are filled with My pains* (Job xvi.). So now too ; for the Priests and Rulers still have the revengeful remembrance fresh, how Jesus had made a scourge of cords and dared to drive their money-changers out of the Temple ; and now they open their mouths and exhort the strikers to show Him no pity, and not even to spare His face.

*He hath torn Me with wound upon wound, he hath rushed in upon Me as a giant* (Job xvi.). Job's wounded body was the image of what is to come to Job's Lord and Master. Satan is still the real executioner : *He hath torn Me with wound upon wound.*

Holy Job prayed in his agony : *O earth, cover not thou my blood, neither let my cry find a hiding-place in thee. For behold my witness is in Heaven, and He that knoweth my conscience is on high* (Job xvi.). So may we pray : *Our Father, Who art in Heaven, look down on the face of Thy Christ bound to the pillar ; look down on His Sacred Blood. May the earth never cover it up, nor the cry of His Sacred Blood be hidden away ; but may it night and day ascend to plead for us poor sinners.*

Sanguis Christi, munda me.

Sanguis Christi, inebria me.

*The chastisement of our peace is upon Him* (Isaias liii.). *With His shoulders He will overshadow thee* (Psalm xc.), and protect thee from the everlasting scourge !

*S. Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

*He loved me and delivered Himself up for me.* Here we must remember that not only has our Lord to atone for

our sins and to rouse us to holy fear, and to a wish to do penance, but it is also part of His task to sanctify and consecrate with a heavenly grace all that His disciples shall have to endure. In the annals of the persecuted Church, what words are more familiar than the formulas which express in what way the Martyrs and the Virgins were beaten or scourged? He is identified with every one of them, and wishes to be yoked as helpmate to each, and bear stripe for stripe.

*Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.*

The question is discussed: did our Lady remain conscious during the scourging? In the account that has come down to us of St. Bridget's contemplations, our Blessed Lady is introduced as saying, that after the first stroke of the lash she swooned, and only came back to consciousness when all was over. We also meet elsewhere with certain traditions that the Blessed Mother became insensible at certain stages of the Passion. Thus in Jerusalem, on the *Via dolorosa*, they are now restoring an ancient church which is said to have been called "the Church of the Spasm," because on that spot, it was supposed, our Lady sank down in a swoon. On the other hand, theologians of great repute, such as Suarez, Toletus, and Maldonatus, reject altogether the notion that our Lady lost consciousness at any moment during the Passion. Father Suarez treats the question at length, and holds it as certain that she never became insensible. Certain writings attributed to St. Bernard and St. Anselm, in which Holy Mary is described as swooning, he considers to be of very doubtful authenticity.

*T. Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him. I will chastise Him and let Him go.*

Whatever may be the wish of men, it is not the will of the Eternal Father that Jesus shall die under the scourge. All the pain that the lash can inflict He is willing to endure; but He is not to die bound to the pillar.

St. Augustine hands it down that a young man, a stranger, abruptly put an end to the scourging by running forward and cutting the cords, and saying with firmness to the executioners: "Are you going to kill a Man Who is not condemned?"

And thus once more *the desire of the sinners shall perish*. All this hour they have been waiting and watching eagerly,

thinking that the next stripe would be the final one, and that Jesus would droop His Head and die, if not crucified, at least *shamefully torn*. But here again the great truth stands out clear: *There is no wisdom, no prudence, no counsel against the Lord.*

"When Thou wiltest, Lord Jesus, and where Thou wiltest, and in the way Thou wiltest, death shall come to Thee, and Thou wilt lay down Thy life."

## STATION II.

*I will chastise Him and let Him go* (St. Luke xxiii. 22).

A. Pilate's promise is, so far, fulfilled abundantly: *I will chastise Him.*

As soon as the cords are cut, down to the ground, so wet with His Sacred Blood, the Lamb of God sinks. And here we find the fulfilment of that word which long ago He spoke by His Prophet: *I am a worm and no man* (Psalm xxi.).

"O vos omnes"—O all you who pass by the way, stay a little while to consider in your heart this new picture. For our Blessed Lord, our Brother, our Surety, our Mediator, our Saviour, our Jesus, in His desire to draw us all to Himself, presents Himself in another new character: *I am a worm and no man*: a bruised, crushed, wounded, bleeding worm, writhing on the ground.

And observe, in wonder, how the Ever-Blessed Mother does not run forward to raise Him up, because in the *head of the book it is written* of her: *I shall do Thy will, O God*; and she knows God's will to be, that on this Good Friday she is to stand, and watch, and listen, and suffer by compassion, till her soul is pierced through and through; but she is not to bind up one wound, or dress, or foment it with oil.

The holy Fathers picture her as standing there with an obedience to the Divine will, so devoted and loving and perfect, soaring far beyond the obedience of Abraham's

bleeding heart, that undoubtedly, for the glory of her God, and to carry out her Son's will for man's redemption, she would herself raise her hand to inflict the wounds, if need were. *The Mother was to be admired above measure, and worthy to be remembered by good men; joining a man's heart to a woman's thought* (2 Mach. vii.).

B. *I will chastise Him and let Him go.*

*Gather up the fragments*, our Blessed Lord said last year. The blessed angels will carefully gather up every drop of the Sacred Blood; every shred of the torn Flesh.

We, too, must, with the help of Holy Mary, gather together some at least of the golden lessons which our Master, as He lies here, *like a worm*, meekly and lovingly begs us to lay up in our hearts and carry home with us.

I. *Take ye and eat, for this is My Body.* But before you take My wounded Body as your food, think in your heart a while, whether your brother has anything against you. If he has, leave My Body upon the altar, and go first and be reconciled, and then come back to Me (St. Matt. v.). For remember, and forget it not: *As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me* (St. Matt. xxv.). If by an angry word, or unkind deed, or cruel neglect, or evil counsel, you have left a wound on his soul, that wound is to Me more grievous a thousand times than the wound from the lash. You have wounded Me in the apple of the eye. The lash did not do that.

II. And then, if your brother has wronged you, lay upon Me his iniquity, *I am ready for scourges.* I am his Surety. If you must be revenged, you must strike Me. For I am pledged; the promise is written: *With His shoulders shall He overshadow thee: under His wings thou shalt trust* (Psalm xc.).

III. Then, too, our Blessed Lady adds: Think on *the weak* (that) *you have not strengthened*; *the sick* (which) *you have not healed*; *the broken* (which) *you have not bound up*; the poor outcast sinner *driven away* that *you have not brought back*; *the lost one* that *you have not sought* (Ezech. xxxiv.).

Those poor neglected ones round about you, of whom you *had no care*, of whom you said: *What is it to me?* Oh, look on the ground and see how my Son, your Saviour, loved them! If you help to save them, He that is lying here to-day will, from the judgment-seat of His Majesty, with all His saints and angels round Him, say to you: "Come, you blessed ones, for you did it to Me".

C. *I will chastise Him and let Him go.*

He is chastised, Pilate! What more is wanting? Whose business is it now to see that He is set free? But Pilate makes no sign at all in His favour; and enough has not been done. For the prophetic word is: *I am a worm and no man; the reproach of men and the outcast of THE PEOPLE.* The people must *add to the grief of My wounds* (Psalm lxxviii.). The bystanders now have their opportunity. In the second century Tertullian writes: *Dominicum Corpus a columnâ dilapsum ad terram, quasi pilam—pedibus exagitabant.* They kicked the Sacred Body about as if it had been a ball.

St. Peter adds this more consoling word: *When He was reviled, He did not revile; when He suffered, He threatened not* (1 Peter ii.). And we may add: The Ever-Blessed Mother, when she sees her Son reviled, does not utter a mother's curse; when she sees Him suffer, and herself suffer with Him and in Him, her heart breathes no threat. She says: *My Son, lay not this sin to their charge.* She says to us: *See how He loved you!*

We know not whether Venerable Bede learned from tradition what he writes, that they dragged the mangled Body some distance along the ground, and flung it into a pool of water; possibly, to carry out in this cruel way some usual practice of washing the wounds of the scourged criminals.

"O Mother of God and Refuge of Sinners, beg of thy Divine Son to wash my wounded and disfigured soul.

"*Wash me, Lord Jesus, yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.*"

## STATION III.

*I will chastise Him and let Him go (v. 22).*

A. Some writers think that as soon as ever the cords are cut and our Saviour falls to the ground, the soldiers hurry Him away at once to crown Him; but from St. Matthew's narrative it seems clear that between the scourging and the crowning He has put on His clothes. St. Matthew expressly states that before the crowning, *they stripped Him*. We may therefore contemplate our Blessed Lord lying on the ground, *like a worm and no man*; and bidden roughly to dress Himself; and how they mock and ill-treat Him because He cannot do it quickly; and at the same time impede Him and render His painful task more difficult.

. While looking at Him, let us not forget the marvellous obedience of His Holy Mother who is there, sick with desire to help Him; and yet she lifts not her hand. She only looks, and weeps, and prays, and suffers with Him; full always of the peace which *passeth understanding*: because the will of her God is being accomplished in His Divine Son and in herself. *The Mother was to be admired above measure.*

With what transport the blessed angels are contemplating their King and their Queen, and they too are practising a perfect obedience. They forbear from giving their King the help He so much needs. For His Heart is saying to them: "*Sinite modo*"—*Suffer ye thus far*. More, yet more than this I can endure.

B. While we contemplate, we may imagine to ourselves what a happy recollection it would have been through life to any one who in that hour had been so blessed as to be allowed to help our Blessed Saviour to dress Himself. Most kindly and earnestly He says to us now: Do not waste time in wishing for that opportunity; *Amen I say to you, as often as you do it to the least of My little ones you do it to Me (St. Matt. xxv.)*

*If I have despised him that was perishing for want of clothing, and the poor man that had no covering; if his sides have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep; let my shoulder fall from its joint, and let my arm with its bones be broken (Job xxxi.).*

C. We must remember too the agony caused while the woven tunic is dragged over the wounds: *They are not bound up, nor dressed, nor fomented with oil.*

## SCENE II.

### THE BARRACK-YARD.

*Then the soldiers of the Governor, taking Jesus into the hall, gathered together unto Him the whole band (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

*And the soldiers led Him away into the court of the palace, and they called together the whole band (St. Mark xv.).*

*Taking Jesus into the hall.*

I. The scourging we suppose to have taken place in the Lithostrotos, the large court paved with red blocks of stone, to the north of the Prætorium and Fort Antonia. The soldiers now lead our Lord away *into the hall* (St. Matt.). According to the Greek and Latin text it is *into the Prætorium*. In St. Mark's Gospel: *into the court of the Palace*; according to the Latin: *into the court of the Prætorium*; literally from the Greek: *within the Prætorium*.

From these passages it seems clear that the scene which follows is not enacted publicly in the Lithostrotos, the large square in front of the Prætorium; but more privately in the court, or barrack-yard of the soldiers. Why this is to be so, we shall have to conjecture presently. But this much seems clear, that it is to be a private pastime for the soldiers.

II. *Then the soldiers, taking Jesus into the hall (the court), gathered together unto Him the whole band—(the whole Cohort).*

*The whole Cohort* seems to mean all the soldiers at the time in garrison. The Cohort, scholars tell us, is the tenth part of a legion. A legion was more like a brigade in our army, than a regiment. The legion sometimes grew to the dimensions of six thousand infantry and four hundred horsemen. If the Roman Governor had troops at Cæsarea, which was the ordinary seat of government, one Cohort might be considered sufficient to garrison Jerusalem. We have noticed that St. Luke speaks of Herod's *army*, when our Lord was presented to him. It is difficult to

account for Herod being allowed to have an army in Jerusalem unless we suppose, that though Herod Antipas and Pilate have been lately at variance, yet as the Herods were ordinarily devoted to the Romans, they were encouraged to bring their mercenaries to Jerusalem, to act in concert with the Romans in case of a rising during the Paschal celebrations.

III. We are taking for granted, then, that the people are not spectators of the scene which we are going to contemplate. Some, however, of the Priests and Ancients, always in terror lest Jesus escape, may procure admittance in order to watch.

IV. Then the question arises: Who suggests this new torment?

One answer is, that the spirits of darkness have not yet come to the end of their programme: *He glorieth that He hath God for His Father. Let us see then if His words be true: and let us prove what shall happen to Him: and we shall know what His end shall be. For if He be the Son of God, He will defend Him, and will deliver Him from the hands of His enemies. Let us examine Him by outrages and tortures.*

(a) The princes of darkness, therefore, we may assume, devise and suggest this novel and unheard-of cruelty. If Jesus is in any exceptional way Son of God, they argue, a miracle will be worked to rescue Him; and thus they shall know what He is.

(b) They find no difficulty in persuading the soldiers to follow these inspirations. Once suggested, the plan seems, if we may so say, quite a natural cruelty and barbarity. For, it has gone among the soldiers that Jesus asserted before Pilate that He is a King. Herod, too, sent Him back in a robe of mock royalty. I He is a King, then why not treat Him as King?

(c) This plan, then, of the wicked spirits is adopted by men; and it is not barred in Heaven because it will greatly help our Saviour to root out of the souls of His disciples *the pride of life*.

V. We may also ask, why do the soldiers move away from the public Lithostrotos, and prefer to carry on this new barbarity in their barrack-yard?

(a) One answer may be, that it is no part of Pilate's sentence. They may consider it dangerous to indulge in this new and unknown cruelty publicly before all the people. Some might cry out and denounce them to the Governor.

(b) More especially, if, as we may suppose, they intend what they are going to do to be a scornful mockery of Jewish royalty. We observe how often in the course of the morning Pilate expresses his contempt for the Jews by calling Jesus, *King of the Jews*, and *your King*. The soldiers follow his lead. They are going to exhibit Jewish royalty as it ought to be; a crown, a sceptre, a royal robe, all suitable for a King of the contemptible Jews.

It might not be safe to exhibit such an exasperating spectacle before all the people. The soldiers have not as yet found out how thoroughly diabolic malice can suppress national spirit.

(c) At the same time, knowing Pilate's mind, how glad he is

to show contempt for the Jews, and also how he wishes Jesus to be such a spectacle of misery that even the heartless Jews will not clamour any more for His death, the soldiers, even if they do not get an explicit permission for their barbarous pastime, feel sure that the Governor will connive and condone.

VI. We may ask: Are these soldiers Romans? Probably, a great part of them are conscripts from the provinces.

#### STATION I.

*Then the soldiers of the Governor, taking Jesus into the hall (the court), gathered together unto Him the whole band (the whole Cohort) (St. Matt. xxvii. 27).*

##### A. *They gathered unto Him the whole Cohort.*

This is then to be a special pastime and indulgence for the Roman soldiers. Last night, the Jewish Priests and servants mocked our Saviour. But He had distinctly foretold a week ago, that the Gentiles also shall mock Him: *They shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to be mocked. This is (their) hour and the power of darkness.*

##### B. *They gathered unto Him the whole Cohort.*

How diligently they seek for one another, and invite all: and are anxious that none shall lose the unnatural and inhuman enjoyment: *Come, therefore, let us enjoy the good things that are present. Let none of us go without our part in luxury. Let us oppress the poor just man.*

##### C. *They gathered unto Him the whole Cohort.*

THEY GATHERED UNTO HIM. This is precisely our work, to gather men to Jesus. *For He hath given to every one commandment concerning his neighbour.—I will make you fishers of men, our Blessed Saviour says to us all. I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself.—How often have I wished to gather you as the hen gathers her chickens under her wing. Who will help Me, who will bring back My lost sheep? Pray the Lord of the harvest that He may send workmen unto the harvest.—Why do you stand all the day idle?—The weak you have not strengthened.—That which was driven away you have not brought again.*

“Blessed Mother of God, pray for us sinners that we may redeem time lost, and by gathering poor sinners to thy Son Jesus, repair whatever scandal we may have given in the past.”

## STATION II.

*And stripping Him they put a scarlet cloak about Him*  
(v. 28).

A. *Stripping Him.* Therefore, as has been said in the last scene, our Blessed Lord had been clothed after the scourging. This crowning is an after-thought, suddenly planned while He is dressing Himself.

B. *Stripping Him.*

Our Blessed Saviour *was offered because He willed it.* And He is now stripped again because Himself wills it. His Sacred Heart is not content with what the lash has done. He Himself wishes all His wounds to be renewed, and chafed, and aggravated unutterably, while the soldiers roughly strip Him of the woven tunic. A wounded man cries out in anguish, and his flesh quivers when nurses are tenderly dressing his wounds; and when his sores smart, he craves for opiates that shall take away the sense of pain.

But our Blessed Lord, through charity for us, has planned for Himself more pain, fresh agony, because He knows that *in His bruises we are healed.*

He knows that each new anguish will help many souls to escape eternal anguish. And therefore over each fresh wound or agony He rejoices, as one does *who has found many spoils.*

“*Passio Christi, conforta me.* May virtue, dear Lord, come out of Thy wounds to us.”

C. *And stripping Him.*

The sight of a wounded man generally awakens pity. How comes it that these soldiers have no compassion for the mangled Body of our Saviour?

1. One answer may be that Jesus is a Jew, and they

bear an intense hatred to the Jews, and are glad of the chance of venting their malice.

2. Again, men when they indulge their passions become as the savage beasts, and with the beasts the taste for blood grows. Many of these soldiers were executioners during the scourging. Cruelty has gained strength.

What will be the cruelty of Satan and his wicked spirits in their own home ! It never dies out or abates.

Oh, grateful indeed, most grateful, everlastingly grateful will our Lord be to any one who rescues even one poor sinner from the everlasting tyranny of the devil.

*D. Stripping Him.*

Throughout the Sacred Passion our Saviour is planning so that each new suffering shall call our attention to some different sin that we have committed, and move us to sorrow for them all.

Well He knows on this Good Friday how many sins will be occasioned by dress and undress, by dressing and undressing. After the Fall, *the Lord God made for Adam and his wife garments of skins . . . and clothed them. And sent him out of the paradise of pleasure to till the earth from which he was made* (Genesis iii.). Like felons and convicts they were dressed in the skins of beasts, that they might remember and not forget that the child of Heaven has been degraded ; *compared to senseless beasts, and made like to them* (Psalm xlviii.). But the pride of fallen man soon revolted and changed the penitential garb into robes of vanity and concupiscence, that they might subserve to the *lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life*. Therefore *by what things a man sinneth, by the same also is he tormented* (Wisdom xi.). Jesus, the Elder Brother, the Representative of our fallen family, must to-day suffer torment by all those things wherein we sin. *We deserve to suffer these things*, Joseph's brethren said, *because we have sinned* (Genesis xlii.). "I suffer this torment," our Lord says, "because My brethren have sinned." The rich man who had been clothed with purple and fine linen, desired, when in his

place of torment, that a spirit from the dead might go to warn his brothers in his father's house; but the answer came to him: *They have Moses and the Prophets—if they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they believe if one rise again from the dead* (St. Luke xvi.). We want no messengers from the dead. Those who devoutly contemplate Jesus on this day, dressed and undressed, find a virtue come out from His wounds to their souls, and they are able to say with St. Paul: *To me the world* (with all its pomps) *is crucified, and I to the world* (Galat. vi.). Christian nobles, men and women, have been able to say as heartily as Queen Esther said of her diadem: *Thou knowest, O God, my necessity, that I abominate the sign of my pride and glory, which is upon my head in the days of my public appearance, . . . and wear it not in the days of my silence* (Esther xiv.).

At our Baptism we were each asked: "Dost thou renounce Satan and all his works and all his pomps?" And by the voice of our proxy we answered: "I do renounce". And on this understanding we were received into the Kingdom of God.

"Pray for us poor sinners, Blessed Mother, that now at least, while we contemplate thy beloved Son stripped and clothed again, we may have grace to renew from our hearts the promise of our Baptism: 'Yes, I do renounce'."

How many Christian men and women have, while considering in their hearts the scenes of His Sacred Passion, gone back to the primitive idea of dress after the Fall, and understood that dress is to be, not for luxury, not for show, not for the multiplication of sins, but for necessity, for decency, and for penance.

For necessity: *Having food and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content* (1 Timothy vi.).

For decency: *Women also in decent apparel, adorning themselves with modesty and sobriety* (1 Timothy ii.).

For penance: *They would have long ago done penance in sackcloth and ashes* (St. Matt. xi.).

As His scourging has moved multitudes of His disciples to chastise their bodies by the use of the discipline, so too all the agony He endures through His dress—through dressing and undressing—has moved very many to mix penance with the comfort and luxury of their dress.

E. Dress, it is said, ought to be suited to our state of life. What then is our state of life? One answer is: We are sinners, penitent sinners. Whether high-born sinners or plebeian sinners, is of secondary importance. We are sinners. God grant that we be penitent sinners. This is one aspect, at least, of our present state of life during the *short days* of our sojourn here.

Then the change comes, and Isaias tells us this much of our new state: *Thy carcass is fallen down; under thee shall the moth be strewed, and worms shall be thy covering* (Isaias xiv.).

F. *Stripping Him, they put a scarlet cloak about Him.*

The scarlet cloak may possibly have been a cast-off chlamys of the soldiers. If so, it is short, not much more than what we call a cape. As, however, St. John calls it a *purple garment* (ἱμάτιον) it may have been longer; for this Greek word signifies a robe longer than the chlamys. And as scholars tell us that the word chlamys is sometimes used for a royal mantle, it is perhaps probable that our Lord was dressed in some worn-out mantle, fastened about His neck, but leaving visible the wounds in His Sacred Body.

It is asked, Was the mantle scarlet or purple? St. John and St. Mark call it *purple*, St. Matthew *scarlet*. Some commentators therefore think that there must have been two garments, one purple, the other scarlet. The lexicographers give an easier solution by telling us that the Greek word πορφύρεον is sometimes used for a red colour.

“O Blessed Mother of God, while contemplating Thy beloved Son in His mantle of royalty, say once again for the Priests of His Church the prayer inspired by the Holy Ghost: *May Thy Priests be clothed with justice* (Psalm cxxxi.). Pray too that we may hearken to the admonition

of His faithful Apostle: *The night is passed and the day is at hand, let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light. Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*" (Romans xiii.).

### STATION III.

*And plating a crown of thorns, they put it upon His Head*  
(v. 29).

*And plating a crown of thorns they put it on His Head.*

I. A question arises, how are these thorns procured on a sudden? For the project of a mock coronation is an inspiration of the moment, not premeditated.

Some writers answer that during the scourging, besides the *flagellum*, other instruments of torture were used, and among the rest, rods armed with strong thorns. If this be so, they assume that the soldiers took some of these rods, and twisted them into the shape of a crown.

II. Was the crown a mere wreath, or more in the shape of a turban which covered the whole head? Both opinions are put forward. Some writers argue, from the relics that still remain, that it was only a wreath, or diadem.

*A. Plating a crown of thorns, they put it on His Head.*

According to a common opinion there were seventy-two thorns in the crown, but St. Anselm adds that as the crown is often dislodged and readjusted, the wounds on the Sacred Head from the thorns amount to one thousand.

As the thorns are long, some of them pierce His cheeks, some His eyelashes, and interfere with the movement of His eyes.

In the writings of St. Bridget, our Blessed Lady is introduced saying to her, "From the many streams of blood flowing down His face and through His hair, and filling up His eyes and His beard, nothing was to be seen but blood".

*B. They put it on His Head.*

Taking care that the hard and sharp thorns do not hurt their own hands, the soldiers, with skilful cruelty, contrive with the help of staves and rods, to press the thorns into our Blessed Saviour's flesh, and fix the crown on His Head.

O all you who pass by, stay a little while to measure the pain and anguish caused by this new torture. *The whole Head is sick, the whole Heart is sad* (Isaias i.).

C. *They put it on His Head.*

Yet still His sad Heart is comforted by the thought that a virtue will pass out from His bleeding Head to help men and women without number to conquer the terrible power of the *pride of life*. Heaven shall be peopled with disciples of Jesus who, by contemplating the Sacred Passion, will learn to say with their whole hearts: *Thou knowest, O God, my necessity, and that I abominate the sign of my pride and glory that is on my head.*

*Have confidence*, our Divine Master said yesterday evening to His little flock; *I have conquered the world*. Seated now in silence on the low column, while the thorns are entering one after another into His Sacred Head, never opening His mouth, and making no resistance, He is conquering Satan's strongest ally, *the pride of life*.

D. *They put it on His Head.*

And the low column on which He sits becomes *cathedra docentis*, the chair from which our Master teaches us.

"*Delicta quis intelligit?*" He is saying to us—*Who can understand sin?* Who weighs and measures correctly all the iniquity of the head, the countless evil thoughts, lying arguments, wicked plans and projects, which, nurtured in the brain, pass thence to defile the heart?

Wonderful as the discoveries of science are, what machinery is there that can work as rapidly as the thoughts of man? But, alas! sins of thought so easily multiplied are often disregarded because they are only sins of thought; as if the treason of Judas were not thoroughly consummated in thought long before it took effect in act.

"O Jesus my Redeemer, crowned with thorns, from my sins of thought, deliver me. From my hidden, unheeded sins of thought, wash me yet more, and blot out all their iniquity."

E. *They platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His Head.*

Instead of sharing the thorns of my Lord, my head is

multiplying uncharitable judgments and revengeful desires, each one of which is a thorn that can fix a wound in the soul of my neighbour, and therefore also in His Heart: a wound immeasurably more cruel than any that material thorns can imprint on the Sacred Head. "For what you do to My little ones, you do to Me."

F. *They platted a crown of thorns.*

But these thorns are only outward signs of the real inward agony. For to-day Jesus is the Sinner, and His Heart is sad indeed, and He is saying: Father! *there is no health in My flesh, because of Thy wrath. For My iniquities are gone over My Head, and as a heavy burden are become heavy on Me* (Psalm xxxvii.). *The chastisement of our peace is upon Him* (Isaias liii.).

G. *They put it upon His Head.*

*Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see (your) King in the diadem wherewith His Mother crowned Him in the day of His espousals, and in the day of the joy of His Heart* (Cant. iii.).

The Ever-Blessed Mother is watching, is listening, is suffering, through her perfect motherly compassion, wound for wound, thorn for thorn. Can there then be a sense in which we may say that she crowns her Son with this diadem? The holy Fathers answer: Yes, assuredly. For she gives her full and entire consent that, to obey the will of His Father and to content the desire of His own Heart, He shall wear this crown. Nay, if need were, they add, with a courage and a love and an obedience a thousand times stronger than death, she would herself fix the crown and cause the stream of blood to flow, that so poor sinners might be brought to life, and *draw waters in joy out of the fountain of their Saviour.*

The holy angels, gazing on her, *blest her with one voice, saying: Thou art the glory of Jerusalem; the hand of the Lord hath strengthened thee; and thou shalt be blessed for ever* (Judith xv.).

H. *They platted a crown of thorns.*

All through this day Jesus, God and Man, is the sinful Adam. On Him is the sentence passed : *Thorns and thistles shall (the earth) bring forth to Thee* (Genesis iii.).

He is for to-day the *accursed* one Who is to *hang on the tree*. But in Him the curse comes to an end. From this hour, for those who have hearts to love, the thorn of malediction is changed and becomes prominent among *the things that spring up from the earth to bless the Lord*.

I. *They put it on His Head.*

And while *He was suffering, He did not threaten* (1 St. Peter ii.), nor make resistance. For He knows that His followers shall, through *many tribulations, enter into His Kingdom of God* (Acts xiv.), and that, among the other countless shapes of woe, the head oftentimes *shall be all sick*, racked with pain, weighed down, finding no rest, day or night. And from every one of His thousand wounds virtue is going out to His suffering disciples. He above all, immeasurably beyond all, can say: "*Quis infirmatur?*"—*Who is sick, and I am not sick?*

He that touches you, and any pain or sorrow that touches you, *touches the apple of My eye* (Zach. ii.).

J. *They platted a crown of thorns.*

*Traffic*, our Saviour said, *till I come; trade till I come*. But what He teaches, that He always does. Holy writers tell us that He is come to earth to trade. The trader picks up in the foreign land what he cannot find at home.

In Heaven, in His own home, the Son of God had all bliss and all riches; yet He could not find there thorns or outrages. These He is greedily gathering here on earth where they abound for Him.

"O most charitable Saviour, if you take our thorns, give us in exchange some little share of Thy heavenly love.

Passion of Christ, strengthen us.  
Blood of Christ, inebriate us.

Make the bitter things of this earth sweet to us, and its sinful pleasures bitter."

*K. They put it on His Head.*

And while contemplating His Sacred Head, we must not forget how the wounds all over His Body are being irritated and made more sore, as they set Him down roughly on His hard stone throne; and then pull Him and push Him from side to side, while adjusting His crown. *The wounds and bruises and swelling sores are not bound up, nor dressed, nor fomented with oil—I am turned in My anguish while the thorn is fastened (Psalm xxxi.).*

*L. They put it on His Head.*

And He is our Head: *The head of every man is Christ.* He is the Head, we the limbs. St. Bernard therefore asks us: "Is the Head to be crowned with thorns, and the limbs to abound in comfort and luxury?"

## STATION IV.

*They put it upon His Head, and a reed in His right hand*  
(v. 29).

*A. A reed in His right hand.*

The Blessed Mother, as she contemplates, watching and listening, has in her heart the prophetic word: *The Lord will send forth the sceptre of Thy power, out of Sion; rule Thou in the midst of Thy enemies; with Thee is the principality (ἀρχή) in the day of thy strength (Psalm cix.).*

This is the day of our Lord's strength. This *reed in His right hand* is the true sceptre of His power. To-day He Who is mighty is doing great things: *He hath showed might in His arm. To-day He can say: I broke the jaws of the wicked man, and out of his teeth I took away the prey (Job xxix.).* In the Canticle of the Three Children we say: "*Benedicite virtutes Domini Domino*"—*All ye powers of the Lord, bless the Lord.* One meaning of the Latin word, *virtus*, may surely be manly power. To-day we see wonder after wonder of manly courage, manly fortitude, manly endurance, in our Blessed Saviour, nay a meekness and patience far more than manly, nothing less than Divine.

To-day, then, already, our most gentle and humble Saviour is reigning and ruling in the midst of His enemies visible and invisible. His almighty helplessness is conquering them all by unconquerable endurance. His invisible enemies understand far better than men do how His meekness is conquering. *Do you see*, they are saying with vexation and disappointment unbearable, *Do you see that we prevail nothing?* They are fast losing heart.

B. *A reed in His right hand.*

With His crown on His Head, His royal robe on His shoulders, His sceptre in His hand, He is also silently, but most persuasively, teaching us how to conquer and to reign. *Blessed are the meek*, His crown and His sceptre and His royal mantle are saying to us, *for they shall possess the land.*

C. *A reed in His right hand.*

And at His side, the second Eve is always, at least virtually, standing—His own Ever-Blessed Mother, His image, and, as far as creature can be, His second self, the Mirror of His Justice. *Now this Mother was to be admired above measure, and worthy to be remembered by good men.* For she saw her Son crowned with thorns, and bore it with a good courage, for the hope that she had in God. *Joining a man's heart to a woman's thought:* joining to all her motherly tenderness the fortitude of her Divine Son's manly Heart.

#### STATION V.

*And bowing their knees they adored Him and they mocked Him, saying: Hail, King of the Jews* (St. Matt. xxvii.; St. Mark xv.).

A. *Bowing their knees they adored Him.*

Yes! and the Blessed Mother and all the choirs of angels are saying in their hearts with that peace *that passeth understanding: In the name of Jesus*, in the presence of Jesus, *every knee shall bow, of those that are in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth* (Philip. ii.). The unseen spirits of wickedness have little joy as they gaze on this bending

of the knee; for they are beginning to have a strange pre-sentiment of what is coming.

B. *Bowing their knee they adored Him.*

Alas, poor men! They knew not the prophetic word written by Isaias: *Every knee shall be bowed to Me.* Poor heathen man, *these things are hidden from thy eyes.*

"Oh, pray to My Father," our Lord says to us. "*Ask the Lord of the harvest to send workmen into His harvest, that the light may be carried to those who sit in darkness.*"

C. *Bowing their knee they adored Him.*

But still more earnestly He says to us: *Weep for yourselves and for your children.* For we do not sit in darkness. We are His friends, to whom He has made known the *hidden things of His wisdom.* Alas! how wretched our misery if while we bow our knees, our hearts are far away from Him!

Surely this is the place to pour out earnest prayer that whenever we bow the knee before our Hidden God upon the altar, faith and hope and love may be in our hearts, and be ever growing in our hearts.

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus."

D. *They bowed their knees and they said: Hail, King of the Jews.*

Mark well, how we bring down on our own heads the evil we plan for others. If we curse another, the curse rebounds upon ourselves. If any of these desecrated Priests and Ancients are present by privilege, what do they see? Mark how ignominy is heaped upon them. These Roman soldiers are exhibiting, with all the insult that they can devise, their unbounded contempt of the Jews; *Hail, King of the Jews.* This mock King is, in their minds, just such a Monarch as befits them, a most worthy and proper and becoming King for this detestable race.

*They prepared a snare for My feet and they bowed down My Soul. They dug a pit before My face, and they have fallen into it (Psalm lvi.).*

But sin has so poisoned and degraded the souls of the Rulers that they will gladly swallow all this ignominy and Roman insult, and far more, if only they may see Jesus of Nazareth crucified.

But what is all this disgrace, compared with the degradation to which Lucifer will subject us if we fall under his power in the everlasting prison-house ?

“From anger and hatred and all ill-will, deliver us, Lord Jesus.

“Mother of God, full of compassion, pray for us sinners.”

STATION VI.

*And they gave Him blows. And they struck His Head with a reed. And they did spit upon Him (St. Mark xv. ; St. John xix.).*

A. *And they gave Him blows.*

These words, added later by St. John, indicate that many other blows, besides the strokes with the reed, fell upon His mangled Body.

B. *And they struck His Head with a reed.*

If we observe the words of the Evangelists, we shall see that the soldiers, who doubtless were aware how much the Jews were addicted to ceremonies, are ridiculing their rites by a mock religious service.

According to St. Mark : Each soldier approaches, strikes our Lord's Head with the sceptre, then spits on His sacred face, then bows his knee to adore Him, and says: *Hail, King of the Jews !* and so retires to make room for another. St. Matthew changes the order somewhat. They first bow their knees to worship, then spit upon Him, then strike His Head and retire. St. John adds that *they gave Him blows.*

“*Attendite.*” Look on in sorrow while each of the men of this well-drilled Cohort comes in due order to offer this cruel worship.

Satan and his legions are watching most eagerly to see

if Jesus of Nazareth gives any sign of impatience, or revenge, or weakness, during this long ceremony. But the result is as before. *Do you see that we prevail nothing? When He was reviled, (He) did not revile; when He suffered, He threatened not* (1 St. Peter ii.).—*I do not resist; I have not gone back. I have given My Body to the strikers.*

*I have not turned away My face from them that rebuked Me, and spit upon Me* (Isaias l.).

*"Saturabitur opprobriis"*—*He shall be glutted with reproaches.* This prophecy is now abundantly fulfilled. So, too, the word He uttered last week is now accomplished: *They shall deliver Him to the Gentiles, and they shall mock Him and spit on Him.*

Last night the Jews had their opportunity, and without authority they gratified their humour to the full by gross, unbridled mockery and outrage.

As His Passion is offered for Jew and Gentile, the Gentiles now have their turn. In both cases the issue is the same. *"Saturabitur opprobriis"*—*He shall be glutted with reproaches.*

*C. They did spit upon Him.*

There is this peculiar feature in the mocking of the Gentile soldiers: that there is more method in it, more discipline, more cruel skill.

This too is new, that emblems of honour are turned into instruments of torture.

At the pillar the lash was employed—but the lash is an ordinary instrument for severe and cruel chastisement. Here the crown, the sceptre, the mantle are brought into use, and by a novel device are changed into instruments of torture and dishonour.

This, then, is only one instance more of the way in which our Lord in His Passion makes *all things new*. Honours and riches are become a pain, and suffering a high distinction.

We are familiar with the words immortalised by our poet: "Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate you!"

Countless thousands of Christ's followers have, by the virtue that comes out of His ignominy in the Sacred Passion, been able to say such words from their heart; and with St. Paul: *God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Galat. vi.).

D. *They struck His Head with a reed, and they did spit upon Him.*

His crowned Head is suffering enough already. Why do they strike it?

Our Lord's hard chair of agony is *cathedra docentis*. He is teaching His future Church the same lesson that He inculcated yesterday evening: *The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them. But you not so. But he that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger* (St. Luke xxii.). Men raised to honour naturally become giddy and intoxicated through pride. Our Lord is in this, as in all things else, making a great change. In His Church, as persecution, which naturally makes men apostates, will, through the grace of His Passion, raise multitudes to the dignity of martyrdom; so the crown, the sceptre, the mantle—which naturally lead to adulation, and worship, and excessive pride—shall, through the Sacred Passion, become the badges of a painful charge, a laborious Apostleship, a sacred office full of holy solicitude and charity.

St. Paul reminds us that he who rules ought to rule with *carefulness*, or *solicitude*, that solicitude which true mothers feel for their sick child. Ecclesiasticus describes a good father lying sleepless at night through solicitude about his young daughter: *The father waketh for the daughter when no man knoweth, and the care for her taketh away his sleep* (Ecclus. xlii.). Whenever priests, or those in authority, have in good measure this grace of their vocation, this anxious parental solicitude—they pray much for light and guidance, they do penance for those under their charge; they secure help from the prayers of the poor; like the Good Shepherd, they are ready to lay down their lives for their flock; and thus they pass unscathed

through the good things of this earth to the good things of a better world. "*Sic transeamus per bona temporalia ut non amittamus æterna.*" *When thou shalt walk in the fire thou shalt not be burnt, and the flames shall not burn thee* (Isaias xliii.).

Spiritual writers have said that the purple and scarlet robes of those in high stations are emblematic, and signify that they must be ready to shed their blood for those under their care.

*E. They did spit on Him—they bended their knees and adored Him.*

Call to mind how sensitive we naturally are to ridicule; how our pride revolts at once against anything approaching to scoffing or scorn. And therefore the Eternal Father, when, as He is mingling the chalice for His own beloved Son, He sees that men, under Lucifer's guidance, are resolved on sinning in this way, does not forbid it; but lets them follow their will, that His Divine Son may give us an example, and that we may look and do according to the model. To these pagan soldiers, as well as to the Jews, our Saviour says: *It is your hour.* For every fresh reproach and outrage becomes a seed from which the precious flowers of patience and meekness spring up and cover every Christian land.

*F. They put a reed in His right hand, and bent their knees.*

*All things serve Thee, O Lord, and according to Thy ordinance the day goeth on.* All things co-operate unto good for those who love God, and who is there that loves God as His own Divine Son loves Him?

Let the music round the altar and the tabernacle be full and sweet and becoming, Holy Church says. Mark how becoming this ceremonial is, though men's malice intend it to be far otherwise.

*Kings are crowned. Conquerors are crowned. Victims are crowned.* As Jesus of Nazareth is a King—*Thou hast said it, I am a King*—by the soldiers He is crowned.

As He is this day conquering a power that no man has

ever till now conquered, therefore it is meet that He be crowned.

As He is the Victim, the Lamb of God that is to be slain on the altar, let Him be crowned.

G. *They platted a crown.*

The pagan crowns so much prized were made of things of no intrinsic worth, laurel leaves, or parsley, or ivy. Yet what coveted prizes they were!

And what diadem ever was so sacred and so loved and cherished as the crown made out of the thorns, with the curse upon them?

H. *They platted a crown of thorns.*

Conquerors had their trophies made out of the spoils of the enemy. So has our Saviour Jesus. For thorns signify the penalties of sin, and it is by conquering sin and its penalties that He wins His glory and His Name of Jesus—the Name above all names.

I. *They struck Him with the reed.—They bent their knees.—They said, Hail.*

“*Attendite. O vos omnes.*” All of us who belong to the household of the faith, priests and people who frequent God’s House, ought to stay longer, contemplating this mystery, in which things that are good and honourable and holy are all changed into unholy and blasphemous mockery. The bending of the knee, the sceptre, the royal robes, the greeting “Hail!” all become outrages as gross as the spitting in the face.

We are the only ones who can now sully, spoil, and desecrate the beauty of God’s House, and profane His sanctuary, and render *the table of the Lord contemptible*, by irreverence, by profane thoughts, by doing the work of God fraudulently.

J. *They bent their knees. They said, Hail!*

The Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist is the memorial of all God’s wonderful works. Above all it is a memorial of all the scenes of the Sacred Passion. *Recolitur memoria passionis ejus,*

At the holy Benediction service how truly are we reminded of this coronation! We enthrone once more our Blessed Saviour, we bend our knees, and we say, Hail.

“O Ever-Blessed Mother of God, show us the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Pray for us sinners, that we may discern the Body of the Lord, and know our Hidden God.”

Adoro te devote, latens Deitas.  
Fac me tibi magis credere,  
In te spem habere; te diligere.

Devoutly I adore Thee, Hidden God.  
I believe: do Thou increase my faith,  
Give me more hope in Thee.  
Give me more love for Thee.

*K. They bent their knees and adored Him. They did spit upon Him.*

*Weep for yourselves and for your children.* Here again we must call to mind how much more grievously our Blessed Saviour is afflicted by His own, who are false friends, neither hot nor cold, and ever ready to betray Him, than by avowed enemies.

These soldiers know Him not. To them He is only one of the despised and hated race; and a pretender to royalty and holiness.

They are heathens, strangers, and ignorant. We are His own; His familiars; *You I have called friends, because all things I have heard of My Father I have made known to you* (St. John xv.).

*If My enemy had reviled Me, I would verily have borne with it. And if he that hated Me had spoken great things against Me, I would perhaps have hidden Myself from him.* If open and avowed enemies of Christ rise up against the Blessed Eucharist, the result is that the altar is pulled down, and our Blessed Saviour retires and hides Himself from His enemies; *but thou a man of one mind, My guide, and My familiar, who didst take sweet meats together with Me, in the house of God we walked with consent* (Psalm liv.). “Thou, My trusted Priest, My confidant, My delegate, invested with My own power; thou who canst absolve in My Name, and I at once ratify in Heaven; thou who hast a power not given

to angels to pronounce, in My Name and in My Person, the almighty word of consecration, and I am at once subject to it; thou, man of one mind, who hast walked with Me in the house of God, hast stood at the altar carrying Me in thy hands, as My Holy Mother carried Me in Bethlehem; thou who hast been at My table with Me, to eat the sweet meats with Me; thou who hast been permitted to have as thy food My wounded Body, on which *the angels desire to look*; thou My Priest, My Vicar, My Proxy, My second Self, if thou turn against Me how can I hide Myself from thee?

“*Whither shall I go? If I ascend into Heaven, thy word can find Me there, and bring Me down upon the altar. If I descend into Hell to hide Myself, there thy power is present. If thou call, I must come. If I take My wings early in the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even so thy word shall reach Me, and bring Me back to the altar and the tabernacle. The Priest of the Most High God has spoken the word, This is My Body, this is My Blood, and the sacred mystery is accomplished. He spoke and they were made, He commanded and they were created (Psalm xxxii).*”

“Oh, let the heathen soldiers strike Me, and mock Me, and spit upon Me, but let not My enemies exult over Me and say, *Thy own Priests* and Thy own people have betrayed Thee, and abandoned Thee, and outraged Thee, *What hast Thou done?*”

“Ever-Blessed Mother, pray for us sinners; with all the power of thy omnipotent intercession plead for us, and say, O my Son, *may Thy Priests be clothed with justice.*”

“To be spit upon by Jews and heathens is indeed a great ignominy; but after I have boasted in the presence of the wicked spirits that if lifted from the earth, I will draw all to Myself, when I am left solitary in My Eucharistic prison, and neglected and loathed by My own, it is then that My Heart looks imploringly for some consolation and reparation from those who love Me.”

L. *They platted a crown of thorns, and put it on His Head, and stripping Him, they put a scarlet cloak about Him.*

*Go forth, ye daughters of Sion, and see your King in the diadem wherewith His Mother crowned Him in the day of her espousals, etc.* For this coronation is truly the work of the Synagogue—that is, of the ancient Jewish Church, which is His Mother. For He and Holy Mary have through life been most devout children of the Old Church. He is come on earth not to destroy it, but to perfect it. Most truly can He say from His Heart, and His Blessed Mother's Heart re-echoes every word: *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* (Psalm cxxxvi.). He is come not to set aside or destroy the old Priesthood, not to reject the Priests of the Old Church, but if they permit Him, to perfect their Priesthood. In Him all ancient types have their fulfilment, and the old shadows are changed into reality.

Of Aaron and the ancient Priesthood it is written: *In the priestly robe which he wore was the whole world, and Thy majesty, O God, was written in the diadem on his head. And to them the destroyer gave place* (Wisdom xviii.). Till to-day those words had only a very slight and partial fulfilment. It is on this scarlet mantle which Jesus wears to-day that the whole world, and the sins of the whole world, are inscribed. It is on His crown of thorns that Thy majesty, O God, and all Thy love, and all Thy wisdom, and all Thy infinite goodness, are engraven and represented. It is before His diadem and His sceptre that the destroyer gives place.

“We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee, because by Thy holy Crown and by Thy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.”

## SCENE III.

## ARCH OF THE ECCE HOMO.

The prophecy has now been fulfilled abundantly: *He shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon* (St. Luke xviii.). The Gentiles have surpassed the Jews in cruel and skilful mockery. Indeed, we may suppose that one reason why the Jewish Rulers handed Jesus over to the Gentiles was that they knew that Gentiles could be severe and cruel in a way which Jewish law did not permit.

Our Saviour has now suffered as Son of God, as Prophet, as King, and at the Pillar as a Man accused of crime but declared innocent; that is to say, as a man who has to pay a debt not his own. Then did *I pay what I took not away* (Psalm lxviii.).

The soldiers are content; and by this time the Priests and Ancients outside are growing very impatient and restless. Moreover, Jesus Himself has given a command that all be done quickly. Therefore Pilate sends orders that the prisoner be brought to him.

## STATION I.

*Jesus therefore came forth bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment* (St. John xix. 5).

Commentators take for granted that He also carried His mock sceptre.

We may, then, contemplate our Blessed Saviour led from the inner court, the barrack-yard, back into the great court in front of the Prætorium—the Lithostrotos; and thence up the sacred steps, the Scala Santa, to the hall or chamber where Pilate awaits Him.

“Help us, Blessed Mother, to see what you see, to hear what you hear, and to share your compassion.”

The chains and ropes and fetters are all readjusted; for the Priests and Ancients are as importunate as ever: *Lead Him carefully*; and the soldiers have to earn their bribes.

“*Attendite et videte.*” Watch our Blessed Lord as He is forced by the pitiless guards to mount the long flight of steps, sanctified ever since by His painful journeys up and down.

Hear Him panting for breath. Mark how His limbs, exhausted by loss of blood and extreme agony, fail Him; how often He stumbles, and needs to be dragged upwards by the guards.

His Sacred Heart, meanwhile, is ever soaring above His own pain and crying out: "OUR FATHER, *hallowed be Thy name*". He is praying in union with us. *Our Father*, Father of these fallen Priests. So must we pray with Him. *Our Father*, Father of Thy Son Jesus and of us.

Eia Mater fons amoris,  
Me sentire vim doloris  
Fac, ut tecum iugeam.

Mother, fount of charity,  
Share with me thy agony;  
Give me tears to weep with thee.

## STATION II.

### PILATE'S CHAMBER.

*Jesus therefore came forth bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment (v. 5).*

Pilate, when he sees Him enter, is content. His idea has been carried out, and beyond his expectations. He wished for a spectacle that ought to soften the hardest hearts and satisfy the vengeance of the most envious. He has his ideal: and more than he hoped for. What wonder! For in reality our Lord Himself is, we may say, the author and planner of all that has been done: *He was offered because He willed it*. He has been scourged because He willed it, and as He willed it; and crowned because He willed it, and as He willed it. And the thought ever upon His Heart is, *What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard, and have not done it?* (Isaias v.). So that His loving desire for wounds and bruises and swelling sores has gone beyond the cruel wishes of His enemies.

The restless and terrified soul of the Governor is satisfied. He can breathe more freely. His policy will win the day. Jesus may now certainly go free; and he and Herod can sup together pleasantly and end this trouble-

some day with a laugh. His oppressed spirit is much relieved. His step is lighter, as he walks towards the balcony to present Jesus to the people.

### STATION III.

*Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith to them: Behold I bring Him forth unto you, that you may know that I find no cause in Him (v. 4).*

There is, we are told, in the large paved court in front of the Prætorium, called the Lithostrotos, a tribunal, a raised seat, or throne, where the Governor often sits in judgment. But it is not from this chair that Pilate now addresses the people. The crowd has gradually grown larger and larger, and is now so great as to represent the whole people. The Lithostrotos is probably not large enough to contain them all. They are gathered in the large Forum, or public square, which lies immediately to the west of Fort Antonia and the Prætorium, and is separated from the Lithostrotos by a large gateway. According to some arcæologists (though others dissent from this view) the arch still standing in Jerusalem, known as the Arch of the Ecce Homo, formed a part of this gateway. And over the gateway, there was a balcony or loggia from which Pilate addressed the people.

Again, some diligent students of ancient topography, such as Adrichomius, tell us that there was a colonnade connecting the Fortress Antonia with the Governor's house, that on the top of this colonnade there was a terrace, or balcony—that this colonnade was called the Xystus; and that from the terrace, the Governor usually addressed the people. By other writers, however, we find the Xystus placed more to the south. According to them it was a bridge or viaduct thrown across the Tyropœon gorge, and connecting the Asmonean Palace with Mount Sion.

In either of these suppositions, then, whether he speaks from the gateway or the Xystus, Pilate does not now descend by the Scala Santa into the Lithostrotos, but walks along a terrace to the balcony. He is attended by his own body-guard; and the other soldiers follow, leading Jesus bound and chained. Pilate, therefore, arrives before our Lord, and full of confidence that he has now at last hit upon the right expedient, comes forward to speak blandly and cheerily to the crowd. He is very anxious to secure a favourable *plébiscite*, to back him against the implacable malice of the Priests and Ancients.

*A. Behold, I bring Him forth, that you may know that I find no cause in Him.*

First, then, we see how here again the Divine decrees

is executed without fail, and once more from the housetop the innocence of our Divine Lord is preached: *I find no cause in Him.*

The response of His chosen people ought to have been a loud and exulting Amen. Last Sunday's anthem ought to have burst forth again: *Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.* This is the response of all the Heavenly choirs of angels. And the Ever-Blessed Mother, too, in her heart replies: *My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Jesus.* "There is no cause, no cause at all in Him save that He loved us and delivered Himself for us; for me and for my children, to save us all from the tyranny of Lucifer."

*B. That you may know that I find no cause in Him.*

Alas! how great, how heinous, how appalling can the wickedness of weakness be! If, Judge, you find no cause in Him, why call for a *plébiscite*? Why transfer your duty to a lawless mob? Who is the ruler in Jerusalem? The Jews are crouching down to-day before Roman supremacy in a way they have never done till now; and yet you are degrading your office, and degrading Rome, by leaving it to the rabble to decide whether you shall condemn or acquit Him Whom you declare to be innocent.

*C. I find no cause in Him.*

Therefore, set Him free. Did you not say it publicly and solemnly, *I will chastise Him and let Him go*? What a contrast between the judge and the accused! If Christ speaks, we may rely on every word: *for the truth of the Lord remains for ever.* *Blessed art thou, Mother of God, that hast believed; because these things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord.* Not one jot, nor one tittle of His words shall pass until all be fulfilled. But, alas! of us it is written, *Every man is a liar!* We promise and we vow, *but Jesus did not trust Himself to men, for that He knew all men! . . . He knew what was in man* (St. John ii.).

Good reason had this most unhappy judge to ask, *What is truth?* For he is the slave of that master of whom

Jesus said: *Truth is not in him. When he speaketh a lie he speaketh of his own* (St. John viii.). And yet, surely, one who sits in judgment ought to know what truth is: *God is truth: and every man a liar.*

D. *I find no cause in Him.*

Oh, unhappy man! The recording angels register that word. What will you answer at the Judgment, when Jesus is compelled to say: *Wicked servant, out of thy own mouth I judge thee.* Thy own public proclamation is: *I find no cause in Him*, and yet no criminal has ever been sentenced and chastised as you have sentenced and chastised Him.

*Truly, it is good to confide in the Lord, rather than to confide in men! It is good to trust in the Lord, rather than to trust in princes* (Psalm cxvii.).

Were St. Paul present, with his impetuous heart, he well might exclaim: *God shall chastise thee, thou whited wall. For sittest thou to judge according to the law, and contrary to the law commandest Him to be mangled in this way?* (Acts xxiii.). Though all the while thou art proclaiming, *I find no cause in Him.*

E. *I find no cause in Him.*

Let us for a moment reflect on ourselves, as St. Ignatius directs. Even when I have done wrong, and there is abundant cause in me, yet if I am blamed and punished I often rebel; I cannot, I will not bear it.

But if I have not sinned; if I am wronged and calumniated, and the calumny is believed; and I am unjustly punished, who can soothe my anger? Who can speak to me of forgiveness?

And if, still worse, no calumny is believed at all, and I am declared quite innocent; but still heavily chastised, merely to please some powerful enemy of mine. Alas! what shall become of my soul under such temptation? Is there a just God in Heaven, I ask in my wrath, that tolerates such wickedness?

O merciful and compassionate Lord Jesus, one tear

from Thy eyes would most certainly have appeased the anger of Thy Father against our fallen race; but if we had not before us the whole of Thy Sacred Passion, all its cruel scenes, who could teach us to be meek, to be patient, and to forgive?

“Passion of Christ, strengthen us. Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, make us by Thy strong grace meek and humble like Thee.”

F. *I bring Him forth unto you, that you may know that I find no cause in Him.*

The people stand silent, watching for what shall come. There is a short pause of suspense.

#### STATION IV.

*Jesus came forth bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment. And he saith to them: Behold the Man (v. 5).*

A. *Jesus came forth.*

“*O vos omnes attendite.*” Oh, make a little leisure to see and to hear and to think in your heart.

For a moment all tongues are hushed. The people press forward to see this strange spectacle. Never before have they seen a man crowned with thorns. The scarlet mantle does not hide the ghastly wounds. Bruises and gashes and spittle and blood hide His features. His step is feeble; with difficulty He trails his legs forward. His flesh is quivering in the morning air: *A Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity* (Isaias liii.). For a little while the people stand gazing and stupefied. Pilate is elated. The effect is produced.

B. *Behold the Man!*—he says with complacency—the Man you all feared so much! the dangerous Man Who can stop the tribute to Cæsar! the great Leader of the people, Who is to drive out the Roman legions! the *King of the Jews!* The Romans understand how to deal with such characters. *Behold the Man!* For a little while there

is no response. "All is well," the Governor thinks within himself.

C. *Behold the Man!* John and Magdalen and others hear that word; but they do not need it. With all the earnestness of their souls they are looking, striving to recognise their Master. Alas! they cannot—*His look is hidden.*

To-night, when all is over, *when all things are quiet, and the night is in the midst of her course*, an eye-witness is being questioned by disciples who were not at the Prætorium: "How did the Master look? Was He still as we used to see Him: *The beautiful one in His robes, and walking in the greatness of His strength?*" "Alas! not so. His robe was not on Him. Nothing but a tattered soldier's mantle that did not cover Him. The wounds could all be seen. And in His footsteps there was no *strength* at all. He scarcely walked; the soldiers dragged Him to the front." "But was not His face still beautiful? Was there not that heavenly grace that used to draw us all?" "Oh, no; far from it. I was near and I saw Him: *His look was hidden.* I could not recognise Him at all. I heard them say it was Jesus, and I knew it must be our Master; but I could not distinguish one feature. His face was bruised and swollen and torn, and it was covered with spittle, and over the spittle were trickling down streams of blood from the thorns; and His eyes were half-closed and stopped up with blood, and His beard was filled with blood. *We saw Him, and there was no beauty in Him, nor comeliness* at all! No, we could see Him clearly, and *there was not even sightliness!* There was nothing left of that grace that used to charm us; nothing that *we could be desirous* of Him. Oh, His word came true: *You shall all be scandalised in Me!* For a time the thought was in my mind: After all, then, the Pharisees and the Priests may be right. Alas! is the Master an impostor? Our trust was shaken. For a time *we esteemed Him not.* It seemed clear in that hour, that not only were men against Him,

but He was become like a leper, and one struck by God; a man afflicted.

“It was only when I turned and looked at the Blessed Mother, and saw her pale face, her eyes fixed most devoutly upon Him, and her tears falling, and her lips moving in prayer, that I felt full of remorse for having thought so wrongly; and remembered that *He was wounded for our iniquities and bruised for our sins.*”

D. *Behold the Man!*

Here, let us not forget that the tears of our Blessed Lady are pleading for us, that the promised grace may be given to us. *I will pour out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of prayers, and they shall look on Me Whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for an only son; and they shall grieve for Him as the manner is to grieve for the death of the first-born* (Zach. xii.).

“O Blessed Mother, say to us still: *Behold the Man!* Behold my Son! Turn thine eyes of mercy towards us, and show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.”

E. *Behold the Man!*

Alas! we pray to her to show her Divine Son to us. But she is far more earnestly beseeching us to make leisure to look on her Son Jesus, Whom we have wounded; to look on Him till grace comes out from Him to move us to mourn over Him *as one mourneth for an only son.*

F. *Behold the Man!*

Even Pilate will witness against me if I will not stay a little while to look at this wounded Man.

G. *Behold the Man!*

And cease not to look on Him, till we can grieve heartily for our sins. *For the chastisement of our peace is upon Him.*

H. *Behold the Man!*

Look on Him till the bite of the fiery serpent is healed; till *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life* lose their great power.

I. *Behold the Man!* till from the morning watch even until night we can hope in the Lord.

J. *Behold the Man!* till the fire He came to cast on earth begins to burn in our hearts.

K. *Behold the Man!*

And when troubles grow, and we are tempted to lose patience, remember we *have not yet resisted unto blood* (Hebrews xii.).

L. *Behold the Man!*

And say: If Jesus paid this price for the poor sinner, how well it will one day fare with me if I help Him now to *seek and to save that which was lost!*

#### STATION V.

*When the Chief Priests, therefore, and the servants had seen Him, they cried out: Crucify Him! Crucify Him!* (v. 6).

*When the Chief Priests, therefore, and servants had seen Him.*

The people, as has been said, are standing silent. They are looking on Him Whom they have wounded. The spectacle is having its effect on them; *the wounds, bruises, and swelling sores, from the sole of the foot to the top of His Head; His whole Head sick, His whole Heart sad.* The spectacle is turning their hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. Moreover, a grace is going out into their hearts from the fountains of their Saviour; and the ever-compassionate Heart of their own Good Shepherd, Who still wishes to gather them, *even as the hen gathereth her chickens,* is saying to their souls: *My people, what have I done to thee? or in what have I afflicted thee?* (Micheas vi.). The Blessed Mother's Heart, too, is joined with her Divine Son's—prayer for prayer, sigh for sigh. *Why will you die, O house of Israel? return ye and live* (Ezech. xviii.). The Governor is well contented. His policy has succeeded.

But, once more, *the desire of the sinner shall perish.—It is the dream of them that awake, O Lord.* In a moment his bliss-

ful delusions are scattered, and for ever. *When they were lifted up, Thou hast cast them down* (Psalm lxxii.). There is a form of verdict in use among our lawgivers in this country: "Content, or, Not content". The enemies, the arch-enemies of Jesus, they, and they only, are not content. Jesus of Nazareth is chastised, but not dead. He is not crucified; and they begin to mutter their discontent to one another. Their leader, their precentor in this terrible hour of suffrage, first pronounces their verdict, *Crucify Him*. Instantly his followers and accomplices take courage and make the word heard: *Crucify Him*. But they are only a few voices among so many. But these Rulers have around them their wretched slaves, their servants without a soul of their own; and these degraded bondsmen, seeing the eyes of their masters upon them, at once chime in and cry: *Crucify Him*. The Princes of the Philistines said: *Our god, Dagon, hath delivered Samson into our hands: and the people seeing this, praised their god, AND SAID THE SAME* (Judges xvi.). Yet, still, it is only a feeble cry. It is not the response of the people. But it is quite sufficient to change the pleasant delusion of Pilate into despairing rage. *The wicked shall see and shall be angry. He shall gnash with his teeth and pine away* (Psalm cxi.).

*The wicked shall be angry.* He is angry, full of bitter anger and keen regret that long ago he did not send his troops to *mix the blood* of these relentless mischief-makers with the Paschal celebrations. *He shall pine away*. Yes, for all dignity, and manliness, and courage is gone from him. What wonder! The golden dream of this most weak and wicked time-server is scattered for ever. He made sure that he had found out the *modus vivendi*, as we say, the method of serving two masters, and making an adjustment, a concordat between light and darkness, Hell and Heaven. His last stratagem, the very last, is entirely baffled. *The wicked shall see and shall be angry. He shall gnash with his teeth and pine away*. He is full of wrath at being utterly foiled by the obstinate malice of the men he scorns and hates.

## STATION VI.

*Pilate saith to them : Take Him you and crucify Him, for I find no cause in Him (v. 6).*

The weak and unjust Judge is now carried away entirely by impotent anger. And, as St. James writes, *the anger of man worketh not the justice of God* (c. i.). Neither will Pilate's angry word satisfy the demands of those whom he has made his masters. Who can be satisfied with such a sentence? If he finds no cause in Him, by what right does he say: *Take Him you and crucify Him?* What does he gain by such a word? If they act on his permission, the murder will still be his act. He has sanctioned it.

But while he through vexation and hopelessness is losing all self-possession, his clever and determined adversaries are every moment through success growing in boldness and resolution. The Governor shall humble himself lower yet, much lower, in their presence: down to the very dust.

If they act on this hasty, passionate word of his anger and vexation: *Take Him you and crucify Him*: when he returns to his senses he will disown it, and maintain that the murder is their lawless act. Whereas their fixed determination is that they shall be able to maintain before the people that the judgment of death comes from him; so as hereafter to be able to say indignantly to the disciples: *You have a mind to bring the blood of this Man on us* (Acts v.).

What a spectacle of degradation! "To serve God is to reign," and those who will not serve God become the veriest slaves of men and Lucifer! The proud Representative of Imperial Rome is cowering down before the outcast race; and the degraded people of God are licking the dust to win over to their wicked will this heathen man. Of Moses it is written, that *he was a man exceedingly meek above all men that dwelt upon the earth* (Numbers xii.). Oh, for the

holy courage of the meek and humble of heart! Moses did not truckle to the people as this proud Roman Governor does. *O foolish and senseless people*, was his word to them; and he said it aloud—it was no secret whisper, or uncertain sound. *Hear, O ye heavens, the things I speak; let the earth give ear to the words of my mouth. . . . They have sinned against (God) and are none of His children in their filth. They are a wicked and perverse generation. . . . They are a nation without counsel and without wisdom. O that they would be wise and would provide for their last end!* (Deut. xxxii.).

Immeasurably more than the men whom Moses rebukes, these Rulers are now *without counsel and without wisdom*; and yet this Governor, representing the greatest Empire in the world, is cowed down before them; and they are equally degraded and servile before him. When the old father of the Machabees saw his countrymen ill-treated by the minion of a foreign tyrant, he struck down the oppressor and sounded the trumpet for war. What would have been the action of that true-hearted Israelite if he had seen his countryman, Jesus of Nazareth, the innocent and holy one of the Lord and the glory of Israel, covered with wounds by command of the foreign tyrant, and heard the word, *I find no cause in Him?* But these Chiefs and Rulers of God's people, these Priests to whom the Lord has said: *I have no pleasure in you*, in this hour not only tolerate all this oppressive and insulting tyranny, and unheard-of injustice, but humbly beg for more.

#### STATION VII.

*The Jews answered him: We have a law, and according to that law He ought to die: because He made Himself the Son of God (v. 7).*

A. *He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.*

Now for the first time they let out their secret before the Roman Judge.

If Pilate is terrified by them, so too Pilate's anger and fitfulness alarms them.

*I find no cause in Him.* The words sound like decision. He speaks as if resolved. Their obstinacy has baffled Pilate's plan, and now his wavering and fickle indecision has entirely spoiled their scheme. They have been contending all the morning that He is a malefactor. Now they are constrained to tell the truth. In their hopeless bewilderment, they let out their great secret.

The reason why *He ought to die*, and the only reason, is *because He made Himself the Son of God.*

Pilate entirely loses himself before their determination, and they also entirely lose themselves in presence of Pilate's inconstancy. *They have not called upon the Lord. There have they trembled for fear where there is no fear* (Psalm xiii.).

B. *He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.*

Of this Jesus of Nazareth, St. Paul writes that He is *Christ according to the flesh, Who is over all things, God blessed for ever.* Chained then and bound though He be, and apparently the Man without help, yet *the day goeth on according to (His) ordinance, and all things are serving His purpose.* Pilate's vacillation has compelled the Chief Priests and Ancients to publish here on the house-top what last night they only whispered among themselves, that the one crime of Jesus is that *He made Himself the Son of God.*

"O Holy Lord Jesus, *God over all things and blessed for ever, may Thy Kingdom come within us, may Thy will be done, and not ours.*"

The Blessed Mother, the Admirable Mother, is consoled and filled with a deep contentment when she hears this word drawn by God's over-ruling providence from the mouths of the enemies of her Son: *He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.*

It is the disciple whom Jesus loved, blessed St. John, who preserved for us these precious details omitted in the

other Gospels, through which we see how all things *work together unto good*, and make known the true reason why our Lord must die.

#### STATION VIII.

*When Pilate, therefore, had heard this saying, he feared the more (v. 8).*

A. Pilate has suddenly heard quite a new revelation. It is *because He made Himself the Son of God* that Jesus has been dragged before him. On false charges, then, on pretences utterly hollow, these men have induced a Roman Judge to perpetrate this unexampled act of injustice and cruelty. And lo! it is now publicly proclaimed before the whole people, and before all the strangers present in Jerusalem, that he, Pilate, has inflicted torments till now unheard-of on an innocent man, against whom there is no charge save this absurd Jewish one, that *He made Himself the Son of God*. These lying impostors have insulted, they have degraded the majesty and good name of Rome. If in his just indignation he now ordered them to be scourged, Roman justice and Roman pride would have fully ratified the award. Or if he chose to stand by the Jewish law, and enforce their Code against these false witnesses: *Thou shalt not pity him, but shall require life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot* (Exod. xxi.), wound for wound, lash for lash, he will be doing justice and probably great mercy also. For chastisement does often bring conversion, and suffering brings repentance.

B. *When Pilate heard this.*

At the very least, now that his eyes are opened, he will surely act at once, as his successor acted in after years: *If it were some matter of injustice or some heinous deed, O Jews, I would bear with you; but if there is nothing but a question of a word and names, and of your law, look ye to it. I will not be a judge of such things. And he drove them from the judgment-seat.* But this is not the effect wrought on this double-minded man, who is bent on serving two masters.

C. *When Pilate heard this he feared the more.*

*He feared the more. For wickedness is fearful, and a troubled conscience forecasteth grievous things (Wisdom xvii.). They have trembled with fear where there was no fear (Psalm xiii.).*

From time to time, this forenoon, Pilate has been greatly impressed by the meekness, the patience, the becoming dignity of this prisoner. That He is no malefactor is quite evident; but now for the first time he hears that He claims to be the Son of God. "How, then, if this be true? If He really be a Divine Man, or one of the gods come down from heaven to reform this earth, what will He do to avenge these lashes and this coronation? On the other hand, if He be only a vain boaster, and if I by setting Him free rouse the revengeful spirit of these determined Jews, what will they not allege against me?" The outcome of these reflections is that the weak, double-minded man, *feared the more.*

#### SCENE IV.

##### THE GOVERNOR'S APARTMENT.

##### STATION I.

*And he entered into the hall again, and he said to Jesus: Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave him no answer (St. John xix. 9).*

A. Contemplate the unhappy man, who came out of this chamber a few minutes ago so cheery and full of unblessed assurance, now going back along the terrace in sore perplexity; angry, downcast, and helplessly bewildered: *He that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried about by the wind (St. James i.).*

The Psalmist puts this question: *When the wicked have bent their bow, what has the just man done? The answer is: The Lord is in His Holy Temple; the Lord's throne is in Heaven. His eyes look on the poor man (Psalm x.).* That is, when a good man is in trouble and perplexity he lifts his heart

to the Lord in Heaven, and he cries out with King Josaphat : *O our God, as we know not what we ought to do, we can only turn our eyes to Thee* (2 Paral. xx.). But Pilate is one of those described in the Psalm : *Behold the man that made not God his helper, but trusted in the abundance of his riches and prevailed in his vanity* (Psalm li.). Of such it is written : *They have trembled for fear, where there is no fear* (Psalm xiii.).

B. *He entered into the hall again.*

And he gives orders that the prisoner be brought to him.

“*Attendite.*” Give heed ; for to Jesus each new journey is like a fresh and very severe sentence. To the *Man of Sorrows*—on Whose Body from the sole of the foot to the top of the Head there is no soundness ; nothing but wounds, bruises, swelling sores—every step, every touch from the rough hands of the soldiers, is a new and heavy chastisement. In spirit, His Blessed Mother is journeying with Him, and suffering, step by step : *Going they went and wept* ; sowing the heavenly seeds of the tree of life for us.

C. *He feared the more.*

Seated in his saloon, awaiting the prisoner, the words of his wife Claudia come back to him : *Have thou nothing to do with this just Man.* And lo ! this just Man, it turns out, claims to be the Son of God. Wo is me ! What have I done ? Lightning from heaven may strike me. *A sudden and unlooked-for fear is come upon him.*

“*In that hour, Lord Jesus, when the sign of the Son of Man shall appear in the heavens, and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, and men shall be withering away with fear, by Thy Sacred Passion and Death, deliver us.*”

D. *And he said to Jesus : Whence art Thou ?*

Alone with our Blessed Saviour and a few officials, he goes back to his old plan of parley, to see if he can find a straw to catch at.

But how has he the courage to look upon the face of Jesus, Whom he has wronged and tortured as no man ever has been wronged and tortured till now ? How does

he presume to put a question, or expect an answer? His proper place and attitude would be to lie on the ground, and cry out from a broken heart: *Miserere, parce, Domine—Have mercy, O Lord. Spare, O Lord—for against Thee only have I sinned, and I have done evil before Thee.*

Even so, we too at times forget our iniquities and wish to be familiar with God. *Show My people their wicked doings; for they desire to know My ways as a nation that hath not forsaken the judgment of God. They are willing to approach to God* (Isaias lviii.). Give me, Lord Jesus, *a contrite and humble heart, for such a heart Thou wilt not despise.*

E. *But Jesus gave him no answer.*

Alas! a great change has come on since the early morning. Much grace has been given this day to Pilate; and it has all been wasted and rejected. That friendly counsel of the Holy Spirit has been utterly neglected: *Add not sin upon sin* (Ecclus. v.). Oh! great reason has a sinner to fear, and to fear more and more, when God begins to be silent. *Jesus gave him no answer.*

“Correct me, O Lord, and chastise me in Thy mercy, and let me have the many stripes that are the sinner’s portion; but chastise me not in Thy wrath: *Thou hast seen, O Lord, all my iniquities; but be not Thou silent: O Lord, depart not from me*” (Psalm xxxiv.).

Why should our Lord answer? The question is irrelevant. What matters it, Judge, whence the prisoner comes? Your duty is clear; you *find no cause in Him*, therefore set Him free: beg humbly, most humbly, forgiveness for injustice perpetrated, and reckon with the false accusers. Why should Jesus answer? At the dawn of day He was saying to the Sanhedrim, when they questioned Him: *If I shall tell you, you will not believe Me. And if I shall also ask you, you will not answer Me, nor let Me go.* It is the same case now: *You will not believe: you will not let Me go.*

## STATION II.

*Pilate therefore saith to Him : Speakest Thou not to me ? Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and I have power to release Thee ? Jesus answered : Thou shouldst not have any power against Me unless it were given thee from above. Therefore he that delivered Me to thee hath the greater sin (vv. 10, 11).*

A. *Speakest Thou not to me ?*

According to human wisdom Pilate's reasoning is most powerful. Your life is in my hands, will you not answer me ? Will you by insult make me your enemy ? According to the wisdom of this world, Jesus is badly in want of friends ; and already to-day made a great mistake when He turned Herod against Him by His offensive silence ; and He is now repeating the fatal blunder.

Our Lord's meek defence would be : *What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter* (St. John xiii.). *My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways, saith the Lord* (Isaias lv.).

B. *Knowest Thou not that I have power to crucify Thee, and I have power to release Thee ?*

Pilate speaks a truth. He has all that power, but he does not see that he has the power only because Jesus entrusts it to him. *These things are hidden from thy eyes.*

"Take, O Lord, and receive all my liberty, and all my power ; Thou hast given all to me. To Thee I give all back. *May Thy Kingdom come. May Thy will be done : not mine.*"

C. *I have power to crucify Thee, and I have power to release Thee.*

We must reflect on our own case. Let us turn in spirit to look at our Hidden God in the tabernacle ; not great there and *exceedingly to be praised*, but "little and exceedingly to be loved". Come, "*Attendite et videte*". Give heed and see how wonderfully subject He is to each of us.

Which of us is there who cannot say: My Lord and my God, I *have power to crucify* Thee again, by sin and by cruel neglect: and I have power to set Thee free and console Thee?

Consider, too, how the littleness of Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist is only a visible picture of the littleness of the invisible God throughout His own creation.

*The earth He has given to the sons of men.* During my short day of stewardship, I am master here; and my own God makes Himself subject to me and depends on me.

I can give to Him, I can lend to Him of the things He has given to me; or I can refuse Him.

“O my God, my Creator, my Father, my King, my Redeemer, *May Thy Kingdom come. May Thy will be done.—Father, not as I will, but as Thou.*”

“Blessed Mother of God, pray for us sinners, that we may learn to say, according to thy spirit, to every messenger of God, and above all to thy Son Himself: *I am Thy servant and the son of Thy handmaid—be it done to me according to Thy word.*”

The ever-grateful Heart of our Saviour one day uttered this wonderful word: *Whoever shall do the will of My Father, he is My brother, My sister, and My mother.*

### STATION III.

*Jesus answered: Thou shouldst not have any power against Me unless it were given thee from above. Therefore he that delivered Me to thee hath the greater sin (v. 11).*

*A. Thou shouldst not have any power against Me unless it were given thee from above.*

*First, then: All power is from God (Romans xiii.). Therefore, whenever I exercise power of any kind, I ought to be God's faithful steward, acting in His name, and in humble subjection to Him.*

*Secondly.* Whenever I am exercising power over God's child, my neighbour, and still more over Jesus Christ,

the Eternal Son of God, I am bound to use my power with the very greatest reverence and tender care, with some share of that consideration and humble devotion wherewith St. Joseph used his authority over the Divine Child and the Blessed Mother.

But *thirdly*. Our Lord is teaching Pilate—what St. Peter afterwards teaches us—that *governors (are) sent by Him (God) for the punishment of evil-doers, and the praise of the good (1 St. Peter ii.)*; and as St. Paul teaches, *Princes are not a terror to the good work, but the evil (Romans xiii.)*. Consequently, *as a judge*, Pilate ought not to have any power but that power given by God, power to chastise wrong-doers. As, then, Jesus has violated no law, he ought not to have any power over Him. Therefore Caiphaz the High Priest, and Annas, and the Chief Priests and Ancients, who delivered Him up to the Romans, have *the greater sin*.

*B. He that delivered Me to thee hath the greater sin.*

Let us think of ourselves. If my neighbour is innocent, and I accuse him falsely, and thus bring trouble and chastisement upon him, I subject him to the power of those whom God did not intend to have power over him—therefore my sin is great.

Again, even if my neighbour has sinned secretly, this secret sin does not give the public a right from Heaven to sit in judgment on him. Therefore, if I reveal his secret sin to others and bring upon him condemnation and reproach, I am, like the Jews, handing my brother over to a tribunal to which God has given no authority over him: and my sin is great.

*C. Thou shouldst not have any power against Me.*

Men who lose all grace by neglecting prayer, and Holy Mass, and the sacraments, sometimes say oracularly that Christ's religion has done little or no good. But what do we learn from the scene before us? Can we imagine a Christian judge looking at Jesus, covered with wounds, and quite convinced that He is innocent, and yet never

giving an order that the terrible crown of thorns be taken off His Head, and that His wounds be dressed and bound up? Can we imagine a Christian judge bearing the spectacle of the mangled Body, with the full consciousness that this is all his own work, and that his victim is a perfectly innocent Man?

It is entirely our own fault if Christ's redemption be not plentiful. For, as St. Peter tells us, *we are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people; that (we) may declare His virtues Who hath called (us) out of darkness into His admirable light* (1 St. Peter ii.). By word and by deed we have to spread His Gospel and *His virtues*.

D. *He that delivered Me to thee hath the greater sin.*

From the forgiving Heart of our Lord a grace passes with these words into the stony heart of this worldly man, who has been the cause of so much pain and shame to Him. Pilate is once more roused to a sense of justice. Once more is set *before the judge life and death, good and evil; that which he shall choose shall be given to him* (Ecclus. xv.). It is the last struggle between grace and worldly selfishness, or selfish worldliness.

## SCENE V.

THE BALCONY.

STATION I.

*And from henceforth Pilate sought to release Him*  
(St. John xix. 12).

A. Pilate, then, has once more some better thoughts. A good seed is again cast into his soul, that it may be covered up and nurtured there and allowed to grow. A spark of life is come back. Oh, that it may be sheltered from the cold blast that will else extinguish it! The Governor ought to bar his doors and not allow his tempters to come near him. The bold daring of the Priests and Ancients unmans his weakness. In their *presence he is*

*brought to nought.* He fears the men who can damage his body and his position. His fear of God, Who *can cast body and soul into Hell*, is weak indeed. He ought to shut himself up in his chamber, as a sick man most feeble, and with only a spark of life within him which has to be most carefully nursed. In his state, as we are often taught, it is madness to run back into the occasions of sin. As we have seen, some holy Fathers think that Pilate was, in after years, converted. Certainly it is, even in this eleventh hour, the wish of the merciful Heart of Jesus, that he may *be converted and live.* He and St. Procla may yet spend their days in grieving and mourning over the sacred wounds, and there shall be joy in Heaven. O Pilate, *seek not to be made a judge unless thou have strength enough to extirpate iniquities, lest thou fear the person of the powerful, and lay a stumbling-block for thy integrity* (Ecclus. vii.).

B. *He sought to release Him.*

Alas! he does not set rightly to work. He goes out to parley once more with His stubborn adversaries, for whom he, weak man, is no match. The Evangelist writes that he *sought to release Him.* And, no doubt, Pilate makes some feeble efforts from the balcony. He says once more: *I find no cause in Him: I will let Him go,* and the like. But are these real sincere efforts to release Him? Who is Governor in Jerusalem? Who wields the supreme power? Who can speak the word that shall set Him free? Did not Pilate say a few minutes ago: *I have power to crucify Thee and I have power to release Thee?* If he wishes to release Jesus, he has only to say one word to his guards, and bid them disperse the gathering, and so remain quite safe in his chamber. Therefore clearly St. John's meaning is that he goes out on the balcony, and there once more utters some weak expostulations, *neither hot nor cold.* What chance has the spark of life within him of surviving the storm which a faint attempt is sure to rouse in the souls of his masters, the tyrants who are this day humbling him down to the

dust? For a brief moment, then, Pilate seems to be made strong, and resolved to *extirpate iniquities*, but the good seed has fallen on a very rocky soil, where there is no moisture; and when there ariseth tribulation and persecution he is presently scandalised.

## STATION II.

*But the Jews cried out saying: If thou release this Man, thou art not Cæsar's friend. For whoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar (v. 12).*

A. "Attendite"—Give heed, for we may learn a great lesson from the children of this world, *who are more prudent than the children of light*: more prudent, that is, more provident, more far-seeing; we may add, more persevering. A moment ago all seemed lost for the cause of Satan, and the spirits of darkness. But they do not give way to despair. They believe in the motto: "Where there is a will there is a way". They know they are dealing with a man made of dust, and easily blown about by the wind. They practise well in a bad cause the golden rule given to us for our spiritual warfare by the Holy Ghost: *Make not haste in the time of clouds.*

Why may we not rival their determination? Are they fighting for a better prize than ours? Which is the happier lot, to fight to win Christ Jesus, or to fight to lose Christ Jesus, and win an eternity with Lucifer? *The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence. Looking on Jesus—think diligently upon Him, that you be not wearied, fainting in your mind. For you have not resisted unto blood (Heb. xii.). He that shall persevere to the end, he shall be saved (St. Matt. x.).*

B. *If thou release this Man, thou art not Cæsar's friend.*

Under the inspiration of the prince of darkness, the Priests and Ancients persevere to the end; they do not faint in their mind. Their strong wills set their intellects in motion to discover some new kind of destructive shot or shaft, and beyond their expectation they have succeeded. They have hit the Roman Governor in the apple of his

eye, or rather in the core of his heart. For the only god whom Pilate worships is Tiberius Cæsar. To him Cæsar is the author of life and death. To be in disgrace with Cæsar is simply ruin, destruction, annihilation. Only a very short time is gone by since Sejanus, Cæsar's favourite, seemed to be the most powerful man in the universe. But in one day he is tried, by Cæsar's order, sentenced, and strangled. "A courier will be on his way to-morrow to tell Cæsar that contrary to the urgent advice of the Sanhedrim I released this would-be King. Never! this cannot be."

*C. If thou release this Man, thou art not Cæsar's friend.*

This cry, therefore, rises above all the conflicting elements in his soul, as a thunder-peal. He can hear no other sound. It is as if the bolt had struck him. He is lying prostrate, to rise no more. All struggle in his conscience is ended. He will never seek again to release Jesus. For with the whole energy of his being he fears to be reputed as no friend to Tiberius Cæsar. You may argue with him that God is above Cæsar, but what can argument avail? *For fear is nothing else but a yielding up of the succours from thought (Wisdom xvii.).* He fears with a great fear. *Thought cannot avail against this great scare.*

*They have not called on the name of the Lord. They have trembled with fear, where there was no fear (Psalm xiii.).*

And yet a maiden child like Agnes, strong in the grace and virtue that comes out to her from the fountains of her Saviour, can say, *I spoke, Lord Jesus, of Thy testimonies before kings and tyrants more cruel than Tiberius, and I was not ashamed (Psalm cxviii.).*

*D. Thou art not Cæsar's friend.*

"Give to Cæsar, Thou didst say, Lord Jesus, *what belongs to Cæsar.* This part of Thy word Pilate will do and overdo. He will give to Cæsar more, much more, than belongs to Cæsar; but to God he will give nothing. He will give to Cæsar his immortal soul, which is Thine, for it was created for Thee, and to-day Thou art buying it back again at a great price after it was lost."

All is ended. *He that wavereth, is like a wave carried about by the wind.* The mighty wind from Heaven (Acts ii.) has made itself felt for the last time. *The Spirit breatheth where He will*; so Jesus of Nazareth in time past said to one who to-day is watching here among the crowd. The holy spirit of discipline cares not to breathe any more into the soul of Cæsar's creature and Satan's slave.

E. *Thou art not Cæsar's friend.*

And so, the Jewish Rulers—who hate Rome with an undying hatred, and who will struggle against Rome till Jerusalem becomes a huge charnel-house filled with the putrid corpses of her dead—prevail in this hour against their own God, their own Jesus, their one true friend, their Messiah, the Glory of their people, by passing themselves off as Cæsar's worshippers, and calling to their aid the hated name of Tiberius.

*And yet I planted thee a chosen vineyard, all true seed: how then art thou turned unto Me into that which is good for nothing, O strange vineyard?* (Jerem. ii.).

“Blessed Mother of God, pray for us sinners, that we may not be led into temptation.”

## SCENE VI.

### THE LITHOSTROTOS.

#### STATION I.

*Now when Pilate had heard these words, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat in the place that is called Lithostrotos, and in Hebrew Gabbatha. And it was the Parasceve of the Pasch, about the sixth hour. And he saith to them, Behold your King* (St. John xix. 13, 14).

A. *He brought Jesus forth.*

The Governor's mind is now made up. He gives the signal to his officers to attend him, and he goes out prepared to deliver his judgment.

This time, therefore, he does not make towards the Xystus, or balcony whence he exhibited Jesus to the people, and afterwards made his feeble effort to release Him, but he goes down in state to the Tribunal which, as has been said, stands in the large court paved with red stones, the Lithostrotos or Gabbatha, and there in the chair of judgment he takes his seat.

*B. He brought Jesus forth.*

This, then, is our Blessed Lord's last journey down the Scala Santa. In some paintings He is represented as coming down the steps after condemnation. But from St. John's narrative it is clear that sentence is pronounced from the raised Tribunal in the Lithostrotos. And there is nothing to show that He ever again goes up the steps to the Prætorium.

*"Attendite."* We may stay a little while to contemplate our Blessed Saviour coming down for the last time. Last night in the Garden, as we read: *Jesus knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth to meet the multitude.* The words are as true now.

"You know well, most loving Redeemer, as You descend the steps, all the things that are to come upon You, and by one act of Your will You might escape all. You can mount up to Heaven; You can go down into the depths of the earth; You can *take wings and dwell in the uppermost part of the sea*; but Your fixed will is to come down to the Lithostrotos, there to deliver Yourself for me.

*"All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord; all ye wondrous works of His fortitude, of His courage, His love strong as death, bless the Lord.*

"O Mother of Mercy, show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, that we may love Him with a strong and courageous love."

*C. And it was the Parasceve of the Pasch, about the sixth hour.*

As the solemn and decisive moment is at hand, St. John once more recalls the day and the hour.

1. *It was the Parasceve of the Pasch.*

Literally, it was the Preparation of the Pasch. There has been much discussion about the meaning of this phrase.

At first sight we are inclined to say that the sense is: It was the preparation-day—the vigil—of the Pasch. If this were the sense, they think rightly who hold that this year the festival-day of the Pasch has been transferred from Friday to the Great Sabbath which immediately follows. But commentators, highly esteemed, such as the Jesuit Fathers Toletus and Barradius, and others also, contend that no such transfer has been made, and that, therefore, the words, *the Parasceve of the Pasch*, do not mean “the vigil or preparation-day of the Pasch”. According to them, this Good Friday, being the fifteenth day of the moon, by law must be, and actually is, *the festival-day of the Pasch*. But as it happens also to be *the Parasceve*, that is, the preparation-day, or vigil, or eve OF THE SABBATH, it therefore becomes the Parasceve of Paschal-time, the Parasceve, or vigil, that falls during the Azymes, or Paschal days. The Sabbath that occurs during these solemn days is called, *the Great Sabbath*. The Parasceve, or vigil, of this Great Sabbath is known as the Paschal Parasceve, or *Parasceve of the Pasch*.

I. How, then, it is asked, are the Priests and Ancients doing servile work on this day? We may answer (a) that the Law allows a little more laxity on this day than on the strict Sabbath. They may cook food to-day, but not on the Sabbath. (b) Besides, the Priests and Ancients are, our Lord has told us, eminently HYPOCRITES; *they strain out gnats, but swallow camels*. Scrupulous about lesser things, they sin heinously against all that is most holy. (c) Moreover, they do not think it servile work to persecute Jesus. *Whosoever killeth (Him) will think that he doth a service to God* (St. John xvi.).

II. Again it is asked: If this be the festival-day, and if the Pasch was eaten yesterday, why do the Rulers demur about entering the Judgment-hall, and give as their reason that they wish to eat the Pasch this evening? One answer may be that the word Pasch is used in different senses. Thus (a) the Paschal lamb is called the Pasch; (b) the seven days of Azymes are called the Pasch; (c) besides the Paschal lamb, other animals were to be immolated and eaten, such as oxen, lambs, kids, calves. They are all included under the name, the Pasch. It is expressly ordered that there is to be a celebration every day during the Azymes, like the first Paschal supper. These celebrations come under the name, the Pasch. (See Numbers xxviii. and 2 Paral. xxxv.) So that the Priests might correctly say that they had to eat the Pasch in the evening. As, moreover, they had been too busy yesterday with the arrest of our Lord to attend to the Pasch, they would easily satisfy their consciences that they can make up by eating the Paschal lamb to-night. If they gave themselves such a dispensation, this would be only one of their sins, and by no means the worst.

2. *About the sixth hour.*

These words also have caused difficulty. For (1) St. Mark, after narrating the arrival at Calvary, and other details of what took place there, writes: *It was the third hour, and they crucified Him.* Then (2) St. Luke writes: *It was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth.* And yet we have these words of St. John, that when Pilate takes his seat in the Lithostrotos, which must have been an hour, if not more, before the Crucifixion: *It was about the sixth hour.*

Some commentators find it so difficult to reconcile these passages, that they think there must be some error in the manuscripts. Others answer very justly that where there have been some errors of copyists, they have been detected by comparing old manuscripts, and corrected; therefore they do not accept this solution of the difficulty.

Another explanation offered is that at that period the night and the day were divided into watches, consisting each of three hours. Therefore, as with us it is usual to go on saying: It is eleven o'clock: until twelve o'clock comes; so when counting by watches the hour at which the watch begins is spoken of as continuing till the next watch begins; and so St. Mark may say: It is *the third hour*, until the watch which began at the third hour is completed, and the sixth hour comes to begin the next watch. This answer will be accepted more easily, if we observe that in our present way of reckoning there is this much more startling peculiarity, that when our clocks strike twelve the twelfth hour is really ended; and yet, in common parlance, we speak as if the eleventh hour is only then coming to a close.

Father Toletus (Cardinal), however, objects to this second explanation, because he thinks it cannot be proved that the *hours of the day* were divided into "watches," as the night hours were.

He suggests, however, a kindred explanation which will do as well. He notices that in the Acts of the Apostles we have times designated in two different ways. St. Peter says, on Pentecost Day: *It is but the third hour of the day.* Then, in the third chapter, we read: *Peter and John went up into the Temple at the ninth hour of prayer* (Acts iii.). As then we, in this country, have now our solar time and our railway time, so this very careful and learned commentator supposes that in Jerusalem they had their "civil time" and their "church time," or "prayer time"; and that for "prayer time" the day was divided into portions of three hours each, like the night watches (the *excubiæ*). According to this mode, then, of reckoning, the prayer hours might be the first hour, the third, the sixth, the ninth, and the sunset (or, as the Italians call it, the *Ave Maria*). Measuring in this way, the *third hour by prayer time* would go on till the *sixth* comes. If we accept this explanation, the texts which seem to be in conflict can be reconciled.

Pilate takes his place on the judgment-seat between ten and eleven o'clock. The Crucifixion is completed a little before noon. The darkness sets in very soon after, *at the sixth hour.*

*D. Pilate sat down in the judgment-hall. It was about the sixth hour.*

The Beloved Disciple, who wrote these words, also wrote elsewhere: *Jesus being wearied, sat on the well. It was about the sixth hour.* Beside the well, our Blessed Saviour sat down tired at the sixth hour; and now the Roman Governor at the sixth hour sits down tired out by the long struggle between the two masters whom he has wished to serve. A better man than Pilate, Darius the Mede, was at last tired out by the importunity of the leading men of his kingdom, and commanded Daniel to be cast into the lion's den. *He was very much grieved; and in behalf of Daniel he set his heart to deliver him: and even till sunset he laboured to save him;* but at last he yielded to the ceaseless demands of the princes and governors who were Daniel's jealous enemies. He, also, was too weak a judge, and *feared the person of the powerful, and laid a stumbling-block for his integrity.* But *as star differeth from star in glory,* so sin differs from sin in heinousness and malice. Darius the Mede seems holy when set beside the heartless, selfish, and most cruel weakness of Pilate. For Darius grieved sincerely over Daniel, and moreover had a strong persuasion that God would preserve from harm His faithful servant. The King said to Daniel: *Thy God, Whom thou always servest, He will deliver thee* (Daniel vi.).

Yes; two men sin in the same hour, and sin grievously—mortally, as we say. Yet to the all-seeing eye of God *sin differeth greatly from sin.* Peter sinned last night, and Judas sinned; but the results are as wide apart as Heaven is from Hell.

*E. It was about the sixth hour.*

And Pilate sits down weary, and entirely absorbed in the thought of his own weariness, and his own trouble.

No thought at all has he for the weariness of Jesus, Whom he scourged, and Who is standing now in agony, while he sits.

He is weary and tired out, and his mind is made up to struggle no more. He will set at nought one of the two masters, and adhere to the other. To Cæsar then most assuredly he will adhere. What else can he do? For Cæsar is his god. Jesus of Nazareth, therefore, he must set at nought. Justice is gone from him; compassion is dead; even that fear, *the beginning of wisdom*, which for a moment terrified him from proceeding against one *Who makes Himself the Son of God*—has all passed off. *The light of justice* has faded away. The voice of Claudia Procla is now only the voice of a foolish woman. Who is this Galilean when compared with Cæsar? *That which is feeble is nothing worth*. And, moreover, the Roman historian, Tacitus, has truly said: "It is in our nature to hate the man we have wronged". So that not only does Pilate now because he is weak condemn Jesus; but, moreover, he dislikes Him greatly because he has wronged Him greatly. He is a wicked debtor, who owes to Jesus a great debt of reparation which he has no mind to pay; and therefore he has an aversion for the creditor he has wronged.

As usual, then, where there is a will, the intellect finds out a way. "For, after all, is it not his duty to content this people? And here Priests and Rulers and people are unanimous. This Jesus, though but a foolish impostor and an idiot, yet has made Himself obnoxious to all. The Priests and leading men must have good reasons for their persistency against Him."

F. *He sat down in the judgment-seat and said: Behold your King.*

The Jews had cried out an angry threat: *Thou art not Cæsar's friend. For whoever maketh himself a king is not Cæsar's friend.* Here is Pilate's answer: *Behold your King!* It is the answer of his bitter scorn; but also the

answer of his fears. "This pleasant joke will propitiate the Rulers; they will see clearly that he has reduced Jesus to such a plight that neither they nor Cæsar can have much to fear from Him now."

G. *Behold your King.*

St. Helen found the Holy Cross buried deep in filth and refuse, and the statue of Venus planted above it. The Ever-Blessed Mother, if she might speak to us when our Blessed Saviour is dethroned and dishonoured in our souls, and buried away under the things of this earth, would say to us in sorrow: "*Behold your King!* Before it is too late, restore my Divine Son to His proper place in your heart. Cry out: 'My Lord and my God, may *Thy Kingdom come*'."

STATION II.

*But they cried out: Away with Him, Away with Him, Crucify Him!* (v. 15).

A. *Away with Him, Crucify Him!*

"*Attendite.*" Give heed for a little while. Listen to this terrible cry. Observe that it contains two parts: (1) *Away with Him!* (2) *Crucify Him!*

For, when we give ourselves to sin, at first we reject God; we turn away to worship some creature—*Away with Him!*

Then in time God becomes a hated enemy, *a censurer of our thoughts, grievous unto us to behold.* Malice sets in, and we cry: *Crucify Him.*

B. *Crucify Him.*

As if Jesus had not endured enough already! We can understand from this day's work of hatred how Lucifer's malice still to this day goes on, planning fresh dishonour to God and to His Christ, and more ruin to men.

"O Blessed Mother of God, pray for us sinners, that we may not die in grievous sin and be given up to everlasting malice, and to companionship with the enemies of thy Son."

**C. Crucify Him.**

If His enemies so earnestly wish for Him more sorrow, more shame, more pain, shall we grow tired of wishing more and more ardently: *To Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction, and honour, and glory, and power, for ever and ever?* (Apoc. v.).

*Their* cruel wishes for Him bring to themselves *weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth* for ever.

*Our* loving wishes for Him will secure for us His eternal gratitude and everlasting love.

**STATION III.**

*Pilate said to them: What shall I do then with Jesus that is called Christ? Shall I crucify your King? The Chief Priests answered: We have no King but Cæsar* (St. Matt. xxvii.; St. John xix.).

**A. Shall I crucify your King?**

We have seen how, afterwards, the Jews repudiate with great wrath the charge that they shed the Blood of Jesus. *You have a mind to bring the blood of this Man upon us* (Acts v.). What shall they be able to answer at the Judgment when the recording angels testify how they browbeat and overawe this weak judge; and then, too, by word and example lead on the foolish people like sheep, to reject Him and to demand a cruel death for their Lord? *Away with Him! Crucify Him!* The Death of the Lord is far more the work of their strong wills than of Pilate's weak will.

**B. Shall I crucify your King?**

Pilate asks in derision: *Shall I crucify your King?* Is the King of the great Jewish people—who have made such a fight for their independence, whose daily prayer is to be free from the yoke—is their King to be crucified?

But unconsciously he is, with all things else *working together unto good*. He is making it more and more clear that the rejection and ruin of the people of God is

their own work. They cast off Jesus thoroughly and entirely, before He becomes their ruin. *Destruction is from thyself, O Israel.*

C. *Shall I crucify your King?*

Pilate, without knowing the force of his own words, is teaching a great lesson: that the people are dishonoured and degraded, when their King is dishonoured and degraded. Do you really consent, are you willing, can you be willing that your own King be crucified? The King is the Father of His people. *Shall I crucify your own King, your own Father? Glory not in the dishonour of thy father, for his shame is no glory to thee. For the glory of a man is from the honour of his father; and a father without honour is the disgrace of his son* (Ecclus. iii.).

For our own sakes, out of love and regard for ourselves, we ought to cry out earnestly: "O Lord Jesus, may *Thy Kingdom come*". *Benediction to the Lamb, and honour, and glory, and power, for ever and ever* (Apoc. v.).

For if there be glory for Him, there will be praise and glory for us. If it fares well with Him, it fares well with us. He is our Head, we His members. His well-being is ours.

So is it, too, with His Holy Church and with our neighbours. If His Church is made to suffer, we suffer. If His Church is oppressed and not allowed to do her work, the look-out for us is bad.

And so again, if my neighbour is scandalised and sins, does it not concern me? Is he not a limb of the body to which I belong? *Did not He that made me in the womb make him also?* (Job xxxi.). Can I isolate myself from my brethren, and affect to say with Cain: *Am I my brother's keeper?* St. Paul understood better the work done by the Incarnation, by the Redemption, and by the Blessed Eucharist, and through the Maternity of Holy Mary: that we are all now members of His body, of His *flesh, and of His bone* (Ephes. v.). Is it wonderful that he exclaims: *Who is weak and I am not weak?* Is it a prodigy if one limb feels for another? The hour will come when

we shall all see that the prodigy, the man to be wondered at, and to be pitied beyond measure, is the redeemed man who cannot feel for his brother ransomed, like himself, by the Blood of Jesus. For *no man hateth his own flesh, but nourisheth it and cherisheth it* (Ephes. v.).

D. *The Chief Priests answered : We have no King but Cæsar.*

*The Chief Priests answered.* Here once more we see that terrible truth that a large proportion of men perish through human respect. The Chief Priests are few, but the many slavishly follow them. And this shows us what a responsibility rests on each of us ; and also what a glorious position we can secure for ourselves if we will. For God has so arranged that we cannot fail to influence others for good or for evil. We can each, if we will, become a leader, to guide and help others to their eternal home. We can each be a mediator, a go-between, a Jesus, to bring about reconciliation between our God and our neighbour. The first disciples were few, but they became a leaven that leavened many : the *salt of the earth, the light of the world*. Every good man's holiness is by a most merciful dispensation contagious, and cannot fail to spread grace and salvation.

E. *The Chief Priests answered : We have no King but Cæsar.*

This is the public solemn profession of the Chief Priests ; but they are the rejected Priests, to whom the Lord has said : *I have no pleasure in you. I will not accept a gift from your hand* (Malach. i.). *Hear ye this, O Priests, and hearken, and give ear, O house of the King, for there is a judgment against you ; because you have been a snare to them whom you should have watched over, and a net spread upon Thabor* (Osee v.). The bad influence of these Priests is like a snare and a net set for the souls of the people, and set too on Mount Thabor, that is, in God's holy places.

F. *We have no King but Cæsar.*

*How is the gold become dim ? the finest colour is changed* (Lament. iv.).

This is the very anniversary-day of the deliverance of Israel out of slavery and bondage, and from the tyranny of a king. To-day the Chief Priests ought to be heading a procession of the people to crowd round Jesus their Deliverer. The drops of blood that are trickling down His face are the drops that were on the door-posts, and saved them when the destroying angel passed by. To-day, and at this hour, and here on this spot beside the holy Temple, these Chief Priests ought to be leading the Song of Joy, and all the people taking it up: "*In exitu Israel de Ægypto*"—*When Israel went out of Egypt, Judea was made His sanctuary; Israel His dominion—The mountains skipped like rams, and the hills like the lambs of His flock* (Psalm cxiii.).

Alas! *How is the gold become dim?* These Priests have been *sitting on the Chair of Moses*, and it is written of them: *Thou shalt come to the Priests of the Levitical race, and thou shalt ask of them, and they shall show you the truth: and thou shalt do whatsoever they shall say. Neither shalt thou decline to the right hand nor the left* (Deut. xvii.). Good cause had the meek Lamb of God to say to them three days ago: *Wo to you, Scribes and Pharisees, for you shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men.*

The story of the people of God has been one continual struggle for their independence. If ever there was a heart-stirring national elegy, or funeral song, over departed liberty, we have it in the Lament of Jeremias: *Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us. Our inheritance is turned to aliens, our houses to strangers. We have drunk our water for money: we have bought our wood: we were dragged by the necks. We were weary, and no rest was given to us. Servants have ruled over us; there was none to redeem us out of their hand. We fetched our bread at the peril of our lives; our skin was burnt as an oven, by reason of the violence of the famine. The joy of our hearts is ceased; the crown is fallen from our heads* (Lament. iv.).

Yet here in this city of God, and on this day of grace,

these unholy and perverted and degraded Priests publicly proclaim their entire adherence to slavery and tyranny, and their rejection of their Redeemer. "Away with Jesus!" *We have no King but Cæsar.*

*I call, Moses is saying with a prophetic voice, I call Heaven and earth to witness this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing. Choose therefore life (Deut. xxx.)*

But wo! wo! they loved cursing, and it shall be given to (them); (they) would not have a blessing, and it shall be far from (them) (Psalm cviii.).

Neither Pharaoh of Egypt, nor the Philistine, nor the Assyrian, nor the *wicked root* sprung from Greece, Antiochus, nor any other tyrant of the past, has ever been to the people of God such a scourge as Cæsar soon shall be. Him the Priests solemnly elect to-day; and the slavish people answer: "So be it, so be it". *All we like sheep have gone astray—Thy destruction is from thyself, O Israel.*

Cæsar you have chosen, Cæsar will come to you, and will not delay.

*A people, with their leader that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary, and the end thereof shall be waste; and after the end of the war the appointed desolation; and the desolation shall continue even to the consummation and the end (Daniel ix.).*

*When the wicked shall be in rule, the people shall mourn (Prov. xxix.).*

G. *We have no King but Cæsar.*

"Attendite." For we must also turn back on our own past history. "I will think over for Thee, O Lord my God, my years, in the bitterness of my soul, and grieve over those miserable hours when I rejected Thee, and set up self in Thy place; and the princes of darkness in Thy stead. *We have sinned, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly, and have revolted. We have gone aside from Thy commandments and Thy judgments. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face. But to Thee, the Lord our God,*

*mercy and forgiveness, for we have departed from Thee "* (Daniel ix.).

H. *What shall I do with Jesus, Who is called the Christ?*

If I have chosen a creature and sinned, then this question always has to be settled: *What shall I do with Jesus?* There is no alternative: I have contemned Him, and cast Him away; for I cannot *serve two masters*. To us *confusion of face*. But to Thee, the Lord our God, *mercy and forgiveness*.

#### STATION IV.

*And Pilate seeing that he prevailed nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, taking water washed his hands before the people, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just Man: look you to it* (St. Matt. xxvii. 24).

A. *Pilate taking water washed his hands before the people*.

Contemplate the scene: his pages coming forward in their rich livery, with the salver and the ewer of gold or silver, and the perfumed water. How obsequiously they bend their knees and wait on him, and pour the water and offer him the embroidered napkin. All this to establish his innocence! because he only yields to compulsion!

St. Ignatius describes a class of men who will not do the one thing that God wants, but will substitute many other things of their own devising, which God does not want.

Pilate will not do the one thing necessary: he will not judge justly; but he thinks it very important to wash his hands *before the people*, and to renew his protest: *I find no cause in Him. I am innocent*.

We know the mind of our God concerning this kind of service: *When you came to appear before Me, who required these things at your hands? My soul hateth your new moons and your solemnities. When you stretch forth your hands, I will turn away My eyes from you, for your hands are full of blood* (Isaias i.).

B. *Pilate washed his hands*.

Has he perchance heard of the rite prescribed in the law of Moses?

*When there shall be found in the land the corpse of a man slain, and it is not known who is guilty of the murder, the Ancients of the city shall come to the person slain, and shall wash their hands, and shall say : Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it (Deut. xxi.).* Wherever he has learned this practice, it will not avail. His affidavit is false.

*C. He washes his hands before the people.*

He is anxious to be acquitted *by the people*; he cares not to be held guiltless by God. What is the result? The people do not acquit him; God does not forgive him. The Rulers whom he seeks to please are the men most eager to publish that he put Jesus to death. They by no means admit that he is guiltless. In this case, the voice of the people is the voice of God. Pilate washes his hands in vain; he is not innocent of the blood of this just Man. "Better far to wash our secret souls, not before the people, but in Thy presence, O God. I will not presume to *wash my hands among the innocent*, until I shall have first cried out again and again to Thee, my Lord and my God, *Wash me yet more from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.* For, most firmly I believe, my merciful Saviour, the truth of Thy word: *Unless I wash thee, thou shalt have no part with Me.*"

*D. I am innocent of the blood of this just Man.*

"*Attendite.*" Observe to what a fearful extent we can delude our consciences. We see the mote in our brother's eye, yet not the beam in our own (St. Matt. vii.). Pilate considers the Priests guilty of a wicked murder, but himself quite innocent; because *they* have insisted, whereas *he* has only yielded to their malicious will. And, doubtless, their persevering envy and malice and resistance to light is much more criminal even than Pilate's most wicked and unjust weakness. But, on the other hand, his wicked weakness has added to the shame and pain and agony of our Blessed Lord much, very much, besides what the Priests and Rulers had devised.

They had not planned the procession through the

streets in a fool's garment. This is the work of Pilate's wicked weakness.

They had not asked for the competition with Barabbas. This comes of Pilate's wicked weakness.

They had not planned the scourging. It was the wicked weakness of the Governor that said, *I will scourge Him and let Him go.*

They never hoped for a crown of thorns. This barbarity is altogether the outcome of Pilate's wicked weakness.

The Ecce Homo and the appalling cry: *Crucify Him*, was not in their programme. Pilate's wicked weakness has the credit of all this.

Add, too, all the extreme suffering endured by our Lord while being dragged to and fro; up the steps and down the steps, and from tribunal to tribunal—and we shall have some idea of the dark night that can be spread over conscience, seeing how, after all this, Pilate can say solemnly and publicly, *I am innocent.*

“Chastise us not, O Lord, in Thy wrath. Do not say to the Angel of Thy justice, *Blind the heart of this people.*”

Who will say after contemplating Pilate's work that sins of weakness can only be venial sins?

E. *I am innocent, look ye to it.* He sees their guilt, and congratulates himself that he is not like them. With good reason he warns them to *look to it.* But how much easier it is to preach to others than to practise! If he would hearken, Jesus would say to him, “*Physician, cure thyself* (St. Luke iv.). Pilate, be wise; do first thyself what thou teachest: *look thou to it.*”

#### STATION V.

*And the whole people answering, said: His blood be upon us and upon our children (v. 25).*

A. *And the whole people answering, said.*

*All we like sheep have gone astray.* Human respect has at length done its work. St. John, who not only reveals in such full light the Divinity of our Lord, but also gives

many omitted details, and makes some obscurities clear, points out how each new crime begins with the Priests and then spreads to the servants, and thence at last to all the people.

*The Chief Priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.*

*The Chief Priests and the servants cried out, Crucify Him.* Then the people blindly follow the wicked Priests rather than their God.

So, too, Pilate bows down before the will of the wicked Priests rather than do his duty to God.

The Priests themselves choose to worship Cæsar rather than God.

They all ignore the word: *He that feareth man shall quickly fall. He that trusteth in the Lord shall be set on high* (Prov. xxix.). These thoughts were not the thoughts of that faithful Israelite, Mathathias, the father of Judas Machabeus and his brethren who delivered Israel from the tyranny of Antiochus. *God be merciful to us*—this was his thought—it is not profitable to us to forsake the law and the justices of God.—*Fear not the words of a sinful man. For his glory is dung and worms. To-day he is lifted up; and to-morrow he shall not be found; because he is returned into his earth: and his thought is come to nothing. You therefore, my sons, take courage: and behave manfully in the law: for by it you shall be glorious* (1 Mach. ii.).

*Behave manfully in the law; by it you shall be glorious.*

If to-day they would follow this holy counsel and *behave manfully in the law*, Pilate would now be glorious; the Priests and Ancients would be glorious; the people of God would be glorious. But alas, Jerusalem! Alas, Pilate! *These things were hidden from thy eyes!*

B. *His blood be upon us and upon our children.*

*"O vos omnes, attendite."* All you who go by, give heed, listen and learn. For, *What is it that hath been? The same that shall be.* Mark well, what a terrible supremacy is allowed to the free-will of man. *God made man from the beginning and left him in the hand of his own counsel. He*

*added His commandments and precepts.* That is, God creates us; makes over this earth to our keeping: gives us our free-will; then advises us, and gives us His commandments and precepts, and teaches us most carefully; and hears us most gladly every time we call on Him for guidance and for help; but still leaves our free-will in its full power: *He left him in the hands of his own counsel—He hath set water and fire before thee: stretch forth thy hand to which thou wilt. Before men is life and death; good and evil; that which he shall choose shall be given him* (Ecclus. xv.). Therefore, we must not wash our hands and lay the blame of our sin on God: *For He hath commanded no man to do wickedly: and He hath given no man leave to sin. For He desireth not a multitude of faithless and unprofitable children* (Ecclus. xv.). For reasons infinitely wise, He allows us our free-will; but by counsel, by command, by abundant teaching, by the most persuasive example of Jesus and His Blessed Mother, He leads us on to use our power rightly; but still, according to His covenant, *leaves (man) in the hands of his own counsel.*

*C. His blood be upon us and upon our children.*

That cry seems to be but a word, a passing word; yet see how the *plébiscite* endures. The Jews to the present day have never revoked that word of their fathers. We understand, as we look upon their fixity of purpose, how sin can be everlasting in the world to come; and how it is that the malice of the fallen angels lives on through all ages.

*D. His blood be upon us and upon our children.*

When our Lady shall stand to-day on Calvary by the Rood, doubtless some drops of the most precious Blood will fall upon her; and in her Mother's heart she will pray—oh, so earnestly—in a better sense: “My Son and my God, may Thy Blood be upon me and my children”.

“Blessed Mother, include *us* sinners in thy prayer: pray for *us* sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.”

E. *His blood be upon us.*

“Blood of Christ, inebriate us.” His Sacred Body is to feed us as our bread and our meat. His Precious Blood is to cheer us, and inebriate us as a heavenly wine. Full of this most blessed wine, not of this world, the faithful disciples of Jesus and His Blessed Mother are not mere slaves who serve God in fear. They are cheerful and joyous givers who have drunk, Lord Jesus, *of the torrent of Thy pleasure* (Psalm xxxv.). *Be not drunk with wine—but be ye filled with the Holy Spirit: speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles: singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord* (Ephes. v.).

F. *His blood be upon us and upon our children.*

We have seen how, a month or two later, they affect to ignore to-day’s work, and say with anger to the Apostles: *You have a mind to bring the blood of this Man upon us* (Acts v.).

And yet what can be more thorough than their rejection of Christ Jesus, and their determination that He shall die; and die by the most cruel form of death then known to men?

*Not this Man, but Barabbas! Away with this Man, and release unto us Barabbas.*

*What shall I do then with Jesus that is called Christ? Let Him be crucified.*

*Why what evil hath He done? Let Him be crucified.*

*I will chastise Him and let Him go. Crucify Him, crucify Him.*

*Behold the Man! Crucify Him, crucify Him.*

*Behold your King! Away with Him, away with Him: crucify Him.*

*Shall I crucify your King? We have no King but Cæsar.*

*I am innocent of the blood of this just Man. His blood be upon us and upon our children.*

“Attendite.” We may try, as well as we can, to form some notion of the grief our Lord has in His Heart while He listens to this solemn and final decree against Him.

Even His own Blessed Mother cannot mourn over the death of her only Son as He mourns over the loss of His people. We may dwell on every word of His lamentation, and try to believe firmly that there is not in it one word that is unreal: *My people, what have I done to you? Yet I planted thee a chosen vineyard.—Return, O ye revolting children, saith the Lord, for I am your husband* (Jerem. iii.). *To what shall I liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem, that I may comfort thee! Great as the sea is thy destruction. Who shall heal thee?* (Lament. ii.). To His loving Heart, this loss of His people is *great as the sea*. Who shall heal the wound? As God become Man, as a Son of Abraham, of David, and of Holy Mary, He loves His own people infinitely more than Moses loved, when he besought for them: *Either forgive them this trespass, or if Thou do not, strike me out of the book of life* (Exodus xxxii.).

Infinitely, too, more than St. Paul when he declared: *I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren, who are my kinsmen according to the flesh* (Romans ix.).

The Jews had an exceptionally strong love for Jerusalem and their native land; and the more faithful they were to God, the more intense was this love of their land of promise. What can go beyond the Psalmist's passionate exclamation: *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand be forgotten. Let my tongue cleave to my jaws, if I make not Jerusalem the beginning of my joy* (Psalm cxxxvi.). In ardent love for Jerusalem and His chosen people, our Blessed Lord goes infinitely beyond all others.

Not because he forgets Jerusalem, but because He cannot forget her (even if the mother should forget her infant). And because He loves His Holy City above all measure, His own right hand shall to-day *be forgotten*; utterly forgotten, ignored, sacrificed, robbed of all its strength, and nailed to the Cross.

Not because He has ceased to *remember* Jerusalem, but because He does *remember*, and cannot forget, and because Jerusalem is *the beginning of His joy*, His tongue *shall cleave*

to His jaws—thirsty, and dried, and parched, and cold in death.

Fac cor amans Jesu mei, O burning Heart, O Jesu mine,  
Fac ut nos amemus Te. Oh, make me love with love like Thine.

“O Blessed Mother! turn thine eyes of mercy towards us, and show us the loving Heart of thy Son Jesus.”

#### STATION VI.

*Then therefore he delivered Him to them to be crucified*  
(St. John xix.).

*Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.—Jesus*  
*he delivered up to their will* (St. Luke xxiii.).

St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke seem to indicate, as has been already said, that the sentence was pronounced before the scourging; but St. John, writing later, teaches us how to interpret these words.

*Pilate gave sentence.*

The question is raised whether he gave his judgment in writing or only by word of mouth.

Some writers hold that he wrote the sentence, and that this was the usual practice. We know that he wrote the inscription stating the cause of His death: *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*. Adrichomius, the mediæval traveller so often cited by learned commentators, gives one text of the sentence supposed to have been written by Pilate, but it is considered to be spurious. A pillar is pointed out in Jerusalem, in the *Via dolorosa*, which is called the Pillar of the Sentence: because, it is said, the sentence was, according to custom, affixed to it, but writers who have studied the subject tell us that this tradition does not date far back.

A. *Jesus he delivered up to their will.*

We must reflect upon our own story. *What is it that hath been done? The same that shall be done.* The scenes in Jerusalem of to-day are, we may say, stereotyped, so easily and so continually are they reproduced.

Jesus is delivered up to our will in the Blessed Sacrament; and moreover, everywhere, and at all times, from morning till night, and from sunset to sunrise, our invisible God is in many ways subjected to our will. What wonder our Lord has left us that golden prayer to be used continu-

ally: *Our Father, may Thy will be done. Thy will, not mine, my God, my Creator, my Father, my King, my Lord, my loving Redeemer.*

B. *Jesus he delivered up to their will.*

But, our Blessed Saviour cannot complain: *What shall He answer, whereas He Himself hath done it?* It is His own wish to be delivered up to the will of men; His loving desire is that they by treating Him well during their little day of power shall give Him a good plea for treating them for ever in Heaven with infinite love, such as eye hath never seen, nor heart conceived.

*May the glory of the Lord endure for ever. The Lord shall rejoice in all His works. I will sing to the Lord as long as I live (Psalm ciii.).*

C. *Jesus he delivered up to their will.*

When Holy Mary gave up her Child Jesus in His Infancy to the keeping of St. Joseph, or into the arms of Holy Simeon, or of some one of her kindred, she knew they would not harm Him. She ought by rights to be able to feel more sure of us now, when He is delivered up to our will. For (1) never has He done anything since then to deserve hard usage from us, and (2) much has He done since then to deserve kind treatment from us.

1. "*Quid enim mali fecit?*"—*What harm hath He done?* This was Pilate's question. There is not in creation a witness to tell of even one that He has harmed. *The bruised reed He shall not break.* This is His short story.

2. But, on the other hand, *many good works*, good works without number He has shown to us, which ought to win us. *He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil.* This is His record during all time past.

And then, if you ask those who have lived with Him, what do they say of Him? Of His character they say: He was ever *gracious, merciful, patient, of much compassion and easy to forgive evil.* They tell that He was *mEEK and humble of Heart*; and so entirely unselfish that because He loved

His brethren *He betrayed Himself*, and sacrificed Himself for them.

And when He spoke, they tell us, *never did man speak as this Man*. His *conversation* (had) *no bitterness nor His company any tediousness*; but *joy and gladness* (Wisdom viii.). The people quite forgot their hunger and thirst while hanging on His words.

And as for His appearance, He is *beautiful above the sons of men*.

And when His Holy Mother is by His side, you would say, that even for her sake men would pardon Him, even if He had offended grievously, so full of grace is she, inwardly and outwardly. Why, then, should men ill-use Him, when He is delivered up to their will? Alas, wo is me! *The serpent deceived me!* It was Satan that induced me to believe that Jesus is the *austere Man* grievous to behold, *the Censurer of my thoughts*.

It was the father of lies persuaded me to say in my heart, *Away with Him!*

“Ever-Blessed Mother, show us the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.”

“Lord Jesus, may Thy name be hallowed; may Thy Kingdom come.”

D. *Pilate gave sentence.*

He never had opened his lips to give that sentence had he allowed Jesus to teach him that truth: *With what measure you mete it shall be measured to you*. If he do not by repentance undo to-day's work, he has spoken his own doom. He, too, will be given over to the will of his enemies; enemies more terrible than these malicious Jews.

E. *Pilate gave sentence.*

Some writers tell us that Pilate tried to pronounce the name of Jesus, but could not. This is against St. Matthew, xxiii. 22—*What shall I do with Jesus that is called Christ?*

“O Lord Jesus, may Thy name be hallowed in our hearts.”

SCENE VII.

DEPARTURE FROM THE LITHOSTROTOS.

STATION I.

*Then therefore he delivered Him to them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led Him forth (St. John xix. 16).*

A. *To be crucified.*

The Priests and Ancients have gained their point. He is *to be crucified*. He *has been* scourged ; now He *is to be* crucified. As a chastisement for those not doomed to death, scourging is the most terrible. As a form of death nothing so appalling as crucifixion. Students tell us that when criminals were hanging on their crosses with their feet not much raised from the ground, the wolves and jackals used to come and tear out their bowels : and the crucified gladly welcomed them, so unbearable was the torment and the distress of a lingering death on a cross.

B. *To be crucified.*

Out of all the houses and homes of this world, Jesus chose for His birth the stable of Bethlehem, and for the end of life, out of all the possibilities that are before Him, He selects the scourging, the crown of thorns, and crucifixion. *What is there that I ought to do more for My vineyard ?*

“ O man, My brother, child of My Father, if My Passion cannot move you to believe that I love, and to hope in Me, and to be sorry for sin, and to break away from Lucifer, what more can I do for you ? ”

C. *They brought Him forth.*

“ *Attendite.* ” Watch and listen. *Watch and pray*, in union with Holy Mary, full of grace. Pilate, we may suppose, retires. The Chief Priests and Ancients now press forward and crowd round the Tribunal and give directions. They are in command. Jesus is delivered over to their will.

“ Make haste, *do it quickly, lead Him carefully.* ” This is more than ever their refrain.

"Do it quickly," they say, "for much time has been wasted by the fickleness of that foolish Governor. We must redeem time lost. Do it quickly, soldiers, we pray you. You shall have your reward."

"Yet, ye Priests and Ancients," some one might answer, "surely, not so. Time has not been lost. For (1) not yet are twelve hours gone by since Jesus became your prisoner, and see how much you have accomplished. You tried and condemned Him as a blasphemer Who makes Himself the Son of God. Your servants mocked Him as a Prophet till He was saturated with outrage. Early this morning you tried and condemned Him again more solemnly as a blasphemer. Then through your management one of His trusted Apostles is gone to hang himself on a tree. And now you have your will. He is to be crucified.

"Moreover, (2) bear this in mind, that much has been added during the morning for which you had not bargained. You did not covenant that He should be mocked by Herod, and paraded as a fool, and publicly by a vote of the people put below Barabbas. You never dreamed of such a scourging, nor of seeing Him crowned, and exhibited from the balcony. You never had a hope of hearing that cry of the whole people backing you: *His blood be upon us!* In fact, never yet in the history of this world has a prisoner in a short time gone through such an amount of terrible chastisement."

No, surely, time has not been lost. For all the watches, all the hours of the night and the day, will now be well filled up by the Passion of Jesus. *Consummatus in brevi!* hunted down and done to death and made an end of in a short time, He has filled up many days, and long days of martyrdom.

"By Thy ordinance, Lord Jesus, this wonderful day hath gone on, and all things have served Thy purpose."

D. *To be crucified.*

Annas is now a greater man than ever among his accomplices. His policy has succeeded wonderfully. *Let our*

*strength be the law of justice : for that which is feeble is found to be nothing worth.* He is now obeyed promptly : and directs despotically the hasty preparations. "Do it quickly. Bring out at once the cross that is ready. Despatch the trumpeters through the city to make known the judgment. Have the white mules caparisoned, on which the Priests on a solemn occasion like this head the procession. Send quickly a messenger to the prison to see that the other condemned men are ready."

A very short deliberation settles the question : Where shall He die ? where be crucified ? "Golgotha is near. Golgotha is near. Golgotha is the place where many criminals have suffered. Let Him die there where lie buried the skulls and bones of other criminals. Golgotha, too, is well placed. Round Golgotha there is ample room. Many can see Him die.

"See that the Temple guards be ready to keep the way to Golgotha clear. If need be, add the Governor's soldiers. They may be wanted. We are never secure against the jugglery of this Galilean. Pilate must now do our will. He is bound to keep order."

And so, Golgotha is selected—because Jesus Himself has selected to die on Calvary. It is by Thy ordinance, Lord Jesus, that this day goes on.

But, alas ! at the same time, alas ! miserable Rulers, *it is your hour and the power of darkness.*

"O God, our Father, *from them that resist Thy right hand keep me, as the apple of Thy eye* (Psalm xvi.). Be Thou my Guide and Counsellor, that my words and works may begin from Thee, and by Thee be happily ended."

## STATION II.

*And after they had mocked Him, they took off the purple from Him, and put His own garments on Him* (St. Mark xv. 20).

*After they had mocked Him.*

We have seen above that St. Matthew and St. Mark, according to their common practice, do not arrange events in strict

chronological order. They narrate the important incidents, but do not set them down in the exact order in which they happened. Thus here, St. Mark writes: *Pilate being willing to satisfy the people, released to them Barabbas, and delivered up Jesus, when he had scourged Him, to be crucified.* There is nothing in this account contradictory to St. John's story which we are following; but St. John states more clearly the order of events: that the scourging and mocking came before the sentence of death, not after.

A. *They took off the purple from Him, and put His own garments on Him.*

"*Attendite.*"—"Oh, give heed." The words, *They took off*, and *they put on*, are soon written, and soon read, and soon forgotten; but can we quickly realise all the suffering our Blessed Lord endures while they take off the purple, and put on His own clothes? The mantle has become embedded in His wounds. It must be torn out of them. The woven tunic without seam must then be drawn over His Sacred Head. The crown of thorns must be taken off, and then again fitted and fixed on His wounded and aching Head. For the commonly received opinion is that He wore the crown till death. In one copy of the sentence supposed by some to have been written by Pilate it is enjoined that in His crucifixion there shall be introduced some mockery of His pretended royalty.

We must think also of the torment our Lord endures while He is being dragged from side to side, and the tunic and His other garments are being pressed into *the wounds and bruises and swelling sores, which are not dressed, nor bound up, nor fomented with oil.*

*What have you come out to see?* He says to us, as we contemplate. *A man clothed with soft garments? A man clothed in purple and fine linen? Behold they are in the houses of kings. But the chastisement of (their) peace is on Him.*

B. *They put His own garments on Him.*

The Priests and Ancients wish this that the people may better recognise Him. The soldiers too wish it, for then the clothes will fall to them. He, too, wishes to go to death in the garment His Blessed Mother wove for Him.

In Catholic lands and Catholic days it was a widespread wish among the faithful to die in the blessed habit of the Mother of God, or at least not to be without her scapular in the last moments.

C. *They put His own garments on Him.*

Once more we may contemplate the humble obedience of Holy Mary. It would be consolation unspeakable to her to do with her tenderness and *the counsel of her hands*, what the soldiers are doing with so much cruelty, but she remains faithful to God's holy will and stirs not her hand.

Our Blessed Lord, too, remembers, and never forgets, all the affection and devotion wherewith she clothed Him in His childhood. It is a solace to Him to be dressed again in the tunic she made for Him. He values it, He reverences it because it is her gift. *Fac cor amans*: Do this for us, most loving Heart of Jesus, cast fire into our cold hearts, that we may think more of our God Who gives than of the creatures which He gives.

D. *They put His own garments on Him.*

And if we will listen, He will turn to us and say: "Remember Me, and for My sake, *when thou shalt see one naked, cover him: and do not despise thy own flesh. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall hear: Thou shalt cry, and He shall say, Here I am*" (Isaias' lviii.).

STATION III.

*And there were also two other malefactors led with Him to be put to death* (St. Luke xxiii. 32).

A. In Heaven the Eternal Father decrees that these malefactors shall die with Jesus; for on Calvary, death, no matter how penal, or how well-deserved, is to be made quite new—the sting of death is to be taken away. It is written: *He shall be reputed with the wicked* (Isaias liii.). And the Evangelist tells us that this prophecy is fulfilled in the hour when He is led out to death with the two wicked robbers.

On earth also, we may doubtless assume, the Priests and Ancients are glad that the people shall see Jesus crucified as a malefactor among malefactors. It is probably at their suggestion that they die to-day. In time to come, Herod will keep Peter in prison and not put him to death till after the Pasch. These two malefactors may also be respited, if the Rulers do not petition for their execution to-day. The Chief Priests therefore remind the Governor of the two waiting in the dungeon for death.

One of the apocryphal sentences supposed to be dictated by Pilate, enjoins especially that He is to be thus united *with the wicked*. It runs thus: "Jesus Christ, Thy own people and Thy Priests have delivered Thee to me, averring that Thou hast wished to usurp sovereignty over the Jews, whereas they have no King but Cæsar. Since, then, Thou hast done this in defiance of the decrees of the Roman Emperor, I therefore sentence Thee to undergo to-day on Mount Calvary, death on the gibbet of the Cross. Likewise I sentence to death, along with Thee, the two robbers, Dismas and Gesmas; Dismas to be on Thy right hand, Gesmas on the left, but Thou in the centre."

*B. There were two other malefactors.*

Jesus will certainly not object to this arrangement, *whereas He Himself has done it* (Isaias xxxviii.). Long ago, He has earned this reproach from these Rulers: *Behold the Man that is a glutton and a wine-drinker; a friend of publicans and sinners*. You are giving Him a great consolation, Priests and Ancients, though you know it not. For He is the Good Shepherd, Who loves to go after *a lost sheep, and to seek and to save that which was lost*. He is well content with you for putting Him between two malefactors, that so He may find His opportunity: "*I will seek that which was lost; that which was driven away I will bring back. I will bind up that which was broken. Do it quickly*. Bring Dismas to My side, and Gesmas, that I may die with them and for them."

And Holy Mary, too, is beginning what is to be her special task: she is pleading with her Mother's heart for the condemned malefactors, that they may have a grace through the death of her Son to die the death of the just.

*C. There were two other malefactors.*

Where are they meanwhile? They are writhing and howling in the dungeon, under the Roman lash. *Væ victis!* Wo to the conquered! Wo to the fallen! Let those who proclaim that the Gospel of Christ has done nothing for men, go back in spirit to the dungeons of the pagan world. For though we may be far from the perfection of the glorious Gospel of peace, yet the Holy Church has so leavened mankind, that to a great extent cruelty to the fallen is proscribed. If the criminal is to die, death is not to be aggravated. *Such a one is not to be swallowed up with over-much sorrow* (2 Cor. ii.). Death is to be so tempered with Christian charity, that the criminal shall be changed into a holy penitent.

Crucifixion is of all deaths the most terrible; and yet the condemned man is to be tortured first by the lash, as a preparation for worse and intolerable torment.

Possibly, however, as all is to be done quickly, the two malefactors are less *shamefully torn* by the scourge than they would have been otherwise.

*D. There were two malefactors.*

Full of compassion and charity, Jesus awaits them, and the Blessed Mother, too, is waiting, full of pity for them. But they have no welcome for Him or for her. As they come forth into the Lithostrotos, bound and chained, and haggard and begrimed, and with the filth of the dungeon upon them, little pleased are their eyes to rest on Jesus of Nazareth. Their flesh is quivering with pain, and He the Seducer, so they imagine, is the cause. But for Him and His crimes they would not have to die to-day. They would stand reprieved. Who knows? They might later be set free. Poor unhappy, hopeless men: to them death and *departure* from the world is sheer *misery*,

and their going away is *utter destruction* (Wisdom iii.). What wonder that they are bitter, and more sore in mind than in body? Truly they are scandalised in Him to-day; and therefore is His most tender Heart pleading with *groanings unspeakable* for them, and He is inspiring His Holy Mother to use her powerful intercession for them.

#### . STATION IV.

*And bearing His own Cross, He went forth to that place which is called Calvary, but in Hebrew Golgotha* (St. John xix. 17).

##### A. *Bearing His own Cross.*

Was this a new torment devised specially for Him? Scholars tell us that sometimes, when there was a fixed place for execution, the crosses were stationary; but when this was not the case, the condemned criminal was made to carry his own Cross. Be this as it may, Jesus might well, in His present state of exhaustion, be exempted. By right, according to natural laws, He ought not to be alive to walk to Calvary.

“*Attendite.*” Remember last night how, in the Garden, *knowing all things that should come on Him, He went forth.* He knew then what is going to be done to Him now. The holy Cross, we are told, is fifteen feet in length, the transverse beam eight feet long. And to one of His faithful servants it was made known that none of His many wounds during the Sacred Passion was so painful as the wound made on His mangled shoulder by the weight of the heavy Cross.

“*Attendite.*” Mark how the Blessed Mother watches and notes how heavily and with what heartlessness they let the weight come down on His *wounds, bruises, and swelling sores, not bound up, nor dressed, nor fomented with oil.*

##### B. *Bearing His own Cross.*

Does He, before it is laid on His shoulder, devoutly kiss the holy Rood? What His Apostle afterwards felt and expressed, is only a very feeble echo of what is passing in our Lord's Heart: “O holy Cross! with desire long

desired!" And with His Heart is joined His Blessed Mother's. She too is saying most devoutly: "O holy Cross! O blessed Cross! thrice welcome!" Truly, *the Mother was to be admired above measure, and worthy to be remembered by good men, joining a man's heart to a woman's thought* (2 Mach. vii.).

C. *Bearing His own Cross.*

How dear, how precious was the ark to those sheltered within it, when all flesh was perishing in the Flood! The holy Cross is our salvation from the flood. Our Saviour knows it. Holy Mary knows it. Long ago in their cottage He told her all His secret, and she understood all the loveliness and glory of the holy Cross.

D. *Bearing His own Cross.*

The blessed angels now understand what was meant by that ladder of theirs—the ladder standing on the earth, and the top thereof touching Heaven; and the Lord leaning on the ladder, as they went up and down (Genesis xxviii.).

The holy Cross is the ladder that reaches from earth to Heaven. By it the angels bring graces down to us. By it they take up to God the souls in their keeping. And the Eternal Father is ever, we may say, bent down, and *leaning on this ladder*, and gazing on it with ineffable delight.

E. *He went forth, bearing His own Cross.*

All is now ready. The Priests are mounted on their mules to lead the way. The Centurion has been appointed to take command. The trumpeters have begun to sound the funeral knell of the condemned. The Masters of this most holy ceremony have quickly arranged the order of the march.

Heavily laden though He be with His Cross, Jesus has not only His own clothes again upon Him, but also His chains and bonds. For "it is most necessary," the Priests again and again repeat to the guards, "most necessary to *lead Him carefully*: so often and often He has by magic arts escaped. Otherwise long ago they would have put an end to His seduction of the people."

The two chains that hang from His neck are in the hands of strong men, and others hold the ropes that bind Him. Others, again, come to show Him the nails and hammers that they have ready for Him. His Heart is welcoming every chain and every bond and all the nails. For He knows well, how these chains and bonds and nails will *loose the bonds of wickedness, and let them that are broken go free*; and how the weight upon His shoulders shall *undo the burdens that oppress, and break asunder every burden* (Isaias lviii.).

*F. Bearing His own Cross.*

*He that sat on the throne, said: Behold, I make all things new* (Apoc. xxi.). *He that sat on the throne* is Jesus, God made man. To-day He is bringing about the greatest, the grandest, the most glorious revolution that ever has been, or shall be. Everything is made new. Till now the Cross has been infamy and torture beyond endurance.

*Accursed is he of God that hangeth on a tree* (Deut. xxi.). But that Prophet who saw so clearly in vision the details of the Passion, that he writes as if an eye-witness of them all, holds very different language: *A child is born to us*, he says; *a Son is given to us*; *the Government (Empire) is upon His shoulder* (Isaias ix.).

*Government is upon His shoulder*: for the Cross is the great weapon by which Jesus conquers Satan and wins empire. David went out against Goliath with his sling, and the five round stones in his scrip. Our Lord wins His great victory to-day through His Cross and His Five Wounds.

The Cross, we may say, is the great ally that helps Him to Sovereignty. *Ought not* (He said a few days later), *ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?* (St. Luke xxiv.).

Again, the Cross on His shoulders may be called *Government*, or *Empire*, because it is to-day our Lord's throne, and the throne is an emblem of royalty. *Regnavit a ligno Deus*, Holy Church sings; "It is from the tree that God reigns"

He Himself taught us the same truth when He said on Palm Sunday: *I, if I be lifted up, shall draw all things to Myself.* It is from His Cross that He is to win all hearts, and to reign in them.

G. *Bearing His own Cross.*

While, then, we contemplate our Lord with His Cross laid upon Him—*Empire upon His shoulder*—we may find heavenly nourishment and light by dwelling on the titles which the inspired Prophet gives to Him when he sees Him thus in his vision, *with Government upon His shoulder.*

*His name shall be called Wonderful.* What so wonderful as He is to-day? So helpless and so almighty! so disfigured, and so beautiful above all the sons of men! so poor, and yet *possessing all things, and enriching many!*

*Counsellor.* Who advises us so prudently as Jesus under His Cross? He counsels forgiveness of injuries, and He advises us not to believe that sufferings are a curse, and pleasures our Heaven. He warns us most tenderly: *My little flock, do not love the world.*

*God the mighty.* For to-day His Blessed Mother is repeating every hour: "*Fecit potentiam in brachio suo*". He is putting forth the might of His arm, and He is revealing all the ineffable power of His meekness and patience. In another sense, the Holy Spirit has said: *The mighty shall be mightily tormented*: but to-day also, He that is mighty, most mighty in His endurance, *is mightily tormented.* All the power of hell is exerted against Him, and exerted only to be conquered.

*The Father of the world to come.* He is to-day creating a new world: *making all things new.*

*The Prince of Peace.* For to-day He is teaching us what true peace is, and is winning peace for all men of good-will.

H. *Bearing His own Cross.*

Of Abraham we read: *He said to his young men, I and the boy will go with speed as far as yonder. And he took the wood for the holocaust, and laid it upon Isaac, his son, and*

he himself carried in his hands fire and a sword. Isaac said to his father, *My father.* And he answered, *What wilt thou, son? Behold, saith he, fire and wood. Where is the victim for the holocaust? And Abraham said, God will provide Himself a victim, my son. So they went on together (Gen. xxii.).*

This is only a prophetic picture. To-day we see the reality.

God has provided Himself a victim. His Divine Son said, *A Body Thou hast fitted to Me: Behold I come.* And now, united with His Eternal Father, *with speed He is going yonder,* to the mount which the Eternal Father has shown to Him. And His Father has laid the wood on Him, and He asks no questions about the Victim, for He knows all, "*Jesus tacebat*". Neither does the Blessed Mother ask, *Where is the Victim for the holocaust?* For she too knows all.

#### I. *Bearing His own Cross.*

When Sobna who is over the Temple was deposed, God said, by His Prophet: *I will call Eliacim; I will clothe him with thy robe, and will give thy power into his hand, and he shall be as a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Juda. And I will lay the key of the house of David on his shoulder, and he shall open and none shall shut, and he shall shut and none shall open (Isaias xxii.).*

Eliacim is a type. To-day the ancient High Priest is rejected. The new High Priest according to the order of Melchisedech enters into possession, and is about to offer the Everlasting Sacrifice.

*The key of the house of David (is laid) on His shoulder.*

When gates were large, and the keys heavy, the gatekeeper used to carry the keys on his shoulder. The keys are another emblem of power and royalty. Our Blessed Lord has said already, *I am the door of the sheep. By Me if any man enter he shall be saved.* He is both door and doorkeeper. *He shall shut and none shall open, He shall open and none shall shut.*

His Holy Cross is the great key that opens Heaven. Suffering brought the Prodigal home to his father. The Cross to-day opens Heaven for St. Dismas.

“We adore Thee, Lord Jesus, and we bless Thee, because by Thy Holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.”

Sancta Mater, istud agas,	Oh, do this for me, Mother blest,
Crucifixi fige plagas,	Deeply engrave within my breast
Cordi meo valide.	The Cross and wounds of thy dear Son.

*Bearing His own Cross, He went forth.*

I. Calvary, or Golgotha, lies due west of the Prætorium, at a distance of about three-quarters of a mile. But the nature of the ground makes the *Via dolorosa* long and weary indeed to one in the condition of our Saviour. Jerusalem, as has been already said, is traversed from south to north by a very narrow valley or gorge, of which the southern part is called Tyropæon, and the northern, though only a continuation of the Tyropæon, is called the Broad Ravine. We may consider the two as one continuous valley, or ravine, dividing the city from north to south. As it is a deep valley, and is very narrow, carriages cannot pass at all from east to west. The very few carriage-roads in Jerusalem run from north to south.

Those making the Way of the Cross start from the Prætorium westward, and go down an incline into the valley, and then up a longer and steeper ascent to Golgotha. The streets leading from the bottom of the Tyropæon Ravine to Calvary are now like a flight of broad steps, or small terraces. Horses and donkeys and camels can go by them, but no wheeled vehicles.

These steps that lead from the bottom of the ravine to Calvary are about one hundred and thirty in number. As after the siege much rubbish from the ruins lay piled up in the streets, the ravine may have been on the first Good Friday deeper than it is now.

The Way of Sorrow, then, lay for our Lord down one incline and then up another, which is long and steep, and paved, probably, with large rough stones.

II. By referring to some old maps, we see that the Way of the Cross which pilgrims now follow does not exactly correspond with the *Via dolorosa* as traced on them. One cause of the deviation is that buildings have been erected which necessitated a change of route. In the old maps the *Via dolorosa*, when the Judgment Gate is reached, turns to the north.

At present after passing what is now called the Judgment Gate, the Way of the Cross bends rather to the south.

The well-known architect, Mr. Schick, by birth a Swiss, and now advanced in years, who has been for forty years employed on buildings in Jerusalem, as his father was before him, and is probably better acquainted than any other living man with the topography of ancient Jerusalem, though not himself a Catholic, and much consulted by modern explorers who are zealously propagating novel theories concerning the holy places, yet alto-

gether adheres to the Catholic tradition respecting the site of Golgotha. He explains the discrepancy between the route of the present *Via dolorosa* and the more ancient one, by saying that the gate now called the Judgment Gate is not really the gate through which our Lord passed. He points out the remains of another ancient gateway that have been discovered more to the south, in a building which has been secured, along with so much other property, by the Russians, and he maintains that there stood the Judgment Gate. In this he comes nearer to the old map of the mediæval traveller, Adrichomius, who is considered by the commentators a trustworthy authority.

III. The Stations of the Cross as we have them now are not exactly in the same order as we find in some old books, which make Simon of Cyrene take up the Cross outside the gate, but they do agree with the order set down by Adrichomius, who gives with great accuracy the distance from Station to Station.<sup>1</sup> I. From the Judgment-Seat (Station I.) to the spot where the Cross was laid on our Lord (Station II.), 60 feet. II. Thence to the spot where He first fell (Station III.), 180 feet. III. Thence to Station IV., where His Blessed Mother met Him, 140 feet. IV. Thence to Station V., where Simon took the Cross, 163 feet. V. Thence to Station VI., at the house of Veronica, 435 feet. VI. Thence to the Judicial Gate, where He fell the second time (Station VII.), 763 feet. VII. Thence northward along a rough and stony ascent to cross roads, where the daughters of Jerusalem waited (Station VIII.), 803 feet. VIII. Thence to the foot of Calvary, where He fell the third time (Station IX.), 410 feet. IX. Thence to the spot where He was stripped (Station X.), 41 feet. X. Thence to the spot where He was crucified (Station XI.), 27 feet. XI. Thence to the spot where the Cross was fixed in the rock (Station XII.), 28 feet. In all, from the Prætorium to Calvary, 3050 feet.

As measures vary in different countries, Adrichomius draws a line to represent one-fourth of a foot, according to the measure which he follows.

A—————B

This line will be found to be about one-eighth of an inch less than a quarter of a foot by our measure. If his measuring differs from that of some modern writers, one explanation may be that the way of the Cross did not in his day lie along the same route as at present. (See the map of Adrichomius.)

Such details as these will not be deemed trivial by those who love St. Ignatius of Loyola, and value his method of contemplation. He encourages us to be realistic in our contemplations, to find out the length of the roads by which our Lord travels, and whether they are hilly or level, and the rest. The Holy Ghost says that he who *fears God neglects nothing*. Love values detail, even more than fear does.

<sup>1</sup> This measurement of Adrichomius differs much from modern measurements.

SCENE VIII.

THE VIA DOLOROSA.

STATION I.

*Bearing His own Cross He went forth (St. John xix.).  
And there were also two other malefactors led with Him  
to be put to death. And there followed Him a great  
multitude of people, and of women who lamented Him  
(St. Luke xxiii.).*

*A. He went forth.*

The procession moves westward, through the gate of the Lithostrotos, into the large forum, or square, which lies outside the northern wall of the city; then it immediately turns to the south, and enters the city through a gate in the northern wall; then turns again westward, down the incline into the ravine.

Our Blessed Lord has only gone down the incline about sixty-six yards when He falls to the ground. He has perchance been commanded to hold the Cross with His hands, to keep it from falling, and in that position they may have been tied to the wood.

As He falls, then, on the incline, He has no protection from His hands or arms. His sacred face once more strikes heavily against the rough pavement. We are told that at each of these falls blood is forced from His nostrils and His mouth, and His teeth are loosened.

With what moderation, how very much below the truth the inspired Prophet writes: *Wounds, bruises, and swelling sores, and they are not dressed, nor bound up, nor fomented with oil.*

Who but Himself and His Blessed Mother understands what the shock of the fall does to each of the six thousand wounds upon His Body? *Who understands sin?* the Psalmist asks. "O my children," our Blessed Lady may add, "who understands the pain that sins are bringing

to my Son Jesus?" *The chastisement of our peace is upon Him. By His bruises we are healed.*

B. *He went forth.*

Our Lord saw Lucifer fall out of Heaven. *How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer?* the Prophet asks. We know the answer. *Thou saidst in thy heart, I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Most High* (Isaias xiv.). Afterwards our Lord heard Lucifer persuade Adam to sin by this word: *You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.* As, then, the angels fell through a wish to be like to God, and man fell through the same wish, Jesus, God and Man, falls to the ground that we may be able to gratify our wish of being like to God. Look at Him on the ground; *look, and do according to the Model.*

St. Francis of Assisi, when he saw one of his disciples brought to ruin by pride, cast himself on the ground and lay there saying, "Nowhere else is man safe".

*Man placed in honour hath not understood* (Psalm xlvi.).

Ever-Blessed Mother, it was on thy humility that the Son of God looked down from Heaven when He became *desirous of thy beauty*, and made choice of thee. Pray for us sinners, that through life our one fixed choice may be, through all the changes of this changing world, to remain ever in humility God's servants. *I am Thy servant, O Lord, thy servant, and the son of Thy handmaid* (Psalm cxv.).

## STATION II.

*He went forth, and there followed Him a great multitude*  
(St. Luke xxiii. ; St. John xix.).

A. Tradition tells us that St. John led the Blessed Mother by a shorter way down the incline to the main road running from north to south along the ravine. At the point where the road from the Prætorium joins, at right angles, this main road from the north, there have been discovered the ruins of an ancient church, supposed to have been built by St. Helen in memory of the meeting

of our Lord and His Blessed Mother. It has been sometimes called the Church dello Spasmo, because some writers thought that our Lady swooned away at this meeting. As we have seen, however, eminent theologians strongly condemn the notion that the Blessed Mother ever, at any time, lost consciousness during the Sacred Passion. They hold that, as the Second Eve, she must have shared, by the side of her Son, in every scene of the great conflict.

*B. Carrying His Cross, He went forth.*

Other writers represent her speaking gently to some of the soldiers, praying them to be merciful to her Son. Perchance some meek word from her may have softened the heart of the Centurion, to whom grace came to-day.

Simeon foretold to her that on this day, *out of many hearts different thoughts would be revealed* concerning her, as well as concerning her Divine Son. Accordingly, some here present, we are told, respect her, and allow her to draw near to Jesus, to kiss His wounded and disfigured face. Others blaspheme, and ask her why she so badly brought up this wicked Son; and hold up before her eyes the nails that they have ready for Him.

David in his grief could only sob out the words: *Absalom my son! my son Absalom! Ear hath not heard the cry of Holy Mary's sorrowful heart: "My Son Jesus! Jesus my Son, my God, my all!"* And perchance she says, too, a beseeching word to move them not to punish Him for falling under the Cross; not to strike Him so heavily; not to tear out the hairs of His Head in lifting Him. And some hearken, and others scoff. *Out of many hearts thoughts are revealed.*

"Mary, full of grace! blessed among women! blessed, thrice blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus."

## STATION III.

*As they led Him away, they found a man of Cyrene named Simon, the father of Alexander and of Rufus, coming from the country. They laid hold of Simon; and him they forced to take up His Cross. They laid the Cross on him to carry after Jesus (St. Matt. xxvii.; St. Mark xv.; St. Luke xxiii.).*

I. *They found a man of Cyrene.*

There were two towns of this name, one in Africa. It is conjectured by some students that this Simon may have been an African negro, and that this was one reason why he is lawlessly compelled to carry the Cross. These writers add a second conjecture, that the *Simon who was called Niger*, mentioned in the Acts (c. xiii.) as one of the Prophets and Doctors of Antioch, may have been this Simon of Cyrene. No one seems to doubt that he received the grace of faith in return for the service he renders to-day. His sons, Alexander and Rufus, seem to be mentioned by St. Mark as well-known disciples. Tradition tells us that they were all three afterwards consecrated Bishops in Spain by St. James.

II. It has been said above, that the *Via Dolorosa*, coming from the Prætorium, enters at a right angle into the main street running from north to south down the ravine, close to the spot where the meeting with our Blessed Lady takes place. Thence it goes southward for a short distance down the main street, almost to the site where the house of Dives is supposed to have stood. There it turns again to the west, and begins to ascend by broad steps, or terraces, till it reaches an ancient gate, now called the Judicial Gate. In the old maps this portion of the Way of the Cross runs in the same direction, as at present, from east to west; but somewhat more to the south than now.

III. At the point where the *Via Dolorosa* leaves the main street from the north and turns again westward, the procession, according to tradition, meets Simon, *coming from the country*, possibly from the Judicial Gate, to which they are going. The words of St. Matthew: *GOING OUT, they found a man*, are interpreted by some writers as meaning that they had reached the city gate when they met Simon, but the common opinion is that they were still within the walls. St. John uses the same word: *He went forth*, at the first starting from the Prætorium.

A. *They laid hold of him, and forced him to take up the Cross.*

This is the first instance we find of a desire to give some relief to Jesus. Whence comes this consideration? What is the motive? The heavy fall of our Lord under

the Cross, and the delay caused by it, have irritated the Priests and Ancients, who are in feverish haste, and always in terror that He may effect His escape. Another fear has also come to them. His strength may fail. He may die before they can reach Golgotha. This would be a grievous disappointment: for He must be crucified. *Let Him be crucified!* has been their persevering demand. It is not then their compassion, but a merciless policy that suggests this alleviation.

*What is it that hath been done? The same that shall be done.*

Many things men still do which seem to the eye like kindness. Gifts are given, and honeyed words are multiplied; and this is called affection and love, but in the end it is manifest that *with their tongues they acted deceitfully. The poison of asps is under their lips*, and the miserable gifts are worse than the price of blood; they are the *commutation* for the innocence of the immortal soul; an exchange for the everlasting companionship with God in Heaven.

*Our Father, Who art in Heaven, forgive us our trespasses, lead us not into temptation, deliver us from evil. Amen.*

*B. They laid the Cross on him to carry after Jesus.*

Men, therefore, lay the Cross on Simon through a cruel wish that Jesus may survive to hang thereon; but, as has been said, the providence of the Eternal Father is always overruling every detail of the Sacred Passion, and with an everlasting charity has arranged that Simon shall thus carry the Cross.

We may observe that St. Luke emphasises the fact that *they laid the Cross on him TO CARRY AFTER JESUS.* For our Blessed Lord had said in time past: *If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross daily and follow Me* (St. Luke ix.). *And whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after Me, cannot be My disciple* (St. Luke xiv.).

This scene, then, is planned in Heaven that we may ever have it before us. Our blessed Angel, if we only listen, will cry daily to us: *Look, and do according to the model.* If we will make leisure and contemplate Simon

thus walking after Jesus and carrying the Cross, virtue will come out to us and help us to carry our own cross patiently, and not only patiently, but gratefully and with gladness.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

Blood of Christ, inebriate me.

*They forced him to take up the Cross. They laid the Cross on him to carry after Jesus.*

The question is discussed: Did our Lord Himself still continue to carry the Cross? Did Simon merely walk after Jesus, and lift up the part of the Cross that was trailing on the ground? Or was Jesus relieved entirely from the weight, and was the Cross laid on him?

Some writers and some painters adopt the opinion that Simon only gave partial relief, by lifting the Cross still carried by our Saviour.

But (1) would this be a relief? or rather throw the weight more upon the shoulders of our Lord? (2) Do not the words of St. Luke settle the question: *They laid the Cross on him to carry after Jesus?* This is a literal translation from the Greek and Latin; and the words would not be verified if Simon only lifted the hinder part of the Cross.

### C. *They laid the Cross on him.*

Devout writers tell us, and it seems very probable, that at first Simon felt much aggrieved at the injustice done him; but afterwards, helped by Divine grace, found his *burden light and the yoke sweet.*

We may contemplate our Blessed Lord's pity for him, and our Lady's also, and think with what tenderness they pray that great grace may come to him.

It is one instance more added to countless others, to show how our most bountiful Lord gives the poor wine first, and the best afterward. He begins by asking some sacrifice, and then repays the sacrifice with a shower of priceless graces.

### D. *They laid the Cross on him to carry after Jesus.*

Abimelech, we read, when about to attack the town of Sichem, *taking an axe cut down the bough of a tree, and laying it on his shoulder and carrying it, he said to his companions: What you see me do, do you out of hand. So they cut down*

*branches from the trees, every man as fast as he could, and followed their leader (Judges ix.).*

In sorrow our Saviour said that the *children of this world are more prudent than the children of light. More prudent, yes, and often more loyal to their leaders.* How much His sorrowing Heart would be consoled if when He says to us most earnestly: *Take up your cross and follow Me, each of us as fast as he could* took up the sacred burden and followed (our) Leader.—*The sons of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, have constantly kept the commandment of their father, which he commanded them, but this people hath not obeyed Me (Jerem. xxxv.).*

*E. They laid the Cross on him to carry after Jesus.*

In after years, the disciples, doubtless, venerated Simon, and pointed him out as the privileged man who carried the Cross. May we then have grace to understand, when some suffering comes, that it is the very Heart of our Lord which has planned for us, that we shall be allowed to help Him by carrying His Cross with Him and for Him. *I fill up*, St. Paul writes, *those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh (Coloss. i.).*

No position is so honourable as that of helping our Lord to carry His Cross. If by some other arrangement we had been redeemed without ourselves contributing anything towards it, our state would be immeasurably less high and holy and glorious than it is now. For then we should not be made like to Christ—*conformable to the image of God's Son*. Now He has purposely left some part of the work of redemption undone which each of us is allowed to do; so that every one may become His partner, and like to Him, a Christ, and a Jesus, His brother, and His bride.

“O Ever-Blessed Mother, obtain for us grace to lay up in our hearts, after thy example, this scene of the holy Passion, that we may help thy Divine Son and carry His Cross, not in sadness, but in gratitude and joy.”

## STATION IV.

VERONICA.

*And there followed Him a great multitude (St. Luke xxiii. 27).*

A. *Do it quickly.* They are hurrying on with much tumult, and writers who have collected the sacred details from all the sources within reach, tell us that as our Saviour is dragged painfully along, men and even little children are encouraged to cast stones at Him, and to throw dirt upon His sacred face. The Evangelist tells us that the cry: *His blood be upon us*, came from the *whole people*.

*My friends and My neighbours have drawn near, and stood against Me; and they that were near Me stood afar off; and they that sought My Soul used violence. But I as a deaf man heard not: and as a dumb man not opening My mouth (Psalm xxxvii.).*

Contemplate our Saviour's grief when His own beloved children (His first-fruits) are taken from Him, and alienated. As if a deaf man, He will not hear the blasphemies, which they echo without understanding them. As a dumb man, He answers not one word of reproach, but His Heart finds excuses and prays for them. But still, we must always keep in mind the words He uttered in time past: *Wo to those by whom the scandal cometh.* He that shall by example, by bad teaching, by neglect, *scandalise one of these little ones that believe in Me, it were better for him that a mill-stone be hanged about his neck and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea (St. Matt. xviii.).*

*There followed Him a great multitude.*

I. Tradition tells us that Veronica was standing at her door waiting for the Master, and that when He passed she boldly ran into the midst of the soldiers, and presented a napkin to wipe the filth and blood from His Face, and that our Blessed Saviour with great gratitude accepted her service, and left impressed on the cloth the image of His sacred Face.

II. We are told, too, that there were three folds of this linen cloth: and that the impression was found on each of them; and consequently that this sacred image was preserved as a precious relic in three different countries: in Spain, in Jerusalem, and at Rome.

III. Some writers derive the name of this holy woman from the Latin word *verum* (true) and the Greek word *εικων* (image): but this derivation is rejected by scholars, as it is quite unusual to find a name made up of a medley of Latin and Greek. They are of opinion that in her own country she bore the ordinary name of Berenice; and that this name was in other lands changed to Veronica.

IV. We are told, that she was very intimate with our Lady, and very dear to her. A very early chronicler states that she was the woman cured by our Lord of the issue of blood; that she afterwards went to Rome with St. Peter, and from thence, by his direction, passed into Gaul, with St. Martial, and with her husband, St. Amator. This Amator is supposed by some to have been Zacheus of Jericho. Subsequently, it is said, she went back to Rome with her treasure, and there ended her days.

B. Contemplate the holy courage of Veronica. We know how the rage of the Priests and Ancients had burst forth heretofore upon all who took the part of Jesus. Their frenzy is now at its height; wo to those who resist or gain-say it! And besides, she sees the pitiless guards with their swords ready, and their spears. *But love is strong as death.*

Moreover, though our Blessed Saviour does not choose to protect Himself, but delivers Himself up for us; still He can and will protect her.

“Passion of Christ, strengthen us, with that strength which comes from love of Thee.”

C. Think how greatly our Saviour is comforted by this outburst of compassion. With what solicitude He gives His blessed angels a charge over Veronica. The guards permit her to come near to Him; and He Who will not allow the blessed angels to give Him help, readily accepts her services, and at once repays her charity with a great increase of grace.

Tears come from His sacred eyes. He is as if taken by surprise. *My Heart*, He says, *hath expected misery and reproach*, and lo! unexpected love is come to Him and fills Him with emotion and gratitude.

Now, too, in our day *we* are privileged. *We* are

permitted to do work for Christ which angels would gladly do but may not.

D. Mark, too, how faithful our Saviour is to His word: *Give, and it shall be given to you in good measure.* When the linen cloth has served Him and wiped away the dirt that disfigures His face, she has it again; she has not given it away, but only lent it to Jesus; and lo! it returns with good interest. When she lends it, it is a poor linen cloth; it comes back a portrait more priceless than all that man's hand has ever painted throughout the ages.

*Glorify the Lord as much as ever you can: for He will yet exceed; and His magnificence is wonderful. Blessing the Lord, exalt Him all you can: for He is above all praise (Ecclus. xliii.). He said, and (it) was made. He commanded and (it) was created.*

E. We must turn, too, to the Blessed Mother, who is near—a more perfect image immeasurably, and more beautiful, of her Divine Son. He in His humility of Heart said to His disciples: *The works that I do, and greater than these,* shall you do. And she now, who may not nurse Him, nor bind up one of His wounds, nor foment them with oil, has no sore jealousy because Veronica is so privileged, but is consoled unspeakably because there is one to love her Son.

F. And then, too, if we are looking with a holy envy at Veronica, the Blessed Mother says to us most earnestly: "*Sursum corda.* You need not envy her. In the Most Holy Eucharist you have a treasure better than Veronica's. If the image of my Son is precious, know that He Himself is better than His image."

G. When the devout woman in the crowd cried out: *Blessed the womb that bore Thee:* He put a still higher thought into her mind: *Yea, rather, blessed they who hear the word of God and keep it* (St. Luke xi.). So now to us His Heart is saying: "Do not stand gazing on Veronica. For you can set *Me as a seal on your heart; as a seal on your arm.* Blessed shall you be indeed if My image is in

your heart. Thrice blessed if the image of My meekness, and My charity is stamped, too, on your outward demeanour. For so shall it come to pass that you will draw more hearts to Me than Veronica did with her treasure."

H. And we may try, too, to measure the consolation and astonishment and gratitude and increased love of Veronica when her eyes discover her reward.

The housewife in the Gospel calls her neighbours to be glad with her when she has found her groat. What will be Veronica's feeling when to-night she unfolds the linen cloth to show it to the Blessed Mother and to Magdalen and the others?

"Happy Saint, obtain for us a share of thy gratitude and love; for He that is mighty has done to us even greater things than this."

#### STATION V.

##### AT THE JUDGMENT GATE.

*He went forth, and there followed Him a great multitude*  
(St. Luke xxiii.; St. John xix.).

##### A. *He went forth.*

This gate is called the Judgment Gate because it leads to the place of execution.

*The bodies of those beasts, St. Paul writes, whose blood is brought into the Holies, by the High Priest for sin, are burned without the camp. This was the old Levitical law. Wherefore, he adds, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people by His own blood, suffered without the gate* (Hebrews xiii.).

"*Attendite.*" Look, and listen, and give heed. For our Blessed Saviour is leaving His Holy City for the last time. He is never again to return through this gate. Not without reason is He once more cast down heavily on the pavement; with all His wounds renewed, and new bruises and new streams of blood covering His sacred face.

*O all you who pass by, His Heart is saying to us, stay a little while, and see if there be sorrow like to My sorrow.*

*Touched*, indeed, He is, *inwardly with sorrow of Heart*, as in the early days of the Flood. For He is bidding a last and most mournful farewell to His Holy City and to His people. *After sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain, and the people that shall deny Him shall not be His.*

*Howl, O gate; cry, O city* (Isaias xiv.). For as Jesus goes out of the city to-day, all the glory of Jerusalem departs with Him. This is in truth the last day of the Old Jerusalem, *the city of God, the city of perfect beauty, the joy of all the earth* (Lament. i.).

From this day begins the desolation that is to come. *The ways of Sion mourn; all her gates are broken down; her priests sigh, her virgins are in affliction; and she is oppressed with bitterness.* When the Jews, to this day, go to their wailing place in Jerusalem on the Friday, they do not know what their lament ought to be. They mourn over their dispersion. But their wailing ought to be over Jesus going to-day for the last time out of their Holy City.

#### *B. He went forth.*

Let us turn to ourselves. At the sacred font Christ's delegate said solemnly over us: "Depart from this soul, unclean spirit. Give place, that God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost may dwell here." *He said, and (it) was done. He commanded, and (it) was created.* The soul of the baptised becomes the temple of God.

But, alas! The unclean spirit driven out, waited and watched, and returned to beg for re-admittance: to beg of me to reinstate him. For without my consent, he never can return. And wo! wo, a thousand times! I said deliberately to my own God: "Depart, give place to Lucifer, and give place to a poor creature which Thou, my God, didst make for me. As if Thou wert not better than the work of Thy own hands."

*He went forth.* My God departed in sorrow out of my soul, which was His temple and His holy city: *Touched with sorrow of Heart inwardly*, He departed.

But there was great joy in Heaven on the day and in the hour when I came back, and said: *Father, I have sinned.* Father, to me *belongeth confusion of face.* But to Thee, my God, my Father, my Redeemer, *mercy and forgiveness.*

STATION VI.

*And there followed Him a great multitude of people, and of women who bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus turning to them, said: Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not over Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For behold the days shall come, wherein they will say: Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that have not borne, and the paps that have not given suck. Then they shall begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us; and to the hills: Cover us. For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry? (St. Luke xxiii. 27-31).*

I. After passing through the Judicial Gate, the procession has turned towards Golgotha, which stands in full view at about four hundred yards to the north, and close to the upper part of the western wall of the city. To reach Golgotha they skirt the upper western wall. They have gone two-thirds of the way, when the road branches into two: one leading to the north-west, towards Gabaon, the other direct to Golgotha. It is at the junction of these two roads that the women of Jerusalem are gathered.

II. *A great multitude of people, and of women who bewailed.* The Greek text makes it clear that only the women are lamenting; not the multitude of people.

III. The women are not the devout women who are following our Lord from Galilee. They are women of Jerusalem. Some commentators think that in their lamentations they are only carrying out a usual custom. We know how even in our times it has been in certain countries the practice that women should at funerals keep up a lamentation aloud. The words of our Lord, *Weep over yourselves*, seem to some writers to indicate that they are not mourners devoted to Him and full of compassion for Him. But though they may not be His disciples, there is no reason to think that their tears and wailing are not a genuine expression of pity and compassion.

A. *For behold the days shall come when they will say: Blessed are the barren.*

Interpreters teach that our Saviour is speaking primarily of the days of the siege which are so soon to bring horrors beyond description, and in the end the utter destruction of the city. Some of the crowd here present will live long enough to witness the horrible scenes of that siege. Those who die before, will leave their children to pass through that terrible tribulation: therefore, *weep for yourselves and for your children.*

B. *Weep not over Me, but over yourselves and over your children.*

We cannot suppose that any one person will during the siege undergo sufferings in any way equal to our Lord's; but there is this wide difference between His sorrows and theirs. His are hallowed and blest; theirs will be a curse. He knows that all His sufferings are of His own choice; and every moment while He is enduring He has *joy set before Him*, and knows that because His Soul hath laboured He shall see and be filled. And if He shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long-lived seed; and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in His hand; and He shall divide the spoils of the strong, because He hath delivered His Soul unto death; and was reputed with the wicked (Isaias liii.). On the other hand, He knows that when the Roman army comes, and brings such tribulations as were not from the beginning of the creation which God created until now, neither shall be (St. Mark xiii.), the sorrows will not be cheered by hope. *For these are the days of vengeance; for there shall be great distress in the land and wrath upon the people* (St. Luke xxi.). These will be *days of vengeance*; and there shall be *wrath upon the people*. God is striking hardened sinners who have resisted all His graces and rejected Him. And it is written of the Egyptians in the days of darkness: *Over them was spread a heavy night, an image of that darkness which was to come upon them. But they were to themselves more grievous than the darkness* (Wisdom xvii. 20). So may we say of the appalling horrors of the siege. They were to be only an image of far worse horrors to come; and the Jews

now cast off, with their sins upon them, and the curse which they have chosen, shall be more grievous to themselves than the famine, and the sword, and the fire that will spread so much havoc.

Therefore with good reason does our most compassionate Lord say: *Weep not over Me, weep over yourselves and over your children.*

C. *They shall begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us.*

In the early scenes, before the Sacred Passion began, we saw how our Lord, in His discourse on the Mount of Olives, mingled together the destruction of Jerusalem and the terrors of the final Judgment. So now also, we may in contemplation assume that His thoughts are reaching beyond the siege into the world to come. For we find in other parts of Holy Writ these words which He now uses applied to what is coming in the latter days.

St. John, who in this hour is present with our Blessed Lady watching and listening to every word of his Divine Master, in years to come in one of his visions of things *which must be done hereafter*, sees that *when the heaven departed as a book folded up, and the islands were moved out of their places, and the kings of the earth, and the princes, and the rich, and the strong hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of mountains, men say to the mountains and the rocks: Fall upon us and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb* (Apoc. vi.).

We need not then confine our thoughts to the siege of Jerusalem that is past, but may look forward to what is still to come, which concerns us much more nearly.

D. *Weep not over Me, but weep over yourselves and over your children.*

First, then, we must ask, Does our Blessed Saviour really mean that we are not to stay and mourn over Him? Quite the contrary. He is most desirous that we *look on Him Whom we have pierced*—and *mourn for Him as one mourneth for an only son*. From His inmost Heart He calls to us: *O all you who pass by, give heed and see if there be*

*sorrow like to My sorrow* : because He knows well that it is while we gaze on Him and His wounds that the bite of the fiery serpent will be healed in us.

Still, there is a great truth, and one to us of the utmost moment, which our Saviour wishes to impress on us.

When a sensible man pays a very large price for a property or a jewel, it is clear that he values more what he gets than what he gives. Therefore, if our all-wise Lord thinks it right, and wise, and prudent to give up His own Body to be mangled as it is, and His Soul to be afflicted as it has been, and His Blessed Mother also agonised, in order to win us back from Lucifer, He must see clearly that what is coming to us hereafter is to Him much more grievous than what is coming to Himself to-day.

*E. For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry ?*

The green wood has the sap in it, consequently it is not fit for the fire. The dry wood is the right and proper fuel for the burning. Our Saviour means that His Sacred Body and His Soul are both innocent. As His own Beloved Disciple will afterwards write: *He appeared, to take away our sins : and in Him there is no sin* (1 St. John iii.). His Body and His Soul, then, are perfectly sinless, and not only sinless, but, through His Incarnation, become Divine—the very Body and Soul of God—and therefore are by their own nature quite unfitted for suffering. It is only by a stupendous miracle that they can suffer. It is only because the Son of God has, we may say, broken through all laws, in His desire to redeem lost man, and has decreed that *no word shall be impossible with God*, and has actually become Sin for our sake, that the fire of suffering can take any effect at all upon Him.

But our case is quite different. Our sinful souls and corrupt flesh are the dry wood, the very fittest fuel for the burning.

F. *If in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?*

*Surely, He hath borne our sorrows and carried our griefs. Surely, the chastisement of our peace* has been laid heavily on Him. Surely, never on this earth has there been sorrow like to His sorrow; a Passion like to His; compassion like His Blessed Mother's.

Yet still, all the while, He knows, what He said last night: *The things concerning Me have an end.* Time is, doubtless, a deceptive word. For, wide indeed is the difference between the hours of a night of agonising pain and the hours of a night of refreshing sleep. From what we witness here on earth we have some faint idea, at least, of what time in Purgatory may mean; and what the Apostle means when he writes that with God *one day is like a thousand years.*

The hours then that shall be spent on Calvary will be, beyond doubt, hours unspeakably long. Yet still, the ninth hour shall come; and when it does come, the Soul and the Body of our Lord will be beyond the reach of all malice, whether of men or of fallen angels. *His place is in peace, His abode in Sion. There hath He broken the powers of bows, the shield, the sword, and the battle* (Psalm lxxv.).

*The things concerning Me have an end. His place is in peace.* Why? because He is not the real sinner. Jacob put on Esau's garment, but was not Esau. Our Divine Lord put on the *likeness of the flesh of sin* (Romans viii.), but He is not the real sinner. He is come down to our level, in order to raise us up to a share of His Divinity. He is become like to us in all things, excepting only sin—the hideousness, the foulness, the malice of sin. But the real sinner is one who during his day of power on earth, has, in defiance of God's continual efforts to save him from his own iniquity, deliberately rejected his God, deliberately said again and again: *Away with Him!* Nor is this all; for the sinner not only rejects God, but, all filial love now changed entirely into hatred, goes into the house of his eternity a blasphemer

against his God, and crying with intense malice: *Crucify Him! He is grievous to us to behold.* Deliberately he has chosen to have Lucifer and not God as his master. *He loved cursing, and it shall come unto him; and he would not have blessing, and it shall be far from him. And he put on cursing like a garment: and it went in like water into his entrails, and like oil in his bones. May it be unto him like a garment which covereth him; and like a girdle with which he is girded continually* (Psalm cviii.).

In consequence of this deliberate and persistent choice of the sinner's free-will, our Blessed Saviour is obliged to say to him at the Judgment: *Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go into everlasting punishment* (St. Matt. xxv.).

*Everlasting punishment.* If Annas and Caiphas and the Ancients who are having their will to-day, repent not heartily before their little day on earth is over, they will understand when they enter the house of their eternity and see their master, Lucifer, as he is, why Jesus says to-day: *Weep not over me, but over yourselves.*

The things concerning Jesus have had an end on Golgotha. But wo is me! Down in this nether Golgotha, unblessed, unhallowed, joyless, hopeless, *exiled from the eternal providence; down in this land of forgetfulness, where no order but everlasting horror dwelleth*, when shall a ninth hour come to them? When shall they be able to say: *"Consummatum est"*? When shall a nightfall come to bring them a short respite of sleep? When shall a dawn visit them to bring one ray of light or hope to the unbearable darkness? If we go down and ask the sinner there, who here in this world grew old and hoary in sin, How long were you on earth? we know his answer: *We being born forthwith ceased to be* (Wisdom v.). His long life now seems as one day. Ask him next: How long he has been in the prison-house? What can he answer: Since *one day is like a thousand years*? Ask him once again: How long

he is to remain shut up in this prison of despair? How soon does he hope to be delivered? He can only answer with *weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth*—“*Fremet et tabescet*”. He shudders with horror, and pines away, but he cannot pronounce the word—the only true word: “For ever”: “for eternity”. He can only howl out his wail, so old! oh, so old! and yet, still quite fresh and new: *We fools! The serpent deceived me.*

G. *Weep not over Me, but over yourselves.*

It is no wonder then at all that the tender Heart of Jesus, God and Man, says, *Weep not over Me*. For He sees Hell, and hears the wailing there.

No wonder that the Eternal Father consents with gladness ineffable that He shall deliver Himself, and betray Himself, and sacrifice Himself, and give up all His own rights, to rescue the poor sinner from spending his eternity under the power of Lucifer.

No wonder that the most tender-hearted of all mothers goes with her only Son, step by step, to see Him suffer, and to look on Him as He dies; and at every blow, every bruise, every fall, and every outrage, says in her heart her own glorious word: *Fiat, fiat*: if only the poor sinner, the fallen child of my God, be snatched out of the jaws of the destroyer.

H. *Weep not over Me, but over yourselves and over your children.*

What wonder, too, that our Divine Lord, when Peter said to Him, *Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee*; and again, *Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee*; and the third time, in grief of heart because his love seemed to be doubted: *Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee*—what wonder that then our Saviour made answer: *Feed My lambs; feed My sheep*: that is, if thou lovest Me, take care of My lambs; take care of My sheep; go and rescue My lost sheep for Me. *Break the jaws of him who was a murderer from the beginning, and out of his teeth (take) away the prey.*

I. *Then shall they begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us; and to the hills: Cover us.*

The terrible siege of Jerusalem, and the wars that rage in the world from time to time; pestilence, also, and famines and earthquakes, these are all, our Lord tells us, only *the beginning of sorrows*. Like the Egyptian darkness, they are *an image*, a foreshadowing of worse things to come. The first day, the opening day of the real sorrows, that *day of misery and calamity*, is the day when the impenitent soul hears at the judgment-seat, from the lips of Jesus Crucified, the words: *Depart from Me*.

Quantus tremor est futurus,  
Quando Judex est venturus,  
Cuncta stricte discussurus.

Ah! what trembling then shall be,  
When the Lord in majesty,  
Comes to judge iniquity.

How blessed they who now betimes, before the *summer is over and the harvest is past*, have the grace to cry out earnestly: *Pierce Thou (O Lord) my flesh with Thy fear; for I am afraid of Thy judgments* (Psalm cxviii.).

Alas! why have we to pray earnestly for this fear? The murderer, when his day of doom is near, has not to go in quest of fear, nor to labour for it. It thrusts itself upon him. He cannot sleep for fear. The gallows is before him; darkness cannot hide it. But sin so dims the light of faith in us, that it is with us *as in the days before the Flood*. *They were eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage, even till the day in which Noe entered into the ark, and they knew not till the Flood came, and took them all away; so shall the coming of the Son of Man be* (St. Matt. xxiv.). *Their little ones go out like a flock, and their children dance and play. They take the timbrel and the harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down into Hell* (Job xxi.).

J. *Then shall they begin to say to the mountains: Fall upon us.*

Our Blessed Lord tells us of the *wrath to come*; purposely that when it comes, it may find in us no fuel, nothing to be consigned to *everlasting burnings*. If He were an

enemy, anxious to chastise and to be avenged, He would not forewarn us so earnestly and so often. *Take ye heed, watch and pray.* This is the practical moral of all His warnings: *And what I say to you, I say to all: Watch* (St. Mark xiii.).

K. *The days will come when they shall say: Blessed are the barren.*

A good child carefully trained is to its father and mother on their death-bed: "*Gaudium meum et corona mea*"—*My joy and my crown* (Philipp. iv.). And at the judgment-seat, when the Christian father or mother dies, the Guardian Angels of these well-trained children will plead far more persuasively than the widows of Joppa pleaded with St. Peter round the dead body of Dorcas (Acts ix.). They will have something better to show than coats and garments made for their little ones. And as He listens to the pleading, our Blessed Lord will answer with infinite contentment and gratitude: *Come, you blessed of My Father: for as long as you did it to My little ones, you did it to Me.*

But if, through the heartless neglect of parents, our Lord is obliged to say of the child: *Better for him if that man had not been born*, such parents may have one day good reason to say: *Blessed are the barren.*

*Pierce, then, O Lord, my flesh with Thy fear*, lest I scandalise any of Thy little ones—Thy children, or Thy poor, or any of Thine who are weak.

Holy Job tells us how he was through life kept from wronging any of God's little ones: *For I have always feared God as waves swelling over me; and His weight I was not able to bear—For what shall I do when God shall rise to judge? Did not He that made me in the womb make him (my neighbour) also?* (c. xxxi.).

## SCENE IX.

## AT THE FOOT OF CALVARY.

## STATION I.

*And they came to the place that is called Golgotha, which is the place of Calvary (St. Matt. xxvii. 33).*

A. From the Judicial Gate the procession has come up northward, passing close along the upper part of the western wall of the city. At a distance of a hundred yards from Calvary, as has been said, the road to Gabaon branches off, and at the junction of the two roads the women of Jerusalem are wailing. As we may well believe, the feverish impatience of the Priests and Ancients is intolerant of all delay. Yet the will of our Lord is always supreme; and so, despite their impatient haste, they halt perforce—they halt for the short moment while He is addressing the mourners.

Then these unhappy Rulers, whose malice makes them grievous to themselves, urge the guards to redeem time lost by more haste.

*“Do it quickly, do it quickly, we pray you. For even at this hour the fickle Governor may change his purpose; or the people may turn soft-hearted, like the foolish women; or the Galilean may escape, with the help of Beelzebub.”*

Quickly then, they drag our Saviour over the remaining one hundred and thirty yards, and they arrive at the south side of the place of Calvary.

I. We may notice in passing that, though we call it commonly “Mount Calvary,” it is not so called in the Gospel. The Gospel name is *the place called Golgotha, or the place of Calvary*. In reality, as far as we can learn, Calvary could scarcely be called a hill, or mount. The city and suburbs stood on five hills. Sion to the south-west, Moriah to the east, Bezetha to the north-east, and Gareb to the north-west. Acra was a lower hill in the centre of these four. Gareb, on the west, is not a high hill, and *the place of Calvary* stands on its very gentle slope. The road then from the Judicial Gate has been up a very slight incline. The

ground all around is rough and rocky. *The place of Calvary* is, as far as we can learn, a small plateau, raised about twenty feet above the ground around it, and perhaps sixty feet from east to west, by forty or fifty from north to south.

II. Though it stands about four hundred yards to the north of the Judicial Gate, through which the procession left the city, yet it is not more than one tenth of that distance from the nearest part of the western wall. St. John writes: *The place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city.* Probably nothing more than the deep fosse, or city ditch, lay between Calvary and the upper western wall. The great Basilica built by St. Helen and her son, Constantine the Great, stood east and west. At the extreme western part of it was the Holy Sepulchre. Then came *the place of Calvary*, which, in the original Basilica, they very wisely did not roof over, but merely surrounded it with a colonnade. Then came the long nave which stretched across the old fosse, so that the eastern wall of the great Basilica rested on the foundation of the western wall of the city, or as some say stood within the city.

Coming then from the south to Golgotha, the Priests and soldiers find a steep side of Golgotha in front of them; and if the local tradition be true, they pass along the western side of the small plateau to the north, where they find an easy ascent to the level. On the east side of Calvary there is a deep precipice, as the fosse lies there. It was in this fosse or ditch that St. Helen found the Holy Cross buried, along with the other crosses. On the western side of Calvary the descent is less steep, and at a short distance of about ninety feet from where the Cross stands is the small garden in which the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea was *hewn out in the rock.*

The great crowd that has gathered for the spectacle naturally place themselves, not on the east side of Calvary, where the deep fosse lies, but on the western and southern sides. Accordingly, we find a tradition existing that the crucified had their faces to the west, and consequently their backs turned to the city.

III. The name Golgotha, or Calvary, is interpreted, skull. The place of Calvary would therefore mean the place of the skull. The origin of the name is, according to some writers, that the skull of Adam given by Noe to one of his sons was there buried. Such a tradition would account for the name better than some of the other explanations offered.

St. Jerome mentions that he was told by a Jew, they had a tradition that it was to Calvary Abraham took his son Isaac to be sacrificed.

### *B. They came to the place which is called Golgotha.*

From the common tradition we learn that our Blessed Saviour fell once more to the ground when He arrived at the foot of Calvary. This is the third fall since He left

the Prætorium, and, as we are told by those who have diligently collected all traditions and revelations concerning the Sacred Passion, it is the twenty-third fall since He left last night the Garden of Gethsemani. As then we have seen in a former chapter that it was shown to the holy Spanish Abbess that the frequency of these most painful falls was reduced at the prayer of our Blessed Lady, we can understand to what an extreme degree our Blessed Saviour is permitting natural causes, such as the loss of blood, and the weakness brought on by labours and watching and severe fasting, to afflict Him now.

C. *They came to the place of Calvary.*

Let us pause for a while to think of the violent irritation of the Priests and Ancients at this fresh delay and all the trouble which Jesus is giving them. See how they turn their mules and hasten to the spot, and urge the guards to compel Him to rise at once and hasten forward. "This trick has been tried too often. He has been eased of the Cross, there is no excuse for falling now. This is pretence, to move the foolish women to more lamentation, or to rouse the silly people to rescue Him." To deserve a still larger dole of blood money, the soldiers respond readily. Blows and kicks and imprecations are multiplied, and we are told that, as He lies on the ground, a new revenge occurs to them for the trouble He is causing by falling. "As He is fond of the earth, let Him have it," and they fill His sacred mouth with the dust and dirt of the road.

His loving Heart is content to endure this, and much more, if He can only make us contrite for the sins of the palate, and the wickedness of the sinful tongue.

D. *They came to the place of Calvary.*

St. James had reason to write that *the anger of men worketh not the justice of God*. Who deserves these heavy blows and cruel kicks? Jesus, for falling down, or the Ancients, who are so angry that He falls?

*What have I done to thee? Why strikest thou me, lo!*

now this third time? the patient beast of burden said to Balaam. O My people, Jesus now says meekly, as He lies on the ground, *What have I done to thee? Why strikest thou Me, lo! now this third time?* Is it a wonder that I lie down weary at this sixth hour?

E. Yet now once more He adds, *Weep not over Me, but weep over yourselves.* For meek as He is, and *easy to forgive evils*, yet He knows that the strong and mighty who are cruel to Him or to His little ones, will be *mightily tormented*. What seems to be an imprecation coming from Him, is only the prophecy of His sorrowful Heart. *Let their eyes be darkened, and their back bend Thou down always. Pour out Thy indignation upon them; and let Thy wrathful anger take hold of them, because they have persecuted Him Whom Thou hast smitten; and they have added to the grief of My wounds. Add Thou iniquity upon their iniquity, and let them not come unto Thy justice. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living; and with the just let them not be written* (Psalm lxxviii.).

F. *They came to the place of Calvary.*

Lying on the ground, our Blessed Saviour says to us most feelingly, "Have compassion on the fallen. Do not add to the grief of (their) wounds."

When the people represented to Roboam what they had suffered during the reign of Solomon, his father, he answered mercilessly, *I will add to your yoke. My father beat you with whips, but I will beat you with scorpions* (3 Kings xii.). When my neighbour is already sore and angry, shall I add to his bitterness?

If one has wronged me grievously, he has wronged himself far more than me. The more he has wronged me, the more deeply he has himself fallen. He greatly needs compassion. If he perseveres in his sin, he is lost for ever. Alas! poor fallen child of God, *who shall heal thee?* Some one must pray with a heart like St. Stephen's, *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.* Otherwise God's justice will surely lie heavy on all those who wrong others. We must

make haste then to pray earnestly for those who have sinned by wronging us. If we add to the grief of their wounds, and scourge them with scorpions, who shall heal them?

By the side of my Lord lying on the ground, I will think over years gone by: how have I treated the fallen? servants who have displeased me? children who have committed some fault? an old friend with whom I have quarrelled? neighbours, relatives, whom I have known to be in sin? What have I done to lift them all up?

Have I tried to raise them from the earth? Or have I broken the *bruised reed*? Have I stamped out the last sparks of life, and *extinguished the smoking flax*? Have I been more harsh because it is now the third time that my neighbour has fallen? The weaker he is, the more he needs help to rise. Not only seven times, but seventy times seven times I must try to lift him up.

*G. They came to the place of Calvary.*

And when I have fallen down myself, and on account of my relapses am losing hope, our compassionate Saviour reminds me that He fell so often during the Passion, to make me see that He is quite aware of my infirmities and relapses, and has made satisfaction for them all. *For He knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are dust* (Psalm cii.).

While contemplating Jesus lying so faint, so exhausted on the ground, our Angel says to us: *We have not a High Priest who cannot have compassion on our infirmities*. From the ground He says to us: *Come to Me all you who labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you* (St. Matt. xi.).

*H. They came to the place of Calvary.*

At length Annas, or some other leader, not because compassionate, but through worldly wisdom and politic malice, warns them that if they are too savage, Jesus may expire before they can see Him crucified. Therefore the storm of angry words and blows is suddenly lulled; and they raise Him more gently, and lead Him more carefully

—whither? To death and crucifixion. To the eye of men, they seem to be turned to mercy, but their mercy is only cruel policy.

If I treat a servant well in order to get good work out of him, and then cast him off in his old age when he cannot serve me, is this kind charity? *Do not heathens do this much?* If I entertain neighbours luxuriously in the hope of future favours, is this hospitality?

“Soul of Christ, sanctify us. Body of Christ, save us. Blood of Christ, inebriate us. Heart of Jesus, inflame us. Passion of Christ, strengthen us.”

I. *They came to the place of Calvary.*

Contemplate the Ever-Blessed Mother as she stands with her weeping eyes fixed on her Divine Son prostrate on the ground.

She knows His secret; how He is making His offertory to His Eternal Father before He ascends to the altar to offer the Holy Sacrifice.

“In the spirit of humility, O my Father, and a contrite heart, may we be accepted by Thee. And so may our sacrifice be this day offered in Thy sight, that it may please Thee, Lord our God.”

“Mother of God, pray for us sinners, that prostrate in spirit by His side we may say from our hearts: *We have sinned, we have committed iniquity. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face. It is not for our justifications that we present our prayers before Thy face, but for the multitude of Thy tender mercies. O Lord, hear: O Lord, be appeased: hearken and do: delay not for Thy own sake*” (Daniel ix.).

On our Good Fridays, when we see the priests prostrate while the altar is being made ready for the Mass of the Presanctified, we may call to mind our Saviour prostrate at the foot of Calvary.

## SCENE X.

## ON CALVARY.

*And they bring Him INTO THE PLACE called Golgotha, which being interpreted is the place of Calvary (St. Mark xv. 22).*

Jerusalem on the eastern, southern, and western sides, was surrounded by valleys, so that, in those days, it was considered to be on these three sides impregnable. But on the north lay Mount Scopus, and between this hill and Jerusalem the ground was on a level with the city, if not higher; so that it was in this quarter that the Assyrians and Romans, and, in after times, the Crusaders, pitched their camp and assailed the city. The little plateau of Calvary in this respect bore a resemblance to the city. On the south, west, and east, the sides are more steep, but on the north the approach is easy. Therefore, as has been said, the Priests and Ancients coming from the south, pass along the western side, and arrive at the north, and then turn round and face the south, and easily reach the level. On the place of Calvary, and around it, the ground, as has been already said, is rocky.

Caves or grottoes abound in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, as elsewhere in Judea. If the tradition preserved in Jerusalem be correct, arriving at Calvary, with their faces now turned to the south, they find on their left hand one of these caves or grottoes, which, as we shall see, they turn to account.

The ground, as has been just said, is rocky. If Golgotha has been, as many think, a common place of execution, there are doubtless holes already in the rock, into which the crosses can be dropped, and there fixed. If not, such holes must be prepared, and this requires a little time. We read that four soldiers are told off for each of the condemned, and over them all is the Centurion. Other guards are, no doubt, stationed round about, to keep order, and prevent any attempt at rescue. In the early days of our Lord's Public Life, as St. Luke writes, *the Scribes and Pharisees were filled with madness* (St. Luke vi.). It is the same still. What more foolish than the fear that Jesus will not die?

Observe, too, how the Chief Priests, though they much desire that the people may hold them innocent of the blood of Jesus, and ascribe His death entirely to Roman law, yet, in their state of restless malice, have not prudence to keep at a distance; they are on the ground, directing and urging on the work.

The delay necessary for the preparing of holes in the rock, is to them a time of terror. He may escape, and therefore, according to the tradition still extant in Jerusalem, they give orders that Jesus be confined in the little cave or grotto which

they discover on the left hand, below the level of Calvary, and that He be there guarded strictly till all is ready.

On the site of this cave, as is supposed, stands the little chapel still called the Prison of our Lord. And the Greeks add further details to the tradition, for they represent our Blessed Lord seated in the grotto, with His legs secured in stocks, so that escape may be impossible.

#### STATION I.

*And they gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall. And when He had tasted, He would not drink (St. Matt. xxvii.). And they gave Him to drink wine mingled with myrrh, but He took it not (St. Mark xv.).*

A. The mother of King Lamuel, instructing her son, says to him: *Give strong drink to them that are sad, and wine to them that are grieved in mind (Prov. xxxi.).*

We are told that there existed in Jerusalem a confraternity of pious women, who, following perchance this counsel, undertook, among other good works, to provide myrrhed wine for those condemned to the terrible punishment of crucifixion. This drink was supposed to have the effect of deadening their sense of pain.

St. Mark states that the ordinary drink, *wine mingled with myrrh*, was given to our Blessed Saviour. Some commentators therefore interpret St. Matthew's words, *They gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall*, as if they only meant that the wine mingled with myrrh was bitter as gall. But the sense more generally accepted is the literal one, that the soldiers threw gall into the myrrhed wine. This view is in keeping with the prophetic words, *They gave Me gall for My food, and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink (Psalm lxviii.).* The vinegar is not offered to Jesus at present, not till towards the end of the Three Hours.

From these words of the 68th Psalm, Father à Lapide, and an early Father quoted by him, conjecture that gall in a solid state is thrown into the wine offered to our Saviour. The gall is *food*, the vinegar *drink*.

*They gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall.*

Why do the soldiers mingle gall with the wine? Is He not suffering enough already? Is He not *sad*? Is He not one of those *grieved in mind* who might be allowed wine to strengthen and deaden pain?

1. One answer may be that cruelty, like other vices, grows by indulgence. Besides, the soldiers have been urged on by bribes and flattery to be cruel. They have become inhuman. *They have persecuted Him Whom Thou hast smitten, and have added to the grief of My wounds* (Psalm lxxviii.).

Contemplate them with mock pity encouraging Jesus to drink, telling Him that He must be weary, and also detailing what they have in store for Him. He will surely want support.

2. Then besides, if this is good wine, provided for the Crucified by charity, by spoiling a little of it with gall, they hope that He will not drink, and it will become their portion.

3. Then we know, moreover, that the unseen spirits are counselling and directing. They have two wishes—one, that men may multiply heinous sins, and afterwards despair; the other, to see if by any possibility they can wear out the meek patience of Jesus. *Let us examine Him by outrages and torments, that we may know His meekness and try His patience* (Wisdom ii.).

4. Lastly. Our Lord Himself is ever hungering and thirsting for every new shape of suffering that may be useful to Him hereafter in His work of redeeming. He knows full well the promise: *Because His soul hath laboured, He shall see and be filled* (Isaias liii.).

Many holy thoughts shall be revealed out of the hearts of men while they *consider in their hearts* the exhaustion of our Blessed Saviour and the cruel refreshment offered to Him.

B. *They gave Him wine mingled with gall.*

“Why, O my soul,” St. Augustine asks, “why art thou not inebriated with the bitterness of compunction

and tears since His refreshment is the bitterness of gall?"

And again. "I was the slave of gluttony, Thou art afflicted by hunger; I tasted the sweetness of the forbidden fruit, Thou the bitterness of gall. Behold, O King of glory, behold how my heartlessness stands out apparent through Thy tenderness."

From another devout heart this thought is revealed. Of Thy dealings with us, dear Lord, and especially in the Most Holy Sacrament, it is written, *He fed them with the fat of wheat, He filled them with honey out of the rock* (Psalm lxxx.).

What do we give you in return? "*Quid retribuam Domino?*" Gall for His food, vinegar to drink. *Foolish and senseless people, is this the return thou makest to the Lord?* (Deut. xxxii.).

C. *And when He had tasted, He would not drink.*

Our Lord then does taste the bitter and nauseous draught. Whatever suffering it can inflict upon His palate comes to Him; but He will not drink. Most reverently we may ask, Why will He not drink?

One reason is that He has no wish at all, by numbing His senses, to escape one pain. Neither does He wish men to think that He is ready to escape pain when He can. He wishes all to know that He has been offered merely because He willed it.

Again, He said a week ago, *Trade and traffic till I come.* He is now trading and trafficking with extreme diligence. For He knows that *the night is coming*, and coming very soon, *when no man can work* or traffic any more. Once the appointed moment comes, He must bow His Head in willing obedience to His Eternal Father, and die. After that He can never any more teach us and move us and win us by suffering. Therefore has He arranged that during the watches of last night, and the hours of to-day, sufferings beyond all count and number shall be given to Him, *heaped up, shaken together, and flowing over.*

The Psalmist writes: *I will rejoice over Thy words, as one that hath found great spoil* (Psalm cxviii.). Our Blessed Lord is more greedy of sufferings than the most covetous are of money or treasure. He is consumed with the desire to bring men to believe that to suffer for their God is their highest privilege on this earth. He is loth indeed to consent that one *particle of the good gift* shall go from Him or from His Most Blessed Mother.

In the Life of St. Dominic it is told that a holy woman who had by looking at Jesus Crucified become like to Him, was found by him in a lonely spot, with her flesh much eaten away by disease. Already the Prophet's words were verified in her: *Worms shall be thy covering* (Isaias xiv.), and the words too of holy Job: *My flesh is clothed with rottenness and the filth of dust* (Job vii.).

Jesus Crucified, Who has made all things new, had given to this suffering Saint a share of His own ineffable contentment in suffering, and His greediness for pain and distress, so much so that if a worm or a maggot fell out of its place upon her flesh to the ground, she carefully replaced it again upon the wound, and all the while was *speaking to (herself) in psalms and hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in her heart to the Lord* (Ephes. v.).

"*Flesh and blood did not teach you this,*" Jesus said to St. Peter. So would He say too to this dying Saint who is *desiring to be dissolved* and to be with her Master.

What price is there that our flesh and blood will not willingly pay to escape from pain? But the Archangel said to our Lady, *No word shall be impossible with God.* That is, now that the Son of God has set His hand to the work of redeeming fallen man, and raising him up from the dunghill, He never will look back, and nothing that grace can do shall remain undone. His disciples shall do even greater works than He has done. If holy Job, who never stood in spirit on Calvary, never contemplated the Passion of Jesus or the Compassion of Holy Mary, is yet

of this mind: *I have said to rottenness, thou art my father; to worms, my mother and my sister* (Job xvii.), need we be incredulous when we read of the wonders wrought in men who live in spirit on Calvary, and are fed on the Body of the Lord, and inebriated with His Blood?

Alas! they are not the great prodigies. But if I can live near the burning Heart of Jesus, and still remain cold, if I can drink of the Sacred Blood, and know nothing of the intoxication of Divine love, I am the most mournful of prodigies.

*D. He would not drink.*

Some holy Fathers say, it was not the bitterness of gall that He shrunk from, but that which is signified by gall, the poison and guilt of sin. The penalties of sin are dear to Him. *Dulce lignum! dulces clavos!* But He wishes all to know that He never can have the guilt, the bitterness of sin, incorporated with Him.

*E. He would not drink.*

In the contemplations of the Venerable Abbess d'Agreda we find a different thought, that though His tormentors imagine that the drink will numb His sense of pain, yet in reality, if our Lord continue to drink, His sufferings will by the gall be aggravated exceedingly; and that in this instance again it was the cry of our Lady's motherly heart that induces Him to sacrifice one suffering, and to give infinite pleasure to His Father in another way, by deferring to her. *Look and do according to the Model.* By giving up things holy, as prayer or penance, out of charity, we may honour God greatly.

And here we may call to mind, that as she is by compassion sharing every pain of His, so He, by having her present, and allowing her the privilege and position of the second Eve, is doubling every pain of His own. While we endeavour to realise a little of what compassion means in her, we must always remember that His compassion for her is immeasurably more keen than her compassion for Him. He then is always undergoing two distinct and separate Passions—one from His own wounds of Soul

and Body, the other through sharing all her anguish. If she is watching every wound that appears on Him, He is, with an eye infinitely more acute and quick, noticing every sorrow of her heart, and every suffering of her most delicate and sinless body.

*F. He would not drink.*

As has been said, it may be that the heartless executioners are regaling themselves with the wine intended for Jesus, and are fulfilling what was written, *They that drink wine made Me their song*. These unpitying soldiers may be making merry over their happy device of preventing Him from drinking by spoiling the wine, and while they regale themselves, be afflicting His sacred ears with ribald songs and jests.

What are the thoughts of our most meek Saviour meanwhile? The Psalm goes on to tell us: *As for Me, My prayer is to Thee, O Lord, for the time of Thy good pleasure, O God*. His Heart, in the most perfect submission to His Father, is pining with desire that the hour of redemption may come quickly. *Thou shalt arise and have mercy on Sion, for it is time to have mercy on it, for the time is come* (Psalm ci.).

*G. He would not drink.*

He is not yet on the place of Calvary. The little prison is lower down than the level. He is the Great High Priest waiting for a brief while—as the priest waits in the sacristy before he ascends to the altar of God—saying, meanwhile, in His Sacred Heart: *Introibo ad altare Dei*—“I will go in soon to the altar prepared for Me by My Father. He hath provided the altar, and the wood, and has fitted a Body to Me that I may be both Priest and Victim.”

“Blessed Mother of God, speak to our souls, say to us: *Ecce, Agnus Dei!* Look attentively, for my Son is *the Lamb of God Who taketh away the sins of the world.*”

She is not far from the door of His little prison, waiting and watching. Oh, how much better to be with her at this house of mourning, than to be, without her, in the

house of feasting. *Blessed is the man who watcheth daily at My gates, and waiteth at the posts of My door* (Prov. viii.).

“Blessed Mother, grant us to wait and watch with thee at the posts of this door. Show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, that with thee we may *mourn over Him as one mourneth for an only son.*”

H. *He would not drink.*

He was less thirsty when He sat by the well than He is now. In that hour, the sinful woman said to Him: *Sir, I perceive that thou art a Prophet. Our fathers adored on the mountains, and you say that at Jerusalem is the place where men adore. Jesus saith to her: Woman, believe Me, that the hour cometh when you shall neither on the mountain nor in Jerusalem adore the Father* (St. John iv.). That hour of promise is come now. Not in the Temple on Mount Moriah is the Lamb of God to be immolated. For to-day all things are made new. Jesus is come outside the gate, the holy Fathers teach us, because grace is no longer to be confined to one chosen city. The *clean oblation* is not to be offered any more only in one temple. *In every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered in My name a clean oblation.*

Therefore the new altar, the new sanctuary, Calvary, *the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense*, is not shut up within the walls of any one city. It stands in the open, and men from every land are gathered round it, waiting for the High Priest and the Sacrifice.

“The Cross,” St. Leo writes, “is to be the altar, not of one temple, but of the world.”

From to-day, the Mother of God and Mother of men shall have a long line of children, who with her will say: *Till the day break and the shadows retire, I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense* (Cant. iv.).

“Till the day of eternity dawn on me, till the shadows of this land of darkness roll away, I will make my home on the mountain of myrrh and on the hill of frankincense.”

I. *They gave Him wine to drink mingled with gall. He would not drink.*

*Look and do according to the pattern.* With the wine of this world and the good things offered by this world, how often there is a poison mixed; and, alas! for the moment we call the *bitter sweet*. It is only later, sometimes too late, that we find that it is indeed an *evil and a bitter thing* to leave the Lord our God.

J. *Wine mingled with gall.*

Our spiritual teachers advise us to remember, that when we spoil good intentions by mingling others with them that are not pure, we are offering to our Lord works that are *wine mingled with gall*.

K. *Wine mingled with gall.*

"O my Lord Jesus, *recogitabo tibi annos meos*. In the presence of Thy Most Holy Mother I will think over, with Thee and under Thy eyes, my years gone by; all those most unhappy hours when I offered Thee gall; and the blessed angels were saying of me: *Their vines are of the vineyard of Sodom, and of the suburbs of Gomorrha; their grapes are grapes of gall, and their clusters most bitter. Their wine is the gall of dragons, and the venom of asps, which is incurable*" (Deut. xxxii.).

STATION II.

*And they bring Him into the place called Golgotha*  
(St. Mark xv. 22).

I. As then on our Good Friday, at present, the priest waits prostrate in the sanctuary, on the lower level, while the attendants are on the predella arranging the holy altar, so Christ, the High Priest of *the good things to come* (Hebrews ix.), is waiting in His prison cell below, the condemned cell as we call it, while the attendants are making all ready in the sanctuary, and at the altar, *on the place of Calvary*.

II. Some are of opinion that they have to join together the two portions of the Cross, as, according to usage, so they state, the condemned criminal who had to carry his cross, while he bore on his shoulders the main beam, was made to carry the shorter transverse beam in his hands. The commonly received tradition among us, as represented in pious paintings, is against this view. If, however, this has to be done, they do it quickly. Very quickly, too, the holes are made ready in the rock in which the crosses shall be fixed.

III. Some of the ancient Fathers, and also of later writers, take for granted that, as a part of the preparation, the crosses are now already fixed firmly in the ground, and that our Blessed Saviour afterwards was standing upright when He was nailed to His Cross. St. Bridget, in her narrative, describes the Crucifixion as effected in this way. When the crosses were not higher than eight or nine feet, as seems to have often been the case, the condemned could easily be crucified standing upright. In our Saviour's case, the cross is supposed to have been fifteen feet in height, and therefore St. Bridget describes a platform erected on which He stood, and how at the bidding of the soldiers He placed Himself in position with His back to the Cross, and stretched out His hands for the nails.

Father Louis de Palma adopts St. Bridget's account of what she saw, and holds this to have been the ordinary mode of crucifixion.

The more commonly received opinion, however, is, that our Blessed Saviour was lying on the ground when crucified. This opinion is supported by the local tradition in Jerusalem. For in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre we find an altar erected on the spot where our Saviour lay down to be nailed to the Cross, and another on the spot where the Cross was raised and planted in the rock. The former altar belongs to the Latins; the latter to the Schismatic Greeks. This conception of the Crucifixion is also found in what are called the Revelations of some holy contemplatives. In a former chapter some explanation has been offered of the discrepancy observable between these writings of holy servants of God, which are called Revelations.

To those writers who with Father de Palma profess to follow ancient history, one answer is given which seems satisfactory: that when there was near a city a fixed place for executions, and when crucifixions were frequent, the crosses remained there stationary, and the condemned were therefore crucified standing upright. In other places, such as Jerusalem, where crucifixion was not an ordinary punishment, the condemned criminal had to carry his own cross to the place appointed, and in this case he was laid on the ground to be fastened to the cross.

According, then, to the tradition which is accepted in Jerusalem, we are told that the Cross is laid ready on the ground at about twenty-five yards from the cave where our Lord is confined; and that about twelve yards further on, the holes are ready in which the crosses are to be fixed.

#### *A. They bring Him into the place called Golgotha.*

While the appointed executioners are making preparations on the *place of Calvary*, we may contemplate the Priests and Ancients, who are watching and directing as masters of the ceremonies. With many flattering words

they are saying: "*Do it quickly*, brave men; and make all secure. The impostor, we reckon, will not easily escape out of the hands of Romans. He will not, we expect, get off this time." Probably, too, they have strong wine, not mixed with gall, ready for these men, that they may forget the ghastly nature of their work, and push forward with more energy. Bribes are also ready: "*Do it quickly*, and *lead Him cautiously*."

B. *They bring Him into the place called Calvary.*

All is now ready. The word is given: "Guards, bring Jesus forth! *Do it quickly: lead Him carefully*."

In the narrow cell, therefore, in the rock, they take off the fetters in which they have *humbled His feet*, and they set Him upright, and by the two chains fastened to His collar round His neck and by the ropes round His waist, they lead Him *as a lamb to the shearer, as a sheep to the slaughter*. They drag Him quickly up the incline till He stands on the plateau, on the *place of Calvary*. He is now in full view of the crowd gathered on the western and southern sides of Golgotha. When they are at fifteen yards' distance from the little prison, and ten yards' distance from the spot where the Cross is lying, they halt to prepare Him for death by stripping Him.

"*Attendite*." Let us pause a little while to consider in our hearts all that His wounds and bruises and swelling sores have suffered in that prison, at His going in and coming out, how roughly they set Him down on the rock, with what little tenderness and circumspection they lift Him again, and how as they hurry Him along, He is only saved from falling by their suddenly and violently jerking the chains hanging from His neck, and the ropes that bind Him. And the cry of His Heart to His angels is still: *Sinite modo*—Suffer thus far and much farther.

Even holy persons, when they are dying, are most grateful when some alleviation is found for their pain. To our Blessed Saviour, on the contrary, each moment is bringing fresh aggravation to His wounds. *They have*

added to the grief of My wounds. And it is with His full consent that each new agony comes. He courts them all, knowing that *in His bruises we are healed.*

C. Of holy Simeon we read that *he came by the Spirit into the Temple.* We may contemplate the devotion, the fervour with which our Great High Priest goes towards the altar of sacrifice. "*Introibo ad altare Dei.*"

"Blessed Mother of God, pray for the priests of thy Divine Son, when they are going to the altar. Say for us, Mother of Jesus: *May the Lord keep thy coming in and thy going out*" (Psalm cxx.).

And so, too, whenever we go to assist at Holy Mass or approach the holy altar, we too may pray that virtue may come out to our souls from our Saviour arriving at the place of Calvary.

### STATION III.

#### THE STRIPPING.

*They bring Him into the place called Golgotha (v. 22).*

A. The busy Priests and Ancients are arranging every ceremony: "Halt here! Strip Him! *Do it quickly*: but hold Him fast."

"*Attendite.*" We must stay a little while to watch the stripping of our Saviour.

The crown of thorns is pulled very quickly and very roughly out of the wounds and thrown down on the ground. The weight of the Cross, the frequent falls, the rough hands of the soldiers, have all helped to imbed the woollen tunic in the sacred wounds; but with their strong arms, the executioners very quickly tear it out again from all the *wounds and swelling sores.*

Oh, when even one wound has to be dressed, how imploringly does the sufferer appeal to the pity of the nurses to do their work gently and with circumspection! *With what circumspection*, Lord Jesus—it is Thy Holy Spirit Who gives us the word—*with what circumspection*, dost Thou

deal with each of our wounds, with our infirmities, with our follies! And how do we repay Thee? How do we treat Thy wounds? Do we dress them or bind them up or foment them with oil? If we could even wash them with a few tears of compassion and contrition!

The question is discussed: Was our Lord stripped of all His clothes?

Some eminent theologians are of opinion that He was. They support the opinion (1) on the authority of some of the early Fathers; (2) by alleging the usual practice of the Romans.

To these arguments it may be answered that unless a sufficient tradition be established, the words of one or two early Fathers cannot decide the question. We know, moreover, that the Fathers may sometimes use the word "naked" as we find it used in the Gospel, of St. Peter in his fishing-boat; in which case the received interpretation is that he had laid aside part of his clothing. No sufficient tradition is brought forward to establish that our Saviour hung naked on the Cross. If paintings and sculptures are any indication of the sense of the faithful, they are with few exceptions on the opposite side.

Then with regard to the argument from Roman practice. Even if such a practice can be established, it would not suffice as a convincing proof. For all through the Sacred Passion, we see usage and practice overruled to suit the designs of God. The crown of thorns was not according to Roman usage. Neither is it Roman practice to crucify a man declared over and over again to be innocent. On the other hand, the Romans did allow the breaking of the bones, but the Divine decree does not. Again, it was not Roman usage to open the side of the dead, but it is part of God's plan that this should be done.

The Venerable Abbess d'Agreda states emphatically that our Lady several times assured her that her Divine Son was never during His Passion entirely stripped of His clothing; and in the Revelations of St. Bridget we read that our Lady's veil was wrapped round His loins, when He was crucified.

Father Barradius, S.J., in his Commentary, considers it as certain that our Lord was not entirely stripped of His clothing.

B. Of St. John the Baptist we read that *beholding Jesus walking he saith, Behold the Lamb of God.* As they tear off the woven tunic, our Blessed Lady says to our hearts, *Behold the Lamb of God.* The paschal lamb roasted last night was only a picture of this Sacred Body—in which from the sole of the foot to the top of the Head there is no soundness—*wounds, bruises, swelling sores.*

“*Attendite.*” Stay a little while to look at the wounds not bound up nor dressed, nor fomented with oil, but all torn open and fresh. Stay a little while to *mourn for Him as one mourneth for an only son.*—*Behold the Lamb of God: Behold Him Who taketh away the sin of the world.* Mark, how His sacred flesh is quivering from the agony caused by this merciless undressing.

C. For the fourth time to-day our Blessed Saviour is now stripped. To His Eternal Father He is saying: *Thou knowest My reproach, My confusion, and My shame. In Thy sight are all they that afflict Me* (Psalm lxxviii.). Who are they that truly afflict our Lord? Those who love and worship this world and its riches; and His Heart is consoled in the thought of the many who contemplating this stripping, will take courage to spurn riches and love poverty.

D. Holy Job said: *Naked came I out of my mother's womb, naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done. Blessed be the name of the Lord* (c. i.). Our Blessed Saviour goes out of life more naked, in one sense, than when He came into the world. For now besides His clothes, the skin of His sacred Body and His sacred flesh are in part torn away. *If riches abound, set not your heart upon them* (Psalm lxi.).

E. When Aaron was called to the priesthood, vestments were made for him *of violet and purple, scarlet and fine linen* (Exodus xxxix.). Are there none for Jesus, the *High Priest of the good things to come*? None: for to-day He makes all things new. Never till this hour has man been High Priest and Victim too. *His wounds and bruises and swelling sores* are instead of *violet and purple and scarlet.* Behold our High Priest, and *behold the Lamb of God.*

F. And the Cross lying hard by is not only His altar; it is also *Cathedra docentis*—His pulpit, whence He teaches: teaches in the best way, that is, by example. He is going to die, and from His death-bed to teach us how to die.

So now, as a preparation for death, He is being stripped.

*"Attendite."* *"Siccine separat amara mors?"*—Does bitter death separate and strip in this way? Death strips us as no other power can. *Man, when he shall be dead and stripped, and consumed, I pray you, where is he?* (Job xiv.).

*Dead! stripped! consumed!* All the three words have much the same sense. What is death but a very violent stripping? The woven tunic is not torn off with a wrench so cruel as when death tears away the soul from the body. And what means the word *consumed*? Is it not that death's servants and helpmates, the worms and the rottenness of the grave, strip off the flesh from the bones?

We make, then, a good preparation for death by beginning to strip ourselves of the trappings of this world. *Oh death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions* (Ecclus. xli.). We are making an excellent preparation for death if we are divesting ourselves of some of those possessions in which the father of lies counsels us to place our peace and contentment.

Why does our most loving Saviour promise such marvellous rewards to those who leave house and lands and home for Him? Because He sees that they are preparing most wisely to die well, to be ready and willing and cheerful when He comes to call them away. For more than ever, in the hour of death, does He love a cheerful giver, one who says promptly and devoutly of life, as of all else: *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*

"Ever-Blessed Mother of God, watching at the death-bed of thy Son, pray for us sinners *now* and at the hour of our death—*now*, that we may not allow our hearts to have their peace in the poor possessions of the earth, but may do willingly ourselves what death will come to do whether we will it or not."

G. Richly indeed is he clothed in God's eyes who loves the poverty and nakedness and the wounds of Christ

Jesus. Who is so gloriously bejewelled as the martyr who can say: *I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body?* (Galat. vi.).

## SCENE XI.

## THE CRUCIFIXION.

## STATION I.

*And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, they crucified Him there* (St. Luke xxiii.).

*He went forth to that place which is called Calvary: where they crucified Him* (St. John xix.).

A. *They crucified Him there.*

The Cross is lying at twelve yards' distance from the spot where they have stripped Jesus. *There they crucified Him.* Contemplate these nurses, with hearts of stone, helping this Man *Whom God has smitten*, to His death-bed, and adding to the grief of His wounds. *Like a sheep*, we read, *He is led to the slaughter.* But the patient sheep is not led to a cross to be crucified. If we saw a brute beast so treated, we should be touched with compassion. Has not the Lord God a better claim? Mark how the Most Holy Mother watches with her eyes every step, and at every step she is growing in grace. For as she looks, virtue is ever coming out from His Heart to hers.

Mark, too, how the blessed angels desire to carry Him in their hands lest on the rugged rock He strike His bare and wounded foot against a stone; but they remain in motionless and most loving obedience.

B. *They crucified Him.*

It is but a word—like that other word, *Pilate took Jesus and scourged Him.* It is only a short word. You can read it quickly and pass on, and forget it. But the Ever-Blessed Mother says to us imploringly, "*O vos omnes.* O you who pass by the way, turn aside for a little while. Come to me and stay with me to understand what is hidden in

that word, *They crucified Him.* They crucified my Son. They crucified your Saviour."

*C. They crucified Him.*

When the priest arrives at the altar, he bows down to kiss it. Did Jesus of His own accord kneel down to kiss the Holy Rood? "*Domine, tu nosti.*"—*Lord, Thou knowest.* One thing is certain, that with an intensity and devotion infinitely beyond the fervour of His martyred Apostle, His Sacred Heart welcomes and salutes and venerates the Holy Rood, His friend, His ally, His helpmate in the work of redemption.

*D. They crucified Him.*

And the Priests are ever urging, *Do it quickly.* But in the Garden they had to wait for His pleasure. However much the storm is raging, the winds and the waves must obey Jesus of Nazareth. And therefore they must perforce pause till He has with infinite reverence bowed down before the Eternal Father to express Himself, with all the boundless ardour of His immeasurable love, obedient, *obedient unto death, obedient unto the death of the Cross.*—*I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send? and who shall go for us? And I said: Lo! here I am, send Me. And He said, Go* (Isaias vi.).

And as the Blessed Mother is made aware of this act of oblation—for nothing can He conceal to-day from her, His partner, His helpmate, the new Eve—with quite a new sense and feeling her heart once more breaks forth into her melody: *My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Jesus.*

*E. They crucified Him.*

While we contemplate the obedience of Jesus *to His Father unto death, unto the death of the Cross,* let us not forget that there is an obedience and a subjection far more wonderful: our unhallowed obedience, our slavish submission to our passions, to men and to Lucifer.

But, as has just now been said, the Priests and Ancients are urgent: "*Brave soldiers, good friends, do it quickly.*" And in His secret Heart Jesus is echoing the word, Oh, yes,

do it quickly. And in her compassionate heart too, the second Eve is responding: *Do it quickly.*

O man, were you suffering, how tenderly, with what circumspection would Jesus and His Blessed Mother nurse you and tend you! To any one who will dress a wound of yours or foment it with oil, He says: It is to Me you did it. "*Numquid redditur pro bono malum?*" Is it the rule? Is it a law of nature? Is it some necessity that we must be cruel to Him because He is so gentle and so loving to us?

Not gently, not lovingly, not with *circumspection*, not with care or consideration for His wounds, do they lay Him down on His death-bed. "*Do it quickly, faithful, trusty soldiers!*" And they do it quickly, hurriedly, roughly, and mercilessly.

#### F. *They crucified Him.*

From different sources, however, we learn that they considered some care necessary, but a most cruel care. For they resolve that it is necessary to measure Jesus for His death-bed. Their plan is to prepare the way for the large blunt nails by boring holes in the hard wood; and it has been shown to holy contemplatives that in order to have a plea for afterwards dragging and stretching and straining His sacred limbs, they purposely allowed more than good measure; and this, we are told, the Blessed Mother with her watchful eye at once discerns, and is seized with an anguish beyond all that has been till now, when she discovers that they intend to rack and drag His limbs till they are adjusted to the holes they are purposely preparing quite out of place.

O quam tristis et afflicta  
Fuit illa benedicta  
Mater unigeniti.

Oh, how sad, and wobegone,  
Was that ever-blessed one,  
Mother of that only Son.

"We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee, because by Thy Holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world."

Now with a new meaning the blessed angels are making

their prayer to the Eternal Father, *Behold, O God, and look on the face of Thy Christ.*

*G. They crucified Him.*

*Remember My judgment*, our most thoughtful and loving Saviour says to us: *for thine also shall be so; yesterday for Me, to-day for thee* (Ecclus. xxxviii.). "If to-day they measure Me for My death-bed, to-morrow they shall measure thee for thy coffin and thy shroud and thy narrow grave. Watch and be ready."

*H. They crucified Him.*

*Knowing all things that should come upon Him*, He went forth last night to give Himself up. And now, too, He knows well all they are going to do to Him. And He ratifies what they will. To His Blessed Mother's shuddering heart He once more says that meek word of Gethsemani: "*Sinite modo—Suffer ye thus far.* Yea, and much farther: for there is still much more that I must do for My vineyard."

He has in mind how in time to come His beloved disciples shall be stretched upon the rack; and though in His humility of Heart He is willing that His disciples do greater things than He does, and perchance suffer greater things than He suffers, yet He does wish to taste and share and sanctify every shape of pain and anguish that is to come to them. For He is to bear the yoke with each of them.

Most readily, most thoroughly, most lovingly the Blessed Mother acquiesces, and once more repeats in her heart her prayer of days gone by, her old word still ever new, and most welcome to her God: "*Behold (Thy) handmaid, my God, my Son: be it done to me according to Thy word.* Let them rack and tear my heart, if only fallen man shall be once again the child of our Father Who is in Heaven."

And accordingly they measure Him for crucifixion, and purposely mismeasure Him.

Then for a moment there is a lull for the last short

preparation. "*Do it quickly,*" the Heart of our Lord is saying; and the executioners lose no time. For, *according to Thy ordinance,* Lord Jesus, this day goeth on.

I. *They crucified Him.*

And now they are ready, and they command Jesus to stretch out His right arm, and to lay His hand carefully on the place they have made ready. He is *obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.* And not to God alone obedient, but to man, for His Father's sake.

Out of love for His Father He intends to obey man at the altar to the *consummation of the world.* This obedience shall often cost Him more than His obedience on Calvary.

The executioner therefore speaks the word, and it is done. He commands, and Jesus obeys, as if man were His Creator and His God.

J. *They crucified Him.*

In that hour the Ever-Blessed Mother hears the wielded hammer descend upon the large nail. For she is so placed that she hears all and sees all. She is not to be defrauded of the good day. *No particle of the good gift* shall pass her by (Ecclus. xiv.).

Her heart, too, quickened by her motherly love—*non fallunt viscera matrem*—hears the large blunt nail crunching its way through the bones and sinews and muscles of that sacred hand that blessed so many and harmed no one.

We are told that twelve heavy blows of the hammer are needed to drive the blunt nail through the hard wood. At the scourging Jesus says: *They have worked on My back,* like to the smith at his anvil. Now the brawny arm of the smith is fastening and riveting the sacred hand to the Holy Rood.

*Absit!* our human thoughts say; *Absit!* "Far be such a sound from thy ears, Blessed among women! For these things ought not to be to-day."

I. For on this day, thirty-four years ago, St. Gabriel was with thee at Nazareth, and the *Word was made flesh,*

and began to dwell in thy sacred womb. To-day, then, Jerusalem, the city of God, by a special privilege of its own, and by anticipation, ought to have already its Angelus bell, proclaiming from the housetop to the crowd round Golgotha the word whispered to thee in secret, that thou art *full of grace* and the *Lord is with thee*. For *thou art the glory of Jerusalem*.

2. And to-day, too, the trumpets ought to be pealing over Golgotha, and the people re-echoing the song first sung by Israel on the borders of the Red Sea: *Pharao's chariots and his army He hath cast into the Red Sea. The depths have covered them; they are sunk to the bottom like a stone* (Exodus xv.). For this is the festival of the Pasch.

3. To-day, again, all Judea and all the tribes of Israel ought to be following in procession Jesus of Nazareth, *mighty in word and work*, and *beautiful above the sons of men*, the second Adam, with the second Eve by His side; because on this sixth day of the week it was, and perchance at this sixth hour, that in the beginning the Eternal Father created man and woman to *His own image*. *To His own image He created them. Male and female, He created them*.

"But, oh, no! Not as we will, O God our Father, but as Thou. Thy thoughts are better than our thoughts; Thy ways are high above ours, as heaven is above earth."

As she listens to the sound of the falling hammer, "so strong," writes a holy Father, "is Mary's love for us that she can welcome even with a gladness, we may say, the Crucifixion of her Son". "*Quasi gaudenter*," that is, with that peace and gladness that *passeth understanding*.

For she knows, as she listens, that the nails are fastening to the Cross the handwriting that was against us; and, compared with the everlasting weeping and wailing, their sound is welcome, thrice welcome.

Oh, yes, it is the sound of the solemn and sacred passing-bell that marks fittingly and becomingly the most

sacred hour of this great day of grace, not to be forgotten in time or in eternity.

4. On this sixth day, and at this sixth hour, we are told, the first Adam stretched out his sinful hand to repay his God, his Creator, his Father, with disobedience and rebellion and treason, and apostasy to the ranks of Lucifer.

On this sixth day, and at the sixth hour, the second Adam, Jesus, in the flower and beauty of His Divine Manhood, with loving obedience stretches out His right hand to pay back to His Father and our Father, His God and our God, all that reverence and service and love of which the sacrilegious hand of our first father robbed Him.

Lo! His sacred, His feeble, His beneficent, His ever-healing hand, His hand of benediction, is nailed to the tree, as a reparation for the sin of the hand that stripped the tree—“*Non sicut delictum ita et donum*” (Romans v.). A thousand thousand times more ample and wide-reaching the reparation than the sin. The blessed angels can find no words sufficient for their ineffable gladness at the compensation made to their God.

Were holy Job here on Calvary, more devoutly, more feelingly than ever would he pray: My Lord and my God, *to the work of Thy hands Thou shalt stretch out Thy right hand.*

“Lord Jesus, while I contemplate this wound in Thy right hand, increase in me faith and hope and love and contrition. May I be able to say: *Now have I begun. This is the change of the right hand of the Most High.*”

On this day, holy Simeon foretold, *out of many hearts thoughts shall be revealed.*

The thoughts of men on Calvary are very unlike the thoughts of the Blessed Mother and the thoughts of the angels—watching unseen.

#### K. *They crucified Him.*

“Well done, well done, brave Romans!” the Priests and Ancients are saying with their desecrated tongues.

“Jesus, we think, will not easily undo this work of yours. Oh, well done!” And the man who has thus driven home the first nail, surely deserves largess. The oil of sinners, the flattery of wicked sinners, is poured out on his head, and the bribe of blood-money makes him happy. He rises up panting for breath after his hard work, but smiling over his success.

“*Do it quickly*, good friends; finish your work.”

Now is seen the reason why the heart of our Blessed Mother was sinking within her when she perceived the mismeasurement. The holes for the nails are designedly too far apart; but what matters that? His limbs can be stretched. And to His Eternal Father Jesus is saying: *My Heart is ready*, O God, *My Heart is ready*. In that hour He is not ignorant of the boast that a persecuting judge shall one day utter in this land of ours over the racked martyr: “I have made him a foot longer than God made him”. “*Sinite modo*—suffer ye so far, My angels; let it be; let Me taste the chalice of My martyrs and bless it.”

No bone, therefore, shall be broken: *You shall not break a bone of Him*, the watchful angels say to the souls of these executioners; but they can rack and stretch His limbs.

While one, then, kneels upon the crucified arm, that he may thus keep it in position, the other men use the strength of their strong arms to drag the left hand to its appointed place.

In the record left to us of holy Job, we read this marvellous prayer of his compassionate heart: *If I have denied to the poor what they desired, and made the eyes of the widow wait; if I have lifted my hand against the fatherless, let my shoulder fall from its joint* (Job xxxi.). If we were to make that prayer and it were heard, man could no more go forth to his work until the evening; our arms would be powerless. But Jesus, our Brother, our Surety, Who is become to-day the sinner for us; Who has put on our dress to bring down on Himself, not Esau's blessing, but the curse due to us:

He is making a great reparation for our unmerciful hands. His shoulder is dragged out of its joint.

L. *They crucified Him.*

A moment's pause, and once more the Blessed Mother is standing erect, with her weeping eyes fixed on the face of her Son, and she is again counting with her heart the blows of the hammer.

It is only the same thing over again, we say, for we easily tire of sorrow. We like to pass on, to find elsewhere a change. But the nailing of the left hand is not merely *what hath been done*. Since the right hand was crucified, the shoulder-joints have been racked till they are dislocated.

Since the right hand was crucified, these brawny men have knelt down and laid their weight on His wounded Body.

Since the right hand was crucified, pain that we cannot measure has been added to what was before; and those who watch the sick-bed well know that pain, as it goes on, wears out courage and resisting power.

Holy writers tell us that the agony is so great when the nail is being driven through the left hand, that, as last night in the Garden, Jesus ought by rights to have sunk down on the sward to die of grief—so now, by rights, He ought to swoon away from agony, and become lost to sense.

"*Attendite.*" Stay here a little while, for Jesus is not unconscious nor insensible. He can see, He can hear; He is attending to every compassionate word revealed out of our hearts.

M. *They crucified Him.*

As we look on these two crucified hands, *Sursum corda!* *Blessed is he, we read, that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor. The Lord will deliver him in the evil day. The Lord will help him on his bed of sorrow. THOU HAST TURNED ALL HIS COUCH, Lord Jesus, IN HIS SICKNESS (Psalm xl).*

It is with these two wounded hands that our Saviour will nurse His dying servant, who has had a right spirit

towards the poor. Oh, what a contrast! The gentleness, *the circumspection* wherewith Jesus will tend His suffering servant, *and turn his couch*, that is, as we say, make his bed; and the heartlessness, the cruelty, the savage inhumanity which man has for Him! *Nunquid redditur pro bono malum?* Is it a rule, a law of our fallen nature, that we must return malice for goodness?

“O compassionate Mother, show us more and more the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.”

N. *They crucified Him.*

His right hand and the left. *Thy hands have made me and formed me*, the Psalmist prays; *therefore, give me understanding.* When he uttered this prayer, his eye had not seen the hands of his God nailed to the wood. His ear had not heard His patient moaning, nor the hammer falling on the large, rough nail. It had not entered into his heart to conceive the Blessed Mother standing by and looking into the eyes of her Jesus while they are crucifying Him.

In quite a new way we may say: “*Thy hands have made me*, Lord Jesus; over again, in a better way, when, thanks to Thy Sacred Passion, we were born of water and the Holy Ghost”.

If holy Job had seen what we have seen, with fervour multiplied a hundred-fold, he would pray: *Thy hands have made me*, Lord Jesus, *and fashioned me round about; and dost Thou thus cast me down headlong on a sudden? Why dost Thou not suffer me to be clean from my iniquity?* (Job x.).

O. *They crucified Him.*

It was not only to Jerusalem that He spoke in the days of old—when *Sion said: The Lord hath forsaken me and the Lord hath forgotten me;* and He at once made haste to repel the calumny—*Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee.* BEHOLD I HAVE GRAVEN THEE IN MY HANDS, *and thy walls are always before My eyes* (Isa. xlix.).

Two proofs He gives that He cannot forget us, or cease to pity us: (1) Because He has all a mother’s pitying

love, and much more. To the best of fathers and mothers He has only given a small, very small spark of the fire burning in His own Heart.

And then (2) How can I forget thee? *I have graven thee in My hands.*

To-day this prophecy has its fulfilment. Aaron was to have the names of Israel's sons engraven on two precious stones attached to his ephod. Our High Priest chooses a more excellent way: He has us and our names engraven on His hands.

*P. They crucified Him.*

*Thou openest Thy hand, Lord Jesus, and fillest every creature with benediction.*

*"Attendite."* We must make leisure, to *consider* in our hearts that now all our blessings come to us from the wounded hands of our Lord. His Passion makes *all things new*. Water and wine, bread and oil, the sunlight and the still night, are all hallowed, and consecrated, and blessed, and elevated for our use, so as to have some share of that power to help us to Heaven that is given to sacramentals. Creation is created over again to-day; and the Eternal Father, Who gives us His only Son to-day to be our Jesus, *how shall He not also with Him give us all things?*

*Q. They crucified Him.*

We are told that each of the four executioners was allowed, as his perquisite and privilege, to drive in one of the nails. Therefore, on the second executioner too the *oil of the sinner* is now poured out to fatten his head. The unholy lips of the castaway Priests have blessings for him also. *"Euge, euge!" They opened their mouth wide against Me; they said, Well done, well done! Our eyes have seen it (Psalm xxxiv.). Well done!*

*"Good friends, you must be tired. You are not sad, we think, nor grieved in your mind, that we need offer you strong drink and wine, for you have done a good work. But our Law tells us to pay the workman the price of his labour the same day, before the going down of the sun."* Therefore they

give this man too his blood-money, and to both the *strong drink* that Lamuel's mother prescribes for *the sad*, and the wine she would have given to *them that are grieved in mind*.

R. *They crucified Him.*

"But now, brave men, good friends, brave men and faithful, *do it quickly*, finish your excellent work."

As our Saviour teaches, let us learn from *the children of this world*. These Priests and Ancients are working without any hope of reward, they are walking *through hard ways*, wearying *themselves in the ways of iniquity and destruction*. Yet mark their marvellous perseverance. As long as there remains something to be done, so long it is as if nothing had been done. They press forward to their goal, as if contending for the crown *incorruptible*, and *never fading*, of which the Apostles write.

"Ever-Blessed Mother, pray for us and at the hour of our death, that we may persevere to the end, and be saved."

S. *They crucified Him.*

The most troublesome part of the work is now to come. The ropes and chains, we are told, which had been used to bind our Saviour, must now help to stretch His Sacred Body.

"It is hard," they say, "well-nigh impossible, to draw down the feet to the place we have made ready." "No," one says, as they pause, "we shall never do it." And now, moreover, though the night was cold, the noonday sun of the Judean spring-time is very warm. The drops of sweat are gathering on the foreheads of these labourers. They are wearying *themselves in the way of iniquity*.

But, "Courage, brave men," the uneasy Rulers answer. "Courage. Rest a while, and refresh yourselves." *Let them drink and forget their want of strength, and remember their sorrow no more* (Prov. xxxi.).

So now, with renewed energy, some throw their weight on the wounded limbs, to prevent the sacred hands from being torn from their places. The others pull, and rack,

and dislocate the joints till they have forced the sacred feet to their proper position, and there bind them with ropes while they make ready the nails.

*They crucified Him.*

I. The question has been discussed whether the nails used were three or four. The more common opinion among the faithful is perhaps that there were only three. Those writers who compare the three vows of religious life to the three nails assume that there were only three. And yet commentators who study the question carefully come to the conclusion, (1) that no one nail of the size of those preserved as sacred relics could have transfixed the two sacred feet. And (2) they think, moreover, that in the annals of the Church more than three nails are accounted for.

II. These commentators further hold, that either there must have been a footboard to support the sacred feet, or a place hollowed out in the main beam of the Cross in which the feet could rest. Without some such support, they consider, the wounds in the sacred hands must have been so rent and torn that the Sacred Body would have fallen. This difficulty has led some writers to suppose that cords were used to help the nails to keep the Body in position on the Cross.

III. About the length of the Cross also there has been discussion. We are told that the cross used ordinarily did not exceed eight or nine feet in height, but that sometimes, when a more notorious criminal was to be crucified, a higher cross was used. Accordingly the common tradition is that our Saviour's Cross was fifteen feet in length. Certain writers suggest that the Rulers, wishing Him to be the conspicuous malefactor, arranged that His Cross should be taller than the others. This suggestion, however, cannot well be reconciled with the historical account accepted as authentic, that when St. Helen discovered the three crosses, she found it impossible to determine which was the Holy Rood, till the miraculous cure was wrought to solve the doubt. This story being accepted as genuine history, it becomes clear that the three crosses were equal in length, and clear too that the thieves were nailed to their crosses as Jesus was. If they had been only tied to the crosses, as some artists represent them in their paintings, St. Helen and the Patriarch would have discovered the True Cross by the holes for the nails.

IV. Certain early writers tell us that the Cross was made out of four kinds of wood—the palm, the olive, the cedar, and the cypress.

*T. They crucified Him.*

“*Attendite.*” Give heed. Let us watch with our eyes, and listen with our ears.

With our ears we hear the imprecations against Jesus,

because of the trouble He is giving. It is all His fault that they cannot more easily fit Him to His death-bed. Alas! What they are doing is what we too are apt to do. We blame others severely, and perchance chastise them for mistakes or faults which are the result of our own neglect, and our own blindness, and our own sins.

U. *They crucified Him.*

More heavy blows are needed to fasten the sacred feet to the wood than were wanted for the hands. The work is more difficult. And lo! after they have begun, when the Blessed Mother has heard the first, the second, the third terrible sound, there is unexpectedly an interruption. They find it, we are told, so difficult to force the blunt nail through the sacred foot, that they draw it out again, and with the gimlet which they use to prepare in the wood a passage for the nails, pierce the sacred feet also, that the nail may make its way more easily.

“Mother of Sorrows, pray for us sinners. Remind thy Son, Jesus, of His promise: *I will pour out upon (them) the spirit of grace and of prayers, and they shall look upon Me Whom they have pierced* (Zach. xii.). Do this for us, Holy Mother, obtain for us grace that we may continue to look on Him Whom we have pierced, till we realise with much contrition that *He was wounded for our iniquities*. His sacred feet are bruised and wounded and crucified, because our *ways are perverse, and our steps infamous* (Prov. ii.). We *walk not by the path of life, our steps are wandering and unaccountable* (Prov. v.). *We have erred from the way of truth. We have walked through hard ways, but the way of the Lord we have not known* (Wisdom v.). Alas! *The chastisement of our peace is upon Him.*”

V. *They crucified Him.*

Pilate asked, *What evil hath He done?* We may ask ourselves now, *What evil* have the innocent feet of our Lord done to deserve this cruelty?

(a) Ask those who lived with Him. They tell us: *He went about doing good.*

(b) Wake up out of his grave the Prophet of the Passion, the holy martyr, Isaias, and see how his tears will flow. Why, "these," he tells us, sobbing, "these are the feet I saw in my vision, so *beautiful upon the mountains; the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, and that preacheth peace*".

(c) Speak to St. Magdalen. Her tears tell us: "It was at these most sacred feet that I found grace and pardon and salvation. Let me wash them with my tears; let me with my contrite heart kiss them, and with the best spikenard anoint them: the beautiful feet that brought the Gospel of peace to my soul. But oh! what evil have they done that they should be crucified?"

W. *They crucified Him.*

If we doubt what others tell us concerning His crucified feet, we can, if we please, *consider in our heart* His own account of what is done in this hour. *Many dogs have encompassed Me; the council of the malignant hath besieged Me. They have dug My hands and feet; they have numbered all My bones. They have looked and stared on Me* (Psalm xxi.).

*They have dug My hands and feet.* If, as we are told by some diligent students of the Sacred Passion, the nails used are large blunted nails, the Psalmist's words will convey to us the work of the large blunt nail crushing its way slowly, and driven in, as the spade is forced into the hard soil. Others, however, among whom are Father à Lapide and St. Bridget, speak of the nails as sharp-pointed.

*They have numbered My bones.* For the pulling and dragging completes what the scourging left undone. It is easy now to number the bones of this mangled and racked and outstretched Body.

*Many dogs have encompassed Me.* For He is become a defenceless lamb, the prey of the wild dogs and the wolves.

*The council of the malignant hath besieged Me.* For see how the relentless Priests and Ancients press round, and keep close, and watch Him that He do not escape.

*And they have looked and stared on Me.* For they gloat over His agony, and are with staring eyes watching every feature of His sacred face.

And, meanwhile, we must not fail to mark all the pity, the compassion in His sacred eyes, with which He makes a return for their scowls.

*X. They crucified Him.*

And in his vision the Prophet saw strangers gazing on these sacred wounds, made by the nails, and heard them put this question to our Saviour: *What are these wounds in the midst of Thy hands?* We may add: *What are these wounds in Thy sacred feet?* And He has recorded the answer: *With these was I wounded in the house of them that loved Me* (Zach. xiii.).

*“Attendite.”* We must make leisure for these words. Clearly we see in them that what is impressed most deeply on our Saviour’s Heart is not the action of these pagan soldiers. Theirs are only the surface wounds. But the wounds that are gone deep and are fixed as a seal on His Heart, are those inflicted by disciples who have known Him and *once loved Him—in the house of them that loved Me.* Many times and in divers ways He repeats this truth to us. *If My enemy had reviled Me, I would verily have borne it. But thou, a man of one mind, My guide, and My familiar* (Psalm liv.).

St. Paul reminds us how much more grievous the sin is of those *who were once illuminated; have tasted also the Heavenly life* (the Blessed Eucharist), *and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost; have, moreover, tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come; and are, after all this, fallen away* (Hebrews vi.).

Alas! *who will give water to my head and a fountain of tears to my eyes?* (Jerem. ix.).

“Mother of God, pray for us sinners, that while we look on these wounds, we may have lively sentiments of faith, hope, and love, and contrition imprinted in our hearts.”

Y. *They crucified Him.*

The Romans are experts in this terrible art of crucifying. The weight of the body and the contortions and the struggles of the crucified, they know by experience, may loosen and dislodge the nails; but they have learned how to make all secure. In some of the most esteemed books on the Sacred Passion we find their plan detailed. The executioners turn the Holy Cross in order to clench the nails at the other side. Strong men can easily turn the Holy Rood. But what does this mean?

Contemplate our Blessed Lord with His bruised face and all His wounds pressed against the rock by the weight of the Cross. As He lies there, hear Him say to us: *I am a worm and no man.*

Hear our Blessed Lady also sob aloud: *O you who pass by, see if there be sorrow like to my sorrow.* For this is a new inhumanity; and we are told that it appalled the heart of His Blessed Mother. But once more the never-tiring meekness of her Divine Son tranquillises her with the word: "*Sinite modo—Suffer on still, Holy Mother. More, yet more! Weep not over Me, weep over your child, the poor sinner, the fallen child of God, whose soul hath cleaved to the pavement (Psalm cxviii.).* For when I say to him: *Sursum corda!*—look up, child of God!—like *the deaf as he stoppeth his ears,* and will not look on Me, but says: *He is grievous (to us) to behold.*"

## STATION II.

*They crucified Him there (St. Luke xxiii. 33).*

A. *They crucified Him.*

The Priests and Ancients and Scribes and Pharisees are beginning at last to breathe freely. He is crucified; He has not escaped. All through the night and ever since the dawn they have been fearing lest He should escape out of their hands. It was almost against hope that they hoped, for He has so often escaped them. Now, at

last, He is crucified. "Oh, well done, well done, comrades; the Romans know how to do their work. Do you think, soldiers, that Jesus, the great worker of miracles, will escape this time? Will He be able to undo your work?" They are greatly contented to see Jesus of Nazareth lying down at their feet with His face to the ground.

"Three days ago, do you remember, He was proclaiming at the Temple that He was the Lord spoken of by David. He was to sit on God's right hand, and to make His enemies His footstool. Who is the footstool now, Jesus?" For they stamp upon Him and tread Him under foot.

#### *B. They crucified Him.*

But there is no time to be lost. "Finish your excellent work, kind friends! Lift up the Cross: let the people see the seducer!" And their hilarity gets the better and better of their avarice; and they dole out again largess to the executioners.

It is stated that the hole prepared for the Cross was thirty feet from the spot where Jesus has been crucified. Over these thirty feet, we are told, they drag our Saviour as He lies, with His face downwards. But as it does not fit in with God's decrees that this excess of savage cruelty should have its full effect, the blessed angels, at the behest of the broken-hearted Mother, their Queen, interfere to give some protection to the Sacred Body.<sup>1</sup>

#### *C. They crucified Him.*

Pray *do it quickly*. Yet suddenly they discover that they must once again halt for a brief space. "We are forgetting," some one says, "that He is a King. Where is His crown? The King must die with His crown on His Head!" We find it specified in one of the copies of the sentence supposed to have been written by Pilate, that Jesus is to be mocked as a King in His Crucifixion. The crown, then, which is lying a few paces away, is quickly

<sup>1</sup> Contemplations of Venerable M. d'Agreda,

fetched, and quickly readjusted on the Sacred Head. The old wounds are reopened, fresh ones are made. Our Blessed Lord knows His own secret, where there is still place for a *wound*, a *bruise*, or a *swelling sore*. From the sole of His foot to the top of His Head, it is the wish of His Heart that there be no soundness in Him.

And Holy Mary once more in her heart says, "*Fiat mihi*". He knew all that was to come to Him when He offered Himself. And to her He had revealed all. He could not hide from her what He was about to do and suffer.

It is thou, Blessed Mother, who for our sakes, and for the glory of thy God, hast by thy consent placed this crown upon thy Son Jesus.

"*Attendite.*" Oh, let us make time, and go aside for a few moments to see our King in the diadem wherewith His Mother crowned Him on the day of His espousals. And His own Heart, so covetous of every pain that may help to win men to Him—His own Heart is urgent *that no particle of the good gifts* escape Him.

#### D. *They crucified Him.*

The delay is a short one. "Now, good friends, brave soldiers, lift up this great King. Let the people see the great Prophet, and understand what the Romans think of Him."

"*Attendite.*" Let us for a little while watch the raising of the Holy Rood. Oh, with how little tender nursing or *circumspection* do these flattered torturers handle the wounded Body while lifting the Cross! Mark how the Blessed Mother with her accurate compassion measures all the unspeakable anguish when they let down the Holy Cross with a jolt into the hole of the rock.

Then too with our eyes we must note the position of extreme distress and agony into which the Sacred Body settles down when it begins to hang on the erected Rood.

"Oh, be careful!" we cry out, if we see any one about to touch a wounded man. They train so carefully, we are

told, nurses for the battlefield, that they know how to lift the wounded skilfully, and even the men of the police force too, that they may understand how to carry to the hospital tenderly the suffering body bruised by an accident.

Contemplate too and note with what scant commiseration and tenderness they drive in the wedges to fix firmly the unsteady and reeling Cross.

The Blessed Mother alone can measure the power of each shock and each jolt to reproduce the pain of the *wounds and bruises and swelling sores*.

For indeed they *are not bound up, nor dressed, nor fomented with oil*.

E. *They crucified Him.*

The triumph of the Rulers seems complete. Annas is receiving congratulations. His policy has won the day. Jesus of Nazareth is crucified. In the excess of their jubilation the Priests and severe Pharisees are inclined to forget their outer gravity and decorum. They gesticulate to the people to draw near and behold. The Cross stands erect. The people can all see the mock King, the false Prophet, the seducer, Who dared to denounce and revile the Priests and Ancients. Perchance they give command to their hirelings to raise a shout of triumph, to mark the accomplishment of the great work and proclaim from Golgotha the glad tidings of great joy, that Jesus is crucified, that the one Man is about to die in order that the whole race may not perish.

Meanwhile, there is a peace come, a balm given to the Heart of our Lord. He is at last lifted up from the earth. His good time is come. The promises shall begin to have their fulfilment. *I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself.* And from His Heart into the heart of His Blessed Mother there goes out *that peace which passeth understanding, that peace which the world cannot give.*

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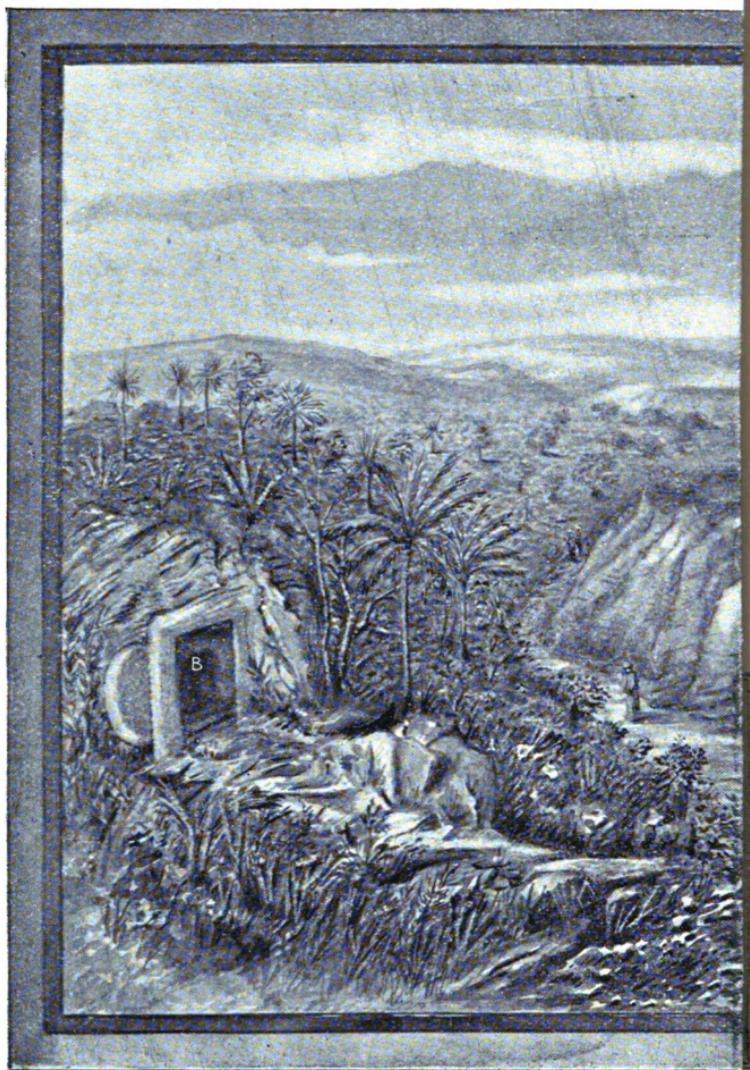
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## CHAPTER III.

## THIRD WATCH OF THE DAY.

The Sixth Hour.

## SCENE I.

## THE PLACE CALLED GOLGOTHA.

## STATION I.

*Then were crucified with Him two thieves : one on the right hand, and one on the left (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

*They crucified Him there : and the robbers, one on the right hand, and the other on the left (St. Luke xxiii.).*

A. *They crucified Him there.*

Our Blessed Lord is now *lifted up*, hanging on His Cross. The Chief Priests and Ancients are smiling on one another. Annas, their great leader, is like one who has earned a triumph. He is not praying: *Let not the oil of sinners fatten my head.* His heart is not crying out: *Not to us give glory.* But all is not ready yet for the shout of triumph, and the peal of trumpets. Jesus must die as a malefactor and with malefactors. Their opening word to Pilate this morning was, *If He were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to thee.*

In spite of want of proof, in spite of Pilate's obstinate resistance, they have Him condemned and crucified. All that is wanted now is that He be *reputed with the wicked*, and die in the company of malefactors.

B. *Then were crucified with Him two thieves.*

Their desire is soon accomplished. As has been already mentioned, each of the condemned has his own four exe-

cutioners; each his own hard nurses for his death-bed. They are to do all that is necessary for each one that he may die crucified. They must do him to death, and watch him till he dies.

While, then, they have been crucifying Jesus, there came from the cross of Dismas hard by, and from the cross of Gesmas, the echo of every blow of the hammer. But with this difference. Of our Lord it is written, "*Jesus autem tacebat*". *He shall be dumb as a lamb* (Isaias liii.). *When he was reviled, He did not revile* (1 St. Peter ii.). But from the cross of the thieves there comes at every fresh torture the howling and the raving of men who have no hope: *an image of (what) was to come*: a prelude of the *weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth* which goes on in that prison where man exists without hope for ever. At one moment they cry out beseechingly to the soldiers to pity and to spare. But for the fallen in those days there was no pity. "*Væ victis!*" *That which is feeble is found to be nothing worth.* As a matter of course, a slave or a prisoner is first tortured till he owns himself guilty, and then mercilessly chastised for his crime. Let those who blaspheme against the redemption of Christ as unprofitable, study the pages of history in which are recorded the ingenuity and unrestrained liberty wherewith Prætors and Governors tortured the martyrs of Christ. Of Dismas we are told that under torture he acknowledged his robberies, and confession did not secure for him, as it does for us, an absolution.

*Lord, we cry out, if Thou shalt observe iniquities, who shall endure it?* And with reason. If from the Cross of Christ and the open fountains of grace in His Body hope does not come out to our poor hearts, what man can bear up against the racking pain of sickness? against the tortures that men's cruelty can inflict? against the bitterness of death?

*C. Two thieves: one on the right hand, one on the left.*

"*Do it quickly, brave men, good men.*" And the crosses are seen to rise. Dismas on the right hand, Gesmas on

the left. And as they fall with a shock into the holes prepared, and their suspended bodies settle down into position, their shrieks of agony are heard throughout the crowd, who close in and press nearer to see better, and to hear more of all this great sorrow.

D. *Two thieves : one on the right hand, one on the left.*

Now let the trumpets sound, and tell the good news! Now do the Priests and Ancients, so long trampled on by Jesus of Nazareth, feel themselves righted and reinstated. "He is hanging now, a malefactor among malefactors; the arch-criminal between criminals; *one on each side, and Jesus in the midst.* The crowned King of malefactors and impostors and seducers."

"We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world."

E. *Two thieves : one on the right hand, one on the left.*

Here again: *There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, no counsel against the Lord.* They know it not, these triumphant Priests and Ancients, but they are working along with all things else the will of the Master Whom they have crucified. For He, far more than they, has been wishing to have the robbers, one on His right hand and one on His left. It is only what He said last night in the Cenacle: *I say to you, that this that is written must yet be fulfilled in Me : And with the wicked was He reckoned* (St. Luke xxii.). Contemplate the tender welcome which the Heart of Jesus crucified speaks secretly to the hearts of His two companions. Oh, how He wishes to gather them both to Himself as the first-fruits of Calvary! And with what a motherly heart does Holy Mary look up to both of them, to Dismas on the right and Gesmas on the left, and pray fervently that they may both become His *friends*, and abide with Him throughout *His temptations*.

F. *Two thieves : one on the right, one on the left.*

*With the wicked He was reckoned :* and this is His own choice. *This, He said, must be fulfilled.* It has been

arranged in Heaven that men may carry out this part of their design.

For (1) Jesus does not wish to die alone. It is His Holy Spirit Who dictated that word: "*Væ soli!*"—*Wo to the solitary!* He did not come on earth to be a lonely isolated Man. *Se nascens dedit socium.* From His Birth He gave Himself to be man's companion. The bereaved, and the suffering, if they can afford it, are glad to pay a good price to secure a suitable and trusty companion, who shall be to them, not a servant, but far more, far better than a servant. Jesus came into the world under a covenant that He will be a companion to every one of His brethren; that is, to every child of the fallen family of Adam and Eve. When the cavilling lawyer put what he thought his unanswerable difficulty: *Who is my neighbour?*—How can I know who is my neighbour? Where can I draw the line between neighbours and strangers?—Jesus quickly gave the definition: Your neighbour is every one of your brethren who wants help from you, not one excepted, old or young, white or black, the kind or the froward, rich or poor, comely or unsightly.

*G. Two thieves : one on each side ; Jesus in the midst.*

And then (2) His Cross is His pulpit; and He is preaching this great fundamental truth: that He is dying for sinners. Therefore He chooses to die with sinners. He has put on Esau's clothing. He is Esau in all things, but sin. This is His will. This must be. He chooses to be reckoned on Calvary among sinners. What is there that belongs to the sinner (excepting his guilt) that Jesus has not taken upon Him? He is preaching—not from the house-top, but from a position where He is better seen and better heard—from His holy Cross He is preaching a truth that shall be echoed throughout Christendom to the consummation of the world, that He is become Sin for us. He is the first-born of the sinful family; the eldest brother of sinners, one of themselves, like to them

in their penalties, and in all things, save and except their hideous sin.

In life He eat and drank with sinners. The Pharisee thought that if He were a real prophet He never would suffer the Magdalen to kiss His feet. This was not the thought of Jesus. "I have come purposely *to seek and to save that which was lost.*

"I am the Lamb of God, and My whole wish is to take away *the sins of the world.*

"I am the Good Shepherd; put on one side the ninety-nine just, I will leave them to find My one lost sheep. When My prodigal comes back to Me, then shall there be gladness for Me and for My Mother and for My angels.

"He that wishes to have his own sins blotted out and forgotten, and cast behind My back, let him help Me to bring back My lost sheep. His charity *shall cover a multitude of sins.*"

H. *One on each side ; Jesus in the midst.*

Whenever our Lord says, *Our Father*, He sets Himself down in the midst of His sinful brethren, as if one of them. So, too, when we pray, in our own minds we must be *reputed with the wicked.* We must set ourselves down in the midst of a group of poor sinners—particularly poor sinners whom we have judged severely and condemned—for we are like to them. Among all sinners, we must also especially single out and gather round us, when we pray, those whom we have scandalised; that is, those whom we have drawn into sin, by provoking them, or by bad advice, or by example: *From the sins of others, spare Thy servant, O Lord.*

I. *With Him two thieves.*

*He was reputed with the wicked.*

If so, in what a delusion are we all! For even the holy cry out: *Redeem me from the calumnies of men, that I may keep Thy commandments* (Psalm cxviii.). Is not this as much as to say: "If I am exposed to calumny, if I am unjustly reputed with the wicked, I cannot keep Thy com-

mandments" ? Beyond all doubt calumny does oftentimes unman entirely even strong virtue. But this can only be because men do not look steadily at Jesus crucified, *Whom they have pierced*. Calumny is doubtless one of the most envenomed of the fiery serpents whose bite is so fatal ; but all who looked on the brazen serpent were cured of the bite and did not die. And the brazen serpent is only a sign, a type, of Jesus become Sin for us, and lifted from the earth upon His Cross.

Which is better for us ? To be reputed, with Jesus, unjustly among sinners ? or that the sinner should with his oil of flattery fatten our heads, saying to us, *Euge ! euge !*—Well done ! well done !

## STATION II.

*And the people stood beholding, and the Rulers with them derided Him, saying : He saved others ; let Him save Himself, if He be Christ, the elect of God (St. Luke xxiii.). The Chief Priests, mocking, said with the Scribes, one to another : He saved others ; Himself He cannot save (St. Mark xv.).*

*The Chief Priests with the Scribes and Ancients, mocking, said : If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe in Him (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

*A. The people stood beholding, and the Rulers derided Him.*

The people behold. The Rulers deride. *Have they made thee a ruler ?* the Holy Spirit says to us ; *be not lifted up* (Ecclus. xxxii.). It is hard for a ruler to realise to what an extent men are prone to agree with him, and follow him slavishly ; and how much, therefore, it behoves him to walk cautiously. *Lead Him carefully*, is the watchword so often repeated during the Sacred Passion. "Lead them carefully," "Lead your subjects carefully," is a warning word never to be forgotten by rulers. You have a following. You have men watching you and copying and

imitating, as if they were painting your portrait. Lead them all carefully.

“What say you, Romans? Do you think that this great worker of wonders will be able to undo your work? Will the nails by you so well clenched come out of the wood at His bidding?” The twelve soldiers that have worked so hard are round the crosses, wiping the drops of sweat from their brow, and again refreshing and cheering themselves with the *strong drink of the sad and the wine of the distressed in mind*. They can join heartily in the merry jest of the Rulers.

*I am become a reproach to them. They saw Me and they shook their heads* (Psalm cviii.).

B. *The Chief Priests, with the Scribes and Ancients, mocking, said: If He be the King of Israel, let Him come down from the Cross, and we will believe in Him.*

“Do you hear, Jesus of Nazareth? do you mark our words, Galilean? We solemnly promise to believe in you, if you come down from the Cross. Let us wait and give Him time. Will you not promise, High Priest Caiphas? Do you not pledge yourself, venerable Annas, to follow Jesus as His disciple to Galilee and back, if He will only come down now? Give Him time. He cannot get the nails out all at once.

“You worked many miracles for the poor and ignorant. Work just one that will satisfy the Rulers and the educated men.

“You promised, Jesus, to pull down the Temple and build it up again in three days. But we do not require such a troublesome miracle as that. Only come down from the Cross. Just loosen the nails and come down, and you have us all for your disciples; and the people will certainly follow us. What! no answer! no move to come down!”  
“*Jesus autem tacebat.*”

C. *The Rulers derided Him, saying: Let Him save Himself, if He be the elect of God.*

Having thus revealed the thoughts out of their own

hearts around the Cross, they are glad to hurry off to teach the people what to think.

For they have (1) to assure the people that this is no work of theirs. The Romans have done all. The Roman Governor has tried the cause, and examined Jesus carefully, and condemned Him. On this errand, therefore, they pass about among the multitude; speaking to the men of Jerusalem, to the strangers from Galilee, and to those from other parts.

They then (2) repeat to all their convincing argument: "We have promised solemnly to believe in this Man, Jesus, if He will only come down from the Cross. What can we do more? You heard Him declare that He would pull down the Temple and build it up again in three days. We do not ask for such an expensive experiment. For here we have a far more simple test. If He is, as He says, greater than Abraham and Moses, let Him just come down from the Cross, and we swear to become His disciples, and we can promise that Pilate will also, and these soldiers too. *He trusted in God. Let Him now deliver Him if He will have Him, for He said: I am the Son of God.* If God will not hear Him, or deliver Him, what further proof can we want? The Law says clearly: He is accursed of God that *hangeth on a tree*. God has given to us all the plainest proof possible that Jesus the Galilean is no true prophet, but a seducer and blasphemer, *accursed of God*.

"We are perfectly willing to become this day His disciples if He will give us some proof that He is Son of God.

"If God will have Him, if He be the elect of God, and if we are all hypocrites, and white-washed sepulchres as He delighted to call us, what so easy as that God should deliver Him, and strike us? But see: there He is hanging on the tree *accursed*; and here we are, after all the wicked deeds denounced so arrogantly by Him, quite safe and sound. It is easy to delude the simple people of Galilee

with pretended miracles. Why not work just one here before us ? ”

Say not, O Priest, say not, Pharisee, *I have sinned, and what evil hath befallen me ? For the Most High is a patient rewarder* (Ecclus. v.).

### STATION III.

1. *And the soldiers also mocked Him, saying : If Thou be the King of the Jews, save Thyself* (St. Luke xxiii.).
2. *And they that passed by, blasphemed Him, wagging their heads, and saying : Vah, Thou that destroyest the Temple of God, and in three days dost rebuild it, save Thy own self. If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross* (St. Matt. xxvii.).
3. *And the self-same things the thieves also that were crucified with Him reproached Him with* (St. Matt. xxvii.).  
*And they that were crucified with Him reviled Him* (St. Mark xv.).

A. *The soldiers mocked Him. And they that passed by blasphemed. And they that were crucified with Him reviled Him.*

We see here, once more, how sin is contagious, and words are like sparks of fire out of which a conflagration grows. The Priests begin: the soldiers follow: then the people, and lastly even the crucified thieves join in. It is like a fugue of most unhallowed music. *All they that saw Me have laughed Me to scorn. They have spoken with the lips and wagged the head* (Psalm xxi.).

The Lord said to Aaron: *Thou and thy sons shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary; and thou and thy sons shall bear the sins of your priesthood* (Numbers xviii.).

*The iniquity of the sanctuary: the sins of your priesthood.* “O sorrowful Mother, pray for us sinners. Say to thy Divine Son: *May Thy priests be clothed with justice: that so they may act as the salt of the earth and the light of the world: and help to spread Thy holy Gospel, and not be apostles of sin and iniquity.*”

*B. And they that passed by blasphemed.*

Hence, we may assume, that when the Priests go down from the plateau—from *the place of Calvary*, the sacred sanctuary—some of the crowd come up, and walk past the holy Cross, looking on Him *Whom they have pierced*: as we see men do still when there is some public spectacle in the street or square. They cannot tarry long; they must move on, that others may come and see: *For out of many hearts thoughts shall to-day be revealed.*

C. A few are mourning *as one mourneth for an only son*. But the many are crying, *Vah!* The Princes have said, *Vah!* Therefore the people say the same. *All we like sheep have gone astray.* *Wo to the world*, our Saviour said, earnestly and sadly, *because of scandals* (St. Matt. xviii.). One of the terrible scandals of this world is the bad influence of men who by position, or riches, or talents, or assurance and boldness, become leaders.

*D. And they that passed by.*

Let us consider, too, in our hearts, that Calvary and the *everlasting sacrifice* have not vanished away. All of us must still walk past the Holy Rood of Jesus crucified, and make our choice whether He is to be our resurrection or our fall, whether at the Judgment we are to be placed on His right hand or His left. From each one's heart his thought and his choice must be revealed.

Inter oves locum præsta,	Place for me, Good Shepherd, keep
Et ab hædis me sequestra,	On Thy right, among Thy sheep;
Statuens in parte dextra.	With the goats, oh, curse me not.

*E. And the soldiers also mocked Him.*

These strangers have no quarrel with Jesus. They mock Him (1) because they have been flattered by the Priests; (2) because they have earned money by torturing Him; (3) because they may win a little more blood-money by mocking Him; (4) because the appetite for cruelty grows by indulgence; (5) because that *which is feeble is found to be nothing worth*. The same baseness that leads us

to crouch down and degrade ourselves before a leader, inclines us also to despise the weak and helpless.

Our Lord Jesus, on the contrary, *resists the proud*; is fearless before these Rulers; but has infinite charity for the weak and the little.

F. *And the soldiers mocked Him.*

If the Jews had been worthy of their religion, they might have gained over their masters, the Romans. The men around us, who are outside the Church, form their ideas of Christ's religion from what they see in us. A man when he marries often tries to better his life, because now, he says, "others depend on me". Many others depend on us Catholics. We are watched and noticed; our words, our acts, our demeanour have much influence for or against our Lord Jesus Christ.

#### STATION IV.

1. The Chief Priests said: *He saved others: Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the Cross, and we will believe in Him. He trusted in God, let Him now deliver Him, if He will have Him, for He said: I am the Son of God.*
2. The people: *Save Thy own self. If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross.*
3. The thieves: *The self-same thing the thieves also reproached Him with. If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us.*
4. The soldiers: *If Thou be the King of the Jews, save Thyself.*

A. It deserves notice that all are unanimous in this cry: that our Lord is to come down from the Cross.

At the Prætorium, an hour ago, the persistent yell was: *Let Him be crucified.*

Now all in one chorus insist: "Let Him come down from the Cross".

Those who have had special light concerning the Holy

Passion, tell us that both at the Prætorium and here on Golgotha the unseen spirits of wickedness are inspiring and suggesting, and giving to men their watchword.

The change in the popular cry, they tell us, is due to a change in the policy of the princes of darkness.

Throughout the early stages of the Passion their tactics were, as the Holy Ghost has revealed, *He calleth Himself the Son of God. Let us see then if His words be true. For if He be true Son of God, He will defend Him, and deliver Him from the hands of His enemies. Let us examine Him by outrages and tortures, that we may know His weakness and try His patience. Let us condemn Him to a most shameful death* (Wisdom ii.).

The wicked spirits have heard Jesus say that if the days of persecution be not shortened, *no flesh should be saved* (St. Matt. xxiv.). Their plan, therefore, was to heap every kind of torment and outrage upon Him. For thus, they argued, either God will deliver Him, and then we shall know for certain what He is, and who He is; or else, the tortures will break down His patience and meekness, and He will sin.

All this time, then, they have been trying an experiment in a dark uncertainty, and are constantly asking themselves, Is He a man, or more than man?

When at last Jesus is crucified, and betrays no sign whatever of weakness or impatience, or any departure whatever from the highest sanctity, once more they say to each other in despair: *Do you see that we prevail nothing? The whole world (will go) after this Man* (St. John xii.).

As beyond crucifixion they have nothing worse to suggest, they begin to see that they are vanquished.

Moreover, as soon as ever Jesus is fastened to the Cross, as St. Jerome writes, they feel a mysterious power exercised over them by the Cross. They begin to shudder and quail in presence of "Thy holy Cross, Lord Jesus, through which Thou shalt redeem the world".

Crux fidelis, inter omnes,  
Arbor una nobilis.

O faithful Cross! no other tree  
Compares with thy nobility.

In the contemplations of God's holy servants we see that from this hour Satan and his unseen spirits begin to wish to fly away from Calvary; but the decree of God is that they shall remain on the battlefield to the end, to the bitter end.

And in order that their confusion may be worse confounded and multiplied, it is through the voice of the woman, the despised woman, that the will of God is enforced. It is the voice of Holy Mary, the second Eve, that forbids their departure, and commands them to remain on Calvary, till the stupendous conflict is entirely ended. They must drink the bitter chalice of shame and humiliation and confusion to the dregs. The woman shall with her virgin foot crush the serpent's head, before they can have leave to fly away to hide the agonies of their pride.

*B. Let Him come down from the Cross, and we will believe in Him.*

"To me it seems," St. Jerome writes, "that the demons suggest this cry. For as soon as ever He was crucified, they felt the power of the Cross, and understood that their strength was broken, and now are working that He may come down from the Cross."

From this moment, then, the method of warfare is changed:

"We cannot overcome the meekness of Jesus of Nazareth, but we may yet perchance delude Him and trick Him. We have made a fatal mistake in torturing and crucifying Him; we may be able to undo what we have done by inducing Him to come down from the Cross."

Already they understand something of the mystery, that if He, the Just One, dies, through their machinations, their power over guilty men will be lost. His Death will be death to their empire. They have marked that word on the holy page: *O death, I will be thy death; O Hell, I will be thy bite* (Osee xiii.). From now, therefore, they are

as anxious to hinder the Death of Jesus as they were before to multiply torments.

They will try every plausible argument.

Therefore, having learned, St. Bernard suggests, from their watchful experience, with what ardent zeal Jesus desires to move His people to believe in Him, they suggest to the Priests and Ancients to make this most seductive offer :

1. C. *Let Him come down from the Cross, and we will believe in Him.*

Longing as He does for their belief, surely He will come down to win it. This, St. Bernard thinks, is their plan. The Rulers, Satan knows, are only saying the words with their lips ; their hearts are far away from all intention of believing in Jesus. But this does not trouble him. He is more pleased by far to work for his ends by lying than by truth.

“They do not mean what they say. But Jesus, in His ardent enthusiasm, may believe what they say. We have deceived prophets in days gone ; we may do so still.”

Therefore, with all the ingenuity and perseverance of their own malice, the argument is formed and reformed in different shapes, and urged and urged again and again.

2. D. *He trusted in God, let Him now deliver Him.*

So that if Jesus will not now come down from the Cross, men will either doubt the power of God, or doubt the Mission of Jesus. “Are then,” St. Chrysostom writes, “all the prophets and just men whom you slew, ye wicked Jews, not prophets and not just, because God did not deliver them? Nay, because they died, they are proved to be just men and prophets.”

3. E. *If Thou be the King of the Jews, save Thyself.*

These pagan soldiers know nothing of His being the Messiah, or Son of God, but they heard Him say : *Thou sayest it, I am a King. For this came I into the world that I might give testimony of the truth. My Kingdom is not of this world.*

The challenge therefore suggested to them by the unseen spirits, is, *If Thou be the King of Israel, save Thyself.*

4. F. *He saved others, He cannot save Himself.*

Therefore if He do not now come down from the Cross, all His past miracles are discredited. They were wrought by magic.

5. G. *Let Him save Himself, if He be Christ, the elect of God.*

“If Thou do not descend from the Cross, Jesus, what will become of the faith and trust of all these poor men and women of Galilee who have followed Thee? Their *hope is come to nothing*” (Tobias ii.).

6. H. *If Thou be the Christ, save Thyself and us.*

The spirits of darkness have often noticed with intense displeasure and disgust the compassion and charity of Jesus for the suffering; and therefore they stir up His two crucified companions to appeal to His compassion: *If Thou be the Christ, save Thyself and us.*

I. But the result of all their stratagems is ever the same: *Do you see that we prevail nothing?* This is the self-same Jesus Who has Himself said: *He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved.* If His disciples must persevere to the end to be saved, shall He not persevere to the end to be our Saviour?

J. The Priests cannot deceive Him by saying, *We will believe.* Long ago, we read, *He did not trust Himself to men, for He knew all men. And because He needed not that any should give testimony of man; for He knew what is in man* (St. John ii.).

Jesus cannot be deluded by fine phrases on the lips. His own Holy Spirit dictated these words: *An enemy speaketh sweetly with his lips, but in his heart he lieth in wait to throw them into a pit. An enemy weepeth with his eyes; but if he findeth opportunity he will not be satisfied with blood. . . . He will shake his head, and clap his*

*hands, and whisper much, and change his countenance* (Ecclus. xii.).

K. And as for the soldiers and the thieves—

He knows well how He can offer them grace and help without coming down from the Cross.

L. *Vah! Thou that destroyest the Temple of God, save Thy own self.*

As we look up at Him Whom we have pierced, while they are mocking Him, He says to us most meekly: "*Laugh no man to scorn in the bitterness of his soul* (Ecclus. vii.). When a man is already troubled, add not to the grief of his wounds. For whensoever you do it to one of My brethren, you do it to Me."

"Mother of Sorrows, pray for us, that we may have grace to say: *If I have wronged any one, I give back four-fold.*"

#### STATION V.

*They crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on each side, and Jesus in the midst* (St. John xix. 18).

A. We are told that the crucified on this day had their backs turned to Jerusalem.

I. Some writers say that this was arranged purposely by the Rulers, who did not wish Jesus to die looking on Jerusalem. They considered Him unworthy to look on their Holy City.

*I am a worm, and no man; the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people* (Psalm xxi.). *My people, what have I done to thee? In what have I molested thee? Answer thou Me* (Mich. vi.). *Many good works have I shown to you.* For which of these do you sentence Me, that I am not in death to look upon Jerusalem, the city I have loved? *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* (Psalm cxxxvi.). *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered together thy children as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not* (St. Matt. xxiii.).

2. The nature of the ground renders it almost necessary that the faces of the crucified should be turned westward, away from Jerusalem. We know from the Evangelists that a large multitude of people are present. St. John adds that many Jews went up to the place of Calvary, and are near enough to read the inscription. They are, doubtless, curious to see the faces of the crucified. This they could not do, if their faces were turned towards the city. For between Calvary and the city, as has been said, there is only the ditch around the fortifications, in which there is no room for the crowds.

3. Other writers suggest that the watching and overruling providence of God wishes our Lord to hang on the Cross with His back turned on the people that are no longer His people, and His face turned westward to the land of the Gentiles, in which the clean oblation is to be offered from the rising up of the sun to the going down thereof; and to the Rock of Ages on which He is about to build His everlasting Church.

B. *They crucified Him.*

His eyes are turned away from Sion, because His people have pronounced their own doom: *We have no King but Cæsar!* Consequent on this their election God pronounced His sentence: *Let their habitation be made desolate, and let there be none to dwell in their tabernacles* (Psalm lxxviii.).

From His Cross His sacred eyes are looking over *the countries that are white already for the harvest.*

In union with His whole fallen family, with all poor sinners of the heathen nations grouped around Him, He is saying in His Heart: *Our Father, Father of us all, may Thy Name be hallowed; may all My poor brethren come to a knowledge of Thy Holy Name!*

And from His Cross He asks humbly: *Who will help Me to seek and to save that which was lost?* (St. Luke xix.).

## STATION VI.

*And Pilate wrote a title also, and he put it upon the Cross.*

*And the writing was: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. This title, therefore, many of the Jews did read, because the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city, and it was written in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin (St. John xix.).*

*They put over His Head His cause written: This is Jesus, the King of the Jews (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

*Then the Chief Priests of the Jews said to Pilate: Write not, the King of the Jews; but that He said: I am the King of the Jews. Pilate answered: What I have written, I have written (St. John xix.).*

I. We are told that it was enacted by Roman law that the crime of the crucified, or his *cause*, should appear over his head.

II. Pilate himself, we gather from the text, wrote the title for the Cross of Jesus.

III. Do the words, *he put it upon the Cross*, mean that he had the title fastened to the Cross before the procession started from the Prætorium? This may be so; but they, on the other hand, may be right who think that the title was not fixed to the Cross till after the Crucifixion, as St. Matthew writes: *They put over His Head His cause written.*

IV. The title, we are told, was written in red characters on a board whitened with lime. A portion of this board, with the characters upon it, is still shown in the Church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme at Rome. The letters are not large enough to be read by the crowd at a distance. Those who came to the Cross and passed by blaspheming would see them. It is noticeable, that on the relic preserved in Rome, the Greek and Latin inscriptions, as well as the Hebrew, are written from the right hand to the left.

V. Some hold that the arms of the Cross were fastened on to the stem so as to form a letter V, and that the title was nailed to both arms above the Sacred Head.

The more common opinion is that in the Roman cross the arms were at right angles.

VI. We commonly see the Cross represented as having part of the main beam above the arms. Some writers hold that the arms of the Cross were fastened at the top of the main beam, and consequently that there was no support for the Sacred Head. In this case a piece of wood or an iron rod was fixed to the Cross to support the title.

Whatever the shape of the Cross may have been, the crown of thorns is sufficient of itself to cause the word to be verified: *The Son of Man hath not whereon to lay His Head.*

A. *It was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.*

Pilate is, unconsciously, working with all things else unto good. *The day is (still) going on according to Thy ordinance, O Lord.* Every detail is regulated in harmony with Thy holy will. The title in Greek and Hebrew fore-shows that in the coming Kingdom of Jesus there shall be *no distinction of the Jew and the Greek, for the same is Lord of all, rich unto all that call on Him* (Romans x.).

In *Latin* too, because from His Cross He is looking towards Rome, where stands the Rock of Ages on which His Church shall be built.

*He gave Him power and glory and a Kingdom; and all peoples, tribes, and tongues shall serve Him* (Daniel vii.).

B. *Write not, the King of the Jews, but that He said: I am the King of the Jews.*

At what time did the Priests make this remonstrance? Was it before they left the Prætorium, or after the Cross is set up on Calvary?

It seems from the context, that in the hurry and bustle they did not think of reading the *cause* written by Pilate, till the Cross is erected, and then to their dismay and indignation find how the Governor has tricked them, and insulted them. Watch them, when some one calls their attention to the astonishing inscription, coming close to the Cross to read it, and pointing out to each other the gross outrage to their nation.

Hear the outburst of curses and imprecations against the Governor. *The wicked shall see, and shall be angry. He shall gnash with his teeth and pine away.* They are ready to give a large reward to the executioners if they will take down this title; but the Centurion is a soldier, and accustomed to obey. If his commander says: *Do this, he doeth it* (St. Matt. viii.). What the Governor has set up cannot be taken down. *The desire of the sinner shall perish.*

But these Jewish Rulers are not inclined to be beaten. This is too important a point. "All the people will come up to the Cross and read the inscription, as it is so near the city. What will they think? The Roman states no cause for the condemnation of Jesus but this: *He is the King of the Jews*. We shall be in a worse plight than ever. Herod, the Idumean (because he was an alien and a creature of Rome), murdered the legitimate descendants of our glorious Machabees. And now, men will say that Pilate has crucified Jesus because He is really the Son of David and lawful King of the Jews." On their surefooted mules, therefore, two of their Chiefs, men of the most weight, can reach the Prætorium in a very few minutes. "*Do it quickly. Do it quickly.*" In haste they go. Not in such haste, but *having great wrath*, they return, bringing the Roman's arrogant and insulting answer. "He would not listen. He said curtly: *What I have written, I have written.*" Annas is once more full of bitter scorn. "As usual, you have entirely mismanaged it. You did not put the case properly to the Governor." But it is all in vain. There is nothing to be done, and they can only look up at the title and again see if perchance they have misread it. No, it is all there: *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews—The wicked shall see, and shall be angry. He shall gnash with his teeth and shall pine away. The desire of the wicked shall perish.*

Their anger goes on growing as fresh comers read the title, and go about among the crowd telling in wonder what they have read.

C. *What I have written, I have written.*

St. Augustine writes: *Ideo Pilatus quod scripsit, scripsit, quia Dominus quod dixit, dixit*—"Pilate wrote what he wrote, because the Lord said what He said". Jesus had said: *Thou sayest that I am a King.*

"*Attendite.*" We must understand ourselves, and explain to our neighbours outside the Church, how our Lord can, when He pleases, incline the heart of a bad man to utter the truth and nothing but the truth. *Balac said to*

*Balaam: What is this that thou dost? I sent for thee to curse my enemies, and thou contrariwise blessest them. He answered: Can I speak anything but what the Lord commandeth? (Numbers xxiii.).* When our Lord says to His delegate: *Go you and preach: whoever believeth shall be saved; whoever believeth not shall be condemned,* He knows well what He is doing. He does not profess that this delegate will be a man impeccable, a man who sins not; but He does profess and promise that whenever His delegate teaches His flock, the Holy Ghost *will give testimony* along with the teacher; and thus, the teaching will be infallible. Consequently all men must hear this teacher, who is only the mouthpiece of the Holy Ghost. This infallibility is not a grace given to the teacher for his own sake. It does not necessarily render him a holy man fit for Heaven. He will have, like other men, to work out his own salvation privately in fear and trembling; but whenever he teaches publicly and officially, the Holy Spirit, for the sake of the people, in order that all may be able to come easily to a knowledge of the truth, will guide and overrule the teaching of the delegate, and render it unerring and infallible.

Pilate, Caiphas, Balaam, and Herod's Priests, all acted as God's mouthpiece, and declared the truth. Even so can our Lord at all times draw truth and praise out of the mouth of babes or sinners.

#### STATION VII.

*Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother*  
(St. John xix. 25).

It is St. John who, now in years, bequeaths to us these priceless words not found in any other Gospel. The virgin disciple whom Jesus loved and the Ever-Blessed Mother loved, preserved this treasure for us.

*A. Mary His Mother.*

*By Thy ordinance, O Lord, (this) day is going on; for all things serve Thee. And it is according to Thy good*

pleasure that there shall be a place for Thy Holy Mother near to Thee. The second Eve, throughout the great struggle, shall be beside the second Adam.

She is not yet indeed close to the Cross, but she is within the sanctuary, not far from the Holy Altar, on the plateau, on *the place of Calvary*. There she stands, watching, and listening, and suffering—suffering pains and anguish that no woman but the sinless Mother of God can suffer. She may safely call to us: *See if there be sorrow like to my sorrow*. Eye hath not seen her great compassion. Ear hath not heard the sobbing of her motherly heart. It hath not entered into human thought to understand how truly she can say: *With Christ I am nailed to the Cross*.

No man, then, on Calvary interferes with her grief.

He that said to His disciples when Magdalen was anointing His feet: *Be not troublesome to this woman: has also given His angels charge concerning thee, Blessed among women*, that no one be troublesome to thee.

No hand is raised to strike her; no tongue to outrage her on Calvary. But it is arranged that her sorrow shall be great enough, *great as the sea*, through her perfect compassion. No wound is to come direct to her. But every wound on her Son's Body and in His Heart shall pass on at once to her. Each of His nails has pierced her through and through.

If St. Paul could apply to himself this word: *With Christ I am nailed to the Cross*: what word are we to find for Holy Mary? For his compassion, when set beside hers, is as a small lake beside the great sea.

B. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

When John and Magdalen are telling in after days what they saw to those who question, they answer: "No; she did not sink down on the ground; she did not swoon away. At times she fell on her knees to adore her Son and His holy Cross. More often she stood erect, sometimes motionless; sometimes quivering and shuddering; always pale;

tears on her face; panting, at times, for breath, as she listened to the Master's heavy breathing; but always *full of grace*. The pain of her compassion, indeed, imprinted on her features, was saying more plainly than her lips could speak it: With my Son Jesus, *I am nailed to the Cross. Now, not I, but (my Son) Jesus liveth in me.* But the word that ever came to my heart as I looked at her was: *Hail, full of grace! Blessed among women!*"

C. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

Well for us that it is so. *Which of you, the prophet asks, (can) dwell with everlasting burnings?* Which of us, we may add, can stand alone on Calvary and bear the consuming fire? Which of us can endure to stand alone, looking on Him Whom our sins have pierced? "*Væ soli!*" It is not good for us to be there without our great Help-mate, our Mother, the Refuge of Sinners. We can draw near to her and say:

Eia Mater fons amoris,	Mother, source of charity,
Me sentire vim doloris	Share with me thy agony;
Fac, ut tecum lugeam.	Make me mourn and weep with thee.

D. *Mary His Mother.*

And our Mother too. *Come, my children, she says to us, come and hear me, and I will teach you* (Psalm xxxiii.). And when we come to her, and listen, she reminds us of the words her Divine Son spoke secretly in the silence of the night to His timid disciple Nicodemus: *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* (St. John iii.).

Nicodemus is here to-day, looking at Jesus crucified, and looking at the Blessed Mother; and he finds how true the word whispered to him in the midnight is coming now. As he looks on Jesus lifted up, the venom of the serpent's bite is being quite deadened. Virtue is coming out from the holy Cross into his soul.

The Ever-Blessed Mother beseeches us all to stay with the timid disciple, looking up at Him Whom we pierced

till virtue comes to us also, and we are endowed with power from the Cross.

E. *Mary His Mother.*

"My children," she says to us, "to-day my Son is conquering Satan, and all the powers of Hell. Will you still resist Him? Shall He not be able to conquer you too, and win you over to His compassionate and loving Heart?"

F. *Mary His Mother.*

"My children," she says, *forget not the kindness of thy Surety. For He hath given His life for thee. The sinner and the unclean fleeth from his Surety. A sinner attributeth to himself the goods of his Surety, and he that is of an unthankful mind will leave Him that delivered him* (Ecclus. xxix.).

*The sinner attributeth to himself the goods of his Surety.* For of all the good things or blessings which we enjoy, what is there that we have not received? what good thing have we that has not on it the inscription, the mark of Jesus crucified, the sign of the Cross?

*He that is of an unthankful mind will leave Him that delivered him.*

"O Mother of Compassion, pray for us sinners. Beg of thy Son to take from us the heart of stone, and give us a heart of flesh, that we may not leave thy Son Jesus Who delivered us, but love to stay here with Him till we learn how to mourn for Him *as one mourneth for an only son, and to grieve as the manner is to grieve for a first-born.*"

G. *Mary His Mother.*

"My children," she says to us, "forget not your birth-right, the promise made to the children of the New Jerusalem, *I will pour out on them the spirit of grace and of prayers, and they shall look on Him Whom they pierced.*

"Your little day is passing, *the night is coming in which no man can work.* Will you not make leisure while your hour lasts, to secure the spirit of grace and of prayers which is yours, and to look on my Son Jesus Whom you have pierced?"

*H. There stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother.*

Holy contemplatives tell us that one part of her work while she is listening to the scoffs and blasphemies of those who are mocking, is to pray in union with that prayer Jesus made last evening: *Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee.* She does not pray that her Son may not suffer, but she does pray earnestly that His glory and the beauty of His holiness may be revealed and declared throughout the Passion, and that His enemies may not so prevail as to hinder His Passion from having its effect on the souls of men. Already her prayer is heard in part, for Pilate has not yielded to the Rulers this time. He has maintained the writing that is above the Cross, which is to be so salutary.

The prayer of the Blessed Mother shall soon be heard much more amply.

## STATION VIII.

## THE FIRST WORD.

*And Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do* (St. Luke xxiii. 34).

A. *And Jesus said* (literally from the Greek and the Latin, "was saying, said more than once").

To-night when all shall be over, and the disciples with their full hearts are whispering together, within the barred doors, about the things done to-day, after they have listened in tears to the story of the mockeries and blasphemies on *the place of Calvary*, one asks, "Was the Master silent all the time while they crucified Him, and after the Cross was lifted? Did He speak no word at all?"

"Oh, yes," John answers, or Magdalen perchance, or the other Mary, "oh, yes, I heard Him speak more than once. For though at times there was much noise and tumult, the soldiers uttering savage words, the thieves howling, the Priests running to and fro and giving orders, and though they tried hard to excite the people to shout when the Cross was raised, yet there was often a lull.

From the people there came no great response to the efforts of the Rulers to excite them. Indeed, at one time, when they turned His sacred face downwards upon the ground, under the Cross, in order to clench the nails, there was a murmur of pity quite audible among the crowd.<sup>1</sup> The servants of the Priests indeed were loud in crying, *Vah!* but the people seemed to stand bewildered, so that frequently there was a silence, and we could hear; and I heard the Master sometimes moaning gently; and I could hear too, when the Cross was lifted, His heavy, difficult breathing, as if in the strained and cruel position of His Body He could not draw breath freely. And so, when they were nailing Him, and afterwards, I heard Him say these words: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*"

"Oh, impossible!" some one exclaims. "How could He in truth say that word? Are you not mistaken?" "No, there is no mistake. I heard Him, I am sure, say those words, and not once only, but often, at intervals. And had you been there, and heard the tone of His voice as He spoke them, and watched the tears falling from His eyes, which were almost closed up with blood, you never till the day of your death could forget those words. Never before, I think, on this earth did any one hear tenderness and sorrow such as I heard then in the tone of His voice when He spoke those words, *Father, forgive them.*"

B. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

We must try to realise, as well as we can, how thoroughly, with what intensity, the Blessed Mother joins her heart with her Son's in making this prayer.

What a love, *strong as death*, yea, and stronger than the terrible death by crucifixion, is in the Heart of Jesus, and in the sinless heart of Holy Mary, that they can thus rise above all their own agony to pray for others; and, wonder of wonders, to pray for such bloodthirsty enemies.

C. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

*If they know not what they do, we perchance argue, they*

<sup>1</sup> Venerable M. d'Agreda.

are not guilty. For ignorance, we say, excuses us if we sin not knowing what we do. Why then does our Saviour say, *Father, forgive them ?* If they need forgiveness; they are not guiltless.

The answer may be that there is an ignorance that excuses from guilt, and there is a guilty ignorance.

When St. Paul said to Ananias, *God shall strike thee, thou whited wall ! they that stood by said, Dost thou revile the High Priest of God ? And St. Paul said : I knew not, brethren, that he is the High Priest. For it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the Prince of thy people.* Here St. Paul does not sin by irreverence, because he does not know that he is speaking to the High Priest.

Again, when the Pharisees say to Christ, *Are we blind ?* He answers, *If you were blind, you should not have sin.*

These words teach us that there is an ignorance that exempts from guilt.

But there is too a guilty ignorance, an ignorance which is the effect of sin. Thus our Lord, after telling us that *He who knew the will of his Lord, and prepared not himself, and did not according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes,* goes on to say: *He that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.*

Here we have an ignorance which lessens guilt, but still is worthy of stripes ; and is beaten with some stripes, though fewer than those of the servant who knew more. This blindness oftentimes becomes more and more guilty, and the worst punishment of sin in this world. *Blind the hearts of this people, and shut their eyes, . . . lest they see with their eyes . . . and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I heal them* (Isaias vi.).

This is a most criminal blindness, an entirely voluntary effect of great sin.

This was the blindness of the Chief Priests last night, when our Lord said to them, *It is your hour and the power of darkness* (St. Luke xxii.).

This is the blindness He lamented as He wept over

Jerusalem: *If thou hadst also known the things that are to thy peace, but now they are hidden from thy eyes* (St. Luke xix.).

The blindness, therefore, of those for whom our Lord is praying is not an innocent blindness. There is guilt in it; guilt, however, not the same in all; for some of His persecutors are sinning most deliberately and most grievously against the light.

Others are led away by the example of the Rulers. They sin, and they do things worthy of stripes, but they are partly in ignorance, and their ignorance is some excuse for them.

*D. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

At all times, whensoever we sin, we are blind. If we had the full light of the blessed, we could not sin. But still we have light enough to render us guilty. And, moreover, it is through our own guilty neglect, and through our sins, that we have not much more light.

Guilty blindness is one of our great crimes, for which we have to beg great contrition.

*E. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

With regard to this guilty blindness, one petition included in our Lord's cry from the Cross is this: "Father, take away from them this chastisement, this curse of guilty blindness, otherwise they never shall know what they do.

"They will go on sinning against Thee, their good God, their Father, their loving Redeemer, and all the horror and foulness and malice of their sin will be hidden from their eyes."

*F. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

When we pray, *From my hidden sins cleanse me*, we are praying to be delivered from culpable blindness.

*Forgotten sins* and *hidden sins* are not the same thing.

*Forgotten sins* oftentimes have been absolved, because we are sorry for them implicitly, and would confess them if we remembered them.

*Hidden sins* are not forgiven, because we are not sorry for them. They are sins with regard to which we are culpably blind. Through our own fault, we do not see

their malice, and do not repent of them. Like the lees or sediment at the bottom of the cask, they lie undisturbed in the careless and blinded soul. Hence the Lord's threat: At the Judgment, *I will visit on the men that are settled on their lees* (Sophon. i.).

G. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

To our unloving eyes these men, on Calvary and around, seem all to know full well what they are doing. Our Blessed Lord's Heart can find excuse where we see none. A mother who loves her child has some share of this marvellous power of our Lord's Heart to find excuses.

H. *Father, forgive them.*

The Cross is, as we are often told, not only the altar of our High Priest, where He offers sacrifice, but also the pulpit from which He teaches.

With an everlasting forethought (to use our poor language) He has resolved that this is to be the first word from His death-bed. When a good father speaks from his death-bed, his children listen more earnestly because they know that he will speak the words that are nearest his heart.

Of His death-bed words, then, He puts this one in the first place, and, as far as we know, it is the only one that He utters more than once.

We remember how kindly and with what motherly solicitude Holy Mary said at Cana of Galilee to the waiters, when our Lord was going to work the miracle: *Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye*. With far greater anxiety and tenderness now does she say to us: "My children, watch and listen, and *do according to the pattern*. What you hear my Son say from His Cross, that word say after Him. Lay it up in your hearts. Practise that word. Make it your one thing necessary to learn how to say that word."

I. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

We must, then, learn to say this word. And what word ought to be more easy to us? But, alas! what word is more difficult to flesh and blood?

As, then, our God knows that it ought to be easy to us, and because He also knows that it is to our corrupt nature very repulsive, therefore He insists rigorously and inexorably that we must learn to say this word, and to say it from our hearts.

And this He must do. He cannot do otherwise.

I. Because He Himself is *charity* and *mercy*; and we are His children, created to His own image. *Let Us make man to our image and likeness. And God created man to His own image; to the image of God He created him* (Gen. i.). Therefore He cannot tolerate in us His children anything opposed to His own *charity* and *mercy*. *God is charity. He that abideth in charity, abideth in God, and God in him* (1 St. John iv.). *Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful* (St. Luke vi.).

J. *Father, forgive them.*

2. God must require of us to say this word, because He is a Father. One of the tasks of our life is to earn for ourselves a vivid faith that God is a *Father*. Our daily and hourly prayer through life is to be: *Our Father, hallowed be Thy Name*; that is, may Thy Name of Father become to us a dear Name, a cherished Name, a truth and a reality. *At least from this time call to me, Thou art my Father* (Jer. iii.).

*If I be a Father, where is My honour?* (Malach. i.). Why am I not treated as a good Father? For, if God is a Father, He is *our Father*. He is the Father of all my neighbours as much as He is mine. I have no claim to be His child more than my neighbours have.

Therefore, when any one wrongs me, it is a child of my own God who wrongs me, a child of *our Father*. I and the offender who wrongs me are, we may say, twin brothers, children of the same Father. If I strike the offender, if I hurt him, or harm him, *what shall I do when God shall rise to judge? And when He shall examine, what shall I answer Him? Did not He that made me in the womb, make him also? And did not one and the same me form in the womb?* (Job xxxi.).

K. *Father, forgive them.*

3. God must require of me to say these words, because He is not only a Father, but a most just Father. Therefore He must protect all His children against injustice. Consequently He must strictly forbid me to be judge in my own cause. Why so? Because our corrupt and most selfish nature never judges justly when there is a case between self and another.

*The anger of man worketh not the justice of God* (St. James i.). Our anger never judges justly. Why not? Because our pride is incredibly sensitive, and, as we say, touchy. A wound on the body is very sensitive; an exposed nerve is very sensitive; but our pride is much more so. We often feel grievously offended and wronged, when there is absolutely no cause present. Fear, the Holy Spirit tells us, can get no help nor succour from thought and reasoning. Pride is quite as unmanageable as fear. It often becomes sore before any wound at all is inflicted; and when wounded, keeps no measure in chastising and avenging.

Before God can permit us to act as judge, we must be fair and impartial. To understand how far away we are from justice and fairness and equity, contrast our judgments when we do wrong to a neighbour, and when a neighbour does wrong to us. After we have done a wrong to a neighbour, if we go so far as to make an apology, perhaps a curt and rough one, we claim to have fulfilled all justice. "What can I do more? If the fool chooses to go on sulking, that is his affair. I have made an apology; he ought to be satisfied."

But if I am the wounded man, will a few words of ungracious apology heal up my wound entirely, and change my enemy into a welcome friend?

I say a hasty, brusque, rough word that creates a large and deep wound, and forthwith hasten on to other scenes, and in a few moments I have entirely forgotten my words. *I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me?* (Ecclus. v.). But if the hasty, brusque, and rough word is spoken to

me, will it pass away and be thus forgotten in a few minutes? or in a few hours? or in a few days? or weeks? or months? Will time heal the wound? Is there any moth that can consume this remembered injury? Is there any skilful thief that can steal it out of my resentful soul?

Before God can allow me to judge, He must be sure that I shall weigh and measure a sin committed by my neighbour in the same scales and with the same weights that I use for my own sins. What good reason can be given why a wrong done to *me* is so much more grievous than a wrong done to *any one else*? Is there in this universe one just judge who will rule that a wrong, if done *by me*, is light and venial; but a wrong done *to me*, heinous in the extreme?

*L. Father, forgive them.*

4. Again, God must rigorously require that I adopt these words, because He is not only a Father and a good Father, but also because he is the Truth, and must always abhor lying, and fraud, and above all, hypocrisy. Now, when I judge and condemn severely and bitterly the wrong done to me by my neighbour, I am a liar and a hypocrite. The prince of darkness has his name of devil, or diabolus, because he is ever the *accuser of the brethren*. He is *the accuser*, and *the father of lies*. Mark how the two trades go together, lying and accusing.

But why must this be? Why am I a hypocrite, because I condemn my neighbour? St. Paul gives the answer: *Thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest. For thou dost the same things which thou judgest* (Rom. ii.).

We do the things which we judge. We condemn loudly another man, but never tell that we have done just what he has done. Those Ancients and Pharisees who came so early in the morning to call on our Saviour to sentence that sinful woman, said nothing at all about their own crimes; and little thought that they were playing the prosecutor before Him Whose *eyes are brighter*

*than the sun, beholding round about all the ways of men, and looking into the hearts of men, into the most hidden parts* (Ecclus. xxiii.).

How glad they were to slink away, when our Saviour began to write in the dust extracts from the record of their own lives !

In the eyes of the charitable and merciful and just and holy God, our Father, it is a monstrous iniquity when we judge and condemn another rigorously for sins we do ourselves, and allow ourselves complete impunity for the same.

This is the reason why for this sin He has no mercy : *Judgment without mercy for him that hath not done mercy* (St. James ii.). *If you will not forgive, neither will your Father that is in Heaven forgive you your sins* (St. Mark xi.).

Where can we find a stronger proof of the iniquity, the intolerable injustice, the corrupt malice of our pride, than the fact, well known to the masters of spiritual life, that we are most inclined to judge and condemn loudly the sins we commit ourselves ? The truth of St. Paul's words that *we do the things we judge* is so borne out by experience, that our spiritual guides teach us that one of the best ways of finding out our ruling passion is to note what we are prone to blame and condemn severely in others. The vain are merciless on the vanity of others. The self-willed and tyrannical inveigh with much wrath against the tyranny of others. The unchaste are ever suspecting and denouncing immorality in others.

*M. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

It is because our Lord knows well *what is in man*, and how our wanton and insane pride and hypocrisy cannot refrain from condemning others, that He offers such incredible privileges and emoluments to those who will abstain from this enormous wickedness.

*Judge not and you shall not be judged.* Why do heretics and unbelievers stick at other Gospel truths and cavil against them ? Why do they not direct all their envenomed

acumen against this word: *Judge not and you shall not be judged?*

If there is in Holy Writ a sentence which to our corruption and blindness might seem irrational, here we have it. What judge in our land was ever heard to say to a murderer: Do not condemn your fellow-murderer, and you will be let off yourself? What Government so reckless as to say to the burglar or assassin: Do not insist that your accomplice be chastised, and you shall not be chastised yourself?

And yet our all-wise God, because He knows how madly bent we are on condemning others for what we do ourselves, binds Himself to this most marvellous covenant: *Judge not that you may not be judged* (Matt. vii.). *If you will forgive men their offences, your Heavenly Father will forgive you also your offences* (St. Matt. vi.).

N. *Father, forgive them.*

Yes, our Lord speaks this word from His death-bed as a lesson to be learned by us. St. Augustine writes, *Pro te misit hanc vocem, ut audiretur*—"He uttered this word for you, that you might hear it". He might have prayed in secret for His persecutors, but then you would not have had your lesson. He preaches this doctrine to us in this most solemn moment, because this is a fundamental teaching in His Gospel, from which there can be no exemption. St. Gregory writes: "His disciples through life must love their enemies, even as their Master in death loves His enemies who are slaying Him".

Is He requiring too much? According to His parable, I owe Him *ten thousand talents*, and my fellow-servant owes me *a hundred pence*. That means that my debt to God is immeasurable; for even the inspired Psalmist can only say, *Who understand sins?* Who, but our Lord? *We* do not understand sin, but *Jesus Christ* does. He knows how immeasurable is the malice, and folly, and ingratitude, and treason of sin, and all the everlasting ruin it brings to us; and therefore when He finds us severe and hard and inexorable against our fellow-servant for his small, insigni-

ficant debt, He lays aside all mercy towards us, and judges us justly according to the true magnitude of our debt.

*His lord, being angry, delivered him over to the torturers until he paid all the debt. So also shall My Heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts (Matt. xiii.).*

O. *Father, forgive them.*

Indeed, He is making all things new to-day. For He knows quite well that Satan has so thoroughly duped men and persuaded them to admire and adopt his pride, that they accept in its worst sense, as a golden rule, that maxim of the world, "Death before disgrace". In the gospel of the world—the "code of honour," as it was misnamed—a man was bound to try to murder his neighbour, and to run imminent risk of being murdered himself, rather than excuse and forgive some small affront, perhaps only imaginary. From this first Good Friday a very different practice sets in. When enemies are not merely uttering wounding words, but showering deadly stones, the first martyr with his dying face lit up like an angel's shall say: *Lord, do not lay this sin to their charge (Acts vii.).*

The Church of Christ Crucified is to be a Church of miracles. Why do foolish men refuse to believe that saints walk on the water, heal diseases, or raise the dead to life? Are we not all obliged to work the miracle of forgiving our enemies?

Is there one among us exempted from adopting this dying word of our Saviour Jesus: *Father, forgive them?*

Is not that kindred word also meant for all of us: *Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you? Bless those that curse you, and pray for those that calumniate you?* And if a man finds in himself a virtue come out from Christ Crucified which enables him to do all this, will that man be incredulous when told that Xavier raised the dead, or St. Alphonsus was present in two distant chambers at the same moment?

P. *Father, forgive them.*

Oh, thanks be to God, Who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. xv.). This word, once so impossible to man, is since this sixth hour of the first Good Friday become possible; and not only possible, but easy; and not only easy, but sweet and pleasant. After announcing that saving promise: *I will pour out the spirit of grace and of prayer, and they shall look on Me Whom they have pierced*: our Saviour goes on to tell us by His Prophet: *In that day I will take away the false prophets, and the unclean spirit out of the earth* (Zach. xii.). The lying and unclean and malicious code of Lucifer, with which men were so thoroughly imbued, has lost its hold on their minds, and the strange wonder has come to pass that the disciple of Christ Jesus can love his neighbour as himself.

Can find excuses for his neighbour as for himself:

Can desire forgiveness for his neighbour as for himself:

Can grieve over his neighbour's fall as over his own.

*Q. Father, forgive them.*

While looking on Him Whom we have pierced, and listening to His dying words, and contemplating our Brother, the First-born of our regenerate race, on His death-bed, and staying on Calvary by the side of His Mother and our Mother, we find ourselves beginning to understand all His Gospel concerning forgiveness, so that we at last acknowledge that His yoke is sweet, and what seemed an impossible burden is really light.

How many there have been that could cordially endorse that word: "I never was light-hearted till I learned to forgive every one".

*R. Father, forgive them.*

On Calvary, all the arguments dictated of old by the Holy Spirit (Ecclus. xxviii.) to teach us forgiveness of injuries, become quite intelligible and convincing.

1. *He that seeketh to revenge himself, the Lord will surely keep his sins in remembrance.* Yes, we now understand that word. For we often say, *If Thou shalt observe iniquities, Lord, Lord, who shall stand it?* We do not go to the

judgment-seat trusting to our own immaculate innocence, or to *our justifications*; but our trust is that because we have learned from Calvary to be merciful, we shall be able to say, overwhelmed with gratitude: *Lord Jesus, Thou hast cast all my sins behind Thy back* (Isaias xxxvi.). He will not keep our *sins in remembrance*.

2. *Forgive thy neighbour if he hath hurt thee, and then shall thy sins be forgiven to thee when thou prayest.*

Oh, yes: we begin to understand why there has been a cloud between our God and us when we pray. We have not as yet learned sufficiently the lesson, the first great lesson, that comes from our Saviour's death-bed, *Father, forgive them*.

3. *Man to man reserveth anger, and doth he seek remedy from God? He hath no mercy on a man like himself, and does he entreat for his own sins?*

This argument is now unanswerable.

*Man to man*—man, so small, is angry, and sets himself up so high, and will not forgive, and doth he appear before the infinite majesty of God with his sins upon him, and expect to have a remedy for all his troubles and wounds?

*Man to man*—*he hath no mercy on a man like himself*. Is one poor sinful man so hard upon another poor sinful man? Is it not passing strange if a leper contemn a leper? If a convict despise a convict?

4. *He that is but flesh nourisheth anger, and doth he ask forgiveness of God? who shall obtain pardon for his sins?* (Ecclus. xxviii.).

*He that is but flesh*. St. Paul, knowing that he was but flesh, chastised his body lest, he says, *while I preach to others, I myself become a castaway*. Shall I who am but flesh, so weak, so frail, so liable to temptation, shall I not win grace and help and mercy for my hour of need by showing mercy to others? If I don't, what will become of me? *Who shall obtain pardon for MY sins?* Not even the all-powerful Mother of God can obtain for me forgiveness or mercy if I will not be merciful.

5. *Remember thy last things, and let enmities cease.*

Oh, yes, death is too near; Judgment is too near. I cannot continue this quarrel. I want all my time and all my mind and my thought to get ready for my last end. Enmities must cease. *In all thy works, remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.* Anger and revenge shall not prevail.

6. *Remember the fear of God, and be not angry with thy neighbour.*

God, Who is to judge me, is the Creator, the Father, the God of my neighbour who has done me a small injury.

Can I heavily strike a child who has done me a childish wrong, under the very eye of his powerful father on whom I depend for my bread?

Holy Job tells us that he never through life could act harshly or unjustly or unmercifully to his neighbours, however lowly. Why not? *For I have always feared God, as waves swelling over me, and His weight I was not able to bear* (c. xxxi.).

How can I be so insane as to strike my neighbour, when the great God, on Whom my eternal doom depends, says in my hearing to the man whom I assail: *He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of My eye?* (Zach. ii.).

S. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

“So must we think, so pray,” St. Bernard writes, “when enemies revile us and inflict injury.”

For ourselves, we can with great ingenuity find excuses. So can we for our neighbours also, once the malice of the unclean spirit is driven out of us. “Excuse,” he adds, “the intention if you cannot excuse the act. Think it is ignorance; think it is a surprise; think it an accident. Say to yourself: ‘He was under temptation exceeding great.’”

T. *Father, forgive them.*

“We can have great hope,” St. Bernard adds, “when praying for an enemy. Such prayers offer violence to

the ears of God. He hears us, for He remembers how He wished His own cry to be heard."

God allows (Blessed Peter Faber teaches us) a bad man to wrong a good man, in order that the immense power of the forgiving prayer of the good man may win the great grace needed by the bad man, who else must perish. St. Paul knows now how much his conversion was helped by the dying cry of St. Stephen: *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge* (Acts vii.).

U. *Father, forgive them, they know not what they do.*

Even they who seem to wrong us with malice know not what they are doing. They know not, they do not realise that Jesus is wounded by their act in the apple of His eye; they know not that He is the *patient rewarder* Who has the long eternity before Him in which this sin will be chastised, if they repent not. Poor blinded brother! he has wronged himself far more than me. Why need I take revenge? For unless he becomes entirely converted, and makes amends, chastisement is coming to him such as human eye has never seen. He will weep and wail and gnash his teeth with a despair that no ear on earth has ever heard. The everlasting presence of this sin will be a burden my revengeful heart can never desire for him.

V. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

If we continue on Calvary, looking at our Saviour and listening to His words, virtue is all the while coming out from His charitable Heart to our selfish hearts, till at last we see the whole beauty and the wonderful gentleness and mercy of the golden rule laid down by Him for us: *With whatever judgment you judge, you shall be judged, and with whatever measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again* (St. Matt. vii.). For by this law, even after we have sinned, it is left entirely in our own hands to determine our sentence. If we choose to judge others fairly and charitably, and with that leniency which we show to ourselves, we shall be judged leniently and mercifully and with infinite indulgence.

W. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

Let us not grow tired, then, of looking and listening while our Blessed Lord is saying this word. For He does not grow tired of saying it. During the everlasting Sacrifice of the Mass, His thoughts and His cry for us are those of Calvary. He is still the same *Jesus, yesterday, to-day, and the same for ever* (Hebrews xiii.).

(a) Call to mind, then, the agony of His Body when He makes this prayer. He has been scourged, crowned, nailed, and is hanging in the most intolerable torture known. Here indeed is charity *strong as death*, and much stronger. How hard we find it, when in great pain, to plead for others, or care for others!

(b) Then Isaias writes: *He was reputed with the wicked, and hath borne the sins of many, and hath prayed for the transgressors.* Shame and disgrace have been added beyond measure to His bodily torments, when He makes this prayer. *He has been glutted with reproaches and outrage.*

"By the greatness of His Passion," St. Bernard writes, "measure the greatness of His charity."

Remembering how slight an insult is sufficient to unman our virtue and fill us with resentment, we must stay here till strength comes out from the Cross to us. *It is good for us to be here till we are endowed with power.*

(c) St. Laurence Justinian represents our Lord saying: "I make more account of their souls than of the welfare of My Body. Grievous is the torment I endure, but more bitter far to Me their ruin."

(d) "By His most merciful prayer," St. Augustine writes, "He was hindering their damnation."

(e) "What have you ever seen, O my soul," St. Bernard asks, "more meek, more kind than this Man? Great is the weakness of man in death; but to die with thoughts like these is strength immeasurable."

(f) "What manner of Man is this Who over His enemies pours out a word of blessing, the like of which has never till now been heard from the beginning?"

(g) "O Lord Jesus, in what measure wilt Thou refresh, *with the torrent of Thy pleasure*, those who desire Thee, seeing that with such abundance Thou dost anoint with the oil of Thy mercy those that crucify Thee?"

(h) "Never am I more like this goodness, than when to him who has wronged me, and still wishes to wrong me, I always wish blessings, and do him good also, if I can. This comes of Thy grace, Lord Jesus, Who didst pray for Thy crucifiers."

(i) "Christ prays for His murderers; will you not pray for your detractors?"

X. *Father, forgive them.*

It was on that morning when He protected the sinful woman from the malice of the Scribes and Pharisees, that our Blessed Saviour spoke the word: *When you shall have lifted up the Son of Man, then shall you know that I am He* (St. John viii.).

It is here on Calvary, as we look and listen, that we learn something of what our Lord is: *A gracious and merciful God: patient and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil* (Jonas iv.).

Y. *Father, forgive them.*

There are five times when we must more especially rouse ourselves to use this word of our Saviour.

(a) In the moment when we are wronged, or imagine ourselves wronged.

(b) Before we begin prayer. *When you shall stand to pray, forgive, if you have aught against any man, that your Father also Who is in Heaven may forgive you your sins* (St. Mark xi.). Purposely and designedly and, as we say, with infinite premeditation, our Lord planned that prayer for us: *Our Father, forgive us as we forgive.*

(c) At night, before we fall asleep. For though, not in St. Paul's sense, yet in a sense allowable, we may say that by sleep we *die daily*. Sleep is, in a way, an image and reminder of death at the end of each working day. *Let not the sun go down upon your anger* (Ephes. iv.).

(d) When preparing for Holy Communion. *Go first and be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.*

(e) Above all, when death is near. *Remember thy last things, and let enmities cease.*

“Ever-Blessed Mother of God, pray for us now and at the hour of our death, that our hearts may be changed and become like to the forgiving Heart of thy Son Jesus.”

*For I know that Thou art a gracious and merciful God, patient and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil (Jonas iv.).*

*Z. Father, forgive them.*

We sometimes say with our lips, “I forgive him, but—I will have nothing to do with him”.

We must not forget (1) that our Saviour says that He will deliver us over to *the toriurer*, unless we forgive every one his brother *from our hearts*; (2) that He binds us to this prayer: *Our Father, forgive us, as we forgive our debtors.* We need something better from God than a mere lip forgiveness.

*AA. Father, forgive them.*

What are we to do when resentful thoughts return? Sick men, when the attack returns, repeat the salutary dose. *Go thou and do the like—I say to you, Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them that calumniate you.* Not seven times only, but seventy times seven, must we say, *Father, forgive them,* till the virtue that comes from the Cross prevails in us.

Who knows? Our Lord may see that either your soul needs much special grace, or that your enemy is in great need, and therefore allows the resentful thought to return, that you may win grace for yourself and for your enemy, by praying again and again, *Father, forgive them.*

*BB. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

All sinners are enemies to our Lord, all have wronged

Him; but all sinners have not wronged us. Besides, therefore, those enemies who have wronged us, our Blessed Lord wishes us to say for all sinners: *Father, forgive them.* All our neighbours in the state of sin have wronged God and wronged themselves. No sick persons, no starving poor, none of the Holy Souls in Purgatory, are in such need of alms as those who are in sin. We must rouse ourselves to say for poor sinners our Saviour's dying prayer: *Father, forgive them.*

Some object: "I want all my prayers for myself".

The reply is this: The more we want help, the more we ought to pray for others. By praying for others we change every prayer into excellent alms; or rather, we add an excellent almsgiving to prayer. We double and treble the value of our prayers, and they win far more grace for our souls than when we pray only for ourselves. In prayer, as elsewhere, "*Væ soli!*"—*Wo to him that is alone!* We must pray with a group around us of those whom we know to be in want.

For, what particular reason is there that God should give me graces rather than to my neighbour? If I imagine in my prayer that I have some special title to mercy which my neighbour has not, I am deluded.

Christ died for all; and desires that all be saved. Unless I desire my neighbour's salvation, my desire for my own cannot be genuine.

I am to love my neighbour as myself. If my love for him is small, my supernatural love for myself is small also. If I have no sorrow for my neighbour's sin, my sorrow for my own is very insufficient.

God is *our* Father, not merely *my* Father. If I don't wish blessings to His other children, He will not be disposed to be generous to me.

CC. *Father, forgive them.*

We have seen that St. Bernard tells us that we ought to pray with a great love for those who offend us, as such prayers God hears most willingly.

We may bear in mind in addition, that if we lose hope for enemies and sinners, and give them up as incurable and beyond the reach of our prayers, there is great danger that we may lose hope also for ourselves. For what solid ground can we have for hoping for graces for ourselves, if we make up our minds that other children of God, because they have chanced to offend us, or because they have sinned, are beyond the reach of redemption?

Our hope for ourselves will surely grow in proportion as we hope more for our enemies, and for sinners.

DD. *Father, forgive them.*

*Lastly, there are all those whom we have wronged.* Surely they have a right to a place in all our prayers. What Zacheus said, every penitent disciple of Jesus Christ ought to say: *If I have wronged any one, I give back four-fold.* Restitution in other shapes is sometimes difficult; but prayer is always possible for those whom we have wronged, and it is a prayer that will greatly please our Lord, for it is the prayer of a *humble and contrite heart.*

We may bear in mind, too, that if a man has wronged us, there is always great chance that we have wronged him also. If a man wrongs me at noon, I may in one hour, through resentment and unfair revengeful thoughts, and angry words behind his back, be more guilty in his regard than he has been towards me.

EE. Our Blessed Lord hates sin, but loves the sinner. We have often little hatred for sin, but great hatred for the poor sinner.

## SCENE II.

THE SECOND WORD ON THE CROSS. THE GOOD THIEF.

## STATION I.

*Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

*And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour (St. Mark xv.).*

A. *When the sixth hour was come.*

We are assuming that the Crucifixion is completed before mid-day, that is, before the sixth hour. When our Lord has been *lifted up* for a little while the sixth hour is come, and the beginning of the darkness is perceived.

The Chief Priests and Ancients are in the very midst of their feverish triumph, hurrying about among the immense crowd, and with one group after another are enforcing despotically their fallacious argument that Jesus is manifestly, by God's silent acquiescence, shown to be a seducer.

As if every martyr, because he dies and is not rescued, were an impostor: whereas his glorious death is the heavenly seal set upon his sanctity by God.

But Ecclesiasticus writes: *Laughter I counted error; and to mirth I said: Why art thou vainly deceived?* Baltassar, the King, is in the very height of his revel when the hand is seen writing his doom on the wall. *The same night Baltassar, the Chaldean King, was slain; and Darius the Mede succeeded to the kingdom.*

We have seen how, during the Sacred Passion, power is given to *the woman*, the second Eve, the Mother of God, to coerce and humble Satan; and how she is ever praying to the Eternal Father: "*Glorify Thy Son. Glorify Thy obedient and suffering Son. Let not the enemy prevail against Him.*" In compliance with this wish of her heart, already the joy of the Priests and Ancients has received one

great check through Pilate's refusal to alter the inscription. Worse things are coming to them. For her heart, seeing that men are blaspheming, has turned to God's inanimate works, and said: *May the sun and the moon, the light and the darkness bless the Lord.*

B. *There was darkness.*

On a sudden, the bright noon of the Judean springtide begins to be overcast. It is not the gloom that precedes a coming storm. It is a darkness novel and quite unexpected. The people, already little pleased with the work of their Rulers, are murmuring aloud: "What have our Rulers done? They have brought on us the blood of the just Man. Now what crime had Jesus of Nazareth committed to deserve death?" A little while, and the screaming of frightened birds and the lowing of the cattle helps very much the spread of consternation among the multitude. The Priests and Ancients are struck dumb in the midst of their harangues to the people. For *wickedness is fearful*: and their conscience tells them how wicked above measure they have been. *Their countenances were changed and their thoughts troubled them, and the joints of their loins were loosed* (Daniel v.).

However, they are obliged to rouse themselves and put on a bold face, and force their tongues to speak assurances that the darkness means nothing at all; is perfectly natural; that all learned men are quite prepared for it, and that only the ignorant are terrified. "You are not alarmed, Annas, are you?" The great leader answers with a smile of scorn. "Is any one of the Rulers alarmed? or we the High Priests?" All the while, *they who (are promising) to drive away fear from the sick soul are sick themselves of an excessive fear; for a troubled conscience forecasteth grievous things* (Wisdom xvii.). They have no mind to continue their speeches to the multitude. The people are scowling on them. There may be danger near. Therefore the Rulers retire on their mules towards the place of Calvary, where the line of guards is a protection.

## STATION II.

*And they that were crucified with Him reviled Him (St. Mark xv.).*

*The self same thing the thieves also that were crucified with Him reproached Him with (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

*And one of those robbers who were hanged, blasphemed Him, saying: If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us (St. Luke xxiii.).*

*A. The thieves that were with Him reproached Him. . . . One of those robbers blasphemed Him.*

Did both the thieves join in reviling Jesus, or did only one blaspheme? As St. Luke writes, *one of the robbers*; while St. Matthew and St. Mark have: *the thieves—they that were crucified*, some writers think that only one blasphemed. They argue that historians sometimes say: "The bystanders threw stones," when perhaps only one did it; and that therefore we need not interpret St. Matthew's and St. Mark's words literally. But is there any good reason for thus explaining away the words of St. Matthew and St. Mark? The more common interpretation reconciles sufficiently well these two Evangelists with the narrative of St. Luke.

According to the common opinion, both thieves, after being scourged, come out of prison exasperated against Jesus, and join in reviling Him as the cause of their troubles. But later on, at the moment to which St. Luke alludes, only one robber blasphemes against Him. A great change has by this time been wrought in the soul of Dismas.

*B. And they that were crucified with Him reviled Him.*

We may then contemplate both thieves in their anger reviling Jesus, and His humble Heart answering meekly: *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter (St. John xiii.).*

And we may watch our Blessed Lady praying with a most tender compassion for the two sufferers, now become

companions to her Son, "My Son, *they have no wine.* The poor suffering sinner only wants Thy grace, and all his sorrows will be changed into a holy martyrdom. By Thy holy Cross, have mercy on the crucified sinners at Thy side."

"Blessed Mother of God, pray also for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death."

### STATION III.

*One of those robbers who were hanged, blasphemed Him, saying: If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other answering, rebuked him, saying: Neither dost thou fear God, seeing thou art under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man hath done no evil (St. Luke xxiii. 39—41).*

#### A. *One of those robbers blasphemed Him.*

One: for Dismas does not any longer join. He speaks not; for some time he has become silent and thoughtful.

With amazement he has been listening to the prayer of his Companion, again and again repeated: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* Despite his excruciating pains, he turns, and fixes his eyes on the pale, disfigured face of Jesus. He notices the tears that are trickling down His cheeks mixed with the drops of blood. He marks too how this malefactor in the middle does not howl, does not utter curses, as he and his comrade have done. No imprecation, not one, has passed His lips.

Then, too, Dismas also rests his eye on the gentle and sorrowful face of the Blessed Mother; and marks her eyes, sometimes resting on him, and her lips moving as if in prayer. Then he turns back again and gazes on our Lord, without being conscious that he is now fixing his eyes on Jesus because Jesus has first turned His eye of mercy towards him. The night before, Peter did not begin to weep till *the Lord turning looked on Peter.* Now, in like manner, Jesus has turned and looked on Dismas, and

the blessed prophecy of Palm Sunday is beginning to be fulfilled: *I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself* (St. John xii.). While Jesus is making His prayer: *Father, forgive*: His blessed Mother can do nothing but join heart with Heart. She too is crying, *Father, forgive.*

In that hour, the Soul of Jesus Crucified has begun to commune silently with Dismas, and the robber's heart of stone is being changed into a contrite heart of flesh. The unexpected darkness helps on the growth of that fear which is *the beginning of wisdom*. In his secret soul Dismas is saying to his God: "O my God, be merciful to me a sinner. I will repass with Thee my unhappy years gone by." In anguish he is thinking how far away his God is from him. Ah! little he knows how near, how very near He is!

*B. One of those robbers.*

Dismas is silent now. Never again will he utter one word against this most patient Sufferer, Jesus of Nazareth. For surely, he argues within himself, this meek and humble-hearted Man cannot be suffering for any sin of His own. No! Nor ever again will he wound the heart of that gentle and desolate Mother.

For the first time, tears from a contrite and humbled heart are beginning to flow down his rough cheeks; when suddenly he hears his impenitent comrade burst out again: *If Thou be the Christ, save Thyself and us*. Strongly moved by the grace of the *plentiful redemption* which is working in him, Dismas rebukes his old accomplice, saying: *Neither dost thou fear God, seeing that we are under the same condemnation?* Holy fear has entered into his soul, and is *piercing his flesh*, and makes its wonderful power felt above the cruel agonies of his crucified body.

*Neither dost thou fear God?* The fear of the coming Judgment is stronger now in Dismas than the sense of present pain; and the grace within him, like a fire, seeks to spread itself into the soul of his comrade.

*Neither dost thou fear God, seeing we are in the same condemnation?* Whatever these other men may do and say, *wagging their heads and crying, Vah!* we two, who are doomed, and so near our death, we cannot join in their wickedness. We must fear God.

As he speaks, grace is growing rapidly in his soul.

*C. And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds.*

*“O vos omnes.”* O all you Christian men and women who go by the way, stay a little while and listen to the wonderful word spoken by a robber who has spent his days in sin and is now for the first time penitent. We must consider in our hearts, and wonder, as we watch what grace can do, and with what speed it can work. For *it is easy in the eyes of God on a sudden to make the poor man rich* (Ecclus. xi.). Oh, it is good for Dismas to be here on Calvary. For in one short hour he has learned what oftentimes we do not learn in long years. Our Blessed Lady remembers the promise spoken to her: *No word shall be impossible with God.*

Is it a common thing, or is it a rare thing among us, to hear those who are suffering severely, though suffering far less grievously than Dismas, say, *We indeed justly, we are receiving the just reward of our deeds?*

If I can get so far as to say with the penitent prodigal: *“I am not worthy to be treated as Thy child, my God. Make me one of Thy poor hirelings”*: if I can bring myself to believe and to say, after my sins, that ill-usage is good enough for me, that my heart ought to expect *reproach and misery*: oh, what a comforting assurance this is that my absolutions are thoroughly valid and ratified in Heaven!

Sometimes, immediately after absolution from very heinous sins, and a long course of sin, men murmur: Now that I am serving God well, why does He not bless me? Why does not my business prosper? Why do not Catholics deal with me? *In vein have I justified my heart, and washed my hands among the innocent* (Psalm lxxii.).

Or, again, too often, even when one confesses grievous sin and begs forgiveness, he has no mind at all to allow his neighbour to treat him as a sinner, or even say one disrespectful word to him. "I may be a sinner in God's sight," he says, "but this man does not know that: he has no right to insult me. I will not stand it."

Is this contrition? Is this the genuine loving contrition that *covereth a multitude of sins*? *I counsel thee to buy gold fire-tried*. We who have grown old amid the good things of Christ's charity find it so hard, even when we know our guilt, to accept punishment as well deserved—so quick are we to resent even a word of correction, so inclined to screen ourselves, even by a lie, from blame—and yet this malefactor is able to say in the first hour of his conversion, although enduring agonising torture: *We are receiving the due reward of our deeds*.

D. *We indeed justly*.

"*Est homo marcidus*"—"There is a sorry man, wanting restoratives, his strength far gone; abounding in need: *and yet the eye of God hath looked upon him for good, and hath lifted him up from his low estate, and hath exalted his head: and many have wondered at him, and glorified God*" (Ecclus. xi.).

Here then we see the thief lifted up from the dunghill, and already established in a degree of virtue precious in God's sight. For a *humble and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise*. Dismas has already a contrite and humble heart, since in the extremity of bodily agony he is able to say, *We indeed justly: we are receiving the due reward of our deeds*. Now he has planned in his heart a further ascent, and from one virtue he will mount to another: *In his heart he hath disposed to ascend by steps . . . (he) shall go from virtue to virtue. The God of gods shall be seen (by him) in Sion* (Psalm lxxxiii.).

E. *But this Man hath done no evil*.

He does not yet recognise his Hidden God; only a suffering man in sore need. And out of his own poverty he gives this fellow-sufferer great alms.

*Silver and gold have I none, but what I have, I give thee* (Acts iii.).

Even if he were rich in gold and silver, Dismas cannot stretch out his crucified hand to offer it. "The thief," St. Gregory writes, "had nothing now free from torment except his heart and his tongue. Touched by Divine grace, he offers all that remains at his disposal to the service of his fellow-sufferer."

F. *This Man hath done no evil.*

Dismas gives a great alms:

1. Because, when a man is himself suffering great pain, it costs him much to rouse himself to work for another. And alms become more precious in God's sight in proportion to what they cost us.

2. Because "a friend in need," we say, "is a friend indeed". Our Saviour in this hour is in extreme necessity. Till now He has been saying: *I looked on My right hand, and beheld, and there was no one that would know Me* (Psalm cxli.). At last He has found on His right hand a friend who feels for Him.

We need not envy Dismas. Jesus remains always poor and needy among us, that each of us may be a friend in need to Him.

3. Then again, it is a great alms, because the battle against Jesus is raging on Calvary, and it requires much courage to utter such a word as this. Heretofore, when the blind man after his cure spoke up for Jesus, these Priests and Ancients had no words bad enough for him. They cast him out of the Synagogue as an excommunicated reprobate. To-day their rage, like the furnace in Babylon, *is heated seven times more than it had been accustomed to be heated* (Daniel iii.). They are in such a state of frenzy—so little, their terror tells them, is wanting to stir up the people in favour of Jesus—that they are ready to tear in pieces any one who shall dare to take His part. Consequently, several of the holy Fathers of the Church, considering the courage

with which Dismas—in presence of the Rulers, and after hearing all their denunciations of Jesus—proclaims His innocence, are not afraid to speak of him as a martyr.

“He began his chastisement,” St. Augustine writes, “as a robber, but ends it as a martyr.” This word of the Good Thief is the strongest possible condemnation of the Rulers. For if Jesus has done no evil, evil indeed must be they who have crucified Him.

Contemplate, then, the surprise, the indignation, the fury with which the Priests and Scribes hear this public profession from Dismas and scowl upon him. Why do they not fall upon him? (1) Because Jesus from His Cross, though He does not choose to save Himself, is well able to defend whom He pleases.

And (2) because the Centurion in charge is not so much the slave of the Rulers as his master Pilate has been, and he knows how to repress disorder. *Many dogs have encompassed Me: the council of the malignant hath besieged Me, and they have looked and stared upon Me* (Psalm xxi.). They can stare wildly on Dismas, and gnash their teeth, but no more.

- G. *This Man hath done no evil.*

4. Another reason why this well-timed alms is so consoling to the agonised Soul of our Lord, is that it comes from a contrite and humbled heart. The immediate effect of contrition in the heart of Zacheus was: *If I have wronged any man, I restore him four-fold.* Dismas is now bent on making all the reparation in his power. Grievously, he now sees, grievously he has wronged this innocent and patient Man, Jesus of Nazareth: cruelly, too, that disconsolate Mother. And most earnestly he desires to make some poor amends.

“O Mother of God, Refuge of Sinners, pray for us sinners as you prayed for the first-born of your sinful children, that we too may have a great desire to make good, four-fold, every wrong we have done.”

H. *This Man hath done no evil.*

*Give alms*—our Saviour said, not long ago, to His enemies, the Pharisees—*give alms, and behold all things are clean to you* (St. Luke xii.). *Alms*, holy Tobias said, *deliver from all sin, and from death: and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness* (c. iv.).

When St. Raphael had rendered such great services, the good old man, filled with gratitude, said to his son: *What can we give to this holy man that is come with thee? Father*, his grateful son answered, *what wages shall we give him? or what can be worthy of his benefits?* (Job xii.).

*Sursum corda!* We may contemplate the infinite gratitude of our Saviour communing now with His Eternal Father, and asking in profound humility of heart: “My Father, what can we give to Dismas?” We say, “*Quid retribuam Domino!*” But He says with infinitely greater humility and reverence and gratitude: *Quid retribuam latroni?* “What shall I give in return to the penitent for the good alms he has given to Me?” And the Blessed Mother knows her Son’s secret thoughts, and, consoled ineffably, waits, and watches to see what His grateful Heart will do, and His blessed angels, with their Queen, wait and watch in admiration.

They have not long to wait. Jesus has promulgated this law: *Ask and you shall receive.* Therefore He puts it Himself into the mind of Dismas to ask, in order that He may be able to give.

*I. This Man has done no evil.*

Dismas said no more. This seems a passing word. But never through time or in eternity shall it pass away. Mark how the little grain of mustard-seed grows into a great tree that shall live for ever, because gratitude in our Lord’s Heart is infinite.

## STATION IV.

*And he said to Jesus : Lord, remember me when Thou shalt come into Thy Kingdom. And Jesus said to him : Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise (vv. 42, 43).*

*A. Lord, remember me.*

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, as it were, the soul of the sinner has been wafted across the chaos that lay between him and his God, and full of filial hope draws near and says, Remember me, my God, my Father. Dismas could not make this prayer unless the grateful Lord had already done great things for him. St. Thomas writes that it is a miracle when a sinner without passing slowly through intermediate stages is so strongly moved by grace that he suddenly arrives at the perfection of sanctity. Of his great faith St. Chrysostom says: "He sees Jesus a condemned man, but invokes Him as a King; sees Him on a Cross, but prays to Him as if enthroned in Heaven". He and other Fathers call St. Dismas, "Prophet, Apostle, Evangelist".

When Dismas gave his alms to Jesus a short moment ago, he was only befriending one under the same condemnation as himself. Since then, faith, hope, and charity have been poured into his soul. His impenitent companion scoffs at the royalty of Jesus. Dismas now believes firmly in Him as his King and his Lord. He believes, and hopes also; and asks with great trust, and with love, too: "My Lord, remember me". St. Augustine writes: "To faith like this what can be added, I know not. For while those are shaken who saw Christ raise the dead, he believes, though he sees Him crucified by his side. Truly no faith like this hath our Lord found in Israel; nay, nor in the whole world."

St. Bernard writes, *Bonus Jesus cito exaudit, cito promittit, cito dat.*

“Quickly our good Lord Jesus hears this prayer, quickly He promises, quickly He gives.”

“Who,” he adds, “who is there that will not hope in one Who hears so lovingly, promises so readily, pays so promptly?”

B. *This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*

*This day*—for though the gates of Heaven are not yet open, yet wherever Jesus shall be, there shall Paradise be. *The city hath no need of the sun nor the moon to shine in it. For the glory of God hath enlightened it, and the Lamb is the lamp thereof* (Apoc. xxi.).

We must keep a little time to contemplate the unspeakable comfort given to our Lady's heart while she listens to her Son's word to St. Dismas: *This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.* “O my Son, my God, *according to the multitude of my sorrows, Thy comforts hath given joy to my soul*” (Psalm xciii.). And as she knows that her prayer for Dismas has won the great mercy, she adds: *My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. He that is mighty hath done great things for me.* Mark how her tears are falling and how Dismas weeps abundantly, as his eye meets hers, and he looks on his Mother and his Queen, and she fixes her eyes on the dying Saint, her first-born on Calvary.

C. *This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*

And it is our Blessed Saviour Himself Who tells us that there is among all His holy legions a gladness such as eye on earth hath never seen, nor ear heard of, nor heart conceived, in the hour when they hear their King from His holy Cross canonise the Blessed Saint that was, till this holy hour, a castaway. “All ye angels of the Lord,” their Queen is saying to them, “bless the Lord, bless my Son Jesus. *Who is like to God our Lord, Who looketh down on the low things, raising up the needy from the earth, and lifting up the poor out of the dunghill?*” (Psalm cxii.).

“True indeed it is, my Son, my Lord: Thyself Thou wilt not save, but Thou will save and glorify others.”

D. *This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*

"O vos omnes, attendite." Oh, do not yet hasten away. Tarry a little longer, to consider in your hearts, how the Good Thief came to be so blessed as to hear this word: *Thou shalt be with Me.* We are familiar with the legends which tell us that either he or his mother befriended Holy Mary when she was fleeing with her Divine Child from the cruelty of Herod. But we need not build our theories on any uncertain foundations.

We have certainties before us.

E. *This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*

First, then, Dismas was a sinner found out in his sin and punished by man for his sin. And there is always hope for a sinner found out and subjected to chastisement.

For (1) a sinner detected, when his sin is now exposed, is a man cast down and humbled. Pride is often cast out of him.

Then (2), when God strikes in this world, it is a sign that He does not intend to chastise us in the next life. He is a Father, Who *hath compassion on His children* (Psalm cii.). *For the Lord will not cast off for ever. For if He hath cast off, He will also have mercy, according to the multitude of His mercies. For not from the heart hath He afflicted nor cast off the children of men* (Lament. iii.).

St. Augustine tells us how earnestly as a child he prayed that he might not be chastised for his delinquencies. Later on, his thoughts changed, and he cried out: "O God, spare me not here, that Thou mayest in eternity spare me".

Happy the day and blessed the hour when our good God chastises us here, in order not to be compelled to take vengeance in eternity.

Happy the sinner who wisely chastises himself, for God will not cast him off. *Sacrifice a sacrifice of justice, and hope in the Lord* (Psalm iv.).

Weep not over the prisoner in his dungeon nor the condemned man on the scaffold; but weep over him who sins and prospers. *Their houses are secure and peaceable, and*

*the rod of God is not upon them. Their little ones go out like a flock, and their children dance and play. They take the timbrel and the harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down into Hell (Job xxi.).*

Dismas, then, has sinned; but in the dungeon he has been scourged for his sin, and starved for his sin, and trampled on, as an outcast, for his sin. And now, on Calvary, for his sin he is to die, and to die crucified. And even when sorrow and suffering are a consequence of our own sin, our Lord has a fellow-feeling for the sufferer, and is very willing to sanctify the suffering. *I am with him in tribulation* (Psalm xc.). If Gesmas died impenitent, his overwhelming despair at the Judgment will be that he did not use offered graces as Dismas did. *We fools! Behold how (he is) numbered among the children of God, and (his) lot among the saints* (Wisdom v.).

*F. Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*

(3) While studying the grace given to St. Dismas, we must, in the next place, bear in mind the words of Isaias, the Prophet of the Sacred Passion: *Thus saith the Lord: In an acceptable time I have heard thee, and in the day of salvation I have helped thee* (c. xlix.). There never has been since the beginning of the world an acceptable time such as this Good Friday. The Passion of our Lord covers up entirely the multitude of sins committed throughout the world. And the dark moments, from the sixth to the ninth hour, are so beautiful in the eyes of the Eternal Father, that He cannot remember man's transgression. He can only look on the face of His Christ.

There are, then, acceptable times; there are special days of salvation.

Whenever our Blessed Lord is lying on the altar and the Sacrifice of Calvary is being represented in the Holy Mass, that is an acceptable time.

All the feasts of the Blessed Mother of God are acceptable times. For her *the King desires to honour.*

When God wishes to show special honour to a saint, then is an acceptable time.

As has been said already, the time of suffering is an acceptable time. For our Lord cannot help having much compassion for those who suffer.

Again, the time we spend charitably by a sick-bed, or with the poor, or helping a sinner to rise, these hours are always acceptable times. For *the merciful shall find mercy*.

Are there, on the other hand, times specially unacceptable? Yes; the days when we are sinning and prospering are specially odious in God's sight. The hour in which I am sinning myself, and yet hard and unmerciful to others, is also a very unpropitious hour for finding mercy.

G. *This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*

(4) Observe, also: as there are acceptable times, so are there acceptable places. When Naaman, the Syrian leper, was bidden by Eliseus to go wash in the Jordan, he was angry. *Are not the rivers of Damascus*, he said, *better than all the waters of Israel?* (4 Kings v.). But his servants counselled him better than his own anger. *Wash*, they said, *and thou shalt be clean.*

God is Lord and Master of all. If He chooses water for Baptism, oil for the dying, bread and wine for the Eucharist, we are fools if we rise up and ask why must it be water or oil or wine? If He chooses to say to His priests: What you absolve shall be absolved: fools are we if we determine to have forgiveness in some other way of our own. If our Blessed Lord chooses to give grace in the Jordan or in Jerusalem, or at the tomb of a martyr or a shrine of our Lady, who shall gainsay God's good pleasure?

Calvary is God's chosen spot. In consequence of the words of the 73rd Psalm, *God is our King before ages; He hath wrought salvation in the middle of the earth*, many early Fathers assumed that Calvary is the centre of the earth. This at least is certain, that it is the centre of Christian life. At Holy Mass each day the priest says: *I will compass Thy altar, O Lord, that I may hear the voice of Thy praise, and*

tell of all Thy wondrous works (Psalm xxv.). Do not the words give us a picture of what Christian life ought to be?

*I will compass Thy altar, O Lord.* Whatever my walk of life may be, my heart shall ever continue going round about Thy altar, shall ever be looking towards Thy altar. For Thy altar is Calvary; and Calvary is Thy altar.

One of our favourite poets writes to his loved brother :

Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,  
My heart untravelled, fondly turns to thee.

Many children of Holy Church are so blessed as to be able to say that whatever their work may be, and whither-soever duty may call them, their souls untravelled turn to Calvary, the centre of the Christian world. *If I forget thee, O Calvary, let my right hand be forgotten.*

Some spiritual writers have thought that the mystery of the Blessed Eucharist will be in some ineffable way perpetuated in Heaven, in order to add to the delighted gratitude of the blessed; and to keep fresh and perennial the memory of Calvary, and all the holiness and loveliness of the first Good Friday.

*I will compass Thy altar, O Lord.* I will frequent Calvary. I will go often in spirit to the *mountain of myrrh* and the *hill of frankincense*. With what object? The Psalmist tells us: (1) *To hear the voice of Thy praise*; to hear the hymns and songs of Holy Church on earth in praise of Jesus Crucified; to hear what the blessed in Heaven are saying or singing of Jesus Crucified; to hear, too, what the Holy Souls in Purgatory are lovingly sighing out concerning Jesus Crucified.

And then, also, (2) *to tell of Thy wondrous works*; to get so warmed with that fire that comes from the Heart of our Lord Crucified, that this Divine fire may spread as it ought from our hearts to others.

Good Friday, then, is an acceptable time, and Calvary a chosen spot for the miracles of God's mercy, far beyond the waters of Jordan, far beyond the Pool of Siloe or

Solomon's Temple. Our Lord said of Solomon's Temple: *My eyes shall be open, and My ears attentive to the prayer of him that shall pray in this place. For I have chosen and have sanctified this place, that My name may be there for ever, and My eyes and My heart may remain there perpetually* (2 Paral. vii.).

How much better do these holy words suit Calvary!

*I have chosen and have sanctified this place.* For His Birth He chose the stable, to be cradled there between *the two animals*, the ox and the ass, and to sanctify that place. For His Death, for His Passion and His Blessed Mother's Compassion, He chose Golgotha, the place of the skull, to die there, *between the two robbers*, Dismas and Gesmas, and to sanctify the place ineffably.

Much against his will, and with a heavy heart, Dismas came to Calvary. By the ninth hour he is able to say, *Better is one day in Thy courts*, Lord Jesus, *above thousands* (Psalm lxxxiii.). *It is good for me, O Lord, that Thou hast humbled me* (Psalm cxviii.). It is good for me to be here.

H. *Lord, remember me. This day thou shalt be with Me.*

"Quickly He hears, quickly He promises, quickly He pays," St. Bernard tells us. We often suffer much because our Lord is slow in hearing our prayers, or seems not to hear at all.

"*Attendite.*" Let us stay here a little, and fix in our mind the method adopted by the Good Thief, which succeeded so well in obtaining a speedy hearing for his prayer. *Look well, and do according to the pattern.* Try to find out what plan he followed, and *go thou and do the like.*

First, then, Dismas is a suffering man, and the Heart of our Saviour, as has been said, always inclines towards sufferers. *I am with him in tribulation.* The sick and the suffering are often depressed because they cannot work. They may be comforted unspeakably. For suffering makes us more like to Christ Crucified than work does. Consequently, though there has ever been so much work to do in His vineyard, He was more pleased to see His martyrs

die suffering with Him and for Him, than to leave them on earth to work in His vineyard.

Secondly, the heart of St. Dismas has become bruised and humble. *We indeed justly.—We are receiving the due reward of our deeds* (St. Luke xxiii.). *The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds* (Ecclus. xxxv.). The heart of Dismas has been bruised by a great contrition. He is wonderfully humble—we must admit it—to be able to accept with such singular resignation the terrible agony of the crucified.

Let us remember what a power pain has to blot out entirely from our mind the sense of our guilt, and the conviction that we deserve much chastisement. At times, it only makes us more impatient if friends remind us of such thoughts.

Let us, then, do justice to the wonderful grace come from the Heart of Jesus into the heart of His companion in suffering.

Thirdly, Dismas, before he makes his short prayer, gives a great alms. Now, on this point, what is our Saviour's promise? *Undo the bundles that oppress; let them that are broken go free; and break asunder every burden. Deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the needy and the harbourless into thy house. When thou shalt see one naked, cover him, and despise not thy own flesh. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning and thy health SHALL SPEEDILY ARISE. THEN SHALT THOU CALL AND THE LORD SHALL HEAR: THOU SHALT CRY AND HE SHALL SAY, HERE I AM* (Isaias lviii.).

Dismas has done his best to ease the burden of injustice and malice that is oppressing Jesus. Let us try to do according to the pattern. We can take off a heavy burden from our absent neighbour by defending him when maligned and oppressed by evil tongues. But if, on the contrary, we by unkindness, by detraction, by calumny, add to the load that is burdening one of our brethren, what chance have we of a speedy hearing when we pray? Or, again, if we have not entirely forgiven from our very

hearts, if there is some one of our brethren labouring under the weight of our displeasure, how can we hope for a speedy answer to our prayer? If with an unforgiving heart we are saying, "Our Father, forgive as I forgive," can we expect a blessing to come quickly?

Fourthly. Then, besides, Dismas has Jesus and Holy Mary near him when he prays, and praying with him; and they are ever ready to pray with us now. The priest at the altar turns round and says to the faithful: *Oremus*—"Let us pray". Jesus, Who is *ever living to intercede for us*, turns also to us and says: "Let us pray together to *My Father and your Father, My God and your God*". Before we begin to say, Our Father, let us prepare our souls, by bringing close to us on one side those whom we dislike, or are inclined to contemn, who are the children of our Father as well as we are; and on the other side, let us have near us Jesus our Brother, our Surety, the first-born of our Father, and the first-born of our Holy Mother. If we pray in this companionship, our prayer will be very pleasing.

I. *Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*

The holy Fathers of the Church find great contentment in dwelling on the grace given to St. Dismas. "Not one will you find," St. Chrysostom writes, "before the Thief who was judged deserving of a promise of Paradise; not Abraham! not Isaac! not Jacob! not Moses! not the Prophets nor the Apostles! You will find the Robber favoured above them all." O blessed St. Dismas, when thou wert grieved this morning, Jesus of Nazareth passing by said to thee: "*What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.* Take up thy cross and follow Me."

J. *To-day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*

"Notice," writes St. Augustine, "our Lord died, taking with Him neither gold nor silver nor precious raiments, nothing but the soul of one thief." This is His treasure.

K. *Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*

Shall we say then that we can all wait and make our

peace with God on our death-beds? *Absit!* Far be that thought from us. It was not the thought of the Good Thief. He was not one who knew, but would not do. "Till he was on the cross beside our Lord," St. Augustine writes, "he knew nothing of religion, nothing of Christ." "When once he became aware that it was the acceptable time, he made no delay, nor deferred his cure to the last moment. Let not any one say: I see how the Good Thief obtained in a brief space pardon of his crimes. The devil inspires this confidence only that he may secure our perdition. Beyond all counting are they who have been deluded by this empty phantom of hope."

One is converted on his death-bed, therefore I must not despair. Few are converted on their death-bed, therefore I must prepare beforehand.

*Delay not to be converted to the Lord; and defer it not from day to day* (Ecclus. v.).

*Arise, make haste and come* (Cant. ii.), our Blessed Lord says to us from His Cross.

*L. Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*

St. Augustine, reflecting on the humble patience of the Thief in his terrible penance, prays: "Do Thou, O Lord, Who sendest the outward scourge, give me always a never-failing patience, that so Thy praise may never depart from my mouth".

St. Bernard prays: "Oh, if Jesus would also remember me, a sinner! Remember me, Thou Who didst not spurn the Thief who confessed to Thee."

Holy Church prays:

Qui Latronem exaudisti	Thou Who didst the Robber hear,
Mihi quoque spem dedisti.	Biddest me with hope draw near.

*M. Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*

Christ changed the fishermen into fishers of men. So, too, a holy Father writes, He taught the Robber to follow his trade in a new and better way, and by violence to carry away the Kingdom of Heaven.

## STATION V.

*One of those robbers blasphemed. . . . But the other said to Jesus : Lord, remember me* (vv. 39, 43).

A. *One shall be taken, the other left* (St. Matt. xxiv.), our Lord said three days ago, and He added His usual earnest warning : *Watch ye therefore.*

The scene on Calvary, St. Leo the Great tells us, is a picture of the Judgment that is to come. The Judge is in the middle, the elect on His right hand, the wicked on the left.

"One goes before Peter into Paradise," St. Jerome writes, "the other follows Judas into Hell."

B. *One blasphemed ; the other said, Lord, remember me.*

If we ask, why one is thus taken and the other left : why God draws one and does not draw the other : St. Augustine gives one answer :

Noli investigare,  
Si non vis errare.

Do not search too long,  
For you may go wrong.

God Himself gives this answer : *I will have mercy on whom I will, and I will be merciful to whom it shall please Me* (Exodus xxxiii.).

Therefore grace is always God's free gift. But still, if we might get behind the scenes, as we say, and see all that passes before the hour in which the two Apostles sin, St. Peter and Judas, we should understand better why God is pleased to be merciful to one, and is constrained against His will to let the other perish in his sins. And so, too, at the Judgment, when Jesus Christ makes known His secret, we shall understand why Dismas finds mercy and Gesmas does not.

*And then, Lord Jesus, Thou (shalt) be justified in all Thy words, and (shalt) overcome when Thou art judged* (Psalm l.).

C. *Thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*

Let us contemplate the peace that this world cannot give, but which Jesus can give—which is now in the soul

of this crucified Saint since he heard that word, *Thou shalt be with Me.* "*In pace in idipsum dormiam et requiescam. Quoniam tu, Domine, singulariter in spe constituisti me*"—*In peace I will sleep, and will rest. For Thou, O Lord, singularly, wonderfully, most marvellously, hast settled me in hope.*

In the eleventh hour, just as God's Angel is about to swear that for him *time shall be no more*, Jesus on His Cross calls Dismas from eternal death to Paradise and life everlasting.

"Blessed Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death."

### SCENE III.

#### THE DIVISION OF THE GARMENTS.

##### STATION I.

*The soldiers, therefore, when they had crucified Him, took His garments (and they made four parts, to every soldier a part), and also His coat. Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said then one to another: Let us not cut it, but let us cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the Scripture might be fulfilled: They have parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture they have cast lots. And the soldiers indeed did these things (St. John xix.).*

*And crucifying Him they divided His garments, casting lots upon them what every man should take (St. Mark xv.).*

*And they sat and watched Him (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

*A. The soldiers, therefore, took His garments.*

The growing darkness affects the soldiers somewhat as it affects all others around Golgotha. They are no longer so well pleased with their work. They are glad to withdraw a little from the Cross. They cannot retire altogether and go back to their barracks, for they are bound to keep watch to the end and see the condemned expire; but they are well content to go aside and look after

the spoils that have fallen to them through the Crucifixion. Some writers tell us that the Centurion, already touched by Divine grace, orders them to retire, in order that the Blessed Mother may be undisturbed. They leave, therefore, the plateau and take their seats, a little below the level. There they spread out the garments of our Blessed Saviour, and, according to their usage, bring out their dice, in order to settle the partition amicably. It is, moreover, time for their noon-day meal. They are tired, and glad of some rest and refreshment. Perchance too they reckon up the fees and bribes which they have received for services rendered.

*They made four parts, for every soldier a part.*

These words bear out the opinion of those who tell us that four executioners were appointed to take charge of each doomed criminal.

*They divided His garments, casting lots.*

Did they cast lots over all the garments, or only for the woven tunic? Some writers gather from the words of St. Mark that the whole distribution was settled by the cast of the dice. Others think that St. John's words imply that nothing but the woven tunic was determined by lots. One method proposed for reconciling the two opinions is to say that in the first place the soldiers divided the garments as well as they could into four equal portions, setting aside, however, the woven tunic; that then they cast lots to decide which of the four portions each is to have; and that lastly they cast lots for the woven tunic.

B. *They said then one to another: Let us not cut it.*

Holy writers wish us to learn a lesson from the prudence of these rough men. Charity ought to be in our eyes, like a precious robe, much more sacred than the woven tunic is to them.

Sometimes we are in doubt which of two courses to pursue. Worldly prudence, or resentment, or some other passion may urge one course; St. Paul, however, earnestly presses on us an opposite advice: *Before all these things have charity* (Coloss. iii.). If a rent is once made in heavenly charity, who shall mend it?

*A mild answer, the Holy Ghost tells us, breaketh wrath; but a harsh word stirreth up fury* (Prov. xv.).

One harsh word often makes a breach in holy charity, which cannot for many long days be repaired.

Again, the Holy Spirit cautions us all very strongly against the tongues of tale-bearers and mischief-makers. *The tongue of a third person hath disquieted many. . . . He that hearkeneth to it shall never have rest : neither shall he have a friend in whom he may repose. The stroke of a whip maketh a blue mark ; but the stroke of the tongue will break the bones* (Ecclus. xxviii.). And yet he who strikes with a whip shall be shut up in prison ; while he who with his mischievous tongue has destroyed long-standing friendships, and set at variance a peaceful family, is allowed to walk abroad unmolested and to visit house after house as an apostle of discord. Let us not cut and rend and tear asunder the unity of charity.

C. *They said one to another : Let us not cut it.*

The holy Fathers also see in this coat *without seam, and woven from the top throughout*, a picture of our Lord's revelation, that is, of His Gospel, or the one faith committed to His Church, which is *woven from the top throughout*, so as to make one indivisible whole. It ought never to be cut. For St. James writes : *Whosoever shall keep the whole law, but offend in one point, is become guilty of all* (c. ii.). So too, evidently, if I accept all God's teaching, except one doctrine which I reject, faith is wholly destroyed. For it is clear that, if I accept my neighbour's testimony in other matters, but on one point believe firmly that he is a liar, what I accept can never efface the stigma I fix upon him by accusing him of one grave lie.

D. *Crucifying Him, they divided His garments.*

"*Attendite.*" Let us not fail to mark this contrast : Jesus throughout the whole course of His agonising torments is unmindful of Himself and thinking of us. But we can sit down under the shadow of His holy Cross, and forget our Surety Who is giving His life for us. We can be so absorbed in a little gain, or a passing pleasure, that we forget entirely His Passion and Holy Mary's compassion.

## SCENE IV.

## THE THIRD WORD.

## STATION I.

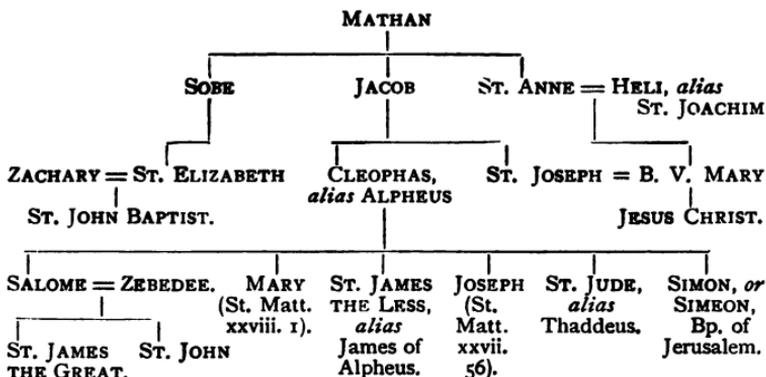
Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother, and His Mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen (St. John xix.).

And there were many women afar off, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him. Among whom was Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee (St. Matt. xxvii.).

*His Mother, and His Mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas.*

i. *Mary of Cleophas* is here called *His Mother's sister*, in the same way that St. James is called by St. Paul *the brother of the Lord*, and St. Mark writes: *His Mother and His brethren came and sent to Him, calling Him* (c. iii.). The names of brother and sister are given to cousins. The more immediate relatives of our Lord can be seen in the following table. We start from Mathan, whom we find in St. Matthew's genealogical table (c. i.) as a descendant from David and Solomon. Mathan, as we see, was father of St. Anne, and grandfather both of our Lady and of St. Joseph.

N.B.—The sign = means married to.



From this table we see that Holy Mary, St. Elizabeth, St. Joseph, and Cleophas (called also Alpheus) are all first cousins: that Salome, and one of the three Marys, and the

Apostles, St. James the Less (called also James of Alpheus), and St. Jude (called also Thaddeus), were the children of St. Joseph's brother, Cleophas, and would therefore be considered first cousins of our Lord. Two other Apostles, St. James and St. John, are younger. They are sons of Zebedee and his wife, Salome, who is St. Joseph's niece.

2. *His Mother and His Mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen.*

Mary of Cleophas, mentioned by St. John, is Mary the mother of James and Joseph mentioned by St. Mark.

3. St. Mark speaks of Mary of Cleophas and Mary Magdalen and Salome (Zebedee's wife) as *afar off*. St. John places them with our Lady beside the Cross. They may have been at first *afar off*, and afterwards, when the darkness cleared the ground around the holy Cross, drew as near as they could to the Blessed Mother.

A. *Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

This is well. She is now in her place. The darkness, we are told, is come at her prayer: *Glorify Thy Son, O God, that Thy Son may glorify Thee*. It is come at her prayer to silence the enemies of Jesus, and also to scare them away, and to leave her place within the sanctuary, during the Holy Sacrifice, free for her. The darkness secures a sacred privacy for her sorrow. In the moment of the Incarnation no eye on earth witnessed her ineffable gladness; no ear on earth heard the melody made in her heart. No thought of man pictured her ecstasy. So is there now a sacred veil spread over her sorrow, her sorrow *great as the sea*.

For if it be written: *According to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, Thy comforts have given joy to my soul* (Psalm xciii.), we may safely say that according to the multitude of those midnight joys in the hour of the Incarnation and in the hour of the Nativity, so are these sorrows, *great as the sea*, which, in this untimely midnight, enter unwitnessed into the soul of this admirable Mother.

*Let them be confounded and ashamed that seek my (Son's) Soul* (Psalm lxix.). This prayer has been heard. The scoffing Priests and Ancients are struck dumb by the darkness and have slunk away from the place of Calvary. And

Holy Mary has come into her own position close to the holy Cross.

*Ordinatione tua*—Entirely according to Thy will and ordinance, Lord Jesus, this holy day of grace and salvation is going on. She is near to the Cross.

B. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

*“Attendite.”* Look at her near to the Cross, standing in front, her eyes fixed on her Divine Son. There is nothing now on Calvary to disturb her contemplation. She can see, she can hear, she can suffer. The sword can enter silently and leisurely, without let or hindrance, into her soul and pierce it through and through. “She is given up,” says the theologian Cajetan, “to a wondering contemplation, comparing the high things heretofore witnessed with the depths of the present hour.”

C. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

She is not here to nurse her Son. She will not dress His wounds, nor bind them up, nor foment them with oil. She is here that the Divine decrees may have their fulfilment. In this hour, the great enmity, so long foretold, between her and the serpent is to come to its height, and she is to crush his head under her virgin foot. In this hour, her Son is *set as a Sign to be contradicted*, and to become *the fall and the resurrection of many*; and her own soul *is to be pierced with the sword of sorrow, that out of many hearts different thoughts may be revealed* (St. Luke ii.). Many will scoff at her; many will venerate deeply, and love tenderly this Blessed Mother of the thrice Blessed Son.

In Bethlehem she was a Mother to Him, and nursed Him and fed Him with her milk. To-day she is here as the second Eve, to help the second Adam, by suffering at His side, to repair the great wrong done to His Eternal Father by a man and a woman in the Garden of Eden.

D. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

St. Bernardine writes that in the very hour of the

Incarnation she knew and accepted what was to come. For she had, with the Holy Ghost as her Master, studied the sacred pages. When, therefore, she said: "*Fiat*"—*be it done to me*, she consented to all.

Then, as has been already said, in those hours of blessedness which they spent together at Nazareth, the Divine Child was ever perfecting more and more her *superminent knowledge* of Him. He Who said of old: *Can I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?* had much more vividly imprinted on His Heart this thought: *Can I hide from My Blessed Mother any of the things that are to come to her and to Me?*

As she is My Eve, and My helpmate, is it well, is it right for Me to be alone through My long Passion of foreknowledge? Can I eat My morsel and drink My chalice alone for so many years and not share with her? It is impossible. This may not be.

Now His hour is come and her hour is come. They are together. *Lovely and comely in their life*, in this hour of death they must not be divided.

*E. There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

A holy Father writes that, as in the Incarnation the Son of God willed to share with His Human Nature all that could be shared; so in His Sacred Passion Jesus wills to share with His Blessed Mother all His sorrows, as far as ever He can share them. They are to be two in one, with *one heart and one soul*.

He has given to her the right of sharing everything with Him—draining with Him the chalice to the dregs: *The Lord hath sworn and will not repent* (Psalm cix.).

This must be so, for otherwise St. Paul's argument would fail: *He Who delivered His only Son for us all, how hath He not also with Him given us all things?* (Rom. viii.).

To her pre-eminently and in a manner quite ineffable, God has given His only Son. How then can He hold anything back? How can He help sharing with her every sorrow of His Son?

*F. There stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother.*

Moreover, unless He shares with her every morsel of the *bread of tears*, and every bitter drop in his chalice, He cannot rightly do all His own work. For it is in His design that He shall be able to say: *What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard, that I have not done to it?* (Isaias v.).

If then He does not suffer in her, and by seeing her in agony endure an anguish such as we cannot measure, there will be something which He could do for His vineyard and has not done it.

Those who love truly on this earth often say: I can bear my own pain, but I cannot endure to see my wife and my child starving. The tender and most sensitive Heart of Jesus would escape far more than half of His Passion were He not to endure to the end—to the very end—the agony of seeing His Mother suffer.

*G. There stood by the Cross, His Mother.*

He must, then, bear all the pain of seeing her pain; and, what is worse, He Himself must inflict every wound. Neither Jew nor Roman shall touch one hair of her head. He Himself will inflict wound after wound, anguish upon anguish, by revealing and laying bare to her heart every wound and anguish of His own.

The words of Jeremias are often applied to Holy Mary's sorrow: *Great as the sea is thy contrition*, thy crushing grief. St. Bernard figures to himself two seas, to represent these two Hearts of Jesus and of Mary. The Heart of our Lord, he says, overflows, and the overflow pours into the heart of His Mother.

Her heart becomes full, too full, much too full, and the great overflow pours back into the Heart of her Son.

To St. Bridget our Lady made this revelation: "Whenever my Son from His Cross looked down on me, to such a degree was He filled with bitter grief on account of my sorrow, that all the pain from His wounds was, as it were,

lulled to rest, on account of my sorrow which He was witnessing."

"His sorrow," she added, "was my sorrow, because His Heart was my heart."

H. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

We call her "the Mirror of Justice". So was she also a mirror reflecting most perfectly all the sufferings of her Son.

A mirror or speculum reflects faithfully, if (1) there be light sufficient; if (2) the mirror be sufficiently near; if (3) its surface be bright, and not sullied.

1. *The light on Calvary is strong.* Through the years gone by she had a prophetic knowledge that was more dim. Now, on Calvary, she sees clearly every wound, hears every breathing, every sigh, every word; feels most vividly all His weariness, all His distress, and His cruel pains. Her knowledge is most complete. She is in the full light.

Moreover, besides seeing with the eye, she understands; she penetrates into His secret suffering. She can say: *I am come into the depth of the sea* (Psalm lxxviii.).

Applying these words of our Saviour, *By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved; and he shall go in and go out and find pastures* (St. John x.), St. Laurence Justinian writes: "She went in through the openings in His hands and His feet, she came out through every wound in His Body, and everywhere found pastures of sorrow".

The heart of the Virgin Mother became the bright speculum of the whole Passion. St. Augustine writes: "By seeing, she shared every pain". With good reason may she use Job's words: *My eye abideth in bitterness* (c. xvii.). And, as has been said, she not only sees the wounds on the surface, but understands every inward anguish, and all the aggravating circumstances: she understands fully not only how suffering He is, but also how innocent, how blameless, how undeserving of all this cruelty and unkindness.

*My beloved is white and ruddy* (Cant. v.). White—that is, pure, innocent, guiltless. For *what evil hath He done?* No one can accuse Him. No one can condemn Him. Yet when was ever a malefactor so stained with red drops of blood, and so covered with *wounds and bruises and swelling sores?*

A holy writer applies these words also of the Canticle of Canticles: *The hairs of thy head (are) like the purple of the King* (Cant. vii.). *The hairs of the head*, he writes, are the Blessed Mother's thoughts, and her thoughts are become quite like the blood-stained Body of the King. "The flesh of her Son was dyed in the blood of His Passion, and her Mother's thoughts are dyed, so to say, in the blood of her compassion."

With her weeping eyes she travels from wound to wound, and as she gazes, St. Gregory Nazianzen writes, "each wound produces in her uncounted wounds". St. Cyprian adds: "All that marvellous martyrdom which torments effected in Him, the active watching of her eyes reproduced in her".

1. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*
2. *On Calvary the Mirror is near enough.*

Maternal love brings her close, unspeakably close, to her Son. "*Non fallunt viscera matrem.*" A mother's bowels of compassion cannot be mistaken. Nothing can escape them.

In her case motherly love is in its perfection. And, moreover, she has a Son in Whom every loveable perfection is most perfect; perfect beyond the reach of our thoughts.

We are moved to pity when we read of Agar's sorrow in the wilderness over her starving son: *She cast her boy under one of the trees that were there: and she went her way, and sat over against him, a great way off, for she said: I will not see the boy die. And sitting over against, she lifted up her voice and wept* (Genesis xxi.). Holy Mary cannot thus retire *a great way off*. She cannot sit down to rest—she must stand, and stand near the Cross. Oh, yes, and

far, far more united in spirit even than in body; and she must see her Son die.

St. Ambrose, preaching at his brother's funeral, tells how a brother laid his lips upon those of his dying brother to receive the parting breath. The Blessed Mother's heart is still more closely joined to the Heart of her Son, inhaling, drawing in every sorrow of His.

"*Anima Jonathæ conglutinata est animæ David*" (1 Kings xviii.). If this can be said, that Jonathan's soul was knit, was glued to the soul of David, where are we to find a word that shall express the close, intimate union of these two Hearts on Calvary, the Immaculate Mother's and her Divine Son's?

*Nullus dolor amarior*, St. Bonaventure writes, *quia nulla proles carior*.

Oh, ne'er was shed so sad a tear;  
For never died a Son so dear.

As our Blessed Lady expressed it to St. Mechtildis: "The sorrow of my Son was my sorrow, because His Heart was my heart".

A devout writer on the Passion applies the word in the Lamentations: *He hath set me as a mark for His arrows* (c. iii.). "Each time," he writes, "Jesus looked upon His Mother, a fresh arrow is fixed in her heart. Each time her eye rests on Him, an arrow goes through His Heart." To St. Bridget the Holy Mother made known that while the Holy Child was young at Nazareth neighbours when in trouble used to say: "Let us go and look at the Son of Mary, that for a little while at least we may be comforted". But in this hour, on Calvary, to look on Him brings to her not joy nor consolation, but only comfort in the original sense of the word, that is, an increase of strength, a growth of that love which is *strong as death*, stronger than death, stronger than all the malice of Satan, stronger than all the horrors of Golgotha.

We say that she *stood by the Cross*. "Nay," answer some of the holy Fathers, "she is fastened to the Cross

with Him." Who else can say so truly as she can, *With Christ I am fixed to the cross?* St. Bonaventure writes: "The Son and the Mother are crucified together; and, on account of their intense love for one another, out of their mutual compassion there is engendered in each of them distress unspeakable: precisely on this account, that each is suffering because of the other". St. Thomas, enumerating in detail the pains our Lord suffered through His senses, says that His eyesight was afflicted by seeing His Mother. "*Abyssus abyssum invocat*" (Psalm xli.). One abyss of sorrow is for ever calling up another.

J. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

3. *The reflecting Mirror on Calvary is bright and resplendent.*

Holy Mary is not only an eye-witness, not only the Mother of the Crucified, but she is *full of grace*. And through the abundance of grace in her soul, she suffers more than through her eyesight or her Motherhood. Jesus crucified is more to her as her Lord, than as her Son. She loves Him and magnifies Him and exults in Him more because He is Son of God than because He is her Son.

Were she only a mother, and an eye-witness, she would not understand all the worst, the most crushing of all His sorrows and sufferings. For the Psalmist rightly asks: *Who understands sins?* We poor sinners, who are ever inclined to say that forbidden word: *I have sinned, and what harm hath befallen me?* how can we form any conception of that load under which Jesus is *bowled down* to-day, because He hath taken on Him sin—the sins of the world, and all that displeasure with which His Eternal Father necessarily abhors sin? None other than the Heart of the Lamb of God Himself adequately understands sin; and next to Him the immaculate and sinless heart of His Mother.

St. Bernard calls Holy Mary, *Primogenita Redemptionis*—the first-born, the eldest child, the first-fruits of Redemption. On her beyond all others is poured out the plentiful redemption in all its abundance. Theologians distinguish

three measures of grace to which Christ Jesus is entitled : (1) *Gratia unionis*—the grace of hypostatic union with the Divinity ; (2) *Gratia capitis*—the grace that accrues to Him as Head of all creation ; (3) *Gratia singularis personæ*—that personal grace that belongs to Him as the Holiest of the holy. Now, when He gave Himself to her, all other things, as St. Paul argues, He necessarily gave with Himself. Hence all His prerogatives He shared with her ; and to-day, He ratifies and amplifies a thousand-fold all her rights, all the original covenant between them. And as He so scrupulously shares with her every one of His sorrows, so does He in abundance share with her all His rights. She has what may be said to correspond to the *Gratia unionis*—the internal union of Mother with Son. She too has all that grace which belongs to the Mother of the living, the Mother of the Church : *Gratia capitis*. She too has in abundance all the grace that befits the Immaculate, the sinless one, who from the beginning was full of grace, and, by her diligent traffic, has through life been multiplying the graces showered on her, every hour and every moment. *Gratia singularis personæ*.

In the very first beginning she was set above the holiness of saints and angels. (Her) *foundations are on (the top of) the holy mountains*. Where their perfection ends, there hers begins.

Her holy soul, then, understands sin, and she divides the Sacred Passion into two parts—the sufferings laid on her Son by the Eternal Father ; and, unspeakably more intolerable, the sins committed against Him by men. It is chiefly this presence of sin on all sides of Him that in the Garden drew from His Heart that cry : *My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me*. And this is now the mountain that has fallen on her, the hill that is covering her. *I beheld the transgressors and I pined away, because they kept not Thy word* (Psalm cxviii.). *His fire is in Sion, His furnace is in Jerusalem* (Isaias xxxi.). The fire of His zeal for the Eternal Father's glory, the furnace

burning in His Heart, is to-day in Sion, in Jerusalem, on Calvary, all reproduced in her heart.

K. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

Three witnesses call her Blessed—the devout woman who heard Jesus preach: *Blessed is the womb that bore Thee*; St. Elizabeth, when Mary came to visit her: *Blessed art thou that hast believed*; lastly: *All generations* (she herself tells us) *shall call me blessed*. Three times is she blessed, and three times over is she crucified—crucified by being present; crucified by her motherly love; crucified by her holiness, and her horror of sin.

L. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother.*

Theologians ask: What recompense does Jesus, Who so richly rewarded Dismas, give to-day to His Mother on Calvary? As the words, *Of whom was born Jesus Who is called Christ*, they say, convey to us briefly, as it were in epitome, the story of her sanctity and a catalogue of all her graces; so too this short word, *She stood by the Cross*, is, as it were, a new compressed volume, a new abridgment, telling succinctly of all her fidelity, and all its rich recompense.

“Never did she forsake Thee,” writes St. Bernard; “not in Thy infancy, not in Thy childhood, not in Thy young manhood, and never throughout Thy Passion has her sympathy, her service, ever failed Thee. Thy infancy she suckled; Thy preaching she followed, and heard it all; Thy Passion she witnesses and accompanies, contemplating every outrage.”

What recompense, then, is she to have?

We know the answer of the Angelical Doctor when our Lord put the question to him: “What reward, Thomas, do you desire of Me?” “None other, O Lord, but Thyself.”

With our poor human thought we may try to soar a little way towards the sense and the intensity with which she makes the same answer on Calvary: “No reward, my Son and my God, for me, but Thee Thyself”.

And we may also perchance in contemplation try to understand the meaning those words of our Lord's parable have when addressed to His Holy Mother: *Thou art always with Me (Mother), and all that I have is thine.*

*All that I have is thine.* Her great reward is that with true filial fidelity He keeps His word to her, and does not keep back any sorrow from her, but lets her share them all. *Can I hide from Abraham what I am about to do?* There is nothing that He hides from her, nothing that He does not share. They are drinking the chalice together drop by drop.

As a matter of course, then, it follows that as she shares all His sorrows in such good measure—*pressed down, shaken together, and running over*—so too in the same abundant measure will she share every other prerogative of His that can be shared. *All that I have is thine.*

M. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother.*

What recompense, then, shall she have to-day?

Till now she has been *the Mother* of Jesus. But on Calvary, spiritual writers tell us, she is made in a spiritual and mystical, but most true and real sense, *His Spouse also.*

Every Christian is called by the Apostle, the bride of Christ. Strange would it be indeed if the Blessed Mother was the one exception. But, on the contrary, to her supereminently belongs this title which includes so many others. Whom does the Water and the Blood from the side of the second Adam first reach, if not her?

Who is the Eve built up out of the Sacred Side, if not Holy Mary? True, in another sense, Holy Church is the second Eve; but as Christians have their visible Head on earth, and their invisible Head, Christ Jesus, in Heaven, so too they have as their visible Mother Eve, the Holy Church on earth, and their invisible Mother Eve in Heaven, Holy Mary, Mother of God and Mother of men.

Christ Jesus is, as the inspired Prophet tells us, both the *Child that is born unto us, and the Father of the world to come* (Isaia's ix.).

On Calvary He is *the Father of the world to come*, and she, His Spouse, and the Mother of the new creation.

Explaining this new relationship, holy writers observe that as the first Eve could be—not in the ordinary sense indeed, but still in a true and unique sense—an offspring of Adam, *bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh*, and yet become also his spouse; so also Jesus, though the Child of Holy Mary, could be in a spiritual and mystic and most true sense, supereminently her Bridegroom—He the Father, and she the Mother, of the world to come.

And therefore, when the ten virgins who represent the Kingdom of Heaven—that is, the Church on earth, as St. Gregory teaches us—go out to meet the Bridegroom and the Bride, who are the Bridegroom and the Bride?—a devout commentator asks. Doubtless, he answers, Christ and Holy Mary, the King and the Queen. And as there are so many holy saints, brides of Christ, he applies the words of the Canticle of Canticles: *There are threescore queens: one is My Dove; My perfect one is but one* (c. vi.).

Three espousals are therefore noted in which our Lord has part: (1) The espousals between the Divine and Human Nature before His Birth; (2) the espousals between Christ and His Church after His Death; (3) the espousals between Jesus, the Father of the world to come, and Holy Mary, the Mother of the living, on Mount Calvary.

She has, St. Thomas of Villanova writes, two sons: *Homo Deus, et homo reus; ambo nati ex Virgine*—"Man God and man guilty, both sons of the Virgin Mother". Of her first-born, Jesus, God is the Father and she the Mother. Of her second family, Christ is the Father, she the Mother. And it is on Calvary that she goes through, as the holy Fathers observe, the anguish and travail of the second childbirth.

"The travail she escaped in Bethlehem," St. Peter Damian writes, "all came on Calvary."

At the first birth there was no sorrow, but great joy to all the nations. On Calvary, when she gave birth to her

second son, the sinner, *homo reus*, her agony is unspeakable. Of Rachel we read, that when she was dying after childbirth, *when for pain her soul was departing, and death was now at hand, she called the name of her son Benoni, that is, the son of my pain. But his father called him Benjamin, that is, the son of the right hand* (Gen. xxxv.).

The sinner, then, *homo reus*, who becomes on Calvary the son of Holy Mary, is *the son of my pain*, as Jesus, *homo Deus*, is the Son of her joy. And yet both by the Eternal Father and by her, the sinner, *homo reus*, is, as it were, made *the son of the right hand*; set in the place of honour. For Jesus, the Divine Son, is sacrificed and delivered up for the sinner.

N. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

*All My things are thine. How hath He (God) not also with Him given (her) all things?* (Rom. viii.).

From the infinite courage and fortitude with which our Saviour continues to the end to share all the horrors of His bitter Passion with His Mother, we may safely argue that there is nothing that can be shared with her that He will not share. If He gives her pain and suffering above all measure, though to see her suffer is such infinite agony to Himself, who can believe that He will withhold any gift or privilege that He can give in gladness? The Prophet Jeremias tells us that *not from His Heart hath He afflicted the children of men.* He, then, Who never from His Heart afflicts even the wicked sinner, He Who never breaks *the bruised reed*—what infinite pain does it cost Him to afflict His Blessed Mother!

Abraham, strengthening his breaking heart to inflict the death-wound upon his unresisting and obedient and blameless son, is but a very faint image of our Lord inflicting with all the resolution of His infinite love wound after wound on the soul of His Mother. But these wounds are not to remain for ever undressed, and not fomented with oil. *According to the multitude of my sorrows, Thy consolations, my Son and my God, have gladdened my soul.* For so

it ever shall be. Whenever our Lord gives bitter wine, He has the good wine to follow.

In this hour, therefore, they ineffably—far more than ever before—become two in one, having one Heart and one Soul. The *Sponsus et Sponsa*: the King and the Queen.

O. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

“*Attendite.*” O Blessed Mother, say to us: “*Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what great things He hath done for my soul (Psalm lxx.), in consequence of these espousals knit together between our two suffering Hearts on Calvary*”.

First, then. In this hour she becomes His helpmate, as a spouse ought to be, in His work of redemption.

That Christ our Lord is the one Redeemer is certain beyond all doubt. Holy Church never ceases preaching this from the house-tops. *Neither is there salvation in any other.* For beside the name of Jesus *there is no other name under Heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved (Acts iv.). For, if by one man's offence death reigned through one, much more they who receive abundance of grace shall reign in life through one Jesus Christ (Romans v.). There is one God, and one Mediator of God and men, the Man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy ii.).*

This is all most true; but, as St. Bernard writes: “*Although Christ was sufficient for us, it is not (according to God's design) good for man to be alone.* It is more befitting that both sexes should take part in our redemption.”

The plan of God's providence is clear. Adam fell, and by his fall sin came into the world. Had Eve remained faithful, still Adam's sin would have brought on the fall of our race. On the other hand, if Eve had fallen and Adam remained faithful, we should not have fallen in Eve. Only in Adam, the head and father of our race, did we fall.

Redemption, then, is to be after the form of the Fall. Satan, who conquered by the help of a tree, is to be conquered also with the help of the tree. The first Adam's side is opened as he sleeps. And so shall the side of

the second Adam be opened as He sleeps on the Cross. This being so, what follows? Beyond all doubt, that as Eve, though she could not of herself bring on the fall of the race, yet, by seducing Adam, had a large share in the work of ruin, so that through her the great scandal came; so too, in like manner, though Christ our Lord is the one Redeemer Who restores us all to life, yet, when the time of redemption comes, the Blessed Trinity say once more: *It is not good for Man to be alone, let Us make for Him a helpmate like unto Himself* (Genesis ii.). The one great difference between the form and fashion of the Fall and the form of the redemption, is pointed out by St. Paul: "*Non sicut delictum ita et donum*" (Romans v.)—Not as the sin, so the grace given. The redemption is not to be measured so as to be just sufficient to repair the ruin. The work of grace is to be on a scale immeasurably beyond the work of sin. And therefore the power of helping redemption given to Holy Mary shall surpass, beyond our conception, the power that Eve had for mischief.

*P. There stood by the Cross, Mary His Mother.*

This design of God, that Holy Mary is to be the helpmate of our Lord Jesus in the work of redeeming, becomes more clear if we think upon another word of St. Paul: *I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His Body, which is the Church* (Coloss. i.).

*I fill up what is wanting.* If Christ, in His charity and humility of Heart, chooses to leave something wanting in His Passion, which men are to fill up; if His humble Heart wishes and wills that His disciples shall do even greater works than He has done, shall we be so unwise, so senseless, as to believe that He has not, in His charity and wisdom, and for the more complete humiliation of the serpent who seduced the woman, made over to Holy Mary a share inconceivably large in the work of redeeming men? If our Blessed Lord had not decreed that the woman was to be with Him to crush the serpent's head,

the father of lies would never have laboured so assiduously to persuade his dupes in this country, to set up a Redeemer without His helpmate, a second Adam without His Eve, a Jesus without His Blessed Mother.

*Q. There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

She herself thoroughly understood all the mysteries of Calvary when she said to her devout servant, St. Bridget, "As Adam and Eve betrayed the world for an apple, so Christ and I redeemed the world, as if with one heart". To a true child of Holy Church, like St. Bridget, who understood the revelations of God, our Lady is not afraid to say, "we redeemed". For even so does Holy Church without scruple encourage her believing children to say to Holy Mary, "Our life, our sweetness, and our hope," and a thousand similar words. In the same spirit holy writers call our Lady Co-Redemptrix. Such words scandalise none of Christ's little ones, to whom He giveth understanding. They all know and believe that Christ is the Author and Primary Source of all salvation, and that our Lady, like every other creature, can only work as a secondary, through a virtue derived from Him.

To help us to understand this great mystery, the Lord, as the holy Fathers love to point out, has set in the firmament *two great lights*: a greater light to rule the day, and a lesser light to rule the night (Genesis i.). The moon has all its light from the sun, but yet, by God's arrangement, is nearer to us, and with its borrowed light has a work of its own to do, which is not done by the direct action of the sun. It has its own effect on the waters and the land.

To all the little ones who are willing to be taught, and to whom God giveth understanding, this picture explains very clearly in what way Holy Mary is the helpmate of her Divine Son in redeeming.

*R. There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

One way in which she is our Lord's helpmate is by being our Advocate.

He is Himself our Advocate. *My little children, . . . if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus*

*Christ the Just* (1 St. John ii.). But, if He and His Mother are full partners in sorrow, so that He keeps nothing back that He does not share with her, so beyond all doubt shall she share all His offices, and all His titles, except the *incommunicable names* (Wisdom xiv.). Whatever the Eternal Word is of Himself, and uncreated, she shall by creation share, as far as may be, being with infinite care created to His likeness, an image admirably conformed to Himself.

She shall be, then, like to Him, our Advocate, our go-between. Is it not His own arrangement that the prayer of two shall prevail better than the prayer of one? If, then, it pleases Him to live on interceding for us, but interceding always with her at His side, as His helpmate, who shall gainsay His plan?

She is to be, as He is, our go-between; so near on one hand to our Lord, and to God's condition, a holy writer observes, that nothing but the Divine Essence is wanting to her, and, on the other hand, so near to our condition, that sin alone parts her from us. On either side, indeed, the dividing gulf is vast beyond all thought, but it is bridged over, so that she can most easily approach to God and plead for us, and approach to us to plead with our foolish hearts the cause of her God.

St. Peter Damian, commenting on her words, *He that is mighty hath done great things to me*, is not afraid to say to her, "and all power is given to (thee) in Heaven and in earth". This holy doctor himself understands and wishes us also to understand that covenant of Calvary: *All My things, Holy Mother, are thine*. Therefore, My power is thine. Hence he goes on: "For how can thy Son's power be ever in opposition to thy power, since it is from thy flesh that He has His flesh?" His conclusion is: "When thou prayest, Mother of God, thou dost not draw nigh the golden altar of reconciliation to ask, but to command; not as a handmaid, but as Queen—*Non rogans sed imperans; Domina, non ancilla*". He is only ascribing to her what another Saint calls *suppliant omnipotence*, or *almighty intercession*.

*S. There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

One thing at least, some one may say, our Lord did not share with His Mother—that is, His Priesthood. *Solis Presbyteris*, St. Thomas writes: To priests alone, only to priests, not to Cherubim or Seraphim, not even to His Blessed Mother, has He committed the office of offering up the Everlasting Sacrifice at the altar.

This is true, but according to the teaching of our holy masters, it is only a part of the truth. There is more to be added. For if our Lady has no share in the Priesthood of Jesus, how does St. Peter say to us all, *You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood?* (1 St. Peter ii.).

First, then, they bid us observe that had Abraham completed the sacrifice of Isaac, he would not only have sacrificed his son, but also himself, the very life and joy of his heart. In truth, we may say that he has already sacrificed himself, though not his son. “Abraham,” writes St. Peter Chrysologus, “was immolating himself in his son. So as to be both victim and pontiff, sacrifice and priest.” On the other hand, Isaac also, if offered by his father, would have been the victim, but at the same time, while offering himself, in meekness and loving obedience, he also shares the office of the sacrificing priest. There are, then, two priests and two victims.

Now let us turn to Calvary, and what do we find? First of all, the Eternal Father sacrifices His Son. As God said to Abraham, *Thou hast not spared thy only-begotten son for My sake*, so St. Paul writes of the Eternal Father, *He that spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all*. Therefore, the Eternal Father sacrifices His Son, not as an act of obedience or homage to any higher power, but as an act of love to us His children.

Secondly. In this act of sacrifice of the Eternal Father, the Blessed Mother concurs. If Jesus is the Son of the Eternal Father, He is also truly and really her Son. And the Eternal Father does not repent of His gifts to her, for in Him there is no shadow of change. *The gifts of*

*God are without repentance* (Romans xi.). Therefore every right given to the Blessed Mother, the Eternal Father reverences and respects and ratifies. If then, supreme as He is, He does not raise her to the dignity of her maternity till she in all humility pronounces her word of consent, "*Fiat*," so neither does He, without her full participation and consent and concurrence, carry out His wish not to spare His only Son, but to deliver Him up for men.

St. Bernardine of Siena, as we have seen, tells us that in the hour of the Incarnation she already gave her consent to the Death of her Son. And St. Bernard, treating of this united action of the Eternal Father and the Most Blessed Mother, writes: "In order to redeem the slave, they sacrificed their Son, their joint possession".

Thirdly. Then, in the next place, if we contemplate what is done on Calvary, we find (1) our Blessed Lord both Pontiff and Victim, Priest and Sacrifice. Moreover, (2) we find our Blessed Saviour sacrificing not only His own Body, but her soul also; not only making Himself the Victim, but with far greater cost to His own Heart making her also a joint victim with Himself, uniting her to Himself in the condition of victim. (3) And this is not all, for if she is suffering with Him as victim, she is also quite as fully sharing in His priestly work of offering the Sacrifice to the Eternal Father. Abbot Arnold writes: "One and the same was the will of Christ and of Mary. One and the same their holocaust. Both were offering sacrifice together to God. She in the blood of her heart, He in the Blood of His Body."

St. Ambrose too speaks of her tears as "the blood of her soul".

*T. There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

Then, of the other priestly powers given to men, has she any share in them?

Priests have to teach. And Holy Church loves to present the Blessed Mother to us as the "Seat of Wisdom," the "Mother of Good Counsel," and introduces her as saying

to us, *Come, children, and hear me, and the fear of the Lord I will teach you* (Psalm xxxiii.). Again, *Come, and I will tell you what great things the Lord hath done to my soul* (Psalm lxxv.). Again, *Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates. Counsel and equity is mine, prudence is mine* (Prov. viii.). *I am the mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge* (Ecclus. xxiv.).

U. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

Does her Divine Son on Calvary give her any share in the third great power of the priesthood, *Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven?* Here again we firmly believe that it is the Son of Man, Christ Jesus, Who alone, in His own right, can forgive sins. But at the same time, we see how lavishly He shares this power with men His delegates.

As then we find Him on Calvary making her joint victim with Himself, and one with Himself in the work of offering the Sacrifice, it would be strange indeed if He did not find out a method of sharing with her His great power of forgiving sins.

And accordingly, as we have already seen, to her is given an *omnipotent intercession*. So that, in the words of St. Peter Damian already quoted, "she comes to the golden altar, not to ask, but to command, not as a servant petitioning, but as Mistress and Queen".

If then the Saints and Doctors of the Church thus tell us that by her Divine Son's behest the Mother of God comes to the golden altar, not to plead for the sinner, but to order his forgiveness, this surely is only saying in other words, that Jesus Christ has said to her, in a sense peculiarly her own, *Whose sins you forgive they are forgiven them—Whatever thou shalt loose, shall be loosed.*

According to the plan of our Lord, then, in the forgiveness of sins and the dispensation of grace, there is commonly something to be done on earth, and something to be done in Heaven. On the one hand, the absolution pronounced by a priest on earth is void if from some defect it

cannot be ratified in Heaven. On the other hand, the hand of our Lord is often held in Heaven till man on earth fills up what is necessary to the sufferings of Christ.

Thus in the Holy Mass, till the consecrated priest blesses and consecrates the bread and the chalice, the Eternal word does not *leap down from Heaven, from His royal throne*, to offer Himself again in the Perpetual Sacrifice. So, too, in consequence of His compact, till the faithful ask for themselves and for the living and the dead, our Lord in Heaven is oftentimes hindered from giving. So, too, if charitable men and women on earth do not nurse the sick, and teach little children, angels from Heaven cannot interfere. All this work of charity is confided as a precious monopoly to us, that we, by being merciful, may win mercy.

No power of the priesthood, therefore, is in any way diminished by our Lady's action. She merely shares our Lord's action in Heaven. If she wishes a sinner to be forgiven, our Lord so certainly forgives, and so immediately, that we may safely say that her will determines the forgiveness; so that what she forgives is forgiven.

And we may here note this difference between her will to forgive and the will of the priest on earth—that here on earth a priest may sometimes be mistaken in his judgment, and loose when he ought to bind, or bind when he ought to loose; he may in ignorance pronounce absolution when true sorrow for sin is wanting, and then the sacrament is void, as Baptism would be if by some mistake the water were not poured. But in Heaven when our Lady wishes a sinner to be forgiven, error or mistake there cannot be; the sinner must be and will be forgiven.

V. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

Let us call to mind other fruits which our Lord and His Blessed Mother will gather together out of their joint sufferings on Calvary. Hither they came in tears, and here they are weeping together while in sorrow they sow the seed. Together hereafter they shall carry home the rich harvest. Of our Blessed Lord the Holy Spirit has said:

*If He shall lay down His life He shall see a long-lived seed. At once He shares the reward with her: All that I have is thine. . . . All My things are thine.* She, too, then, shall see a long-lived seed. For all who come to the Lord Jesus, shall come through her. *Per Mariam ad Jesum. After her, following her, shall virgins be brought to the King. And not only virgins, but sinners also. For it is her omnipotent pleading that shall win forgiveness for them. And not only virgins and sinners, but the martyrs also shall come to the King following in her wake. For from this hour the Mother of God shall be Queen of Martyrs.*

*How, some one may say, can this be done? She did not lay down (her) life. Why, then, shall she see a long-lived seed?*

The Saints and Doctors of the Church have abundant answer ready.

For she was more a martyr, they tell us, from the very fact that she did not die. Were it given to her to sink down and die, or even to swoon away into unconsciousness, it would be relief unspeakable. As she stands there enduring, with her Divine Son, the burden of sin and the displeasure of the Eternal Father, if the mountains might fall on her, or the hills crush and cover her, they would be to her lower nature welcome beyond thought. Her condition, as she stands by the Cross, is such that by all laws she ought to die. Most truly can she say with her Son: *My soul is sorrowful unto death.* Not once, but a thousand times her heart ought, in the natural course, to break. St. Paul said, *I die daily.* She is dying every minute, on Calvary. "Exceedingly do I wonder," St. Bernard writes, "that through the immensity of her sorrow she did not die." But that she may not fail and die she is strengthened by her Son.

St. Bernardine of Siena tries to describe her condition on Calvary in these words: "Beside the Cross stood the Mother, like one both dead and living. She lived on, dying. She was dying, but still lived. Die she could not, because

though alive she was dead." The two great agonies of a woman, another writes, are in childbirth and in death. Holy Mary goes through both on Calvary. Other martyrs, they observe, were made like to Jesus in some one stage of His Passion. St. Andrew was crucified. Many were scourged. But our Lady is a complete and perfect image of all His Passion. "Whatever," writes St. Bonaventure, "her Son suffered in His flesh, thou, O Virgin, didst suffer in thy heart. All the separate wounds spread over His Body were concentrated in thy heart." St. Jerome remarks that her martyrdom is more intense, because she suffers in her soul, which in the case of ordinary martyrs, persecution cannot reach. Her soul is, as St. Laurence Justinian writes, a most bright mirror that reflects every detail of the Passion without any exception.

*W. There stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother.*

Another contrast between other martyrs and their Queen is this.

They know that death is near, that they are soon to *be dissolved and to be with Christ*. She, on the contrary, has this cruel wound added to all the others caused by the sword of sorrow, that death is coming quickly to separate her Son from her. Who ever had such reason as she has to utter that sad lament: "*Siccine separat amara mors?*" —*Doth bitter death separate in this way?* (1 Kings xv.). "Is bitter death going to take from me my Son, my only joy, my life? And am I to live on without Him? Shall bitter death take out of me my heart and my soul, and yet leave me living? O my Son, and my God, *if it be possible let this bitter chalice of separation pass from me*, that I may die with Thee and not be separated from Thee." When she heard her Son say to the thief: *This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise*, had she been an ordinary martyr she might have pleaded in the words of holy Church for a speedy release from this life.

Qui latronem exaudisti,  
Mihi quoque spem dedisti.

O Thou Who didst the robber hear,  
Oh, leave me not in exile here.

But the Blessed Mother shares abundantly her Son's patient and enduring love, and with His prayer her heart unites perfectly, as if the two hearts were one: *Not as I will, O Father, but as Thou.*

X. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother.*

St. Bernard writes, *Non sufficiebat Christi passio, nisi crucifigeretur et Mater*—"The Passion of Christ did not suffice. His Mother must also be crucified."

We must dwell a little on these words and see in what sense they are true.

This much is certain, that our Blessed Saviour has good reasons for wishing His Blessed Mother to suffer at His side. We may humbly pray to understand them.

1. First, then, as has been said, a man and a woman helped to bring about the Fall: and therefore it is expedient that a man and a woman work together for the redemption.

2. It is according to the humble and loving heart of Jesus to wish to share His work with those He loves.

3. As Satan and his followers proudly scorned the man and the woman in the Garden of Eden, the wisdom of God saw fit to humble those wicked spirits by enabling the weakness of a woman to take part in the work of conquering and crushing him.

4. Then we have seen what St. Paul says, *I filled up what is wanting to the sufferings of Christ.*

The compassion of our Lady fills up something that is wanting to the Passion of Jesus. For there is one thing which Jesus on His Cross cannot teach us by example. He cannot teach us how to contemplate His Passion and how to feel compassion for Him. If our Lady were absent, how should we learn to contemplate her Son? Who else could teach us what compassion ought to be? What better way have we of trying to understand the Sacred Passion than by watching its effects on her? When do we want her help so sorely as when we are trying to watch and listen on Mount Calvary?

5. Then, too, we know that our eyes will bear to look at the moon, but will not bear to be fixed on the sun.

If we gaze on our Lord we may be bewildered with the thought that He is God : that He is the Giant rejoicing to run His way.

But when we look at her, we know that we are looking on a woman, and a Mother, with all the feelings of a woman and a mother in the highest perfection. Hence in that favourite hymn of Holy Church we say :

Quis est homo qui non fletet,	Who is he that will not weep,
Christi matrem si videret	When he sees the Mother keep
In tanto supplicio ?	Watch beside that agony ?
Quis non posset contristari,	Who, but must be wobegone,
Piam Matrem contemplari	Watching the Mother of that Son
Dolentem cum Filio ?	Crucified by sympathy ?

*Y. There stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother.*

To sum up. Two thoughts are dominant in the Heart of our Lord, rising above all His sufferings. Both are reproduced in the heart of His Mother, conquering in her, too, all other emotions.

1. *The first is love for His Father ; zeal for His Father.*
2. *The second, love for men, the children of His Father ; compassion for men.*

The two great commandments which He teaches, He is the first to keep with a transcendent fidelity. And His Mother's soul, the perfect work of God's hand, is a most faithful copy of His holiness; made not by a skilful man, not by angels or archangels, but by the infinite wisdom and charity of God.

She, too, loves God with all her heart and all her mind and her whole strength ; and for God's children now given to be her children she has a second love most like to the first great and burning love.

1. Her *zeal for God's honour* rises so high above her motherly feelings that, as the saints tell us, she not only yearns and groans with desire to die herself as a reparation, but—what is far more marvellous—she would herself

direct the crucifixion, and take part in it, if this were needed for the reparation due to God's offended majesty. It helps us to rise up to her high thoughts when we read that as the martyr St. Calliopus was about to be crucified, his mother bribed the executioners to induce them to add to his merit by crucifying him with his head downwards.

We know from St. John's Gospel that the word in the Psalm: *The zeal of Thy house hath eaten Me up* (Psalm lxxviii.) comes from our Lord's Heart. We may, then, safely assume that on Calvary the zeal for His Eternal Father's glory is consuming Him more effectually than the drain of His Sacred Blood; and this consuming fire of zeal necessarily spreads from His Heart into that of His Mother.

This zeal impels *Him* to say: *Father, behold I come!* and impels her to say, at Nazareth, in Bethlehem, and on Calvary: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to Thy word.* The only difference between the Divine Son and the Blessed Mother is, that in Him, as in the sun, the burning and shining fire is ever the same; in her, as in the moon, there can be increase. Throughout her years and days and hours on earth the burning brightness has ever been crescent; waning never. On Calvary, then, Jesus, the High Priest, filled with infinite zeal for the glory of His Father, is immolating Himself. And as St. Peter Chrysologus says, that "Abraham was immolating himself in his son"—*Et immolabat se in filio*; so we can most truly say of Holy Mary: She is crucifying herself while crucifying her Son. While offering up as a most perfect holocaust her Son, she is quite as thoroughly immolating herself.

"O Blessed Mother, teach us to say in union with thy heart: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost."

- Z. There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*  
 2. *Her motherly compassion for men.*

The saints never tire of trying to help us to realise that the Mother of God does most truly on Calvary be-

come our Mother. St. Paul leads the way, telling us that *no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it. As also Christ doth the Church ; because we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones* (Ephes. v.). If, by the water and blood coming from His side, we are through Baptism and the Blessed Eucharist *members of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones*, what is there in all the writings of the saints about devotion of Holy Mary that can be called an exaggeration? One saint writes: "The Mother of Christ is the Mother of the members of Christ". Is that an exaggeration? or simply a truth? Can the Mother of Christ be anything else than a true Mother to all who are members or limbs of Christ's body? Another saint writes: "In each of His members, she embraces her only Son". Is there any exaggeration here? She that reflects perfectly all the thoughts of her Son's Heart, can we doubt that she believes most firmly, and realises most thoroughly, that in compassionating each of us she is giving her Son the same consolation as if she were nursing Himself? We do not realise this truth. On us it will burst as a stupendous novelty when, at the Judgment, we find that Christ can love so intensely, as to feel all that is done to His little ones as if done to Himself. But the sinless heart of Holy Mary is not aloof from His Heart as we are. They are two in one. A spiritual writer has said that our two eyes—which act so perfectly together that it is as if only one eye was looking—give us some notion of the perfection in which the Heart of the Divine Son and the heart of His Mother, and His Spouse, beat together and love together.

*I to my Beloved, and His turning is towards me* (Cant. vii.). The intimate sympathy and communion with which our eyes act together, we may be sure, does not sufficiently represent the joint action of these two Souls and two Hearts, which are *one Heart and one Soul*.

Hence spiritual writers tell us that when she hears from the Cross that word: *Woman, behold thy son*, instead

of feeling as one cast down from Heaven to earth, instead of being thrown into a gloomy depression at seeing the exchange proposed to her, the son of Zebedee in lieu of the Son of God, she can at once respond most truly: *My soul melted when He spoke* (Cant. v.).

How can it be otherwise? Our Blessed Saviour has most solemnly pledged Himself that *every one that hath left children for My name's sake, shall have a hundred-fold.*

How then! Is Holy Mary to be the only exception to this promise? If she gives up her Son Who is God, for God's sake, is she, or is she not, to have her hundred-fold? Joy, great joy, joy ineffable is set before her when she accepts the exchange. She believes most firmly that she will not lose her Son, but *because (her) soul hath laboured,* will see Him and possess Him and be filled with His presence for ever and for ever; and with Him will receive good interest, *pressed down and running over—the long-lived seed,* the countless array of God's children wrested from the jaws of the destroyer, who will become her children, and will be drawn by *the odour of (her) sweetness,* till following her they arrive at the eternal home of God.

And throughout the endless ages our Blessed Lord will say to her for ever and ever: As long as you were a Mother to one of My little ones, you did it to Me.

“ I believe, then, O my God, this great mystery. Help, Thou, my unbelief.

“ I believe that, as Thy Prophet spoke: *Before she was in labour, she brought forth. Before her time came to be delivered, she brought forth a Man-child* (Isaias lxvi.). That is to say, I believe firmly that in Bethlehem, without travail, she gave birth to her first-born, but afterwards on Calvary becomes a Mother to me, the mother of many children, the Mother of the sinner who is ‘*homo reus*’; *the child of my pain*—and that this child of her pain she will cherish and nurse and pity as she would her first-born.”

For God, so the saints teach us, whenever He appoints to an office, gives every grace which befits that office.

Therefore, when Mary became Mother of God, St. Gabriel said she was full of grace. In that hour, as St. Bernard writes, she was *plena sibi*—full of every grace which she needed to be the Mother of that Son. But when she becomes a second time a Mother, a sorrowful Mother indeed, but at the same time the joyful Mother of sinful children, she is once more filled with grace, far more full than before. So that now she is, the devout Saint adds, *superplena nobis*—full to overflowing for our sakes.

*Sursum corda.* “O God, incline unto my aid: O Lord, make haste to help me, that I may believe firmly, that if a child is born to us, and a Son is given to us at Bethlehem, so, too, a Mother, a true Mother, a Mother supereminently loving and compassionate is given to us on Calvary.” If the very best mother on this earth could turn hard-hearted and forget the child of her womb, yet she says to us: *I cannot forget you, the child of my pain.*

AA. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother.*

To this second childbirth on Calvary, spiritual writers also apply the well-known description of the *Great Sign* in the Apocalypse: *A woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars. And being with child, she cried travailing in birth, and was in pain to be delivered* (Apoc. xii.). Already, through the effect of the Incarnation, she is clothed with the sun, and has the moon under her feet. For she is Mother of God and Queen of Heaven and Earth. But this notwithstanding, on Calvary she is groaning in the anguish of another birth and *in pain to be delivered.*

Let us not forget what the Holy Spirit adds: *When the dragon saw that he was cast upon the earth, he persecuted the woman who brought forth the Man-child.* This is, in the eyes of Satan, her unpardonable crime, that she gave birth to Jesus, the Saviour. *And the dragon was angry against the woman, and went to make war with the rest of her seed who keep the Commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.* Here we have the full story of Satan's war

against ourselves. (1) He hates God. (2) He hates man, as being God's child, and created to fill the thrones of the fallen angels. (3) He hates with an extreme and relentless hatred the Man-God, Christ Jesus, come to wrest from him the victory he has won. (4) Through hatred for Jesus, he must of necessity hate the woman who gave birth to the Man-child—*homo Deus*. (5) And because he thus hates with an insatiable hatred the Divine Son and the Blessed Mother, his hatred spreads to *the rest of her seed*, the second family, the sons of her pain—“*homo reus*.”

The second Commandment, our Lord tells us, is like to the first. In His Heart and in His Blessed Mother's love for men is like to their love for God. We may say it is all one love. For man is loved because he is God's child. It is through love of God our Father that we are loved.

But yet to our imperfect wisdom, at first sight, our Lady's compassionate love for us seems more a mystery than her love for God. For when she freely with her whole heart sacrifices her Son on Calvary to the Eternal Father, she is only giving Him back what He gave to her. As we read in Exodus: Pharaoh's daughter said to the mother of Moses: *Take this child and nurse him for me*; and the mother most gladly nursed her own son, but when he was grown up *delivered him back to Pharaoh's daughter*. So is it on Calvary, Mary gives back to God her Son Whom she has nursed for Him. This is less surprising.

But when we learn that she *did not spare (her) only Son, but delivered Him up for us*, this is a mystery that *passeth understanding*. Who could ever believe it, did we not know the explanation: that she, the Mother, has before her eyes what the Father of her Son has done, and she is doing according to the Model. *He spared not even His own Son, but delivered Him for us*. She, the ever-faithful handmaid of the Lord, must go and do the like. She *spared not even (her) own Son, but delivered Him up for us*.

See how she loved the *child of her pain!* She makes him her Benjamin, *the son of the right hand.* To save the heartless prodigal, "*homo reus,*" she hath not spared her innocent First-born, Who has always been with her—*homo Deus.*

#### STATION II.

*When Jesus, therefore, had seen His Mother and the disciple standing, whom He loved, He saith to His Mother: Woman, behold thy son. After that He saith to the disciple: Behold thy Mother! And from that hour the disciple took her to his own (St. John xix. 26, 27).*

*A. Jesus saith to His Mother: Woman, behold thy son.*

*O all you who pass by the way, attend and see if there be any sorrow like to My sorrow (Lament. i.).*

St. Bernard, so devout and so enlightened a servant of our Lady, thinks that this word from the Cross must have passed through her heart as a most keen sword of sorrow. "What an exchange," he argues; "the son of Zebedee in lieu of the Son of God!—man guilty in place of Man-God!"

This word, she knows, is a farewell word. Bitter death is going to do its work of separation.

This is the parting legacy. The disciple whom He loved, whose head reclined last night on His Heart, He gives to her. But this means that He is going from her, going to die. And she is about to have John instead of Jesus, the son of Zebedee in place of the Son of God.

O quam tristis et afflicta,  
Fuit illa benedicta,  
Mater unigeniti.

Oh, how sad, how wobegone  
Is that ever-blessed one,  
Mother of that only Son.

*B. Jesus saith to His Mother: Woman, behold thy son.*

But once more her Angel is whispering in her ear: "*Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. If thy Son Jesus shall lay down His life, He will be with thee still, but because His Soul hath laboured, and (thy) soul hath laboured, He shall see, and thou shalt see, a long-lived seed.*

Besides thy one Son Jesus, thou shalt be the glad Mother of many other children, all made like to the image of thy Son Jesus; each of them a Christ, a Jesus; each of them a picture, speaking to thy Mother's heart, and saying: *The Lord is with thee, Mother.*"

Oh yes, she has a joy, a great joy set before her, which she can see through the darkness on Calvary. There is joy ineffable among the angels of God when they hear this word, that *homo reus* is going to be changed into *homo Deus*, man guilty into man God, that the sinner is given to the Blessed Mother to be nursed by her, even as she nursed her first-born, Jesus.

There is joy among the angels, for they know that the word whispered in the darkness into her ear shall to the very end of time be preached from the house-tops, and all the generations shall in great hope and gladness call her blessed, because her dying Son has constituted her the Mother of all the disciples whom He loves.

There is joy among the listening angels, for well they know that, guided by the never-failing teaching of the Holy Spirit, the Church, the Spouse of Christ Jesus, hearing the dying words from the Cross, will interpret them aright. It is as when old Tobias called his good son to his sick-bed, and said, *Hear, my son, the words of my mouth, and lay them as a foundation in thy heart. When God shall take my soul, thou shalt bury my body. And thou shalt honour thy mother all the days of her life. For thou must be mindful what and how great perils she suffered for thee in her womb* (c. iv.).

Holy Church has ever laid up the dying word of her Lord *as a foundation in (her) heart*. She has considered it a fundamental truth of His Gospel that the Mother of God is to be the Mother of men, and that the woman is to take part with her Son in the divinest of all Divine works, the work of rescuing the souls of sinners out of the jaws of the Destroyer, and that therefore she is to be honoured by the side of her Son to the end of time.

C. *Jesus saith to His Mother : Woman.*

“Why,” the saints ask, “why does He call her woman?”

One answer is: To spare her heart. In this hour He cannot add to her agony by letting her hear the name of Mother. But others rejoin: This answer does not suffice. For heretofore also, at Cana, He addressed her by the same title: *Woman*.

Another answer therefore is offered—that it is her title of honour. For as He is pre-eminently the *Son of Man*, so she is pre-eminently the *woman*; the *woman* that was promised; the *valiant woman* that is to be at enmity with the serpent, and to crush his head.

They add, moreover, that in certain Eastern languages, the word is like our word “lady,” a title of great honour.

But still remains the question, Is not the name of mother more dear and more honourable too, and more suited to this moment on Calvary?

Another suggestion then is offered by spiritual writers. They observe that Jesus beginning His Public Life at Cana, and still more, now on Calvary, is teaching us this truth, that both His Eternal Father and His Blessed Mother have consented to give Him up. They are both agreed not to spare Him, that is, not to treat Him as their beloved Son, but to sacrifice Him, and let Him be treated as the sinner. Therefore, as His Father and His Mother have for this dark hour ceased, as it were, to recognise Him as their Son, so He does not call her Mother, but Woman, and does not cry out, My Father, but *My God*, why hast Thou forsaken Me?

D. *After that, He saith to the disciple: Behold thy Mother.*

Is not this word superfluous? some one asks. For if he is her son, of course she is his Mother. But the answer is given: Not at all superfluous is this word. For what would it boot that she be told to be a Mother to us, if we also be not told to lift our hearts to her as to a mother? Jesus is the Mediator, the go-between. As He has to

reconcile His Father with men, and men with His Father, so He has to move Mary to be our Mother, and then each of us to be her child. In like manner, what would it avail for the Holy Spirit to teach the Apostles, if He does not also incline the hearts of Bishops, Priests, and laity, to listen to the Apostolic teaching ?

E. *Behold thy Mother.*

Those who are duped by the father of lies object and cavil that this word is only for John.

This much, at least, is certain, that it is only the disciples whom Jesus loves who are committed to the care of His Mother. Any one who chooses to believe that our Lady is no Mother to him, let him look to it, and consider diligently whether he be a disciple whom Jesus loves. For Holy Church, always guided by the teaching of the Paraclete, does not hesitate to present our Lady to us, saying : *He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord. But he that shall sin against me, shall hurt his own soul. All that hate me, love death* (Prov. viii.)

She adds a word that ought to move us much to draw others to a knowledge and love of our Blessed Mother : *They that explain me shall have life everlasting.*

F. *From that hour the disciple took her to his own.*

The question is discussed, What is meant by the phrase, *took her to his own* ? St. John was doubtless one of those of whom St. Peter testified, *Behold we have left all things.* Therefore, it is argued, he had no home to which he could take our Lady. They who argue thus perchance forget our Lord's answer to St. Peter : *There is no man who has left house, or brethren, or father, or mother, or lands for My sake and for the Gospel, who shall not receive an hundred times as much, now in this time ; houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and lands ; and in the world to come life everlasting* (St. Mark x.). Therefore, the very fact that John has left all for Christ proves that he always will have a home here on earth for our Lady, and life everlasting, besides, with her in Heaven.

G. *Behold thy Mother.*

John has left his father Zebedee, and his mother Salome, and in return he is made by our Lord the son of Holy Mary, and has for his Mother the Mother of God.

Had not the Psalmist good right to say: The Lord is *faithful in all His words?* (Psalm cxliv.). He promised a few days ago that every one who leaves father or mother for His sake, shall have a hundred-fold *now in this time.* And lo! John, who has left his mother Salome, is in this most sacred hour, by the last testament of the Lord, made the son of Holy Mary, and from this hour has her for his Mother indeed. Is this, or is it not, a hundred-fold? The devout Cardinal Bellarmine writes: *Reliquit matrem uxorem piscatoris: et in matrem accepit Matrem Creatoris*—“The mother he leaves is a fisherman’s wife, the Mother he wins is the Mother of God”.

*Who is like the Lord our God, the blessed angels ask, raising the needy from the earth that He may place them with princes?*

Do the kings of this world ever raise a distinguished soldier or statesman to the rank of a prince of the blood royal? If they do, what is this poor honour compared with the dignity, beyond our conception, conferred on John? He is henceforth Mary’s son; she is his Mother. He occupies henceforth in the home the place that hitherto Jesus had. And she most cordially and lovingly accepts him as the proxy and the *alter ego* of her Son Jesus. He is from henceforth the disciple whom Jesus loved and the disciple whom the Blessed Mother loves—“*Dilectus Jesu, dilectus Mariæ*”.

Her short visit to Elizabeth filled that home with blessings. What does she do for John during the long years of her sojourn with him? *For my spirit is sweet above honey* (Ecclus. xxiv.). *I love them that love me. With me are riches and glory.*

H. *He saith to the disciple, Behold thy Mother.*

In this hour, Salome, who has till now been John’s

mother, is somewhere on Calvary, perhaps near enough to hear this wonderful last testament whispered from the Cross. What are her thoughts as she realises this transfer of her son to another Mother? to the Blessed Mother of God? Is her heart racked by maternal jealousies? We need not think so. For He Who speaks from the Cross is the Eternal Wisdom that *reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly* (Wisdom viii.).

Salome has an assurance in her secret soul, that if she gives up her son to be the true and faithful servant of the Mother of God, she too will have her hundred-fold now in this time—yes, even now in this time. The gratitude of Jesus and His Blessed Mother will take care that she has an abundant hundred-fold. And when she goes to the home of her eternity, her Lord will say to her: “When My Mother was childless, you gave your child to her. What you did to her *you did to Me.*” And the Blessed Mother will echo that word: *You did it to me.* And a thousand times a thousand years shall pass, and still this word will be fresh in the Heart of our Lord and in the heart of His Mother: *Come, blessed one; for you did it to Me.*

I. *From that hour he took her to his own.*

If Jesus and Mary are for ever and for ever grateful to Salome and to John for what they have done, what ought we to do for Jesus and for Mary? For they have done greater things to us than Salome did for them.

*Perpendite, rogo!* St. Peter Damian writes, *quam debitores simus huic benedictæ Genitrici*—“Oh, weigh well, I pray you, how deeply we are debtors to this Blessed Mother”.

J. *From that hour he took her to his own.*

“Why,” asks a spiritual writer, “are we not told that our Lady also accepted this dying testament, and took John for her son?”

Perhaps we have the answer in our Lord’s words, when St. Peter asked Him to explain the parable: *Are you also yet without understanding?* (St. Matt. xv.).

There might perchance be found some one to doubt as to St. John's actions, therefore we are told what he did. Of the Blessed Mother's mind and thought and action no one can doubt; no word need be said.

K. *From that hour he took her to his own.*

*Look and do according to the model.* Not to John alone is she given to be a Mother; not John alone can take her to his own.

Denis the Carthusian writes: "This chosen disciple represents each of the faithful. When therefore Christ said to John, *Behold thy Mother*, He gave His Mother to be the Mother of every Christian."

Happy, thrice happy, they who in childhood are led to the altar to say: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, I choose thee this day as my Lady, my Queen, my Mother. I promise never to abandon thee. Stand by me, then, in every action of my life, and do not forsake me in the hour of death. Amen."

After Baptism, faithful parents make haste to dedicate their child to the Mother of God. And what better parting word can a dying father say to his children than to remind each of them that he is *the child of her pain*? *Honour thy Blessed Mother all the days of thy life*, for thou must be *mindful what and how great (an anguish) she suffered for thee* in her travail on Calvary.

*Now the Mother was to be admired above measure, and worthy to be remembered by good men, who beheld her Son crucified, and bore it with a good courage; being filled with wisdom, and joining a man's heart to a woman's thought* (2 Mach. vii.).

*Behold thy Mother.*

One of the early Fathers of the Church imagined that St. Joseph was still alive, but that our Saviour appointed John to have henceforth the care of the Blessed Mother, that men might know that Joseph was not the real father of her Divine Son. But this opinion is confined to him alone, or to very few. The opinion held, we may say, universally in the Church, is that St. Joseph was dead before the Passion of our Lord.

## SCENE V.

## THE FOURTH WORD.

## STATION I.

*Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour (St. Matt. xxvii. 45).*

Our Blessed Saviour has now completed His last Testament. Yesterday evening He bequeathed His Sacred Body and Blood to His Church, to be her possession *till the consummation of the world*. Now by His word on Calvary He has committed His Holy Church made up of the disciples whom He loves, to His Blessed Mother; and to His Holy Church He has virtually given this parting injunction: *Thou shalt honour thy mother all the days of (thy) life*, that is, *till the consummation of the world*. Thou shalt take care that all generations call her blessed. Be *mindful of what and how great perils she has suffered* for thee in her travail (Tobias iv.).

After this for a time He speaks no more. There is, we read, *a time to keep silence and a time to speak* (Eccles. iii.). During these three solemn hours from the sixth to the ninth, our Lord chooses to be silent. Twilight has settled down dark and heavy over Jerusalem and Golgotha. The busy mid-day is suddenly changed into the silence of night. The voices of men are hushed around the Cross. Neither guards nor the crucified malefactors are disposed to speak. They are awe-stricken. The screams of frightened birds and the lowing of terrified cattle break at times the stillness. Otherwise there is a midnight silence on the place of Calvary. Of this most sacred silence we are reminded by the silence of the priest during the more solemn part of **Holy Mass**.

In secret to the soul of His Blessed Mother the Heart of her Son says once more: *The hour is come* (St. John xvii.). *The prince of this world cometh: and in Me he hath not anything* (St. John xiv.). *A woman when she is in labour hath sorrow, because her hour is come. So also you now*

indeed (shall) have sorrow (St. John xvi.), but have confidence. Now shall the prince of this world be cast forth (St. John xii.).

A. *From the sixth to the ninth hour.*

*It is appointed unto men once to die.* And before death we are prepared to witness *the agony*.

As we have a High Priest *tempted in all things like as we are, without sin*, He has Himself chosen to have in His bitter chalice all the anguish of the dying man's last *agony*.

The word *agony* is only another word, as has been said, for a struggle. When we witness the *agony* of the death-bed, it seems to us as if there were a struggle going on between life and death; as if death were labouring to wrench asunder the two that God has joined, the soul and body; and that the helpless soul and body are in vain struggling to hold together, and prevent the dreadful separation. All the pain of this separation our Blessed Lord chooses to endure in its extreme severity. His most blessed Soul, and His innocent Body, have given no cause for this severance. Most perfectly they have worked together to praise, reverence, and serve the Eternal Father.

Never on this earth has there been human soul and body that had such a right to remain for ever intimately united as the Soul and Body of our Lord have: *Siccine separat amara mors?* Is bitter death going to sever and tear asunder this most sacred companionship?

But this is not all. This death-struggle means much more than the separation.

B. *There was darkness.*

And it is in the darkness *that the beasts of the woods go about* (Psalm ciii.). And it is in these hours of darkness that the prince of this world of darkness goes about, for he, with all others who do evil, *hates the light*.

There is darkness, and during this darkness the last great struggle between the woman and her seed on the one hand, and the serpent and his seed on the other, is to be decided.

Death and life shall in this hour bring this awful conflict to an end. Our poor souls are the prize for which they contend.

*O all you who go by, attend, give heed, and contemplate the supreme hand-to-hand struggle between the two greatest leaders that ever have been or ever shall be on this earth: Christ Jesus, the Leader of all the children of God; and Lucifer, the arch-sinner, and the leader of all the wicked. St. Ignatius encourages us in his meditation on the Two Standards to try in our poor way to form some conception or picture of these two leaders. To the eye of human wisdom the contrast between them looks far more unequal than the fight in the valley of Terebinth between the Philistine giant and the Jewish shepherd-boy. Jesus is, it is true, in the flower of His Manhood, but He is hanging crucified and exhausted. Even when in His full strength He seemed too beautiful, too delicate, far too graceful, to grapple with the huge strength of the savage giant. But now all strength seems gone from Him. He has, apparently, nothing left to do on this earth but to die.*

Of Lucifer, on the other hand, we may say: *There is no power on earth that can be compared with him, who was made to fear no one. He is king over all the children of pride. His heart shall be as hard as a stone: and as firm as a smith's anvil. He shall esteem iron as straw, and brass as rotten wood. The archer shall not put him to flight; the stones of the sling are to him like stubble (Job xli).*

C. *There was darkness.*

*"Attendite."* Contemplate Lucifer making every preparation for the final struggle; glaring with his evil eyes upon Jesus on His Cross, and the Blessed Mother by the Cross; the woman and her seed. *The Lord showed me Jesus the High Priest standing; and Satan stood on His right hand, to be His adversary. And Jesus was clothed with filthy garments (Zach. iii).*

Listen to Satan summoning up his powers: *Prepare war; rouse up the strong; let them come, let all the men of war*

come up (Joel iii.). *The devil is come down, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time. And when the dragon saw that he was cast upon the earth he persecuted the woman who brought forth the man child* (Apoc. xii.).

Then, if we turn to our Blessed Lord, *the Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle*: in this hour He seems to our human eyes no match for the strength and courage and daring of Lucifer. Those who saw Him tell us that He looked like a despised one, *the most abject of men; acquainted with infirmity*; that is to say, one given up to weakness and helplessness in all its extremity. St. Thomas gives us this description of His preparation for this struggle: "On His Head He had a helmet, not of gold, but of thorns. For a breastplate He had His immaculate flesh. In His hands He held no lance, nor sword, but the large nails that crucified Him. On His feet, in lieu of spurs, the nails thrust through them. For a war horse He had His Cross."

We must also for a moment fix our eyes on His Blessed Mother, for she is to take part in this *agony*, this death-struggle. She *the woman*: the *valiant woman*. *On her lips is ever the law of clemency*, but her hands she *hath put out to strong things*. Under her pale features, and her weeping eyes, and her gentle aspect, so full of grace, she has within, a *woman's thought*, a mother's tenderness in its perfection, *joined with a man's heart*.

#### D. *From the sixth to the ninth hour.*

There is no noise now, no tumult raging on Calvary; but the conflict is at its height. *Mors et vita duello conflixere mirando*.

Grim death, and Heavenly Life,  
Grappled in wondrous strife.

From the sixth to the ninth hour, we read, the death-struggle endures. Alas! what do words tell us? What do we learn as we read, *Pilate scourged Him*, and *they crucified Him*, unless we stay and *consider in our hearts*, and pray that we may *understand concerning our Lord poor and*

*needy*; and that we may have *the promised spirit of grace and of prayer to look on (Him) Whom we pierced?* So now, too, what notion have we of all the anguish compressed into these three hours from the sixth to the ninth? *Be not ignorant, my beloved, that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years* (2 St. Peter iii.).

In these three dark hours, the soul of our Saviour travels, if we may so speak, to every Christian death-bed in the ages to come, seeking if there be anything more that *I ought to do for My vineyard*. Is there any bitterness in death that I have not tasted? any danger to the dying for which I have not made provision?

O stay here a little while, to watch and listen.

*E. From the sixth to the ninth hour.*

i. We may first, as St. Ignatius advises, look with our eyes and try to realise what was in this hour the aspect of our Saviour.

That He is wasted away by fasting and watching and labour and great loss of blood, we know. St. Bridget adds what she heard from our Lady concerning His appearance during this agony.

“His eyes seem half dead; He can only open them, to look on me, by squeezing out the blood that dims them. His cheeks are sunk and cleaving to His jaws. His face all sadness. His mouth stands open. His tongue and His teeth can be seen all blood-stained.

“The stomach and below the stomach, so emaciated as if all the intestines had been taken away, and nothing left but skin adhering to skin. The flesh of His Body—wherever it is not covered with wounds—pale, and worn, from the drain of blood. His arms and legs strained and rigid, and His ribs from the extreme attenuation can be counted. His beard and hair soaked in blood.”

*F. From the sixth to the ninth hour.*

Contemplate also the other picture, left us by the inspired Prophet, of what he saw in his vision. In this hour,

especially, it has its full verification. And it sets before us what the bystanders would afterwards say to each other.

*“There was no beauty in Him during this long agony, nor comeliness. We have seen Him. There was no sightliness. The anguish of the inward struggle so disfigured those beautiful features which even sinners used to look upon in order to find some rest for their souls, that in this hour there was actually no sightliness at all: nothing of all that gracefulness which used to attract, nothing to draw us, so that we should be desirous of Him. His looks, His usual gracious aspect, His attractive countenance all hidden. He looked like one whom all men would despise. The high opinion we used to have of Him was shaken: we were scandalised. And worse than all, it appeared to us in that darkness that not only were men all turned against Him, but that, like the poor leper, He was stricken and afflicted by the hand of God.”*

*G. From the sixth to the ninth hour.*

*Yes: like one stricken by God and afflicted.* Sometimes, when the martyr is covered with wounds, we discover signs of great peace within. But now, our Lord's tears, His sobbing, and the distress that is rendering His Sacred face uncomely and unsightly, make it clear that all the outward disfigurement is only a picture of the inward agony.

*Save me, O God, for the waters are come in even to my soul.*

*I am come into the depths of the sea, and a tempest hath overwhelmed me.*

*I have laboured with crying, my jaws are become hoarse, my eyes have failed, whilst I hope in my God. My enemies are grown strong, who have wrongfully persecuted me (Psalm lxxviii.).*

*My enemies are grown strong.* “For it is your hour, princes of darkness. Men have had their hour and done their worst. Now it is time that you put forth all your strength.”

*H. From the sixth to the ninth hour.*

2. *The inward agony.*

From what we have already seen, we may perhaps understand a little of the agony and struggle going on in

the most holy Soul of our Lord and in the soul of His Blessed Mother.

Satan employs, as the masters of spirit teach us, two weapons in his warfare against God and men: (1) *Force*; and (2) *Cunning*.

1. *Force*. (a) When so permitted, he employs open force, that is, overt and undisguised warfare. Thus we read: *Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord, and struck Job with a very grievous ulcer from the sole of the foot even to the top of his head* (Job ii.).

So, too, we read in Church history, how he urges on persecutors to stamp out Christianity by using unsparingly torments and death. How many have been conquered by the weapon of force we know too well from history. And our Blessed Saviour, speaking of persecutions to come, said: *There shall be then great tribulation . . . and unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved* (St. Matt. xxiv.).

As Satan did not know that Jesus was God-Man, he is assailing Him as he attacks other holy men, but with extraordinary violence. Part of his plan is, as we have seen: *Let us examine Him by outrages and tortures, that we may know His meekness and try His patience. Let us condemn Him to a most shameful death*. This portion of his design has been carried out with the utmost severity.

(b) To outer force, Satan also joins, when so permitted, that pressure, full of anguish, to which spiritual writers give the name of *Desolation*. We know that when subjected to this torment, holy souls have suffered sometimes so much distress, so strong a foretaste of the pain of loss, which is the worst of the torments of Hell, that they would gladly have welcomed in exchange the torments of martyrdom.

Satan had permission, during the Agony at Gethsemani, as we have seen, to spread over the Soul of our Saviour the darkness of this desolation in its most distressing and oppressive severity.

## 2. *Cunning.*

Along with brute force, Satan combines the use of the most appalling craft and cunning. When not permitted to stir up persecution, his warfare is carried on mainly by lies and trickery. *The serpent deceived me*, was the lament of our first mother; and it will be the everlasting wail of the lost in Hell.

We may notice two degrees in the craft and cunning of the father of lies.

Sometimes, when dealing with sinners, he tells gross lies, in which he makes little attempt to disguise himself. He promises men pleasures and honours which he cannot give, and they ought to know he cannot give. Thus he told Judas that he could gain the price of his treason without being found out or suffering any loss. But at other times, as St. Paul writes, Satan *transformeth himself into an angel of light*. It is only by using this stratagem that he can decoy innocent and holy souls. If false religions are not disguised under a mask of goodness, the unsuspecting souls of good men cannot be lured to them.

### I. *From the sixth to the ninth hour.*

We have seen from the writings of St. Jerome and others that Satan and his legions, from the time when the Crucifixion was completed, as they saw that our Blessed Saviour's meekness and humility of Heart was proof against outrage and torment, began to lose all confidence in their policy. *Do you see that we prevail nothing?* (St. John xii.). We have further seen from St. Jerome and other ancient Fathers, that the cries which were multiplied around the Cross: *If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross* (St. Matt. xxvii.), were inspired by the wicked spirits who now are feeling strongly the power of the Holy Cross, and begin to fear that if Christ dies, His death will be the ruin of their empire.

As then we are taught that it is on Calvary the two great leaders, our Blessed Lord and Satan, put forth their whole strength for the decisive and supreme struggle,

we may assume that during the three long hours of darkness the father of lies and his wicked spirits, being now fully aware that in this warfare against the Woman and the Man they have to deal with sanctity such as they never found on earth before, transform themselves into angels of light, to see whether by any plausible artifice they can induce Jesus to come down from His Cross, and Holy Mary to persuade Him to do so.

During the agony in the Garden, we read: "Satan laid to the charge of our Lord a host of imaginary crimes. He reproached Him with the faults of His disciples; the scandals which they had caused; and the disturbances which He had occasioned in the world by giving up ancient customs. He reproached Him, too, with having been the cause of the massacre of the Innocents; with having brought disunion into families; with having deserted His family, and squandered the property of others." These lies were intended to dishearten our Saviour and make Him give up His work of bettering men.

But as He was not thus to be turned aside from His course, the only plan which now remains is that He be induced by plausible arguments to work a miracle, and come down from the Cross, and that His Mother be moved to use her influence to persuade Him to this course.

What they already said, then, through the mouths of men will now be whispered into the Soul of Jesus, and the soul of Holy Mary, with all the importunate energy and malice of a last supreme effort. *The devil is come down having great wrath—knowing that he hath but a short time* (Apoc. xiii.).

"Did you not hear how the Priests and Ancients solemnly pledged themselves that they will believe in you if you come down from the Cross? And if they believe, all the people will believe. The terrible crime they committed to-day will then be blotted out. All your own disciples, too, who have been scandalised, will believe.

“You surely heard, too, the pitiful cry of these crucified thieves, *Save Thyself and us*. When did you ever turn a deaf ear to such a prayer? And will you not take pity also on your heart-broken Mother? What will become of her and of your little flock if the Pharisees triumph?”

J. *From the sixth to the ninth hour.*

The words uttered by Jesus on the Cross are, one after another, adding to Lucifer's scathing fears and misgivings.

That cry: *Father, forgive them*, is something more than the cry of a human sanctity.

That promise, again, to Dismas: *This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise!* Surely, no man ever spoke a word like this.

Again, the solemn transfer of Holy Mary to be the Mother of men. Satan's quick sagacity sees with horror that this means a complete reinstating of the hated fallen race. Men are going to be raised up to be brothers of this Christ.

Satan's quick sagacity! For before the fall of the rebel angels, theologians tell us, God proportioned the gifts of grace in them to their natural gifts. Lucifer was, therefore, both by grace and nature, above all those other spirits whom he persuaded to join him in his proud rebellion. In all of them, after their sin, St. Thomas writes, “the natural gifts remain unimpaired”.

*They went down to Hell with their arms* (Ezech. xxxii.).

The fallen Angel therefore has all his far-reaching intelligence, and it is now becoming quite evident to the proud prince of this world that his empire is destroyed unless he can by stratagem hinder Jesus from completing His victory by death.

To understand what this victory looks like in the eyes of Lucifer, we need only call to mind one fact to show what his position on this earth has been. He has been to such an extent the prince of this world, he has so thoroughly duped men and induced them to transfer to him the worship they owe to God, that while God has found one

faithful servant, Abraham, ready at His command to sacrifice his son Isaac, Satan has persuaded parents without number to become at his shrine *merciless murderers of their own children, and eaters of men's bowels* (Wisdom xii.). Oh, let us not forget, when we hear men blaspheme against the efficacy of Christ's redemption, *those parents sacrificing with their own hands helpless souls*, to the sound of music, and in the midst of dancing and other hideous orgies.

Satan ascended *above the height of the clouds*, and has been *like the Most High* (Isaias xiv.). *Thy heart was lifted up with thy beauty* (Ezech. xxviii.). But now, his terrible foreboding is that the hour is come when *(he) shall be brought down to Hell into the depth of the pit* (Isaias xiv.).

Therefore every artifice, every plausible sophistry, every shape of lie must be tried to persuade the second Adam to come down from His Cross; and to induce the second Eve to beseech her Son to deliver Himself from death.

K. *From the sixth to the ninth hour.*

*And the dragon persecuted the woman also* (Apoc. xii.).

Not knowing how entirely they are *one Heart and one Soul*, and how Jesus is in this hour hiding nothing from His Blessed Mother, Satan thinks it necessary to assail her also; to persuade her to have pity on so many perishing souls, and to move her Son to work this one miracle which will wipe out the disgrace heaped on Him, and will be the salvation of so many.

“Like good Queen Esther, Holy Mother, speak a word for your people. If your Son comes down from the Cross, they will all be saved, and not they alone, but the other nations will by His Apostles be brought to Him, and He shall reign; and of His Kingdom there shall be no end. Oh, mark how the blood of your Son has been poured out; and what has come from it? Nothing, so far, but sin upon sin. Was there ever in Jerusalem wickedness such as there is to-day?”

At every word the wicked spirits are watching, with

their keen intellects at full strain, to see if they make any way. Theologians tell us that from the beginning, the mystery of the Incarnation was purposely concealed from Satan; because had he known that Christ was God, he never would have had courage to compass His death. In the Church's hymn we read that God's plan was :

Multiformis proditoris,  
Ars ut artem falleret.

That is, Satan had won by trickery, and to confound his wisdom, stratagem shall be used to overthrow him. For God's design it is necessary that a man shall conquer him by dying. But had not the great mystery of the Incarnation been by stratagem concealed from him, he would never have forfeited his right over guilty man by planning the cruel death of the Sinless Man.

St. Paul explains to us the Divine plan. *The decree against fallen man, Jesus is to take out of the way, fastening it to the Cross. And He is to despoil the principalities and powers, and to expose them confidently in open show, triumphing over them in Himself* (Coloss. ii. 15), *that through death He might destroy him who had the empire of death* (Hebrews ii.). Christ could never have thus conquered Satan and his legions, and exposed them in open show, had He not concealed His Divinity: for Satan would never have advanced to the fight had he known all the truth. In God's design, Satan must be conquered by a man, and at the same time must forfeit his rights over guilty man by usurping a tyrannical power over the guiltless Man. He was duped by holy artifice, and fell into the pit which he had made (Psalm vii.).

St. Augustine writes: "Through the holiness of Christ the devil was conquered; for though in Him he found nothing worthy of death, yet did he kill Him. Surely, then, it is just that the debtors whom he holds in bond be set free, as they believed in Him Whom Satan put to death, albeit He owed no debt."

Had Satan known Who his Adversary was, he would have fled away from the unequal contest. Our Lord, therefore, St. Peter Damian writes, "exposed all His weaknesses, but concealed His strength".

## STATION II.

*And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying : Eli, Eli, lamma Sabacthani ? that is : My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ? (v. 46).*

*A. My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ?*

To St. Bridget our Lady said : "My Son, seeing me and His friends weeping and inconsolable, with a loud and plaintive voice, cried to His Father : *My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ?* This grief, which came to Him from the grief of His friends, went beyond all the other bitterness and tribulation which He was enduring in mind and body, for He loved them tenderly."

But, "beware," St. Bernard writes, "of thinking, because of this cry, that our Lord Jesus has been betrayed into impatience, for all the while that He was enduring the extreme bitterness of the Cross, nothing came out of His Heart but sweetness".

Our Lord then sees that Lucifer has now had his hour, and his opportunity to the full. He has been allowed to employ freely all his weapons, cunning, and fraud, and lying, and plausible illusions. Jesus sees His Blessed Mother tormented and oppressed by the despairing impotency and malice of the wicked spirits. It is no wish of His Heart to see her suffer needlessly.

If the Prophet says of Him : *Not from His Heart hath He afflicted the children of men* (Lament. iii.), what agony must it be to His most filial Heart to give her up to the unspeakable anguish produced by close contact with these loathsome enemies of her God and her Son !

The blessed angels watching the contest are once more saying : "*Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee : thy*

soul is knit to His, *as one Heart and one Soul*. Lucifer prevails nothing against Him or against thee." And they turn to their God and plead beseechingly: *Thou shalt arise and have mercy on Sion: for it is time to have mercy on it: for the time is come* (Psalm ci.).

Not then out of any impatient haste, but because He knows His Father's will, and that the appointed hour is come, with a loud and most plaintive voice our Saviour cries: *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*

B. *My God, My God.*

We have already seen that some spiritual writers think that our Lord, instead of crying out, *Father*, as He did in His first word on the Cross, now called on Him as *God*, to signify that during these three hours, both His Eternal Father and His Blessed Mother have, at His own desire, given Him up, if we may so speak, as their Son, that He may personate the sinner, and may grapple with Lucifer as the representative of the sinful race.

He has permitted His Blessed Soul to pine and languish under the sense of His Father's infinite aversion to sin and the sinner. But the dark hour is now to end, and it is by the ordinance of His Eternal Father that it is coming to its close. And therefore not in any opposition, but with a most perfect understanding with His Eternal Father, He once more asserts His right to all the intimate union due to the only-begotten Son: *My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*

When our Blessed Lady, in days gone by, said to her Son in the Temple: *Son, why hast Thou done thus to us?* not the faintest shadow of discontent or murmuring passed over her soul. There was nothing, absolutely nothing in her heart but perfect motherly love. Even so now, and far more now, the Divine Son, and the Holy Mother along with Him, for they are *one Heart and one Soul*, are only saying the very word which the Eternal Father delights to hear. They are asking for that which the Eternal Father longs to give, but wishes to give at their petition,

in order that Lucifer may more thoroughly understand that it is through this Man and this woman, whom he scorned, that he is now conquered and crushed.

C. *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*

But, O compassionate Lord Jesus, Thou Who hast hid Thy heavenly truths from *the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones*, give us grace to understand Thy loud cry, lest through our foolish wisdom we go astray, and Thy words become a scandal to us.

For, like so many other words of our Lord, they have not all their meaning on the surface. We require the light of the Holy Spirit, and the guidance of Holy Church, and our own diligent study, to arrive at the precious truths hidden in them.

"I know not," a holy Father writes, "if any mortal man can understand how many secrets lie hidden under the mysterious words of this expostulation."

"No one must interpret these words," St. Leo warns us, "as if the omnipotence of God His Father had withdrawn from Him, for the nature of God and the nature of man are so become one that never can torments separate, nor death divide."

By the Incarnation the Divine Nature is so united both with our Lord's Soul and with His Body, that not even in death can Body or Soul be severed from the Divinity.

Hence this word of our Saviour is full of mystery and doctrine, so that St. Leo writes: *Vox ista doctrina est, non querela*—"This word is not a murmur, but a heavenly lesson".

D. *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*

What, then, is the meaning of our Blessed Lord's expostulation?

The holy Fathers suggest many interpretations, as we shall see later. Meanwhile, this one may be sufficient which St. Bernard offers us. "He is speaking as Man, and there has been a certain amount of abandonment

since there has been no manifestation of Divine power in such extreme necessity."

Light is thrown on this interpretation if we bear in mind that the words of our Lord, *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* are the opening words of the 21st Psalm, which is held to be a prophetic Psalm that describes to us the thoughts of our Saviour during His Passion. Therefore, though He only speaks aloud the first verse, yet spiritual writers assume that in His Soul He is adding the other words of the Psalm, as those in verses 5, 6, and 7, where He urges the contrast: *In Thee have our fathers hoped, they have hoped, and Thou hast delivered them. They cried to Thee and they were saved; they trusted in Thee and were not confounded. But I am a worm and no man.* The sense of our Lord's cry may be, as St. Bernard suggests: "Miracles were worked for Moses and other patriarchs in the hour of need, but now when Satan is oppressing with such persevering malice My beloved and Immaculate Mother, no miracle is worked to stop him".

*E. Why hast Thou forsaken Me?*

Then, too, we know from our own experience how hard at times it is to distinguish between sin and temptation; and between sin and certain consequences and penalties of sin, such as heaviness of heart and internal desolation. To us at times temptation seems to be sin. Yet all the while, temptation and sin can be as wide apart as Heaven and Hell. Temptation could come to our Lord, but sin never.

His compact, then, and His will, is to be as like as He possibly can be to us—that is, to subject Himself to all those troubles of temptation and inward desolation which are attendant on sin, and so connected with sin that to us they seem to be sin, though in reality far apart from sin. His object is to be *tempted in all things like as we are*, but always *without sin*.

He hereby teaches us to distinguish all the accompaniments of sin, which go before sin or after, from

sin itself, and from the guilt of sin. The accompaniments He takes to Himself, and therefore, to our eye, looks like the sinner, though all the while He is the all-holy God.

This being so, we can understand how He can by His Divine power check the flow of joy and Divine gladness which by rights ought ever to be flooding every part of His Nature—His Body and His Soul—and instead of allowing Divine grace to produce all its effects in the sensitive part of His Human Nature, He gives up all this region, if we may so speak, that is, all the lower part of His being, to those painful and most distressing emotions of fear and sadness and sorrow, which would naturally abound were sin reigning in His Soul.

St. Laurence Justinian writes: "The Eternal Father forsook the sensitive part of His nature, and left it in man's purely natural condition; for He held back the streams of eternal delight, so that they should not flood the Soul of Christ with the torrent which ought to be". In this sense, then, both He and His Blessed Mother are enduring an abandonment.

*F. My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*

These words, as has been said, occur in the opening verse of the 21st Psalm, which is full of allusions to the Sacred Passion. From the fact that our Saviour utters these words now, and a little later the words from the 30th Psalm: *Into Thy hands I commend My Spirit*, some holy writers conjecture that, while on the Cross, He is silently in His Heart crying out to His Father in the inspired words of certain suitable Psalms, and that during the interval which remains between this loud cry and His last word, He is going over the Psalms from the 21st to the 30th. Many words meet us in these Psalms, and in others which are understood of the Passion, but which at first sight we should think it a blasphemy to put into the mouth of our Divine Lord. But the words that we are now considering explain them to us. He is God, but He is Man also, and Man

with the sins of the world laid upon Him : Man *tempted in all things like as we are, without sin* (Hebrews iv.). That is, Man exempt indeed entirely from the guilt of sin, but loaded and oppressed and crushed down under an accumulation of all the effects and consequences and penalties and disgrace of sin. Knowing all things, and with full and eternal deliberation, He has covenanted to personate the sinner, and to endure, in the garb and disguise of the sinner, all that the displeasure of God, and all that the malice of Lucifer and the cruelty of men can in this world inflict on the sinner.

“*Saturabitur.*” He shall be saturated with suffering and pain and anguish and outrage, internal and external. We may therefore contemplate our Blessed Lord in the darkness, not only crying out the first words of the 21st Psalm : *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* but also in His Heart repeating other words of that Psalm and other kindred Psalms.

*Far from My salvation are the words of My sins.* That is, wide indeed seems the gulf between peace for Me, the joy of salvation for My Soul, and *the words of My sins*, the words of the sins that are become Mine, that is, all those foul and loathsome words or thoughts in which different vices find their expression. *In Thee have our fathers hoped, they have hoped, and Thou hast delivered them. They cried to Thee and they were saved ; they trusted in Thee and were not confounded. But I am a worm and no man, the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people.*

His Divine Heart is not repining, for He has been offered up *because He wished it.* He is only pleading for us, by reminding His Eternal Father that while the Divine Providence interfered so often in times past to protect the faithful patriarchs and saints, He is given up for the hour to the will of man.

*From My Mother's womb Thou art My God, depart not from Me. For tribulation is very near ; for there is none to help Me* (Psalm xxi.).

*My Heart is become like wax melting in the midst of My bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and My tongue hath cleaved to My jaws.*

*They have looked and stared on Me. They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture they cast lots.*

*But Thou, O Lord, remove not Thy help to a distance from Me. Look towards My defence. Deliver, O God, My Soul from the sword: My only one from the hand of the dog.*

*My only one—“Unicam meam”.* Commentators understand that our Lord is praying for His Soul, His life, which is, as it were, His one treasure.

But if He is in these dark hours repeating these words, while He is, as St. Bridget tells us, suffering far more distress from the condition of His Blessed Mother than from His own, doubtless she too is *His only one* whom He wishes to see rescued from *the hand of the dog*.

G. *My God, My God.*

The 68th Psalm is also understood by contemplatives to be a cry of our Blessed Lord's Soul to His Father during His Sacred Passion. We may in this darkness consider some of its sacred words in our hearts.

Knowing how many have been scandalised in Him by the sight of His infirmity, He prays:

*O God, let not them be ashamed for Me, Who look for Thee, the Lord of hosts. Let them not be confounded on My account, who seek Thee, O God of Israel. Because, for Thy sake I have borne reproach, shame hath covered My face. I am become a stranger to My brethren, and an alien to the sons of My Mother.*

*But as for Me, My prayer is to Thee, O Lord, for the time of Thy good pleasure, O God. Let not the tempest of water drown Me: nor the deep swallow Me up. Hear Me, O Lord, for Thy mercy is kind: look on Me according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies. Attend to My Soul and deliver it: save Me because of My enemies.*

*Pour out Thine indignation upon them, and let Thy wrathful anger take hold of them.*

### H. *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*

Commentators gather from St. Paul's words a corroboration of what our Lady said to St. Bridget, that her Divine Son uttered 'this cry, "*Flebili voce,*" with the plaintive voice of one Who is weeping. St. Paul writes: *In the days of His flesh, with a strong cry and tears, offering up prayers and supplications to Him that was able to save Him from death, (He) was heard for His reverence* (Hebrews v.). Tears then are added to His loud cry, and He is heard *for His reverence*, that is, for the infinite reverence with which He worships His Eternal Father, and also for the infinite reverence with which His Father regards Him.

### I. *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*

The holy Fathers are careful to remind us that the most holy Soul of Jesus could suffer no real separation from His Eternal Father, but was only drinking to the dregs that bitterness which spiritual writers call desolation—a state well known to the saints, in which they are, by the wisdom and charity of their God, permitted to taste with our Saviour something of the most terrible of all the consequences of sin—the pain of loss.

What are we to do when under this suffering? The Holy Spirit answers: *Make not haste in the time of clouds. Humble thy heart and endure: wait on God with patience: join thyself to God and endure. Take all that shall be brought upon thee: and in thy sorrow endure, and in thy humiliation keep patience. For gold and silver are tried in the fire; but acceptable men in the furnace of humiliation* (Ecclus. ii.).

*Join thyself to God and endure.*

Whither can we go to find strength under this heavy trial, if not to the darkness of Calvary, there to *join ourselves to God and endure, to wait on God with patience?*

There and only there will strength sufficient come to us from the suffering Heart of Jesus. There we learn that we are not cast away in this dread hour, but because we are acceptable men, are with our Lord and His Holy

Mother cast into the *fire of humiliation*, that we may come out cleansed from some of our dross, and made a little more like the fire-tried gold of their charity.

J. *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*

Many holy Fathers have meditated long on these mysterious words in order to give them an interpretation that fits in with our Blessed Saviour's Divine Nature. *I studied that I might know this thing; it is a labour in my sight* (Psalm lxxii.).

1. Some think it to be a repetition of the cry in Gethsemani: *May this chalice pass from Me*, that is to say, that our Blessed Saviour, seeing the agony inflicted on His Blessed Mother by the profane importunity of the wicked spirits, expostulates humbly and lovingly, "Why, O God, did you not let Me work out redemption without facing all these sorrows?"

2. Others think that our Lord is identifying Himself with His people, and, as if one with the cast-off race, cries out, *My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* He, our Head, is identifying Himself with His members, and bewailing that so many of them are forsaken through their own fault.

3. Others, again, think that our Saviour says these words for our sakes: that we may all believe that He is a real Man and suffers from this intense desolation far more keenly than any of His saints shall do. He knows that the father of lies will spread this error among so many others, that Jesus, being God, did not suffer really, but only apparently.

4. The fourth interpretation is the one we are following: that the cry of our Lord is a loving petition. When He knows that the time willed by His Father is come, He says: *Why hast Thou forsaken Me?* that is, there is no longer any reason why My Blessed Mother should any more be given up to the power of the malicious tempter!

5. Origen thinks that our Blessed Lord is expostulating and lamenting because so many will not profit by His

Passion. "Why dost Thou forsake Me, so that I am become like a gleaner who can only gather the remnant in the harvest, or the grapes in the vintage when there is no longer the full fresh cluster to be found on the vine?"

6. Others interpret it, that our Lord wishes to proclaim that He is not dying for His own sins, as the thieves are, but for the sins which He has taken upon Himself. Therefore, after asking the question: *My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* He answers in the Psalms: *For far from My salvation are the words of My sins.* That is, what wonder that Thou hast forsaken Me, since the sins of My people which are laid on Me, take from Me all right to happiness and joy, and set salvation from My present misery far from Me.

7. Lastly, St. Cyprian suggests that our Lord asks the question from His Cross to induce us also to *consider in our hearts* the causes and reasons why the Eternal Father gives up His Beloved Son to all this suffering.

If we do not make leisure for this study, and never understand rightly why the Sacred Passion is so bloody: why the sufferings are so varied, and so cruel: why, also, our Blessed Lady shares so largely in the sorrows, Calvary cannot produce its full fruit in our souls.

Tantus labor non sit cassus.	May Thy pains not fruitless be.
Sancta Mater, istud agas,	Do this for me, O Mother blest,
Crucifixi fige plagas,	Deeply imprint within my breast
Cordi meo valide.	The wounds of Jesus crucified.

K. *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*

Well, then, as we have seen, St. Cyprian thinks that our Lord's hope and wish is that we too will make leisure to ask this question and seek for an answer: "Why, O God, why are Thy beloved Son and His Blessed Mother given up to all this inconceivable agony?"

St. Paul answers this question; and his answer is short and sufficient, if we will only shut it up in our hearts and study till we understand it.

*He loved me and delivered Himself for me (Galat. ii.).*

*For me.* He is forsaken on Calvary, that I may not be for ever forsaken *in the land of forgetfulness—exiled from the eternal providence. Weep not over Me, and My abandonment: for it will end. Weep over yourselves and your children, that they may seek and find forgiveness, and not be compelled to spend their eternity abandoned; weeping and wailing and gnashing their teeth.*

*For me.* That I may begin to have some notion of that intolerable pain of loss which my sins deserve; and may say with St. Dismas when the *waters of tribulation are come in even to my soul: We are receiving the just reward of our deeds.*

*For me:* that my heart of stone may begin to be changed into a heart of flesh.

*My soul melted when He spoke.* I ought to remain in the darkness looking on Him Whom I have pierced, and listening to the sorrowful cry, *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*—till virtue comes out from the Heart of my Lord, and my soul begins to melt.

*For me:* that at last, seeing my God and my Lord, my Saviour and my Brother in agony for me and my sins, and His agony doubled and trebled and multiplied beyond measure by His Blessed Mother's agony of compassion for Him, and His great compassion for her, I may fall down prostrate and say, *To (me), O God, belongeth confusion of face.* I am the guilty cause of all Thy crushing grief *great as the sea.*

*For me:* that I may learn to have compassion for the desolate, and for the tempted.

For if I by harshness or neglect persecute the man whose heart is already sore and bruised, "I belong, O Lord Jesus, to the number of those miserable men of whom Thou hast complained: *They have persecuted Him Whom Thou hast smitten: they have added to the grief of My wounds* (Psalm lxxviii.). For most assuredly, what I do to the least of Thy afflicted little ones, that I do to Thee."

*For me:* that at last my heart may be drawn to Thee lifted up on the tree for me, and for me forsaken and deso-

late unspeakably, that I may console Thee by bringing to Thee some of that fire which Thou on Thy Cross art desiring to kindle on the earth.

That I may begin to love Thee, my Lord, and to mourn over Thee, *as one mourneth for an only son*; and to grieve over (Thee) *as the manner is to grieve for the death of the first-born.*

Eia Mater fons amoris,  
Me sentire vim doloris  
Fac, ut tecum lugeam.

O Mother, Source of charity,  
Oh, share with me thy agony,  
That I may mourn with thee.

*For me*: that when *bitter death* comes to me, I may find that through the agony of Jesus and His Holy Mother all things are made new on the Christian death-bed.

For it is in these dark hours of agony that our Divine Saviour is earning for us the Holy Viaticum for our last great journey; and the oil of peace, the oil of consolation, the holy oil of gladness for our agony. *Thou hast prepared a table before Me against them that afflict Me. Thou hast anointed My head with oil: and My chalice which inebriateth Me how goodly is it* (Psalm xxii.).

*For me*: that when as a chastisement of my sins, or, to teach me to live by faith, and not merely by feeling, my Lord withdraws His sensible presence from my soul, I may not lose hope, and give up at once, as if all were lost, but remember the dark hours on Calvary; and how the Divine Son and the Ever-Blessed Mother persevere through all that inward agony in the most perfect love and submission to the Eternal Father, saying always: *Father, not as I will, but as Thou.* For Jesus and His Holy Mother are doing in this hour what He teaches us to do: *In the time of clouds make not haste. Join thyself to God and endure.*

*For me*: that I may learn two things. (1) How great the cunning, the craft, the plausibility of the tempter is: (2) How all his lying artifices are baffled and rendered void by the Sacred Passion. "O Lord Jesus, *lead us not into temptation: deliver us from evil.* From the snares of the devil, deliver us, O Lord." "Mother of God, and Mother

of poor sinners, pray for us that we may *watch and pray*, and that we may *not enter* into temptation."

*Thanks be to God Who has given us the victory over the wiles of Lucifer, through the wisdom and charity of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*For me*: to remind me to have in my prayers a great compassion for the dying, and for all in their agony. For they are every day saying to me: *Remember my judgment, for thine also shall be so. Yesterday for me, and to-day for thee* (Ecclus. xxxviii.).

*For me*: to draw me to think also of the Holy Souls suffering desolation and abandonment in Purgatory. For eye hath not seen agony like theirs—the vehement, the ceaseless struggle between their desire to be with their God and their humble and faithful resignation. *Oh, may this chalice pass from me; but not as I will, my God, but as Thou.*

## SCENE VI.

### THE EFFECTS OF THE LOUD CRY.

#### STATION I.

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

St. Paul tells us the first effect of this cry: *He is heard for His reverence.*

*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*, Satan and all his wicked spirits are rebuked and coerced. They stand, if we may so speak, utterly paralysed and helpless.

Theologians teach us that God sometimes uses His angels to crush the action of the powers of darkness. Sometimes, again, by simply withholding His concurrence, which is necessary for each action of every creature, He at once renders them perfectly powerless.

As, however, in this hour of darkness, the great battle foretold from the beginning between the woman and the serpent, *her seed and thy seed*, Satan, is being fought on

Calvary, we may be quite sure that these holy servants of God are right who teach us that Lucifer is now made to feel that the woman has all power over him and his legions: *She shall crush thy head.*

Accordingly we read, that in this hour of supreme confusion to them, and calamity and disaster and ruin, all this host of rebel spirits are maddened with desire to flee away and hide themselves. *Resist the devil, and he will fly from you* (St. James iv.), the Holy Spirit teaches us. Jesus and Mary, the Man and the Woman, have resisted him thoroughly to the end, have baffled, have conquered the devil and all his host, and these have now no wish but to flee away and hide themselves "in the vast chaos of eternal night," far, far away from Calvary. But the Blessed Mother utters a short word like St. John's: *Non licet.* Trodden down under her Virgin foot, the leader of all the wicked must now lie, cowering and grovelling in his terrible despair. He has taught men to adopt the maxim, *Væ victis*; and as he has meted, *it shall be measured* to him now. *He loved cursing and it shall come unto him.* Even the Blessed Mother's heart joins in this sentence: *Pour out Thy indignation upon them, and let Thy wrathful anger take hold of them; because they have persecuted Him Whom Thou hast smitten, and have added to the grief of My wounds* (Psalm lxxviii.).

No; now they may not flee away, but must abide to the end, to the bitter end, and endure the full force of the Death of the Lord which they have brought about. *He hath opened a pit, and dug it; and he is fallen into the hole he made* (Psalm vii.).

## STATION II.

*At the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lamma sabacthani; which is, being interpreted, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* (St. Mark xv. 34).

A. *With a loud voice.*

Louder far and more wonderful than His cry at Bethany, which reached Lazarus in his grave! One of

the countless miracles of the sacred Passion is this, that Jesus, worn out, quite exhausted, faint and parched, helpless and prostrate, can utter this loud cry. "*Laboravi clamans, with effort and labour I cried out; for My jaws are become hoarse, My eyes have failed, whilst I hope in My God (Psalm lxviii.). . . De Profundis clamavi—Out of the depths of My sorrowing Heart, and with all the energy of My loving Heart, I have cried.*"

For *love is strong as death*, and much stronger. *The many waters that are come into (His) Soul cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it.*

B. *With a loud voice.*

*The voice of the Lord (is) upon the waters; the God of Majesty hath thundered; the Lord upon many waters. The voice of the Lord is in power; the voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars; yea, the Lord shall break the cedars of Libanus, and reduce them to pieces (Psalm xxviii.).*

Under the canopy of darkness this cry of our Saviour travels over the heads of the vast crowd, and is heard by every one; and passes across the deep fosse around the walls into the silent streets of the city. More even than the mysterious darkness, it spreads awe and consternation.

When He spoke gently last night in the Garden, and said in humble meekness, *I am He*: who was able to stand it?

"*Attendite.*" Pause, then, to contemplate for a while the trouble and dismay awakened now by this loud cry from the Cross, in the souls of all who have rejected our Saviour; and most of all in the Rulers and Ancients, who have planned and meditated *vain things against the Lord, and against His Christ.—The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars.* These strong-minded men are terror-stricken and appalled. *Destruction and unhappiness in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known (Psalm xliii.).* For *the way of peace* is to follow Jesus; to love Jesus; to keep close to Jesus. *The eyes of the Lord are on them that fear Him.*

Though He will not save Himself on Calvary, He can

save all who trust in Him. *He is their powerful Protector, and strong stay; a defence from the heat, and a cover from the sun at noon. A preservation from stumbling, and a help from falling. He raiseth up the soul, and enlighteneth the eyes, and giveth health and light and blessing* (Ecclus. xxxiv.). These unhappy men are among those who *have not called upon the Lord; there have they trembled with fear, where there is no fear* (Psalm xiii.). This loud, strong cry fills them with the fear that after all Jesus is not going to die, for He has all His life within Him still. He may, they think, in this darkness be coming down from His Cross to strike His enemies and deliver the people from their yoke. *We fools! what hath pride profited us?*

*From those (O Lord), who resist Thy right hand, keep me as the apple of Thy eye* (Psalm xvi.).

“From anger, hatred, and all ill-will, deliver us, O Lord.”

### STATION III.

*At the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? (v. 34).*

*Jesus cried out.*

Some spiritual writers present this loud cry to us, if we may so speak, under another aspect.

*I have always held My peace; I have kept silence; I have been patient; I will speak now as a woman in labour* (Isaias xlii.).

As we have seen, zeal for His Father's glory and for our poor souls is consuming our Lord more actively than torments or loss of blood. And if His Blessed Mother shares every pain with Him through her gift of motherly compassion, immeasurably more, nay, infinitely more, does He by compassion share every sorrow and anguish of her heart. If then she is now, as so many holy Fathers tell us, going through the terrible agony of that second childbirth, which is to make her the Mother of sinners, He must necessarily by His boundless compassion be sharing in her travail. One poor sinner has already been rescued

on Calvary from the grasp of Lucifer, and baptised in the baptism of desire, and, as the holy Fathers rank him with the martyrs, we may perhaps say also, in the baptism of blood. "How long, O God, how long shall we have to wait—My Mother and I—for other sinners to come to life? *My God, why hast Thou forsaken (us) ?*"

It is of our Lady's present condition on Calvary that interpreters understand that word written afterwards by the Beloved Disciple: *And being with child, she cried travailing in birth, and was in pain to be delivered* (Apoc. xii.).

When our Saviour, then, utters His loud cry, He is only her mouthpiece, only proclaiming from the housetop before Heaven, the vehement cry of her heart in secret, the yearning of her agonised soul, that she may become quickly *the glad mother of children.*

With *one heart and one soul* they are both crying out: *As a woman with child, when she draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs, so are we become in Thy presence, O Lord* (Isaias xxvi.).

Cardinal Hugo writes: "In creating, God is our Father and labours not. *He spoke, and they were made.* But He is our Mother when He redeems with agony and labour. He is our Mother, for in anguish on the Cross He gave us birth."

It is His story and Holy Mary's that we read in Genesis. *When death was now near* (they) *called the name of* (their) *new-born son, the redeemed sinner, Benoni, the son of my pain* (Genesis xxxv.). Benoni, yes; but also Benjamin, the cherished last-born.

Joseph had to go and hide himself quickly, because *his heart was moved upon his brother Benjamin, and tears gushed out* (Genesis xliii.). What is this but a faint picture of the tenderness with which from His Cross Jesus is looking on His younger brother, the poor sinner, the last-born of His Blessed Mother, *the son of* (her) *pain ?*

Juda, also, the elder brother, spoke out boldly for Benjamin; *I cannot return to my father without the boy, lest I be witness of the calamity that will oppress my father*

(Genesis xlv.). But what is Juda's emotion by the side of our Lord's strong feeling for His Eternal Father? *I cannot return to My (Eternal) Father without the boy*—the last-born of My Mother, the son of her pain, lest I be witness of the sorrow that will oppress Him. *What commutation can I offer Him, if I cannot take with Me Benoni, or Benjamin, the son of My pain, whom I loved, and delivered Myself up for him?*

"Why did He cry out," St. Bernard asks, "if not that His prayer might be loudly heard?" It is on Calvary that we understand best that argument of our Saviour: *Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee* (Isaias xlix.).

*From the sixth hour there was darkness over the whole earth until the ninth hour.*

1. Commentators discuss a question as to how the darkness was brought about. One approved opinion is that there was a miraculous solar eclipse. This opinion is supported by a statement found in a work purporting to be by St. Denis, but considered by the learned to be of later date, that he and others saw the moon come between the sun and the earth in a miraculous way. Miraculous, because (1) by the ordinary laws of nature the moon could not at that time of full moon cause an eclipse; (2) because a natural eclipse would not have lasted so long.

2. *Over the whole earth.* The question is also asked: Are we to believe that the eclipse was general? or may we understand the Greek and Latin words to mean "over the whole land," that is, the land of Judea, or Palestine? Opinions are divided. Commentators much esteemed hold that the eclipse was general. The word of St. Denis, if genuine, bears out this view, as he states that he was at Heliopolis in Egypt when he witnessed this eclipse.

3. These writers further think that the Prophet Joel is alluding to this darkness in his prophecy: *The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood.* They gather this from the context, both before these words and after, where we find the promises of a great outpouring of grace. *I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh. . . . And it shall come to pass that every one that shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be salvation, as the Lord hath said, and in the residue whom the Lord shall call* (c. ii.).

They add that though the Gospels mention nothing of the moon appearing like blood, certain early Fathers allude to such a phenomenon as having occurred.

## STATION IV.

*About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying : Eli, Eli, lamma Sabacthani? That is, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? And some that stood there and heard said : This Man calleth Elias (St. Matt. xxvii. 46, 47).*

A. *My God, My God.*

We have seen the effect of these words on Satan, and on the Priests and Ancients. Their effect in Heaven, as we have also seen, is that our Lord's cry is heard at once, *for His reverence.*

*The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds (Ecclus. xxxv.).*

When did ever prayer ascend from a heart meek and humble as the Heart of our Saviour is? Therefore at once it *pierces the clouds* and prevails.

A little while then, that is, after a short moment of wholesome terror, the thick veil of darkness is suddenly, quite suddenly, withdrawn, and the sun of the Paschal time is once more shining on Calvary and Jerusalem and the great multitude. All the cries of affrighted beasts and birds are hushed. Calvary and Gethsemani, and Olivet and the Prætorium, and the Coenaculum, are all reposing in the genial warmth and brightness and freshness of the spring-tide afternoon; as if nothing were going amiss in the Holy City. For our Father in Heaven *maketh His sun to rise upon the good and the bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust* (St. Matt. v.). And we have to imitate His bounty, by loving those who do not love us.

Nay, it chances at times that sinners have even a larger share of the good things of this world than God's children have. Are we to envy them? If there were not another world coming, and coming quickly, and very nigh, we might crave for present prosperity. But knowing, as we do, that we have not here our abiding city, when we see men sinning and prospering, we must keep in mind the sad explana

tion which the Psalmist gives after studying their mysterious prosperity: *But indeed for deceits Thou hast put it to them. When they were lifted up, Thou hast cast them down. They have suddenly ceased to be* (Psalm lxxii.).

B. *Some said: This Man calleth Elias.*

The soldiers with the return of light have come back near to the Cross. Their knowledge of the language used by our Lord may perhaps be imperfect. However this may be, certain it is that even when God speaks, we easily misunderstand His words. Translating from one language into another, men often change the sense. But far more commonly when they are interpreting our Lord's Gospel, they entirely corrupt His revelation, and substitute what suits their passions, or the lies suggested by Satan. If we had not a living and infallible authority to interpret for us, God's revelation would be of little value.

#### STATION V.

*About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice (v. 46).*

A. *About the ninth hour.*

A tear soon dries up, men say. So does fear quickly pass away, when the cause is gone. It vanishes and is forgotten. Job tells us that man born of a woman, *though living only for a short time—yet never continueth in the same state* (c. xiv.); and in the Proverbs we read: *There are many thoughts in the heart of a man: but the will of the Lord shall stand firm* (c. xix.). Our emotions and feelings come and go, and we become so absorbed in the present thought that we quite forget those that have passed. St. James writes of the man *beholding his own countenance in a glass, and presently forgot what manner of man he was*. It is much more true that our souls, when desolation comes, quite forget that there has been consolation, and when sunshine comes back, feel as if they never had been under a cloud.

The spring sunshine, the pleasant freshness of the afternoon, drives away terror from the souls of the men around Golgotha. The Priests and Ancients lift up their

heads again, and are able once more to speak jauntily and as oracles: "Did we not tell you that there was nothing to fear, nothing whatsoever?" They venture again to draw near to the place of Calvary, and as they find Jesus just as He was, haggard and worn and helpless on the Cross, all their hideous courage returns.

But still one fear remains. "That loud cry is proof convincing that His strength has not left Him. He is not dead yet, and may not be at all near to death." "While there is life," we commonly say, "there is hope." With them, the thought is: "While there is life, there is fear and terror and no peace. He may escape us."

*B. About the ninth hour.*

Contemplate, therefore, these Priests and Ancients once more gathered together in a group to take counsel what they must do to abbreviate this unendurable suspense. "Evidently they must persuade the Governor to give them leave to put an end quickly to the life of Jesus, that is, to complete the murder."

But how can this be done? Their deputies, whom they sent three hours ago, testify that the Governor is no longer approachable; and they are sure that the darkness will have added to his terror, and made him more unwilling to do anything against Jesus. But, as we say, "necessity is the mother of invention". When the will is resolved, it quickens the intellect, and plans and expedients are forthcoming.

The Governor must be solemnly warned that the suspense is highly dangerous: that at any moment there may be a popular outburst in favour of Jesus: that, moreover, Jewish sacred law requires that the bodies of the crucified be buried before the Great Sabbath commences at sunset. The people will be won, if the Governor respects the holy law, and may on the other hand grow very turbulent if the present situation be prolonged.

Their best and wisest, therefore, their men of weight, are despatched in haste to the Prætorium, with the oft-repeated admonition: "*Do it quickly*".

Spiritual writers teach us that the devils help us to sanctity, not only, as the presence of an enemy benefits soldiers, by keeping our souls exercised and on the alert by their temptations, but also by teaching us a great lesson, by their unhallowed courage and perseverance. From His Cross Jesus says to us all, *Be not wearied, fainting in your minds* (Hebrews xii.). See how My enemies do not grow weary or faint. And yet compare the outcome for them with the issue for you. What will they gain by walking in hard ways? and what will be your reward if you labour and persevere?

“Mother of God, pray for us sinners. Show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, that we may *think diligently upon Him that endured such opposition from sinners against Himself*; and may not be wearied. Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and in the hour of our death.’

## SCENE VII.

### THE FIFTH WORD.

#### STATION I.

*Afterwards Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst* (St. John xix. 28).

A. *I thirst.*

In the account of our Lord's long fast in the wilderness, we observe that it is when the fast is ended, that He is hungry. *When he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry* (St. Matt. iv.). *He ate nothing in those days: and when they were ended, He was hungry* (St. Luke iv.).

Again we read that at the sixth hour He sat down weary by Jacob's well, and said to the Samaritan woman: *Give Me to drink*. It does not appear, however, from the Gospel story that He did drink. And when a little later the Apostles who had gone into the city of Sichar to buy

meats, returned, bringing food, and *pressed Him, saying: Rabbi, eat*, He made answer: *I have meat to eat which you know not of*. And when his disciples, not understanding His answer, say to one another: *Hath any man brought Him to eat? Jesus saith to them: My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work*.

From these passages we learn that He is Supreme Lord, that *all things serve Him*, that hunger and thirst, cold and heat, and all other created things, affect Him just as much as He wills, and when He wills. In every detail of life, as in His Passion and Death, He suffers, *because He Himself willed it*. As no man can take His life from Him, but He lays it down Himself when He wills (St. John x.), so is it with hunger and thirst. At times He prolongs His fast and abstains from the meat and drink of this earth, and finds His food and nourishment in doing the will of His Father: *Every word that cometh from the mouth of God is His bread*. At other times, again, He lets Himself feel in all their severity the pangs of hunger and of thirst.

We know that men absorbed in an engrossing study, and soldiers eagerly rushing on to victory, can forget hunger and thirst and weariness. What wonder then if Jesus, when praying with intense earnestness for us, and conquering the temptations of Lucifer in the wilderness, or in the Garden, or on the Cross, seems to forget entirely the hunger and thirst of His Body?

But when the long fast is ended He gives up His Body to the sufferings of extreme hunger. And now that the last great struggle with Lucifer is decided, He allows something like what we call reaction to set in. That is, He allows all the natural causes that have been at work to have their full effect.

He has lost much blood, in the Garden, at the pillar of the flagellation, in the courtyard of the barracks where He was crowned, and now, too, on Calvary. And those who lose much blood in sickness tell us that thirst becomes their worst torment. They also who chronicle disasters

at sea have often recorded how those who have escaped drowning have lost their reason through the agony of their thirst.

B. *Jesus said : I thirst.*

“*Attendite.*” Let us look up to the wasted and disfigured face of our Saviour, and mark, too, the extreme emaciation of His Body, and listen to the feeble and languid voice with which He now makes known His secret: *I thirst*—such a contrast with the late loud cry—and try all we can to form some conception of the intensity of His suffering, and the greatness of His distress in the moment when He utters this word. He has had no food, no refreshment, no sleep, no rest since He left the Cœnaculum last night; and it is quite beyond the thoughts of men to reckon up the pain, the weariness, the distress of body that He has endured since then. *My strength is dried up like a potsherd : and My tongue hath cleaved to My jaws : and Thou hast brought Me down unto the dust of death* (Psalm *xxi.*).

This word: “*Sitio*”—*I thirst*—is a short word, shorter even than the word: *Pilate scourged Him*, or, *They crucified Him*. But oh, what good reason our Blessed Lord and His Holy Mother have to say to us pressingly: “O all you who go by the way, stay a little to listen to this word, and to contemplate this thirst!”

C. *Jesus said : I thirst.*

We must also contemplate our Blessed Lady. For as they *are one heart and one soul*, and are sharing the chalice together, she, too, is thirsty.

Whether her marvellous compassion has drawn the blood from her body, as her devout servants tell us, or has not, we are quite sure that in this hour she is sharing to the full His weariness, His extreme exhaustion, all His prostration, and His sore need of some refreshment.

Quis non posset contristari,  
Christi Matrem contemplari,  
Dolentem cum Filio ?

Who is there but must condole  
With that loving Mother's soul,  
Mourning with her dying Son ?

St. Bernard thinks that when she heard that other word, *Woman, behold thy son*, the sword of sorrow must have pierced her heart through and through.

Surely now when she hears her Son make this acknowledgment, *I thirst*, the cruel wound is opened afresh.

D. *Jesus said: I thirst.*

And we must remember also that when He says this word, He knows full well that He is driving the sword of sorrow through the soul of this most beloved Mother, and her compassion is to Him a new anguish, much more oppressive than the thirst. Yet He hesitates not, but utters the word, and causes her this agony on set purpose, because it is His resolve to be able to say: *What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard that I have not done to it?* She is to share everything, both His thirst and all the distress that her compassion is causing to Him.

Quæ mœrebat, et dolebat,  
Pia Mater dum videbat,  
Nati pœnas inclyti.

Weeping and in woe she stood,  
Gentle Mother, by the Rood,  
Mourning for her dying Son.

E. *Jesus said: I thirst.*

Contemplate, too, the extreme fidelity and humble obedience of the Blessed Mother. Which is hardest—for Abraham to strike his son? or for Holy Mary to hear her Lord Jesus cry, *I thirst*, and stand there inactive? Which would be easier, to be obedient unto death—that is, to die out of obedience—or through obedience to stand and hear her Son cry, *I thirst*, and not stir a hand to slake His thirst?

In the Holy Mother, as in her Divine Son, *love (is) strong as death; yea, the death of the Cross*, with all its agonies.

Fac me tecum pie flere,  
Crucifixo condolere  
Donec ego vixero.

Mother, let me at thy side,  
Sorrow for the Crucified  
All the days of my short life.

F. *Jesus said: I thirst.*

Our Saviour has two Bodies, the body of flesh which

He received in the womb of Holy Mary, and the Body built up for Him out of the water and blood that came from His side. *We are members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones.* Therefore the Apostle tries to bring home to us the love that our Saviour has for us, by saying that He loves us as men love their own bodies. *For no man ever hateth his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, as also Christ doth the Church* (Ephes. v.).

"Attendite."—*O all you who go by, stay to consider this truth in your hearts.* Who can express the care, the solicitude, the keen and lively sympathy that a man has for his body? In spite of our own badness, we shall be full of hope if we once believe firmly that Christ cherishes us as a man cherishes his own body. We hear sometimes of great saints growing tired of their bodies, and hating their bodies; but these are miracles of grace. In the order of nature, suffering must be intense indeed before a man can desire to part from his own loved body.

Christ our Lord feels more strongly for His Mystical Body than for His natural Body. He says: *Who touches you touches the apple of My eye*; and this is no exaggeration. For He freely sacrifices the apple of His eye and every other sense of His natural Body in order to cherish and nourish us, His Mystical Body. *Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute Me? I am Jesus, Whom thou dost persecute.* Saul was only persecuting His disciples: *But so long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me.*

When He cried out: *My God, My God, why dost Thou forsake Me?* St. Bernard tells us that He was praying—*ut non derelinquatur in membris suis*—not to be forsaken in His members. Therefore, in like manner, when now He says, *I thirst*, He is speaking also for His members. For when His poor are thirsty, He is thirsty. When His poor are sick and weary, and want food and refreshment, He is weary and hungry and sick. St. Paul could say truly, *Who is weak and I am not weak?* And yet his heart, after

all, is only warmed with some small sparks of the infinite charity burning in the Heart of Jesus.

Let us rouse ourselves to win a more lively faith in this truth which we have known from childhood, and also to believe that at the judgment-seat, when we find out that verily and in truth our Lord identifies Himself with His little ones, this fact will burst upon us as a great and stupendous surprise. *Lord, when did we see Thee hungry and thirsty, and did not minister to Thee? Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it not to one of these least, neither did you do it to Me.*

From His Cross, then, our Blessed Saviour is for ever pleading to us in favour of His little ones, for the limbs of His Body who are in want, saying: *I thirst.*

*Blessed the man who understandeth concerning the poor and the needy (Psalm xl.).*

As often as we go to the altar to be present while God's minister *shows the death of the Lord*, we must renew our faith that He says again: *I thirst*, to remind us of His suffering members.

G. *I thirst.*

We may humbly and reverently ask, why our Blessed Saviour reveals the secret of His thirst. For our spiritual masters teach us that it is commendable to suffer in silence. *He shall sit solitary and hold his peace (Lament. iii.)* is the model they set before sufferers. The familiar words of our great poet are quoted to raise us to high and generous thoughts:

She never told her grief,  
But let concealment, like a worm i' th' bud,  
Feed on her damask cheek.

*It is good, they say, to wait in silence for the salvation of God (Lament. iii.).*

And again: *In silence and in hope shall your strength be (Isaias xxx.). It is good to hide the secret of (the) King (Tobias xii.).*

One answer to this difficulty may be that our Blessed

Saviour saw on Calvary some one to whom He earnestly wished to give great graces in return for a drop of water.

Another answer we may find in the word of the Holy Spirit: *There is a time to keep silence and a time to speak* (Eccles. iii.).

Patient silence is good; it is great prudence and high virtue. But St. Paul says: *I show unto you yet a more excellent way* (1 Cor. xii.). What is this more excellent way? The Apostle answers: *Above all these things have charity.* Holy men at times give up prayer, and give up penance, in order to do works of mercy. So, too, would they break through humble and holy silence, when by so doing they can help their neighbours' souls. They leave God, for God. Our Blessed Lord, last night, interrupted His prayer in the grotto in order to look after His suffering Apostles in their troubles. So do His faithful servants interrupt their silent communing with God, to speak to men, if by so doing they can serve our Lord in His little ones.

In this hour, then, our Blessed Saviour prefers charity to the silence of His meek and humble Heart. He discloses His secret, and calls our attention to His cruel thirst; because He knows that out of His thirst virtue will come to us.

If He do not speak this word from the Cross, we shall never know this feature of His Sacred Passion; and His followers will lose all the grace which is to come to them from His tortured palate, and His parched tongue, and His fevered lips. A holy writer puts this question to our Lord: *Ergone plus cruciat sitis quam Crux? De cruce siles, et de siti clamas*—"Is Thy thirst more torment, Lord, than Thy Cross? For, of Thy Cross Thou sayest no word, but of Thy thirst, Thou criest: *Sitio.*"

The answer perchance is this: We see and know the torment of the Cross, without being told of it. But of the thirst we know nothing, till our Saviour speaks.

H. *I thirst.*

While listening to this sacred word, and contemplating the thirst of our Saviour:

1. Some win for themselves strength to conquer the tyranny of intemperance. Where else can they find virtue enough, grace enough, to break from this slavery?

2. Others plead powerfully with the Eternal Father, *Look down on the face of Thy Christ*, and the thirst of Thy Christ, and thus win a victorious grace for a friend or kinsman given up to the ruinous vice of intemperance.

3. Others, again, remain considering in their hearts the thirst of our Lord till they find in themselves strength to add to prayer that fasting without which certain devils cannot be driven out from the souls of those dear to them.

4. Others, also, while hearing the cry of our Saviour, are put in mind of the agonising thirst of the Holy Souls in Purgatory. For they remember our Lord's most charitable word: *Weep not over Me, but weep over yourselves and over your children.*

If it were possible for us to draw near to Him and moisten His burning lips, He would surely say: "Nay, rather, give Me solace by solacing the Holy Souls of My servants who are enduring in perfect meekness a thirst more distressing than Mine. *I was thirsty and you gave Me to drink.* For so long as you did it to My suffering little ones, you did it to Me." Add to this that our Blessed Lord in Heaven thirsts more for the liberation of His Holy Souls than they themselves do.

#### I. *I thirst.*

The holy Fathers who *meditate* on the Sacred Passion *day and night*, teach us that our Blessed Lord is suffering from more than one kind of thirst.

St. Bernard writes, that "by His thirst, the Lord Jesus is setting before us a picture of His burning love for us," *the thirst of His Heart. I came to cast a fire on the earth, and what do I desire but that it be enkindled?*

*The zeal of Thy house hath eaten Me up.* This zeal is not merely a zeal that God's Temple on earth may be duly honoured, but that the everlasting home of His Father in Heaven may be peopled and filled with His children.

*Deal favourably, O Lord, in Thy good-will with Sion, that the walls, the living walls, of Jerusalem may be built up (Psalm l.).*

*My zeal hath made Me pine away, because My enemies forgot Thy words (Psalm cxviii.).* We must contemplate our Saviour and His Holy Mother consumed and parched up with the burning thirst of their hearts for our poor souls, and thus enduring all the agony of a mother's childbirth.

St. Augustine puts these words into our Lord's mouth: *Sitis mea salus vestra est*—"My thirst is your salvation; My thirst for your souls torments Me more than the thirst of My Body".

*J. Jesus said: I thirst.*

Micheas the Prophet writes: *Wo is Me! for I am become as one that gleaneth in autumn the grapes of the vintage; there is no cluster to eat; My soul desired the first ripe figs. The holy man is perished out of the earth, and there is none upright among men: they all lie in wait for blood, every one hunteth his brother to death. The evil of their hands they call good (c. vii.).*

"This," Origen tells us, "is a cry from our Lord yearning for the souls of men. For He came to gather in the whole vintage, but only finds a few clusters."

St. Augustine reasons thus with our Saviour: "In Thee, O Lord, the prophecy has its fulfilment: *All the nations shall serve Thee (Psalm lxxi.).* Why, therefore, art Thou still thirsty? Art Thou not content with such large draughts?"

He answers his own question thus: "Many souls He drinks in, but never shall He be free from thirst". And commenting on the words of the 61st Psalm: *They have thought to cast away My price: I ran in thirst,* he says: "They cast Me away, but I thirsted after them".

St. Laurence Justinian writes: "What Christ said to the Samaritan woman, *Give Me to drink,* this He repeats to all of us from the Cross when He says, *I thirst*".

What He thirsts for by the well is not the cooling water, but, as He explains to His Apostles, He is thirsting

for the souls of men. *Lift up your eyes and see the countries ; for they are white already to harvest* (St. John iv.).

K. *Jesus said : I thirst.*

St. Gregory Nazianzen suggests another thought: *Sitit sitiri Deus*—"God thirsts to be thirsted for"—that is, desires to be desired, loves to be loved. He was thirsting at the well that the soul of the sinful woman might begin to thirst after Him.

"This Samaritan woman," St. Augustine says, "found the Lord thirsting, and was herself refreshed by the thirsty One. She first found Him thirsting, that He might afterwards be refreshed by her faith."

Greatly does He thirst that all our thirst may be for Him. *If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink* (St. John vii.). . . . *The water that I will give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into life everlasting* (St. John iv.). *They that drink Me shall yet thirst* (Ecclus. xxiv.).

Of the good things of this world we become sated; for our hearts are not created to be content with them. We are familiar with St. Augustine's word: "My heart was created for Thee, my God, and it must be restless till it rests in Thee". Alas! how easily we lose the thirst for our God, and become accustomed to do without Him!

*I have sinned, we say, and what harm hath befallen me?*

As if it were not an evil to be deplored with tears of blood, that we have lost the hunger and thirst for our God, and are content with the husks of swine.

As if we have no cause to grieve night and day, when our Father in Heaven, and our Lord Jesus Christ from His Cross, are saying in the hearing of the Holy Mother and the blessed angels: *Be astonished, O ye heavens, and ye gates thereof be very desolate. For My people hath done two evils. They have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water* (Jerem. ii.).

When we examine our consciences, we are sometimes troubled about many things. We find that we have offended

in many ways; but whether we have gone astray through love of riches, or through love of pleasure, or through love of honour, we have always first committed this sin of sins: *They have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters.* Whatever be the creature we adhere to and worship, we first turn our back on our own God, *the Fountain of living waters.* We scorn and reject Him, and choose the *broken cistern that holds no water.* We forsake Him entirely, and take in His stead *the husks of swine.* Yet all the while, He created me to love Him, and to love Him with my whole heart.

*Is this the return thou makest to the Lord, O foolish and senseless people? Is not He thy Father that created thee and made thee and possessed thee? (Deut. xxxii.). Will a virgin forget her ornament? But My people hath forgotten Me days without number (Jerem. ii.).*

When Anna, afterwards the mother of Samuel, was fretting because she was childless, her husband tried to comfort her by saying: *Why weepest thou? Am not I better to thee than ten children? (1 Kings i.).* Not when we are weeping, but when we are giving our hearts to pleasure and enjoyment of some poor creature, our Lord says to us in sadness from His Cross: "*Sursum corda! Am I not better to thee than the works of My hands? Have they loved thee with an everlasting love? I have loved thee, and delivered Myself up for thee. Have they done as much for thee?*"

*L. Jesus said: I thirst.*

And His faithful servants refresh His thirst ineffably when they say to Him from their hearts: *For Thee, Lord Jesus, my soul hath thirsted.*

*My soul hath thirsted after the strong, living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God? (Psalm xli.).*

Consider how greatly the thirst of our Saviour is alleviated when He hears St. Paul saying: *I desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ (Philipp. i.). I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus (Romans viii.).*

“Mother of God, pray for us sinners; pray for us, ‘the children of your pain,’ that we may stay here, looking on Him whom (we) have pierced, till grace comes out to our dead hearts, and we find ourselves able to say: My Lord Jesus, *Sitio—I thirst* after Thee, *the strong, loving God.*”

M. *Jesus said: I thirst.*

St. Bernard adds a thought to help our contemplation. He speaks to our Saviour in this way: “After Thou hast now drained the chalice of Thy passion, Thou sayest, *I thirst*, as if to say: More torments yet, and greater ones, I thirst to undergo, if need be. For there is nothing, O man, that I can refuse to bear for thee.” “Let, then,” he goes on, “the faithful soul imitate her sweet Jesus, Who thirsted for such a chalice of bitterness and drank it all for her; let her too thirst after hardships for His sake, and drink of the chalice.”

N. *Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said: I thirst.*

In the Cenacle last night, our Lord said to His disciples: *I say to you, that this that is written must yet be fulfilled in Me.* And a few days before, He warned them that many troubles would come, before His Church on earth would have finished her work: *These things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.* Now He knows that all the prophecies respecting His life on earth are fulfilled, except one; and in order that this one may have its fulfilment, He speaks the word: *I thirst.*

The prophecy He alludes to is in the 68th Psalm: *They gave Me gall for My food, and in My thirst they gave Me for drink vinegar.*

O. *That the Scripture might be fulfilled.*

Observe here, and throughout the Passion, how the foreknowledge of God acts. Sins are not committed by men because God foreknows; but God foreknows the sins, because men will do them. The sin is not an effect of His foreknowledge, but the cause of it. If men are not going

out of their free-will to crucify Him, He will not foreknow the Crucifixion.

Consequently, though He knows every word written concerning Him, and so disposes all things that men will out of their free-will accomplish everything, yet we observe that neither men nor devils are at all adverting to prophecies when they bring about their fulfilment. Judas does not betray Jesus, Annas and Caiphas and the Ancients do not condemn Him, nor deliver Him to the Gentiles, because they know that all this is prophesied. Pilate does not scourge Him nor crucify Him with any intention of carrying out a prophecy.

#### STATION II.

*And immediately one of them running took a sponge and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink. And the others said, Let be ; let us see whether Elias will come to deliver Him (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

*And one running and filling a sponge with vinegar, and putting it upon a reed, gave Him to drink, saying, Stay, let us see if Elias will come to take Him down (St. Mark xv.).*

*Now there was a vessel there full of vinegar. And they putting a sponge full of vinegar about hyssop, put it to His mouth. Jesus therefore, when He had taken the vinegar, said, It is consummated (St. John xix.).*

A. *One of them running took a sponge.*

From St. Matthew's account, and St. Mark's, we are inclined to think that the order of events was this: as soon as our Saviour cries out with a loud voice, *Eli, Eli*, some of the soldiers standing by, hearing Him, said: *This Man calleth Elias ; and immediately one of them running took a sponge.* It is difficult from their narrative to find a reason for thus offering the vinegar. We see no connection between the loud cry of our Lord, either in its true sense, or as the soldiers interpreted it of Elias, and their offering the vinegar. St. John solves the difficulty by telling us that our Lord had said the word: *I thirst.*

The soldiers therefore hear the loud cry, and immediately after, or very soon after, they hear our Saviour add the word: *I thirst.* They join the two words together; and, as St. Matthew tells the story, one runs, and offers the vinegar; but the others say: *Let be; let us see whether Elias will come and deliver Him.*

As St. Mark narrates it, the soldier who offers the vinegar is the one who says: *Stay, let us see if Elias will come to take Him down.*

According to St. John's account, more than one take a part in offering the vinegar: *They putting a sponge full of vinegar about hyssop, put it to His mouth.*

It seems probable, therefore, that at first two or three take part in the preparations, by putting the sponge about the hyssop, and then fastening both to the reed; that one lifts the reed to our Lord's mouth, and then, after a short time, one or two who have taken part in the work say: *Let be; let us see if Elias will come.*

The question is discussed, How then came a vessel full of vinegar, and a sponge, and a reed to be there?

Some commentators think that it was usual to offer vinegar with hyssop to the crucified to hasten death; that the executioners would naturally wish death to come quickly, that they might be set free.

Others think that there is no ground for saying that vinegar and hyssop would hasten death. They think that, on the contrary, the effect of the vinegar would be to counteract exhaustion and restore animation.

Others, again, are of opinion that the vinegar is there for the use of the executioners, and that they applied it to their nostrils, and used it as a disinfectant. If Golgotha was the ordinary place for executions, something of the kind might be needed. Or again, it might be that in the hot weather, the wounds left by the scourging which preceded crucifixion, might soon begin to be offensive.

If the Cross of our Lord had been as low as the crosses usually were, the reed would scarcely have been needed. As the Cross is a tall one, and the reed is there at hand ready, it may have been brought for this purpose. But as they had reeds in the Prætorium wherewith to strike our Lord's face during the crowning, some reeds may also have been brought to the place of Calvary, or found there without premeditation.

Some writers say that the reed is only the stalk of the hyssop. Others hold that the hyssop was fastened to a reed.

*B. Jesus therefore, when He had taken the vinegar.*

From these words it seems that our Blessed Lord does drink some of the vinegar. When they offered Him the myrrhed wine with gall in it, before His Crucifixion, *He would not drink*. Now, St. John tells us, He takes the vinegar.

The explanation may be, that the myrrhed wine was intended to deaden the senses and diminish pain; but that the vinegar is not offered either to shorten life or to refresh, but out of wanton cruelty.

This interpretation fits in with the thought suggested by St. Bernard, that our Saviour, when He says, *I thirst*, is not only parched with bodily thirst, but thirsting also for more suffering, if it may be that He may thus do more for His vineyard.

When He utters the word, *I thirst*, He well knows that the vinegar will be offered, and therefore, from all we have seen during the Passion, we may perhaps fairly infer that He accepts it fully knowing that it will be no refreshment, but one more torment added to the grief of His wounds.

This is the view which St. Laurence Justinian expresses: "Never in any age was it heard of, that vinegar was given to a dying man to quench his thirst. This cruelty passes beyond all the bounds of cruelty, for what would be granted to any brute beast, these wicked men refuse to the Son of God in His thirst."

St. Cyril of Alexandria writes in the same sense. This draught we may consider as one more act of cruelty towards our Lord added to the rest.

What still more confirms this view, and even renders it we may say quite certain, is that in the prophetic words of the Psalm this offering of vinegar is specified as one of the cruel outrages heaped upon our Saviour. *They gave Me gall for My food, and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to*

*drink.* We may, doubtless, be sure that if the vinegar will hasten death, our Saviour will not drink it.

C. *When He had taken the vinegar.*

We must, then, contemplate our Blessed Saviour with His meekness and humility of Heart allowing them to add thus *to the grief of His wounds*: and accepting this cruel refreshment from the hands of His persecutors.

“Pray for us sinners, Blessed Mother, that while we contemplate the thirst of thy Divine Son, we may learn of Him to be meek and humble of Heart.”

D. *When He had taken the vinegar.*

While *considering* in our hearts the thirst of our Lord, we may also bear in mind that His Heart is much more distressed by the unkindness and inhumanity which is reigning in the souls of the men who are afflicting Him than by the torment caused to His Body by the vinegar.

My people, *What have I done to you? in what have I aggrieved you?*

“*Numquid redditur pro bono malum?*” Is it usual, is it necessary, is it the law that evil must be returned for good?

E. *When He had taken the vinegar.*

Remember also, what immeasurable pain our Blessed Saviour is enduring through His compassion for the terrible wound inflicted on the Heart of His Holy Mother when she sees Him in His extreme thirst drinking the vinegar.

O quam tristis et afflicta  
Fuit illa benedicta  
Mater unigeniti.

O sad indeed, and wobegone,  
Was she the ever-blessed one,  
The Mother of that dying Son.

F. *When He had taken the vinegar.*

*Oh, who will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears to my eyes, and I will weep day and night,* while I set in contrast, with what tenderness, *with what circumspection* my Lord Jesus Christ has nursed and cherished me in my hour of need, and delivered Himself up for me; and my heartless inhumanity to Him crucified for me.

“O loving Heart of Jesus, give us some of the fire that burns within Thee.”

G. *One filling a sponge with vinegar gave Him to drink.*

Each of us is His vineyard. *I planted thee a chosen vineyard, all true seed: how then art thou turned unto Me into that which is good for nothing, O strange vineyard?* (Jer. ii.).

When we return Him evil for good, heartless indifference for His love, we give Him vinegar and gall to drink instead of good wine.

They who live badly, Origen writes, give Jesus vinegar instead of wine.

H. *One of them took a sponge and filled it with vinegar.* Again and again we must impress on our souls the truth that every time we help our neighbour by an act of mercy, we refresh our Lord's thirst with good wine. *I was thirsty and you gave Me to drink.*

And if it costs us labour and sacrifice to do the work of mercy, the refreshment we give to our Saviour becomes more and more delightful.

He who was so pleased by the faith of the woman of Chanaan, how ineffably consoled is He when His faithful servants deny themselves, and share His thirst, and His hunger and His weariness, in order to obtain the conversion of a sinner or to give refreshment to the suffering souls.

I. *A sponge full of vinegar.*

So long as we have a disrelish for our Lord Jesus Christ, a dislike to be with Him in prayer; no desire for Holy Communion; no keen wish to assist at Holy Mass, our souls are to Him a sponge full of vinegar: *I have no pleasure in you.*

“Blessed,” His loving Heart says to us, “*Blessed they who hunger and thirst after justice,*” that is, after Him and His love.

The vehement and excruciating thirst for God in Purgatory, the unbearable separation from Him, the prolonged

banishment are the necessary reparation to be made for our disrelish of God here.

*Sitiri sitit Deus.* Our Lord thirsts that we may thirst after Him.

## SCENE VIII.

### THE SIXTH WORD.

#### STATION I.

*Jesus therefore, when He had taken the vinegar, said : It is consummated (St. John xix. 30).*

A. *It is consummated.*

“*Attendite.*” We may contemplate how, before uttering this word, our Blessed Saviour most humbly and most lovingly consults His Eternal Father to know whether there is anything more that He wishes Him to do or suffer before He leaves this world. If so, *My Heart is ready, O God, My Heart is ready.*

Then, too, He communes in secret with the heart of His Holy Mother. *Can I hide from Abraham what I am about to do ? Can I leave her in ignorance, unicum meam—My only one, that My hour is come, and that I am about to die ? Always obedient to her and full of reverence, now in this hour, His soul is more than ever united to hers. They are truly one heart and one soul. Since then He has from His Cross appointed her to be the nursing Mother of His Church, He takes counsel with her also, and asks : What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard, that I have not done to it ? (Isaias v.).*

When His Eternal Father answers, *All is consummated,* and when His Blessed Mother also answers in her heart : *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because He hath visited and wrought the redemption of His people ; as He spoke by the mouth of His Prophets, who are from the beginning ;* then He also speaks aloud the word He had heard from His Father.

**B. *It is consummated.***

Last night in the Supper-room our Blessed Lord said : *Father, I have glorified Thee on earth. I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do.* When saying this word, He made a distinction in His mind between His working day and His hour of suffering, His Passiontide. He had finished His work of teaching in Galilee and in Jerusalem, and His work of healing the sick and going about doing good. Now His hour is come when He is to suffer and die.

This duty also He has now fulfilled : *It is consummated.*

Now, therefore, in a more complete sense, He has finished *the work* that His Eternal Father gave Him to do. "He specifies nothing," St. Laurence Justinian observes, "but says absolutely: *It is consummated*, that we may be sure that all is completed." "Nothing," writes St. Augustine, "remained to be done before dying." St. Bonaventure, as a Religious, uses the phrases of religious life, and writes: *It is consummated*; that is: Father, "the obedience" which Thou gavest to Me, I have perfectly accomplished.

**C. *It is consummated.***

"*Attendite.*" *O all you who go by the way, stay here, on this place of Calvary, a little while, to watch the death-bed of your Saviour, your Brother, the First-born of our fallen race; for it is appointed for all men once to die, as He is dying: and the one thing necessary is that we be each able to say when dying: My God, my Father, I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do.*

*Once to die, and only once.* If in that moment my lamp is alight: if I die in God's grace, with His love in my soul, all is well for ever. I have done the *one thing necessary.* *If the tree fall to the south, or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there shall it be* (Eccles. xi.).

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, and Virgin, I choose thee for my Lady, my Patroness, and my Advocate. Stand by me in all the actions of my life, and do not abandon me in the hour of my death."

D. *Jesus therefore said: It is consummated.*

We may consider in detail what this word includes

1. Some time ago, our Divine Master said: *I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptised, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?* (St. Luke xii.). Mark how thoroughly the baptism has been accomplished. His Sacred Blood has flowed not only on His forehead, but has bathed every part of His Body, as if He had been baptised in blood by immersion.

And by virtue of this most complete baptism, all the members of His Mystical Body can now also be baptised.

*“Te ergo quæsumus—We beseech Thee, therefore, Lord Jesus, succour Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed, and baptised in Thy Precious Blood.”*

*“Blessed Mother of God, pray for us sinners, that we may have some share of the promised spirit of grace and of prayers, and may love to look on Him Whom we have pierced, and to contemplate His Sacred Body baptised in His Precious Blood.”*

E. *It is consummated.*

2. About ten days ago, our Lord made a prophetic revelation to His Apostles: *Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written concerning the Son of Man: (1) He shall be betrayed to the Chief Priests and Scribes; (2) They shall condemn Him to death; (3) And shall deliver Him to the Gentiles (4) to be mocked, (5) and scourged, (6) and crucified.* All these things have been accomplished. *Not one jot, nor one tittle, has been passed over, all is consummated.*

*Thanks be to God, Who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* The whole design approved by the Eternal Father in Heaven has been carried out. Redemption is not only sufficient, but abundant. *“Non sicut delictum, ita et donum”* (Romans v.). The Sacred Passion has not been so measured as just to undo the work of the Fall and nothing more. There is between the Fall and the plentiful Redemption a gulf as wide as there is between

the first Adam and the second, between a mere man and a Man-God—*Homo reus et Homo Deus*. *Plentiful redemption* is secured for man.

F. *It is consummated.*

3. That is, the work of *mediation* is perfected.

Not only is the Divine justice satisfied, and the Eternal Father disposed to be reconciled with man—that was easily done—but enough has been done also to draw the hearts of men back to their God. *I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself.*

*I will draw all things to Myself.* Because our Lord has not only taught, and also practised what He taught, but He has won for us abundant graces to enable us to carry out what He has taught and practised.

G. *It is consummated.*

4. Because every kind of sin is atoned for. *You when you were dead in your sins, (God) hath quickened together with Him (Jesus); forgiving you all offences; blotting out the handwriting of the decree that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He hath taken the same out of the way, fastening it to the Cross (Coloss. ii.).*

*Forgiving us all offences.* The long and dark calendar of all our sins, of pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, sloth—the sins against God, of blasphemy, sacrilege, malice, despair; the sins against our neighbour, even the worst, murder and scandal and calumny; and all our crimes, too, against ourselves, by which we degrade ourselves—all of them detailed in the handwriting that is against us He hath fastened to His Cross, and in His Sacred Blood washed out the entire record. So that, even when we aggravate our guilt by relapses, still the Beloved Disciple has only this word to say to us: *My little children, these things I write to you that you may not sin. But if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Just. And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our sins only, but for the sins of the whole world (1 St. John ii.).*

H. *It is consummated.*

5. But we want something more besides forgiveness. We are warned: *Be not without fear about sin forgiven.* When forgiven, therefore, we are still weak, and may grow faint, and fall again, before we reach the top of the Mountain of God. All this our Saviour knows. Therefore besides giving Himself to us as *our ransom*, He has also given Himself to be *our companion on the way.*

Besides this He has given Himself to be *our Food* for the journey.

And then finally, on the shore of Eternity, He is waiting for us, and calling us, and bidding us make haste, that He may be Himself *our reward* for ever.

*What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard and have not done it?* Redemption is most abundant.

I. *It is consummated.*

6. He gave Himself to be *our companion.*

Therefore it is a part of His plan to share every sorrow and pain that His disciples shall suffer, and sanctify them all. Is there, then, on this earth any kind of pain or sorrow of soul or body which was not in His bitter chalice?

From *the sole of the foot to the crown of the head*, is there any spot, within or without, that has not its *wound*, or *bruise*, or *swelling sore*?

Is there any shape of mental suffering that He has not fully shared?

(a) Anguish from the treason and faithlessness of friends? from their weakness, their neglect, their disloyalty, or their ingratitude?

(b) All the suffering that can be caused by confusion and shame and public disgrace?

(c) All that crushing pain that can arise out of tyrannical injustice and hypocrisy?

(d) All the agony that may come from witnessing the pain of those much loved?

(e) Still worse, the most oppressive of all anguish—the sense of God's displeasure, and that foretaste of the pain

of loss, which can be tasted on this earth, when desolation visits the soul?

Then pass over also in review all the wounds and bruises and swelling sores on His Sacred Body, and call to mind how men *have added to the grief of His wounds*: and deepened them more and more. (a) What His eyes have endured; (b) how His ears have been afflicted; (c) what He has suffered in His mouth, His tongue, His palate. (d) Think, too, how the sense of touch has been tormented in every part of His Body. Think of His Sacred Head, His bruised face, His back, His arms, His wrists, His hands, His weary legs, His wounded knees, His pierced feet.

Who is there weak in any way, that I am not weak with him? Who is there heavily burdened, that I cannot say to him, *Come to Me, and I will refresh you*? "For I have shared your load."

J. *It is consummated.*

7. Because all the enemies of God and man are conquered.

(1) SATAN is crouching down beside the Cross, with his head crushed under the foot of the Blessed Mother. *Now shall the prince of this world be cast out* (St. John xii.). *Thou hast humbled the proud one, as one that is slain. With the arm of Thy strength, Thou hast scattered Thy enemies* (Psalm lxxxviii.). Origen writes: "To the eye, the Son of God is crucified. But invisibly, the devil with his princes and powers is fastened to the Cross." Spiritual writers apply the words of Jeremias to the struggle, and to the defeat of Lucifer. *The strong hath stumbled against the strong and both are fallen together* (c. xlvi.). In a wrestle, both combatants may fall, but one is above, the other beneath. So on Mount Calvary our Saviour appears to be fallen and prostrate, but He is victorious. His enemy is crushed beneath His fall.

(2) THE WORLD, Satan's great ally, without whose aid he can do nothing, is also conquered.

*Have confidence, I have overcome the world* (St. John xvi.).

As conquerors have for their warfare artillery, cavalry, and infantry, so the WORLD carries on its anti-Christian war with the aid of three strong powers, *The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life.*

All that is in the world is *the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, the pride of life* (1 St. John ii.).

These three powers our Saviour has conquered.

#### THE LUST OF THE FLESH.

The spirits of darkness and their agents on earth have had leave since last night to *examine Him by outrages and tortures, and to condemn Him to a most shameful death.* But His most patient Body has conquered them.

“Body of Christ, save me. Passion of Christ, strengthen me.”

#### THE LUST OF THE EYES.

Our eyes lust after riches and the varieties which can be bought with gold and silver.

By His poverty and His Blessed Mother's poverty our Lord has triumphed over riches.

He can say from His Cross more truly than Job: *Naked came I out from My Mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither* (c. i.). He has conquered riches; so that a multitude of His disciples will become enamoured of His holy poverty, *having nothing, yet possessing all things* (2 Cor. vi.).

#### THE PRIDE OF LIFE.

Pride is Lucifer's sin. For the flesh, and for riches, he has only scorn. Pride wants the first places, and show, and pomp, and pageantry, and admiration, and worship. Our Blessed Saviour has triumphed over pride: *He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross* (Philipp. ii.).

K. *It is consummated.*

St. Paul had good reason to say: *Thanks be to God Who hath given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

For by the grace of Christ so thoroughly did he conquer the world that he could say: *To me the world is crucified, and I to the world* (Galat. vi.). That is, to me

the world is as hideous and ghastly as a crucified criminal. So am I to the world.

L. *It is consummated.*

8. "*Attendite.*" O all you who go by the way, stay a little while to *consider* in your hearts how completely and perfectly our Lord has done the work of redemption.

While on earth, He went about like a physician, teaching publicly what is necessary for spiritual health and life everlasting; but He well knew that this public teaching would avail nothing unless He made a provision by which He could deal with each individual soul.

Men on the first Good Friday pass in front of the Cross on Calvary; some believe, and some cry, *Vah!* Christ is to some their resurrection; to others their ruin. So must it be in all times till the consummation of the world. Every man must pass in front of the Cross and make his choice. Therefore (1) Calvary and the Cross are perpetuated. On the altar we have the *Everlasting Sacrifice*, the *juge sacrificium*. Then, moreover:

(2) There must be a never-failing provision for all the wants of redeemed men. See how abundantly this provision is made. Go and examine a Christian church, the home of our Lord on earth.

(a) HE LIVES THERE ON THE ALTAR, in order at all hours to be a Jesus, a Saviour to men.

(b) There He has ready a special and abundant blessing for the CHRISTIAN BRIDE AND BRIDEGROOM when they enter on married life. So that the holiness of Christian marriage is a standing miracle in the Church, akin to the heavenly sanctity of consecrated virgins.

(c) The child of the Christian marriage is indeed born in the degraded and fallen state, but at once is carried TO THE FONT TO BE BORN AGAIN of water and the Holy Ghost. There the baptised child becomes immediately so beautiful an image of the Holy Child Jesus, that if so blessed as to die speedily, the regenerate soul is instantly, without any let or hindrance, admitted among God's

angels for ever. If the soul of a baptised child were to appear to us above the tabernacle, we should think, as St. John thought when he fell down to worship an angel, that we were in presence of the Divine Child Jesus.

(d) The house of God, the house of Christ Jesus on earth, is not only the house where we are born, but it is there that **WE ARE NURSED AND FED**: fed on the *food of angels*; fed on the *Bread from Heaven, having in It all that is delicious and the sweetness of every taste*; fed on the Sacred Body and Precious Blood of Christ.

(e) The Church is, moreover, **THE SCHOOL** where we receive our best education.

The altar teaches us. We are taught from the pulpit. At the altar-rails we learn our catechism. In the confessional we are taught. The sacred font teaches us admirable mysteries. The Stations of the Cross, and the crucifix, and the altars of the saints, and holy images all help to educate us for the everlasting world to come.

(f) The Church is **OUR HOSPITAL** also.

When our souls are sick even to death, this is the moment when most urgently our Saviour says to us: *Come to Me, you who labour. They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are ill* (St. Matt. ix.). Say once from your heart, say in secret, say to one man, My delegate, the salutary word, the word privileged ineffably: "*Peccavi*" — *I have sinned*: and if your sins be as scarlet they shall be made white as snow (Isaias i.). My minister shall at once say: "*In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, I absolve thee*". And, *Amen, I say to you*, what he forgives on earth shall be forgiven in Heaven. And if you sin again, and again repent, seven times, and seventy times seven times, and more, even then shall the forgiveness be ratified in Heaven.

(g) And when the poor sinner can come no more to the holy altar, but is waiting on his death-bed for the Judgment to come, then as he cannot come to Jesus, the Good Shepherd will go from the altar to him. In the

dark hour on Mount Calvary, He has earned for the dying disciple the HOLY VIATICUM, the LAST ANOINTING with the oil of peace, the LAST LARGE FORGIVENESS, and INDULGENCE.

(h) And, finally, when death has done its work, it cannot take the Christian soul out of reach of the plentiful redemption. Bring the anointed corpse to the foot of the altar, and let the Everlasting Sacrifice, THE PROPITIATION FOR THE QUICK AND THE DEAD, be offered, and through the green sward of the graveyard there shall descend an abundant refreshment to the Holy Soul in the prison-house. *For it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead,* and have the Holy Mass offered for the dead, *that they may be loosed from their sins* (2 Mach. xii.).

M. *It is consummated.*

9. But some one objects—if Christ has so thoroughly redeemed, why have we still so much suffering, so much poverty, so much sickness, so much misery?

One sufficient answer is that it is no part of our Lord's plan to banish suffering from the earth. He has no wish to make the earth once more a paradise of pleasure. He has chosen a much more excellent way. He takes the valley of tears as He found it when He became Man. He with all His Heart embraced poverty and suffering as His portion and His Blessed Mother's portion. He allows death and sorrow and poverty and pain to remain; but He has taken the sting out of death and pain and sorrow, and changed all these things into heavenly blessings. So that He is not afraid now to say: *Blessed are the poor. Blessed they that mourn. Blessed the dead who die in the Lord.*

Suffering has become, since the first Good Friday, a double blessing; a blessing full of grace to the patient sufferer; and a blessing to all the sufferer's household; for it moves them all to compassion and charity and to powerful almsgiving.

N. *It is consummated.*

10. Even the sins of wicked men, and the cruelty of persecutors, and the malicious hostility of the anti-Christian world, are changed into the shortest and quickest and most

direct route to Heaven. *Deny Christ*, the tyrant will say. *Neither death nor life*, the martyr answers, *shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus*. Sentence is forthwith pronounced, and in a short time—hours, perchance, or days—the martyr does the work of long years, and wins the eternal weight of glory. “*Consummatus in brevi explevit tempora multa*” (Wisdom ii.).

O. *It is consummated.*

St. Ignatius recommends us to reflect upon ourselves. *Yesterday for me, to-day for thee*. A little while, a very little while, and my Angel shall whisper to me also: “*Consummatum est*”—*It is consummated*. . . . *Thou canst be steward no longer*. Suddenly, when I am not expecting it, when I am in the midst of my dreams, *the cry is raised: Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet Him*. Prayer for delay or respite cannot now avail: *The Angel lifted up his hand to heaven and he swore by Him that liveth for ever and for ever, that for me Time shall be no more* (Apoc. x.). *Now is an end come upon thee; and I shall judge thee according to thy ways* (Ezech. vii.). *The things of this world are passed away like a shadow* (Wisdom v.). *God shall judge both the just and the wicked, and then shall be the time of everything* (Eccles. iii.). Everything shall then have its true value.

“O Blessed Mother of God, pray for us now and in the hour of our death; that we may be able to say, humbly and gratefully, *Thanks be to God Who gave us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*; for we have done the *one thing necessary*.”

P. *It is consummated.*

As the princes of darkness were so urgent that Christ should come down from the Cross, so now are they watching eagerly, daily and hourly, for the opportunity to persuade us not to persevere. We must arm ourselves as the saints did with holy thoughts and earnest prayers.

(a) “What shall it avail a man,” St. Bernard writes, “if he do not persevere to the end? Of how many once strong in virtue have we read that they fell!”

(b) "Oh," he adds, "how great a fear is awakened by that thought, that a man knows not whether he shall persevere. But we have an efficacious antidote which we can apply to the terror, for we can put our trust in Him of Whom Isaias writes: *Behold, God is my Saviour. I will deal confidently, and will not fear*" (c. xii.).

"So that I can say, It is through Thy help, O Lord, and not of my strength, that *I have fought a good fight, and finished my course, and kept the faith*" (2 Timothy iv.).

(c) *Be subject to the Lord and pray to Him* (Psalm xxxvi.). *Being confident of this very thing, that He who hath begun a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus* (Philipp. i.).

(d) St. Ephraim writes: "Knowest thou not, miserable man, that the Lord crucified for thee will from thee demand an account of all thy graces?"

(e) He adds: "Glory be to Thee Who art to come again in the glory of the Father to judge every soul that renders void Thy Sacred Passion. In that hour, may Thy hand, I pray Thee, cover me, and deliver my soul from everlasting fire."

(f) St. Bernard laments: "If I look upon myself, I cannot bear the sight; so many things do I find in myself that deserve confusion. And whereas I ought to bewail and pray, Wo is me! the effect is just the contrary."

(g) But another holy Father supplies this consoling thought: "There is no sin that is not cancelled by Thy love; no crime so heinous that is not chased away by the advent of Thy love".

"In sins I have wasted my days, but do Thou, most compassionate Jesus, vouchsafe to help me: that so I may say: *Omnis consummationis vidi finem.*"

That is, contemplating the perfect consummation of Thy work, may I too be able to say, It is consummated.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This, however, is not the usual sense given to these words of the 118th Psalm.

Q. *It is consummated.*

And as we stay here and contemplate, may the Blessed Mother remind her crucified Son of His promise. *I will pour out on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of prayer, and they shall look on Me Whom they have pierced; that we may remain here, looking on Jesus, "auctorem et consummatorem fidei"—the author and finisher of faith (Hebrews xii.), till we find ourselves moved to mourn over Him as one mourneth for an only son, and to grieve over Him as the manner is to grieve for the death of the first-born (Zach. xii.).*

## SCENE IX.

### THE SEVENTH WORD.

#### STATION I.

*And Jesus again crying with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

*And Jesus having cried out with a loud voice, gave up the ghost (St. Mark xv.).*

*And Jesus crying with a loud voice said: Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit. And saying this, He gave up the ghost (St. Luke xxiii.).*

*Jesus therefore, when He had taken the vinegar, said: It is consummated. And bowing His Head, He gave up the ghost (St. John xix.).*

A. *Jesus again crying with a loud voice.*

St. Matthew's account, and St. Luke's also, make it clear that this loud cry is distinct from the cry, *Eli, Eli.*

From St. Matthew and St. Mark's words we should naturally conclude that there was a last loud cry without any words; St. Luke, on the other hand, gives the impression that the loud cry means that our Blessed Lord said with a loud voice His parting word: *Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.*

From the Greek word in St. Matthew's narrative *κράξας*, and from the comments of some of the Fathers,

we may perhaps infer that this was a loud cry distinct from the words spoken.

B. *Jesus crying with a loud voice.*

St. Bonaventure writes that our Lord, after saying the word, *It is consummated*, grew faint and began to show the signs of coming death—*ex tunc languere cœpit more morientium*. Other writers are of opinion that He preserved His full strength unimpaired to the end, and that the loud cry is not therefore a special miracle.

The opinion commonly held agrees with St. Bonaventure's, that the loss of blood and the torments of the Passion have been allowed to produce their natural effect; that our Lord is consequently reduced to a state of excessive weakness; and that the loud cry is therefore a special miracle.

The author of a work ascribed to St. Jerome, writes: "We children of this earth die speechless, or with a voice that can only whisper; but He Who came down from Heaven, with a loud cry gave up the ghost".

St. Thomas uses language that might accord with either opinion: "In order to show that His Soul was not wrested from Him by the violence of His Passion, Christ preserved His bodily nature in its full strength, so that in the last extremity He might cry out with a loud voice: a fact that must be reckoned among the miracles of His Death".

C. *Jesus crying with a loud voice.*

"Why this loud cry?" St. Bernard asks.

The answer has been given in a former chapter. The Cross is our Lord's pulpit. He is teaching us. St. Bonaventure writes: "Our Lord hanging on His Cross, to His last breath was not idle, but was doing and saying things useful to us".

This loud cry, accompanied, as we gather from St. Paul, with tears for us, is a last loud cry to His Father on our behalf, and a last loud cry to the hearts of men. If the tears falling from His eyes, as He stood beside the grave of Lazarus, made the bystanders say: *See how He*

loved him, what shall we think when we contemplate our Blessed Saviour forgetting His own extreme need, and crying out with so much energy for us?

D. *Jesus crying with a loud voice.*

The cry by the grave at Bethany was heard in the prison of Limbo, and brought the soul of Lazarus from thence. This last loud cry is heard in Heaven above, and draws down abundant grace. It fills with dismay all the powers of Hell. It carries refreshing hope to the Holy Souls in Limbo and in Purgatory.

It has not passed away. To the consummation of the world it will plead for us, and be heard by the Eternal Father for *His reverence*.

“Blessed Mother of God, who wilt lay up in thy heart this loud cry, as well as all the other words uttered by thy Son, pray for us poor sinners, that we may not be deaf to it.”

E. *Jesus crying with a loud voice.*

St. Augustine suggests this thought: “If so much power be in His dying cry, what may we expect, and what must we fear when He comes to judge?”

“O Christ my God,” he prays, “Thou art my love, my salvation, my mercy and my redemption.”

F. *Jesus crying with a loud voice.*

Other holy writers tell us that it is a *cry of pain, and a cry of joy*.

*A cry of pain.*

(1) For *bitter death* is going to *separate*. All that men have done is not like the cruel wrench that is about to part the Most Holy Soul from the Sacred Body.

Ordinarily, when death is coming, men's senses are numbed; they are not conscious enough to feel all the agony of the separation. But our Blessed Lord has all His consciousness. Much more truly than Saul He can say: *Anguish is come upon Me, and as yet My whole life is in Me* (2 Kings i.). . . . *Let no particle of the good gift pass thee by*. No jot or tittle of the bitterness of this coming

separation shall escape the eager desires of His Heart. No drop is in the bitter chalice that He will not drain and taste most thoroughly. For He must be able to say for ever: *What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard, that I have not done to it?*

“*Attendite.*” We must try to form some little conception of this bitter parting.

If a man has to lose one limb, he shudders; and drugs are given to him to bring on insensibility.

If many limbs were to be amputated, one by one the suffering and distress would not equal the anguish of this parting between the Soul and the Body of our Lord.

G. *Jesus crying with a loud voice.*

*A cry of pain.*

(2) God has joined these two companions together—the Soul and the Body of our Lord; and by all rights the union ought to be indissoluble for ever.

We sinners become through life familiar with our sentence: *It is appointed for all men once to die.* When death comes to us, we must all say with the good thief: *We are receiving the due reward of our deeds.* But our Blessed Saviour’s life-long consciousness is that death, which is only the outcome of sins—*per peccatum mors*—has no right, no power over His Soul or His Body. He stands alone among men, “*inter mortuos liber*”—*free among the dead*, and yet *I am become as a man without help, I am counted among them that go down to the pit; like the slain sleeping in the sepulchres, whom Thou rememberest no more* (Psalm lxxxvii.).

• “*Tradidit semetipsum.*” When He dies, He betrays Himself, and all the rights of His Soul and Body. If He were not dying by His own consent, it would be a supreme injustice, nay an utterly impossible injustice, to His Soul and Body that He should die—“*inter mortuos liber*”.

H. *Jesus crying with a loud voice.*

*A cry of pain.*

(3) *O death*, Ecclesiasticus exclaims, *how bitter is the*

remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions. Besides His Sacred Body, our Blessed Lord has other possessions which death will take from Him. He must leave His Blessed Mother, whom He loves with a love that we cannot measure. In her He has peace, a great peace. It is delight ineffable for Him to be with His sinless Mother. Oh, bitter indeed is the remembrance of coming death which is going to take her from Him and Him from her: "*Siccine separat amara mors?*"—*Does bitter death thus separate?*

St. Paul writes that it was the will of His Eternal Father that *through the grace of God He might taste death for all* (Hebrews ii.). He is indeed tasting death, and all the bitterness of death, for us all.

I. *Jesus crying with a loud voice.*

*A cry of pain.*

(4) Death separates us from the *body of sin*, and from friends and companions who through our own fault, and their fault, have oftentimes not proved true friends to us. Our Lord by death is separated from a sinless Body, and from His little flock, who have remained with Him in His temptations, and who are His joy and His crown.

*I have given My dear Soul into the hand of her enemies* (Jerem. xii.). He is delivering up His dear Soul, His innocent Body, His well-beloved Mother, His chosen disciples, to be afflicted by the hand of death.

J. *Jesus crying with a loud voice.*

*A cry of pain.*

(5) Some one may say: But His Death was *voluntary*, whereas we die out of *necessity*.

His Death, as all His sufferings, is both *voluntary* and *involuntary*.

*Voluntary*, because He only dies when He Himself accepts death.

*Involuntary* and *violent*, (1) because it is most painful to His sensitive nature; and (2) because the manner of His

Death and all the malice that brings it about is most abhorrent to Him.

So, too, in like manner, His Death is both *natural* and *miraculous*.

*Natural*, because He submits to the laws of human nature; and the natural causes of death are having their full effect on Him.

*Miraculous*, because it is only through a miraculous and stupendous effort of Divine power that the Sacred Soul and Blessed Body, hypostatically united with the Divinity, and possessing more than all the Blessed, the Beatific Vision, can suffer, or be subject to the action of death.

K. *Jesus crying with a loud voice.*

*A cry of pain.*

(6) Because death, St. Thomas teaches, though it will not separate the Divine Nature either from His Soul or from His Body, yet will separate the Divine Person from His Manhood—that is, from His composite Human Nature, from His Body and Soul joined together in unity. So that during His term of death, He will not be a man. During His days in the grave, He will not be God-Man.<sup>1</sup>

L. *Jesus crying with a loud voice.*

*A cry of pain.*

(7) *A three-fold cord is not easily broken*, the Holy Spirit tells us (Eccles. iv.).

Commentators speak of our Blessed Lord as this *three-fold cord*, hard to be broken. His Divinity, His Soul, and His Body are so intimately united as to form one Person.

St. Bernard writes: “The Word, the Soul, the Body, form one Person. The three in unity: and the one Christ composed of three.”

And this triple cord, by all rights, ought never to be broken.

<sup>1</sup> St. Thomas, Part 3, q. 50, a. 40, discusses the question: Was our Lord a Man during the hours between His Death and His Resurrection? and his conclusion is: *Ergo non fuit homo*. The opposite opinion he declares to be false.

St. Augustine, writing of this union of three parts in Christ, says: *Homo potius est in Filio Dei, quam Filius in Patre.* His meaning is that the Eternal Father and His Divine Son, though so closely united, yet do not form one Person, but two; whereas the Word and the Body and the Soul of Christ are so united as to form one Person.

M. *Jesus crying with a loud voice.*

*A cry of pain.*

(8) A good father feels the bitterness of death much more when he knows that he is leaving his helpless children in the midst of heartless enemies, who will take every advantage of their weakness. Our Blessed Lord knows that He is leaving His little flock *as lambs among wolves*, and that Satan will labour night and day to be revenged on Him, by persecuting His disciples.

*The serpent cast out of his mouth after the woman, water, as it were a river, that he might cause her to be carried away by the river. And the dragon was angry against the woman, and went to make war with the rest of her seed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (Apoc. xii.).*

N. *Jesus crying with a loud voice.*

*A cry of pain.*

(9) The presence of the thief on His left hand dying impenitent is affecting strongly the Heart of our Lord. *Why will you die, O house of Israel? For I desire not the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God (Ezech. xviii.).*

*Their madness is according to the likeness of a serpent: like the deaf asp that stoppeth her ears, which will not hear the voice of the charmers, nor of the wixard that charmeth wisely (Psalm lvii.).*

O. *Jesus crying with a loud voice.*

*A cry of joy.*

I. It is, holy writers tell us, the cry of the conqueror, pursuing His enemies.

Applying the words of Amos (c. iii.): *Will a lion roar in*

*the forest if he have no prey? Will the lion's whelp cry out of his den if he have taken nothing?*—Father Barradius writes that this is our Lord's cry of triumph, because the malicious enemy of God and men now lies crushed beneath the foot of the Blessed among women.

P. *Jesus crying with a loud voice.*

*A cry of joy.*

2. Man has been till now subject to three deaths: the death of the body; the death of the soul by sin; the eternal death of soul and body. Our Lord cries out in exultation:

(1) Because He has won for man *resurrection* that will deliver him from the death of the body.

(2) Because He has won *grace* that will raise the soul from death to life; and also preserve the living soul from death.

(3) Because He has won *eternal glory* that will do away with eternal death, and establish man in everlasting life.

Q. *Jesus crying with a loud voice.*

*A cry of joy.*

3. For now shall that prophetic word have its fulfilment: *I will deliver them out of the hand of death. I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy death. O Hell, I will be thy bite* (Osee xiii.). Yet the words that immediately follow are: *Comfort is hidden from My eyes.* For so great is the present anguish of death and separation, that it shuts out to a great extent the future triumph.

R. *Jesus crying with a loud voice.*

*A cry of joy.*

4. Because His Cross is the pulpit from which He teaches. And this loud cry, He knows, will prove the truth of that word He spoke in the Temple, in Solomon's Porch, last winter. *Therefore doth the Father love Me; because 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 I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of My Father* (St. John x.).

This loud cry proves to all men that torments have not conquered Him and cannot conquer Him. He can, if

He pleases, forbid the approach of death. He can in an instant restore strength to His Body and prolong life for ever.

St. Ignatius advises us to dwell sometimes on this thought, that our Blessed Saviour is suffering everything most voluntarily, and only because He wills it. Holy persons, even when they suffer with resignation, yet are oftentimes most glad to have relief; but our Blessed Lord wills and wishes each new pain and sorrow to come to Him. It is always with His full consent that *they have added to the grief of My wounds.*

The question is asked: If then our Lord lays down His life, and if *no man taketh it away* from Him, how can He be said to be put to death by the Jews or by Pilate? One answer to this question is found in His word to the Roman Governor: *Thou shouldst not have any power over Me, unless it were given from above* (St. John xix.). Men cannot take life from Him against His will. Death cannot come to Him without His consent. But, as He freely gives His consent, men have power to crucify Him and kill Him, and do crucify and kill Him.

By uttering this loud cry when, according to all natural laws, He ought to be powerless as a man at the point of death, He proves that if He so willed, He could retain life, despite all the efforts of men and the princes of darkness.

S. *Jesus crying with a loud voice.*

*A cry of joy.*

5. Because He knows that this cry will bring faith to the Centurion. *The Centurion who stood over against Him, seeing that crying out in this manner He had given up the ghost, said: Indeed this Man was the Son of God* (St. Mark xv.).

Doubtless, too, this loud cry makes an impression on the minds of those who retire striking their breasts.

T. *Jesus crying with a loud voice.*

*A cry of joy.*

6. For He knows how His disciples will learn from His loud cry to cry loudly in prayer from their hearts whenever danger is nigh, and especially when the supreme and decisive hour is near.

Oftentimes we say to God: "*Clamor meus ad te veniat*" —*May my cry come to Thee.* Quickly our prayer would

mount to Heaven, and quickly would the answer come down, if there were indeed a loud cry from our hearts.

The wicked men of this world despise weakness: *That which is feeble is found to be nothing worth* (Wisdom ii.).

Our Blessed Saviour, Who suffered so much from Pilate's weak good wishes, has great reason not to be content with feeble prayers. *That which is feeble is found to be nothing worth.*

## SCENE X.

### THE PRÆTORIUM.

#### STATION I.

*Jesus crying with a loud voice* (St. Luke xxiii.).

*Then the Jews, because it was the Parasceve, that the bodies might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath-day (for that was a great Sabbath-day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away* (St. John xix.).

This loud cry doubles and trebles the dismay of the Priests and Ancients. It follows their delegates to the Prætorium. Perchance it is heard by the Governor, and adds to the trouble of his soul.

Most unwelcome to him is the sight of these men who have humbled him to-day to the dust. And the darkness that has terrified him, and this loud cry which they urge as a proof that He has all His life in Him, makes the Roman Governor abhor more than ever these detested masters who have compelled him to shed the blood of a just Man; nay, of one Who may be a God from Heaven, Whose vengeance will surely overtake him.

Most impatiently he listens to their earnest pleading; for they *besought* him. With contemptuous scorn he hears them urge their law and their Sabbath.

At the same time he cannot help sharing their terror lest prolonged suspense may lead to danger and bring on a rising of the people. Therefore they gain their wish.

*As usual, they are meditating vain things against the*

*Lord.* The suspense shall not be prolonged. *They have trembled for fear where there was no fear* (Psalm xliii.). *There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord* (Prov. xxi.).

## SCENE XI.

## CALVARY.

## STATION I.

*And Jesus crying with a loud voice, said: Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit* (St. Luke xxiii. 46).

A. *Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.*

St. Bernard asks: "What is the reason why the Co-Eternal Son thus publicly commends His Soul into the hands of His Father, seeing that even if He had not spoken, His Soul would have been commended none the less?"

St. Bonaventure, as we have seen, gives the answer: "To His last breath our Blessed Lord is not idle, but is working and speaking for our good".

He proclaims Himself with His last breath the true Son of God; the Son of the Eternal Father. And we, as we look up to His sacred face and hear His dying word, must answer devoutly: "*Credo, Domine Jesu*—I believe, Lord Jesus". "Thou art the Everlasting Son of the Father."

B. *Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.*

"*Attendite.*" Last night He said: *I came forth from the Father and am come into the world. Again I leave the world and I go to the Father* (St. John xvi.).

What He then said in secret to a few, He now proclaims with a loud voice, that shall reach the ends of the earth, and to the distant ages to come.

He refutes all the calumnies uttered against Him, and by this bold profession, uttered with no uncertain sound, brings back the faith of His disciples, scandalised by the ignominy of His Cross. The doubt for a time had pos-

session: Is He then an impostor? Are the Priests speaking the truth? But now it is cleared away for ever. *I leave the world, and I go to the Father. Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.*

*Truly He is the Son of God.* "Thou art the King of glory, O Christ. Thou art the Everlasting Son of the Father."

*C. Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.*

*Sursum corda!* We must stay here to contemplate this passage of His Holy Soul from the hands of His enemies into the hands of His Eternal Father.

His Spirit, that has been oppressed and afflicted by Lucifer and his wicked partners, and by the malice of the Jewish Rulers, by the cruel weakness of Pilate, and by the treason of Judas, is to pass from the midst of these enemies into the safe keeping of His Eternal Father's love. *Many dogs have encompassed Me, the counsel of the malignant hath besieged Me.* But their hour is past. Father, it is now Thy hour.

*D. Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.*

We must contemplate too the Ever-Blessed Mother listening to these words.

By rights, they ought to break her heart. She ought to sink down at the foot of the Cross and die before she witnesses what is coming.

But she is full of grace; full now and overflowing with the new graces of Calvary. She can rise entirely above her own bereavement, to be glad with the gladness of her Son. She who could weep whenever He wept, and bleed when He bled; she can now be comforted ineffably, because His Soul is to escape from all His enemies and pass into the loving care of His Eternal Father, *where the wicked (shall) cease from tumult, and the wearied in strength (shall be) at rest* (Job. iii.).

*Hail, full of grace; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb; blessed is thy crucified Son Jesus.*

E. *Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.*

*Having loved His own, He loved them to the end.*

Holy writers tell us that our Blessed Saviour is commending into the hands of His Father not only Himself, but also His Mystical Body; His *little flock*; His Church; His Bride.

St. Athanasius writes: "When He says, *Father, into Thy hands I commit My Soul*, by that word He commits to the keeping of His Father all men who through Him and in Him are to be brought to the life of grace".

This teaching of St. Athanasius, that our Blessed Saviour when commending *His Spirit* into the hands of His Father is commending to Him His Church also, seems to be founded on St. Paul's words: *He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit* (1 Cor. vi.).

Another early Father writes: "From that hour in which He commended His Spirit into the Hands of His Father, we have regained our liberty, since the devil has no longer power over souls committed to the Eternal Father".

F. *Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.*

Recall once more St. Bonaventure's words, that "He is not idle on the Cross, but is working and speaking with a view to our good".

Also bear in mind what the Beloved Disciple afterwards wrote: *Having loved His own, He loved to the end.* He is from His death-bed teaching His future Church.

He is preaching quite a new idea of death. It is no longer to be as of old: *Their departure was taken for misery, and their going away for utter destruction* (Wisdom iii.). Death is to be henceforth the going home of God's child out of this world into the hands of his Father. The disciple of Christ is to die saying with his Master: *Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.* "My Lord, and my Saviour, into Thy wounded hands I yield up my spirit, for *Thou hast redeemed me, Lord God of truth*" (Psalm xxx.).

“Not out of necessity,” St. Bernard writes, “but for example’s sake, He commended His Spirit into the hands of His Father, that we might learn to commend our souls into the hands of our Eternal Father when we are dying.”

St. Jerome also writes: “This practice the Church has learned from Christ. This prayer the faithful also make when the soul is leaving the body.”

G. *Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.*

We must consider how wise it is thus to commend our souls in death to the hands of our Lord.

For (1) He has said: *Him that cometh to Me I will not cast out* (St. John vi.).

(2) He has also said: *I give them life everlasting: and they shall not perish for ever, and no man shall pluck them out of My hand* (St. John x.).

What more can we desire? He will not Himself reject us. And no one else shall snatch us out of His hand.

H. *Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.*

(3) For, Lord Jesus, *Thy hands have made me and formed me* (Psalm cxviii.). *Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh. Thou hast put me together with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted me life and mercy. And Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit* (Job x.).

I. *Into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.*

(4) Because *Thou openest Thy hand and fillest every creature with benediction* (Psalm cxliv.). *For, Thou lovest all things that are, and hatest none of the things which Thou hast made. For Thou didst not appoint, or make anything hating it. But Thou sparest all: because they are Thine, O Lord, Who lovest souls* (Wisdom xi.).

J. *Into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.*

(5) Because Thou hast said, Lord Jesus, *Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? And if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in My hands: thy walls are always before My eyes* (Isaias xlix.).

**K. Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.**

We have, however, to remember that this word will not come to our hearts in death unless by practice during life we have it ready. Of our Saviour, it is written: *Having loved, He loved to the end.* So shall it be with us. If through life we habitually look upon God as our Father, we shall be able to say at death: *Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.* St. Bernard wishes us "to be during life always praying that He will vouchsafe to us the grace to breathe forth our souls with these words with which He gave up the ghost, and to commend them efficaciously into His hands".

Holy Church teaches her priests to say daily: *Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit. Thou hast redeemed me, Lord God of truth* (Psalm xxx.).

*O Lord God, in Thee have I put my trust. Save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me. Lest at any time he seize upon my soul as a lion: while there is no one to redeem or to save* (Psalm vii.).

**L. Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.**

We may call to mind how our Blessed Saviour wishes us to be like faithful servants watching for the coming of their master: *that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open to him immediately* (St. Luke xii.).

This is only saying in other words, that when He comes to call us away out of this world, *He loves a cheerful giver.* He is glad if we answer cheerfully, Lord, *into Thy hands I yield up my spirit.* His covenant with us is: *Knock and it shall be opened to you.* Greatly does it content Him if we are of the same mind towards Him: ready to open when He knocketh. The stars *were called, and they said: Here we are, and with cheerfulness they have shined forth to Him that made them* (Baruch iii.). Should God's child be less cheerful when called to the Everlasting Home of his Father?

**M. Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit.**

Consider, too, how wonderfully the death-bed has been

made new since the Death of Christ. So that our Saviour's holy servants have been able in death to believe that our Lord is saying to them: *Behold, My beloved speaketh to Me. Arise, make haste, My love, My dove, My beautiful one, and come. For winter is now past: the rain is over and gone* (Cant. ii.). The sufferings of this time will then appear momentary and light, if only we can die saying with a strong hope and love, My Lord and my God, *into Thy hands I commend my spirit. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit* (Acts vii.).

## STATION II.

*And saying this, He gave up the ghost* (St. Luke xxiii.).  
*And Jesus, again crying with a loud voice, gave up the ghost* (St. Matt. xxvii.).  
*And bowing His Head, He gave up the ghost* (St. John xix.).

### A. *Bowing His Head, He gave up the ghost.*

He died, therefore, (1) with a loud cry: (2) after saying the words, *Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit*: and (3) St. John adds a circumstance omitted by the other Evangelists, that He bowed His Head before He gave up the ghost.

"*Attendite.*" Let us contemplate our Blessed Saviour bowing His Head before He yields up His Holy Soul.

Spiritual writers observe that the ordinary rule is that the head drops after death. But in our Lord's case the Sacred Head does not drop from necessity. He is the Master of life and death, and He arranges every detail.

"Not out of necessity, Lord Jesus," St. Augustine writes, "but when Thou willest and where Thou willest, and in the way Thou willest, Thou dost yield up Thy Soul."

### B. *Bowing His Head.*

First, with infinite reverence and loving obedience He bows His Head to His Eternal Father.

*Therefore doth the Father love Me: because I lay down My life that I may take it up again. No man taketh it away from*

*Me, but I lay it down of Myself. And I have power to lay it down: and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of My Father (St. John x.).*

With full consciousness, therefore, He bows His Sacred Head, and makes a most perfect act of obedience; giving up His Soul because His Father has so willed. *This commandment have I received of My Father.*

*He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death: even to the death of the Cross (Philipp. ii.).*

So must we bow our heads, and in obedience accept of death. We desire to die well. We ask to be taught how to die. Is there any better or safer method of dying than to make death an act of obedience, as perfect as we can? When Thou willest, O my God, where Thou willest; and in the way that Thou willest, may Thy poor servant breathe out his soul.

#### C. *Bowing His Head.*

2. St. Augustine writes: *Salvator noster caput inclinavit in morte, ut oscula det suis dilectis*—"Our Saviour bowed His Head in death to give His parting kiss to His beloved ones".

Who so beloved, who so revered as His Blessed Mother? He has revered her, and obeyed her, and loved her through life. He does not change in death. The only change can be that, as on Calvary she has grown immeasurably in grace, so has His love and reverence for her grown beyond measure. To her He bows down with all His filial devotion, and wishes once more to hear her Mother's heart say, "*Fiat*". And with a fervour and a burning love high above the measure of grace that was in her soul in the hour of the Incarnation, she bows down her whole being in most perfect submission to the Divine will, and answers, *Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to Thy word.*

#### D. *Bowing His Head.*

3. *Nobis quoque peccatoribus.* To us also, sinners, He bows down His Head to listen to our cry for mercy.

*Incline, O my God, Daniel cries out, incline Thine ear and hear.* And Jesus wishes to die with His Head bowed down to listen to us poor sinners, and His arms stretched out to us. He wishes so to die that we may understand that there shall be no change in Him through the time to come. *If the tree fall, in what place soever it shall fall, there shall it be.* For ever, our Lord will remain as He dies—with His ear bowed down to hear us; His arms stretched out to welcome us; His sacred lips bowed down to kiss His repentant prodigal. *Jesus yesterday, and to-day, and the same for ever.*

St. Augustine adds: "We return His kiss as often as through love for Him we are contrite and moved to compunction".

#### *E. Bowing His Head.*

4. Jesus is the *Mediator*: the go-between. He is lifted up and hangs between heaven and earth; to bring together the highest and the lowest. His Head is bowed down to us, His Heart is lifted up to plead with His Eternal Father for us. He is loving His own to the end.

*Who with a strong cry and tears offering up prayers and supplications to Him that was able to save Him from death, was heard for His reverence. And being consummated, He became to all that obey Him the cause of salvation (Hebrews v.).*

He is praying with a strong cry of His Heart and with tears to Him *Who is able to save Him from death*; but He is not asking to be saved from death. He is speaking to His Eternal Father words akin to those He addressed to the women who wept over Him: "Pity not Me, My Father, pity Thy own children, and for Thy own sake forgive them".

#### *F. Bowing His Head.*

5. "He is thanking His Father," St. Bonaventure writes, "for calling Him home." Thanks to the death of our Lord, we poor sinners can also thank our God for calling us away, in His great mercy, at the moment when He wishes.

#### *G. Bowing His Head.*

6. St. Athanasius writes: "Death dreads Christ, and dares not approach to Him, but Christ bowed down His Head and bade death come".

"Then at length," another early Father writes, "He gave permission to death to approach to Him."

Neither can death approach to us till He gives leave. Satan could not afflict holy Job till leave was given to him. He cannot tempt us or trouble us without the consent of our Blessed Lord.

### STATION III.

*And bowing His Head, He gave up the ghost* (St. John xix. 30).

A. *He gave up the ghost.*

"*Emisit spiritum*"—*He sent forth His Soul.* When men die we say: "They gave up the ghost". They do so of necessity. But our Blessed Lord, out of no necessity, but by His own choice, sends forth His Spirit. He speaks the word, and the separation takes place. He commands, and death is completed. He wills, and natural causes produce their effect.

By His own will, and by commanding death to come, He immolates Himself. He is slain by men; but as High Priest He immolates Himself.

B. *He gave up the ghost.*

When men die, we hear commonly a long-drawn breath, and then another, and all seems finished. But after a pause, once again a long breath is drawn with a gasp, and this is the last: and the friends around stand in silence watching, and in suspense, till some one whispers the word: He is dead.

Contemplate Holy Mary watching and listening. She is the first to understand, and says in her secret soul: He is dead. *Non fallunt viscera matrem.* Her Mother's heart can here make no mistake.

Some commentators think that the immediate natural cause of death was the breaking of His Sacred Heart.

C. *He gave up the ghost.*

The blessed angels follow. They say a word which in time past, they thought, could not have been said without a blasphemy. He is dead. Our God is dead. Since the hour of the Incarnation, *No word shall be impossible with God.*

D. *He gave up the ghost.*

Hear St. Magdalen also say, as her tears burst forth from her eyes: He is dead. Wo is me! *The breath of our mouth, Christ the Lord, is taken in our sins.*

E. *He gave up the ghost.*

*He loved to the end.* All else He has given to His Father, and to men.

And now loving, *with His whole Heart, with His whole Soul, with His whole strength,* He has given His life to His Eternal Father and to men. He has breathed out His own Soul.

F. *He gave up the ghost.*

The Holy Sacrifice is completed. The High Priest has immolated. The Victim is slain.

*Christ hath loved us and delivered Himself for us. An oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness* (Ephes. v.).

G. *He gave up the ghost.*

He is dead. St. Ephraim writes: "Let us shudder together as we say to each other: Christ our Saviour has been delivered up to death for us sinners. Weigh well, my brother, what this word means that you have heard."

H. *He gave up the ghost.*

He is dead. But, *O death, where is thy victory? Death is swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is henceforth thy sting?* (1 Cor. xv.).

*Rejoice not thou, My enemy, over Me because I am fallen. I shall arise when I sit in darkness* (Micheas vii.).

I. *He gave up the ghost.*

Those who are ignorant concerning them that sleep, hasten away from the death-bed. They say: He is gone to God: gone to a better world; and they hurry off from the house of mourning and forget.

We must not hurry away or forget. *Remember Me*, His lips are saying to us still.

*Forget not the kindness of thy Surety*, our Lady says to us. *For He hath given His life for thee.*

“Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, that the promised grace may be given to us; and that we may *mourn for Him as one mourneth for an only son, and grieve over Him as the manner is to grieve for the death of the first-born.*”

*J. He gave up the ghost.*

“*O vos omnes*”—*O all you who go by the way*, turn aside for a little while to see; to look on Him we have pierced. Heaven forbid that it be said of us: *The just perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart* (Isaias lvii.).

END OF PART II.

## PART III.

AFTER

## CHAPTER IV.

THE FOURTH WATCH OF THE DAY.

3 to 6 P.M.

## SCENE I.

CALVARY. THE NINTH HOUR. HOLY MARY

## STATION I.

*There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother*  
(St. John xix. 25).

A. *By the Cross of Jesus.*

Christ the Lord is dead. Let us look at Him Whom we pierced. His Sacred Passion is ended. His Eternal Father will now *wipe all tears from (His) eyes; and death shall be no more, nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away* (Apoc. xxi.). The bitter separation shall never come again. Nor ever again shall the loud cry of anguish burst from His lips: *His place is in peace, and His abode in Sion* (Psalm lxxv.).

B. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

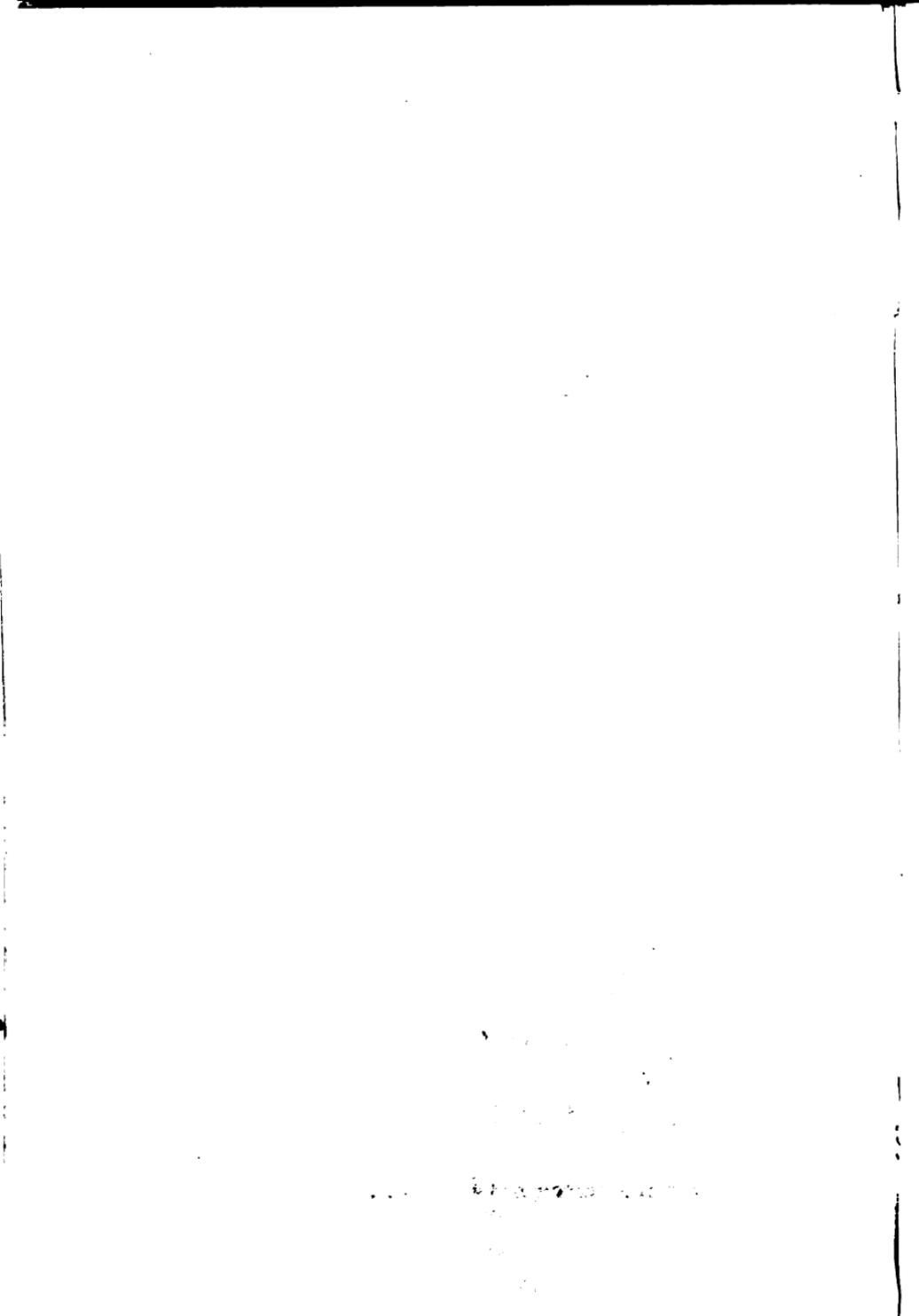
Let us fix our eyes on the Blessed Mother; for her passion is not ended. As her Divine Son suffers no more, no new *compassion* will come to agonise her. But now her own peculiar passion begins. For He is dead and she survives.

“Surely,” John and Magdalen are thinking, as they gaze on her, “surely the *silver cord* of life will be broken, the *golden fillet* of beauty and grace will shrink back upon her brow. *The pitcher* that holds her heart’s blood will be crushed at the fountain, and the *wheel* of her nativity will be broken on the



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*cistern. And the dust shall return into its earth from whence it came, and the spirit return to God Who gave it. She shall go into the house of (her) eternity, and the mourners shall go round about the street (Eccles. xii.). The little flock will be left doubly desolate; for she must die. She cannot outlive this hour."*

*C. There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

To-night, when all is over, and the still moonlight rests over Jerusalem and Calvary as if there had been nothing but peace, the scared disciples will be whispering together in the Cenacle; and one will say to John or to Nicodemus or to Joseph, or to Magdalen or to Mary of Cleophas: "What happened to the Blessed Mother? Did she seem near to death? Did she swoon? Did she become unconscious?" And the privileged eye-witness will answer: "No, never for a moment was she insensible. When He was drawing His last breath, she too was gasping for breath, and her frame was quivering, and we feared much that she would sink down and not rise again. But in the moment of His Death, it was as if a new life came to her. She stood erect; her tears flowed fast; but there was a heavenly beauty on her face, such as we never saw before. '*Full of grace! full of grace!*' my heart was saying, as I looked on her."

*D. There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

We are allowed in contemplation to try, while gazing on her features and her outward demeanour, to discover some little of what is passing in her soul.

This, then, we know, that our Lord died loving; He was loving His own to the end, till His Heart broke and He gave up the ghost. (For, as we have seen, it is the opinion of learned commentators that the breaking of His Heart was the immediate cause of death.) But death did not put an end to His love. If He ended His life on earth, loving, His Blessed Soul began its new existence, loving. As His holy angels gather around to greet Him, at once He gives them a loving command to watch over His

suffering Mother: "*Angelis suis mandavit de te*"—He gave His angels a charge concerning thee, Blessed among women, to protect thee from all danger of invasion, or of the noon-day devil (Psalm xc.). *There shall no evil come to thee, Holy Mary, full of grace!*

E. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

Holy contemplatives tell us that in this hour, Lucifer and his wicked legions are cast down once more into the lowest Hell, with a fall far more appalling than the first; and that it is the voice of the woman, the Blessed among women, that hurls them down. They are far away now, and cannot molest her.

F. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

What, then, are the thoughts that arise in her heart?

David, when he heard of the death of his unworthy son, said as he went weeping to his chamber: *My son, Absalom; Absalom, my son; who would grant me that I might die for thee? And he covered his head and cried with a loud voice: O my son, Absalom! O Absalom, my son! O my son!* (2 Kings xviii.).

Our Blessed Lady passes beyond all this. At every step of the Sacred Passion her heart has been yearning that she might spare her Son by suffering instead of Him. It would be relief unspeakable if she might bear the wrench of bitter death in place of Him, or even be allowed to die along with Him. But she loves Him too well to urge this prayer. Her one desire now is: *Not as I will, my God, but as Thou.*

The love of her heart is stronger than death, and offers most willingly to do a harder thing than to die, that is, to live on after Him.

G. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

Oh, with what contentment do the blessed angels execute the charge given them concerning her, to comfort her, and watch over her! Once more her own Archangel is whispering into her soul the words that were the beginning of her joy: *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.* More than ever is He with her now, for His word

of promise is ever true : *I am with the one who is in tribulation.*

H. *There stood by the Cross, Mary His Mother.*

And, doubtless, she their Queen makes answer to the blessed angels and gives them a charge in turn concerning her Divine Son : *Angels of the Lord, bless the Lord—sing to the Lord a new song.* And perchance in this hour, with quite a new fervour, and a new meaning, and a new grace, she breaks forth into her own even-song which Holy Church re-echoes still : “ *My soul magnifieth the Lord, my spirit exulteth in God, my Jesus. For He that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is His Name.*”

“ Holy, thrice holy is His Name. For I have believed, and those things (have been) accomplished which He spoke to me. He promised me, when He was a Child by my side, that I should be with Him to the end. *The Lord is faithful in all His words and holy in all His works. He hath done great things for me. All generations shall call me blessed. . . . ‘Omnis consummationis vidi finem’.* I have witnessed to the end, to the very end, the consummation of all holiness, the consummation of perfect charity, the consummation of the everlasting Sacrifice, the consummation of redemption.”

I. *There stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother.*

And as her Divine Son last night allowed His Human Heart to feel most strongly human desires, and to cry out in anguish : *Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me,* it may be that from time to time, as she looks on Him Whom they have pierced, her Mother's yearnings grow strong, and she asks once more with most reverential love : *My Son, why hast Thou done this to me ?* and she is full of desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ her Son.

But the blessed angels remind her that she has now other children so precious that her Son gave His Blood for them, and that she must live for them ; and they remind her too how her Divine Son has provided for her bereavement by instituting the Most Holy Eucharist, that He may

be with her all her days, and abide with her children to the end of time.

*J. There stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother.*

Her Divine Son last night rose up in the height of His own Agony, to go to watch over His disciples. Will she not do the like? She too can forget her bereavement, to think of her new first-born: to look up into the face of St. Dismas, and speak a word of comfort to him; to pray that the Death of her Son may bring more and more grace to him before he breathes out his soul.

“Mother of God, and Mother of sinners, pray for us also, now and at the hour of our death.”

*K. There stood by the Cross of Jesus, Mary His Mother.*

The Venerable Abbess d'Agreda saw in her contemplations that our Blessed Lady, while standing with her eyes fixed upon the Body of her Divine Son, is solicitous about His speedy burial; anxious to have the Sacred Body in her keeping, and out of the reach of His enemies. The tomb of her ancestors is on the other side of the city, beyond the Prætorium, at Gethsemani, beside the Grotto of the Agony. How shall she safely transfer her treasure thither? Who will take out the terrible nails for her? Who will bring down the Body from the Cross and lay it in her arms? In her anxiety, she turns, as usual, to the Blessed Angels, to ask them to befriend her. They, we are told, make known to her that, by the law, the dead Body belongs to the Roman Governor, that without his permission no one can lay it in the tomb.

This is sad news for her. For, if this be so, this Most Sacred Body, intimately united with the Divine Nature, may still be profaned. Most humbly she begs of the Eternal Father to hasten to her aid, and her humble prayer penetrates the clouds; and the response in her heart is: Mother of God, *ask, for I must not turn away thy face* (3 Kings ii.). And she understands that when Jesus said the word, *It is consummated*, one part of His meaning was that the power of His enemies to harm Him was at an end.

Her Heart is consoled, and with all the energy of her love, she repeats the prayer of her Son : O Eternal Father, glorify Thy Son. *May all the works of the Lord bless the Lord.*

## SCENE II.

### THE NINTH HOUR. THE MOURNING OF CREATION.

#### STATION I.

*And behold, the veil of the Temple was rent in two, from the top even to the bottom, and the earth quaked and the rocks were rent (St. Matt. xxvii. 51).*

A. Our Lady's prayer is heard. The Eternal Father begins to glorify His well-beloved Son. And the *works of the Lord* begin to *bless the Lord*. As the sun in the heavens gave its signs of mourning, so now the earth makes its lament for the Death of Jesus and the sins of men.

It is the ninth hour when He bows His Head and gives up the ghost. It is the hour of the evening sacrifice. *This is what thou shalt sacrifice upon the altar : two lambs of a year old, every day continually. One lamb in the morning, and another in the evening (Exodus xxix.).*

It is the hour for the lamb to be sacrificed in the Temple on Mount Moriah. And lo ! from the Temple gates, across the deserted streets, comes to Golgotha the sound of the trumpets calling the people to the evening sacrifice. It is all too late. The evening sacrifice is consummated. The Lamb of God has been offered and immolated. All ancient types and shadows are things passed away and obsolete.

Vetustatem novitas,	New things the old and obsolete replace,
Umbram fugat veritas,	Before the truth the shadows hide their face,
Noctem lux eliminat.	The glorious light drives night away.

The people have assisted at the reality ; they have no heart to go and witness the unmeaning types. *The ways of Sion mourn, because there are none that come to the*

solemn feast. *The Lord hath cast off His altar, and cursed His sanctuary (Lament. ii.).*

**B. The earth quaked.**

The trumpets sound the call to the Temple; and lo! the only response is the rumbling of the earthquake. And *the veil of the Temple, so sacred in the past, is rent in two from the top even to the bottom.*

**C. The veil of the Temple was rent in two.**

Through the voice of His creation our Lord's silent lips are from the Cross repeating the sentence which in sorrow of Heart He spoke by the last of His Prophets: *To you, O Priests, that despise My Name, I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts; and I will not receive a gift from your hand (Malach. i.).*

The answer to this trumpet-call has long ago been given in prophecy: *After sixty-two weeks Christ shall be slain: and the people that deny Him shall not be His. And in the half of the week, the victim and the sacrifice shall fail, and there shall be in the Temple the abomination of desolation; and the desolation shall continue even to the consummation and to the end (Daniel ix.).*

**D. The veil of the Temple was rent in two.**

But are there no glad tidings, in this hour, in the voice of creation? When Jesus was born, the Angel was sent to the shepherds to say to them: *I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people.* Even so it is now. The earthquake brings heavy news to the rejected Priests of Jerusalem, but *good tidings of great joy to all the people.* For the veil of the Temple now rent in twain as a thing worn out and worthless, is to make known that the ancient barrier between God and man is gone; that henceforth not one High Priest alone, but every Christian man and woman and child will be allowed to say: *I will go in to the altar of God: to God Who giveth joy to my youth.*

**E. The veil of the Temple was rent in two.**

And the rent *brings good tidings of great joy to all the people.* For the hour is now come which our Blessed Lord

foretold when He sat weary by the well. *Woman, believe Me that the hour cometh when you shall neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, adore the Father.* There is no longer to be a monopoly for Jerusalem. *For in every place there is Sacrifice, and there is offered to My Name a clean oblation* (Malach. i.).

F. *The veil of the Temple is rent in two.*

Another holy Father suggests that the veil in front of the hidden *Sanctum Sanctorum* is rent, as a pledge that henceforth our good God will make known to us all the mysteries of His law. *The uncertain and hidden things of Thy wisdom Thou hast made manifest to me* (Psalm l.). *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children* (Isaias liv.).

Oh, how enviable is our condition under the law of love compared with the state of the Jews under the old covenant!

*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all that He hath done for thee.*

*How lovely are Thy tabernacles, now, O Lord of hosts, when we compare them with the coldness and severity of the Temple on Mount Moriah.*

In the old days, *all Mount Sinai was in a smoke, because the Lord was come down upon it in fire; and the smoke arose from it as out of a furnace, and all the mount was terrible. And behold thunders began to be heard, and lightning to flash, and a very thick cloud to cover the mountain.* And the edict was promulgated: *Take heed ye go not up into the mount, and that ye touch not the borders thereof; every one that toucheth the mount, dying, he shall die* (Exodus xix.).

In our days of privilege, not only is there no forbiddance to come to the altar where our Lord has His abode, but from His tabernacle He is ever inviting us: *Come to Me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you* (St. Matt. xi.).

Nay, what is wonderful beyond all thought, He lays a commandment upon us: *Except you eat the Flesh of the Son*

of Man, and drink His Blood, you shall not have life in you (St. John vi.).

“We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.”

G. *The veil of the Temple was rent in two.*

St. Cyril, and other holy Fathers, suggest this thought, that as the Jewish Priests rent their garments when they heard a blasphemy, so the sanctuary of God rends its garment in token of horror at the great scandal committed on Calvary.

There were, we are told, two veils in the Temple; one, the outward veil near to the entrance, the other, more in the interior, shutting off the sanctuary, or Holy of Holies, into which the High Priest alone entered, and only once in the year. Commentators discuss the question which of the two veils was rent. Some of great weight think that it was the outer veil. The more common opinion seems to be that it was the veil of the Holy of Holies.

*The earth quaked.*

St. Chrysostom, with other Fathers, takes for granted that this earthquake was felt throughout the world. “Then was all the earth shaken, that everywhere might be recognised the power of the Crucified, and that He Who suffered was God, and not a mere man.” Early writers mention local earthquakes that bear out the opinion of St. Chrysostom. His Death proved Him to be a true Man, the miracles after His Death prove Him to be true God. His prayer is heard. *Father, the hour is come. Glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee* (St. John xvii.).

H. *The earth quaked.*

We may contemplate with what gentleness our Lord uses His power. The ungrateful city that rejected Him is not laid in ruins. The earth does not open now to swallow up the impious men who have crucified Him. *But executing Thy judgments by degrees Thou gavest them place of repentance.* If then Thou didst with so great deliberation punish (Thy) enemies, that deserved to die, *with what circumspection (wilt) Thou judge Thy own children?* (Wisdom xii.). *For I know that Thou art a gracious and merciful God, patient and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil* (Jonas iv.).

I. *The rocks were rent.*

St. Thomas writes: "The rocks were rent, to show us that through His Sacred Passion the stony hearts of men would be softened".

St. Bonaventure: "Wo to me, the most unhappy of men, who am not able to have even a little relish for the Passion of Christ. I will humble my life down to the earth until I can go into the sanctuary of God."

St. Ephraim: "Every creature is smitten with terror, because our Saviour has suffered, but we sinners for whom He was delivered up, make light of it. Oh, may thy heart tremble, may thy soul be filled with horror."

St. Bernard: "Who is this, that heaven and earth show their compassion for Him? Acknowledge Him, O my soul; this is the Lord Jesus, the only-begotten Son of God."

"We adore Thee, O Christ, in acknowledgment of the multitude of Thy goodness which Thou hast shown to us wicked and abandoned."

"Holy Mother of God, pray for us sinners; remind thy Divine Son of His promise:

*"I will give you a new heart, and put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh (Ezech. xxxvi.). And now, O Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, Lord Jesus, dead upon the Cross, the soul in anguish, and the troubled spirit crieth to Thee: Hear, O Lord, and have mercy, for Thou art a merciful God, and have pity on us, for we have sinned before Thee (Baruch iii.)."*

"Remember Thy gracious promise: *I will pour out the spirit of grace and of prayers, and they shall look on 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"* (Zach. xii.).

St. Bonaventure writes: "O heart truly bad, how long wilt thou resist the infinite generosity of Divine love? What must my hardness be that is not softened by all the Blood of the most innocent Lamb!"

*Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friend (St. John xv.). Why did Christ, when as yet we were weak according to the time, die for the ungodly? For scarce for a just man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man some one would dare to die. But God commendeth His charity towards us, because when we were as yet sinners according to the time, Christ died for us (Romans v.).*

*The rocks were rent.*

A fissure in the rock on the place of Calvary is still pointed out. Tradition tells us that it opened between the Cross of Christ and the cross of the impenitent thief. Eusebius, the historian, states that Lucian, a holy Priest of Antioch, when brought before the judge, mentioned this cleft in the rock as an abiding proof of the truth of the Christian religion. The mediæval traveller, Adrichomius, who is considered by the commentators a trustworthy witness, writes that this fissure is wide enough to admit the body of a man, and that they had not been able to fathom its depth.

## STATION II.

*And the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints that had slept, arose, and coming out of the tombs after His Resurrection, came into the Holy City, and appeared to many (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

The rocky ground around Jerusalem abounded with graves and tombs; some with the slabs laid over them horizontally, others hewn in the rock with upright doors. Some commentators tell us that the graves were opened immediately after the Crucifixion, but that the dead did not arise till after the Resurrection. According to this view, the graves stood open from the Friday to the Easter Sunday. We are told that among the heathens this miracle was well known, and excited great attention. The Jews may, through fear of legal uncleanness, have been afraid to enter these open tombs to look at the dead.

The question is discussed among students of the Sacred Scriptures, whether they whose bodies were raised, died again or were admitted with their bodies into Heaven.

Each of the two opinions is supported by Fathers of great weight. St. Thomas, at first, inclined to the second opinion, but later, considered the first more probable—that is, that they died again. St. Jerome also takes it for granted that they rose like Lazarus, to die again, after they had borne witness to our Lord's Resurrection.

One strong argument adduced for this opinion is, that it does not seem probable that any of the saints would have their bodies glorified in Heaven before the Assumption of the Mother of God. St. Bridget writes that it was revealed to her by our Lady, that no human bodies were in Heaven except her Son's and her own.

A further question discussed is, Who were the saints whose bodies were restored to life?

Different conjectures are suggested. Some writers think that, as the object was to strengthen the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the belief of the Resurrection, those saints rose and appeared who were still remembered in the Holy City, such as St. John the Baptist, St. Joseph, Zachary, and St. Elizabeth. Others suppose that Abraham, and David, and some of the Patriarchs and Prophets were selected.

### SCENE III.

THE NINTH HOUR. "I WILL DRAW ALL THINGS TO MYSELF."

#### STATION I.

*And the Centurion who stood over against Him, seeing that crying out in this manner He had given up the ghost, said: Indeed this Man was the Son of God (St. Mark xv.).*

*Now the Centurion and they that were with him watching Jesus, having seen the earthquake, and the things that were done, were sore afraid, saying: Indeed this was the Son of God (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

*Now the Centurion, seeing what was done, glorified God, saying: Indeed this was a just Man. And all the multitude of them that were come together to that sight, and saw the things that were done, returned striking their breasts (St. Luke xxiii.).*

*A. And the Centurion, and those that were with him, seeing these things that were done, were sore afraid, saying: Indeed this was the Son of God.*

First then, the Centurion, hearing the loud cry, and seeing that crying out in this manner He had given up the ghost, said: *Indeed this Man was the Son of God.*

Then secondly, when, following on the loud cry, the earthquake comes, and the rending of the rocks, the Centurion is still more moved, and the soldiers that are

keeping watch with him, influenced doubtless by the demeanour of their leader, are also much moved. They too are sore afraid. *For the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord. It shall go well with him that feareth the Lord, and in the days of his end he shall be blessed. The fear of the Lord driveth out sin* (Ecclus. i.).

B. *They were sore afraid, saying: Indeed this Man was the Son of God.*

Holy fear draws this good confession from them.

Some pious persons have a dislike to holy fear. They wish their teachers to discourse to them of love, always love. But is love genuine if it has no value for holy fear? Calvin pretended that to act from fear was sinful. St. Ignatius writes more correctly:

“Although it is above all desirable that we serve God our Lord very much through pure love, yet ought we highly to approve of a fear of His Divine Majesty. For not only is filial fear something righteous and most holy, but so too is servile fear, when a man reaches to nothing better and more useful, because it helps him much to rise out of mortal sin, and when once a soul has thus risen, it easily arrives at filial fear, which is in every way acceptable and pleasing to God, because it is inseparably united with Divine love.”

C. *The Centurion, and those with him.*

1. Again and again we are reminded of the power for good and for evil that a leader possesses. And each of us is in a certain degree a leader. For the sake of those around us we ought to sanctify ourselves.

2. If we are so prone to follow a leader, why, Lord Jesus crucified, are we so slow to follow Thee? What other leader is so true to us, so devoted to us, so wise, so loving, so able to lead and to protect us, and keep us safe against all enemies?

*The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing* (Psalm xxii.).

*I will feed My sheep. I will seek that which was lost, and that which was driven away I will bring again: and I will*

bind up that which was broken, and I will strengthen that which was weak, and that which is fat and strong I will preserve (Ezech. xxxiv.).

D. *The Centurion and those with him, saying, This Man was truly the Son of God.*

Contemplate our Blessed Lady; and try to realise how unspeakably she is consoled when she hears her Son well spoken of. His prophetic promise is coming true: *If I be lifted up I will draw all things to Myself*. She heard her Son teaching His disciples to say: *Our Father, hallowed be Thy Name*. Her heart is now saying: "O Jesus, my Son, my Lord, and my God, may Thy Name be hallowed". And her prayer is prevailing.

A few drops of rain fall at first, afterwards the great shower floods the earth. So is it here. Now, a few confess Christ, but in the ages to come Christian men and women and children, *whom no man can number*, will gather round the Cross, and say, with the Centurion and his little group of followers, as they look upon Him Whom we pierced, *Indeed this was a just Man. Indeed this Man was the Son of God.*

E. *Indeed this was a just Man.*

That our Lord was just to His Eternal Father is certain. That He was just, and more than just, unspeakably loving to us, is equally certain. But, was He just to Himself? The Apostle writes: "*Tradidit se met ipsum*"—He betrayed Himself. He gave up His own rights, and sacrificed Himself entirely in order to rescue us. Was this justice to Himself? Yes; because He knew that if He humbled Himself on Calvary for three hours, His Father would exalt Him throughout Eternity. *He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the Cross. For which cause God also hath exalted Him, and hath given Him a Name that is above all names* (Philipp. ii.).

F. *Indeed this Man was the Son of God.*

Did the Centurion and his soldiers believe in Jesus as God? Some commentators think not, but that they had

heard the Priests and Ancients scoffing at Him because He called Himself the Son of God; and now seeing the miracles wrought, they consider it certain that He is a just Man, and a holy Man, and a Prophet, and in this sense, a Son of God. St. Jerome, however, and other commentators of high authority, think that the Centurion believed in Christ as God.

We at least must make a profession most full and hearty as we look upon the crucified Body. *Indeed this was a just Man, an innocent Man; no malefactor; Indeed this Man was the Son of God.* And His only crime was that by His own choice *the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all* (Isaias liii.).

*I live in the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me and delivered Himself up for me* (Galat. ii.).

St. Augustine writes: "All my hope is in the Death of my Lord, His death is my life and my salvation. The more power He has to save, the more secure am I."

"I cannot be terrified at the multitude of my sins, if the Death of the Lord comes to my mind, and I love Him."

St. Bernard writes: "Already, O my soul, you have seen His weakness and pitied Him. Now contemplate His majesty and you shall be filled with admiration."

G. *Indeed this Man was the Son of God.*

A little while ago, our Saviour said in Galilee: *I confess to Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to little ones. Yea, Father, for so it hath seemed good in Thy sight* (St. Luke x.). From the Priests and the learned Scribes, these things are hidden. To the Roman Centurion, who has been ignorant as a babe, the truth is revealed: "The last are become the first". *Many that are first shall be last, and the last first* (St. Mark x.).

St. Jerome writes: "The Gentile confesses. Judea is blinded and denies."

Venerable Bede adds: "The Gentile confesses aloud. The Jews only strike their breasts in silence."

"Mother of God, pray for us sinners, that we may be enlightened with the humble little ones and not left in blindness with the proud and the wise."

H. *The Centurion glorified God, saying, Indeed this was a just Man.*

If his confession began in fear, grace soon grew, and he gave glory to Jesus Christ in gladness.

The common opinion is that the Centurion's name was Longinus, and that he afterwards died a martyr. One annalist states that he was a Spaniard, named Oppius, who was the first to announce the Death of Christ to the Spaniards, and was afterwards Bishop of Milan. This account is not accepted by some of the best commentators.

I. *Truly this is the Son of God.*

"See," St. Bernard writes, "how sure-sighted faith is. It recognises God at His Mother's breast. It recognises Him hanging on the tree. It recognises Him in death. The thief knows Him on the Cross; the Magi at the Crib; and the Centurion discovers life in death. The robber proclaims Him a King. The Centurion, true Son of God and true Man."

Our virtue sometimes depends on circumstances. We can be good, we say, in the country, and not in the town. Some are Catholics on the Continent, and Anglicans here. True faith and true charity do not change with times and places.

## SCENE IV.

THE NINTH HOUR. COMING TO BREAK THE LEGS.

## STATION I.

*Then the Jews (because it was the Parasceve), that the bodies might not remain on the Cross on the Sabbath-day (for that was a great Sabbath-day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. The soldiers therefore came: and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with Him (St. John xix. 31, 32).*

**A.** *The Jews besought Pilate that their legs might be broken.*

The Law prescribes that *when a man hath committed a crime, for which he is to be punished with death, and being condemned to die is hanged on a gibbet, his body shall not remain upon the tree, but shall be buried the same day, for he is accursed of God that hangeth on a tree; and thou shalt not defile thy land (Deut. xxi.).*

Does this case come under the Law? Has Jesus committed a crime? Is it for a crime committed that He has been punished with death? Is His death a punishment? He is hanging on the tree, but is He accursed of God? Does His crucified Body defile the land?

Ave verum corpus natum  
Ex Maria Virgine,  
Vere passum, immolatum  
In cruce pro homine.

Hail, Sacred Body, truly born  
Of Mary's virginity;  
Truly bruised and truly torn,  
And truly crucified for me.

Not then, because guilty of crime, not because accursed; not because His Body will defile the land, but because by His own wish he is *reputed with the wicked*, let His Body be taken down and His burial hastened.

**B.** *For that was a great Sabbath-day.*

Oh, yes, it will be a great Sabbath-day; the greatest of Sabbath-days: for after completing His work on the sixth day, the Lord will rest.

But not from true reverence to the Sabbath do the

Ancients and the Priests press to have the Sacred Body taken down. For in what way could the people better spend their day of rest than in looking devoutly on Him Whom they have pierced?

Their one wish is to break His legs, that they may see Him dead. They cannot breathe in peace till He is dead. And the argument that prevails with Pilate is not the near approach of the Sabbath, but that he will be answerable to Tiberius if any rising of the people takes place. He has given his consent. The Rulers lose no time. *Do it quickly*, is still their ceaseless inculcation.

*C. The soldiers therefore coming.*

These are either some of the Temple Guard, or some Roman soldiers put at the disposal of the Rulers for the completion of their work.

From the place of Calvary, John and the holy women see the Priests on their mules, followed by the soldiers, coming through the Judgment Gate on the south, and rapidly advancing towards Golgotha. They are carrying ladders, and have heavy bludgeons in their hands, spades also and shovels wherewith to open the grave for criminals. When John whispers to Holy Mary what he sees, her Mother's heart is filled with sadness. She interprets truly; *Non fallunt viscera matrem*—A mother's heart is not easily mistaken. She is sure that the enemies of her Son are not satisfied, but mean more outrage. St. Bonaventure writes that she turned herself towards the Sacred Body and said: "My beloved Son, wherefore are they coming back? What more do they wish to do to Thee? Have they not killed Thee? My Son, I thought they were contented: but I see that they still persecute Thee after death." He adds that she placed herself at His feet to be between Him and His enemies, and that Magdalen and John stood beside her, as if to protect the Sacred Body.

"*Attendite.*" *O all you who go by the way, stay a little while and see if there be sorrow like to my sorrow.* She

revealed to St. Bridget something of her feelings for her Son. "He was to me as my own heart. So that when He was born from my womb I felt as if half my heart was born and had gone out of me. When He suffered, it was as if my heart was suffering. For if it were possible that there should exist a being, half in, and half out; if the part outside were hurt, the part inside would feel the hurt as much as the part outside. So when He was scourged and wounded, my heart was scourged and wounded."

She is, then, full of anxiety now, for her inspired heart tells her truly that enough has been done, that there is no reason for fresh outrage.

To add to her trouble, the Centurion, who has been kind to her, is absent. He has been summoned by the Governor.

## SCENE V.

### THE PRÆTORIUM.

#### STATION I.

*And when evening was now come (because it was the Parasceve, that is, the day before the Sabbath), Joseph of Arimathea, a noble counsellor, a good and a just man, who was also himself looking for the Kingdom of God (because he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews), came and went in boldly to Pilate, and begged the Body of Jesus. But Pilate wondered that He should be already dead. And sending for the Centurion, he asked him if He were already dead. And when he had understood it by the Centurion, he gave the Body to Joseph (St. Matt. xxvii.; St. Mark xv.; St. Luke xxiii.; St. John xix.).*

*A. Pilate wondered that He should be already dead.*

*Delight in the Lord, the Psalmist writes, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart. Commit thy way to the Lord, and trust in Him, and He will do it (Psalm xxxvi.).*

Our Blessed Lady has been pouring forth her heart in prayer that the Sacred Body may not be any more

outraged, and after the cry of her heart, she commits her way entirely to the Lord. And the Lord, true to His word, is taking care that the Blessed Mother, who delights in Him, shall have the request of her heart.

*Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God.*

B. *He was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews.*

We must mark how the Death of our Lord brings grace to so many. Many more are moved by His Death than by His preaching and His miracles during life.

Joseph is no longer paralysed by fear. The Priests and Ancients have only just retired from the presence of the Governor, when Joseph goes *boldly* in to beg for the Sacred Body.

“By Thy Cross and Passion,” dear Lord, “deliver us from weakness and cowardice.”

It is while we look at the brazen serpent that we shall be cured. While we contemplate Jesus dead upon the Cross, virtue will come out to us.

“In the Cross, salvation,” we read in the *Imitation*; “in the Cross, life; in the Cross, protection from our enemies.”

C. *He begged the Body of Jesus.*

“*Attendite.*” Oh, stay a little while, to contemplate the sacred poverty of Jesus.

His Body is the property of the Roman Governor.

*Man*, holy Job asks, *when he is dead and stripped and consumed, I pray you, where is he?* (c. xiv.). He is on Calvary, He is on the Cross. Jesus is *dead*, and *stripped*, and *consumed*. His executioners possess His clothes, His Body is the possession of the Roman Governor. He is not indeed consumed, or to be consumed in the grave. God *will not give* (His) *Holy One to see corruption* (Psalm xv.). *Under Thee, Lord Jesus, the moth shall not be strewed, nor shall worms be Thy covering.*

Still He is consumed. For *the fire came down and consumed the holocaust*. Never was whole burnt-offering more thoroughly consumed.

Poor Jesus Christ! the poorest of all the blessed poor. So *needy, yet enriching many; having nothing, yet possessing all things.*

“Mother of God, pray for us sinners, that we may also say, *Blessed are the poor*, and may love the rich poverty of thy Son.”

D. *Pilate wondered that He should be already dead.*

1. For he has witnessed so many strange and wonderful things to-day, that it often occurs to him that Jesus will not die; the fears of the Jews are well grounded, He may escape.

2. Moreover, they have just been to tell him that as yet His whole life is in Jesus, that He is crying out like a giant in full strength. Can He then have died so suddenly? He forgets the scourging, he forgets the crown of thorns, he forgets how often He was dragged up and down the Scala Santa, and through the streets. He did not witness His extreme feebleness as He carried His Cross along the Way of Sorrows. If Pilate knew all, and *considered in (his) heart*, his wonder would be that Jesus had lived so long.

But the great wonder of all is, that *He loved me and delivered Himself up for me.*

E. *Sending for the Centurion, he asked him.*

Learn a lesson, when we can, from the children of this world, and from their prudence. The Roman Prætor is a soldier accustomed to discipline. He sends for the officer on duty, who will give him correct official information. *Go thou and do likewise.*

Men would all arrive at the truth if they would seek it from the mouth of Christ's appointed delegate. And we should be spared much sin and much misery if we would imitate the wariness of Pilate, and not believe every hearsay about our neighbour till we have sure evidence.

F. *And when he had understood it by the Centurion, he gave the Body to Joseph.*

Nothing knows he of the priceless value of the Sacred Body. He gives it away as worthless.

What wonder? When His own disciple gave Him away, and delivered Him up to death for thirty pieces of silver, how can Pilate know better? *Thy own nation and the Chief Priests have delivered Thee up to me. What hast Thou done?*

To us our Lord says, *You are the light of the world.* It is from our practice that unbelievers are to get their light, and come to the faith.

Alas! shall we prove a scandal to them instead?

G. *Joseph went in boldly to Pilate, and begged the Body of Jesus.*

St. Anselm writes, that our Lady revealed to him, that among the reasons which Joseph urged, one was that the Mother of Jesus, a good and holy woman, will die of grief if the Body of her Son be cast into the pit of the criminals.

If Pilate had compassion on the Blessed Mother, it is no wonder that some early Fathers had hopes of his salvation, and believed in his conversion.

One other ground of hope is, that he was disgraced before he died. He did not sin, and prosper to the end. When God takes away the husks of swine from a sinner, there is more hope that He will draw him back to his Father's home.

H. *Joseph went in boldly.*

The Death of Christ is bringing courage to Joseph, courage to Nicodemus, grace to the Centurion, contrition to so many who are striking their breasts. Jesus lifted up on His Cross is drawing all things to Himself. Shall I alone remain unmoved? What is the cause of my hardness and blindness? "Wo to those," St. Bonaventure writes, "in whose souls the Death of Christ works no effect. Wo again to those whose hearts cannot be moved to gratitude." But he adds: "Acknowledge that on account of your crimes you are unworthy of such a grace. Perchance if you humble yourself, He that looked on the humility of His handmaid will give you a new heart."

St. Bernard adds: "Pride is found in me. Hence that lack of devotion from which I suffer."

St. Augustine says: "Dear Christ, good Jesus, give me Thy holy love, to fill my heart, and possess it entirely. Have mercy on me, and do not despise my soul for which Thou hast died."

I. *Joseph went in boldly.*

Metaphrastes, in the Life of Holy Mary, writes: "The Virgin Mary came to Joseph, and said to him, 'Ask for His Body, that it may be taken down and buried'".

What wonder if our Blessed Saviour wished him to have this grace through His Blessed Mother? "All things He wishes us to have through Mary." Through her the Eternal Father gives us His own Son, and with Him He gives all other graces through her.

J. *Joseph went in boldly.*

Joseph, we read, was a *rich man*. An early Father writes: "This is a bold and noble venture. He does not stop to think, I am rich, and may forfeit all my riches."

St. Chrysostom adds: "Greatly to be admired is his courage, for through love for Jesus, he faced the danger of death, and exposed himself to the hatred of all the Rulers".

His desire was to do honour to the Sacred Body. Do I owe nothing to it?

"See it," St. Bernard writes, "hanging naked, all torn by the scourges, and remember the copious stream of blood that flowed from His wounds."

## SCENE VI.

### CALVARY. THE BREAKING OF THE LEGS.

#### STATION I.

*The soldiers therefore came, and they broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with Him (St. John xix. 32).*

A. Obeying the often repeated command, *Do it quickly*, the soldiers march up rapidly to Golgotha. They bring,

as has been said, heavy bludgeons to break the legs, ladders to bring down the bodies, spades and shovels to open the common grave for criminals.

Magdalen and John and the devout women, who have had peace till now on Calvary, are thrown into great consternation. They have heard our Lord say in another sense, *Give not that which is holy to dogs*. In their hearts they are crying out to the Father in Heaven, "Oh, give not the Holy Body to the dogs". St. Bonaventure represents them placing themselves at the side of Holy Mary to protect the Sacred Body from outrage.

Our Blessed Lady, though her heart trembles at the thought of further profane insult, yet is strengthened by a sure trust. She is persevering in her prayer, "O Eternal Father, *glorify Thy Son*, for He has glorified Thee". *It is not good to take the Bread of the children*, the Body of Thy own Son Jesus, *and give it to the dogs* (St. Mark vii.).

B. *And they broke the legs of the first.*

*Do it quickly.* There is no delay. A heavy blow from the bludgeon is heard, answered by a loud howl from the man who has no hope to comfort his death-bed. Another blow and another, another despairing cry and another, and Gesmas is dead. And his last cry is the sword of sorrow once more driven into our Lady's heart, leaving there an anguish more bitter than all before.

C. *They broke the legs of the first, and of the other that was crucified with Him.*

Dismas at once understands what he has to expect. But neither the howling of his companion, nor the sound of the heavy blows of the clubs, can take peace and hope out of his heart. He can truly say, as his tears flow down, *Singularly (wonderfully) hast Thou, O Lord, settled me in hope* (Psalm iv.). The words of Jesus are being whispered into his soul by his good Angel, *This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*

And now his eyes instinctively turn to his new Mother, for this word also his Guardian Angel is saying to his

heart, *Behold thy Mother!* And her eyes are for the time turned away from her own Divine Lord, to look on this first-born of her new family. Once more our Blessed Saviour is bidding her be a Mother to the disciple whom He loves. *Behold thy son, Holy Mother.* And her eye is fixed on him, and her heart is praying with a Mother's earnestness that he may have to the end every grace he needs.

She now is beginning her work of standing by the death-bed of those disciples whom her Divine Son loves.

Dismas utters no despairing cry as his bones are crushed by the blows. He retracts nothing of what he said to his companion: *We are receiving the just reward of our deeds, but this Man, my Lord and my God, He did no evil.* He dies with his own short prayer in his heart: *My Lord, remember me,* and possibly may have been the first to say words akin to our own familiar prayer: "Mother of God, pray for us sinners".

Happy, thrice happy they who in early childhood are taught to consecrate themselves as perpetual servants to Holy Mary, and to say to her often and often: "Stand by me in all the actions of life, and do not abandon me at the hour of my death".

## SCENE VII.

### THE OPENING OF OUR LORD'S SIDE.

#### STATION I.

*But after they were come to Jesus, when they saw that He was already dead, one of the soldiers with a spear opened His side, and immediately there came out blood and water (St. John xix. 33, 34).*

A. *After they were come to Jesus.*

Quickly the executioners have done the bidding of their masters. The bones of the first and of the other that was crucified with Him, are broken, and they are dead. And

now: "Make haste, make haste to the work that is most important of all. Strike, and strike heavily, and make all sure. Crush the bones of Jesus of Nazareth, that we may see Him also dead, quite dead, and bury Him before the festival-day."

But no, this shall not be. The Centurion is come back, and he will not permit one blow. A Higher Power also than the Centurion has pronounced that this must not be.

*Neither shall you break a bone* (Exodus xii.), was the command given to Moses when the paschal lamb was for the first time immolated in Egypt, and to the Beloved Disciple it was afterwards revealed that this command, uttered in days long gone by, was intended also for the Lamb of God slain on the first Good Friday (St. John xix.).

*B. One of the soldiers opened His side with a spear.*

"It is useless," he tells the Rulers, "to strike. He is dead; you have your wish to the full. He is dead."

It is commonly assumed that the Centurion was himself the soldier who opened our Saviour's side. Some think he does it maliciously. Others that he acts rashly perhaps, but in a friendly spirit, to prevent worse outrages from the Rulers. Be this as it may. One thing is certain: that his act fits in with the design of God.

We are told that as he withdraws his spear, our Blessed Lady says gently to him, "May God forgive the pain that thou hast caused me," and with her forgiving heart she prays for him.

We are further told, that a drop of the Precious Blood falls upon his face, and cures the disease in his eyes from which he is suffering.

*C. One of the soldiers opened His side with a spear.*

Whatever the spirit may have been that actuated Longinus, we may assume that he no more understands the import of his act than Caiaphas understood when, as High Priest, he uttered the word, *It is expedient for you that*

one man die for the people,<sup>1</sup> or Pilate, when he wrote the title for the Cross. Utterly unconscious was he that He Who hangs dead had in days long gone prophesied this hour: *They shall look on Me Whom they have pierced* (Zach. xii.).

Here, as in every other detail of the Sacred Passion, we see how the Divine Providence is ever overruling the storm, and allowing the raging tide to roll just as far as suits the designs of God, and no further.

Two things have been from the beginning decreed: (1) that *no bone shall be broken*; but (2) that the side of our Saviour shall be opened, and that water and blood shall come out from the wound.

D. *One of the soldiers opened His side with a spear.*

What then is the import of this sacred ceremony? Briefly this: The second Adam is to be after the form of the first, and the battle fought in the Garden of Eden is to be fought over again, and on the same lines, by the Man and the Woman who defy Satan on this place of Calvary.

1. First, then, in a garden the first battle was fought and lost. In a garden, therefore, our Saviour begins the second struggle, and in a garden, when He has won the victory, He is buried.

2. Our Saviour is not to die of a broken Heart in Gethsemani, nor under the lash at the pillar. He is to die on a tree, because a tree gave help to Lucifer in Paradise. Jesus is to hang as fruit on the tree, and draw all men to God.

3. A woman was prominent in the first struggle, and befriended Satan. A woman is to be in the very thick of the second struggle on Calvary, to help her Son.

4. The first Adam fell asleep, and his side was opened. The second Adam hangs asleep on the Cross, and His side

<sup>1</sup> We ought often to explain carefully to Protestants, that God, whenever He sees good, can incline even bad men to speak and act rightly. On this point they are ignorant, and imagine that the infallibility of the Pope necessarily implies impeccability also.

must also be opened. A bone was taken from the side of the first Adam, out of which his helpmate was built up. From the side of Jesus water and blood is to come out; and of the water men shall be born again at the font of Baptism, and with His Blood their souls shall be nurtured; so that as the first Adam said to Eve, *This now is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh*, so our Blessed Lord inspired His Apostle to write the word, *We are members of His Body, of His flesh, and of His bones* (Ephes. v.). Out of this water and this blood, His helpmate, His Holy Church, His Bride, is built up, and every Christian may be called, as the holy Fathers do call him, a Christ.

Little does the future martyr, St. Longinus, know, when he shows his first movement of sympathy to the Holy Mother and her persecuted Son, how great a tree will grow out of the small mustard-seed.

The merciless Priests and Ancients, therefore, are robbed of the satisfaction of seeing Jesus beaten to death with clubs.

*The hope of the hypocrite shall perish* (Job viii.).

E. *One of the soldiers opened His side with a spear.*

(a) St. Augustine writes: "The Evangelist uses a very significant word. He would not say, he struck His side, or he wounded it; but, he opened it, that there the door of life might stand open."

(b) He adds: "It was as a type of this opening that Noe was bidden to make a door in the side of the Ark, through which might pass in those animals that were not to perish in the Flood. What more life-giving than this wound!"

(c) Again he writes: "Consider the side which was opened by thee and for thee, and yet thou wilt not enter in".

(d) St. Laurence Justinian: "Through an excess of love He opened His side, in order to give you His Heart".

(e) St. Bernard addresses the pierced Heart of Jesus as "the home of love, the throne of the Blessed Trinity, the ark of wide-reaching charity".

(f) He adds: "Therefore was Thy side pierced, that an entrance might stand open for us".

(g) St. Anselm: "Admit me, O Lord, into the chamber of Thy love".

(h) Abbot Guericus comments on the words of Isaias, *Enter thou into the rock, and hide thee in the pit from the face of the fear of the Lord, and from the glory of His majesty* (Isaias ii.). "That is, make thyself a hiding-place in the wounds of the Crucified. Fly from thy Judge to thy Redeemer, bury thyself in the pit dug in His side."

(i) St. Augustine: "Longinus opened for me the side of Christ with a lance, and I went in, and there I rest secure".

(j) St. Bonaventure tells us that it was the right side that the soldier pierced, and that the wound was large.

(k) St. Bridget, in her contemplations, saw that the spear was driven in with such force that it clove the Heart in two, and touched the ribs on the opposite side.

(l) Jesus says to us, as to St. Thomas, *Bring hither thy hand, and put it into My side.*

(m) St. Bernard: "Therefore was the side wounded, that by the visible wound the invisible wound of love might be revealed".

Again: "Through love He was wounded on account of our sins. Through the openings in the Body the secrets of His Heart are disclosed to me, and the bowels of His mercy too."

Again: "That Heart so wounded, who will not love?"

(n) *They will look on Me Whom they pierced, and they will mourn and will grieve* (Zach. xii.).

(o) *One of the soldiers opened His side.*

St. Cyril: "Perchance having still some doubt whether He was dead". Another of the early Fathers suggests that it was perhaps done to gratify the Jews. We have already seen that Longinus may not have acted in malice, but rather to save the Sacred Body from outrage.

F. *They did not break His legs.*

(a) On account of the prohibition, as we have seen: *Neither shall you break a bone thereof* (Exodus xii.).

(b) The bones, a holy writer observes, are emblems of strength and firmness. The Passion was not to conquer the courageous meekness of Christ. *Many are the tribulations of the just, but out of them all will the Lord deliver them. The Lord keepeth all their bones. Not one of them shall be broken* (Psalm xxxiii.).

(c) *God hath scattered the bones of those that please men. They have been confounded because God hath despised them* (Psalm lii.).

G. *One of the soldiers opened His side with a spear.*

"*Attendite.*" We must stay to consider the effect of this wound upon our Lady.

(a) St. Bernard writes: "Since Jesus had given up the ghost, it is clear that the cruel lance that opened His side could not reach His Soul, but her soul most certainly it reached".

(b) Simeon had prophesied: *Thy soul the sword of sorrow shall pierce.*

(c) St. Bernard adds: "His Soul was no longer there, but thine could not be torn away".

"The sword of sorrow, therefore, pierced thy soul through, so that with good reason I may proclaim thee more than martyr."

(d) St. Bonaventure: "As she looks on her wounded Son, she feels all the crushing sorrow of death".

(e) He adds: "Thou, O Lady, in thy heart art pierced by the lance. O heart of most tender love, why art thou changed into a heart of sorrow?"

H. *Immediately there came out blood and water.*

(a) St. Thomas writes: "The water flowing from the side of Christ was pure water, and came by miracle out of the dead Body, as did also the blood".

(b) Euthymius: "It was something quite beyond nature, which showed clearly that He Who had been pierced was more than Man, since never from a dead man,

though he were pierced a thousand times, could blood flow forth”.

(c) Theophylact: “That blood should come from a dead body is marvellous. But the water flowing is a miracle that silences all controversy.”

(d) He adds: “Through these two elements the Church is created and maintained. For through water we are regenerated, through the Blood and the Body we are nourished.”

(e) St. Athanasius: “There flows out blood and water, that through blood we may have redemption, and by the water be cleansed”.

(f) St. Cyprian: “Out of this fountain flows all the sweetness of God’s mercies, and all the tenderness of His love”.

I. *One of the soldiers opened His side with a spear.*

But if they cannot wreak their vengeance on Jesus dying, they can at least, so they hope, dishonour His dead Body. With a murderous resolve to take vengeance, as soon as they can, on the arrogant Centurion who has baffled them, and full of chagrin and bitterness, they bid their gang make haste to place their ladders, and take down the bodies, and cast them into the unhallowed pit reserved for criminals. But here again *the desire of the sinners shall perish*, and they will have to gnash with their teeth, and pine away with vexation.

They forget that He Who gave them power last night in the Garden, when He said, *It is your hour*, cancelled their grant when He said the word, “*Consummatum est*”. Their little day of power is past and over.

Neither do they know, though as Priests of the Most High they ought to know the secrets of the Law, that the same Providence which pronounced the command, *Neither shall you break a bone*, also uttered the decree, *There shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall rise up to rule the Gentiles, in Him the Gentiles shall hope*, AND HIS SEPULCHRE SHALL BE GLORIOUS (Isaias xi. ; Romans xv.).

SCENE VIII.

THE TAKING DOWN FROM THE CROSS.

STATION I.

*Joseph of Arimathea besought Pilate that he might take away the Body of Jesus. And Pilate gave leave. He came therefore and took away the Body of Jesus. And Nicodemus also came (St. John xix. 38, 39).*

*A. He came therefore, and Nicodemus came.*

*“Attendite.”* The Blessed Mother seems quite helpless. *Tribulation is very near. There is none to help me. Many dogs have encompassed me. The council of the malignant hath besieged me. But Thou, O Lord, remove not Thy help to a distance from me. Look towards my defence. Deliver my soul from the sword, and my only one from the hand of the dog (Psalm xxi).* The Centurion can give no help, as the Priests and Ancients have the law on their side. The bodies must be taken down and buried in the pit. But the watchful wisdom of God *reacheth from end to end mightily, and disposeth of all things sweetly (Wisdom ii).*

*B. He came therefore, and Nicodemus came.*

While the soldiers put at the disposal of the Priests are hurriedly loosing the body of St. Dismas and the body of Gesmas from their crosses, the Rulers from the place of Calvary see a party of men passing through the Judgment Gate and hastening rapidly towards them. What does this mean? *Wickedness is fearful. A troubled conscience always forecasteth grievous things (Wisdom xvii).* “Has Pilate found out our conspiracies? Are we to be seized and dragged to judgment?” Or is this the beginning of a rising of the friends of Jesus?

Our Blessed Lady, on the other hand, sick at heart with solicitude, asks John anxiously: “Who are coming? Are they more enemies?” All are straining their eyes. They can see that the men are bringing ladders and many other things. At last, when they are near enough, John

whispers to the Blessed Mother that she has nothing to fear. He recognises Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus leading the party. He is quite sure that they are no enemies of Jesus. The Blessed Mother is at once relieved of her oppressive fear. *When I called on Him, the God of my justice heard me. O ye sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart? Know ye also that the Lord hath made His Holy One wonderful (Psalm iv.).*

C. *He came therefore, and Nicodemus came.*

The Priests also and the Ancients have now recognised Joseph and Nicodemus, and their trouble grows exceedingly. Joseph and Nicodemus are men not to be despised; men in every way their equals, men much more respected than they are. *Joseph, St. Mark tells us, was a noble counsellor.* Nicodemus also belongs to the Sanhedrim. And they are known to dissent entirely from their colleagues with regard to Jesus. *The same had not consented to their counsels and doings (St. Luke xxiii.).*

What do they want? What are they coming for? They have ladders. They have many servants bearing burdens. They have funeral torches. These must be preparations for a burial. We must crush this attempt. We must browbeat them into submission, as we did the Governor. Their courage is not greater than his.

D. *He came, and Nicodemus came.*

Joseph and Nicodemus have arrived, but they are imperiously bidden by the High Priest to retire at once. Their presence is not wanted. The law provides for the interment of the malefactors. They must withdraw.

Joseph and Nicodemus had both in times past a share of Pilate's weakness.

*Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews (St. John xix.). There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a Ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night (St. John iii.).*

But lo! Jesus in His Death has made all things new. Joseph and Nicodemus are not afraid now. The Passion

of Christ has strengthened them. *Let not the oil of the sinner fatten my head. For my prayer shall be against the things with which they are well pleased* (Psalm cxl.).

Joseph answers the High Priest's mandate by handing to the Centurion the Governor's warrant by which the Body of Jesus is given to him.

The Centurion gladly reads it aloud to Priests and Ancients, and once more the Psalmist's words are verified: *The wicked shall see and shall be angry. He shall gnash with his teeth and pine away: the desire of the wicked shall perish* (Psalm cxi.).

But rage makes them bold: "This is a forgery," they exclaim; "they will not submit to it". But the Centurion knows his duty, and stands firm. This is Pilate's signature. There is no forgery.

Then they will forthwith send deputies to Pilate, to talk him over once more. But their hearts fail them. He will only again insult them, and say: *What I have written, I have written.*

They take the Centurion aside, to flatter him and offer him bribes.

But he is a soldier, and when his commander says, *Do this, he doeth it.* The Governor has given the Body to Joseph, and Joseph shall have it. Any one who gainsays, let him look to it, for it will be at his peril.

St. Gregory of Tours hands down a narrative, taken from the Gospel of Nicodemus, which shows that the Jewish Rulers did not forgive Joseph for this interference with their malicious design. This Gospel of Nicodemus has never been accepted as an authentic, inspired Gospel by Holy Church; but that does not prove, so commentators remark, that it does not contain many true statements.

St. Gregory writes:

"Joseph also was apprehended who had embalmed Jesus with spices, and buried Him in his own tomb. He was shut up in a dungeon, and, to render escape impossible, was guarded by the

Rulers themselves, and had to endure treatment more cruel than the Lord Himself had suffered; because, whereas the Lord had soldiers for His guards, Joseph had the Priests and Ancients. Afterwards, however, when the Lord rose, and the guards were affrighted by a vision of angels, and He was no longer found in the sepulchre, during that same night the walls of the dungeon in which Joseph was confined were lifted from the ground, and he was by an Angel set free and let out of the prison, and the walls were then restored to their places.

“When, therefore, the High Priests vehemently reprimanded the guards of the Holy Sepulchre, and, with severe menaces, demanded from them the Sacred Body, the soldiers answered them: ‘Do you give back Joseph, and we will restore Christ; but, as we now well know that you cannot give back the man that befriended God, neither are we able to give back the Son of God’. So the Priests were silenced and the soldiers escaped punishment.”

Another tradition tells us that Joseph was one of those afterwards sent adrift in an open boat with Lazarus and Magdalen and others; that he arrived with them in Gaul, and afterwards preached the Gospel in England.

Some writers add that Joseph was well known to Pilate, and was an exception to his strong dislike and contempt for the Jews. This seems probable enough, as he was both rich and of high position, and at the same time a good and upright man.

#### E. *He came, and Nicodemus came.*

The prayer of the Blessed Mother is heard: *Deliver my only One from the hand of the dog* (Psalm xxi.).

Annas and Caiphas and the rest have no longer any wish to remain near the Cross. They are as anxious to escape as they were when Jesus was stooping down to write their sins in the dust. *They went away, one by one, beginning with the eldest.* Beyond the others, Annas and the more ancient feel this bitter humiliation, and shrink away in haste from the Cross, from the presence of the Blessed Mother, and from the calm fearlessness of Joseph and Nicodemus. They will wreak their vengeance when the time serves, but for the present they are ashamed and silenced, like the prophets of Baal in presence of Elias.

#### F. *He came, and Nicodemus came.*

Contemplate how He Who feeds the ravens and clothes the lilies of the field, takes good care of the Blessed

Mother; how His angels have charge over her, to see that she who is poor, and the Mother of the Poor Man, and possesses nothing, be provided with *all things*.

A rich man and one of position is needed to go in to Pilate. Joseph answers in gladness: *Ecce adsum*—"Here I am, send me".

Courage is wanted in that hour when all are scared and scandalised. From the Cross of Christ courage is come into the souls of the timid. Jesus does not fail to do what He exhorts us to do. *Strengthen ye the feeble hands, and confirm the weak knees. Say to the faint-hearted, Take courage and fear not* (Isaias xxxv.).

G. *He came, and Nicodemus came.*

The Sacred Body, therefore, now belongs to Joseph, and is safe from all further outrage. *Consummatum est*. The work of Satan and Satan's ministers is ended. The Priests and Ancients have turned their mules homeward. Their servants are carrying back the ladders and the bludgeons. The crosses of the two thieves have been taken down, and cast into the pit, and covered up. Such of the soldiers as still remain on guard, have retired a little from the sacred sanctuary now established in the centre of the earth. None but friends remain on the holy ground of Calvary.

*In Judea God is (now) known: His name is (suddenly become) great in Israel. And His place (His sacred place, His battle-ground, the field of His triumph) is in peace. The Priests and Ancients, baffled and utterly conquered by the meekness of Jesus, are not going home in peace. Their troubled conscience forecasteth grievous things. But there is peace on the hill of frankincense and on the mountain of myrrh (Cant. iv.). There hath He broken the powers of bows, the shield, the sword, and the battle. Thou enlightenest (Lord Jesus) wonderfully from the everlasting hills. (For Calvary is from this hour to be the everlasting hill, perpetuated on the altars of Christendom.) All the foolish of heart were troubled (Psalm lxxv.). For the enemies of*

Christ, while for their raging anger they are compared in the sacred writings to roaring lions, at the same time for their senseless folly are likened to calves (Psalm xxi.).

## STATION II.

*And Joseph, buying fine linen and taking Him down, wrapped Him up in the fine linen (St. Mark xv.).*

*He came, therefore, and took away the Body of Jesus. And Nicodemus also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pounds' weight (St. John xix.).*

*A. He came, therefore, and took away the body of Jesus; and Nicodemus also came.*

Holy writers tell us that Joseph and Nicodemus, as soon as they can get near to the Cross, kneel to adore the Sacred Body, and that when, on their arrival, the Priests and Ancients retire, all the friends of our Lord, now met together, remain for a long time weeping, and speechless through grief.

Eia Mater, fons amoris,  
Me sentire vim doloris  
Fac, ut tecum lugeam.  
Juxta crucem tecum stare  
Et me tibi sociare  
In planctu desidero.

Mother, fount of charity,  
Let me share thy agony;  
Make me weep with thee.  
Let me stand where thou hast stood,  
Mourning with thy Motherhood,  
By the Holy Rood.

*B. He came therefore.*

We may contemplate Joseph, as soon as he is able to speak, drawing near to our Blessed Lady, to tell her with great reverence that the Sacred Body now belongs entirely to her; that the Roman Governor has ceded it to him; and that he is only her servant, come to fulfil any orders or wishes of hers with regard to the burial.

*C. He came therefore.*

We may also fix our thoughts on our Blessed Lady. In the first place, she raises her heart to thank her God for taking care of her in her poverty. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and let all that is within me bless His Holy Name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, who crowneth thee with mercy and com-*

*passion* (Psalm cii.). *The poor and the needy shall praise Thy Name* (Psalm lxxiii.).

Then she turns to Joseph, and with a most grateful humility gives him great thanks for running so much risk, and braving the anger of the Rulers in order to render service to his Master. "When the Divine Child was pursued, and we were fleeing away, Joseph, my spouse, protected us. You are now come in his place, in my present distress. My Son will not forget your fidelity."

D. *He came therefore.*

*Isaac said to his father : My father. And he answered : What wilt thou, son ? Behold, said he, fire and wood ; where is the victim for a holocaust ? And Abraham said : God will provide Himself a victim for a holocaust, my son* (Gen. xxii.).

Lo, now, the Sacred Body is hers: she can bury it. Here, too, are ready true and devout mourners. But where is the tomb? and where are all the many things needed for the funeral?

The tomb in which the Body of Jesus ought naturally to be laid is in Gethsemani, on the other side of the city, in the garden belonging to Holy Mary, where last night He was *sorrowful unto death*. It would be very dangerous, the Most Prudent Virgin sees, to go thither with the funeral. The enemies of Jesus might waylay the procession and attempt outrages. Moreover, the law forbade, we are told, the bodies of executed criminals to be buried in the ancestral tomb. Besides this, the sundown is near, when the great Sabbath will begin.

Joseph is able to comfort her. In a little garden belonging to him, not more than twenty yards from the Cross, he has a tomb, which he made ready for his own death. It is far too poor, he thinks, for the Sacred Body of his Divine Master: but it is new, *no man has yet been laid* in it. If she thinks fit to permit it, they can in all security make the interment there. The Blessed Mother hears with great consolation this new proof that the eye of the Divine Providence is watching, and that she is

not forgotten in her hour of need. And moreover, it is a right and specially fitting arrangement. For in a garden man fell; in a garden began the Sacred Passion; in a garden it shall end. *By Thy ordinance, O Lord, the day goeth on.* Add to this, that it is well that the tomb of the *Poor Man* be an alms.

E. *He came therefore.*

Her heart is filled with still further consolation and wonder when Joseph, as we read, tells her further how both Nicodemus and himself have been strongly urged by an inward inspiration to bring to Calvary all that is needed for embalming and for a becoming funeral.

He points out the ample store of aromatic powder made from myrrh and aloes, which the servants of Nicodemus have brought.

He shows her too the winding-sheet of fine linen, and the sudarium for His Sacred Head, and the swathing-bands which he has provided. They have also pails for water, and sponges, and everything needed for washing away the dust and dirt adhering to the holy wounds, and they have too the funeral torches. Nothing has been forgotten.

“It is,” the Holy Mother says most devoutly, “the word that my Son spoke: *Be not solicitous for your body what you shall put on. If the grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe, how much more you? For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things* (St. Matt. vi.). . . *The poor and needy shall praise Thy Name, O God* (Psalm lxxiii.). *Who maketh grass to grow on the mountains, and herbs for the service of men* (Psalm cxlvi.). *The Lord is faithful in all His words and holy in all His works*” (Psalm cxliv.).

Contemplate, too, with what reverence and delight the holy angels are watching how the providence of God furnishes in abundance all that the Blessed Mother wants, and how devoutly they add those other words of our Lord: “*Multis passeribus meliores estis vos*”—*Better than many*

*sparrows are you* (St. Matt. x.). "O Sovereign Lady, and Mother of God, He Who feeds the birds of the air, shall He forget any want of thine?"

### STATION III.

*And Joseph, taking Him down, wrapped Him up in the fine linen* (St. Mark xv. 46).

A. *And Joseph, taking Him down.*

Our Blessed Lady, we are told, now gives Joseph the commission to do all that is befitting, and to arrange everything carefully, and most reverently.

St. Luke writes of him (c. xxiii.): *He was a counsellor, a good and just man (the same had not consented to their counsels and doings). Blessed, the Psalmist writes, the man who hath not walked in the counsels of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the chair of pestilence. He shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters. His leaf shall not fall off, and all whatsoever he shall do shall prosper* (Psalm i.).

Blessed, thrice blessed, O faithful counsellor, O good and just man, chosen that thou mightest be ready in such a time as this (Esther iv.).

If St. Dismas has fared so well for giving Jesus an alms in His hour of need, what shall be done for Joseph and Nicodemus, who have exposed their lives in order to give fitting honour to Jesus unburied?

"*Attendite.*" "*Defunctus adhuc loquitur,*" St. Paul writes. From His Cross, the silent lips of our dead Lord are still speaking to us: "Envy not Joseph. Give help to the very least of My brethren, and you will give burial to My Body."

B. *And Joseph, taking Him down.*

"Take note," St. Bonaventure writes, "of the manner of the deposition. The ladders are placed at each side of the Cross. Joseph and Nicodemus go up the steps."

The opinion is held by some that Joseph and Nicodemus, and their helpmates, among whom perchance is Longinus the centurion first loosened and removed the

wedges that held the Cross firm in the rock, and then laid it on the ground, and took out the nails; but the common opinion is that followed by St. Bonaventure, that they set up ladders against the Cross. St. Mark's words, *Joseph, taking Him down*, might fit in with either view, but to most persons probably they would suggest the opinion generally adopted.

C. *And Joseph, taking Him down.*

Holy servants of God tell us that Joseph and Nicodemus, before beginning their sacred task, beseech our Lady to retire to a little distance. This they do wishing to spare her pain, but John makes known to them that she has watched everything, that nothing has escaped her, that her desire is not to miss one jot or tittle of the holy mystery, not to *let one particle of the good gift overpass her*.

*Omnis consummationis vidi finem*—"Of all this perfect work of immolation I have seen the end".

D. *Joseph, taking Him down.*

Observe how all is made new by the Death of our Lord. This morning, outrage was heaped on outrage. Now all is most reverent and devout and loving.

Whenever before this hour did rich and leading men, like Nicodemus and Joseph, climb up ladders to take down the body of one crucified as a criminal? They do not entrust this work to their servants.

They begin their task, so holy writers tell us, by drawing most carefully the thorns out of the wounds, and bringing the holy crown down to the Blessed Mother. Watch how fast her tears flow upon it, and with what profound humility she kisses it.

It is not an easy task to loosen the nails driven through the wood, and clenched at the other side, but they have been inspired to bring every necessary implement, and all is done becomingly. They are full of anxiety not to increase our Lady's sorrow by any clumsiness, or blundering, or anything unseemly. Oh, may we too be earnest never to add to her sorrow!

No words are spoken while they do their work, nothing but sobs are heard.

St. Bonaventure writes, that Joseph on the ladder supported the Body by the arms, while Nicodemus came down to draw out the nails from the feet.

One thing renders their task more easy, namely, that the Sacred Body is so worn out by hunger and loss of blood that it is not heavy, but a very light burden.

“Happy,” the Saint adds, “the men who were so privileged as to clasp in their arms the Sacred Body.”

While contemplating the devout care with which they handle the Body of our Saviour, is it not a fitting time to beg of the Blessed Mother to intercede for all priests, who, despite unworthiness, are commissioned to hold in their hands at the altar her Divine Son, that we may have some of the reverent devotion of Joseph and Nicodemus?

*May Thy priests be clothed in justice*, and have grace to say truly, “Devoutly I adore Thee, O Hidden God”. “Body of Christ, save me,” and, “Be not unto me to judgment and condemnation”.

*E. And Joseph, taking Him down.*

Devout writers tell us that the Blessed Mother helped in the holy work of taking down the Sacred Body, and that as soon as they were within her reach, she took the holy hands, and with great devotion kissed the sacred wounds.

Sancta Mater, istud agas,  
Crucifixi fige plagas,  
Cordi meo valide.

Do this for me, O Mother blest,  
Deeply imprint within my breast  
The wounds of Jesus Crucified.

## SCENE IX.

## THE STONE OF UNCTION.

## STATION I.

*And Joseph, taking Him down, wrapped Him up in the fine linen (St. Mark xv. 46).*

*A. And Joseph, taking Him down.*

THE STONE OF UNCTION is still shown in the Basilica of the Holy Sepulchre. A table of hard stone, about twenty-five feet lower down than the level where the Crosses stood. It was convenient for the work of embalming, and therefore, while Nicodemus and Joseph are taking out the nails, other disciples of Jesus are spreading cloths upon the Stone of Unction, and opening the packets of the aromatic myrrh and aloes, and fetching water from the cistern.

“All you holy Saints on Calvary, pray for us that we may be moved to make devout preparation when the Body of the Lord is about to be committed to our care.”

John meanwhile is always in charge of the Blessed Mother. She has now the Sacred Head in her hands, and Magdalen is allowed to carry the Sacred Feet, Joseph and Nicodemus support the Body; and so, with great care and reverence, and grieving *as the manner is to grieve for the death of the first-born*, and helped through their holy task by many special graces, they carry the sacred treasure down to the STONE OF UNCTION, and there lay it down. St. John then arranges a seat for the Virgin Mother, where the Sacred Head reposes on her lap. St. Magdalen is once more kneeling at the feet, where she has found so many graces. The other devout men and women, we are told, all kneel and adore the Sacred Body, presented to them by Holy Mary.

“We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee.”

“Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.”

*Paraphrase.*

Pange lingua gloriosi	Adore, my soul, on Calvary,
Corporis mysterium,	Adore the wondrous mystery,
Sanguisque pretiosi,	God's glorious Body crucified.
Quem in mundi pretium.	Adore, my soul, God's Precious Blood
Fructus ventris generosi	Outpoured upon the holy Rood,
Rex effudit gentium.	From head and hands, from feet and side.
	Adore the fruit of Mary's womb,
	Before they lay it in the tomb.
	Jesus her Son, the King of men,
	Lies dead to give us life again.

*B. And Joseph, taking Him down.*

Some writers hold that it was the custom among the Jews that men embalmed the bodies of men, and women the bodies of women. If this were so, the commonly received opinion is, that on this occasion an exception was made for the Sacred Body of the Lord.

One fact that seems to support this common opinion is that undoubtedly the devout women came to the Sepulchre on Easter Day prepared to continue the work of embalming.

One writer on the Sacred Passion tells us that in order to relieve the agonised heart of our Lady, the wounds on the Sacred Body were by a miracle disguised during the washing and embalming, so that they did not appear in all their ghastliness; but this opinion does not seem to find favour. It seems more in keeping with the other scenes of the Sacred Passion, to adopt the common persuasion that while she sat bathing the sacred face with her tears, she was studying most carefully every wound, the length, the breadth, the depth of each, and laying them up one by one in her heart. For each of those precious wounds is saying to her, *Set me as a seal upon thy heart.*

Sancta Mater, istud agas,	Do this for me, O Mother blest,
Crucifixi fige plagas,	Deeply imprint within my breast
Cordi meo valide.	The wounds of Jesus Crucified.

*C. And Joseph, taking Him down.*

We read that some horsemen from the country pass by Calvary while they are washing and embalming the

sacred wounds, and stop for a time, gazing appalled on the crucified Body. Their question is like that asked heretofore by the disciples, *Who hath sinned—this Man or His parents?* to bring down such a curse. John, or Joseph, or Nicodemus, explains to them that Jesus was no malefactor, but a Prophet, *mighty in word and work*, and pointing to the Most Holy Mother, asks, “Do you see any sign of wickedness in her?” “Then what is the cause of all this cruel butchery?” the strangers urge. *What evil hath He done? This Man hath done no evil*, is the answer. *But the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all*. The only cause in Him is this: *He loved me, and delivered Himself up for me—If any man love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema* (1 Cor. xvi.).

D. *And Joseph, taking Him down.*

*When there shall be found in the land the corpse of a man slain, and it is not known who is guilty of the murder, the Ancients of that city shall come to the person slain, and shall wash their hands, . . . and shall say: Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it* (Deut. xxi.).

*Our hands did not shed this Blood.* With my lips I dare not say this impious word, but my life says it.

(a) So long as I have no deep contrition for my sins, I practically deny that they are the cause of His Death.

(b) So long as I live indulging myself, seldom denying self, I virtually deny that I am the cause of these wounds.

(c) So long as I am not strongly impressed with gratitude to my Lord and Saviour, my life is denying that He died for me, and that I am the cause of His Death.

(d) So long as I remain cold and insensible, and have not that fire enkindled in my heart which He came to cast on the earth, I am living as if He has not died on my account.

(e) Worst of all, if by wilful sin I am *crucifying again the Son of God, and making Him a mockery* (Hebrews vi.), I am proclaiming aloud that I am not the cause of His Death.

(f) If I do not hope strongly and firmly that He will pardon me, and give me every necessary grace, I am denying that His death is for me, and on my account, and to cancel all my sins.

(g) *Amantissime juvenis*, St. Augustine writes, "most loving of men, in the flower of Thy youth, what has caused Thy Death? What gave occasion to Thy condemnation? I, I must bear all the blame of Thy bloody Death."

E. *Joseph, taking Him down.*

Contemplate our Blessed Lady.

(a) St. Bernard writes: "The most sorrowful Mother is bathing the face of her Son in an abundance of tears, and gazing upon His head, His hands, His feet, His side, and all His mangled limbs".

(b) And oftentimes she kisses His forehead, His cheeks, and His lips.

(c) St. Bridget describes what she saw in her contemplation: "The loving Mother is seated, and supporting His head on her knee, and with her linen veil is carefully cleansing the wounds".

(d) St. Ephraim makes her say: "Where is now all Thy beauty, my Son? Have pity on Thy bereaved Mother, my most sweet Son."

(e) St. Laurence Justinian: "The heart of the Virgin Mother is become a most bright mirror of the Passion of Christ, and a perfect image of His Death".

(f) He adds: "As she surpasses all saints in grace, in holiness, in merit, so too in her sorrow, in her anguish, in her suffering".

(g) St. Bernard: "I do not believe it possible to form a conception of the sorrow of the Virgin Mother, unless we believe it to be as great as such a Mother could ever suffer for such a Son".

F. *Joseph, taking Him down.*

While contemplating our Lord's Body thus resting on the lap of His Mother, call to mind the words of Isaias, *A throne shall be prepared in mercy* (Isaias xvi.).

He is now on the throne of His mercy.

“Run to the Virgin Mother,” St. Bernard counsels us. “She bears in her hands the King of glory, and is ready to give Him to all that ask.”

G. “*Defunctus adhuc loquitur.*” The dead is still speaking to me. He is saying: *Remember My judgment, for thou also shalt be so. Yesterday for Me, to-day for thee.*

## STATION II.

*Nicodemus also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes*  
(St. John xix.).

A. IN THIS HOUR WE CAN PREPARE FOR OUR LAST ANOINTING AND FOR OUR CONFESSIONS.

Lord Jesus, crucified in the presence of Thy Blessed Mother, I beseech Thee:—

(a) BY THY CROWN OF THORNS AND THY CLOTTED HAIR,  
Give me a true contrition for the sins of my head, my sins of thought.

*Sins of commission.*—Uncharitable thoughts, impure thoughts, irreligious thoughts, despairing thoughts.

*And sins by omission.*—The absence of grateful thoughts, compassionate thoughts, lively faith, strong love, thoughts of praise, thoughts of reverence.

By Thy bloodstained and clotted hair, pardon the sinful vanity of the hair.

(b) BY THY SACRED EYES CLOSED IN DEATH, AND THE TEARS THEY SHED IN LIFE,

Give me true contrition for the sins of my eyes.

*Sins of commission.*—Uncharitable curiosity, scowling, angry and contemptuous looks, impure curiosity, idle and distracting gazing about.

*Sins too of omission.*—Not looking at Thy crucifix, at Thy tabernacle, not reading holy books, turning my eyes away from the needy.

(c) BY THY SACRED EARS,

Give me true contrition for the sins of my ears.

*Sins of commission*—listening to and encouraging detractions and calumny; listening to immodest words, irreligious words, disobedient murmurs against the Church, against legitimate authority.

*Sins of omission*—by not giving ear to good advice, to sermons, to the cry of the poor.

(d) BY THY SACRED MOUTH, DRIED UP AND PARCHED, I beseech Thee, Lord Jesus, in Thy Holy Mother's presence, give me true contrition for the sins of my tongue.

*Sins of commission*—by uncharitable words, immodest words, irreligious words.

*Sins of omission*—by uncharitable silence, not defending the absent, not helping by good advice, not daring to check indecent words and irreligious conversation.

Give me true contrition also for sins of the palate in eating and drinking.

Give me also, for Thy Holy Mother's sake, hearty sorrow for want of fervour, for all negligence, when Thy Blessed Sacrament has been on my tongue.

*By Thy Sacred Lips, cold in death and livid,*

Forgive also, Lord Jesus, every sin of the lips by sensual kissing.

(e) BY THY HOLY FACE, DISFIGURED WITH WOUNDS AND DIRT AND SPITTLE,

Forgive all sins of vanity, and all wicked desires to attract unduly attention and admiration.

(f) BY THY SACRED HANDS, NAILED TO THE CROSS AND POWERLESS IN DEATH,

Give me a true contrition for all the sins of the hands.

*Sins of commission*—every uncharitable or sinful word written, all deeds of revenge, all wicked actions.

*Sins of omission*—all my neglect to open my hands to help those in want.

(g) BY THY SACRED FEET, NAILED TO THE CROSS, COLD AND MOTIONLESS,

Grant me a true contrition for my sinful footsteps.

*Sins of commission*—when I have knowingly gone into occasions of sin.

*Sins of omission*—when I was unwilling to stir a step to honour Thee, to win grace for my poor soul by going to Holy Mass, or to the Sacraments, or to visit Thy poor and Thy sick servants.

(h) BY THY SACRED SIDE PIERCED, AND BY THY BROKEN HEART,

I beseech Thee, in Thy Holy Mother's presence, give me a true contrition for all the sins of my heart.

*Sins of commission*—desires of revenge, thoughts of malice and hatred against men, or against Thee, my God.

*Sins of omission*—all my habitual heartlessness towards my God, my Creator, my Father, my most loving Redeemer; my lifelong want of love for my Lord on His Cross, for my Saviour in the tabernacle, for His Blessed Mother who has been so devoted a Mother to me; all my ingratitude to my Guardian Angel; all my want of compassion for the needy, for the Holy Souls in Purgatory; all my want of the spirit of forgiveness.

(i) BY THE WOUNDS, BRUISES, AND SWELLING SORES ALL OVER THY SACRED BODY, FROM THE SOLE OF THE FOOT TO THE CROWN OF THE HEAD,

I beseech Thee, in presence of Thy most sorrowful Mother, grant me a true contrition for all the wickedness of the sinful flesh.

*Sins of commission*—by impurity, by sensuality, by gluttony, by excessive indulgence in sleeping.

*Sins of omission*—neglect of duty, and neglect of works of mercy, through the sloth of the corruptible flesh that weighs down the soul.

(j) BY THE DEEP WOUNDS ALL OVER THY BODY,

Give me also a true contrition for all my relapses into sin. For as the lash deepened each wound, so have I by relapses aggravated each sin.

B. AND NOW WE COME TO THE SECOND VOLUME OF OUR LORD'S PASSION.

His second Passion He suffered in our Blessed Lady by witnessing the agony of her compassion.

BY THY BLESSED MOTHER, AND THY SACRED PASSION DOUBLED AND TREBLED BY HER SORROW,

Give me a true contrition for the second volume of my sins—the sins I have occasioned in others, my parents, my brothers and sisters, my companions in youth; those with whom I have dealt in after years, some older, some younger; some above me, some below; some now dead, some still living; some of one sex, some of another.

*Sins of commission*—by provoking them to anger, by filling them with uncharitable thoughts, by advising revenge, fomenting quarrels, by flattery, by encouraging wickedness or impurity, by leading others to worldliness, by harshness to those in want or trouble, by shaking faith and hope, by teaching others by example to violate the holy laws of the Church, to neglect Mass, not to observe days of abstinence and fast, by discouraging almsgiving.

*Sins of omission*—by grave neglect, by not correcting those under my charge, by not chiding bad words, by not helping poor sinners, by not giving alms.

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my iniquity.*

*From my hidden sins cleanse me, and from the sins of others spare Thy servant.*

“Give me grace, O God my Lord, that I may repay four-fold to all whom I have wronged.”

C. *Joseph wrapped Him up in the fine linen.*

All is ready now for the winding-sheet, but we read that to give contentment to the Holy Mother, they forbear for a little while longer, that her heart may still continue to contemplate.

“*Attendite.*” For we too must continue to look on Him

Whom we have pierced. Whither else need we go? Have we not all here?

*"Defunctus adhuc loquitur."* I am the Bread of life, the cold and livid lips are saying to us. *This is the Bread that cometh down from Heaven*; not indeed *prepared without labour*; but *having in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste, serving every man's will*; and, it may be, *turned to what every man (likes)* (Wisdom xvi.).

What grace is there that we cannot draw from the fountains of our Saviour?

#### I. HOLY FEAR.

(a) St. Bonaventure: "Here, I know my iniquity. Wo to me that crucified Christ by my sins and have added grief to the grief of His wounds."

(b) St. Augustine: "I the sinner, as I stand here beside Thee, my heart is terror-stricken, my face turns pale, over all my flesh I tremble, while with the eyes of faith I gaze on this too appalling spectacle".

Again: "Man sins, God bears the chastisement. I did the wickedness, the penalty is laid on Thee."

(c) St. Paul: "This is Christ Jesus—'Quem proposuit Deus . . . ad ostensionem justitiæ Suæ'—Whom God has set before us as a manifestation of His justice" (Romans iii.).

(d) St. Bonaventure: "So greatly does God abhor our sin, that He chose to endure His Death rather than tolerate sin". *He did not spare His own Son.*

(e) St. Thomas of Villanova: "If you spread out before me a thousand Hells, I am not so terrified as when I see God dying for me". "What can better strike terror into a sinner, than to see the Son of God atoning by His Death for the guilt of sin?"

(f) St. Thomas Aquinas: "As there is in God infinite majesty, therefore is sin, in a sense, something infinite, and consequently an atonement is needed that has infinite efficacy, the work of a God-Man".

(g) St. Bonaventure: "Is it not quite detestable and intolerable to sin against Thee after Thy Passion?"

## II. HOPEFUL CONTRITION.

(a) Look down, infinite clemency, on me most miserable, and blot out my countless sins in the multitude of Thy tender mercies.

(b) St. Thomas : " Christ has, in His Passion, delivered us from sin, by instituting a process by which all manner of sins can be forgiven. It is as if a physician invented a medicine by which all diseases, future as well as past, could be cured."

(c) St Augustine adds : " There is no antidote so powerful against the fire of lust as the Death of my Redeemer ".

## III. GRATITUDE.

" *Attendite.*" Stay yet a little while beside the crucified Body and the most sorrowful Mother.

" *Defunctus adhuc loquitur*"—*I have yet many things to say to you.*

(a) "*Quid retribuam Domino.*" Our Blessed Mother asks us this question, " What return shall we make to God our Saviour ?" *For (we) are bought at a great price.*

(b) St. Bernard : " O most sweet Lord of all things, and our Saviour, good Jesus, what manner of fitting thanksgiving can I offer Thee ? "

(c) St. Anselm : " Consider the state thou wast in, and what has been done for thee. Ponder on thy necessity, and His benignity."

" Thou wast rapidly going downward into the abyss, whence there is no return, and a burden unbearable was weighing thee down. Such wast thou, and utterly helpless. Oh, what was then thy doom ? Shudder as thou rememberest, tremble as thou thinkest on it.

" O good Jesus, that was my position, when, without my asking it, or expecting it, Thou didst lift off the load that was crushing me. Bent and bowed down as I was, Thou didst raise me from earth, and say, Have confidence, I have redeemed thee, I have given My Life for thee.

" I was in darkness, and Thou didst dawn on me like

the sunlight, and say, If thou cleave to Me thou shalt never fall into the depths, whither thou wast hastening; but I will guide thee into My Kingdom."

He Who did thus by thee, oh, weigh well what manner of love He deserves, and understand how much thou owest to His love.

(d) St. Bernard: "With my whole heart must He be loved, Who vouchsafed to die for me; but how shall that be done in me unless by Thee, my God?"

St. Augustine: "Give me what Thou wishest me to do. Perfect the work begun by Thee; and grant to my unworthiness the grace which by Thy preventing inspirations Thou hast made me desire".

(e) *I will praise Thee, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify Thy name for ever. For Thy mercy is great towards me, and Thou hast delivered my soul out of the lower Hell (Psalm lxxxv.).*

#### IV. A KNOWLEDGE OF OUR VALUE IN GOD'S EYES.

They are going to cover up the sacred face. "But *come, my children,*" our Lady says to us, as we take our farewell look; "*come, my children, and know your worth. For you were bought at a great price.*"

"And remember that the all-wise God could never pay a great price unless your souls were worth a great price."

(a) St. Bernard: "Not little is the dignity of a soul that approaches so nearly to the Eternal Word by the simplicity of its essence, and by its deathless life.

"A great creation is the soul of man, redeemed by the Blood of Christ. Grievous indeed must have been the loss of a soul which could only be recovered by the Blood of Christ."

(b) St. Augustine: "The Son of God shed His Blood for thee. O soul of man, lift thyself up, see what thy worth is.

"Let man recognise what expectations God has of him, and how chastened in his conversation He wishes him to be whom He has loved with so much condescension.

“ Let man understand what his worth is, and what his duty, and as he reflects on what he has cost, let him no longer think meanly of himself, but rather study how to make a return to his Saviour for preserving him.”

(c) If any man were to give his life for me, it would be a great price; but St. Thomas writes: “ The Body of Christ is not to be rated at the natural value of a body, but as the Body of Christ ”.

(d) St. Bernard: “ O soul, stamped with the likeness of God, redeemed by the Blood of Christ, what hast thou to do with the flesh? Why, O man, dost thou so under-rate thy soul, and set thy flesh above it? ”

(e) St. Augustine: “ Carefully then let us keep what Christ purchased with such an expenditure of His Blood. It is not a thing of small value, but the Blood of Christ, that he wantonly wastes who defiles his soul, which was cleansed by the Blood of Christ and by His Passion.

“ Wo to my wretched soul, which seeks not Christ, nor loves Him.

“ Most merciful Jesus, to Thee I commend myself, to Thee I give myself back, to Thee I yield myself up.”

### STATION III.

*And taking Him down, he wrapped Him in fine linen (St. Luke xxiii.).*

*And Joseph, taking the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

#### *A. He wrapped Him in fine linen.*

Now everything has been done reverently and most fittingly. We may then contemplate them lifting the Sacred Body with great care, in order that the winding-sheet may be spread under it, and wrapped round it.

The winding-sheet is a *clean linen cloth*, a new winding-sheet just bought; made of the finest cambric or muslin, manufactured in Egypt for the purpose—fine linen such as Dives wore.

As soon as the shroud hides from their eyes the face so beautiful in its disfigurement, and the form so beloved, silent tears change into a loud lament, the sobbing of their choked hearts.

St. Thomas wishes to have round the altar of the Blessed Sacrament a harmony that is full, and loud, and sweet, and becoming. So is it here. The grief is full and loud, and sweet to the ears of God and most befitting. The winding-sheet, too, and the aromatic herbs, and all other details in this funeral are most becoming.

*B. Joseph wrapped Him in fine linen.*

Jesus is described in the 108th Psalm as *the poor man broken in heart*. Contrast Him with Dives. This rich man had his fine linen and honour and flattery during his life on earth. *Thou didst receive good things in thy life.*

Jesus is poor through life, but in death has the fine linen and much true honour, and wants for nothing. Neither Dives, nor any other man, before or since, is honoured in death by such a funeral as this, for the heart-felt sorrow of mourners is the glory of the dead.

*C. Joseph wrapped Him in fine linen.*

Consider the vigilant solicitude of Holy Mary. At Cana of Galilee her careful eye detected every want. Much more now her heart is keeping heedful watch, and sees that nothing is neglected; and most gratefully she reminds her Father in Heaven of every kindness shown by each of these faithful servants round the Sacred Body.

We have no cause to be envious of them. We can show honour to the Body of the Lord in the Most Holy Eucharist, and we can care for Him in the person of His poor little ones.

*D. Joseph wrapped Him in fine linen.*

It is in this hour, when Jesus dies poor, more poor than He was at His Birth, dies having nothing at all, and yet suddenly possessing all things necessary, and enriching many; it is in this hour that the faithful learn the meaning and the value of Christian poverty, and are urged on to

say from their hearts, "Blessed are Christ's poor: I vow poverty".

For we call it poverty, and our Lord, Who loves to make the most of all we do for Him, calls us His blessed poor. But if we speak accurately, according to our human wisdom, where is our poverty, when God undertakes to watch over us with special care, and to provide us even in this life with a hundred-fold for all we give up?

Blessed indeed are they who trust God, and commit themselves to His care.

*E. Joseph wrapped Him in fine linen.*

So, too, *in this hour* we learn to love almsgiving.

For if those who give up all for God are so well taken care of, need we fear to lend our Lord a little when He is in want?

For almsgiving, as we call it, is not in reality *giving*, but only *lending*; and lending to Him Who is rich enough to repay with good *measure, pressed down, and running over.*

*Give, and it shall be given to you,* is His word.

Therefore, He only asks us to lend. For to give to God what is to be given back, is only lending; and to give what is to be given back with large interest is not real giving, nor even lending, but investing most profitably and most securely.

Still our Blessed Lord, Who is accustomed to *reproach and misery*, and quite unaccustomed to be trusted by men, when He finds one ready to trust Him, and lend to Him, is unbounded in His gratitude.

*F. Joseph wrapped Him in fine linen.*

Not long was the Sacred Body to remain wrapped in the winding-sheet, but long enough to leave its image, with all the wounds, imprinted on the fine linen.

"So many years," our Saviour says to us, "so many years have you known Me, and yet My image is not imprinted on your heart."

*G. Joseph wrapped Him in fine linen.*

Here we have a specimen of the way in which our

Lord returns what is lent to Him. The winding-sheet, when it has done its work, comes back with the true image of the crucified Body upon it, and an image not made by the hand of man, but by Divine power. Where was there ever in this world rich cloth, or tapestry, or embroidery, to compare with the priceless value of this sacred shroud?

## SCENE X.

### PREPARATION FOR THE FUNERAL.

#### STATION I.

*And Joseph taking the Body, laid it in his own new monument, which he had hewed out in a rock (St. Matt. xxvii.). Now there was in the place where He was crucified, a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein no man yet had been laid. There, therefore, because of the Parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus, because the Sepulchre was nigh at hand (St. John xix.). It was the day of the Parasceve, and the Sabbath drew on (St. Luke xxiii.).*

The **STONE OF UNCTION** lies to the west of Calvary and south of the Tomb; and about fifteen feet below the level of *the place where the crosses stood*. From this stone to the new Tomb in the garden, the distance is about forty yards, to the north-west. The path is probably rugged, and up a very slight incline. We are told that the Jews carried lighted torches when they accompanied a corpse to the grave.

#### A. *The Sabbath drew on.*

We may contemplate St. John whispering reverently to our Lady that the great Sabbath will soon commence, and that it is time to carry the Sacred Body to the Tomb. This is heavy news for her heart; but now, as always, she is *full of grace*. As he is now God's angel to her, once more she answers most devoutly: "*Fiat mihi*"—*Be it done to me according to Thy word.*

Oh, how truly might she say: *My soul is sorrowful even unto death.* How heartily she could say: "My Son, my

God, *into Thy hands I commend my spirit,*" if she might sink down on the Stone of Unction, and die.

"My Son Jesus, my Lord and my God, *who will give me that I might die for Thee?* or that I might die with Thee, and be with Thee, and not separated from Thee? *Nevertheless, not as I will, my Son and my Lord, but as Thou.*"

B. *There, therefore, because of the Parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus, because the Sepulchre was nigh at hand.*

As we have seen, it is the Parasceve, the preparation day; that is to say, it is both the festival-day of the Pasch, and the preparation day or vigil of *the great Sabbath*, the Sabbath that occurs during the days of azymes, or unleavened bread.

One reason, therefore, why they do not carry the Body to Gethsemani, is the distance. The Sabbath is drawing near; the time is short.

Another reason doubtless is, *that the poor Man, broken in Heart*, wishes to be poor to the end, and to have the embalming, and His funeral, and His tomb, all as an alms.

Our Lady is therefore well content with this new tomb that is near.

"Blessed Mother of God, pray for all men and women consecrated by the vow of poverty, that they may love their poverty unto death."

"Pray, too, Holy Mother, for all disciples of Christ, that they may ever give alms in gladness *to the poor Man, broken in Heart.*"

C. *There was in the garden a new sepulchre.*

All then is ready; the Admirable Mother has given the sign; and Joseph and Nicodemus, helped, doubtless, by the future martyr, Longinus, bend down devoutly, and with great care and reverential tenderness lift the Sacred Body. We are told that commonly the women mourners headed the funeral procession.

But at this funeral, we find it assumed that the Blessed Mother chooses rather to walk behind the bearers, with her eyes resting on the shroud and her hands supporting

the Sacred Head. St. John is at her side, and Magdalen too perchance, to take care of her as she walks; and the Holy Angels are watching and bearing her up, that she *strike not (her) foot against a stone.*

“*O vos omnes.*” O all you who go by the way, pause on your journey a little while, and follow this holy funeral. For never before has there been on this earth such a spectacle for angels and for men. The mourners are few; but not again till the end of time will there be gathered round a grave, mourners so blessed, so holy; and never again shall there be laid in the tomb a Body like this crucified Body, the Divine Body of God made Man.

All the blessed choirs of Heaven are here with their Queen, taking their part in this new Paschal solemnity; and all are saying: *This mother is to be admired above measure, and worthy to be remembered by good men, who bore with a good courage, for the hope that she had in God; joining a man's heart to a woman's thought* (2 Mach. vii.).

## STATION II.

### THE FUNERAL PROCESSION.

*There, therefore, because of the Parasceve of the Jews, they laid Jesus, because the Sepulchre was nigh at hand* (St. John xix. 42).

#### A. *The Sepulchre was nigh at hand.*

The procession is formed; the torches are alight; and, better than the torch-light, there is heavenly love burning in every heart.

Contemplate at leisure the great solicitude of the bearers, lest by any want of care on their part there should come some disturbing accident. Their Guardian Angels are devoutly helping them at every step.

Mark how they all turn their eyes upon the Sorrowful Mother before they start, for they never tire of looking on the Blessed among women, *full of grace.* “*Qui bibit me, adhuc sitiet*” (Ecclus. xxiv.). Holy Church puts these

words into the mouth of Holy Mary: *They that drink me shall yet thirst for more.*

B. *The Sepulchre was nigh at hand.*

In contemplation we have not only to look at the Admirable Mother's outward appearance and demeanour, as she walks with her hands bearing up the Sacred Head, and her eyes fixed on the holy shroud in which her treasure lies; we are allowed, too, to try to enter into her secret thoughts. *Sursum corda!* Our Guardian Angels whisper to us: "Lift up your hearts and endeavour to form some notion of the heavenly yearnings in her heart". Her Divine Son, as we have seen, used the holy Psalms while on His Cross. What psalm, what canticle, what sacred song is ascending from her heart—more sweet than fragrant incense to God on high?

She, we may say, is "eminenter," that is, transcendently, the Church of her Son. On her the Holy Spirit has already poured out the gifts He has in store for the Church to come. Holy Church, therefore, presents her to us saying: *Counsel and equity is mine; prudence is mine; strength is mine.*

*She, then, may be now filled with that inspiration which afterwards Holy Church communicates to her priests.* When the Sacrifice is consummated, and they come slowly down from their Calvary bearing within them the Body of the Lord, because they have within them the burning fire, the furnace of love, they are taught to repeat the holy Song of the Children in the furnace of Babylon.

So now may the Blessed Mother, as she bears her loved burden, her light burden, be from the very depth of her soul and with all the energy and power of her heart, calling on all God's works to bless the Lord: *All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord. Sing to the Lord a new song.*

For this is now an entirely new Canticle. In the years gone by, God's works were the works of His creation; all the works of the six days. But since the sunset yesterday God is become *known in Judea* in His new character of

Redeemer. New works more wonderful than those of the six days have been crowded into this Good Friday from the First Vespers to the Second.

“O Blessed among women, bid us come round you and learn of you how to make our thanksgiving when we are bearing within us the Body of thy Son.”

#### THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION.

In her heart, then, the fire is burning more actively than in the furnace of the three children. Let us listen most attentively to what she says.

“*Benedicite omnia opera Domini Domino*”—All ye works of the Lord, all ye works of my Divine Son, bless the Lord Jesus.

*Ye angels of the Lord*, ye twelve legions who stood by and saw Him suffer, and recorded diligently every thought and word and work of His from His Conception to His Death, *bless the Lord*; bless my Son with me.

*All ye powers of the Lord* (“*virtutes Domini*”), all ye wonders of His courage and fortitude, manly and more than manly, all Divine, *bless the Lord*, bless my Son Jesus.

*O ye sun and moon*, *bless the Lord*: for He worked for us in the sunlight, He watched for us when the moon shone.

*O ye stars of heaven*, *bless the Lord*, for you were witnesses of His tears and His prayers for men.

*May every shower and dew* bless my Son: for every refreshing shower and dew has been bought anew for us, and, thanks to His death, will bring refreshment to our souls also.

*All ye breezes*, *bless the Lord*: for ye are laden now with fragrance from Calvary.

*May fire and heat* bless my Son: and ever put men in mind of the fire and heat which burned in His Heart.

*O ye cold and heat*, *bless my Son*: for in the cold and in the heat He bore the burden of the day, and He sought and He saved the lost sheep.

*O ye frost and cold, bless the Lord:* for cold was the night as He lay prostrate praying for men.

*May the ice and the snow bless the Lord:* for hearts colder and harder than the ice shall be melted now, and the soul of the sinner shall become white as snow.

*O ye nights and days, bless the Lord:* may every watch of the night and every watch of the day bring to men's minds the Passion of my Son. For He loved them at the sunset, He loved them in the midnight, He loved them at the cock-crow, He loved them as the day broke, He loved them in the noonday, He loved them in the Vesper hour of the evening sacrifice, when He bowed His Head and died. He loved His own to the end.

*O light and darkness, bless my Son:* for He has by His Passion sanctified the light and sanctified the darkness.

*Oh, let the earth bless the Lord:* for He lay upon the earth to pray and weep for men; and the drops of His Blood bedewed and sanctified the earth.

*O ye mountains and hills, bless my Son:* and tell to the hearts of men how He loved them, and prayed for them, and suffered for them, and died for them on the mountain and the hillside.

Four hills at Jerusalem especially invite us to bless the Lord. Mount Sion, on the south, where stands the Cenacle and the houses of Caiphas and Annas. Mount Olivet, on the east, with Gethsemani on its slope. Mount Moriah, also on the east, where was the Temple and Pilate's Prætorium. Mount Calvary, on the west, on the slope of Mount Gareb.

*All ye things that spring up in the earth, bless the Lord:* remind the hearts of men how weary His feet were when they trod upon the grass and the herbs that grow, and how His tears, and the sweat of His brow, and the drops of His Blood, blessed and sanctified the flowers and the herba.

*Ye seas and rivers, bless my Son:* tell my children how in the river He was baptised as their brother, as if one of their sinful selves: and bid them, too, not to forget with what supremacy He hushed to rest the stormy sea.

*O ye fowls of the air, bless my Son, and keep in men's memory that they are dearer to His Heart than the birds of the air, of which He has so much care.*

*O ye beasts and cattle, bless the Lord: and say to men, your masters: The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel hath not known Me, and My people hath not understood (Isaias i.).*

But, more than all these, *ye sons of men*, now given to me to be my children, bless my Son Jesus: for at a great price He bought you.

And *may Israel bless the Lord*: may His chosen people, may His disciples, may the children of His Church, may all whom He calls to follow Him closely, know and love and bless my Son.

And oh, above all, *ye Priests of the Lord*, who are henceforth to offer *the clean oblation*, to hold in your hands the Body of my Son, may you reverence, may you love, may you serve, may you bless my Son Jesus, Who has shared with you His eternal Priesthood.

And *ye servants*, ye faithful servants of the Lord who follow Him closely in meekness, in humility, and in poverty, bless my poor Son, my meek Son, my humble Son, for He has made your yoke sweet and your burden light.

*O ye spirits and souls of the just*, in Heaven, on earth, and in the cleansing fires, bless my Son Jesus: for from His Calvary and His altar joy will go up to Heaven, peace to men on earth, and refreshment to the suffering souls.

“Blessed Mother of God, be with us and help us when we have within us the Body of thy Son Jesus, that we may glorify Him with thee. Mother of God, pray for us sinners.”

C. *The Sepulchre was nigh at hand.*

Though the way be short, make leisure to contemplate carefully. “*Attendite,*” our Lady says to us most kindly;

“for, *defunctus adhuc loquitur*, my crucified Son has still many things to say to you.”

This is the hour in which He impresses this truth upon us, *My yoke is sweet, and My burden light*. “Go ask those loving men who bear My Body: Have I laid a heavy load upon them? Ask any disciple who loves Me whether My yoke is heavy.”

D. *The Sepulchre was nigh at hand.*

“Hearken, My child,” our Lord says, for His silent lips are speaking to you:

“Do not envy these chosen ones”. For “who is more privileged, they who carry Me in their hands, or you who have Me as your Food?”

E. *The Sepulchre was nigh.*

“*Defunctus adhuc loquitur*.” From His winding-sheet our Saviour says to us: “Why do you stand gazing on My funeral? Have I not said it: Go treat My little ones as reverently and lovingly as these disciples treat Me, and it shall be as if you did all to Me?”

#### HOLY OBEDIENCE.

F. *The Sepulchre was nigh.*

“*Defunctus adhuc loquitur*.” His lifeless lips are speaking to us.

“O all you Christian fathers and mothers who pass by, and still more, you Fathers and Mothers who, in monasteries and convents and religious houses, are in charge over My consecrated ones who for My sake have left father and mother, and hence have a right to their hundred-fold—that is, to a hundred times more charity and tenderness, than they have left behind: oh, stay, not a little while, but tarry long, till you fix deeply on your minds and hearts the care, the tenderness, the reverence, the humility, the charity, with which these disciples carry My Body. For you must do according to this model.”

To our Guardian Angels, the Lord hath given a commandment concerning us that they bear us in their hands,

even as mothers carry their infants. What are Christian parents and Christian superiors but the guardian angels of their charge? What is to be their constant solicitude? Surely that Christ's little ones committed to their keeping do not strike their foot against the stone of scandal and fall.

*G. The Sepulchre was nigh.*

If parents and religious superiors can learn from this scene, so may children, and still more, so may those consecrated by vow to obedience, here contemplate with profit. St. Ignatius of Loyola, a great master of obedience, tells us to be in the hands of God's delegates like the Divine corpse in the hands of the bearers. They may carry it whither they will, and it makes no resistance. The lifeless Body here in the winding-sheet is thus our most holy model. *Look, and do according to the pattern.*

If we vow obedience, and are faithful to our covenant, God on His side will be infinitely faithful: and with a Providence that never sleeps or slumbers will see that our vowed obedience brings us nothing but good. Alas! what multitudes of men have been crushed and ruined under the unbearable and unblest yoke of slavish obedience to a tyrant! But nothing on earth is more safe or secure, nowhere a shorter or more blessed path to eternal life, than a wise and loving obedience to our Lord in His delegates.

## SCENE XI.

## THE TOMB.

## STATION I.

*Joseph laid it in his own new Tomb, which he had hewed out of a rock (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

*Joseph laid Him in a Sepulchre that was hewed out of a rock (St. Mark xv.).*

*This man laid Him in a Sepulchre that was hewed in stone, wherein never yet any man had been laid (St. Luke xxiii.).*

*There was in the place, where He was crucified, a garden, and in the garden a new Sepulchre wherein no man yet had been laid. There, therefore, they laid Jesus, because the Sepulchre was nigh at hand (St. John xix.).*

1. The Tomb is situated, as has been said, about forty yards from THE STONE OF UNCTION, and a few yards less from the spot where the crosses stood. It stands about fifteen feet lower than the level of Calvary, to the south. St. John's words support the existing tradition as to the site. According to him, the garden in which the new Tomb stood, is *in the place where He was crucified: and the Sepulchre was nigh at hand.*

2. St. Luke writes: *A Sepulchre that was hewed in stone.* Some students have understood these words to mean, "built out of hewn stones". But the words of St. Matthew and St. Mark render this interpretation improbable.

St. Matthew writes: *A Sepulchre hewed out in a rock; St. Mark, hewed out of a rock.*

The tradition so generally accepted agrees better with these words. According to this tradition the Holy Sepulchre was hewed out in a solid rock.

3. As we have seen in former chapters, the tombs in Judea were sometimes like our graves, hollowed out in the ground and covered with a slab; sometimes hewn out of a projecting rock, and with an upright doorway; sometimes, again, they were built of cut stones.

4. The tomb of our Lord is hewn out of the rock, with an upright doorway between three and four feet high.

At the time of the burial it consisted of two parts: an outward vestibule or ante-chamber, about a yard in depth, and then an inward chamber, entered by the low door mentioned above.

The outward porch, or vestibule, was cut away, it is supposed, in St. Helen's time by those who were building the Basilica.

The inward chamber is about nine feet from east to west, that is, from the entrance doorway to the opposite wall, and about seven feet from south to north. The height of the inner chamber was probably about nine feet. Venerable Bede writes that in his time travellers could scarcely touch the ceiling with their lifted hands. The stone bed on which the Sacred Body was laid, stands on the right hand of the entrance door, from east to west; that is, along the right hand wall of the chamber as you enter.

5. A question is discussed whether the Holy Sepulchre remained united with the rock behind, or was detached from it. Some careful writers think that at the time of the burial it was attached to the rock, but was separated and isolated by the builders who worked for St. Helen's Basilica.

6. Some modern critics who assail the traditions regarding the Holy Sepulchre, adduce the argument, that there is no rock on the ground from which the Tomb could have been hewed. The supporters of the tradition answer, that the rock was necessarily cleared away when the workmen were levelling the ground for the great Basilica.

7. The opponents of the tradition likewise argue that if the Tomb now venerated be the true one, the foundations of the city wall ought to be found at about two hundred or two hundred and fifty feet to the east.

The answer given by careful explorers is that some portions of those foundations have been discovered; but that as the eastern wall of the Basilica stood on the western wall of the city, some of the foundations of the wall were cleared away, and in other parts, the foundations of the wall and the foundations of the Basilica became confounded together.

#### A. *There, therefore, they laid Jesus.*

In front, then, of the Holy Tomb they lower the bier. Students of Jewish antiquities tell us that funeral processions, as soon as the bier was laid down, walked round it reciting the goth Psalm.

We may contemplate this holy company of mourners observing the prescribed rite. We can listen to the Admirable Mother, *worthy to be remembered by good men*, saying in most devout sorrow: *He that dwelleth in the aid of the Most High, shall abide under the protection of the God of Jacob.* And we can listen to the response from tearful and broken voices: *He shall say to the Lord: Thou art my Protector and my Refuge; my God, in Thee will I put my trust.*

Most attentively we must give ear, and join our hearts with this holy choir as they continue their song of hope.

*He hath delivered Me from the snare of the hunters. He will overshadow Thee with His shoulders, and under His wings Thou shalt trust.*

*Thou shalt not be afraid of the terrors of the night; of the arrow that flieth in the day.*

*There shall no evil come to Thee (now). Neither shall the scourge (any more) come near Thy dwelling.*

*He hath given His angels charge over Thee. Because He hoped in Me I will deliver Him. I will protect Him because He hath known My name.*

*I am with Him in tribulation. I will deliver Him, and will glorify Him.*

*I will fill Him with length of days, and I will show Him My salvation.*

*B. Joseph laid it in his own new Tomb.*

Joseph, therefore, and Nicodemus, bending down enter through the low door into the Tomb, and then the bier is drawn by the others close to the doorway.

With great care and reverence, those outside, without difficulty, lift the emaciated Body and deliver it into the hands of Joseph and Nicodemus inside, who devoutly lay it on its last resting-place; and at once come out, to make room for the Blessed Mother. Helped by John and Magdalen, she bows herself down and enters with them. There she kneels, as they kneel, to adore the Sacred Body.

“*Attendite.*” We must stay here to form, in our poor way, some conception of her holy thoughts.

Most reverently and lovingly she gazed in days gone by on her Child as He lay in the crib. In after years day by day, and hour by hour, her holy eyes rested on Him as *He grew in grace with God and with men*; and now she kneels and fixes her motherly eyes on the shroud that contains, what we call, the mortal remains of her Son, the lifeless Body of her God.

As she enters the Tomb and kneels, the blessed angels are watching their Queen with reverence and love ineffable. "*Dominus custodiat introitum tuum et exitum tuum*"—"Hail, full of grace! May the Lord keep thee and bless thee and enrich thee with more and more graces at thy coming in and at thy going out of His holy Tomb."

With admirable diligence she has trafficked ever since the hour when she first looked on her Son. Every hour, every minute, she has grown in grace. In every act and every word and every thought she has been *full of grace*; full with a fulness ever growing in her heart, which grace is always enlarging—"Dilatasti cor meum" (Psalm cxviii.). Full of grace she enters into the holy Tomb; more full she goes out. For her heart traffics with all the diligence of perfect love while she is there.

Our Lady's devout servant, St. Bonaventure, suggests to us thoughts such as may have been in our Lady's mind in this hour.

"My Son, I clasp Thee in death to my heart. Hard indeed is this separation made by death. Sweet and full of delight was our intercourse. To others we never gave cause of complaint or quarrel, though Thou, my Son, art now slain as if guilty. Faithfully, my Son, I served Thee and Thou me. But in Thy supreme agony and conflict Thy Father willed not to give Thee help, and I had not power to help Thee.

"For the sake of mankind whom Thou wouldst redeem, Thou didst betray Thyself. Hard indeed and cruel exceedingly was Thy task of redeeming. For man's salvation I rejoice in Thy Passion. But over Thy pain and Thy Death I grieve beyond measure. For I know well that Thou hast done no evil, and altogether without cause wast cruelly put to death, a death so shameful.

"Now, therefore, my Son, our intimate union is rent asunder, and I must needs be separated from Thee. I, then, Thy disconsolate Mother, must bury Thee. But after that whither shall I go? Where shall I dwell, my

Son? How shall I be able to live without Thee? Gladly indeed would I be buried with Thee, that wherever Thou art there I might rest. But as for my body, that may not be; but my spirit can be buried. My soul I can bury with Thy Body within Thy Tomb."

As she thus pours out her heart, her tears are flowing fast upon the winding-sheet.

But the Most Prudent Virgin knows she may not tarry longer; she rises up and once more clasps in her arms the Sacred Body, and most humbly and lovingly kisses it, and, remembering her Son's parting prayer, lifts up her eyes and says with all the fervour of her heart: "O Father, into Thy hands, into Thy keeping, I commend His Divine Body. I go, whither I must go; but my heart will remain where my treasure is."

Once more her Archangel whispers to her soul: *Fear not, Mother of God. Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with thee. He is not dead, but sleepeth.*

## STATION II.

*And the women that were come with Him from Galilee, following after, saw the Sepulchre, and how His Body was laid (St. Luke xxiii.).*

*And Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of Joseph beheld where He was laid (St. Mark xv.).*

*And Joseph rolled a stone to the door of the Sepulchre (St. Mark xv.).*

*And Joseph rolled a great stone to the door of the Monument (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

*A. And the women that were come with Him from Galilee, following after, saw the Sepulchre, and how His Body was laid.*

Our Blessed Lady, doubtless, shortens her visit to the Tomb, because her humble charity wishes the other devout mourners to come in and see how they have laid Him.

When, therefore, John has helped her to go out through the low door, Magdalen remains within, and Mary of Cleo

phas, the mother of Joseph, and her daughter Salome, and other devout women from Galilee enter, to see how the Sacred Body is laid. For as we have seen, if *fear neglects nothing*, love is still more accurate, and keen to know every detail. When reminded by Joseph that the sunset is not far off, they all fall on their knees to adore and with reverent obedience retire. Sorrow when not so blessed and so holy is at times unreasonable; but this is an acceptable hour, and Calvary is an acceptable spot. Grace is being poured out in abundance.

*B. And Joseph rolled a great stone to the door of the Monument.*

Joseph and Nicodemus roll, along the groove prepared for it, the large round stone that is to close up the doorway. From the fragment of this stone still preserved in the small chapel at Jerusalem belonging to the Armenians, which is supposed to stand on the site of the house of Caiphaz, we can see that it was circular like a millstone.

Forget not that this great stone barrier can make no separation between the hearts of these mourners and the crucified Body. They can all say: *I am sure that neither death nor life, nor things present, nor things to come, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is Christ Jesus our Lord.*

### STATION III.

*And there was there Mary Magdalen, and the other Mary, sitting over against the Sepulchre.*

*And Joseph rolled the great stone to the door of the Monument and went his way (St. Matt. xxvii.).*

*And the women that were with Him, returning, prepared spices and ointments; and on the Sabbath-day they rested according to the commandment (St. Luke xxiii.).*

*A. The women returning prepared spices.*

Some of the women, therefore, hastened away to procure spices and ointments.

From this fact we learn that all has been accomplished

at the Tomb some time before sundown, when the Great Sabbath begins.

Mark the loving devotion of these women. They have gone through much toil to-day. They are worn out with grief. Nicodemus has provided a very ample store of aromatics: but their hearts are not content. Enough has not been done for the Lord Jesus. What wonder? Was He content with what He had done for us, as long as more could be done?

What is the angelic St. Thomas's counsel to us with regard to the Body of our Lord hidden in the tabernacle?

Quantum potes, tantum aude,  
Quia major omni laude,  
Nec laudare sufficit.

Whate'er thou hast, O give it all;  
For still thy gift shall be too small,  
And never canst thou give enough.

*B. And there was there Mary Magdalen and the other Mary, sitting over against the Sepulchre.*

All then did not hasten away. As we often observe, the Evangelists are reticent about our Lady. *It is good*, St. Raphael said, *to hide the secret of a King* (Tob. xii.). What passes between our Lord and His Mother is surely the secret of the King. But still, we are allowed and encouraged to conjecture. We may then assume that Magdalen remains there because she too is there as well as the other Mary.

*C. There was there Magdalen and the other Mary.*

St. John in the Apocalypse, writes: *I saw a Book sealed with seven seals: and I wept much because no man was worthy to open the Book, or to see it* (Apoc. v.).

Doubtless the Holy Mother and Magdalen and the other Mary begin again to weep, and weep much, now that the great stone is rolled and the door closed, and no one can open it for them.

*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* (Lament. iv.).

Could our Lady say these words, or only Magdalen? Perhaps she also might, for if her Divine Son can identify

Himself with His sinful brethren, and pray as if He were the sinner, so, doubtless, can the Blessed Mother make herself one with her sinful children, to plead with them, and for them.

How earnestly Abigail pleaded with David for her foolish husband, and took his sins upon herself: *Upon me let the iniquity be, my lord. Let not the lord, my King, regard this naughty man, Nabal* (1 Kings xxv.). So may the Most Holy Mother unite herself with her new family and say: *The breath of our Lord, Christ the Lord, is taken in our sins.*

And Magdalen and John and others can add: "When He was with us we felt secure, and said: *Under Thy shadow* we can go anywhere on the earth and *live among the Gentiles*".

*D. Mary Magdalen, and the other Mary, sitting over against the Sepulchre.*

"Blessed Saints, now seeing in Heaven the Lord *face to face*, pray for us exiles, that we may have grace to tarry over against the Sepulchre thinking on Him Whom we have pierced, and listening to what He speaks to us from the Tomb."

#### HOLY COMMUNION.

"*Attendite.*" When the Most Holy Eucharist is given to us, each of us becomes the Sacred Tomb.

"Holy Mother of God, be with us in that hour. And ye, too, blessed Saints of Calvary, St. John and St. Magdalen, St. Joseph and Nicodemus, St. Dismas and St. Longinus, intercede for us that once more your beloved Lord may have a fitting tomb to rest in."

(a) THE SEPULCHRE ON CALVARY IS NEW AND CLEAN. *Create in me, O God, a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within my bowels.*

(b) THE TOMB ON CALVARY IS HEWED IN THE ROCK. Alas! blessed Saints, my heart, too, is of stone. Beseech the Holy Mother to remind her Son of His promise: *I will pour upon you clean water, and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness. And I will put a new spirit in their*

bowels. *And I will take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh* (Ezech. xi. and xxxvi.).

(c) THE TOMB OF JOSEPH IS A RESTING-PLACE FOR JESUS. *There the wicked cease from tumult, and the wearied in strength (is) at rest* (Job iii.). The cry of Vah, and Away with Him, does not reach Him here. Alas! shall His enemies be in my soul to molest Him and offend Him during His short stay with me?

(d) THIS TOMB IN THE ROCK IS COLD. "Mother of God, pray for us poor sinners, that the fire of anger may be quite extinct when we go to the altar; and that no unhallowed fire of concupiscence may be burning."

(e) IN THE TOMB ON CALVARY THERE IS SILENCE.

"Blessed Mother, pray for us, that when we are preparing for the Holy Table we may with thee have the words of thy Son laid up in our hearts, but not the idle and sinful words of the world disturbing us."

(f) THE DOOR OF THE TOMB ON CALVARY IS CLOSED AND SEALED.

"O Admirable Mother, pray for us poor sinners, that when thy Divine Son is with us, we may have a lively faith, and close the doors of our senses, and love to remain with Him; and not be in haste to scatter our thoughts and to have our souls poured abroad like water."

Alas! our Blessed Lord described our souls when He said that the good seed fell upon the open highway, and the birds of the air came and carried it away.

(g) THE SEPULCHRE OF THE LORD IS GLORIOUS. Why? Because His Sacred Body there reposed once, and for a short time. How glorious in the sight of the angels, how pure, how holy ought to be the Christian soul and the Christian's body, which has been so often, so often, the resting-place of the Lord. *So long a time am I with you, and not yet have you known Me* (St. John xiv.). The tongue on which My Body reposes, is it still to be a *restless evil*? The body now become the Sepulchre of the Lord, is it still to be a *body subject to sin*?

## THE VOW OF CHASTITY.

E. *And there was there Mary Magdalen, and the other Mary, sitting over against the Sepulchre.*

Above all others, consecrated Religious ought to love to sit here with Magdalen over against the holy Tomb, for it is a picture of the consecrated soul of the Bride of Christ.

(a) *There was in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein no man had been laid.*

If to all Christians St. Paul writes: *I am jealous of you with the jealousy of God. For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ* (2 Cor. xi.), what words would He speak to hearts consecrated by the vow of chastity?

(b) And what all good Christians desire to be on the day of Holy Communion, the consecrated must be habitually.

Therefore, fires of passion must not burn in that soul—**THE TOMB IS COLD.**

(c) The noises of this world must not intrude there—**THE TOMB IS SILENT.**

(d) There Jesus must find a resting-place—**THE WICKED MUST NOT TROUBLE HIM. Jesus weary in strength MUST THERE AT LEAST BE AT REST** (Job iii.).

(e) There must the gate be closed and guarded—*A garden enclosed: a fountain sealed up* (Cant. iv.).

All the senses are gates, to be opened when the Lord wills, but not at the bidding of His enemies—the world, the flesh, the devil.

My consecrated Spouse *is a garden enclosed and a fountain sealed up.*

*A garden enclosed:* for whenever the soul is kept in holy recollection, then fragrant virtues send up their perfume to the Lord.

*A fountain sealed up:* for whenever the powers of the soul are not weakened by dissipation, the consecrated

surely becomes a plentiful *fountain* whence grace flows forth to other souls.

*This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it; because the Lord hath entered in by it, and it shall be shut* (Ezech. xliv.).

*My house shall be called a house of prayer.* You shall not make it a *den of thieves*.

A wise spiritual Father used to say: "Shut up a good Religious in a prison and his soul will do something great for God". On the other hand, the dying Patriarch said to his son: *Thou art poured out like water, grow thou not* (Genesis xlix.).

When the gates of the senses stand always open, the heavenly seed of grace can always be carried away by the birds of the air; there can be no growth of heavenly strength.

(f) *A fountain sealed up.* All the rules and regulations of religious life, the prescribed discipline of the house, and the walls of enclosure, are only the seals set upon the Tomb where our Lord rests.

(g) Observe, too, the Body only of our Lord is imprisoned; His Divine Soul is at large, multiplying works of mercy. And so in religious life, even where enclosure is most strict, while the wise of this world exclaim against the idle recluse, the consecrated soul can range over the earth, praying with tears for every sinner in need. Yes, and it can travel beyond the bounds of the earth, to give relief to the Holy Souls in Purgatory, and to give glory and joy to our Lord in Heaven.

F. *And there was there Mary Magdalen, and the other Mary, sitting over against the Tomb.*

"O vos omnes"—O all ye who go by the way, stay here a little while, watching with the Mother of God and with Magdalen; watching and listening, for, "*defunctus adhuc loquitur*". Words will be whispered into your soul from the silent Tomb.

For from His Tomb He reminds us of the word He afterwards taught to His Apostle.

*(You) are buried together with Him by Baptism unto death (Romans vi.).*

In Baptism the old man of sin dies and is buried: and we rise out of the heavenly waters *to walk in newness of life (Romans vi.).*

Stay by My Tomb, and look at the dead Body crucified for you, and *do according to the pattern.*

Stay here contemplating, till from My Sepulchre a virtue goes out to your soul to extinguish *the lust of the flesh.*

Stay here till from My closed eyes grace goes out to cure in you *the lust of the eyes* for riches.

Stay here beside My Tomb till through My Death and Passion your soul is delivered from *the pride of life.*

G. *There was there Mary Magdalen sitting over against the Tomb.*

Because many sins are forgiven her, she stays here, loving much. *Look thou and do according to the pattern.*

H. *Sitting over against the Tomb.*

St. Paul, in after years, wisely tarried here *considering in his heart* this lifeless Body, till death became dear to him, and he was able to say with gladness, *I die daily.* He was daily going through the bitterness of death.

St. Ignatius tells his disciples that their chiefest and most earnest endeavour ought to be to win grace to die daily and hourly by self-denial. For in proportion as self dies, Christ Jesus lives and reigns in our hearts.

I. *Sitting over against the Tomb.*

*His Sepulchre shall be glorious (Isaias xi.).* Already the fulfilment of the prophecy has begun. It is not costly marble or rich carvings that make a tomb glorious, but the hearty and holy mourning of the faithful who survive. When survivors have in their hearts a good word to say for the dead, as they had for Dorcas, we may believe the old proverb, *Vox populi, vox Dei*; and have a strong hope

that it has fared well with the departed one at the judgment seat.

Our Blessed Lord counsels us all to make friends of the poor by works of mercy and by charity, that when we fail *they may receive (us) into everlasting dwellings* (St. Luke xvi.).

*Blessed are ye poor, He says, for yours is the Kingdom of God.* It is yours, to possess it yourselves; and it is yours, to give it by your suffrages to those who have been your friends.

J. *Sitting over against the Tomb.*

*His Sepulchre shall be glorious* to the end of time. For He has taken measures for our sakes and for His own, that it shall not be forgotten. *He hath made a memorial of His wonderful works.* The Tabernacle is His glorious Sepulchre. There He lies as if dead, as if He did not see nor hear, that we may live by faith, and merit by believing. But every instant He is watching for us, yearning for us, hearing most gladly every desire of our hearts, and ever inviting us, *Come to Me you who labour.*

*How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts!*

With what contentment of heart would they who now sit over against Thy Tomb remain also before Thy holy Tabernacle saying:

O memoriale mortis Domini!	O sweet memorial of my Saviour
Panis vivus, vitam præstans homini!	dead!
Præsta meæ menti de te vivere,	O ever living and life-giving Bread!
Et Te illi semper dulce sapere.	Grant that my soul on Thee may
	ever live,
	And taste the sweetness it is Thine
	to give. <sup>1</sup>

*My soul longeth for the courts of the Lord, my heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God. For the sparrow hath found herself a house, and the turtle a nest for herself where she may lay her young ones: Thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Better is one day in*

<sup>1</sup> Father Eyre's translation.

*Thy courts above thousands. I have chosen to be an abject in the courts of the Lord rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners (Psalm lxxxiii.).*

*Till the day break, and the shadows retire, I will go to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense (Cant. iv.).*

St. Bernard teaches that as often as we think devoutly on the Passion we make a good spiritual Communion.

## SCENE XII.

### FAREWELL TO THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

#### STATION I.

*And Joseph rolled a great stone to the door of the monument, and went his way (St. Matt. xxvii. 60).*

A. We need not believe that Joseph went away before our Blessed Lady retired. Doubtless he would stay with her to the end, to be her servant.

Before his departure, therefore, at a sign from the Blessed Mother, he leads the way from the Sepulchre back to the Cross on Calvary, for the Cross of Jesus is still standing.

The Holy Ghost has given us a picture of the valiant woman who *hath looked well to the paths of her house, and hath not eaten her bread idle (Prov. xxxi.).* Holy Mary is *the valiant woman*, and she wishes to look carefully to see in what state she leaves everything on *the mountain of myrrh, the hill of frankincense.* Worn and weary as she is, she has no mind *to eat her bread idle.*

We may contemplate our Lady, with her devout companions, kneeling down to adore and kiss the Holy Rood.

“We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee. Because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.”

By her direction, Joseph and Nicodemus again set their ladders, and carefully wash with their sponges every part of the Cross that is stained by the Sacred Blood.

And then they take out the wedges that fix the Holy Rood in the rock, and most carefully lower it. So that the Blessed Mother and all the rest can devoutly kiss the places of the nails, and the glorious title in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.

*B. Joseph went his way.*

The servants of Nicodemus and Joseph are still here, and very gladly will they, if so it may be, do service to the Holy Mother, by carrying away the Holy Rood. But the centurion, Longinus, has not, because of his conversion, lost the sense of duty, nor ceased to be an obedient soldier. He represents to Joseph that the Governor's warrant has only given the Sacred Body; that he, therefore, is bound to carry out the law, and bury in the appointed grave the instruments of death, the Cross and the nails, and the title also which belongs to the Cross.

Some devout writers think that our Lady had the holy nails with her in her solitude; but the tradition is that they were found by St. Helen with the Cross and the title. The crown of thorns was not included in Pilate's sentence. therefore need not be buried.

"O Eternal Father," the Blessed Mother's breaking heart once more sighs out, "*if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me. Must I part with the Holy Cross of my Lord? with this loved death-bed of my Son? And must these precious nails too be buried deep down in the earth?*"

"*They have laid me in the lower pit, in the dark places, and in the shadow of death. Shall Thy wonders, my Son, be known in the dark, and Thy justice in the land of forgetfulness? (Ps. lxxxvii.). Shall Thy love, my God, be buried and forgotten? But, O my Father, not as I will, but as Thou.*"

But her blessed Angels made known to her that not for ever shall the Holy Cross and the nails lie buried; that for a season concealment will be a necessary protection against her enemies; but in due time, one walking in her

footsteps, one *joining a woman's thought to a man's heart*, will recover the lost treasure for Holy Church.

Contemplate our Blessed Lady with most humble obedience giving up the holy nails which she has been carrying in her bosom.

## STATION II.

### AT THE GRAVE OF ST. DISMAS.

*Joseph rolled a stone, and went his way* (v. 60).

A. The grave used for the crucified malefactors on this occasion, we are told, was a wide cleft, a fissure in the rock, possibly caused by the earthquake. It stood between 40 and 50 feet below the level of Calvary, in the city ditch that lay to the east, between Golgotha and the fortifications, about two hundred feet from the spot where the crosses stood.

Down to this grave Nicodemus and Joseph and St. Longinus devoutly carry the Holy Rood and the nails. There they cover them up in the earth, to wait the hour when the dark night of persecution is ended, and a Sabbath-day of rest is granted to Holy Church.

Dulce lignum, dulces clavos,	Dear Cross, dear nails, lie buried there,
Dulce pondus sustinet.	Dear was the Burden that ye bare.

*B. Joseph went his way.*

After she has noted carefully where and how they have laid the Holy Cross and the Nails, and the Title, she prays them to show her the exact spot where the body of the good thief is lying with his cross. Then, knowing her wishes, they reverently arrange, as best they can, his resting-place also. And now the deep wound of her heart is opened afresh, for there, close beside, is the body and the cross of the impenitent.

The word of holy Simeon is weighing her down: *He is set for the fall and the resurrection of many.*

Alas, alas! she knows too well, this is only the first example of the Christian graveyard, where saint and sinner shall lie side by side. Both have looked on the

crucifix: both have knelt at the altar; both have been fed with the Body of the Lord.

Sumunt boni, sumunt mali,  
Sorte tamen inæquali,  
Vitæ, vel interitus.

The wicked and the good,  
Both taste the Heavenly Food,  
One is the Food; not so  
The outcome—weal and woe.

*All did eat of the same spiritual food, and all drank of the same spiritual drink. And they drank of the spiritual rock that followed them, and the rock was Christ. But with the most of them God was not pleased (1 Cor. x).*

C. *Joseph went his way.*

Contemplate Holy Mary gazing through her tears on the grave of St. Dismas.

When David, in the early days of his reign, stood in Hebron by the grave of his murdered General Abner, *he lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner, and all the people also wept. And the young King moaning and lamenting over Abner said: Not as cowards are wont to die, Abner died. The King also said to his servants: Do you not know that a prince and a great man is slain this day in Israel? (2 Kings iii).* The Blessed Mother now says a loving word to let her companions know how great a Saint lies buried there with the Holy Cross.

### STATION III.

#### RETURN TO THE PLACE OF CALVARY.

*Joseph rolled a great stone and went his way (v. 60).*

A. From the grave of the good thief and of the holy Cross, our Blessed Lady wishes to return *to the place of Calvary.* The rough pathway is up a very steep incline. Her companions express their great anxiety lest the effort be too great for her wasted strength, but she gently reassures them, and they most reverently and lovingly help her to ascend.

Arrived at Calvary, they all kneel with her to kiss the spot where the Cross was planted in the rock. *Look unto the rock whence you are hewn, and the hole of the pit whence*

*you are dug out. Look unto Abraham your father, and to Sara that bore you.* (Isaias li.). Out of this rock sprang for us the tree of life. Here Jesus hung for us, "and there," close by, they whisper to Nicodemus and Joseph, "the Blessed Mother stood motionless during the dark hours".

All the ground near is consecrated by the drops of blood and water that fell upon it.

Blood of Christ, inebriate me.

Water from the Side of Christ, wash me.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.

B. *Joseph went his way.*

They move on a few yards, and again kneel, saying nothing, but weeping much.

"On this spot," Longinus the Centurion tells Joseph, "the Cross was laid on the ground. It was here they crucified Him." The Blessed Mother knows exactly where the blood flowed down from the feet, the exact spot where the right hand was nailed, and where the left hand. They help her to move, in order that she may again and again kiss each sacred spot. *Non fallunt viscera matrem*—"Her mother's heart forgets nothing".

"We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee; because by Thy holy Cross, Thou hast redeemed the world."

C. *Joseph went his way.*

Again they lift her up reverently and move on a few paces. Once more she stays her steps and bows her head. It was on this spot they forced off the crown of thorns from His Head, and dragged from His wounded Body His woollen tunic. It was here she saw Him stand naked and shivering.

O quam tristis et afflicta,  
Fuit illa benedicta,  
Mater unigeniti.

Alas! Oh, how sad, how wobegone  
Was, in that hour, the blessed one,  
The Mother of that only Son.

D. *Joseph went his way.*

And now before they leave the level of Calvary, she gently reminds John of her Divine Son's words: *Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost* (St. John vi.). She

earnestly begs of him to see that not one of the sacred relics of Calvary be left behind.

And now, with her own eye, that has ever looked *well to the paths of her house* (Prov. xxxi.), Holy Mary surveys carefully all that they have collected together. She is that admirable and prudent woman who *considered the field and bought it (ibid.)*; and poor as she is to-day, the watching providence of her God has taken care that from Joseph and Nicodemus and loving Magdalen, alms come in plenty to enable them to buy for her the precious relics she had so well *considered*. Part of her treasure, indeed, is gone; the sacred nails, which they had purchased, and which she carried in her bosom, are gone, but many things remain of which her heart now makes a faithful inventory.

Here is the holy crown. John promises to carry it most carefully; not a thorn shall be lost.

Here is the seamless tunic, the *dyed garment, the apparel red* and stained, like theirs *that tread in the wine-press*; Magdalen will keep it safely.

Here is the purple mantle the soldiers put upon Him, for it also has been secured.

Longinus cannot as yet give up the sacred lance that opened the Master's side. Duty forbids it, it is not his to give. *'Tis well, 'tis well*, the Blessed Mother commends his fidelity; "fear not, it will come later to be the treasure of His Church".

But they have the hyssop, and the sponge that moistened His lips; and they have the reed that was His sceptre. "Here, too," St. John says, "are the sponges that helped to wash His Sacred wounds."

"These are the cords that bound His hands and arms last night and this morning; and these the cords used to fasten Him to the Cross while they were nailing Him."

## STATION IV.

## DESCENT FROM THE PLACE OF CALVARY.

*And Joseph went his way (v. 60).*

A. When the Admirable Mother is satisfied that no sacred relic is missing, and has confided each to its faithful keeper, they begin to descend from the Sacred Sanctuary. Joseph leads the way southward towards the city, but the Holy Mother points to one spot very near on the north side, and thither they first bend their steps.

Longinus explains to Joseph and Nicodemus: "In this grotto they imprisoned your Master while they were preparing the holes in the rock for the crosses. *They humbled His feet in fetters.* If the Greek tradition be true, the Blessed Mother finds there the stone stocks in which His legs were fastened that He might not escape. Here, too, they offered Him the wine mixed with myrrh and gall, which *when He had tasted He would not drink.*

"Blessed Mother and holy Saints of Calvary, obtain for us grace to imitate the abstinence of our Lord."

B. *Joseph went his way.*

From the prison they begin to go southward; and passing between Calvary on the left hand, and the Holy Sepulchre on the right, arrive in a few minutes at *the Stone of Unction*, and pause a little while, remembering all they witnessed there.

Sancta Mater, istud agas,  
Crucifixi fige plagas,  
Cordi meo valide.

Do this for me, O Mother blest,  
Deeply imprint within my breast  
The wounds of Jesus crucified.

SCENE XIII.

FAREWELL TO CALVARY.

STATION I.

*Joseph went his way* (St. Matt. xxvii. 60).

A. Their backs are now turned on Calvary, and they are moving southward.

“*O vos omnes.*” Oh, let us all take notice how in body only the Blessed Mother is leaving Calvary. Her heart will remain *where her treasure shall be*. Look well, and *do according to the pattern*.

Whenever we go into the Holy Altar and the Tabernacle, *may the Lord guard (our) going in and coming out* (Psalm cxx.). Holy Simeon went into the Temple *in the spirit*. Alas! shall we go in only in body? And when there in body, shall our hearts be elsewhere? Shall our souls haste away from thence even before our bodies retire?

B. *Joseph went his way.*

Very soon they halt once more. Magdalen and John and Longinus know well the reason. Here for the third and last time Jesus fell, to adore His Eternal Father before going to the Altar of Sacrifice.

“Blessed Mother and holy Saints, pray for us sinners who have fallen, not only three times, but many times.”

C. *Joseph went his way.*

Here are the crossroads. It was here that He said to the daughters of Jerusalem: *Weep not over Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children*. Oh, with what unspeakable emotion the Blessed Mother now does His bidding, and pleads for her poor children—the children of her pain; the children of Calvary. “I have delivered up my first-born, Eternal Father, to save my other children. *Tantus labor non sit cassus*—Let not all this agony be void.”

D. *Joseph went his way.*

Walking slowly southwards, they have reached the Judgment Gate.

Here they all turn round with the Holy Mother; for this is the last point whence they can see Calvary; and here on their knees, they breathe their farewell to the Sepulchre and the holy Cross.

“We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee; because by Thy holy Cross Thou hast redeemed the world.”

When they have lifted her up, Joseph, as St. Bonaventure writes, with great humility, approaches our Lady to tell her that there is hard by a cottage belonging to him of which she can take possession as her home. She will then be near to Calvary and the Tomb. He reminds her how greatly she needs repose, and how relieved all her companions will be if they can see her having a little rest. The Blessed Mother thanks him most heartily and most reverently for his great charity; but answers that she is confided to the keeping of John, and wishes only to go wherever he leads. John replies that it seems to him that the proper resting-place for the Holy Mother is in the sacred Cœnaculum where she spent the last night.

Magdalen, too, St. Bonaventure tells us, earnestly entreats our Lady to come to her dwelling-place, where she will be safe.

If St. Magdalen makes this offer, either she has a lodging in town, besides her home at Bethany, or she intends to provide some kind of carriage for the Blessed Mother. We can scarcely believe that she would propose that Holy Mary, in her state of extreme weakness, should go either on foot or on horseback to the loved home at Bethany, beyond Mount Olivet.

To Magdalen's affectionate entreaties, John's answer is that it will be better if she accompanies the Holy Mother to the Cœnaculum. Magdalen, with the impetuosity of her love, answers at once that most surely she will go wherever the Blessed Mother goes, and nowhere else.

E. *Joseph went his way.*

Joseph, therefore, now bids a sorrowful farewell and retires ; and the Holy Mother, with her companions, passes through the Judgment Gate into the city.

Here they see the stone near the gate where the written sentence was affixed in the forenoon.

Immediately after, they make a short stay on the spot where the Lord fell for the second time. There His sacred face was bruised by the pavement, and all the wounds in His Body renewed.

Eia Mater, fons amoris,  
Me sentire vim doloris  
Fac, ut tecum lugeam.

O Mother, Fount of charity,  
Let me share thy agony,  
Make me weep with thee.

They have to take great care of the Holy Mother, as she descends the steep pavement and arrives at length at the door of Veronica. This faithful disciple is, we are told, a most intimate friend of our Lady, and possibly prevails upon her to enter into her house ; not indeed to rest, but to contemplate the image of the sacred face left upon her veil. Gladly she offers the relic to the Blessed Mother, but Holy Mary cannot consent to rob her of her treasure, but with great gratitude accepts the use of it for this hour of sorrow.

Whether Veronica was able to induce her to cool her burning thirst even with a little water, we know not.

After the cruel murder of Abner, David, when pressed to take food, answered : *So do God to me, and more, if I taste bread or anything else before sunset* (2 Kings iii.). Our Lady has made no vow, but she could safely say with her Son : *I have meat to eat which you know not* (St. John iv.). Her love, strong as death, is supporting her ; and, moreover, it is possible, as we are told by holy servants of God, that the Blessed Eucharist is still miraculously preserved within her, giving her strength.

Passion of Christ, strengthen me.  
Blood of Christ, inebriate me.

As the Blessed Mother will not remain, Veronica goes with her on her sorrowful pilgrimage.

The direct road to the Cœnaculum from Calvary runs south for about three-quarters of a mile, or perhaps less. But the holy company of mourners are going with our Lady by a circuitous route in order to visit all the stations on the Way of Sorrows.

The devout Carthusian, Ludolf of Saxony, tells us that when the Holy Mother enters Jerusalem, many Jewish women feel much compassion for her and follow her. We remember how the women of Bethany showed so much sympathy to Magdalen when Lazarus was dead.

“Mother of Sorrows, pray for thy sinful children, that we may not be more hard than those women of Jerusalem.”

Fac me vere,	Mother, with those tears of thine
Tecum flere.	Grant that I may mingle mine.

And now here at these crossroads it was that Simon of Cyrene was found to take up the Cross. How glad by this time is he of his privilege! Perchance, he is following the Blessed Mother home from Calvary; his heart burning within him as she thanks him most warmly for being such a friend to her Son in His hour of need. Beyond doubt, her heart is now pleading most tenderly for him.

At these crossroads they are in the Tyropœan valley, and immediately reach the spot where Holy Mary met her Son as He was coming from the Governor's house laden with the Cross.

Quis non posset contristari,	Who will refuse to bear a part,
Christi Matrem contemplari	With the sweet Mother's aching heart,
Dolentem cum Filio?	Grieving for her Son?

Now they must climb the steep road leading to the Prætorium; and as slowly and with much fatigue, they ascend, once more for a short while they halt. It is the spot where Jesus first fell to the ground under His Cross.

“Holy Mother, pray for the innocent, who are tempted to commit their first grievous sin.”

A few yards further they are in sight of the balcony

where she heard the terrible appeal of Pilate: "*Ecce Homo!*" and the far more terrible response: *Away with Him! Crucify Him!*

"Mother of God, plead for us sinners, that we may bitterly bewail every sin committed against thy Most Blessed Son Jesus."

And now, here is the gate of the Lithostrotos. It was at this point Dismas and Gesmas, carrying their crosses, met our Saviour, and reviled Him. St. Dismas is now with Him in Paradise. *Who is like the Lord our God?* Dismas reviled Him, and His answer was: *Father, forgive them.*

This is the spot where the soldiers laid the heavy Cross on Jesus.

"O Blessed Mother, win grace for us that we may willingly take up our cross."

Here is the tribunal where Pilate so often declared Him innocent, yet after all, sentenced Him.

"Jesus, meek and humble of Heart, oh, make us meek like Thee, *Led like a lamb to the slaughter.*"

Slowly now, they move across the red pavement, to the far corner where the column of flagellation stands; and there they tarry long, saying nothing with their lips, but much with their sighs and tears.

Sancta Mater, istud agas,  
Crucifixi fige plagas,  
Cordi meo valide.

Do this for me, O Mother blest,  
Deeply imprint within my breast  
The wounds of thy beloved Son.

They find their way, too, into the court where He was crowned.

"Holy Mother, with thy consent this crown was put upon His Head, that my pride might be forgiven."

Here is the Scala Santa stained with His Blood.

"Oh, may His footsteps win grace for us to climb the mountain of God."

It was down this steep street from the north that He came from Herod's palace dressed as a fool.

"O Blessed Mother, obtain for us a share of His folly."

From this gallery Pilate put the question : *Which of the two : Barabbas or Jesus ?*

“Have mercy on me, O Lord, for often have I said : *Not this Man, but Barabbas.*”

Longinus, too, perchance, can point out the window whence the disconsolate wife of Pilate, Procla, watched in anguish the proceedings in the Lithostrotos. She may, perchance, be wandering about in this hour to find rest for her troubled spirit, and be so blessed as to hear from her who is the Comforter of the Afflicted, some words of consolation which send her home calm and full of hope.

From the Prætorium their way lies through the Temple grounds to the Beautiful Gate. This morning Judas hurried away through this gate, when his despair was brought to a climax by the hard word of the Priests : *What is that to us ? Look you to it.* And through this Gate, John tells them, the soldiers came last night to seize our Master.

Most anxious are they all when they see the rough and precipitous pathway which the Blessed Mother must traverse to reach Gethsemani which lies below them.

They cross the Cedron ; and “here,” John tells them, “all the soldiers fell to the ground last night when the Lord spoke a word. On this spot the traitor kissed Him. Here He was standing when they bound Him, and, *wo is me*, when we fled away.” They go a little further and kneel in the Grotto of the Agony. This, John tells them, was the bed of stone on which we slept while He suffered. Alas ! we gave Him no comfort.

Once more they urge the Holy Mother to go no further, but pass the night here in a cottage near her garden and the tomb of her forefathers ; but she answers kindly in her Son’s word : *Sinite modo*—“Suffer me to go on a little longer”. Therefore with all care and tenderness they help her to re-cross the torrent of Cedron, and to climb the very steep side of Mount Moriah, along the road of the captivity

by which Jesus was dragged last night. As they walk, her Mother's heart knows every spot where He suffered outrages, where He fell to the ground, and was covered with blows.

Do this for me, O Mother blest,  
Deeply imprint within my breast  
The wounds of thy beloved Son.

The sun has gone down before they reach Ophel, the lower quarter of the city, where the poor live, who used to love her Son. And now her Mother's heart is pleading strongly for them. "Eternal Father, *forgive them, for they know not what they do. The serpent deceived (them).*"

The ascent up Moriah was more toilsome than all the rest of the journey, and then they have to mount again by a long flight of steps to reach Mount Sion from the lower town.

They are now passing by the desecrated palace of the Priests. This is the house of Annas. There the servant bruised His face. That is the Judgment Hall of Caiphas; and below is the terrible dungeon underground where our Lord spent the fourth watch of the night.

The daylight is gone; and the moon is risen when they reach the Cœnaculum.

As the Blessed Mother walks on, the last night that is past is telling to the night now come (Psalm xviii.) a story of suffering and sorrow never heard on earth before, and this Good Friday has a record to hand on to the day that is coming of tribulations, such as no eye but the Blessed Mother's hath seen, nor any ear but hers heard of, neither hath it entered into any other heart to apprehend grief like hers.

She knows it all, as she walks, where the tightened cords caused agony; where the clubs of the servants bruised and wounded; where He struck His foot against a stone; and where the coarse ribaldry of the soldiers gave anguish to His ear. *Non fallunt viscera matrem*—"Nothing is hidden from her Mother's heart".

## SCENE XIV.

## THE CŒNACULUM.

## STATION I.

## GOOD-NIGHT!

*On the Sabbath-day they rested according to the commandment*  
(St. Luke xxiii. 56).

A. *On the Sabbath-day.*

The Parasceve or day of Preparation is ended by the time they arrive at the door of the Cenacle. The Great Sabbath-day is begun. A greater Sabbath-day than God's day of rest in the beginning.

By this time the company following the Ever-Blessed Mother of God has grown larger. Some will follow her into her new home. Many will part from her at the door.

Before they go, she turns to them with a heart full of motherly love for them, such as no other mother on earth has for her children; and she begs of John to thank them most humbly in her name for their great charity to her Son and to herself. And as they press round her, and kneel to kiss her hand, and ask a blessing, she comforts each one of them, and, full of grace, wishes them good-night, and many blessings.

They go away consoled unspeakably; and absorbed in the thought of this Admirable Mother. *Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, thou art the joy of Israel; thou art the honour of our people. For thou hast done manfully; and thy heart hath been strengthened. The hand of the Lord hath strengthened thee, and therefore thou shalt be blessed for ever. So be it. So be it* (Judith xv.). What wonder that they bless her? (Were they) *to hold their peace, the stones* (would) *cry out* (St. Luke xix.). Cardinal Baronius cites an older writer who gives us this early tradition about our Lady: "From the beginning to the end she bore herself with fortitude, and constancy, expressing indeed the emotions of her heart, but so that all was graceful, and nothing unseemly;

proving by her acts that she was a Mother, but at the same time, to the full height the Mother of Him Who restrained all the emotions of His Soul within their fixed boundary". This writer adds that when Jesus expired, she said in her heart: "In this hour, my Lord, the Great Mystery decreed before all ages is come to its end".

*B. On the Sabbath day.*

Several devout disciples, men and women, now enter into the holy house with the Mother of God. Some have been her funeral companions. Others have only heard when all was over, the appalling tidings: "Jesus of Nazareth is crucified". With all haste they have come to gather round the Admirable Mother.

All was done so quickly, according to the Master's command: *Do it quickly*: that Jesus had perchance said, *It is consummated*, before the news had reached Bethany or Bethlehem.

There were, however, on Calvary many whose names are not recorded.

St. Mark mentions *Mary the Mother of James the Less, and of Joseph, and Salome*: and then adds: *Many other women that came with Him to Jerusalem* (c. xv.). We may be quite sure that Martha and Lazarus would not be absent, nor Simon the Leper, nor Zacheus, if the strange tidings reached them in time. A holy contemplative tells us that in her prayer she saw Bartimeus, the blind man cured at Jericho, earnestly pleading the cause of Jesus in the Lithostrotos. It may be, too, that Simon of Cyrene and Longinus are here to-night.

*C. On the Sabbath-day.*

For the Blessed Mother's use they have reserved the holy chamber where the first Mass was celebrated. Thither they bring in, as they arrive, all the holy relics which they have been able to rescue on Mount Calvary. Here on the holy table or altar where our Lord consecrated, are now reverently laid the sacred treasures. One by one, she devoutly watches them as they are presented; the holy

crown, the reed, the cords that bound Him: some of the rods and scourges that tore His Body, some of the staves, too, with which He was bruised. This is the sponge that contained the vinegar to slake His thirst. These are the sponges used to cleanse the sacred wounds. This cup contained the myrrhed wine that He tasted, but would not drink. This is the holy tunic woven for Him by herself, over which they cast lots with their dice. These are the other portions of His dress that were divided into shares.

Beside these Sacred treasures arranged under the lamps which, we read, were hanging overhead, they prepare a couch for the Blessed Mother, and most tenderly urge her to give herself some repose. She, full of grace, full of motherly charity, thanks them and blesses them for their goodness, and in return begs of them all to retire and refresh themselves and take rest. She also prays them not to omit any observance prescribed by the Law for the Sabbath in the azymes.

Leaving her, then, with John and Magdalen who wish to wait on her—and she cannot refuse their petition—the others retire to different apartments.

The women to the supper-room where last evening they celebrated the Pasch with the Mother of God. The men to another apartment, where they prepare to fulfil the rites which, as we have seen in a former chapter, are enjoined for each of the seven evenings of unleavened bread (Numbers xxviii.).

SCENE XV.

THE GOVERNOR'S HOUSE.

STATION I.

*And Herod and Pilate were made friends that same day. For before they were enemies one to another (St. Luke xxiii. 12).*

*Herod and Pilate were made friends.*

A mediæval writer tells us, that after sending Jesus away in a fool's garment, Herod went over to the Governor's house, to show his friendly feelings, and there sat by him, and was a witness of the proceedings. Both of these miserable men have had a day of restless remorse and fear: *For wickedness is fearful, (and) a troubled conscience always forecasteth evil things.* They are both men *who have peace in their possessions*; men described by the Prophet Sophonias, as *settled on their lees*. But the voice of nature has spoken loud enough to-day to awaken their deadened consciences. Now, however, the storm, they flatter themselves, is passed. These two Rulers have sinned, but they have survived their sin, and are able now to harbour that forbidden thought, so common: *What harm hath befallen (us)?*

It is the hour of supper, and they can, on the occasion of their reconciliation, recline in joyfulness at the banquet. Herod's family, as we have seen, have ever been devoted to Rome, from whence they have all their honours. Antipas, therefore, and Pilate are both well pleased at this restoration of an old friendship.

Herodias, the notorious, may also be a guest, and her dancing daughter, Salome. Some writers, however, tell us that she is now crippled.

The banquet, doubtless, is befitting the occasion. The Roman after a hard and anxious day is now *discinctus*, ungirdled, taking his rest in his flowing robe.

*Come, therefore, and let us enjoy the good things that are present; let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments*

(Wisdom ii.). Herod is the luxurious son of a most luxurious father. *I made me singing men and singing women, and the delights of the sons of men* (Eccles. ii.). He brings some of his gifted retainers to help the festivity.

*They drank wine and praised their gods of gold and silver, of brass, of iron, and of wood, and of stone* (Daniel v.). The gods whom these reconciled potentates praise and worship are probably not idols of iron and wood, but the three great gods of this world: *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.*

They drink wine, and as the Psalm of the Sacred Passion (68th) tells us, *They that drank wine made Me their song.*

Their conversation turns often on Jesus of Nazareth and the scenes of the day. Herod thinks that Pilate need have no scruple; he could not have acted otherwise.

The pressure put upon him was simply irresistible. He had himself to yield to the same force when he cut off the head of John the Baptist, who was a truly great man. This Jesus seemed to be only a simpleton. "What can we do? We cannot go against the will of all the people."

Is the Governor's wife, St. Procla, compelled to be present at this revelry? If here in body, her thoughts and her heart are elsewhere.

## STATION II.

*Herod and Pilate were made friends that same day* (v. 12).

A. An attendant enters the banquet-hall to tell the Governor that a large deputation of Jewish Priests and Ancients ask to see him at once on urgent business. Their very name brings imprecations to his lips. How gladly would he order his horsemen to serve them as they served the Galileans! Herod counsels a peremptory dismissal. They can come to-morrow. This is not a reasonable hour. But Pilate knows that his own life is in danger. These Rulers are his masters; and they know it.

They must have a hearing. He has perforce to conceal his vexation and his humiliation in presence of his scornful guests.

Besides, action may be necessary. The Jews may be rising in rebellion. He goes forth, therefore, and asks what their business is? From St. Matthew's narrative we know what the answer is: *Sir, we have remembered that the seducer said while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, the sepulchre to be guarded until the third day, lest perhaps His disciples come and steal Him away, and say to the people: He is risen from the dead: and the last error shall be worse than the first* (c. xxvii.).

Pilate cannot suppress his bitter vexation when he hears their errand. "Is it on such business that you intrude at such an hour?"

They cringe, and lick the dust; and protest that they are quite sure that He never will rise, but they have great fear that His crafty and daring followers may steal away the Body and persuade the senseless mob that He is risen; and then the situation will be worse than ever. Sedition will be inevitable. It is merely out of friendly feeling to the Governor, to prevent the trouble that will come to him if disturbances break out, that they venture to intrude at an unseasonable hour. They are loyal to Cæsar: they wish to have no king but Cæsar, but they cannot answer for the multitude gathered together in Jerusalem.

They have again touched the chord most sure to rouse Pilate to activity. They have wakened up the two great fears that haunt him: (1) Jesus may after all be a God and may rise; but much more urgent, (2) Tiberius at Rome will certainly visit on him any sedition that may take place out of the events of this day.

Cursing the hour when he first listened to them this morning, he answers sullenly, *You have a guard* (or, as some interpret the Greek, "You can have a guard"), you

have your own police, the guard of the Temple; go to guard it as you know.

Can the wine, can the dancer, can Herod's jests bring back peace to-night to his miserable conscience?

He returns to the banquet-hall with all the terrors of this morning alive again. Procla's warning: *Have nothing to do with this just Man*; the words of Jesus: *Thou sayest it: I am a King: My Kingdom is not of this world*. So, after all, He may rise again, and proclaim himself King, and draw the people after Him.

Herod is one who has sinned with more light than Pilate. One of those against whom, in sorrow of heart, the Lord has passed this sentence: *Blind the heart of this people, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I heal them* (Isaias vi.). He therefore makes merry over the news.

"As for His rising again," he exclaims, "that is exactly what they said when I cut off the head of John, another of their great prophets. Nay, they were quite sure that he had risen again. *But what evil hath befallen me?* (Ecclus. v.). Dead men don't rise again so easily. I remember that in one of their books it is written, *Shall a man that is dead, thinkest thou, live again?* (Job xiv.). And they have a saying that *a living dog is better than a dead lion.*"

"Yes," chimes in another guest, learned in the Jewish Law, "they ought to know better than listen to the mob. For there is a well-known sentence in their Books: *The dead knoweth nothing more: the memory of them is forgotten. Their love also and their hatred and their envy are all perished; neither have they any part in this world, and in the work that is done under the sun*" (Eccles. ix.).

These words delight the voluptuous ruler of Galilee. He banters the Governor for his fears. "After all, you cannot be in a worse plight than I am, for John, as I have said, was really a holy man and a clever man; but this Jesus, from what I saw this morning, was a fool and a

mere simpleton. It is very little matter whether He lives or dies." And so the murderer of the Precursor tries to lull to rest the conscience of him who has slain "the Christ," "the Son of God," "the Author of life".

But this view gives little comfort to the Roman. He has the pale face of Jesus before him; and the calm majesty of His words, His tones, His demeanour, do not pass away. "Jesus was no simpleton," is his short answer, as he rises to leave the banquet-hall. The word is come true: *I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation* (Amos viii.).

Pilate's fears are not lessened when he hears from his officials the rumour that the graves of the dead in the valleys round the city are standing open.

St. Procla too, if present, will return with a heavy heart.

B. *Herod and Pilate were made friends.*

The Psalmist writes concerning men who, like Pilate and Herod, sin and still prosper.

*They are not in the labour of men: neither shall they be scourged like other men.*

If our Lord had been what He seemed to be, only a persecuted man, He might well have complained: *I have been scourged all the day, and My chastisement hath been in the morning* (Psalm lxxii.). *Why do the wicked live? (Why) are they advanced, and strengthened in riches? (Job xxi.). I studied that I might know this thing, it is a labour in my sight: until I go into the sanctuary of God, and understand concerning their latter end. When they were lifted up Thou hast cast them down. They have SUDDENLY CEASED TO BE* (Psalm lxxii.).

But the end of Herod and Pilate did not come suddenly. In their case, *executing Thy judgments by degrees, O Lord, Thou gavest them place of repentance* (Wisdom xii.).

"Sweet are the uses of adversity." Many prodigals have by sorrow been brought to God. Both Pilate and Herod were afterwards cast down from their position, and died poor and banished men. The "Mount of Pilate,"

standing by the Lake of Lucerne, preserves the tradition that from its crags the Governor flung himself into the lake, and was drowned. But other accounts of his latter end are given ; some much more favourable.

In the Gospel it is written : *The next day which followed the day of preparation, the Chief Priests and the Pharisees came to Pilate.* In a modern book, the words, *The next day after the day of preparation,* would clearly mean that the Jewish Rulers did not disturb Pilate at his banquet ; but came next morning. But as among the Jews the Great Sabbath began at sunset, the words may have the interpretation given to them above. And as the Priests and Pharisees were tormented with the fear of a pretended Resurrection, it is not likely that they would leave the Tomb unguarded all the first night.

## SCENE XVI.

### THE CENACLE.

#### STATION I.

*On the Sabbath-day they rested (St. Luke xxiii. 56).*

A. God maketh His sun to rise on the good and bad (St. Matt. v.). His sun by day and His moon by night give their light to *the just and the unjust.* It is the time of full moon ; and Jerusalem, *the city of perfect beauty, the joy of all the earth,* is reposing in the stillness and brightness of the moonlight, as if it were a paradise of innocence enjoying a Great Sabbath ; *a great tranquillity.*

It is possible that from the high ground on Mount Sion where the Cenacle stands, a view can be had of Golgotha.

B. *On the Sabbath-day they rested.*

Within the Cenacle, the disciples, men and women, have carefully observed all prescribed rites for the repetition of the paschal supper (Numbers xxviii.). And now they are gathered together in groups with closed doors ; talking in a low voice of the events of the day.

Occasionally a knock is heard at the gate ; and not without alarm and great precaution do those inside answer the knocking. For they are in fear and trouble.

Sometimes it is a disciple who has only just heard the tidings. Sometimes it is one of the Apostles who is recovering from the great terror and is longing to know something of what has happened; and how it fares with the Holy Mother.

We may assume, with St. Bonaventure, that Peter is one of those who knocked at the wicket in the gate. For certainly he is here with John thirty hours later, on the morning of the Resurrection; and, moreover, holy contemplatives give us the details of his arrival.

Not full of grateful gladness does he come to-night as he will come out of his prison in after years, probably to this same wicket. For now he is heart-broken; and covers his head as he knocks; and humbly begs with tears for admission. When John comes to meet him, his only word is: "I am not worthy to be one of you, let me be as a hireling".

As soon as John makes known to the Blessed Mother that Peter is come overwhelmed with grief, her motherly heart answers: "Oh, make haste to let him come to me, for he is heavily burdened". As he falls at her feet confessing his sin, and telling her with sobs and sighs: "I denied Him, and said: *I know not the Man*," her heart pleads with all-powerful earnestness for him, and she gives him the assurance inspired into her soul by her Divine Son, that *as far as the east is from the west* the Lord has removed his sin from him, and will only remember his love and fidelity. She reminds Peter how in the Supper-room her Son had assured him that his faith would not fail: that he would be converted, and not cast down from his apostleship.

The Venerable Abbess d'Agreda writes that in her contemplation she sees our Lady, when Peter enters, full of veneration for him as the future Vicar of Christ, and that her wish is to throw herself at his feet and beg for his blessing; but that out of compassion for his condition, she forbears, and contents herself with kneeling by his side

and praying with him, and for him, with all the force of her "suppliant omnipotence," till strong hope and burning love are again in full possession of his heart.

When Peter retires, John, full of the Blessed Mother's spirit, goes with him to be a comfort to him, to the chamber where the other disciples are gathered.

## STATION II.

### *On the Sabbath-day they rested (v. 56).*

A. Naturally they who were not so blessed as to be on the place of Calvary to-day, or last night with Jesus in Gethsemani or in the Palace of the Priests, have many, many questions to ask; and with breathless attention listen to the answers.

St. Peter and St. John can tell of what passed in Gethsemani. St. John can give some details of the early morning hours after Peter had gone out to weep bitterly.

As St. Peter calls himself, in his first Epistle, *a witness of the sufferings of our Lord* (c. v.), we may perhaps assume that he was near to Calvary to-day, watching, as well as his tears would allow him, what was going on; but not presuming to draw near. John, therefore, has many things to relate to him.

Contemplate the contrite Apostle, as the Beloved Disciple is telling him the story of Dismas; how he weeps and sobs as if his heart would break, and striking his breast, cries out: "O holy Saint! You never saw the Master in His glory as I did. You never saw Him raise the dead as I did; you only saw him crucified as a malefactor: and yet you confessed Him, and I denied Him! Ah me! I said: *I know not the Man.*"

### B. *On the Sabbath-day they rested.*

After this, one tells how he met Judas in the valley of Hinnom, and went towards him, but the traitor fled. Another just come in adds: "Alas! I have been there too, and found his lifeless body lying on the ground,

stripped, and ruptured, under the broken branch of a tree, with a rope round his neck. Some robbers must have taken all his clothes away." This terrible news strikes them dumb, till Peter sighs out the word: "Oh, why did he not come to our Blessed Mother? I, too, was a traitor. I, too, should have been cast off."

*C. On the Sabbath-day they rested.*

"Do you remember," one asks, "how a week ago, near Jericho, our Master foretold to us exactly everything that has come to pass: *The Son of Man shall be betrayed to the Chief Priests, and the Scribes: and they shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to be mocked, and scourged, and crucified?*"

"Every word has proved true; and yet, at the time, we did not give heed to what He said."

"But," one suggests, "did He not say, too, that He would rise again after three days?" To this there is no response. They have not taken in this word. They only remember that He is dead; their faith has been weakened.

*D. On the Sabbath-day they rested.*

Peter adds: "Wo is me! Again and again He warned us to *watch and pray*: and said that danger was coming. I heeded Him not. I even boasted in my folly that I would die with Him, and in the first moment when a woman spoke to me I denied Him."

*E. On the Sabbath-day they rested.*

A knock is heard, and one comes in who has just been to Golgotha and seen the tomb. "Guards are there. Seals are set on the door. A large iron bolt is affixed to it which no one can remove." (Nicephorus the historian mentions the iron bolt as an old tradition, and describes how it was riveted.)

*There is no wisdom, there is no counsel, there is no prudence against the Lord.* The guards and bolt and seals will all hereafter witness to the Resurrection.

And so the night wears on, till exhaustion compels them to seek the repose of sleep.

## STATION III.

MARIA DESOLATA. GOOD FRIDAY NIGHT.

*On the Sabbath-day they rested (v. 56).*

A. They rested. And, according to our human way of measuring, who ever needed rest as the Holy Mother does? Her Divine Son, but no one else, has gone beyond her in weariness.

“*Attendite.*” It behoves us all to stay and watch her, and listen to her during her extreme exhaustion. We must look well, and try to *do* a little, at least, *according to the pattern.*

The time of great weariness is often a time of danger. Men will undergo for a while very great labour, but they expect as compensation a large measure of self-indulgence after. Those who nurse at night are not unfrequently drawn into intemperance. It seems to them reasonable to use stimulants to refresh their tired bodies, and so the habit is formed. Our Lord says to us: *Do not the heathens this?* Heathens will toil for a certain time, if they can have a season of great luxury after.

Our Blessed Saviour and His Holy Mother teach us, in these times of great fatigue, that *not in bread alone doth man live.* Our Lady can say to-night, when pressed to refresh herself, words akin to her Son’s words: *I have a food which you know not.*

The labours of apostolic men would become a snare, if they could not find some refreshment in prayer; if, like the heathen, they must always have much indulgence to compensate much toil.

“Passion of Christ, strengthen me.”

B. *On the Sabbath-day they rested.*

Of what kind is our Lady’s rest?

Of her Divine Son we read that *He loved to the end.* Is love rest? *He loved to the end,* means that to the end love was conquering all the pain and anguish heaped upon Him. His love was *strong as death*; stronger than death; stronger than all agony; ever working and conquering;

never idle and reposing. Such love is not, according to our human notions, rest.

Our Lady's love is most like to this. *She hath not eaten her bread idle. Her hand she hath put out to strong things.* Love makes her *the valiant woman*, joining all the tenderness of a mother's thought with a *man's heart*; that is, with the manly fortitude of her Son. She rests, as the Law directs, from all servile work, from bodily work; but her heart is not resting. The Spouse says: *I sleep, (but) my heart watcheth* (Cant. v.). The love of Jesus Christ, burning in the heart of Holy Mary and the saints, often conquers natural laws; conquers weariness; conquers sleep.

"To us poor sinners, O Lord, give some part and fellowship with Thy martyrs."

C. *On the Sabbath-day they rested.*

Last night, in the Grotto of Agony, Jesus could think of His Apostles; His love was much stronger than the agony. So now our Blessed Lady has a true Mother's heart, and when she hears Magdalen sobbing, and sees John pale and weeping, she takes good care of them and comforts them. For devout writers suppose that she allows John and Magdalen to remain with her in the Holy Chamber.

How hard *we* find it, when weary and in trouble, to devote ourselves to others! *Many waters cannot quench (her) charity.*

D. *On the Sabbath-day they rested.*

But if at times she is quite in solitude, even then she can say with her Divine Son: "*Yet I am not alone; my Son is with me, my God is with me*".

"*Hail, Blessed Mother, full of grace: the Lord is with thee.*"

Consider how, more than ever before, the Archangel can now say to her: *The Lord is with thee.* The Lord is more closely with her now: first, according to His promise, because she is *in tribulation*; secondly, because she is more, than ever *full of grace.* *She hath tasted and seen that her*

*traffic is good.* She has to-day trafficked with wonderful industry and diligence, and multiplied ineffably her store of grace.

“ Mother, *full of grace*, and overflowing, pray for us poor sinners.”

*E. On the Sabbath-day they rested.*

Her heart is not resting. *In (her) heart (she) hath disposed to ascend by steps* (Psalm lxxxiii.). Before the day breaks, she will, by multiplying the fervent acts of her soul, have climbed much higher up the mountain of God. Holy Church compares St. Cæcilia to the busy bee, always gathering more honey from flower to flower. But who gathers graces and merits and increase of love as the Holy Mother does ?

Alas ! we let the privileged hours go by unused. By fervent ejaculations we can always give alms to sinners on earth, and to the Holy Souls in Purgatory. We can give glory to God and peace to men.

*F. On the Sabbath-day they rested.*

But we are allowed to wish to know more of what our Blessed Lady's heart and her mind are doing. How is she spending these watches, *when all things are in quiet silence, and the night is in the midst of her course ?* (Wisdom xviii.).

(1) First, then, we are sure that in her, beyond all others, the promise has its fulfilment : *I will pour out the spirit of grace, and of prayer ; and they will look on Me Whom they pierced ; and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for an only son ; they shall grieve as the manner is to grieve for the death of the first-born.* Jesus is her first-born, and no other Mother ever had such a first-born. And no other first-born ever had such a Mother. She is therefore grieving and mourning over her Son, with a motherly tenderness such as *eye hath not seen.* Neither has human ear heard on earth sighs so heartrending as the sighs of her sorrow. Nor has the thought of man ever measured the depth of her motherly feeling : *Weeping, she hath wept throughout the*

night, and her tears are on her cheeks (Lament. i.). 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 (*contritio*) crushing sorrow.

Eia Mater, fons amoris,

Me sentire vim doloris

Fac, ut tecum lugeam.

O Mother, fount of charity,

Oh, let me share thy agony,

That I may grieve with thee.

G. *On the Sabbath-day they rested.*

With our rosaries in our hand we sometimes travel over the scenes of our Lord's Passion; sometimes, too, we go round the Stations, pausing a little space at each.

The Blessed Mother, then, has spread out beside her the relics of Mount Calvary which her children have brought to her as their present on this new and strange birthday. For to-day, after her long and sore travail on Calvary, she is become the joyful mother of children, the children of her pain. And so it is a birthday.

Her eyes and her heart are making the Stations as she stands looking at her relics, one by one, and pressing them to her lips and moistening them with her tears—the crown, the tunic, the reed, the wine cup, the hyssop, the sponge, the cord, the scourges, and the Sacred Face upon the veil of Veronica.

Sancta Mater, istud agas,

Crucifixi fige plagas,

Cordi meo valide.

Do this for me, O Mother blest,

Deeply imprint within my breast

The wounds of Jesus crucified.

H. *On the Sabbath-day they rested.*

(2) Then, again, this Good Friday, from the First Vespers at sundown yesterday to the end of the Second Vespers to-day, is the day which the Lord our Redeemer hath made; the model day. "*According to Thy ordinance, O God, it hath gone on to the very end.*" And henceforth every day is to be somewhat after the pattern of this day—a Good Friday. Good Friday is to be perpetuated by remembrance, so now the Blessed Mother is living over again the hours of last night.

Now the First Night Watch is closing (9 p.m.), and He is leaving Mount Sion and going down the way of captivity to Gethsemani. He has left His eight Apostles by the brook. He is entering the Garden, and bending His tottering steps towards the Grotto. An hour is well-nigh past (10 p.m.), when He comes to speak sad words and kind words to His three Apostles. Again another hour (11 p.m.), when after His long prayer He is with them once more. The Second Night Watch is far spent (11.45), when He visits them for the third and last time to waken them, and goes to meet Judas and the multitude.

It is now midnight. At midnight He became Incarnate, at midnight He was born, at midnight He is seized and bound.

O Jesu, mi dulcissime,	Jesus, my Lord, my Son most dear,
Spes suspirantis animæ,	Hope of my soul that's yearning here,
Te quærunt piæ lacrymæ,	For Thee they watch, these weeping eyes,
Te clamor mentis intimæ.	To Thee my inmost spirit cries.

The first hour of the Third Watch is far spent (12.45), and Thou hast climbed, my Son, the way of captivity, and Thy holy face is bruised by the servant. Another Night Watch is drawing to its close (2.45), and they condemn Thee to death as a blasphemer, and Thou art looking in pity on Thy Apostle. The Fourth Night Watch is nearly at an end (5.30), when they come to find Thee bent down in Thy dungeon.

Nil canitur suavius,	No song so sweet to hear,
Nil auditur jucundius,	No word delights the ear,
Nil cogitatur dulcius,	No thought was e'er so dear,
Quam Jesus Dei Filius.	As Jesus, Son of God.

#### STATION IV.

##### MARIA DESOLATA.

*On the Sabbath-day they rested (v. 56).*

A. (3) We can help ourselves to understand a third train of thought that occupies the soul of the Blessed

Mother during this holy night, by calling to mind the scene enacted before King David by the wise woman of Thecua (2 Kings xiv.).

She came into the King's presence, wearing mourning robes, and not anointed with oil; in all respects, like a woman lamenting for the dead. And she fell down before the King *and worshipped and said: Save me, O King. And the King said to her: What is the matter with thee? She answered: Alas! I am a widow woman; for my husband is dead. And thy handmaid had two sons, and they quarrelled with each other in the field, and there was none to part them, and the one struck the other and slew him. And behold, the whole kindred rising against thy handmaid saith: Deliver him that hath slain his brother, that we may kill him for the life of his brother whom he slew, and that we may destroy the heir; and they seek to quench my spark which is left. And the King said to the woman: Go to thy house and I will give charge concerning thee. If any one shall say ought against thee, bring him to me, and he shall not touch thee any more. And she said: Let the King remember the Lord his God that they may not kill my son. And he said: As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.*

Here we see something of our Lady's position. The children of her second family have slain her First-born, the only-begotten Son of God. And now the cry of Eternal justice loudly demands that her second child, the poor sinner, the child of her pain, who crucified her First-born, his own elder Brother, shall be delivered up for chastisement. Alas! if this must be, *the last state becomes worse than the first* (St. Luke xi.), for the life and the death of my Son Jesus will be made void. And I shall also lose the child of my pain, for whom I was in travail on Calvary. Therefore her mother's heart is employed in pleading with irresistible groanings. She is weeping, as her Son bade her to do, for herself and her children, till a far better response comes than David's: *Not one hair of thy (sinful) child shall fall to the earth.*

B. *On the Sabbath-day they rested.*

Again, we may help ourselves with another comparison. When David was provoked to great wrath by Nabal's churlish insolence and was about to take severe vengeance, with what powerful pathos did Abigail, Nabal's wife, plead for her husband! *Upon me*, she said, as she lay at the feet of David, *Upon me let this iniquity be, my lord; let thy handmaid speak, I beseech, in thy ears, and hear the words of thy servant. Let not my lord the King regard this naughty Nabal, for according to his name he is a fool, and folly is with him. Wherefore receive this blessing which thy handmaid hath brought thee, my lord, and forgive the iniquity of thy handmaid. (For then) this shall not be an occasion of grief to thee and a scruple of heart to my lord, that thou hast shed innocent blood or hast revenged thyself.*

*And David said to Abigail: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, Who sent thee this day to meet me, and blessed be thy speech. And blessed be thou who hast kept me this day from coming to blood and revenging me with my own hand. Go in peace into thy house; behold, I have heard thy voice and have honoured thy face (1 Kings xxv.).*

What are the pleadings of Abigail compared with the irresistible cry for mercy and forgiveness that comes from the heart of the Mother of Sorrows, when she pleads as if she were one of us? The Lord God knew well what a power would be vested in the *suppliant omnipotence* of His Immaculate Mother, full of grace, when He spoke that word to her: *Woman! behold thy child!* From this hour, *no word of mercy shall be impossible with God.*

“The hour of mercy may not be come, My Mother, or, because of sins multiplied, it may be past; but in whatever hour thou shall plead, Mother Mine, and Mother of My brethren, *I cannot turn My face away.*”

Memorare, O piissima Virgo. Remember this, most tender-hearted Virgin Mother.

Our Lord, in the Psalms, prays as if He were the sinner. What can withstand Holy Mary's prayer when

she makes herself one with her sinful children, and cries out: *Upon me let this iniquity be. Forgive the iniquity of Thy handmaid.*

STATION V.

MARIA DESOLATA. DAYBREAK. HOLY SATURDAY.

*That was a Great Sabbath-day* (St. John xix. 31).

A. The night watches have passed away. The day of the Great Sabbath is dawning. No greater has been; no greater shall be. The Lord Jesus is resting after His work of Redemption.

We have been trying to gain some faint notion of our Lady's thoughts during the watches of the night. Let us humbly try to contemplate her on the Great Sabbath-day, the first Holy Saturday.

B. *That was a Great Sabbath-day.*

Some of the faithful, as we know, when they awake in the early morning, turn their hearts and their eyes towards the Tabernacle of the Blessed Sacrament. Our Lady's heart, we may assume, is, when the dawn comes, at the Holy Sepulchre. Oh, with what intensity does her heart break out into her Matins and Lauds: *O God, my God, to Thee am I watching at break of day. For Thee my soul hath thirsted, for Thee my flesh, O in how many ways! Thy mercy is better than (many) lives. Thee my lips shall praise. Thus will I bless Thee all my life long; and in Thy name I will lift up my hands* (Psalm lxii.).

## SCENE XVII.

THE GREAT SABBATH-DAY. EARLY MORNING.  
A RETROSPECT.

## STATION I.

*That was a Great Sabbath-day* (St. John xix. 31).

A. *That was a Great Sabbath-day.*

*The sun riseth and man shall go forth to his work* (Psalm ciii.).

Our Blessed Lady, some holy writers tell us, goes forth soon after daybreak, to resume her work of studying more and more carefully every spot hallowed by the footsteps of her Son, by the sweat of His brow, by His tears, by the drops of His Precious Blood, by His sorrows, by His love.

Every word and work and thought of His is crying out to her: *Set me as a seal upon thy heart.*

If she has always in times past *looked well to the paths of her house, and not eaten her bread idle* (Proverbs xxxi.), oh, how intensified in this hour is her keen desire to look well to the paths trodden by her crucified Son! *If the fear of God neglects nothing*, will the burning love that consumes her heart overpass any flower or blade of grass or any stone consecrated by His footprints, by a tear from His eye, by a drop of His Blood?

B. *A Great Sabbath-day.*

Our Blessed Lady is, moreover, the Seat of Wisdom. *I am the Mother of knowledge* (Ecclus. xxiv.). Through her a large part of *the supereminent knowledge of Christ Jesus* will reach the Evangelists and Holy Church.

With great earnestness, then, she begs of John, who accompanies her in her pilgrimage, to fix well in his memory every jot and tittle: *Let no particle of the good gift overpass thee.*

Her diligent search will doubtless be aided by much light and by many exceptional graces from above. But she will also gladly avail herself of human helps. Nico-

demus is with her, and Joseph, we may perhaps assume, is come back to her; and their position and revered character will doubtless unlock many doors to them.

Their alms, too, and Magdalen's, for she is with the Mother of God, will secure some more of the holy relics of the Sacred Passion.

Simon Peter dares not join himself to the holy company, but the Blessed Mother wishes the future Vicar of Christ to be with her. Others, no doubt, either accompany her, or set out apart on the same errand.

*Do it quickly* is still the watchword, as the Blessed Mother wishes to be back in her retirement before the streets are crowded.

C. *That was a Great Sabbath-day.*

THE NIGHT WATCHES (12 to 6 a.m.)—THE CLOCK OF THE PASSION.

The desecrated Priests are still sleeping in the palace when Nicodemus and Joseph gain admittance into their precincts. As they pass through the gates, Peter sobs out the words: "Here it was that I first denied Him" (1 a.m.).

"It was to this olive-tree," a servant tells them, "that they bound Him till Annas was ready. On this spot He fell to the ground when the servant struck Him in the face."

As they pass through the court, *Wo is me*, Peter sighs out, "there was the fire burning at which I warmed myself" (2 a.m.).

These steps lead up to the judgment-hall.

"On this spot," John tells them, "He stood when they pronounced Him guilty of death, and the Priests spat in His face." It was then the end of the Third Watch (3 a.m.).

A servant shows them the underground dungeon where they shut Him up. "It was half an hour from the end of the Fourth Watch" (5.30), he tells them, "when they

unbarred the door, and saw Him bent down and chained to a low pillar." For a very small price they secure the filthy cloth that blindfolded His eyes, and cords that bound Him, and sticks that bruised Him.

A few minutes before the First Morning Watch (5.50), the Great Council was gathered in the judgment-hall, and condemned Him again as a blasphemer.

*D. That was a Great Sabbath-day.*

FIRST MORNING WATCH—a retrospect.

Most carefully now they follow His track, and call to mind each incident that occurred during the First Morning Watch (6 to 9 a.m.).

The First Watch was only just commenced (6 a.m.) when He started from the Priests' Palace for the Prætorium.

Going down this long flight of steps from Mount Sion He fell heavily; it was on this spot. A few minutes later (6.15), He crossed the Tyropœon and entered the Temple grounds. It was here that Judas flung down the money given to him.

"Alas, alas!" St. Peter says, weeping, "why did he not come to the Blessed Mother? He would have found mercy. I deserved to be cast off, but she has prayed for me."

"One hour of the First Watch was gone (7 a.m.) when we reached these steps up to the Governor's house (the Scala Santa). Oh, with what pain was our Master dragged again and again up and down them."

Here in the Lithostrotos, on this chair of Judgment, Pilate sat.

It was up this narrow street they dragged Him (7.30 a.m.) to the Palace of Herod Antipas, but they brought Him back by other crowded streets to show Him to the people in the fool's dress (8.30 a.m.).

The First Watch was closing (8.45) when standing here chained and bound, the Master heard the cry: *Not this Man, but Barabbas.*

*E. That was a Great Sabbath-day.*

THE SECOND WATCH (9 to 12 a.m.)—a retrospect.

During the whole of the first hour of the Second Watch they were scourging Him. At the end of the hour (10 a.m.) He was lying here on the ground in His Blood, and trying to clothe Himself: *A worm and no Man.*

Nicodemus and Joseph easily gain admittance also into the inner court where they crowned Him with thorns. A soldier tells them: "This low pillar was the throne they used when they crowned Him". Perchance they are able to secure for money the scarlet mantle.

"It was mid-way in the Second Watch when Pilate from the balcony called out, *Ecce Homo* (10:30), and we heard the terrible response: *Crucify Him.*"

Longinus, perchance, is there to tell them of Procla's message and Pilate's trouble of mind.

"Two hours of the Second Watch were gone (11 a.m.), when the Priests and Ancients raised the cry: *If you release this Man, you are no friend of Cæsar.*"

"A very few minutes later the Governor washed his hands and wrote the sentence."

"Here, on this spot, they laid the Cross on our Master, and here the two malefactors met Him and reviled Him."

"It was a little more than half an hour to noon (11:20) when the procession started from this gate. Three minutes later, going down the hill, He fell under the Cross. This is the spot."

"It was here," they whisper, "at the bottom of the hill, on the great road through the Tyropœan valley, the Blessed Mother met Him."

"A few paces further where the steep road to the west begins they laid the Cross on Simon, and three minutes later, on this spot, half way up the incline, Veronica wiped His sacred face."

"His second fall was here, near the judgment-gate. It was half an hour from noon when He passed through the gate and left the city for the last time" (11:30).

“At these crossroads He spoke to the women of Jerusalem. One hundred and sixty paces further, He fell, for the last time, at the base of Calvary.”

“By this path they led Him round to the north side.” “This cave is the prison,” Longinus tells them, “where they shut Him up and put fetters on His feet lest He should escape while they got the place ready for the Cross. Here, too, they gave Him myrrhed wine to drink, but they also mingled gall with it.” “Did He drink it?” one asks. “No, He tasted, but did not drink.”

“It was on this spot they stripped Him. Close by the Cross was laid on the ground, just here.”

“At fifteen minutes before noon we heard the first nail driven into His sacred hand” (11.45).

“Some minutes later they were dragging Him with His face downward along the ground; and lifted the Cross, and we heard Him say: *Father, forgive them.*”

F. *That was the Great Sabbath-day.*

THE THIRD WATCH (12 o'clock)—a retrospect.

“It was the sixth hour, and the thick darkness was setting in when Dismas said aloud: *This Man hath done no evil.* The Priests and Ancients seemed ready to beat him to death: but the darkness came on quite suddenly. They were terrified and hastened away.”

“Then the Blessed Mother and John and Magdalen, who had been a little lower down, came up hither close to the Cross. The Blessed Mother stood here in front of her Son, her eyes fixed on Him.”

“I drew the soldiers away,” Longinus tells them, “and down here near the prison they sat, and cast lots for His clothes. It was close upon the ninth hour (2.50) when He cried out so loud, *My God, My God, why hast Thou abandoned Me?* A minute or two later, in a very faint voice, He said: *I thirst,* and then, after a very short pause: *It is consummated.*”

“Almost exactly, I think, at the ninth hour *He bowed His Head and gave up the ghost:* for the trumpets from the

Temple announced the hour of the sacrifice, just as He died" (3 p.m.).

G. *That was the Great Sabbath-day.*

THE FOURTH WATCH (3 to 6 p.m.)—a retrospect.

"He had not been dead more than seven minutes when the Priests and their servants came to break His legs.

"Before ten minutes more were past, Dismas was dead and the soldier pierced the Master's side. 'O Blessed Mother, forgive me,' Longinus says, weeping, 'I did not do it in malice. I was afraid they would insist on breaking His legs.'"

"It was not yet half an hour after His Death when Joseph and Nicodemus arrived (3:30). At the end of the hour (4 p.m.) the Sacred Body was laid on the stone for embalment. We spent one hour round that stone. We were very slow in embalming; but for grief we could not work."

"Two hours after His Death (5 p.m.) we laid Him in the Sepulchre. It wanted still half an hour to sundown when the great stone was rolled, and the door closed (5:30). It was quite two hours later when after dark the Holy Mother and her companions reached the house on Mount Sion where the Master supped the night before."

H. *That was the Great Sabbath-day.*

It is still early when the Blessed Mother and her companions have thus completed their pilgrimage. How truly may Holy Mary say as she bends her steps homeward, *I have lifted my eye to the mountains whence help shall come to me.* For she is standing on MOUNT CALVARY. Before her, to the south, lies MOUNT SION and the Supper-room; on her left hand stands MOUNT MORIAH and Pilate's Prætorium, and a little beyond in the background, MOUNT OLIVET, with Gethsemani, and Bethany.

What other mountains or hills are there on this earth whence help can come to us so abundantly? *I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains.*

And the choirs of Heaven around their Queen take up the Psalm :

*Behold, He shall neither slumber nor sleep that keepeth Israel.*

*The Lord is thy Keeper: the Lord is thy protection on thy right hand. The sun shall not burn thee by day, nor the moon by night: the Lord keepeth thee from evil. May the Lord keep thy soul. May the Lord keep thy coming in and thy going out, from henceforth now and for ever (Psalm cxx.).*

### SCENE XVIII.

THE CŒNACULUM. HOLY SATURDAY AFTERNOON.

#### STATION I.

*On the Sabbath-day they rested according to the commandment (St. Luke xxiii. 56).*

#### A. *They rested.*

They have once more returned to the sanctuary where our Saviour instituted the Blessed Eucharist. What is their occupation there? St. Bonaventure suggests that they are gathered round the Sorrowful Mother, and that she begs of St. John to tell them all the things that were done, and the words her Divine Son spoke at the Last Supper. He further represents her listening with most reverent attention to the narrative.

We may then contemplate this scene, and note how St. Peter's grief bursts out again when John is telling how the Master chid him, and insisted on washing his feet.

Further, we may think how affected they are when they hear all the pains that the Lord took to soften the heart of Judas.

*“Eia ergo advocata nostra. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us, and show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.”*

#### B. *They rested.*

Then, too, John and Peter make known to them some of the things that happened in the Garden: How broken

down the Master seemed to be when He went to the Grotto, and came to visit them; how pale His Face was, and how His tears ran down His cheeks when He bent Himself to kiss Judas; how His garments were as much stained as if He had been treading grapes in the wine-press; how all His depression seemed to pass away when He went forward to meet the soldiers, and in a calm voice, heard across the torrent, said: *I am He.*

*C. They rested.*

Then, too, perchance, the Ever-Blessed Mother, *the Mother of Knowledge*, begs of St. John to read to them the prophetic description of the Passion written by Isaias (c. liii.). They have ere now heard it in the Synagogue, but never understood the meaning. Now the scene breaks with full light upon their astonished souls. Every word they realise, and every word renews the grief of their hearts.

*There is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness. We have seen Him, there was no sightliness.*

*Despised, the most abject of men, a Man of sorrows, acquainted with infirmity.*

*Surely He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows: we have thought Him, as it were, a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted.*

*But He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and by His bruises we are healed.*

A long time may be spent over this prophetic picture; and the reading be often interrupted by sobbing, and they remind each other in amazement, how true, how exact the picture is.

Eia Mater, fons amoris,  
Me sentire vim doloris,  
Fac ut tecum lugeam.

O Mother, fount of Charity,  
Oh, let me share thy agony,  
That I may mourn with thee.

## STATION II.

*On the Sabbath-day they rested (v. 56).*

*A. They rested.*

Holy writers tell us that our Lady's habit in the past had been to have, with St. Joseph and her Son, their scanty repast at the ninth hour.

Perchance then at this hour she gently urges them all to go to the large room, and refresh their exhausted strength. As she wishes to be alone, they leave her. *I have meat to eat which you know not* (St. John iv.).

While they are at their simple meal, and afterwards, they think and talk of the Admirable Mother. Mary of Cleophas has known her from infancy, and can tell some details such as our Lady herself afterwards revealed to St. Bridget: How from childhood her soul was ever full of a filial fear lest she should in any way displease her Creator; how she most rigidly abstained from all things that seemed likely to give her any pleasure that might lure away her soul from God; how, as soon as she knew that the Messiah was to be born of a virgin, she prayed most earnestly that she might live to see Him, and be perchance permitted to wait on the Virgin Mother as her handmaid.

*B. They rested.*

The current of their thoughts is suddenly changed when a disciple enters to tell them that Joseph has been seized by the Priests, and cruelly used, and cast into a deep dungeon, perhaps the same where our Saviour was imprisoned in the Palace of Caiphas.

In great trouble and full of pity for Joseph, they run to our Lady.

But she consoles them, and explains that this is a special grace granted to Joseph, in reward of his great charity to the Lord. She assures them all that Joseph will not be forgotten. *Fear not.*

And so the great Sabbath-day goes on according to Thy ordinance, dear Lord.

Fac cor amans Jesu mei,  
Fac ut nos amemus Te.

“Grant that our poor souls may find their Sabbath and their rest in remembering Thee and Thy Blessed Mother.”

## SCENE XIX.

THE CŒNACULUM. THE END OF THE GREAT SABBATH.

### STATION I.

*And when the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James and Salome, bought sweet spices, that coming they might anoint Jesus (St. Mark xvi. 1).*

Do three go out to buy the spices, or only two? This depends on punctuation. For James and Salome were brother and sister, both children of Mary of Cleophas. If therefore we write, *Mother of James, and Salome*, there are three devout women going out; if we write, *Mother of James and Salome*, there are only two.

*When the Sabbath was over.*

Contemplate the earnest devotion of these holy women. They are all very much exhausted; but love, if it be *strong as death*, is stronger much than weariness. As long as more precious spices and ointments can be found, enough has not been done for the Sacred Body. Has Mary sent to Bethany for all that remains of her *right spikenard*? *Let her alone, that she may keep it against the day of My burial.* Be this as it may, we can watch their diligent search for the very best aromatics.

“O Lord our God, and our most loving Redeemer, give us Thy love, that in all our works we may work for Thee, and try to give to Thee the best of everything.” *In omnibus operibus tuis præcellens esto—“in all Thy works keep pre-eminence”* (Ecclus. xxxiii.).

## STATION II.

*Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James and Salome, bought sweet spices, that coming they might anoint Jesus (v. 1).*

A. *They bought sweet spices.*

They have come back; they have opened out their parcels; they have begun at once the work of bruising and mixing the spices and herbs.

To their surprise, our Blessed Lady enters in from the Sanctuary with John: and with her mantle and her veil upon her as if she intends going forth at this late hour.

With gentleness and much motherly affection she watches their work. Well she knows how superfluous it all is, according to human wisdom. But she knows, too, that even if the judgment go astray at times, the work that a loving heart does is not superfluous.

He that begs of me may be an impostor, but what do I lose if I give to him because I believe him to be one of Christ's little ones? *He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what the spirit desireth* (Romans viii.).

She says no word then at all to blame them for not believing the assurance of Christ that He will rise again. For she knows well how, both now and when risen, He will delight in this devotion of their hearts.

B. *They bought sweet spices, that coming they might anoint Jesus.*

They are busy at their work, but they interrupt it, to ask in surprise if the Blessed Mother is going forth at such a late hour? and, if she is, may they accompany her?

Many writers assume that our Lady remained all that night in the Cœnaculum, and from there witnessed the Resurrection.

The local tradition in Jerusalem is that she was near the Tomb when the Lord rose. In the writings of holy contemplatives too, such as Sister Emmerich, we find her going about by night to the holy places.

We may therefore contemplate her thanking very warmly the devout women, and saying to them words like those of her Divine Son: "*What I do, you know not now, but you will know hereafter; I shall go whither I am going; John will take care of me for his Master's sake, but do you remain and finish your holy work*".

Oh, with what fervour their hearts follow her, saying: *May the Lord guard thy coming in and thy going out, now and for ever. For indeed she is blessed among women; and a Mother to be admired above measure, and worthy to be remembered by good men. Ever joining a man's heart with a woman's thought.*

## SCENE XX.

THE WAY OF SORROWS. NIGHTFALL AFTER THE GREAT SABBATH.

### STATION I.

*When the Sabbath was past (v. 1).*

A. With the Beloved Disciple then at her side, the Blessed among women, the Admirable Mother, goes out into the moonlight. For, as after a violent storm at sea the moon may rise and shed its tranquil light over the wrecked fleet of ships, and over the waves that have stifled the drowning cries of so many victims, so is God's moonlight shedding loveliness on the city of sin and sacrilege, the city of rejected graces; the city that was till now the city of God. This is indeed a spectacle of sadness for the Mother of Jesus crucified for sinful men.

*My eyes have failed with weeping, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured out upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people (Lament. ii).*

B. *When the Sabbath was past.*

In silence, then, the Blessed Mother and St. John follow the path trodden by our Saviour when He went early yesterday morning from the Palace of the Priests to the Prætorium.

Through the gate of Sion they are descending the long flight of steps that lead them through the Tyropœan valley to the Temple.

It was further on in the night when Judith passed through the gate of Bethulia, and went down the hill to the camp of Holofernes.

As she passed through the gate, we read: *Oxias and the Ancients of the city were waiting (to see her). And when they saw her they were astonished, and admired her beauty exceedingly. But they asked her no questions, only they let her pass, saying: The God of our fathers give thee grace, and may He strengthen all the counsels of thy heart with His power, that Jerusalem may glory in thee. And they that were there said, all with one voice: So be it, so be it (Judith x.).*

This picture may give us some faint idea of the delight with which the choirs of Heaven are gazing on their Queen, the Mother of God, as she goes down to-night from Mount Sion to Golgotha.

For they know what she knows, the secret of the King.

C. *When the Sabbath-day was past.*

If the Sabbath-day is past, then the third day is come, and on the third day, as she knows, her Son, her Lord, her God will rise. *He will rise on the third day: "Juravit Dominus, et non pœnitebit eum"—The Lord hath sworn, and He will not repent (Psalm cix.). Thou wilt not give Thy Holy One to see corruption (Psalm xv.).*

*Blessed art thou, Holy Mary, that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord (St. Luke i.).*

D. *When the Sabbath was past.*

We have tried to find out for ourselves, according to our poor fashion, what manner of thoughts occupied the soul of Holy Mary during her solitude and desolation; how she went over days gone by; how she contemplated the relics of Calvary; how she pleaded for her second family, the children of her pain.

We must now contemplate other absorbing thoughts

in her soul. She has been looking back on the past; now she is looking forward.

She is, as she walks along over the Way of Sorrow—the glorious way of salvation—consumed with desire that the hours be shortened, and that justice be speedily done to the lifeless Body and to the Most Holy Soul of her Divine Son.

At every step the prayer of her humble heart is penetrating the clouds (Ecclus. xxxv.). And as she has ever delighted in the Lord, the Lord is bound by His promise to give her *the petitions of her heart* (Psalm xxxvi.).

O Eternal Father, *look on the face of Thy* (lifeless) *Christ. O Lord, hearken, and do; delay not for Thy own sake* (Daniel ix.).

Full of these irresistible yearnings, she walks to the Prætorium, and from the Prætorium down into the valley, and up the steep Way of the Cross to Golgotha.

We have seen that Joseph offered her his house near the Sepulchre to be her home. Does she now repair thither? Some holy writers think that she did accept Joseph's kindness. However this be, we may contemplate her begging of John to go back to console Magdalen and the rest, and assuring him that God's angels will take care of her.

Holy writers assume that during the Sacred Passion, and still more at the time of the Resurrection, the veil of separation between the blessed angels and their Queen was to some degree drawn aside, so that they could commune with her and she with them.

Till now, then, we have been contemplating the Sacred Body of our Lord in the Tomb and the desolation of Holy Mary.

Now we must go back to follow for a time His Holy Soul that went forth from the Body at the ninth hour.

## SCENE XXI.

## NEAR THE TOMB.

## STATION I.

*He descended into Hell.*

A. At the ninth hour yesterday our Lord died loving, *loving to the end*; giving alms by word, by incessant prayers with tears, and by every extremity of suffering. No sooner is His Blessed Soul separated from His Sacred Body than, without any break, He continues at once His work of loving and giving alms; for with infinite love He gives His angels a command concerning His Blessed Mother; and then on an errand of love long desired by His Heart, He descends into Hell, to the Limbo of the Fathers, where He has been for ages the *desire of the everlasting hills* (Genesis xlix.). This name given by the dying Patriarch Jacob to Jesus Christ, according to some learned commentators signifies that Christ would be the desire of the holy Patriarchs who in their sanctity out-topped the people, like hills upon the plain.

B. *He descended into Hell.*

He goes down then to the place called Limbo, where all the ancient saints are detained. But He is not to remain there. *Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hell, nor wilt Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption* (Psalm xv.).

If there are also Holy Souls in Purgatory, doubtless to them also Jesus crucified brings indulgence and eternal rest.

The Prophet Zachary, who foretold the humble triumph of Palm Sunday—*Behold the King will come to thee, the just and Saviour. He is poor and riding on an ass*—and who also bequeathed to us the precious promise—*They shall look on Me Whom they have pierced*—seems also to tell us something of our Saviour's visit to His patient servants in Limbo: *Thou also by the blood of Thy Testament hast sent forth Thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water. Return to the*

*stronghold, ye prisoners of hope. I will render thee double, as I declare to-day* (c. ix.). How justly may these blessed souls, who have so patiently waited for the *desire of the everlasting hills*, be called *prisoners of hope*!

They have been exiled from God's home and their home; and now our Saviour is coming to say to them: *Return to the stronghold. Come out of the land of oblivion*, and take your place in the Church of Christ; not now to suffer in the Church militant, but to enter into the joy of your Lord in the Church triumphant. There *I will render thee double*. Yes, the long, long delay will seem but a short dream, when they are once in the *house of their eternity*.

C. *He descended into Hell.*

The words of Ecclesiasticus also may be a prophecy of this visit. *I will penetrate to all the lower parts of the earth, and will behold all that sleep, and will enlighten all that hope in the Lord* (c. xxiv.).

*All that sleep*: because the Holy Souls in Limbo are not tormented, but "sleep the sleep of peace". But still, they are not in possession; they are only hoping and desiring. And assuredly, here on earth at least, *hope that is deferred afflicteth the soul* (Prov. xiii.).

The inspired writer adds: *Desire when it cometh is a tree of life*.

The coming of our Lord Jesus is *the tree of life* to these saints. Hence Jesus said to St. Dismas: *This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise*. He knew that Limbo as soon as He entered there would become Paradise. *For what have I in Heaven* (Psalm lxxii.) better than the Lord Jesus? *The Lamb is the lamp thereof* (Apoc. xxi.). *The Lord shall be to thee for an everlasting light, and thy God for thy glory* (Isaias lx.).

D. *He descended into Hell.*

St. Peter also writes: *Christ died once for our sins, being put to death indeed in the flesh, but enlivened in the Spirit; in which He preached to those spirits who were in prison, which had been some time incredulous* (1 St. Peter iii.).

*He preached to those (who) had been some time incredulous.*

From these words some ancient writers inferred that certain more exemplary heathens who died without faith received the gift of faith at this visit of our Lord, and were saved. One of these writers relates that when a certain Christian had been reviling Plato, that philosopher appeared to him by night and said: "Do not revile me; for no one embraced the faith, when Christ preached to the dead, more readily than I did".

But this opinion and this story are not accepted by our holy Doctors. St. Gregory writes: "Christ going down to Limbo only delivered those by His grace who had believed in Him to come, and in their lives adhered to His precepts". A more common interpretation is that those *some time incredulous* were those who would not believe Noe's warning that the Deluge was coming; but afterwards when it came became penitent and were saved.

*He preached to those spirits: explaining to them the mystery of the Redemption.*

## SCENE XXII.

### LIMBO.

#### STATION I.

*And Jesus having cried out with a loud voice, gave up the ghost (St. Mark xv. 37).*

It is the ninth hour, the hour of the evening sacrifice, and in that same hour His Blessed Soul descends into Hell.

Of a sudden is heard the loud cry of the angels of the Lord who attend upon Him from Calvary, as knocking at the long-closed gates they say with unspeakable jubilation: *Lift up your gates, O ye princes; and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates, and the King of glory shall enter in* (Psalm xxiii.).

From inside, the bright spirits who have charge of the *prisoners of hope*, make their thrilling answer that resounds through the prison and is heard by all there: *Who is the King of glory?* Promptly from the outside comes the reply:

*The Lord Who is strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle (Psalm xxiii.).* For the blessed legions have been watching with glad amazement how the strength, the *virtus*, the manliness, the ineffable power of Christ's suffering meekness, and His Blessed Mother's untiring compassion, baffled and conquered and crushed under foot Satan and all his rebellious spirits. Once more, therefore, they repeat their exulting challenge: *Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates, and the King of glory shall enter in.* And once again with increasing delight the angels of the prisoners cry out: *Who is the King of glory?* in order that all may hear the grand response: *The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory!* Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God and the Son of the Virgin Mary, at Whose name *every knee shall bow, in Heaven, on earth, and under the earth—He is the King of glory.*

The devout women will be asking, at daybreak: *Who will roll away the stone? for it was very great.* Year by year, and age by age, the blessed angels, in their charity for the *prisoners of hope*, have been looking wistfully on these huge everlasting doors, and saying: Who can ever roll these barriers away? But now, *no word shall be impossible with God.* Instantly, *in the twinkling of an eye*, they are lifted up, and the King of glory, Jesus crucified; is in the midst of His *prisoners of hope*. And as they sink down overwhelmed with the excess of the unexpected joy, He says to them, as holy Joseph to his brethren: *Be not afraid: come nearer to Me (Gen. xlv.).* I am Jesus, your Brother. My Mother is your Mother. My brethren, *see that it is My mouth that speaketh to you.*

But, alas, alas! these are but foolish words. What can we do but again and again make use of the words St. Paul borrowed from a Prophet before him? The manner of that meeting between Jesus crucified and His prisoners, *eye hath not seen.* The tones of His greeting, and the music of their response, no ear on earth hath ever heard. And how the

gladness crowded into that moment obliterated all remembrance of the ages of their exile and imprisonment, no heart in this world can conceive!

## STATION II.

### *He descended into Hell.*

A. *He that (sowed) in tears* is now come to reap with infinite gladness and contentment the beginnings of His harvest.

#### B. *He descended into Hell.*

Great as is the gladness of these prisoners now that hope long delayed is changed into fulfilment, yet the gladness in the Heart of our Lord is greater inconceivably, as He says to these holy captives: "*Come, ye blessed of My Father: Come, ye faithful and prudent servants: Come, ye well-trying friends, come and share the joy of your Lord and your Brother*".

#### C. *He descended into Hell.*

And now, helped by the grace of the Holy Spirit, we may in contemplation try to conjecture what manner of special greeting He has for each of those who had been most faithful and devoted. With what words of love, for instance, does He now in one moment give back to St. Joseph a thousand-fold for all the fidelity with which he guarded the family of God committed to him, and acted as the proxy of the Eternal Father!

#### D. *He descended into Hell.*

*Star differeth from star*, St. Paul writes (1 Cor. xv.). So now, also, no two saints in all this company have the same joy poured into them. In each one our Lord creates a new heart; and the gladness of one heart, though like, is still different from the gladness of another.

The martyred Precursor has his own full outpouring of love. Abraham and Isaac and the chaste Patriarch Joseph, and each of the Prophets slain in Jerusalem, all become at once wonderful images and counterparts of

Christ Jesus, yet each with his own individual glory. What word of special welcome has our Saviour for the faithful mother of the seven martyrs, for Judith, and for Esther, the types of Holy Mary? for His own St. Anne, and for Elizabeth, the holy mother of His Precursor? And what manner of tenderness has He ready for the patient suffering of holy Job and the faithful charity of Tobias?

E. *He descended into Hell.*

Then, a little while, and suddenly into the prison of hope, now changed into a Paradise, is ushered by the crowd of blessed angels, their new companion, the first-born on Calvary, the first child of the new family of the second Eve, the penitent and purified and sanctified soul of Dismas, washed in the Blood of the Lamb. Oh, wonder! Our Blessed Lord's gratitude to Dismas for having pleaded for Him is greater beyond measure than the redeemed Saint's thanksgiving to his Redeemer.

F. *He descended into Hell.*

But among all the vast gathering of the Blessed here to-day, there are two on whom all eyes are fixed: our first father, Adam, and our mother, Eve. They have a reason beyond all the rest to lie absorbed in grateful adoration, saying: "We adore Thee, O Christ, and we bless Thee; because by Thy Death Thou hast undone the evil wrought by us, and hast redeemed the world".

## SCENE XXIII.

### PARADISE ON CALVARY.

#### STATION I.

*Thou hast sent forth the prisoners out of the pit (Zach. ix. 11).*

How long does the Soul of Christ tarry in Limbo? Some commentators answer, only an instant, and straight-way leads out the *prisoners of hope*. Others argue from the words: *So shall the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth*

*three days and three nights* (St. Matt. xii.), that the Most Holy Soul remains in Limbo till near the moment of the Resurrection. But the argument does not seem weighty, as these words may be sufficiently verified by the fact that the Sacred Body remained buried till the third day. We are therefore free, in contemplation, to assume that it is at the Sacred Tomb that our Blessed Saviour, in part at least, preaches to the Holy Spirits, explaining to them as they gaze on the crucified Body, and also on the second Eve, the desolate Mother, the Admirable Mother, the Mother of God, and Mother of men, how grace and salvation has been won for the fallen race.

## STATION II.

*Thou hast sent forth the prisoners out of the pit* (v. 11).

A. The third day then is come, and the prophecy must be fulfilled: Three days and three nights the Son of Man shall be in the heart of the earth.

Three days and three nights! If this be so, our cold-hearted human wisdom will calculate, not till the ninth hour of the second day of the week can the Resurrection take place. But there is a power at work strong enough to upset all human calculations.

To Daniel, the Blessed Virgin's Archangel, Gabriel, said of old: *I am come to show it to thee, because thou art a man of desires, (that) seventy weeks are shortened upon thy (captive) people* (Daniel ix.). The soul of this man of desires is present now, yearning with a longing that he never felt on earth, that the Resurrection may come speedily. But Daniel is only one of the gathering of Holy Souls from Limbo; and the blessed angels from Heaven who are gazing on the Body of the second Adam and the bruised heart of the second Eve, are all consumed with a longing that justice may be done quickly to the Sacred Body and to the separated Soul which are awaiting their reunion. God joined these two together, and no

other power had right to sever them. Love alone, Infinite love, above all law, broke the sacred bonds, and in death they are divided.

B. *Thou hast sent forth the prisoners.*

And then, too, all the immense choir of Blessed Spirits are pleading with an irresistible concord for justice to the bruised heart of the Immaculate Mother, who, with the Eternal Father, *so loved the world* that she gave her only Son for man's redemption.

C. *Thou hast sent forth the prisoners.*

Add to this longing for justice to their King their own bereavement. They cannot be at rest till they possess Him ; and, if they may not yet have their Queen also, till at least they see her consoled ineffably. *Thou wilt arise (O God)*, is their cry, *and have mercy on Sion ; for it is time to have mercy on it, for the time is come* (Psalm ci.). " If we may not yet possess our Queen, it is time that we be allowed to look on the face of Thy Christ, our Lord, our Redeemer, our King, our God."

### STATION III.

*There stood by the Cross of Jesus, His Mother*  
(St. John xix. 25).

But there is a cry going up to the throne of the Eternal Trinity more powerful than this stupendous supplication of all the choirs of angels and all the liberated just. Ever since that ninth hour, wherever she bent her steps, the Immaculate Heart of the Mother of Sorrows has been, with groanings unspeakable, pleading that the Holy Soul and Sacred Body, which had paid a debt they did not owe, and been afflicted by a parting so cruel and so undeserved, may be most speedily brought together again.

Once before, the Lord Jesus said to the Blessed Woman of desires : *Woman, My hour is not come* (St. John ii.) : and yet her will prevailed, and it was done according to her wish, for her grateful God never forgets the hour when

she said: *Be it done unto me according to Thy word.* Now, therefore, when her heart cries out: "O God, O Lord, O my Son Jesus, *incline unto my aid, make haste to help me; O Lord, hearken, and do; delay not for Thy own sake,*" He answers: Mother, *My hour is not come;* but all the while He does not forget His promise: *No word shall be impossible with God,* now that the second Eve is become My Mother. And the adorable Trinity, in their wisdom and loving charity, see how the hours can be abbreviated and truth remain undamaged.

Now, therefore, as has been said, for His own sake, for the sake of His Divine Son made Man, for the sake of the Blessed Mother of God, for the sake of the expecting saints and angels, for the sake of the afflicted Church on earth, the days are shortened, as far as may be consistently with the due fulfilment of prophecy. The Vesper hours of Good Friday, from the ninth hour to sundown, are accepted as one day. The Great Sabbath is the second. And now the hours from the end of the Sabbath to the beginning of the early twilight of the first day after the Sabbath, are admitted as the third day.

#### STATION IV.

*Return to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope. I will render thee double (Zach. ix. 12).*

##### A. *Ye prisoners of hope.*

The Holy Souls, then, released from Limbo, and all the choirs of angels, are now around their Queen, near the glorious Sepulchre. We have a saying that "coming events cast their shadows before". In this hour, it is not a shadow that is the harbinger, but a growing hope, and a joy becoming every moment more intense. The hour of suspense is a heavenly day-dawn such as this world has never seen, preparing the way for a glorious sunburst such as angels or men have never conceived.

To the soul of Holy Mary her Archangel is sent to

whisper the message: *Yet a little and a very little while, and He that is to come will come, and will not delay* (Hebrews x.). Meanwhile we may in our poor way contemplate these hoping and expecting and desiring saints and angels, whose eyes are ever turning to the Mother of God, to learn of her what they are to wish, and what to do. If we may use a human word, she is the leader, and ruler, and precentor of this vast and glorious choir which the Eternal God has prepared for Himself and His own home.

Holy writers assume that at the Resurrection, angels and the liberated souls are visible to our Lady.

B. *Prisoners of hope.*

What, then, are the thoughts of this expecting company *which no man can number*?

As we have already seen, one dominant thought is an intense longing that the hours be abbreviated.

But besides this, we know enough from revelation to be able to penetrate a little more behind the veil that hides these blessed choirs from the eyes of this world. The recording angels have, without failing for one moment, kept most diligently an exact register of every deed, every word, every thought of Jesus, God made Man, from His conception to the ninth hour, when He bowed His head and died. Not for one moment have they slumbered or slept over this task of love and joy. Now all the blessed spirits know, and they remind one another of it, that His own teaching was that not even one cup of cold water given as an alms shall lose its reward.

What manner of reward, then, they ask, in transport of reverent wonder and delight, will the adorable Trinity create for all the works of the Lord Jesus? For all His words and thoughts while on earth are, not only an almsgiving, and an almsgiving of that kind which is most precious, the almsgiving that costs much, but also an almsgiving raised to an infinite value by the love that burns in the Heart of Jesus, God made Man.

And God, Who is the true Father, the good Father, the most loving Father of all this large family of His children, is not displeased at their holding happy counsel together on this question. *Let the just feast and rejoice before God, and be delighted with gladness* (Psalm lxxvii.). And so they consider in detail what shape and form of recompense will have been planned in the eternal counsels of their God, for the Son of Man, Christ Jesus.

We read how King Assuerus, when he was enduring a night without sleep, commanded the chronicles of his reign to be brought to him, that they might help to pass the weary hours. There, on a page long overlooked, they read for him how Mardochai, the Jew, had saved his life from traitors. *What honour and reward, he asked, hath Mardochai received for this fidelity? His servants answered: He hath received no reward at all.* He called therefore his chancellor, Aman, and put this question to him: *What ought to be done to the man whom the King is desirous to honour?* (Esther vi.).

This is precisely the question that occupies this vast assembly of the blessed now, and the question which the Eternal Trinity wish them to meditate.

We too are permitted, in our poor contemplation, to consider in our hearts the same question: *What ought to be done to our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus crucified, Whom our God is desirous to honour?* What reward do we wish Him to have?

### C. Prisoners of hope.

Leaving aside, then, that immense record of His thirty-three years on earth, which the *whole world could not contain*: "What manner of recompense," the blessed saints and angels are wondering, "will be given to our King even for His last night and His last day on earth?"

The Eternal Father has, if we may use our human language, through ages that had no beginning, been meditating on this same question: *What shall I give (My Son) for all He hath given to Me?* (Psalm cxv.).

"If the cup of cold water is to have a lavish reward," the Cherubim and Seraphim argue, "what shall be given for each drop of His own life-blood?" "We have numbered," the recording angels say, "most faithfully, all these wounds upon His Body; in what way, think you, will each of them be made good and compensated with ample measure, flowing over?"

"And all those times when He fell down helpless!"

Perhaps even we here on earth know already something of the way in which this weary exhaustion is to be made right. For we see in the great mystery of His existence in the Blessed Eucharist, how His Sacred Body which was on the Way of Sorrow so powerless, henceforth can be in every corner of the world at the same moment.

"Blessed be the Holy and Undivided Trinity, that has planned this recompense for this lifeless and motionless Body."

"What," asks one, "shall be the joy and delight given to His eyes for every tear they shed?" "Yes," another adds, "and for the charity of His eyes? and for the reverence also of His eyes when closed in prayer?"

"And can any one conjecture what can be done to glorify His sacred mouth for every word He spoke, and for His admirable silence? For not one word spoken nor one word meekly held back can pass away without its eternal recompense."

"And what kind of delight will be created to make compensation for His thirst?"

"And His sacred feet that were so weary, and yet so untiring! and His hands, ever open to bless and to give! Even if the nails had never passed through these feet or hands, what can be thought of to pay all that they have earned?"

"But above all, His Sacred Heart that loved with a boundless love from the moment of His conception till He expired! What new kind of honour have the adorable Trinity planned to make up to It for all Its sorrows and the sorrows of His Ever-Blessed Mother?"

“Then besides, what think you will be done as a recompense for the *gratitude* of His Heart? for the *meekness* of His Heart? for the *humility* of His Heart? and for the never-ceasing *obedience* of His loving Heart?”

What can be done? “*O Lord, our God, Thou knowest.* It is well: for we know not.” And then, that last wrench of separation which parted the Sacred Body and the Holy Soul! O mystery! How shall that parting ever be made up to both?

D. *Prisoners of hope.*

So do they wonder and contemplate, and they turn their eyes to the Blessed Mother.

But here, instead of finding help, they have to begin again a new range of wonder and calculation. For is it not written: *According to the multitude of My sorrows, Thy comforts have given joy to My Soul?* (Psalm xciii.). If her sorrows have been great as the ocean, how will her heart be enlarged to hold the joy in store for her? *O Lord our God, Thou knowest.* Blessed be our God. He is *faithful in all His words and holy in all His works. The eyes of all hope in Thee, O Lord* (Psalm cxliv.).

Thus do the blessed spirits muse in boundless gladness in presence of their God; and the Blessed Mother, united with them, is from the depths of her heart crying out: *Come, Lord Jesus* (Apoc. xxii.); and her cry prevails.

E. *Prisoners of hope.*

But first, the Holy Spirit breathing where He wills, sweetly whispers into her soul, as to the precentor of the heavenly choir, the answer to all their musings, and at the same moment inclines them too to take up from her the new anthem which answers their own manifold questions. Beginning, then, with the Ever-Blessed Mother of God, and rising sweetly and solemnly, and “full and loud, and most becoming,” from this vast choir, the new canticle is on a sudden heard: *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and benediction* (Apoc. v.). And in that

hour, with a full comprehension, they grasp the special reasons for every word in that glorious and unanimous verdict.

*Power* He shall have, because He was so helpless and so subject.

*Divinity* must burst forth in a perfect revelation, because His aspect was so hidden, and He was known only as a Man, and as a Man of Sorrows—a *worm and no Man*.

*Wisdom* must shine as the sunlight, because He was mocked as a fool.

*Strength* shall beyond measure be multiplied, because He lay down powerless upon the ground, and *became as a Man without help*.

*Honour* shall be His, because He *was glutted with reproaches*; and *glory* He shall have, because as the sinner He endured all shame.

Yes, and *Benediction!* Blessing be for ever to His Name *above all names*, for He was hooted by His people whom He loved.

F. *Prisoners of hope.*

And now the heart of the Blessed Mother with supreme earnestness cries out: *Arise, O my glory. O Lord, make haste to help me. Arise, my Son, and have mercy on Sion, for the time is come to have mercy on it.*

With one heart they respond, "Amen, amen".

## SCENE XXIV.

### THE TOMB.

#### STATION I.

*The third day He shall rise again (St. Matt. xvii. 22).*

And now His will Who stilled the winds on the lake, and lulled the waves to rest, in an instant hushes the jubilant anthem. There is silence, a holy happy silence, throughout the host of Heaven, and all that vast assem-

blage, and *the prisoners of hope* gaze in rapture on the Most Blessed Soul of Christ, as it enters into the Sacred Tomb, and in an instant is united once more, indissolubly now and for ever, with its faithful partner, the sinless, and most obedient helpmate which rendered to His Soul *good, and not evil, through all the days of (its) life*. Thus, in a moment, *in the twinkling of an eye*, as the Apostle afterwards wrote (1 Cor. xv.), Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God, and the Son of the Ever-Blessed Virgin Mary, He Who is *Master of power* (Wisdom xii.), and *reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly* (Wisdom viii.), and *with tranquillity* (Wisdom xii.), awakes from the sleep of death, and on His new birthday is once more made Man—Jesus Christ, God and Man.

“O God, O My Father, *to Thee do I wake* at the dawning of the new Sabbath-day. I give Thee thanks, My Father, because *Thou (hast) not left My Soul in Hell; nor given Thy Holy One to see corruption.*”

No hand does He need to *unbind Him, and let Him go*. *With tranquillity* He lays aside the grave-clothes. No angel comes to roll away for Him the stone, though *it is great*. In silence and *with tranquillity* He rises, and passes in His glorified Body noiselessly through the stone vaulting of the Sepulchre. *The Body sown in dishonour rises in glory; sown in weakness, it rises in power; sown a natural Body, it rises a spiritual Body* (1 Cor. xv.). *O death, where is (now) thy victory?*

Silence, deep silence still reigns throughout the great company of angels and of blessed souls gathered from Heaven and from Limbo to witness the glorious Resurrection. All are waiting and watching for what the Lord will do and say.

## STATION II.

*He is risen, as He said* (St. Matt. xxviii. 6).

A. And what does the Lord do or say as He rises from the Tomb? Of the strong man, Samson, we read, that when

he found the honeycomb in the dead lion's mouth, he ate of it, *and coming to his father and his mother, he gave them of it, and they ate* (Judges xiv.).

A stronger and a better and a more loving Son is here. From the jaws of death He has taken back the honeycomb, the sweetness and the joy of life. Whither shall He go but to share it quickly with the same Mother who has shared all His sorrow? The first Adam, as he woke out of the deep sleep cast on him by God, saw coming towards him the woman that God had formed to be his helpmate. So now the waking eyes of the second Adam, as He rises through the rock, are resting on His Blessed Mother. He sees her draw irresistibly towards Him, and He makes haste to meet her, and most reverently and lovingly embraces her, saying: "My Mother, '*Resurrexi, et adhuc tecum sum*'—*I am risen, and am with thee still*" (Psalm cxxxviii.).

Then it is that an alleluia loud and full and perfectly becoming, bursts from the delighted choirs. Alleluia! alleluia! For hope is changed into ineffable fulfilment.

Sit laus plena, sit sonora,	Oh, full and loud the song shall be,
Sit jucunda, sit decora,	Seemly and sweet the minstrelsy,
Mentis jubilatio.	The anthems of the soul.

And as the Ever-Blessed Mother sinks down to adore, saying once again, "*Ecce ancilla Domini!*" He adds: "*Arise, My Mother, arise; make haste, My love, My dove, My beautiful one, and come. For the winter is now past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers have appeared in our land*" (Cant. ii.).

Louder and fuller and more jubilantly bursts out again the response of the entranced spirits, Amen, amen, alleluia, alleluia!

And as the Lord goes on: (*She*) *is My dove! My perfect one is but one!* (Cant. vi.); *thou art all fair, My loved one, My faithful one, Mother ever Blessed; thou art all fair, and no spot is in thee*" (Cant. iv.); their irrepressible gladness breaks forth once more: "*Hail, full of grace, the Lord is*

*with thee. Worthy is our Queen, the Mother of the Lamb that was slain, to receive with her Son benediction, and honour, and glory, and power, for ever and ever (Apoc. v.). For God has joined them, and parted they must not be."*

And Holy Mary, overflowing with perfect love, which drives out all fear and all sorrow, responds in that same hour, as she gazes on the beauty of her glorified Son: *It is enough for me if my Son and my Lord be living (Genesis xlv.). My God, my Lord, my Son, already in this hour, according to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, Thy consolations have given joy to my soul (Psalm xciii.). My spirit exulteth in God my Saviour.*

B. *He is risen, as He said.*

Our Blessed Lord will be well pleased, and His Holy Mother will be will pleased, and the rejoicing saints and angels will be well pleased, if *we* also try to take part in this great gladness for the Resurrection and glorification of Christ Jesus crucified.

*Gratias agimus Tibi propter magnam gloriam tuam—*  
"We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory".

St. Ignatius teaches us in his Exercises, when he comes to this mystery, to pray earnestly that *we may rejoice intensely on account of the great joy and glory of our Master.*

This is not at all a selfish prayer. For if it is love to *weep with those who weep*, so is it love to *rejoice with those who rejoice*. Loving compassion does both.

"*Cantate Domino,*" the Holy Ghost says to us, "*canticum novum.*"

This scene at the Sepulchre calls for a new canticle. But if we sing with a new heart the old songs, they become a new canticle.

*Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.* Every word is new, and has to-day a new meaning. The Lord is with her now in quite a new way.

And we can practise our souls too in learning how to say better and better her canticle, *My soul magnifieth the Lord*, blessing God for what He has done for Holy Mary.

For thus we can give her a help which she needs; since there is one thing that she never can do as much as she wishes. She cannot bless and thank her God sufficiently.

Regina cœli, lætare, alleluia.

Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia.

Resurrexit sicut dixit, alleluia,

Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.

Rejoice, O Queen of Heaven and earth, alleluia.

For He to Whom thou gavest birth, alleluia,

Is risen as He said, alleluia,

This third day from the dead, alleluia.

Oh, pray for us for whom He bled, alleluia.

*C. He is risen, as He said.*

Look attentively at Jesus risen: the same Jesus, as on the Good Friday; and yet how changed! *Death is swallowed up in victory.* And not only death, but all that went before death. For we remember, there was *no beauty* in Him then; *nor comeliness, nor sightliness.* We were not drawn to Him. We could not *be desirous of Him.* Now He is *beautiful above (all) the sons of men;* and the angels and blessed saints are *desiring to look on Him:* and, in quite a new sense, are crying out, *O God, look on the Face of Thy Christ,* the beautiful Face of Thy Christ, and out of love for Him, be propitious to His poor sinful brethren—the children of His Mother.

*D. He is risen, as He said.*

St. Ignatius counsels us to note well the great change wrought in Him.

When we see a martyr mangled and tortured, or a holy servant of God suffering on a death-bed, it is hard to believe that they are soon, very soon, to be blessed in Heaven.

Is this calm and beautiful and majestic Lord Jesus the same that on Friday was writhing on the ground in His Blood, *a worm and no Man?*

*He was crucified through weakness,* St. Paul writes, *yet He liveth by the power of God* (2 Cor. xiii.). And while looking on His beauty, and strength, and majesty to-day,

we understand better that the weakness of Good Friday was all voluntary. *He loved me and delivered Himself up for me.*

E. *He is risen.*

He was dead, truly dead : but it was He Himself Who said of Lazarus : *(He) is not dead, but sleepeth.* And what to Him now is His Passion, His Death, nay, His whole weary Life, but a short dream ? *As the dream of them that awake, O Lord* (Psalm lxxii.). *The things that are seen are temporal : but the things that are not seen are eternal* (2 Cor. iv.).

St. Chrysostom writes : “ The glory of the Resurrection has buried in oblivion all the bitterness of death ”.

F. *He is risen.*

We have to believe by faith that He is the same Jesus ; the scourged Jesus ; the crowned Jesus ; the crucified Jesus of Good Friday. “ *Ecce Homo !* ” He is the same Man ; God made Man ; the Son of God and the Son of Holy Mary.

St. Leo writes : “ The Resurrection did not put an end to the former Body, but only changed its condition. The substance is not destroyed. Some qualities have passed away ; but its nature is not gone. That which could then be crucified is now a Body impassible. That which could then be slain is now become immortal. That which could be wounded is made invulnerable.”

And St. Paul writes : *If we knew Christ according to the flesh : but now, we know Him no longer.* St. Leo, to explain these words, adds : “ With reason it is said : that the flesh of Christ is no longer recognised as what it used to be. Because now there is nothing left passible, and nothing that is weak. So that in nature and essence it is the same ; but in its glorious condition not at all the same.”

G. *He is risen.*

St. Paul, the Apostle of the Resurrection, suggests many holy thoughts to entertain our souls while we contemplate our Lord Jesus risen, and His Holy Mother's consolation.

(a) *We are buried with Him by baptism unto death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also may walk in newness of life* (Romans vi.).

The old man of sin was buried in the waters of Baptism. This was more clearly signified in the Baptism by immersion. The Christian rises out of the water regenerated, and a new man. All through my life, then, I ought to have been *walking in newness of life*. Have I lived the life of a risen man, such as Lazarus lived after coming to life? Has my heart been clean? Has a *right spirit* been renewed *in my bowels*?

H. *He is risen.*

(b) But not to stand alone and exceptional. *Christ is risen from the dead, the FIRST FRUITS OF THEM THAT SLEEP. For by a man came death, and by a Man the resurrection of the dead. And as in Adam all die, SO ALSO IN CHRIST ALL SHALL BE MADE ALIVE* (I Cor. xv.).

One cause, then, of the great joy to-day of Christ our Lord and of His Holy Mother is that we are all, through His Death and Resurrection, to rise again.

They are rejoicing for our joy. Is it much if we rejoice at their joy?

Our poor sinful bodies are to rise. Let us not be slaves to them in their corruption, now; but reverence and cherish them as they will be when risen.

I. *He is risen.*

(c) And therefore our bodies shall rise. *If the dead rise not again, neither is Christ risen again* (I Cor. xv.). *Credis hoc? Credo Domine.*

(d) But what boots it that our bodies rise, if our souls be not risen?

*Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall all indeed rise again: but we shall not all be changed. Why not? Because flesh and blood cannot possess the Kingdom of Heaven; neither shall corruption possess incorruption* (I Cor. xv.).

Alas! alas! Are we to rise with our bodies still quite

capable of suffering and of corruption; immortal indeed, but suffering such everlasting misery, that *better had it been for him if that man had not been born?* (St. Matt. xxvi.).

Is that to be the outcome of Christ's Death and Resurrection? *Absit! Domine. Absit! Mater Dei. Tantus labor non sit cassus.*—"Not so, O Lord, not so, Holy Mother. May the Passion of thy Son and thy compassion not be made void."

J. *He is risen.*

(e) *Christ our Pasch is sacrificed* (1 Cor. v.). *Our Pasch, our Passover.* The name was to remind Israel of the crossing over the Red Sea from slavery into freedom. Christ is *our Pasch*: because He has made it possible for our souls through His plentiful redemption and all the provision He has earned for His Church to pass from death to life.

St. Bernard writes that if we go back to sin, "We rob the Resurrection of Christ of its name of Pasch, since we do not pass over, but go back". To each of us He says most compassionately: *Arise, make haste, My beautiful one, and come. For winter is now past; the rain is over and gone. The flowers have appeared in our land.* For each one of us is His Bride, built up out of the water and the blood from His Side; and, though perchance disfigured now, yet He sees us as we are to be: *Make haste, My beautiful one, and come.*

K. *He is risen.*

(f) *Christ rising from the dead, dieth now no more.*

Therefore, under either kind in the Holy Eucharist Christ must be living. Men sometimes say that Holy Church only gives half the Sacrament to the faithful. As long as this heresy prevails, Holy Church fears to countenance it by giving the Blessed Sacrament to the faithful under both kinds. For if Christ is divided, and he who receives the Sacred Body does not receive also the Precious Blood, then Christ is still dead, for His Body and His Blood are separated.

*Christ rising from the dead, dieth now no more. Death*

*has no more dominion over Him.* The Blessed Mother has obtained for many of her children to rise from sin and die no more. They persevere till death, walking in the newness of life. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life have no more dominion over them. Thanks be to God, Who gave us the victory through Christ our Lord.

“O Holy Mother of God, thy power is still the same. Thy Mother’s heart, too, is unchanged. Pray for us sinners, that we may die no more.”

L. *He is risen.*

(g) *Who was delivered up for our sins, and rose again for our justification* (Romans iv.).

The sense is *not* that Christ by His Death merited forgiveness for us, and by His Resurrection merited an infusion of sanctifying grace. For after His Death our Lord *no longer merited*. But St. Paul teaches us that His Death and His Resurrection are both to be useful to us; both teach us; both are our models.

His Death teaches us to die to sin, to destroy sin. His Resurrection, to *walk in newness of life*.

M. *He is risen.*

*If you are risen with Christ, seek the things that are above: mind the things that are above, not the things that are on the earth* (Coloss. iii.).

Our good Angel is ever whispering: *Sursum corda*.

*Where is wisdom to be found?* Job asks. Where are peace and happiness and hope and love to be found?

*And where is the place of understanding?* If I go down into the rich mine, *the depth says: it is not in me*. If I look for it on the sea-shore, *the sea saith: it is not with me*. If I try to buy it, *the finest gold will not purchase it, neither shall silver be weighed in exchange for it*. *Gold or crystal cannot equal it: neither shall any vessels of gold be changed for it*.

*Whence, then, cometh wisdom?*

*Sursum corda!* Our Angel whispers, *God understandeth the way of it: and He knoweth the place thereof* (Job xxviii.).

N. *He is risen.*

(h) *Christ our Pasch is sacrificed: therefore let us feast: not with the old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Cor. v.).*

That is, let us in our Paschal time use *unleavened bread*: not the bread seasoned with the old leaven palatable to our nature. Let us not indulge in conversations leavened with *malice and wickedness*; but let us feast our minds and hearts with innocence and truth.

O. *He is risen.*

An early Father, Minucius Felix, writes: "Observe how, for our consolation, all creation is ever contemplating (and imitating) the future resurrection. The sun sets in the sea, sets to rise again. Stars disappear and return. Flowers droop and die, to come to life again. Shrubs are withered by age, but blossom again. Seeds must die in the ground before they spring up in beauty. It is with our bodies in this world as with those trees which in the winter season hide all their vigour under a feigned decrepitude. Why wish impatiently that the tree come back to life and bourgeon while the winter is still bleak? Even so, must we wait for the spring-time of our bodies."

## SCENE XXV.

### THE TOMB. THE EARTHQUAKE.

#### STATION I.

*And behold there was a great earthquake (St. Matt. xxviii. 2).*

A. *A great earthquake.*

Very loud, but perhaps not of long continuance. Holy Church applies to it the words of the 75th Psalm: *The earth trembled and was still, when God arose in judgment, to save all the meek of the earth.*

*To save all the meek of the earth.* The earthquake is not a chastisement sent in anger to destroy; but a voice announcing that the kingdom of this world is no longer

under Satan's power: that Christ the King has conquered all His enemies; and, to-day, the last of them, death—and *the enemy death shall be destroyed last* (1 Cor. xv.). He is risen now to continue His work of *saving all the meek of the earth.*

B. *A great earthquake.*

1. The loud earthquake awakes the drowsy guards and tells them the tidings, and fills them with terror.

2. The loud earthquake, coming unexpectedly, awakens the attention of the disciples, and prepares their minds to believe.

3. The earthquake, short, loud, and without preparation, speaks to the sleeping city. *He who hath ears, let him hear,* our Lord used to say.

C. *A great earthquake.*

At the ancient Pasch, the deliverance out of Egypt, nature spoke more loudly: *The sea saw and fled: Jordan was turned back. The mountains skipped like rams, and the hills like the lambs of the flock. At the presence of the Lord, the earth was moved* (Psalm cxiii.). *O God, when Thou didst go forth in the sight of Thy people the earth was moved, and the heavens dropped at the presence of the God of Sinai* (Psalm lxvii.). Why is there less demonstration now? Perchance, because less is wanted now. Christ has wrought better wonders and quite sufficient wonders on Calvary. He, on His cross, with His Blessed Mother by His side, is the wonder that will awaken and attract the hearts of men. *I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself* (St. John xii.). He is the Fruit hanging on the tree of knowledge and of life, that will lure us all.

The Psalmist speaks of the God of the first Pasch as the God of Sinai. He spoke in the thunder and lightning of Sinai. Our Lord Jesus, the God of Calvary, says: *I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love; and I will be to them as one that taketh off the yoke on their jaws; and I put his meat to him that he might eat* (Osee xi.).

“By Thy glorious Resurrection, deliver us, O Lord. Do

not, on account of graces abused and our hardness of heart, cease to speak; do not be silent."

Alas! after having loved us with an everlasting love, and drawn us to Calvary to witness His Death and Resurrection, and to know Him and His Blessed Mother, shall our Lord be obliged to say to us in the end: *The Lord thy God hath carried thee, as a man is wont to carry his little son, all the way that you have come, until you came to this place. And yet for all this you did not believe the Lord your God?* (Deut. i.).

## STATION II.

*For an Angel of the Lord descended from Heaven, and coming rolled back the stone, and sat upon it. And his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow. And for fear of him the guards were struck with terror and became as dead men* (vv. 2—4).

### A. An Angel of the Lord descended.

The context is: *There was a great earthquake. For an Angel descended.*

Hence commentators conclude that the earthquake is produced by the action of God's Angel. Some men, deluded by the father of lies and by their own pride, deify the laws of nature. Nature is with them supreme. We believe firmly that our God is the Creator and Lord of nature and nature's laws. *He commandeth both the winds and the sea, and they obey Him.* So does the earth: *The world is Mine, and the fulness thereof* (Psalm xlix.); and the firmament above: *And all things serve Thee* (Psalm cxviii.). *For great power always belonged to Thee alone; and who shall resist the strength of Thy arm? For the whole world before Thee is as the least grain of the balance, and as a drop of the morning dew, that falleth down upon the earth. But Thou hast mercy upon all, because Thou canst do all things* (Wisdom xi.).

### B. The guards became as dead men.

Our Lord is risen: *to save all the meek of the earth.* The

voice of the earthquake is really a message of peace. *The guards, indeed, were filled with terror; but this fear will to many be the beginning of wisdom, and perchance afterwards to themselves.*

The shock of the earthquake and the aspect of the Angel leave no room for doubt in their souls, whatever bribes the Priests may offer. "Great is the truth, and it gains the day." These guards set by the Priests and Ancients will be most useful apostles of the truth. *Unjust witnesses have risen up against Me, and iniquity hath lied to itself* (Psalm xxvi.), that is, against itself, to its own confusion. *There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord* (Prov. xxi.).

C. *An Angel of the Lord descended, and coming rolled back the stone.*

Some commentators think that the earthquake caused by the Angel rolled back the stone. But perhaps this may have been a distinct effort of the Angel's power.

D. *The guards became as dead men.*

See the guards, at the sound of the earthquake, starting to their feet and grasping their swords; but at the sight of the Angel, all their courage and strength is gone, they sink down to the earth and swoon away through excessive fear. The Resurrection is intended to bring life to the dead, *but here we see the living fall down as if dead men.* This is Simeon's prophecy concerning Jesus Christ: *This Child is set for the fall and the resurrection of many.*

*Mors est malis, vita bonis*—"Death to the wicked; Life to the good".

"Mother of God, show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, that to us He may be Life."

E. *The guards became as dead men.*

If the earthquake and the aspect of the Angel can cause fear like to death, what wonder that when *the great day of the Lord* shall come, and men shall see the *sign of the Son of Man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty*, they shall be *withering away with fear?*

To-day He rises in mercy, only *to save all the meek of the earth*. But then He will come to judge justly.

Quantus tremor est futurus,	Oh! what trembling then shall be,
Quando Judex est venturus,	When the Lord in majesty,
Cuncta stricte discussurus.	Comes to judge the sins of men.

“O Lord, my God, *pierce Thou my flesh with Thy fear*”  
(Psalm cxviii.).

We must not forget that the Angel does not roll away the large round stone in order that the Lord may come forth. The Resurrection is already accomplished. The Body that was a *natural Body* has risen a *spiritual Body*, and can pass through walls and rocks and bolted doors.

## SCENE XXVI

### EASTER DAY, VERY EARLY.

Before contemplating each apparition of our Blessed Lord, we must give a little time to clearing up certain difficulties, which we meet in the narratives of the Evangelists.

1. What is the meaning of St. Matthew's words: “*Vespere autem Sabbati quæ lucescit in prima Sabbati*”? (St. Matt. xxviii.).

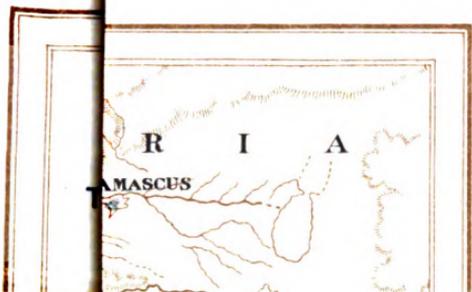
Our Douay version translates these words thus:

*In the end of the Sabbath, when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week.*

The Greek text is: Ὁψὲ δὲ σαββάτων, τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ εἰς μίαν σαββάτων. This passage has given trouble to students. From the words “*Vespere Sabbati*,” which they render “in the evening of the Sabbath,” some commentators conclude that the devout women came to the Tomb on Saturday evening after sunset, when the Sabbath was over. This supposition does not fit in with the context. For at that hour the guards were in possession, and the Sepulchre was sealed, and the Resurrection had not taken place.

2. Others observe that the Greek word ὀψὲ need not necessarily be rendered “in the evening of the Sabbath,” but may mean late in the night of the Sabbath.

3. It may help us if we bear in mind that as in our ecclesiastical calendar each festival has two Vespers, first and second, so each Sabbath had two evenings and nights, one preceding, one following the Sabbath-day. Either of these might be called the evening or night of the Sabbath. Among the Jews especially, as they began the Sabbath at sunset on Friday, what we call Friday night might well be called the night of the Sabbath.





4. But we have already had to notice what some careful commentators say, that though the Jews began the Sabbath at sunset, yet in their ordinary conversation they did not always adhere to this ecclesiastical reckoning, but spoke of the Sabbath much in the way that we do; for (1) sometimes we reckon our Sunday as beginning from midnight and lasting till the following midnight. Again (2), sometimes in common conversation we speak of our Sunday as beginning at sunrise and ending with sunset, or at midnight. Lastly (3), for those who keep choir and chant the Divine Office a festival may be considered as lasting from First Vespers on the Vigil to the end of Second Vespers on the Feast.

5. Hence St. Matthew, seeing that the phrase, *in the night of the Sabbath*, was ambiguous, and might mean our Friday night or our Saturday night, adds words to make clear which night he means: *Late on in the night of the Sabbath*, namely, *that night which has its dawn on the first day of the week*. Literally from the Greek: "Which night twilights towards the first day of the week". This means clearly our Saturday night, the night following the Sabbath-day. This is the rendering adopted by St. Augustine, and seems satisfactory.

In the next place, we have to harmonise the narratives of the different Evangelists, and reconcile some apparent discrepancies.

The chief of these apparent discrepancies are the following:

(1) St. John makes Magdalen arrive at the Tomb *while it is dark*; St. Mark writes: *The sun being now risen*.

(2) According to St. Luke and St. John, two angels are at the Tomb, whereas St. Mark and St. Matthew speak of one.

(3) St. Matthew represents the Angel as sitting outside the Tomb on the stone door; St. Mark speaks of the Angel sitting in the Sepulchre on the right side; St. Luke writes that while the women were inside the tomb, *two men stood by them in shining apparel*; St. John represents *two angels in white sitting* inside the Tomb, *one at the head and one at the feet, where the Body of Jesus had been laid*.

Again (4), St. John makes St. Magdalen come alone by herself to the Tomb, whereas St. Matthew writes: *Came Mary Magdalen and the other Mary to see the Sepulchre*. By the *other Mary*, he seems to mean Mary of Cleophas, of whom he has been speaking. She was mother of St. James the Less. St. Mark puts Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, together, and writes that *very early in the morning they came to the Sepulchre*.

(5) St. Mark tells us that the women fled from the Sepulchre in terror, and they *said nothing to any man for they were afraid*. St. Matthew writes that *they went out quickly with fear and great joy, running to tell His disciples*.

(6) St. Matthew records that our Lord appeared to these women as they were on the road. St. Mark says nothing of this apparition.

Let us spend a little time on these difficulties.

As to the hour when the devout women arrive at the Tomb.

*In the end of the Sabbath, when it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalen and the other Mary to see the Sepulchre (St. Matt.).*

*And when the Sabbath was ended (Saturday evening), Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James and Salome, brought sweet spices, that coming they might anoint Jesus. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they come to the Sepulchre, the sun being now risen (St. Mark).*

*And on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the Sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared (St. Luke).*

*And on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalen cometh early, when it was yet dark, unto the Sepulchre (St. John).*

Commentators have found some trouble in reconciling these narratives one with another. St. Luke's words, *very early in the morning*, offer no difficulty: they agree both with St. John's words, *while it was yet dark*, and St. Matthew's, *when it began to dawn*, and St. Mark's, *the sun being now risen*.

St. Matthew's words, *ὄψε*, etc., which we are rendering *late on in the night*, may mean what we sometimes call the small hours of the morning, towards the morning twilight. This agrees with St. John's phrase, *while it was yet dark*, and with St. Luke's word, "*valde diluculo*," in the Greek, *ἄρθου βαθείος*. The chief difficulty, therefore, is in reconciling St. Mark's *the sun being now risen*, with St. John's *when it was yet dark*.

One clue to the solution of this difficulty, and of the other also, we find in St. Luke's Gospel (c. xxiv. 10). There we read: *It was Mary Magdalen and Joanna and Mary of James and the other women that were with them who told these things to the Apostles.* This sentence we may connect with the closing sentences of the foregoing chapter and the first verse of c. xxiv. : *And the women that were come with Him from Galilee, following after saw the Sepulchre and how His Body was laid. And returning, they prepared spices and ointments, and on the Sabbath-day they rested. And on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came to the Sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared.*

Here we have three women mentioned by name, Mary Magdalen, Joanna, who was wife of Chusa, Herod's steward, and Mary of James, that is, Mary, mother of St. James the Less, and wife of Cleophas. Besides these three, St. Luke says that there were also *the other women who were with them*, who probably had also followed our Lord from Galilee. Salome, the mother of St. John, would certainly be one of these. St. Luke, in c. viii., mentions another, Susanna. From what we have seen in the Introduction to these Watches, Martha would also be considered one of those who followed Jesus from Galilee. It is therefore not at all improbable, from St. Luke's words, that as many as

six or seven or eight of the holy women, if not more, may have hastened to the Sepulchre very early on Easter Day. If this be so, are we bound to believe that they all went in one party, or from the same house? It seems much more probable that they went in different companies of two or three, and not all from the Cœnaculum. It was pre-arranged, no doubt, among them, that they would go, and go very early, in order to finish their work of embalming before the people were abroad. But it is highly probable that they would not all start from the same place, or all at the same time, or all arrive together. Still, however, they would arrange so that no long time would elapse between the arrival of one party and the arrival of the other, as they all intended to take part in the same work.

If this conjecture be correct, all the difficulties fall to the ground. Some arrive while it is yet dark; others after the sunrise. One angel appears to one party, two to another. When one company arrives, the angel is outside the tomb; afterwards, when others arrive, one is inside, or again, two are inside. The women of one company run away terrified, and say nothing. The others are full of joy, and run to tell the Apostles. To one company our Lord appears on the way, but not to all the others.

With regard to the first difficulty, viz., the apparent discrepancy between St. John's words, *while it was dark*, and St. Mark's, *the sun being now risen*, some writers, in order to reconcile the two statements, say that it was dark when they started, but that, as they had about a mile and a half to walk, it was after sunrise when they arrived. But this explanation does not fit in very well with St. John's words: *Mary Magdalen cometh early, when it was yet dark, unto the Sepulchre.*

It will help us to solve the difficulty correctly if we bear in mind what Father Coleridge and other commentators so often impress upon us, (1) that St. Matthew and St. Mark often, for brevity's sake, throw together into one sentence, or into one or two sentences, incidents that did not happen at the same time. Their object is to bequeath to us words that our Lord spoke and works that He wrought, without putting them in their exact order, and without telling us when and where He delivered each discourse or worked each sign.

(2) They also further remind us that St. John in his Gospel, besides wishing to bring out very clearly the Divinity of Christ our Lord in order to silence the heretics of his day, had also in view to render the other Gospel narratives more complete, and to clear up some ambiguities.

Whereas, then, the other Evangelists, for brevity's sake, seem to gather the devout women into one group, and record all the events of the morning without any attempt at distinguishing what happened to one company from what happened to another, St. John, who had been informed accurately by Magdalen of what concerned herself, wishes to make it clear that she went earlier to the Tomb than some of the others. She may have

had companions with her. If so, hers is the first company that arrives at Calvary.

After this we have in St. Mark's Gospel the arrival of a second company who fled away affrighted, and *said nothing to any man.*

Then, thirdly, we have in St. Matthew's account the arrival of a third company, who went back with *fear and great joy to tell the disciples.*

In contemplating we shall follow this order: first giving our attention to St. John's company; then to St. Mark's; and lastly to St. Matthew's.

There remains this question—to which of these three companies does St. Luke's narrative allude?

One circumstance seems to indicate that he is writing concerning St. John's company.

He writes: *Two men stood by them in shining apparel. St. John writes: She saw two angels in white.* Here they agree.

St. Luke ends his account with these words: *And going back from the Sepulchre, they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. And it was Mary Magdalen, and Joanna, and Mary of James, who told these things to the Apostles.*

In these words he is apparently speaking of more than one company.

## STATION I.

### THE FIRST COMPANY OF DEVOUT WOMEN. MAGDALEN.

*On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalen cometh early, when it was yet dark, unto the Sepulchre (St. John xx. 1).*

*Mary Magdalen cometh early.*

All, as we have seen, had probably arranged to come early; but her heart loves more intensely, because much has been forgiven her. *My soul hath thirsted after the strong, living God. My tears have been my bread, day and night, while it is said to me daily: Where is thy God? (Psalm xli.).* "My heart is restless, Lord Jesus, till it rests in Thee."

Contemplate her setting out in the dark hours before daylight, and walking with hurried steps, and carrying her burden of spices and ointments. Those used by Nicodemus and Joseph were not for her heart good enough or sufficiently abundant; and if, as some versions of the Gospel

tell us, she heard our Saviour say at Bethany: *Let her alone, that she may keep it against the day of My burial*, we may be sure that her heart would treasure that word, and she has now ready some of her *ointment of right spike-nard of great price*. But besides this, she has, as St. Mark states, bought a fresh store of sweet spices late on the Saturday evening, and she has been spending the night in bruising and mixing them.

Of all these sweet spices, we may consider, none are so sweet or agreeable to the Heart of our Lord as her tears which mingled with her work. Little she knows, as she hurries northward through the dark and silent streets to Golgotha, how her loving Master is watching every step and listening to every sigh from her strained heart. He, Who called His disciples together a few days ago, to notice the alms put into the box by the poor widow, is now bidding His blessed angels note most carefully for His day of recompense, every alms, every fresh offering that comes from the contrite heart of this loving penitent.

“Holy St. Magdalen, pray for us sinners, that we may embalm the sacred wounds of thy Lord and our Lord, and keep them fresh by remembering them with a contrite and humble heart.”

1. *Mary Magdalen cometh early*. Whence did she come? Some answer, from Bethany, whither they make her go after the burial on Good Friday. The common opinion—that she went with our Lady to the Cenacle—fits better with St. Mark’s account, that on the Saturday evening she and Mary of Cleophas *bought sweet spices*, apparently together.

2. Is Magdalen walking alone, or has she a companion? As St. John wrote his narrative to complete the others and to throw light on some passages in the other Gospels, we are inclined to say that she was alone when we read his words: *On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalen cometh early*. No companion is mentioned in this later account. Again, it would be in keeping with her vehement love to be on her way earlier than all the rest, and consequently alone.

Still, St. John’s words are not conclusive. He might well single her out on account of what followed, in which she stands alone, but his words would not necessarily mean that she had no companion on the road. Besides this, we have St. Matthew’s

words: *In the end of the Sabbath, came Mary Magdalen and the other Mary*; and St. Mark's words: *Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James and Salome came to the Sepulchre*. At first sight they seem to make it clear that she was not on the road alone. But from what we have seen, it is quite evident that St. Matthew and St. Mark are crowding all the incidents at the Tomb into a few sentences, and therefore we cannot conclude from St. Matthew's words that Magdalen and the other Mary and Salome all came together.

One sentence in St. John's narrative, as we have already seen, seems to show that Magdalen has at least one companion. For she says to the Apostles: *They have taken away the Lord out of the Sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him*. If she had been alone, she would have said: "I know not".

We may perhaps then assume that Magdalen has with her the other Mary and Salome, who are mentioned with her by St. Mark.

3. Who was the other Mary? St. Matthew first uses the expression in c. xxvii. v. 61: *There was there Mary Magdalen and the other Mary sitting over against the Sepulchre*. A few verses above, speaking of the women who followed Jesus from Galilee, he writes: *Among whom was MwhoMagdalen and Mary the mother of James and Joseph* (that is Mary, wife of Cleophas, the brother of St. Joseph, and father of St. James the Less and Joseph), *and the mother of the sons of Zebedee* (that is, Salome, mother of St. James the Great and St. John). From these passages it seems reasonable to conclude that the other Mary was Mary of Cleophas,<sup>1</sup> or as she is also called, *Mary, mother of James, or Mary of James*.

Some commentators, however, think that the other Mary was a daughter of Mary of Cleophas, and therefore a sister of the future Bishop of Jerusalem, St. James the Less, who was also author of the Catholic Epistle.

## STATION II.

*And she saw the stone taken away from the Sepulchre. She ran therefore and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith to them: They have taken away the Lord out of the Sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him* (vv. 1, 2).

A. *She saw the stone taken away.*

When she arrives at Golgotha it is still dark, but there is a faint glimmer of the dawn. She has light enough to

<sup>1</sup> We find St. James the Less called (St. Matt. x). James of Alphaeus. Hence commentators conclude that Alphaeus and Cleophas are the same person.

see that the stone is rolled away; that the door of the Tomb stands open; that the Body is not there; that the guards are lying as if dead on the ground. She is too alarmed and excited to make any stay. She must at once give warning to those who may be able to recover the Body.

Jesus and His holy angels are watching her sore distress, and yet they are silent. Why, dear Lord, dost Thou not hasten to console this troubled heart? So was it also when her brother was lying ill at Bethany, Jesus did not come in haste to bring her comfort. He tarried a while, but with a good reason, that so He might give more glory to God and more peace to men. *Patience is necessary for you, that doing the will of God you may receive the promise. For yet a little and a very little while, and He that is to come, will come and will not delay* (Hebrews x.).

B. *She ran therefore and cometh to Simon Peter, and the other disciple whom Jesus loved.*

Therefore, though doubtless she had heard our Lord foretell His Resurrection, and though she has so lately seen her brother Lazarus raised to life, the thought that He is risen does not seem to enter her mind. She is full of fear, and *fear is nothing else but a yielding up of the succours from thought* (Wisdom xvii.). She cannot help herself with memories of the past. She must run in haste to find help and counsel and protection from the two chief Apostles, St. Peter, our Lord's Apostle, and St. John the Beloved, the Apostle of our Lady.

C. *She ran therefore.*

In the fright, what becomes of the precious spices and ointments? Is one companion left in charge of them while Magdalen runs back? It seems not probable that under the circumstances one would have courage to remain. But possibly and probably the costly aromatics have in an instant lost for her all their value. Her heart is entirely intent on the Body of her Master. She will let everything go if she can recover that treasure. *If a man shall give all*

*the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing* (Cant. viii.).

Therefore, though her faith is not perfect, yet she loves most ardently.

“Blessed St. Magdalen, intercede for us sinners, that our many sins may be fully forgiven, and that we may begin to love much.”

D. *She ran therefore.*

Contemplate her haste through the narrow, dark streets, over the very rough pavement. Yet is she not without protection. For the Lord, always the same, gracious and compassionate, *hath given His angels a command concerning Magdalen; they shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror of the night.* Though for wise reasons our Saviour does not as yet appear to her, or send an angel to speak with her, yet He is not forgetting her. He speaks words to her heart to sustain her. *I am with (her) in tribulation.* How blessed are they who thus  *dwell in the aid of the Most High,* and are able to say to the Lord: *Thou art my Protector and my Refuge, my God, in Him will I trust. He will overshadow thee with His shoulders, and under His wing thou shalt trust. His truth shall compass thee with a shield* (Psalm xc.).

E. *She ran therefore and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved.*

Breathless, then, with haste and anxiety, she arrives and knocks at the wicket, and when admitted, goes at once to find Simon Peter. She finds him with John—the Apostle of our Lord with the Apostle of our Lady.

It is from this passage that we conclude that Simon Peter, after the Crucifixion, made haste to join the mourning disciples who were gathered round our Blessed Lady in her retirement.

F. *She saith to them: They have taken away the Lord out of the Sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid Him.*

We are not told how her tears are falling fast as she speaks, and how her sobbing chokes her utterance.

“Blessed Saint, obtain for us a great grace that we may deplore our loss; for our sins have taken away the Lord from us, and we know not where they have laid Him. He is not with us. He is not present to our hearts. He is not the beginning of our joy—He is not King within us. Christ does not live in us; self is ruling there still.”

Meanwhile, about half an hour has elapsed since Magdalen left the Sepulchre. According to the pre-arranged plan, other devout women have also started for Calvary to take part in the holy work of embalming. Veronica, perchance, and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, and Martha, may have been in this company.

### STATION III.

#### THE SECOND COMPANY OF HOLY WOMEN.

*And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they come to the Sepulchre, the sun being now risen. And they said one to another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the Sepulchre? And looking they saw the stone rolled back, for it was very great. And entering into the Sepulchre they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe: and they were astonished: who saith to them: Be not affrighted: you seek Jesus of Nazareth Who was crucified. He has risen, He is not here. Behold the place where they laid Him. But go tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee. There you shall see Him as He told you. But they going out fled from the Sepulchre. For a trembling and a fear had seized them: and they said nothing to any man, for they were afraid (St. Mark xvi. 2—8).*

A. *Who shall roll us back the stone?* How are we to explain the fact that neither these women, nor Magdalen and her companions, seem to have thought of the guards? It is possible that the women of this party have not been in the Cœnaculum, and have not heard that a guard had been stationed at the Sepulchre. Or again, it may be that the state of excitement in which they all are has made

them forget what they heard of a guard. Or the explanation may be that yesterday and the day before they had found out that the guards became very yielding if won over by money. Then, moreover, love *hopeth all things*.

B. *They said one to another : Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the Sepulchre ?*

Therefore they have not met Magdalen ; for she would have told them that the stone was rolled away. They have come along other streets.

C. *Who shall roll us back the stone ? for it was very great.*

They had good reason to ask the question. The stone is, as we know, a heavy circular stone door, which ran in a groove and closed the doorway. It is much too heavy for their weak arms.

D. *Who shall roll us back the stone ?*

Had these holy women loved less they would certainly have said : " Why go forward ? We cannot possibly roll back the stone." But *charity*, that is, love, *hopeth all things* (1 Cor. xiii.). *I can do all things in Him Who strengtheneth me* (Philipp. iv.). Those who love much hope against hope, their strong will tells them that a way will be found ; and because they are so earnest they prevail. *The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away* (St. Matt. xi.). Alas ! alas ! What long and intense acts of contrition we shall make in Purgatory for those miserable hours when we have hardened our hearts against some call of our Lord, because the father of lies assured us that there was in our way a stone that we never could roll back ; and we believed him : *The serpent deceived me.*

Some will not enter into the Church : some will not embrace religious life : some will not confess their sins : some will not rise early to hear Holy Mass or receive Holy Communion : some will not give up a sinful attachment : some will not spend half an hour in contemplating the Life and Death of our Lord : some will not even win mercy and peace by giving an alms : all because the tempter says that there is a stone in the way, and that it

is very great. Poor, weak little ones, our Lord says compassionately to us: *Why do you doubt? O ye of little faith.* Have I not twelve legions of angels ready to roll back the stone? The serpent is deceiving you. Did I not create you? Did I not die for you? How can I then stand by and not help you?

E. *They saw the stone rolled away.*

So shall it be if we do not allow ourselves to be duped by Satan, but persevere and go forward. The great stone that we saw in the distance has, we find, when we reach the spot, been rolled away. To the question, therefore: "*Who shall roll back the stone?*" the wise answer is Abraham's answer to his son, "*God will provide, my son*" (Genesis xxii.).

1. "If I become a Catholic, who will furnish me with bread?"

Jesus answers meekly: *Behold the birds of the air. Your Father in Heaven feedeth them. Are not you of much more worth than they?* (St. Matt. vi.).

2. "If I enter the Church, it will break my mother's heart, and how shall I live after that?"

Jesus answers with compassion: "If I call you, I am responsible. Shall evil come to you or your mother through My act, because I call you?"

3. When death is near, the panic-stricken family round the death-bed say: "You must not mention Extreme Unction, the shock will certainly kill him; the doctor says so. How could we afterwards forgive ourselves?"

Our Saviour answers earnestly: "Oh, beware! I instituted the Extreme Unction to soothe the soul of the dying man, or perchance to raise him up to health. Have I not understood what I was doing? Am I, Who created this man, mistaken as to his formation? or am I, Who died for him, less concerned than you are for his well-being? *O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?*" (St. Matt. xiv.).

*The slothful man saith, he is for ever saying it, there is a lion in the way and a lioness in the roads* (Prov. xxvi.). But has not our Saviour His twelve legions of angels ready?

They are well able to chase away the lion and the lioness. As soon as we pass out of this life many details about health, wealth, news, money, and the rest are forgotten for ever, but the Wise Men from the East never throughout eternity will forget this one thing: *We saw the star and we came*; and the rich young man of the Gospel will never forget one thing: I was called by the Lord, and did not follow the call.

F. *And entering in they saw a young man sitting on the right side clothed with a white robe.*

Daylight has now come. They are not afraid to enter the Tomb, and they can see what is within. The Sepulchre, as we have seen, consists of an inner chamber and an outer small ante-chamber. If these devout women go into the ante-chamber and no farther, and merely look in through the low doorway into the inner chamber, they may be said to enter into the Sepulchre.

*Sitting on the right side.*

That is, on the slab where the Sacred Body had rested, which, as we have seen, ran along the northern side of the Tomb, from the door to the opposite wall.

G. *And they were astonished. Who saith to them: Be not affrighted.*

Their astonishment is great: and as we see from the context, the words of the Angel do not calm their fears.

The Jews said to Moses: *Speak thou to us and we will hear: let not the Lord speak to us lest we die* (Exodus xx.). But St. Ignatius teaches us that when God speaks Himself, He can suddenly create peace and joy in the soul in a way that not even an angel can do.

It is better for us to say with Samuel: *Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth* (1 Kings iii.).

*O my God, be not Thou silent to me, lest if Thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit* (Psalm xxvii.)

H. *Be not affrighted.*

If the words of an angel do not prevail, is it a wonder that my unpremeditated words do not produce effect when

without any previous prayer I rebuke children or servants, or a neighbour, or argue with a Protestant? The words that do good are those that begin from God and by Him are happily ended. When I pour out words that cost me nothing and which I do not myself put in practice, how can such cheap words work wonders?

I. *Be not affrighted, you seek Jesus of Nazareth Who was crucified.*

So will the blessed guardian angels say in the end to the elect, when men are withering away for fear, *Be not affrighted, for you (during life) sought Jesus of Nazareth Who was crucified.*

“Blessed Mother of God, the Lord is with thee. Thou didst seek and find thy crucified Son. Pray for us poor sinners, who habitually seek not for Jesus crucified, but for self.”

J. *He is not here, He is risen.* What joy there is among the angels and saints when they can now say of a poor sinner: *He is risen, he is no longer in the grave!* Am I endeavouring by example, and by earnest prayer and by persuasion and by tact and charity, to give these loving guardian angels the gladness of being able to say of the poor prodigal, committed to their care: *He is risen, he is not here?* How grateful will they be to me if I give them this unspeakable gladness!

K. *Go tell His disciples and Peter.*

Sometimes, as the head and leader of the Apostles, Peter is mentioned by name: *Peter standing up with the eleven* (Acts ii.), as we might say, the Prince of Wales and the other royal princes.

But in this present instance there may be another reason. St. Peter is in great sorrow on account of his sin, and therefore the Angel may be directed to send a special message to him, that he and all may know that he is not to be cast away, but is still to be our Lord's chosen one.

L. *Tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee.*

Why does our Lord take His disciples into Galilee? The Lake of Tiberias is more than one hundred miles from Jerusalem. The Apostles and disciples, even the devout women, travel all this distance and return again before Ascension Day, when they are back on Mount Olivet. *By Thy ordinance, O Lord, the day goeth on.* It is by our Lord's arrangement that these movements are guided.

Why, then, in the joyful days of Resurrection have they so much toil?

1. For Himself and His Mother He chose lifelong poverty and labour. If there had been anything better, He would have chosen the better part for Himself and His Most Blessed Mother. Ever since His disciples joined Him He has trained them to labour by day and by night. *In journeying often: in labour and painfulness, in much watchings, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness* (2 Cor. xi.).

2. In Jerusalem the disciples are in terror. They know how enraged against them the Priests and Ancients are. Tradition tells us that already, before the Resurrection, on the great Sabbath-day, they have seized Joseph of Arimathea, and have him now shut up in their dungeon, watching him themselves, that he may not get out by bribery.

In distant Galilee, their own home, where the Priests of Jerusalem have less power, they will be more secure.

*M. There you shall see Him as He told you.*

Why does the Angel make special mention of the apparition in Galilee? Did not Jesus appear several times in Jerusalem?

During the Last Supper our Lord had said: *But after I be risen again, I will go before you into Galilee* (St. Mark xiv.). And it was immediately after this prophetic word that Peter uttered the boasting word: *Although all shall be scandalised in Thee, yet not I*, which drew forth the sad rejoinder, *Even in this night thou shalt deny Me thrice.* It is in Galilee,

by the Lake of Genesareth, that He designs to repair entirely St. Peter's denials, and to constitute him the Shepherd of all the sheep. This is, therefore, the special and most important apparition.

Moreover, there is a tradition that it was on Mount Thabor, in Galilee, that He appeared, as St. Paul tells us, to five hundred disciples. This tradition fits in with St. Matthew's words: *And the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them* (c. xxviii.).

This then is also a solemn apparition of special importance.

N. *But they, going out, fled from the Sepulchre. For a trembling and fear had seized them; and they said nothing to any man, for they were afraid* (St. Luke xvi.). There is no good reason for fear, there is much reason for joy. But we remember the familiar words, *Fear is nothing else but a yielding up of the succours from thought* (Wisdom xvii.). It is ordinarily useless to argue with one who is in a great panic.

Doubtless, too, these women also have caught a sight of the terrified guards, and on this account are more hasty in their flight.

“By Thy glorious Resurrection, deliver us, O Lord, from all sin, that at Thy second coming we may not seek to fly in terror from Thy face, but may meet Thee in hope and love.”

*They said nothing to any man, for they were afraid.* They may have met Peter and John coming, or the other women, and in their terror passed them without a word; but this does not seem probable.

## STATION IV.

## THE THIRD COMPANY OF DEVOUT WOMEN.

*In the end of the Sabbath when it began to dawn, . . . an Angel of the Lord descended from Heaven, and coming, rolled back the stone, and sat upon it, and his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow. And for fear of him, the guards were struck with terror, and became as dead men. And the Angel answering, said to the women : Fear not you : for I know that you seek Jesus Who was crucified. He is not here, for He is risen, as He said. Come, and see the place where the Lord was laid. And going quickly, tell ye His disciples that He is risen. And behold, He will go before you into Galilee : there you shall see Him. Lo, I have foretold it to you. And they went out quickly from the Sepulchre with fear and great joy, running to tell His disciples (St. Matt. xxviii. 1—8).*

Some of these details are so like those of the last Station, that there are commentators who take for granted that St. Matthew and St. Mark are narrating the same events. But as the two stories differ in some points, we may in contemplation follow the opinion that the two Evangelists are writing of two separate companies of holy women. These women find the Angel seated on the stone door outside the Tomb, the former company saw the young man sitting inside. Here, however, it is possible to understand the two Evangelists as speaking of the same apparition ; for the low, thick, and heavy stone door is inside the outer porch, and it has been closing the low entrance into the Tomb properly so called. Therefore, even when rolled back, it would still probably be in the vestibule, or porch.

A. *Fear not you.*

The sense may be : the guards are terrified, but you need not fear. Or, your companions who were here have fled away in fear, but there was no cause for fear, neither need you fear.

“O holy Angels, who are our Guardians, pray for us poor sinners, that when death comes you may be able to say to us, *Fear not you.*”

B. *Fear not you, for I know that you seek Jesus Who was crucified.*

Our greatest fears come from the dread of suffering. Those who seek Jesus crucified gradually lose this horror of suffering. They no longer believe that suffering is necessarily a curse. They realise that it is a high and special privilege to be allowed to taste the chalice with our Lord and His Blessed Mother.

C. *Fear not you, for I know that you seek Jesus Who was crucified.* To those who are eagerly and wantonly seeking for pleasure and the good things of this world, their Angels do not say, *Fear not you.* In such souls they strive to waken fear and alarm, by reminding them of the Judgment that is coming. But if we are so blessed as to seek and love Jesus crucified, our good Angel through life and most of all at death, will say to us, *Fear not you.*

D. *Going quickly, tell His disciples that He is risen.*

Our Saviour *loved to the end His own who were in the world,* and He has been loving them ever since His Death. His hours in the grave have been abbreviated, that all who are mourning may more quickly be comforted. Therefore He must wish the good news to reach His sorrowful disciples quickly.

How grateful His Heart will be to us, if we help to bring back peace and hope to His little ones, who are depressed and tempted to lose courage; and peace also and eternal rest to the Holy Souls.

E. *And they went out quickly from the Sepulchre, with fear and great joy, running to tell His disciples.*

“Sacred Heart of Jesus, risen from the Tomb, fill us with Thy charity, that we may have a zeal to spread among those who sit in darkness the good tidings that Thou art risen, and that we Thy brethren can all rise with Thee.”

## STATION V.

## PETER AND JOHN AT THE TOMB.

*Peter therefore went out, and that other disciple, and they came to the Sepulchre. And they both ran together, and that other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the Sepulchre. And when he stooped down, he saw the linen cloths lying, but yet he went not in. Then cometh Simon Peter, following him, and went into the Sepulchre, and saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin that had been about His Head not lying with the linen cloths, but apart, wrapt up in one place. Then that other disciple also went in who came first to the Sepulchre: and he saw, and believed. For as yet they knew not the Scripture that He must rise again from the dead. The disciples therefore departed again to their home (St. John xx.).*

*Peter went away, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass (St. Luke xxiv.).*

*A. Peter therefore went out, and that other disciple. And they both ran together.*

Contemplate them running, and Magdalen also and the other Mary also running, all in anxious haste. Why so? Because *they have taken away the Body of the Lord.*

How am I affected if by some mischance the Body of the Lord in the Blessed Eucharist is removed far from me? Some for pleasure sake, and some for profit, fix their abode far from the altar and far from the Body of our Lord, in some home whence they cannot hear Mass or receive Holy Communion. Others, remembering the word of our Saviour, *Seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added to you (St. Matt. vi.),* make it a sacred rule to dwell, whenever the choice rests with them, near the Body of the Lord, near the altar of the Blessed Sacrament. When they are travelling, and arrive at a town, their first question is not, "Where is the theatre?" "Where is the most luxurious hotel?" but, with the Wise Men from the East, *Where is He that is*

*born?* "Where is the Body of the Lord?" "Where shall I be near His church and the altar and the daily Mass?" Christian tourists who thus travel, seeking first the Kingdom of God, have a right to hope that *all other things shall be added to them*. They will not lose the necessary share of healthful recreation because they have adopted as their sacred rule: *Let my right hand be forgotten if I make not the altar and the tabernacle the beginning of my joy* (Psalm cxxxvi.). *Better is one day in Thy courts above thousands* (Psalm lxxxiii.).

B. *That other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the Sepulchre, but yet he went not in.*

St. John, recalling all these incidents in his old age, takes a pleasure in recording how Peter, with his usual eager love, though he arrived last, is the first to go in to make a diligent examination. Perhaps St. John is timid, as some holy Fathers think, or as others conjecture, he waits out of deference to Peter, to allow him to investigate in a case of such great moment.

St. Gregory makes the reflection that the earlier Jewish Church, which arrived first at a knowledge of the Lord, did not go in, that is, did not penetrate the sacred mysteries, as the Christian Church of the Gentiles, which came last, has since done.

*They saw the linen cloths lying, and the napkin that had been about His Head, apart, wrapt up into one place.*

Full daylight has come. They are able to see clearly the cloths in the tomb. These cloths are the winding-sheet and the usual swathing-bands. The sudarium, or napkin for the head, lying apart, was, as Venerable Bede learnt from some travellers in his day, a veil eight feet in length. It is recorded that the Christian who possessed this treasure was a rich man, and on his death-bed asked his two sons to choose whether they would have his riches or this sacred relic. The elder chose the riches, and gradually became very poor; the younger preferred the holy treasure, and with it, all other good things came to him. It is also handed down that, when flung into a fire by a scoffing heathen, it was preserved miraculously and remained unhurt.

C. *They saw the linen cloths.*

These linen cloths, carefully laid by, help to convince the Apostles that the Sacred Body has not been carried away. The swathing-bands, from the natural action of the spices used in embalming, would have been cleaving to the Body. If any persons had taken away the Body, they would have taken it in the grave-clothes.

*D. Then that other disciple also went in, and he saw and believed.*

Is the meaning of these words that John now believed the report of Magdalen, that the Body had been taken away? Some so interpret, and they support their opinion with St. Luke's words, that when the Apostles heard the story of Mary Magdalen, and Joanna, and of Mary, mother of James, *these words seemed to them as idle tales, and they did not believe.* But these words of St. Luke refer to what came later in the day, when the devout women brought the news to the other Apostles that they had seen angels, and that the Lord was risen. They cannot apply to St. Peter and St. John, who, after having been to the Tomb, could not treat the whole story as an idle tale.

Other commentators, therefore, understand that St. John, when looking at the cloths laid carefully by, is suddenly enlightened from above, and believes in the Resurrection. *For as yet, that is, until now, they knew not the Scripture that He must rise again from the dead.* Our Blessed Saviour had indeed more than once clearly foretold His Resurrection; but, alas! how often we *have ears and hear not.* How easy it is to be, with our eyes, a reader of the Bible, without understanding the true sense of God's revelation! Hence in retreat St. Ignatius so often reminds us to pray for an *inward or intimate sense* of truths with which we have long been familiar, but which do not come home to us.

Some holy writers think that St. Peter, who goes in first, is the first to believe fully in the Resurrection, and that after him John enters and believes.

*E. But Peter went away, wondering in himself.*

The words that our Lord spoke to him in the supper-

room are now again true: *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.* His wonder at the things that have come to pass will grow greatly before nightfall.

“Blessed Saint, obtain for us too grace to *consider in the heart* with faith, and hope, and charity, and contrition, and holy astonishment, the things that came to pass on Calvary.”

*F. Peter went away wondering.*

What became of St. John? Some holy writers tell us that he went to seek our Lady where he left her yesterday evening, and found her resplendent with light, as if glorified.

Before continuing our contemplations of the different apparitions of our Lord, we may pause for a little while to call to mind two or three short instructions given by St. Ignatius, which will help our work.

1. In the first place, he directs us to make in the third prelude, before beginning the contemplation, the petition: “Grant me grace that I may rejoice and be glad intensely on account of the glory and joy of Christ our Lord”.

He wishes us to pray for intense gladness. Some shrink from making this prayer. “What right have I,” they say, “to be glad?” They pray earnestly during the contemplations on the Passion for sorrow and compassion; but it seems to them too presumptuous and too selfish to pray for intense gladness, more especially because certain spiritual books, and certain severe teachers, they tell us, inculcate that we ought always to desire and pray for lifelong desolation. Our Lord may lead some of His chosen souls along this difficult path; but St. Ignatius does not consider it the ordinary road for all of us. One of his rules for a person in desolation is this: “He must believe that he is soon to be consoled, if he makes use of the prescribed methods or industries to battle against the desolation”. And now he bids us, during the contemplations on the Resurrection of our Lord and His apparitions, which make up what is called the Unitive week, pray earnestly for intense joy and gladness.

Moreover, in order to keep the soul in this spiritual gladness, he directs those who are following in Retreat his Spiritual Exercises, to suspend during these contemplations the use of bodily austerities and penances, excepting of course the prescribed fasts and abstinences of the Church. And, whereas in the earlier part of the Retreat, he recommends the room where we meditate to be darkened, and directs us to keep strict custody over our eyes, and to rise at midnight for an hour’s meditation,

now he makes a notable change. He says that it is more suitable not to rise for a meditation at midnight, and, if we think that the sunlight and the scenery around will help to spiritual gladness, not to deny ourselves this help. In like manner, if it is winter time, and we judge that a fire and the warmth of the sun will conduce to spiritual gladness, he wishes us to avail ourselves of such aids. He is in all this following out one of his great leading principles: "Means to the end". Your end and aim is good and holy, and therefore use all lawful and innocent means to gain it. He does not believe in a piety that will not most industriously use both the natural and the supernatural means which can advance God's work.

Again, it is worthy of notice that in the early meditations of the Retreat, when we make a repetition of any one of the Exercises, St. Ignatius advises us to dwell on those points in which we felt greater consolation or *desolation*. Now during these contemplations of the Unitive week, he directs us, when we are making repetitions, to dwell on the thoughts which gave us more emotion and spiritual relish. He knows that all things have their time, that if clouds are sometimes good for the soul, so also is cheering and invigorating sunshine in its season. It is related of Blessed Colette, whose soul was now walking in the Unitive way of spiritual gladness, that on one occasion when she was ill, a friend sent her some grapes to refresh her. The bystanders took for granted that, as a matter of course, she would, through the spirit of self-denial and penance, refuse them; but to their surprise she began to eat them, saying: "See how our good Lord takes care of me," or words to that effect.

When some lovers of comfort light on this passage in her life, they clap their hands and say with a look of triumph: "That is the devotion I like: there you have true piety, none of that odious, pharisaical, sour-faced severity that will not allow us to eat, or drink, or smile".

But these comfortable spiritualists take one detached sentence and leave aside all the context. St. Ignatius carefully sets before us the whole doctrine on this point. The grapes, like all other creatures on the earth, are God's work, and therefore good. But they are all only means to an end. They, like all things else, are, in the present state of the world, only useful medicines. Therefore, before we can safely use the grapes, or money, or books, or other creatures, we must first so train ourselves, that we may be really willing either to abstain from the grapes, or books, or money, or to use them, as our case may require. If by prayer and practice we have gained habits of self-conquest, and can with a firm will use such creatures as are at this moment helpful medicine for us, and abstain from such as are at present not helpful but injurious, then we are in a healthy spiritual state, and can, as St. Paul directs, *use the world as if we used it not* (1 Cor. vii.). But men who are sinning and leading an unregulated life,

eating and drinking, buying and selling, and enjoying all things according to their humour, are at present utterly incapable of doing what Blessed Colette did: they never do use the good things of this earth merely as means to help them to praise God and reverence God and serve God. They are using the good things of this earth not as helps to a future Heaven, but enjoying them as their present Heaven; and if they cannot get their fill of these husks of swine, they are apt to repine and lose all hope, as if they had no good God to care for them.

Neither is there any danger at all that if, following St. Ignatius' advice, we pray earnestly for intense gladness and joy, we shall be fostering selfishness.

For observe, he wishes us to rejoice "on account of the great glory and gladness of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ". When our Lady, when Magdalen, when St. Peter look with intense gladness on Him risen, and think with unspeakable relief of heart on what He was on Friday last, and what He is to-day, this is not at all a selfish gladness. It is one and the same charity to rejoice with those in joy and to weep with those who weep. Compassion in the broad sense, is a power of sharing another's feelings, whether joys or sorrows. Old faithful servants, long attached to a family, rejoice with a very unselfish joy when some good news comes to their master and mistress or the children.

Therefore we may safely pray with St. Ignatius for intense joy and gladness on account of the glory and joy of our Lord, and we ought to do so most earnestly. For spiritual gladness helps us to run along the way of God's commandments. Moreover, other men, when they see that we find happiness in serving and praising God, are themselves drawn to His service and to prayer. No wonder, then, that St. Paul says that we are not to sow with sadness or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver (2 Cor. ix.).

2. After thus advising us to pray earnestly for intense joy and gladness, St. Ignatius sets before us five points or topics to dwell upon, or if I may so speak, five dishes or courses for our spiritual feast. We need not partake of them all, but may confine ourselves to any one in which we find nourishment and relish.

First, then, we may contemplate the persons in the scene, watch their outward demeanour, and try to read their inward thoughts, and gain some food for our souls in that way.

Secondly, we may listen to words and see if we can draw from them any heavenly sense that will gladden us; or thirdly, we may watch actions, if there are any, and see if from them we can draw spiritual joy.

Then, besides these three ordinary points or topics, St. Ignatius adds these other two.

Fourthly, consider how the Divinity, which seemed to hide itself during the Passion, now appears and shows itself in the Resurrection by so many true and most holy proofs and effects. It is highly useful thus to contrast what our Lord was on Good

Friday with what He is now. By dwelling on this contrast, it becomes gradually more easy when we see great suffering on a death-bed, or during life, to lift our hearts to the belief that this sufferer is soon to be a most happy saint.

Fifthly, watch the office of a comforter, or consoler which Christ our Lord now exercises towards His disciples, comparing His ways with what friends ordinarily do to console friends.

At the Last Supper, as St. John reminds us, Jesus *loved to the end*. After death, we have seen that He went on loving without any interruption. At His Resurrection, as we have also seen, He began at once showing love to His Ever-Blessed Mother; and now we shall see that He devotes the great day of His Resurrection, His birthday, His coronation-day, His wedding-day, to loving His own whom He has left behind in this world. No shadow of change has come, through prosperity, over His loving and humble Heart. This is not always the way with our corrupt nature. *Man when he was in honour did not understand* (Psalm xviii.). A little prosperity often turns the head and makes a man contemn his former friends.

## STATION VI.

### ST. MARY MAGDALEN.

*The disciples therefore departed again to their home. But Mary stood at the Sepulchre without, weeping. Now as she was weeping, she stooped down and looked into the Sepulchre, and she saw two angels in white, one at the head and one at the feet where the Body of Jesus had been laid. They say to her: Woman, why weepest thou? She saith to them: Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him (St. John xx.). Behold, two men stood by them in shining apparel. And as they were afraid and bowed down their countenance towards the ground, they said to them: Why seek you the living with the dead? (St. Luke xxiv.).*

#### A. *Woman, why weepest thou?*

The blessed angels ask, as if they did not know: *Why weepest thou?* and call her "Woman," as if she whom they love and venerate so much were only a stranger to them. They are in our Lord's secret, they are acting in concert with Him. They see our Saviour waiting till the moment shall come for the glad surprise. With what loving reverence are they meanwhile contemplating their future com-

panion in Heaven, the Saint whose white robe was some time torn and disfigured, but now is washed in the Blood of the Lamb, and adorned with the heavenly diamonds and pearls of loving contrition.

B. *Why weepest thou ?* “*Attendite.*” Stay a little while. Come you who are sad and sorrowful and shedding tears, come to the side of Magdalen. Answer the angel’s question and compare your answer with hers.

No. 1. *Why weepest thou ?* Because I have just heard that I have lost money.

No. 2. *Why weepest thou ?* What else can I do? They have been slandering me cruelly.

No. 3. *Why weepest thou ?* Because my marriage is broken off.

No. 4. *Why weepest thou ?* Because the doctor has just told me that I cannot recover. I must die.

These are all sorrows, and cause tears to flow.

But (1) they are all sorrows that must at the very latest, cease to trouble, when my eyes are fixed in death and my last breath drawn and my soul is gone to another world.

(2) They are selfish sorrows. I am weeping only because some suffering is come to me. There is another sorrow that better deserves tears. *Who will give water to my head and a fountain of tears to my eyes ?* (Jerem. ix.).

C. *Why weepest thou ?*

*Because they have taken away my Lord.*

*For behold they have caught my soul, the mighty have rushed in upon me* (Psalm lviii.), or rather, not the mighty, but the crafty : *The serpent deceived me*, and by my permission and with my full consent they have taken away my Lord from me, and for ever, unless He shall have mercy on me according to His great mercy, and, according to the multitude of His tender mercies, shall blot out my iniquity, and create a clean heart in me, and renew a right spirit within my bowels.

Blessed are they that mourn for their own sins, and the sins whereby others offend our good God, our loving Father, our most compassionate Redeemer, Jesus our Saviour.

#### STATION VII.

*When she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing; and she knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith to her, Why weepest thou? She, thinking it was the gardener, saith to Him: Sir, if thou hast taken Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away (St. John xx. 14, 15).*

A. *She turned herself back.* Why did she turn? Perhaps she saw the angels directing their eyes towards Him and showing Him some reverence; or perhaps our Lord let her hear His footsteps to call her attention. This last supposition fits in better with the local tradition in Jerusalem. According to this tradition, Magdalen is about twelve yards from the Tomb when our Saviour appears to her. She is wandering to and fro in a restless state.

B. *She knew not that it was Jesus.*

Why does our Blessed Saviour use disguises? Some rigid Puritans affect to be very indignant at all manner of deception; but St. Paul says to them: *Thou dost the same things that thou judgest* (Romans ii.), nay, things much worse. The unjust judges who shed so much innocent blood under Elizabeth affected to be deeply shocked if any prisoners did not answer with most confiding sincerity and without any equivocation, their murderous interrogatory. *Their* questions might well shock and scandalise, but not the martyr's answers.

C. *Jesus saith to her: Woman, why weepest thou?*

How glad our Lord always is if, in our troubles, we come to Him and tell Him why we weep. *Come to Me all you who labour and are heavily burdened. My delight (is) to be with the sons of men* (Prov. viii.), and not with men who prosper, but rather with those who mourn. *Blessed are they*

*that mourn : they shall be comforted.* But the Eternal Wisdom, the Son of God, is not found in the land of them that live in delights. He loves much better to be with those in sorrow, if they will only come to Him. Willingly He listens and asks them : *Why weepest thou ?*

D. *Why weepest thou ?* Holy Church makes the priest at the foot of the altar, before the Holy Sacrifice commences, put this question to his soul : "*Quare tristis es, anima mea ? quare conturbas me ?*"—*Wherefore art thou sad, O my soul ? Why dost thou trouble me ?*

It is by watching our joys and our sorrows that we find out where the treasure of our heart is.

"Holy Mary, *the Lord is with thee.* Obtain for me grace to mourn, and not to be comforted, so long as He is not with me."

E. *Whom seekest thou ?*

If she knew, dear Lord, Who it is that questions her, well might she answer with the Prophet : *Lord, Thou knowest. What have I in Heaven, and besides Thee what do I desire on earth ?* (Psalm lxxii.). *My soul hath thirsted after the strong, living God ; when shall I come and appear before the face of God ?* (Psalm xli.).

"Blessed Saint, pray for us sinners, who so easily content ourselves with the husks of swine, and have no hunger and thirst for Christ Jesus."

The intense longing for God in Purgatory, the cruel torment of hope deferred, is the necessary expiation of our little relish and desire for our God here.

Fac Cor amans Jesu mei,  
Fac ut nos amemus Te.

F. *Whom seekest thou ?*

Mark how our Blessed Saviour takes delight in hearing our wants and wishes from our own lips, though He knows them already. *We soon tire of beggars. He never tires when we come to beg of Him.* "Ask, seek, knock," is His unceasing counsel to us. His urgent inculcation is that *we ought always to pray and not to faint* (St. Luke xviii.).

If He could tire of us, never would He have given us such a direction.

G. *Whom seekest thou?*

Our Lord is saying this word to us from the tabernacle. St. Paul tells us that we are supposed to be men running in the arena for a prize. The prize is God our Lord. Our eye, our heart, our intention ought always to be fixed on Him. *Who shall ascend into the mountain of the Lord? The generation of them that seek the face of the God of Jacob* (Psalm xxiii.).

“O God our Father, O Lord Jesus our Saviour, *may Thy Kingdom come* in our hearts.”

*Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God* (1 Cor. x.).

H. *Sir, if thou hast taken Him hence.*

With her, there is only one HIM in the world. She thinks that every one knows who HE is. So was it with the Wise Men from the East. They were intent on one treasure, and thought that every one could tell them *where is He that is born?*

Alas! *we know well that but one thing is necessary. Why are we troubled about many things? And, what is worse, why do we quite forget our God and run after a painted bubble, the bewitching of trifling?* (Wisdom iv.). *O ye sons of men, how long will ye be dull of heart? Why do you love vanity and seek after lying?* (Psalm iv.). *My people have done two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and dug to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns which hold no water* (Jerem. ii.).

“*Hail, full of grace. The Lord is with thee. Thy Son Jesus is ever reigning in thy heart. Mother of God, pray for us poor sinners, who are so full of self and far away from Him.*”

I. *Tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away.*

We have seen how a cold, unloving, slothful heart, sees always phantom lions in the way, when exertion is

needed. Here, on the contrary, we see St. Paul's words exemplified, that *charity believeth all things, hopeth all things* (1 Cor. xiii.). She is sure, if she can only find the Body, that she will be able to take Him away: *I can do all things in Him Who strengtheneth me* (Philipp. iv.). *He that believeth in Me, the works that I do he also shall do, and greater than these shall he do* (St. John xiv.). Alas! what a small part have I accomplished of the great work my Lord wished me to do on earth!

A voice whispers that you are presuming, and attempt too much; but oh, how glad God is to work with one who is *a man of desires* (Daniel ix.), and attempts more and more for the salvation of His little ones. Even if I have no other debt to pay in Purgatory, how long shall I tarry there merely to weep and lament over the work I might have done for our Lord, and have not done it?

## STATION VIII.

*Jesus saith to her: Mary! She turning saith to Him: Rabboni! which is to say, Master (v. 16).*

A. *Jesus saith to her: Mary!*

*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. For you shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace, the mountains and the hills shall sing praise before you, and all the trees of the country shall clap their hands: and the Lord shall be named for an everlasting sign, that shall not be taken away (Isaias lv.).*

Our Lord speaks but one word, but it is, as we say, a premeditated word, a prepared word, a word of great power. It is the outcome of those long hours during which He has by His Life and Death won so much grace for penitent Magdalen.

*It shall not return to Me void. It shall do whatever I please, and shall prosper in the things for which I sent it.*

He sends this one word to work a miracle such as He worked for Mary once before at Bethany. It is like the

loud cry : *Lazarus, come forth* ; for, though she is moving and walking, she is as one dead. Others die when their heart breaks. She is, as it were, living on with a crushed and broken heart within her. And into this word our Lord puts a Divine power to bring back life, and peace, and contentment, and joy unspeakable.

Here again we can do nothing but fall back on the Prophet's words. Painter cannot picture the scene. For his eye hath not seen such a creation, such a return to life. Chronicler cannot rightly tell the story, for his ear has heard nothing, nothing like the tones of our Saviour's voice when He calls her by her name, *Maria*, and nothing like the tenderness and music of the response that comes from her ecstasy : *Rabboni, Master, Master mine* !

It is but one word, *Maria* ! but we have seen in contemplation on the Sacred Passion that it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive all that is contained within the height and the depth, the length and the breadth, of one of these Divine words that come from the mouth of God : *Pilate scourged Him ; they crucified Him : Maria* !

*My word which shall go forth from My mouth shall not return to Me void. No ! for the word of God is living and effectual and more piercing than any two-edged sword, and reaching into the division of the soul and the spirit* (Hebrews iv.). Surely our Blessed Lord can say : *This word from My mouth (has) done what I pleased, and has prospered in the things for which I sent it.*

B. *Jesus saith to her : Mary !*

*And now, thus saith the Lord that created thee and formed thee : Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, and called thee by thy name : thou art Mine.*

*When thou shalt pass through the waters I will be with thee ; and the rivers shall not cover thee ; when thou shalt walk in the fire thou shalt not be burnt, and the flames shall not burn in thee.*

*For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.*

*Since thou becamest honourable in My eyes, thou art glorious. I have loved thee: fear not, for I am with thee (Isaias xliii.).*

*Since thou becamest honourable in My eyes.* Mary became honourable in His eyes in that hour when her contrite heart began to love much.

*C. She turning.*

Probably, after saying, *I will take Him away*, she had begun again to go back to look for the Body in the Tomb. But, as soon as ever she hears our Lord call her by her name, quickly she turns again to Him, and falling at His feet, utters the word, *Rabboni*.

“He has heard your petition, loving Saint; you want to know where they have laid Him, He is come Himself to tell you.”

*D. She turning saith to Him: Rabboni!*

Rabboni, Hebrew scholars tell us, expresses greater veneration and affection than the word Rabbi, Master. In our language she would say: O good Master! dear Master! O Master mine! As our Blessed Lord takes delight in calling Magdalen by her name, so is He much consoled when we call Him by His name: “Father, Jesus, Saviour, dear Master, my God and my all”.

*Therefore at the least from this time call to Me: Thou art my Father (Jerem. iii.).*

How well spent is the time we devote to practising, in order to learn how to utter these names rightly: *Our Father, hallowed be Thy name! Jesus, hallowed be Thy name! Master, hallowed be Thy name!*

“Mother of God, show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, that with our whole hearts we may venerate and love His name, above all names.”

*Who is like the Lord our God? Who understands the art of consoling the sorrowful as Jesus the Man of Sorrows does? Who can weep with those who weep as He can?*

*E. She turning saith to Him, Rabboni.*

Observe that He does not utter one word of censure

against her want of faith in His assurance that He would rise. He sees nothing but her tears, her sorrow for Him, her regret for the loss of Him, her desire to possess Him.

*I know that Thou art a gracious and merciful God, patient, and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil.*

“I know too that prosperity does not change Thy Heart. Neither does sorrow change Thy love into selfishness. Thou dost remember us when things go well with Thee, and when things go ill with Thee, still Thou dost remember us.”

*I cannot forget thee. I have graven thee in My hands—God is faithful.*

*Whence is this to me that thou shouldst come to me!*

#### STATION IX.

*Jesus saith to her, Do not touch Me, for I am not ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren, and say to them: I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God (v. 17).*

A. We may assume that Magdalen had fallen on her knees, and was clasping His sacred feet.

Why does our Lord say, *Do not touch Me?* He allowed her to kiss His feet after her first conversion, and again during the Supper at Bethany. To-day also He allows the other devout women to hold His feet. Why, then, does He say to Magdalen, *Do not touch Me?*

The question is evidently a difficult one, as nothing but mystical interpretations of the words are suggested by the holy Fathers. But, according to later commentators, the literal and correct meaning may probably be this: He does not mean to forbid her to touch His sacred feet, but merely says: “Do not wish to stay here holding My feet; do not seek the consolation of clasping My feet; *but go to My brethren, and say to them that I am risen*”. He wishes her to forget her own happiness, and to set out at once on her errand of charity.

**B. For I am not yet ascended to My Father.**

Do not be afraid to go on the errand which I entrust to you, because I have not left you yet. *I am not ascended to My Father*; you shall see Me again soon, and often.

**C. Go to My brethren, and say to them: I ascend to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.**

“*O vos omnes, attendite.*” O all you who pass by, make some leisure to listen to these words, and to lay them up in your hearts. For in this world of ours it is the rule that *man placed in honour* loses his good sense and right feelings, and becomes like one intoxicated (Psalm xlvi.), or giddy, like one standing on a pinnacle. Because he is become somewhat wealthy, he no longer has any relish for old companions and friends of childhood. A chaos that cannot be passed is set between them and him.

Look a long time at the loving and humble Heart of our Lord Jesus; all the inconceivable glory of the Resurrection day sets no distance at all, nor any barrier, between Him and His poor fishermen from the Lake of Galilee.

*Go tell My brethren*; for they are My brethren, *bone of My bone, flesh of My Flesh*. I am one of them. Go say to them that *I ascend to My Father and your Father, My God and your God*.

“O good Lord Jesus, what wonder your Apostles, when you send them to preach what you have said and you have done, come back and say to you: *Who hath believed our report?* (Romans x.). Who believes what they hear from us? Who can believe and realise that you are one of ourselves? Our eldest Brother, the representative of our fallen family, Who have taken on yourself all our iniquity? Who identify yourself so thoroughly with us, that our sins are your sins; that he who touches us touches you in the apple of your eye? that whatever is done, kindly or unkindly, to us is done to you?”

“Sacred Heart of Jesus, give us grace to dwell on this great truth that your Father is our Father, your God our

God; till we believe firmly, and have an unbounded hope because of our close connection with you."

D. Whenever we say the *Pater noster*, we must say it in union with our eldest Brother, our Lord Jesus, our Saviour. Gladly will He join; and His prayer, like a burning fire, will spread a warmth over our cold words.

#### STATION X.

*Mary Magdalen cometh and telleth the disciples: I have seen the Lord, and these things He said to me (v. 18).*

Contemplate Mary Magdalen hastening on her errand of charity, and with her heart burning within her. Our Blessed Lady, after the Annunciation, went off with haste to greet her cousin Elizabeth. The same spirit of charity is now come from the Heart of our Lord into the heart of Magdalen.

As she hastens onward, some commentators think she overtakes one of the companies of devout women that had left the Tomb some time before.

#### STATION XI.

*And behold Jesus met them, saying: All hail. But they came up and took hold of His feet and adored Him. Then Jesus said to them: Fear not, go, tell My brethren that they go into Galilee; there they shall see Me (St. Matt. xxviii. 9, 10).*

A. Not alone for the exceptional love of Magdalen has He had thought and compassion. The poorest shall not be forgotten. *There is no one that can hide himself from the fire of His Heart (Psalm xviii.).* The Blessed Eucharist is for all. Whole and entire, Jesus gives Himself to every one; His whole Life and His Death is for each one. He is each one's companion and yoke-fellow, as if there were no other.

"*Quis sicut Dominus Deus noster?*" Where shall we find a friend like our Saviour and our Brother Jesus Christ?

Do not hasten away. Stay looking at Him, and listening to every word and watching every action, in order to know and understand better the friendship of His meek and humble and loving Heart.

*B. Go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, and there they shall see Me.*

Did not our Saviour know, when He spoke those words, that they were to see Him that very day, long before they went into Galilee? This is His way. He promises a certain measure of good things, but delights in surprising His disciples with sudden unexpected gifts over and above. So does a good husband fix a certain allowance for his wife in marriage settlements, but takes every chance of adding presents over and above.

## STATION XII.

*She went and told them who had been with Him, who were mourning and weeping. And they hearing that He was alive, and had been seen by her, did not believe (St. Mark xvi.).*

*And going back from the Sepulchre, they told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest. And it was Mary Magdalen and Joanna and Mary of James, and the other women who were with them, who told these things to the Apostles. And these words seemed to them as idle tales, and they did not believe them (St. Luke xxiv.).*

*A. They told all these things to the eleven and the rest.*

The eleven, therefore, have come back again from their hiding-place, full of anxious suspense. Peter and John have told them what they had seen at the Tomb. They are in great sorrow, *mourning and weeping*; but fear is still robbing them of the succours from thought. They are bewildered.

Contemplate the holy women full of emotion, delivering their messages; Mary Magdalen repeating word for word: *Go tell My brethren I ascend to My Father and your Father,*

*My God and your God.* She has no doubts, no hesitations. Her tears are flowing fast, tears of consolation and great love.

B. *They hearing that He was alive, and had been seen by her, did not believe.*

Observe the great attention of the disciples while they listen ; but they are incredulous. Perhaps some little pride renders them unwilling to believe that these women have seen the Lord before themselves. They cross-question the witnesses, and in the end shrug their shoulders, and retire with expressions of disbelief. Their fears are not allayed : their tears are not dried.

Magdalen is not angry that they disbelieve her. She has great pity for them, and knows that her Master can soon console them.

C. *They hearing, did not believe.*

Do not, then, Peter and John believe in the Resurrection? They, as we have already seen, do believe in the Resurrection. We are not bound to think that they are incredulous as the rest of the eleven. In fact, we cannot conclude from the words : *They told the eleven*, that all the eleven were present at the moment. The name, *the eleven, the twelve*, is only another word for the Apostles. If the Evangelist writes, "They told the Apostles," it would not follow that all the Apostles are listening.

And again, it is one thing to believe that the Lord is risen, another to believe the stories told by the women, that they have seen the Lord. Even Peter and John may be on this point not fully satisfied. But the words of the Evangelist may only mean that many of the eleven expressed disbelief.

## SCENE XXVII.

THE PALACE OF THE PRIESTS. COUNCIL CHAMBER.

## STATION I.

*Who when they were departed, behold some of the guards came into the city, and told the Chief Priests all things that had been done. And they being assembled together with the Ancients, taking counsel, gave a great sum of money to the soldiers, saying: Say you, His disciples came by night, and stole Him away when we were asleep. And if the Governor shall hear of this, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they, taking the money, did as they were taught. And this word was spread abroad among the Jews even unto this day (St. Matt. xxviii. 11—15).*

*A. Who when they were departed, behold some of the guards came into the city.*

Do these words mean that the guards remained at the Tomb till the holy women had come and gone again? The words will bear this interpretation. The guards may have kept their station at the Tomb. If so, the question arises, how were the devout women bold enough to approach them and confront them? The answer may be, that the guards, if still there, are overpowered by great fear, and so far from molesting the holy women, are more inclined to sympathise with them and tell them of the earthquake and the apparition of the Angel that had so scared them.

Another explanation might be that the terrified guards either remain paralysed and helpless on the ground, or have, as was natural, withdrawn to some distance from the Sepulchre, but still do not go back into the city till after the departure of the holy women.

*B. Some of the guards came and told the Chief Priests.*

Contemplate the scene in the Council Chamber. The guards, thoroughly panic-stricken, relating all the details

of what they have witnessed—the great earthquake, the rolling back of the stone door, the appearance of an Angel sitting on the stone: *his countenance as lightning, his raiment as snow.*

Mark the features of the Priests and Ancients who have been suddenly called together by Caiphas. They listen in fear, but try to hide their terror by scoffing at the guards. "Brave soldiers indeed you must be, to be frightened out of your senses by the tricks of some women! Why, you say yourselves that these women were there. Evidently they bribed you. When the Governor hears of this, your position will not be pleasant. You have grossly neglected duty. You will pay with your heads for your crime."

These guards were probably the Temple guards, for when the Priests applied to Pilate for a guard, he answered them: *You have a guard, go guard it as you know* (St. Matt. xxvii.). Whether the Temple guard was composed of Roman soldiers is disputed. Some commentators think that they were, but were put at the disposal of the Jewish rulers to act as police. Others think that they were a body of Jewish police tolerated by the Romans.

A tradition is recorded, as has been said, that when the Jewish Rulers the day before seized Joseph of Arimathea, who had incurred their wrath by rescuing the Body of Christ out of their grasp, they would not trust him to the guards, but kept watch themselves.

*C. They taking counsel, gave a great sum of money to the soldiers.*

Fear makes them liberal; they were not generous to Judas, but now they see clearly that the Resurrection makes things much worse for them than they were before. The people may rise, and wreak their vengeance on those who caused the death of Jesus. It is all-important to win over these guards. They have already tried to strike terror into them by threatening to accuse them to Pilate of grave neglect of duty. Now, after going aside and taking counsel, they unexpectedly come back with a great sum of money and distribute it among them with many

fair words. They have done their work well, and have been quite faithful. The Ancients will take care to persuade Pilate. No harm shall come to the guards if they will only firmly stick to this assertion, that the disciples came while they were asleep and carried off the Body. If they don't adhere to this account, they will certainly be accused to Pilate of having allowed the disciples to break the seals of the Tomb and carry off the Body.

D. *They gave a great sum of money to the soldiers.*

Pity the misery of these weak men, corrupted by a bribe. No doubt a grace has been offered to them when the Resurrection took place and the Angel appeared. Had they been true to grace they would now have part and fellowship with the martyrs. They preferred to have for their portion the sum of money shared among them.

E. *They gave a great sum of money to the soldiers.*

Take notice too of the grievous wickedness of these Priests and Rulers. If even now they would retrace their steps! But they harden their hearts, and, as our Lord said to them, *shut the Kingdom of Heaven against men. For you yourselves do not enter in, and those that are going in you suffer not to enter* (St. Matt. xxiii.).

F. *They taking the money, did as they were taught.*

We are reminded of the fatal power that bribes possess to poison the soul. When Samuel had anointed Saul king, and was resigning his office of judge, he said to all Israel: *Speak of me before the Lord and before His Anointed, whether I have taken any man's ox or ass; if I have wronged any man; if I have oppressed any man; if I have taken a bribe at any man's hand; and I will despise it in this day, and I will restore it to you. And they said: Thou hast not wronged us, nor oppressed us, nor taken aught at any man's hand* (1 Kings xii.). *Before the time of the end of his life in the world, he protested before the Lord and His Anointed: Money or anything else, even to a shoe, he had not taken of any man, and no man did accuse him* (Ecclus. xlvi.).

So, in like manner, when the King of Sodom wanted to

load Abraham with presents for having rescued him from his enemies, Abraham answered: *I lift up my hand to the Lord God the Most High, the possessor of Heaven and earth, that from the very woof thread unto the shoe latchet, I will not take of any things that are thine, lest thou say, I have enriched Abram* (Genesis xiv.).

Baltassar offered Daniel large presents if he would interpret his dream for him: *Thou shalt be clothed with purple, and shalt have a chain of gold about thy neck, and shalt be the third prince in my kingdom.* But Daniel also loved that holy liberty and independence which belongs to the children and servants of God, and he answered: *Thy rewards be to thyself, and the gifts of thy house give to another* (Daniel v.). The great Saints of the New Testament strongly commend to Priests that word of our Saviour: *Freely you have received, freely give* (St. Matt. x.). One reason why they dread presents and bribes is, because the Holy Ghost warns us that *presents and gifts blind the eyes of judges, and make them dumb in the mouth, so that they cannot correct* (Ecclus. xx.). Who has courage enough to reprove earnestly the man who has enslaved him by giving him a rich gift? And, once courage is gone, we are glad to become blind, in order not to see sins which call for reproof.

*Seek not to be made a judge, unless thou have strength enough to extirpate iniquities; lest thou fear the person of the powerful, and lay a stumbling-block for thy integrity* (Ecclus. vii.).

Another reason why the Saints will not accept gifts, is that they wish to have their reward from the hand of their generous and loving Master, and dread hearing from His lips that withering word: *They have received their reward* (St. Matt. vi.). Have I lost my liberty by receiving gifts? Am I receiving my reward here?

G. *And this word was spread abroad among the Jews even to this day.*

It is said to have been a maxim of Voltaire's: "Throw mud enough, and some is sure to stick". Assuredly Satan

finds that he gains his ends by lying boldly and with perseverance. Cardinal Newman has left us a vivid picture of the tenacity with which prejudice against the Church keeps its hold on the minds of men.

Ought we to be silent, and think that it is no use to refute lies? The great Saints have not thought so. St. Augustine, we are told, never ceased refuting the Donatists till he cleared Africa of their heresy. This is St. Paul's inculcation to St. Timothy: *I charge thee before God and before Jesus Christ, preach the Word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine. For there shall be a time when they will not endure sound doctrine* (2 Timothy iv.). As the children of this world are sometimes more prudent than the children of light, so also are they sometimes more courageous, more energetic, more persevering. *My brethren, these things ought not so to be* (St. James iii.).

## SCENE XXVIII.

ST. PETER'S CAVE. SOUTH OF JERUSALEM.

## STATION I.

*Peter went away wondering in himself at that which had come to pass* (St. Luke xxiv. 12).

*Peter went away.*

We may perhaps assume that Peter and John secure the sacred winding-sheet, the *sudarium*, and the other linen cloths, and carry them to the Cœnaculum, to present them to the Blessed Mother when she returns.

These two Apostles may still be there when Magdalen and the other devout women arrive with their tidings. If so, it is not necessary, as we have seen, to believe that they are included in St. Luke's words: *They did not believe them.*

After this, St. John, perhaps, goes to find our Blessed Lady in the house, or place near the Tomb, to which she went yesterday.

A. *Peter went away.*

St. Peter then goes forth alone, *wondering in himself at that which had come to pass*: wondering too, in contrition

and humility, what is to happen to himself. Shall he ever be permitted again to see his beloved Master? The women have told him so. Can it be true? If so blessed, what manner of meeting shall it be? What will the Lord say to him? What answer shall he make to his Divine Master? Full of these thoughts he wanders on.

Possibly he bends his steps once more towards Calvary. Or, perchance, wishing to let his tears flow in solitude, he goes from the Cœnaculum down the hill to the south, to the Grotto still shown as the spot where he hid his sorrows after the cock-crow, when Jesus looked upon him.

## STATION II.

*The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon*  
(St. Luke xxiv. 34).

It was late in the evening when the disciples spoke these words, but commentators think that probably the apparition to Peter took place early in the day, before the apparition to Cleophas and his companion, or to any other man among the disciples.

We are not told one word of what passed at this meeting. The short history is this: *The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.*

We must go back once more to the familiar words: *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man what God hath prepared for those who love Him* (1 Cor. ii.).

St. Peter always loved his Master, but contrition has doubled and trebled his love. And in this interview our Blessed Lord once more looks on Peter, and this look shall be stamped indelibly on his heart. If contrition has doubled and trebled his love, this meeting, and the aspect of his most loving Master, and the words that come from His tender Heart into the heart of His penitent Apostle, double and treble contrition. It shall endure till he has at last his will, and expires crucified, and with his head

downwards, because he does not deem it right that he should be so honoured as to die quite after the manner of his Master.

“Blessed Saint, you who sinned once and wept often, pray for us who have sinned often, and seldom grieve for our sins.”

What happened to-day to St. John the Gospels do not tell. If, as holy writers relate, he found our Lady transfigured, something after the manner of what he had seen on Thabor, this vision may have strengthened and consoled him sufficiently, even without an apparition from his Divine Master. St. Jerome tells us that St. James the Less had made a vow not to taste food or drink till he had seen the Lord come to life, and that our Saviour contented his ardent desire by appearing to him to-day. St. Paul (1 Cor. xv.) seems to put this apparition later. *After this He appeared to James.* Some early Fathers also state that Jesus appeared to-day to Joseph of Arimathea in his dungeon.

## SCENE XXIX.

### THE ROAD TO EMMAUS.

#### STATION I.

*And behold, two of them went the same day to a town which was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, named Emmaus. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass that while they talked and reasoned with themselves, Jesus Himself also drawing near, went with them. But their eyes were held that they should not know Him (St. Luke xxiv. 13—16).*

*A. It came to pass that while they talked and reasoned with themselves.*

*They talked and reasoned about the things which had happened.*

Many persons are persuaded that meditation is to them an impossibility, but they find no difficulty in talking and reasoning with another about things that have happened. Oftentimes, if such a conversation could

be taken down, it would be found to contain a good and complete meditation.<sup>1</sup>

*B. They talked together of all those things which had happened.*

Contemplate our Blessed Lord listening most attentively, and with great compassion.

While they are talking and reasoning about His Passion, He hears every word, not one escapes His loving attention. How much we console the Sacred Heart of our Lord when we converse together about Him, or think of Him alone by ourselves! He Who loves us with so intense a love cannot help desiring to be remembered by us.

Our Blessed Saviour called His Apostles together to share His gladness when He saw the poor woman put her mite into the alms-box. So does He now call His angels and saints to share His gladness when we remember Him and talk of Him. He is not used to meet with sympathy and remembrance.

*C. They talked together.*

Our conversation always shows us where our treasure is, *for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh* (St. Matt. xii.).

St. John Columbanus used to say that if he could regulate well the recreation hour of his Religious, he would feel sure of the rest of the day. This too is the teaching of St. James in his Catholic Epistle, that, as a small helm can turn about a large ship, so the tongue, a little member, determines the condition of the whole man. A man that offends not in word *is able with a bridle to lead about the whole body*; and, on the other hand, a foul tongue *defileth the whole body* (St. James iii.).

*D. They talked together.*

We must not then forget how we can give great joy to our loving Lord by remembering Him, and still more by speaking of Him to others. Holy writers say, that when

<sup>1</sup> See Introduction.

we think of the Sacred Passion, even in a way that seems to us not very devout, we greatly please our Lord, and are sure to win good graces.

*E. They talked together.*

Satan, knowing how much our Saviour desires to be remembered by us, adopts as his war-cry the words: *Let us cut Him off from the land of the living, and let His name be remembered no more* (Jerem. xi.). The world, Satan's ally, unceasingly presents shows and pomps, amusements, and the *bewitching of trifling*, to hinder us from remembering Christ Jesus.

What a triumph it is for this hateful enemy of Christ when the day goes by, and no one thinks of Jesus, or speaks of Him!

*F. They talked together.*

Such forgetfulness is a sure sign that love is not strong. Three things, they say, cannot be hidden—a fire, a cough, and love. They must betray themselves. When the Holy Spirit came down on the first Whit Sunday, and filled the hearts of the faithful, they began at once to speak of God's wonderful works.

*G. They talked together of all those things which had happened.*

We can imagine the blessed angels, when they witnessed the Sacred Passion, and the Institution of the Blessed Eucharist, making sure that Christians would be filled with fervent love, and saying: *Generation and generation shall praise Thy works; . . . they shall speak of the magnificence of the glory of Thy holiness, and shall tell Thy wondrous works. They shall speak of the might of Thy terrible acts, and shall declare Thy greatness. They shall publish the memory of the abundance of Thy sweetness, and shall rejoice in Thy justice* (Psalm cxliv.).

*And the Lord hath looked down from Heaven, and is always so looking down, upon the children of men, to see if there be any that understand and seek God, and remember Him and think of Him. Alas!* how deep, how intense the

disappointment when He is obliged to say: *They are all gone aside; they are become unprofitable* (Psalm xiii.).

*Will a virgin forget her ornament? But My people hath forgotten Me, days without number* (Jerem. ii.).

H. *Their eyes were held that they should not know Him.*

Our eyes also are held. We do not see our Blessed Lord watching us, and anxiously waiting to be remembered by us in order that He may bless us. *Fac Cor amans Jesu mei, fac ut nos amemus Te.*

## STATION II.

*And He said to them: What are these discourses that you hold one with another as you walk, and are sad? (v. 17).*

*Domine, tu nosti.* "Most loving Lord Jesus, you well know what your disciples are thinking of, and what makes them sad, for you have been with them, helping them to think devoutly and to mourn over your Passion."

Why, then, does He ask them and make them tell their story? Because He loves more than fathers and mothers love their children. His delight is to be with the children of men, and to have them conversing with Him.

Therefore has He established that law, which we sometimes think hard, that we must ask, and continue to ask, if we would receive. If we do not seek to converse with Him through love, He wishes that at least through the pressure of our wants we may be compelled to come to Him.

"O loving Heart of our Saviour and our God! If Thy delight is to be with us, bring about, in the multitude of Thy tender mercies, that our delight may be to be with Thee."

When tempted to yield to disrelish for our Lord, we may recall this thought: If Jesus Christ is to be the joy of our Heaven, surely He can content our hearts here.

STATION III.

*And the one of them whose name was Cleophas, answering said to Him: Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have been done there in these days? To whom He said, What things? And they said: Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, Who was a Prophet, mighty in work and word before God and all the people; and how our Chief Priests and Princes delivered Him to be condemned to death and crucified Him (vv. 18—20).*

*A. One of them whose name was Cleophas.*

Cleophas was a brother of St. Joseph, the spouse of our Lady, and the father of two Apostles, St. James the Less and St. Jude, and grandfather of St. John and St. James the Great. It is well worthy of note how many of our Lord's more intimate disciples were connected with Him by blood or by affinity through marriage. How greatly are the chances of salvation multiplied if we belong to a holy family! How truly wise are parents who, by prayer and alms, endeavour to secure for their children the grace to reject all marriages that are not blessed by God!

Who the companion of Cleophas was is not known. Many writers suggest St. Luke himself, who gives us this narrative. Others mention Nathanael.

*B. Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which have been done there in these days?*

Listen to these words. Such a question may well awaken emotion in the Heart of our Lord and among His blessed angels. "Alas! who knows what was done in Jerusalem, if you do not, Lord Jesus?"

*C. Art thou only a stranger?*

"Lord, hast Thou not known the things that have been happening to me in these past days?" We often imagine that our Saviour is but a stranger to us, and has no knowledge, no consciousness of what is being done to us, no thought of what we are enduring, no compassion

for our condition. And all the while He is tenderly watching and measuring the chalice for us, taking all care that there be not one drop too much of bitterness, not one drop too little of comfort and strengthening grace. *I will not forget thee. I have graven thee in My hands* (Isaias xlix.).

D. *Art thou only a stranger, and hast thou not known?*

Alas! we are not strangers; we are His own familiars, His intimate friends. It is not through ignorance that we forget how much our Blessed Saviour wishes us to have in our hearts, and on our lips too, the story of His Passion, *how our Chief Priests and Princes delivered Him to be condemned to death and crucified Him. Oh, if I forget Thee, Lord Jesus crucified, let my right hand be forgotten. Let my tongue cleave to my jaws if I do not remember Thee and Thy sorrowful Mother; if I make not Calvary the beginning of my joy* (Psalm cxxxvi.).

E. *How our Chief Priests and Princes delivered Him to be condemned to death and crucified Him.*

They word it correctly; they delivered Jesus to the Gentiles, but at the same time they crucified Him, as it was their will that coerced Pilate. Mark how the sins of others may become our sins. *From the sins of others, spare Thy servant, O Lord* (Psalm xviii.).

F. *Our Chief Priests and Princes delivered Him to be condemned to death and crucified Him.*

It is always an evil to speak recklessly of the sins of priests and princes. We are only spreading scandal and doing harm to the souls of those who hear. But, on the other hand, it is a most excellent work of mercy to deplore before God with sorrow the sins of priests and rulers, and during the Ember-days to join earnestly with Holy Church and endeavour by prayer and penance to secure good and faithful priests for His Church.

STATION IV.

*But we hoped (were hoping, sperabamus) that it was He that should have redeemed Israel (v. 21).*

A. They reveal in these words the imperfect and incorrect idea which they and many other disciples had of the Messiah and His work. They share the delusion under which the Jews still labour, that Christ was to be a mighty conqueror, and drive out the Romans. They hope also, perchance, that they will have high places in the new Kingdom.

A much greater conqueror than their most ambitious thoughts could conceive Jesus truly is. But His method of conquering is altogether new and unearthly. By enduring all that the world could inflict, He conquered the world. By dying He conquered death. By loving, He conquered our selfishness: *Domine Jesu noverim Te.*

B. *We were hoping*—"Sperabamus".

A very holy man, Father Roothaan, the General of the Society of Jesus, used to say that this word "*sperabamus*" contained the source of many of our troubles and sorrows. *We were hoping* for a legacy, for an invitation, for an appointment, and none has come. *We were hoping* to be well enough to travel to-day, and we are not. Blessed they who to all their hopes and wishes can add our Lord's word: *Nevertheless, not as I will, my God, but as Thou wilt.*

STATION V.

*And now, besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company, affrighted us, who before it was light were at the Sepulchre, and not finding His Body, came, saying that they had seen a vision of angels, who say that He is alive. And some of our people went to the Sepulchre, and found it so as the women had said, but Him they found not (vv. 21—24).*

*Yea, and certain women also.*

Contemplate our Lord listening most kindly to all

these details. He makes plenty of leisure for them, though this is such an exceptional day. For it is His Birth-day, His Wedding-day, His Coronation-day, His Resurrection-day. Human wisdom would surely pronounce that on such an unique day, He has work more important to attend to. But He knows of no other work more urgent than this work of consoling His disciples.

As He could in the wilderness multiply the loaf of bread, so can He now multiply Himself and be whole and entire for every one; living and dying for each of us, and giving Himself all to each in the Blessed Eucharist. If, therefore, I do not respond, I render void, in a true sense, all His Life, all His Passion and Death, and all His Eucharistic life.

“Mother of God, pray for us sinners.”

Tantus labor non sit cassus.      So much toil, and so much pain,  
O may they not be rendered vain.

We must learn from our Saviour how we may show kindness by listening, and by making leisure for those who are in want of comfort, and by not interrupting nor answering before we have patiently heard all.

#### STATION VI.

*Then He said to them; O foolish, and slow of heart to believe in all things which the Prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning Him (vv. 25—27).*

A. *Then He said to them.*

Oh, how blessed the hour when at last, after bearing long with our foolish complaints, our Blessed Saviour begins to speak and to teach us truth! *Make haste, O Lord, to help me.* Say, on behalf of our souls, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do: till at last we begin to see and understand.*

*B. O foolish and slow of heart to believe !*

And yet men are often persuaded that they are very wise, and very clever, and very strong-minded, because they will not believe.

The very highest talent, the greatest wisdom, the most perfect good sense, is to believe Jesus Christ, and to be most docile to His teaching and His injunctions.

“Why should I confess to men?” the strong-minded asks; “why be taught by a Church when I have my own intellect and my Bible? Why use oil? why use water?”

The servants of Naaman proved their good sense when they said to their master, who was going away indignant because Eliseus sent him a message to wash in the Jordan, *Father, if the Prophet had bid thee do some great thing, surely thou shouldst have done it, how much rather what he now hath said to thee, Wash, and thou shalt be clean* (4 Kings v.). Be God’s command little or great, the height of good sense is to do it; and as for those who will not, their wail throughout eternity will be, *We fools, we fools! the serpent deceived me.*

A highly-gifted officer understands that to obey his general is true wisdom. A mediocre man may think it more brilliant to try to show that he knows better than his commander.

*C. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things ?*

That is, if you carefully study the Prophets, and all they have said concerning Christ, you will see clearly that He was not to be one of the Printes of the nations who lord it over them, nor one whose kingdom is of this world, but *a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity, and (that) the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all* (Isaias liiii.).

*D. And beginning at Moses, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things that were concerning Him.*

“Attendite.” Contemplate the two disciples listening with earnest astonishment while our Lord teaches them. Mark how their features are lit up with the fire which His words are enkindling in their souls. *Was not our heart*

*burning within us whilst He spoke in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?*

Where else in the world can we find consolation and happiness and peace such as Jesus is giving to-day to these who have been mourning? *Blessed indeed they that mourn if their sorrow is to be thus turned into joy.*

Satan persuades men that to find pleasure they must follow him, and turn their back on God. Alas, *we fools!* Who made all the good things of this earth which Satan wishes us to accept as from him? Did he create them for us? If it rested with Satan we should not have one joy either in time or eternity. He urges us on to run after pleasure here, simply because he hates us with insatiable malice, and wishes us to have nothing but despair throughout eternity. If the things of this earth, O man, so allure you that you are willing to take them as your God and your Heaven, understand that *He Who made them is more beautiful than they* (Wisdom xiii.).

Our Blessed Lord does not allow His enemies to have all the good things even here below. To His disciples, when they will listen to Him, He speaks words which set their hearts on fire, and let them have here a foretaste of Heaven. This is that peace *which the world cannot give*, that peace which *passeth understanding*, that peace which on Thabor so entranced St. Peter that all things else faded away, and the thought of his heart was, *It is good for us to be here, let us make here three tabernacles*—three resting-places.

Bear in mind how He has promised to all who give up the world for His sake, that even here on earth they shall have a hundred-fold, besides all that is to come in the long eternity.

It is our own fault, à Kempis tells us, that we do not more frequently taste this joy of our Lord. It is no part of His design, no wish of His Heart, that we should live here without happiness. He is our true Father, our good Father; and His continual complaint is that we choose to feed on husks of swine at a distance from Him, rather

than stay with Him and share all that He possesses. *My people, He laments, have done two evils. They have forsaken Me, the cistern of living water, and digged unto themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, which hold no water* (Jerem. ii.).

### SCENE XXX.

#### EMMAUS.

#### STATION I.

*And they drew nigh to the town whither they were going, and He made as though He would go farther. But they constrained Him, saying: Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent. And He went in with them* (St. Luke xxiv. 28, 29).

If the tradition commonly received be correct, Emmaus, now called Kubeb, stood on a steep hill about sixty furlongs to the west of Jerusalem. A deep valley separates it from the Holy City, so that although the distance is less than eight miles, yet a good walker takes three hours to climb the high hill and accomplish the journey.

Some diligent students are at the present time contending that the modern Kubeb cannot be the ancient Emmaus. They have in favour of their contention the testimony of St. Jerome and other early and later writers who frequently and clearly assert that Emmaus stood on the site of the city of Nicopolis, afterwards built. Modern explorers also have found monuments that favour this theory.

The main difficulty against it is that Nicopolis was not sixty stadia or furlongs from Jerusalem; but one hundred and sixty stadia—twenty miles. Those, however, who identify Emmaus with Nicopolis answer this difficulty by stating that in some ancient manuscripts the distance is stated as one hundred and sixty stadia; and they therefore contend that the other reading, *sixty stadia*, is a copyist's error.

Tradition tells us that Cleophas had his home at Emmaus.

#### *A. But they constrained Him.*

Contemplate the two disciples, now strongly attached to their new companion, pressing Him, at the door of the house of Cleophas, to accept their hospitality. They know not as yet that He is their Lord; but they know that they owe Him hospitality, (1) because He is a stranger, and (2)

out of gratitude, because He has given them so much heavenly instruction on the way.

We must try to realise our Lord's secret contentment because these acts of charity give Him the plea that He longs for, and, if we may so say, a right to open His Heart and pour out graces on them.

The holy Fathers wish us to notice that they not only *offer* hospitality to this stranger, but *constrain* Him to stay with them: *look and do according to the pattern.*

And observe, too, not because He is well born or rich do they invite Him, nor in the hope that He will in turn invite them to some better entertainment. They have found out on the road that He is a good and holy man. And moreover, as has been said, they are grateful to Him because He has taught them much heavenly truth. Therefore are they most desirous to show Him some kindness as a proof of their reverential gratitude. By giving this hospitality to a holy man because He is holy, they become entitled to the reward of a holy man (St. Matt. x.).

*B. They constrained Him, saying: Stay with us.*

What a joyful surprise beyond all expectation, for these disciples when they at last find out that while befriending a poor traveller they are befriending their good Lord Jesus Christ! What a moment of transport it was to St. Martin of Tours, when Christ appeared to him clothed in the half mantle he had given to the poor man!

But what is St. Martin's transport? what the delight of the two disciples, compared with the overwhelming gladness that will burst upon our souls if our Saviour at judgment is able to say to us the word He so much longs to say: *Come, ye blessed! For as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren you did it to Me.*

*I believe, O Lord, help my unbelief, that I may realise this wonderful truth.*

*C. They constrained Him.*

Observe the different degrees in our way of doing works of mercy and kindness.

(a) The son in the Gospel, when his father wants a service from him, at first grumbles and refuses, but afterwards does it. So, too, the man who had retired to rest only gives the loaf of bread after much earnest entreaty, and to get rid of troublesome importunity. Even so we sometimes give an alms after long resistance, and after extorting a promise that the petitioner will not come again.

(b) Then we sometimes give more promptly, when asked, and with outward civility, though inwardly reluctant and wishing we had not been asked.

(c) Then sometimes with a better charity we give at once what is asked and give willingly.

(d) Charity and kindness are still more perfect when we do not wait to be asked, but look out for opportunities of giving.

(e) Then better still, some, like these disciples, will not take a refusal, they lovingly, and with charitable tact, constrain those in need to accept help. They sometimes hinder them from knowing where the alms comes from, so that they cannot return it.

“Mother of God, pray for us sinners that we may draw from the Heart of thy Son some share of His charity.”

**D.** *They constrained Him, saying: Stay with us.*

Even on this glorious day when all the holy angels and the liberated *prisoners of hope* are greeting our Lord with ceaseless benedictions, these words from two of His disciples have their own peculiar sweetness. For as He tells us how the lost sheep attracts His Heart more than the rest of the flock, so in like manner, the Alleluias of the blessed, now safe in a better world, in one sense affect His Heart less than the cries of His loved exiles on earth: *Stay with us*, O Lord! For they are not yet secure. He is not sure of preserving them for ever.

**E.** *Stay with us, O Lord.*

Alas, how often is all reversed! It is He that is saying to us earnestly: “Stay with Me”: but we begin *all at once to make excuses*. “I have to go to my five yoke of

oxen—I pray you hold me excused: I cannot come: I cannot stay.”

This is the treatment to which He is far more accustomed; so that He says sorrowfully: *My Heart hath expected reproach and misery* (Psalm lxxviii.). Consequently He is surprised and delighted when He hears us say to Him earnestly: *Stay with me*, Lord Jesus. For habitually He is *the reproach of men; and the outcast of the people* (Psalm xxi.). *What have you done*, dear Lord, we may well ask with Pilate, that your own people have for you nothing but disrelish and coldness and contempt? He Himself asks sorrowfully the same question: *My people, what have I done to thee? In what have I molested thee? Answer thou Me* (Micheas vi.).

F. *They constrained Him, saying: Stay with us.*

A mother hides herself at times from her child, in order to have the pleasure of watching the efforts he makes to find her. Our Lord hides Himself and makes as if He wished to go away from the soul; but all the while *not from His Heart is He afflicting the children of men* (Lament. iii.). *For His delights are to be with (them)*. He is hiding, that we may by seeking compel Him to come back and bless us abundantly. “*Sitit sitiri*”—*He thirsts to be thirsted for.*

Alas! how often we let Him go without an effort to keep Him, and comfort ourselves with some creature; a newspaper, our food, or conversation with a friend!

*Stay with us, because it is towards evening, and the day is now far spent.*

In the controversy that has arisen about the true site of Emmaus, use is made of this sentence. Those who maintain the common opinion, which we may call the theory of the Franciscans, rely with good reason on the text of St. Luke, as we have it in the Vulgate, that Emmaus was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem; and that though it is now *towards evening* when they arrive at Emmaus, yet the two disciples will be able easily to reach Jerusalem that night after our Lord has left them. They argue that they could not have got back to Jerusalem that evening had the distance been one hundred and sixty stadia,

equal to twenty miles. The writers who are advocating the other theory that Emmaus stood where Nicopolis was afterwards built, defend their view by saying, (1) as we have seen, that in certain ancient manuscripts of the Gospel the reading is one hundred and sixty furlongs, not sixty; (2) that St. Jerome states clearly that Nicopolis was built on the site of the Emmaus of the Gospel; (3) that the evening of the Jews, like our ecclesiastical Vesper hour, began early in the afternoon. *Towards evening*, therefore, might mean between 2 and 3 p.m.; (4) that though the high-road to Emmaus was one hundred and sixty stadia or twenty miles, the shorter footpath across the hills is not more than sixteen miles; a distance which two disciples accustomed to a laborious life would easily accomplish between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m.

## STATION II.

*And He went in with them. And it came to pass whilst He was at table with them, He took bread, and blessed and brake, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him: and He vanished out of their sight (vv. 29—31).*

*He took bread, and blessed and brake, and gave it to them.*

Did our Blessed Lord reward these two hospitable disciples by giving them His Sacred Body in the Blessed Eucharist? Some holy writers think not, but the more common opinion held, among others, by St. Augustine, St. Jerome, and Venerable Bede, is that Cleophas and his companion did receive Holy Communion. St. Jerome, writing of St. Paula, has these words: "Setting out once more she went to Nicopolis which was formerly called Emmaus, where our Lord, recognised in the breaking of bread, consecrated the house of Cleophas into a church" (Epist. xxvii.).

Those who believe that the Franciscan theory about the site of Emmaus is wrong, lay great stress on this and similar passages in the writings of St. Jerome, where he emphatically repeats that Nicopolis was the Emmaus of the Gospel.

### A. *The breaking of bread.*

Contemplate these two favoured disciples receiving Holy Communion from our Saviour. If their hearts were burning in the way when He spoke to them, how much more now!

Jesu, spes pœnitentibus,  
Quam pius es petentibus!  
Quam bonus Te quærentibus!  
Sed quid invenientibus!

O Jesu, hope of the contrite,  
To them that seek how kind Thou art!  
How gracious to the yearning heart!  
When found at last, O what delight!

**B. *The breaking of bread.***

What was their preparation for this Communion ?

Earnest prayer is doubtless the ordinary preparation for Holy Communion. And if through sloth we neglect such preparation we are much to blame. But there may be other good preparations.

**1. *Labour.***

According to St. Jerome's opinion they had, as poor men, travelled on foot sixteen or twenty miles. Labour, especially when undergone through charity or duty, may well supply the place of prayer. Those who nurse the sick laboriously and charitably are preparing well for Holy Communion.

**2. *Listening to the burning words of our Lord.***

He has been explaining to them the prophecies concerning Himself and His Passion.

Reading, then, about our Saviour, meditating on His words, and above all on His Sacred Passion, is an excellent preparation for receiving the Blessed Eucharist.

**3. *They did a good work of mercy, and did it very well.***

Let us go and do likewise. For works of mercy are heavenly jewels, which adorn the soul for the Sacred Banquet.

**C. *And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him.***

Oh, what a good reward ! "*Melior est misericordia Tua super vitas,*" we say in Psalm lxii. : "One moment of Thy merciful grace, O Lord, is better than long lives without". Thrice blessed shall we be if by holy labour, and by much study of our dear Lord's Life and Sacred Passion, and by works of hospitality and mercy, we deserve to have a great increase of faith, hope, and charity, and to know Him at Holy Communion and in prayer.

Let us charitably pray for priests, who often hold in their hands the Sacred Body of the Lord, that they may know Him *in the breaking of bread.*

**D. *And He vanished out of their sight.***

"Why so soon, O Lord ? why so short a visitation ?"

It is as in the case of Magdalen: "Do not tarry here clasping My feet". When He sees fit He reveals Himself clearly for a little while and then retires, because (1) the rule is that *the just man lives by faith* (Romans i.); *blessed they who have not seen and have believed* (St. John xx.). Moreover (2) He desires that they make haste to tell the good tidings to His disciples.

### STATION III.

*And they said one to the other: Was not our heart burning within us, whilst He spoke in the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?* (v. 32).

A. Many are persuaded that on this earth sinners have all the delights, and Christ's disciples the hard lives.

And, no doubt, at times the prophecy of our Lord in the Supper-room has its fulfilment: *You shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice.* But it is not to be always so, for He adds: *Your sorrow shall be turned into joy. You now have sorrow, but I will see you again and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you* (St. John xvi.).

And there are innumerable passages in Holy Writ which show us that even in this world God gives the best to His children.

*Better is one day in Thy courts above thousands* (Psalm lxxxiii.), one rejoicing soul exclaims.

*My spirit exults in God my Saviour,* our Lady tells us.

*I superabound with joy* (2 Cor. vii.), St. Paul testifies.

And it is over and over again inculcated that in spite of the trials of this life, our habitual state of soul is to be joy: *Rejoice in the Lord always, again I shall say rejoice* (Philipp. iv.).

It is not honourable to our Lord if we serve Him in sadness, as if He were a hard master.

We must bear in mind His solemn promise that those who leave all for Him, shall have **IN THIS WORLD A HUNDRED-FOLD.**

And we remember also the lament of the wicked in Hell: *We have walked through hard ways. We have wearied ourselves in the way of iniquity* (Wisdom v.).

#### STATION IV.

*And rising up the same hour they went back to Jerusalem, and they found the eleven gathered together, and those that were with them, and they told what things were done in the way, and how they knew Him in the breaking of bread* (vv. 33—35).

A. *And rising up the same hour.*

How is it, some one might ask, that they did not kneel down and make a thanksgiving after Holy Communion?

Doubtless a fervent thanksgiving at such a moment is a sacred duty. But, surely, if they were well prepared for receiving the Blessed Eucharist while walking, so may they also make a good thanksgiving while travelling hastily to do a great act of charity.

Our Lady, we read, after St. Gabriel's departure, when *the Word was made Flesh*, went away with haste to the mountains on an errand of charity. We may be well sure that on the road the Lord was with her; and she was making a perfect thanksgiving. Would that we could make kneeling as fervent acts as the loving servants of our Lord make while walking or working!

The two disciples have good reason to feel tired; rest would naturally be very agreeable to them. To set out when the day is far spent on a walk of sixteen or twenty miles (if St. Jerome is correct) in order to console the mourning Apostles and disciples with the glad news, is a very good act of mercy; and when did our Divine Master ever complain of those who make thanksgiving to Him by showing mercy to His little ones? If you love Me, *feed My sheep; feed My lambs*. We may add that the fire that was burning in their hearts on the road to Emmaus is there still. Our Lord is not, indeed, visibly present to

them now, but He has united His Sacred Body and His Blood with them.

## SCENE XXXI.

### THE CŒNACULUM ON MOUNT SION.

#### STATION I.

*Now when it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you (St. John xx. 19).*

A. *That same day, the first of the week, and, we may add, the first of the "new created world". The day pre-eminently which the Lord hath made (Psalm cxvii.). Let us be glad and rejoice therein, the inspired Psalmist writes: Let us be glad and rejoice therein, Holy Church gladly echoes.*

*"Attendite."* Do not hurry away; we must give ourselves leisure to find gladness in the remembrance of all that this day is to us; our Easter day; our Resurrection day; the birthday of our fallen race; the first day of our heavenly life; the dawning of the bright eternal day which, if we are true to ourselves, shall never have a sunset; shall never change into night; shall never be robbed of its heavenly glory.

B. *The disciples were gathered together.*

Contemplate the Apostles, the disciples, the devout women gathered together with the doors closed; some whispering to each other; some still *mourning and weeping* (St. Mark); some much terrified by the rumours they had heard that the Pharisees have already imprisoned Joseph, and will wreak their vengeance on all who took part in the burial of Jesus. Others, again, are filled with ineffable consolation because He is risen and they have seen Him.

Our Lady is, perhaps, in an inner chamber, alone, or with John and Magdalen. They are saying little with their lips, but *speaking to themselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual canticles; singing and making melody in their hearts to our Lord, and giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God and the Father* (Ephes. v.).

C. *Jesus came and stood in the midst.*

Led by the Holy Spirit, our Lady joins the rest in the Cœnaculum; and on a sudden, while they are all turning their eyes to her, the *blessed among women*, gently and noiselessly and with *great tranquillity*, Jesus enters through the closed doors and stands in the midst of them, and says: *Peace be to you.*

St. Ignatius teaches us that when He speaks to His friends, His words are like water dropping into a sponge. When He speaks to His enemies, *men shall wither away for fear.*

*Is thy coming peaceable?* the Ancients of Bethlehem said to Samuel, when in their surprise they saw him arriving. *It is peaceable* (1 Kings xvi.), he answered.

*Is Thy coming peaceable, Lord Jesus?* Yes! most peaceable. He keeps no remembrance at all of their want of faithful courage. All these things He has cast behind His back. His Heart is full to overflowing of that thought which was there during the Last Supper: *I have called you friends* (St. John xv.). *You are they who have continued with Me in My temptations* (St. Luke xxii.). He knows well how the father of lies is ever troubling the souls of His disciples by whispering this lie, that their falls are all kept in remembrance and not forgotten, and therefore He makes haste at once to confound the malice of Satan by uttering the word of greeting: *Peace be to you.*

How unspeakably consoled the Heart of our Lord is when we allow Him to speak this word to our hearts: *Peace be to you.* The enemy of God and man has filled our souls with calumnies against our God, so that mistrust of Him has become deep-seated and ingrained. Our Saviour

tries to expostulate with us, and says: *My people, what have I done to you? In what have I been troublesome to you? Why did you doubt (Me)? Why are you afraid? for I know the thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord. Thoughts of peace, and not of affliction; and you shall pray to Me, and I will hear you* (Jerem. xxix.).

But oftentimes we are so besotted that we will not believe that our own God, our own Father, Who has given to our earthly parents and earthly friends only a little drop of the compassion and love He has for us, has Himself any love and pity for us. *This madness, He complains in His sorrow, is according to the likeness of a serpent; like the deaf asp that stoppeth her ears, which will not hear the voice of the charmers nor of the wizard that charmeth wisely* (Psalm lvii.).

D. *Peace be to you.*

Not only in Paschal-time, but in all seasons of the year, we so far imitate our Lord as to greet our neighbours when we meet them with a peaceful word: "Good-morning," "good-evening". And again, when we leave them: "Good-bye," "good-night," "farewell". This universal custom is no doubt one of the effects produced by our Lord's Gospel of peace and charity. It is a good Christian practice.

But it is to be feared, that too often we are only creatures of habit when we say these melodious words: "Good-morning," "good-evening," "farewell". For we are prone to adopt blindly any prevailing fashion. Hence, in Holy Scripture we are compared to sheep who follow, without reasoning, the bell-wether.

We who will not listen to our Blessed Saviour's voice when He is *charming us so wisely*, are at times quite willing to set up a man as our idol; to worship him; to do his bidding; and follow his lead even to the everlasting charnel-house.

What wonder masters who understand spiritual life warn, with such intense earnestness, even cloistered

Religious to arm their souls daily against the fatal weakness of human respect!

Great philosophers, great painters, great musicians, great conquerors, have sometimes had a large following. But who has had so many followers and imitators as that most weak and foolish man, Pontius Pilate? He, though Jesus Himself was there answering his difficulties and teaching him, deliberately chose to become one of the senseless sheep, and, with the Jewish rabble, to follow the lead of Annas and Caiphas.

We, then, are often only following a fashion when we say, "Good-morning," or "Farewell!" Nay, sometimes when after an angry altercation we say "Good-bye," and slam the door, our hearts are far enough from what our lips are saying.

E. *He said, Peace be to you.*

*So shall My word be which shall go forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but shall do whatsoever I please, and shall prosper in the things for which I sent it (Isaias lv.).*

"Attendite." We must not hurry on. It is worth our while to *consider in (our) hearts* how our Lord's words *do what He pleases, and prosper.*

Why so? (1) Because, if we may say it, they are premeditated with an everlasting care.

(2) By His prayers and tears and labours and bitter Passion, He has earned for His words that they shall be efficacious and shall prosper.

We sometimes think that when He heals the sick or forgives the sinner, His works of mercy cost Him little, as when a very rich man gives a small alms. We forget that our Saviour has paid a great price for every grace He gives to us. A poor mother sometimes watches and works all night to be able to give to her heartless son the money he clamours for. So, too, our Blessed Lord earned with the sweat of His brow, and the Blood of His Body, the mercies that He lavishes on us.

"Attendite et videte." Let us stay long looking at this

Model. For we are madly prone to pour out words (1) without premeditation ; (2) without taking any trouble to earn by prayer and penance a blessing on them, that they may do what we wish and prosper in the things for which we send them.

We utter, impromptu, rash opinions on all subjects. We give advice to all comers ; nay, we intrude advice that has never been asked for. To children and servants, and to the poor who are guilty of begging, or to an obstinate Protestant, we pour forth, like a torrent, a moral or controversial lecture ; and when at length we are tired, or out of breath, we sit down to rest, soothed by the thought that we have given them a wholesome lesson which ought to keep them good for the rest of their lives. ♫

Alas ! *They know not*, our Lord is saying, *they know not what they do*. If the world could have been saved by unprepared discourses, My Death and My Mother's compassion were all superfluous.

First, then, we must try to fix in our minds that these unblest and idle words are plentiful as the sands on the shore and far less useful. For God has put the sand there for a purpose ; but it is not by God's appointment, nor according to His will, that these random words are being poured out.

Secondly, they are not only plentiful and cheap and worthless, but they are most mischievous. When one malicious tongue is speaking, it is spreading infection among many listeners. If the French *mitrailleuse*, that was to kill so many with one discharge, had done all that its inventor proposed, and if its firing could have been made perpetual, it would have fairly represented the tongue, *the restless evil*, the *world of iniquity*, as St. James calls it (c. iii.).

We know, too, how over-cheap food is often found to be tainted and unwholesome. No meat or fish is so cheap or so poisonous as the foolish words poured out by the tongue. Why, then, do we listen eagerly to cheap words,

which cost the speaker nothing, and can be of no use to us? We can by thought, by prayer, by penance, win efficacy for our words, so that they *shall prosper in the things for which we sent them.*

By such industry Apostolic men have won the graces which make their words reach the *division of the soul.*

And if before visiting a poor sick man, I by stinting myself, or by labour, get ready an alms for him, then when I say "God speed!" my word is not an idle word, it does what I wish.

If the long hours wasted in uttering idle words and listening to such were spent in preparing some useful words, how different would be the condition of the world! *With desolation is all the land made desolate, because there is none that considereth in the heart.*

F. *Peace be to you.*

"*Attendite.*" Stay a little while and try to understand what manner of peace our Saviour gives. *My peace, He said at the Last Supper, I give to you. Not as the world giveth do I give unto you.*

Compare the peace which the world gives with the peace which the Lord gives. It is with peace as with health.

A doctor sometimes says to his patient, You must not ride, you must not walk, or run; you must not go out in the winter, nor in spring, nor in the early morning, nor at night, nor in the late evening. You must not eat any solid food, and you must not drink wine. You must not talk much nor attend to business, nor study. You must have no worries, you must spend the winter in Egypt, and the summer on the top of the Alps.

If you do all this you will keep your health.

So it is with the peace which the world gives.

If you are tolerably rich, if you are in good health, if your wife is all devotion, if none of your children are troublesome, if all your servants are faithful, if your rents are duly paid, if no robbers steal your plate, if your

steward is not dishonest, if your neighbour brings no lawsuit, if no rival is outshining you, if the Prince invites you, if no Mardochai refuses to salute you, if your appetite keep good by day, and you can sleep soundly at night, if the weather is not too hot or too cold, if the east wind is not blowing, and above all if you are guaranteed against cholera, influenza, small-pox, and cancer; then perhaps you can have peace till a disturbing cause comes.

Here, then, is what the world can do. If it can keep you from the winds of heaven, and the rain and the weather and all the disturbing causes which surround you on every side, your most fragile and rickety peace may from time to time subsist for a little while. But frail and feeble and unreliable as it is, you must part with it entirely when your clock strikes for the last time, and the hand points to your allotted hour, and the undertaker comes in, so obsequious and obliging, to hurry your remains quickly and decently out of sight.

This is not the peace which our Lord calls, *My peace*. His peace is like a strong robust health of the soul, which does not require to be sheltered every moment from change of wind and weather. The moth cannot consume it. The thief cannot steal it. If there are a thousand Mardochais who will not take off their hats, it is not shaken. Envy and jealousy cannot gnaw it away; time does not damage it; ingratitude, unkindness, angry words, detraction and slander cannot destroy it. Even the mighty hand of death cannot reach it. Through the winter and the summer, the autumn and the springtime of this world, it survives. Through the heat of the day and the darkness of night, in health and in sickness, through honour and dishonour, in abundance and in poverty, it lives on like an evergreen of Heaven. And when death wrenches soul from body, and the poor cherished flesh is given over to the worms, the peace of Christ passes with the blessed soul into a better world, there to be eternal and unchangeable for ever.

“Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, *dona nobis pacem.*”

## STATION II.

*But they being troubled and frightened, supposed that they saw a spirit. And He said to them: Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? See My hands and feet, that it is I Myself; handle, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me to have. And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and feet (St. Luke xxiv. 37—40).*

*A. They being troubled and frightened.*

Therefore, our Blessed Lord's word, *Peace be to you*, has not yet produced its effect. What wonder that our words have not always an instantaneous effect? And yet we are sometimes surprised and displeased if our words are not attended to most promptly.

*B. They supposed that they saw a spirit.*

*All things co-operate unto good for them that love God.* Therefore still more all things work together to carry out the wish of our Lord. The doubts and incredulity of the Apostles all help our faith; their fears put great obstacles in the way of their believing; they think they see a spirit. If they had not thought this, others would afterwards have said that they did see nothing but a phantom.

*C. He said to them: Why are you troubled?*

We can see now that they had no reason to be troubled; but when we are ourselves in trouble, we cannot see how groundless our fears are.

*D. Why are you troubled?*

What answer can we make to our Lord if He puts this question to us?

I am troubled because my health is failing.

I am troubled because I am so poor.

I am troubled because my parents are unkind to me.

I am troubled because I find no comfort in prayer.

To these troubles our Saviour answers: *Seek first the Kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added to you. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things* (St. Matt. vi.).

E. *Why do thoughts arise in your hearts ?*

Let us try to answer this question: Why, during prayer, do distracting thoughts arise in our hearts ?

One answer is: *Where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also* (St. Matt. vi.). Masters of spirit tell us that we can find out our predominant passion by watching our favourite day-dreams

The great Macedonian conqueror in his day-dreams—

Fought all his battles o'er again,  
And thrice he slew the slain.

The sensual in their day-dreams are occupied with dances and theatres.

A litigious man is full of controversy and law-suits.

F. *See My hands and feet, that it is I Myself.*

“O Lord Jesus! Grant us grace not to be afraid of Thee! Oftentimes we are full of fright if Thou say to us, *It is I*. How many dread to go to Thee in the Blessed Eucharist!

“Many dread to die because they must go to Thee at the Judgment-seat.

“O my Lord Jesus, grant us the great grace to be full of hope and joy when we hear Thee say: *See My hands and feet, that it is I Myself.*”

G. *See My hands and feet.*

“Some are recognised by their faces, some by their dress; you will know Me by My wounded Hands and Feet. I am the only one that was ever crucified for you.”

H. *Handle and see.*

St. John writes in his First Epistle: *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, AND OUR HANDS HAVE HANDLED, of the Word of Life . . . we declare unto you* (c. i.).

From these words some holy writers conclude that when our Lord said, *Handle and see*, the Apostles took courage and did fall down and touch and kiss His Sacred Wounds.

Passion of Christ, strengthen us. Within Thy Sacred Wounds hide us.

Sancta Mater, istud agas,  
Crucifixi fige plagas  
Cordi meo valide.

Do this for me, Mother blest,  
Deeply imprint within my breast  
The wounds of Jesus Crucified.

*I. For a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see Me to have.*

Commentators tell us that, when angels appear in human form, their bodies are only apparent, not real; but our Lord's Body is real. He has flesh and bones.

But His flesh and bones need not always be palpable; they can be so when He wishes, but if He so pleases, His Body, which is a Spiritual Body, will not be felt.

*J. He showed them His hands and feet.*

Observe what pains He is taking to allay their doubts and convince them that He is really risen. He well knows that on the fact of His Resurrection His Church is to be established, and that their incredulity, when once conquered, will be most useful evidence. *If Christ be not risen again, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. If Christ be not risen again, your faith is vain, for you are yet in your sins. Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. But now Christ is risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep. For by a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead* (1 Cor. xv.).

"I believe that He rose again on the third day, according to the Scriptures, and I believe in the resurrection of the dead."

STATION III.

*But while they yet believed not and wondered for joy, He said: Have you here anything to eat? And they offered Him a piece of a broiled fish, and a honey-comb. And when He had eaten before them, taking the remains He gave to them (vv. 41—43).*

A. *While they yet believed not and wondered for joy.*

Sometimes men believe not through fear; they see that if they believe, they will be obliged to make sacrifices. Therefore they are unwilling to believe.

But these disciples are hindered from believing through excessive joy; it seems too good to be true that their Master is with them again. It is well to observe that we often are slow to believe, because God's words seem too good to be true. It is hard to believe with a vivid faith, that our Blessed Saviour will really accept as done to Himself the little kindness we do to a poor man. It is hard to believe firmly when He assures us that He loves us, and has loved us with an *everlasting love* (Jerem. xxxi.). It is hard to believe, with a strong and lively faith, that He truly gives us His Sacred Body and His Blood.

St. Elizabeth said to our Lady: *Blessed art thou that hast believed, because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord* (St. Luke i.).

Till we believe the promises of Christ He is unable to accomplish them in us.

When the disconsolate father begged Him to drive out the wicked spirit from his son, *Jesus saith to him: If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth* (St. Mark ix.).

We must, with that afflicted father, earnestly answer: *I believe, Lord; help my unbelief.*

B. *Have you here anything to eat?*

Commentators ask, Did our Lord really eat?

They answer: (1) A glorified body does not require food: it would be an imperfection if it did; but

(2) A glorified body can taste food and relish it : it would be an imperfection if it could not.

Our Lord has bones and teeth, and therefore really eats ; but the commentators teach that the food does not remain in His Body, but vanishes and is consumed in some miraculous way.

C. *They offered Him a piece of a broiled fish and a honey-comb.*

We may observe the poverty and simplicity of this repast. The Resurrection of our Lord will bring them great joy and a *peace which this world cannot give*, but not much of that bodily comfort and luxury which the world offers.

D. *When He had eaten before them, taking the remains He gave to them.*

And, no doubt, He presses them to take refreshment, and sits with them at the table while they do so. He is labouring gently to bridge over that wide gulf of separation which has been set between Him and them by His Death. From this example we see what our Lord's work as Mediator is. He very quickly can arrange matters with His Father and move Him to forgive ; but then He has to turn to us and deal with each of us, and gradually overcome, with much patience and skill, our fears, our repugnances, and all our passions.

E. *When He had eaten before them.*

Holy writers remind us to notice the intense consolation of our Lady when she sits beside Him at this humble banquet, and observes with what meek charity He allays the fears of His weak disciples, and draws them all to Himself.

“ O Blessed Mother, turn thine eyes of mercy towards us, and show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.”

Fac cor amans Jesu mei,  
Fac ut nos amemus Te.

O burning Heart, O Jesu mine,  
Oh, make us love with love like Thine.

STATION IV.

*And He said to them : These are the words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you : That all things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures (vv. 44—45).*

*A. He opened their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures.*

Observe how the Scriptures are like a sealed book till they are rightly understood. Of what use is a will, signed and sealed though it be, till the true sense is determined by a competent tribunal? The Sacred Scriptures would not be to us a treasure, if we had not the light of faith and the infallible Apostolic voice to teach us their true sense.

*B. He opened to them the Scriptures.*

Prayer becomes very easy and very delightful if our Blessed Lord in His mercy speaks to us and opens the Scriptures to us.

Till He thus speaks and gives us what St. Ignatius calls *an intimate sense* of the meaning of His words we have nothing but the letter written with ink. St. Paul writes: *The letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth* (2 Cor. iii.).

STATION V.

*He said therefore to them again : Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. When He had said this, He breathed on them ; and He said to them : Receive ye the Holy Ghost ; whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them : and whose sins you shall retain they are retained (St. John xx. 21—23).*

*A. He said again : Peace be to you.*

He is thinking now not merely of the disciples present in the Cœnaculum. He remembers the promise: *If He*

shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long-lived seed (Isaias liii.); and the promise concerning His Blessed Mother: *After her shall virgins be brought to the King, her neighbours shall be brought to thee* (Psalm xlv.); and the prophetic description of His Holy Church: *The Gentiles shall walk in Thy light; and Kings in the brightness of Thy rising* (Isaias lx.). Therefore He is saying: *Peace to you* all, to those at table with Him, and to all who shall hereafter believe through them: and therefore immediately makes provision that His peace shall reach all in ages to come.

B. *As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you.*

Mardochai said to Queen Esther: *Think not that thou mayest save thy life only* (Esther iv.). We are none of us called merely to save our own souls; nay, we shall not save our own souls unless we love our neighbours as ourselves, and help to win salvation for them also. The Apostles have all this Easter joy not for themselves only: *As the Father hath sent Me, I send you. I go to the Father, but I send you in My place. When the Paraclete cometh, the Spirit of Truth, He shall give testimony of Me, and you shall give testimony because you are with Me from the beginning* (St. John xv.).

C. *As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you.*

"Shall we then, dear Lord, be obliged to listen to your Apostles, as if we were listening to you?"

"Yes," He answers, "for I have said to them: *He that heareth you, heareth Me; he that despiseth you, despiseth Me*" (St. Luke x.).

"Suffer me to speak again, my Lord. What if your Apostles become wicked? Must I still believe in them?"

"Yes," He answers, "for I guarantee their teaching, whether their private life be good or bad. *The Scribes and the Pharisees have sitten on the chair of Moses; all things therefore whatsoever they shall say to you, observe and do: but according to their works do ye not*" (St. Matt. xxiii.).

"Once more, my Lord, suffer me to speak *whereas I am dust and ashes* (Genesis xviii.). When your Apostles die, whom shall I then believe?"

"Never shall their office die," our Lord answers, "I have died for *all men* and wish *all to come to the knowledge of the truth* (1 Timothy ii.). Therefore I am with My Church *all days, even to the consummation of the world.*"

D. *When He had said this, He breathed on them, and He said to them : Receive ye the Holy Ghost.*

By breathing on them and saying: *Receive ye the Holy Ghost*, He teaches us that the Holy Spirit proceeds from Him as well as from the Father.

*Veni Creator Spiritus. Veni Sancte Spiritus.*

E. *Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained.*

In this hour He gives to them the second great power of the priesthood. At the Last Supper He had already given to them the marvellous power given only to His priests: "*Solis presbyteris*": the power of consecrating and offering up the Everlasting Sacrifice. A few days later, He will add the third power: *Go and preach the Gospel to every creature.*

F. *Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them.*

"Now indeed," the Blessed Mother's heart responds, "*according to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, Thy comforts have given joy to my soul* (Psalm xciii.). *My soul doth magnify the Lord, my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.* For according to the multitude of (His) tender mercies He hath made redemption plentiful. The sinner need not die, for to sinners who have a fellow-feeling for him, because they are themselves sinners, my Son hath said: *Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven.*"

"*Juravit Dominus et non pœnitebit eum*"—The Lord hath sworn and He will not repent (Psalm cix.). *All you that thirst come to the waters, and you that have no money make haste, buy and eat : come ye, buy wine and milk, without money and without any price* (Isaias lv.).

G. *Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven.*

We may contemplate the blessed angels watching in wonder and delight this scene in the Supper-room, the

boundless charity of our Lord's Heart, and the wonderful joy and contentment of the Blessed Mother's heart that the poor sinner, the *child of (her) pain* is not to die, but to be forgiven. "*What have we in Heaven better than our King and our Queen? The earth is no longer the valley of tears; but the dwelling-place of God: the gate and outer court of Heaven*" (Genesis xxviii.).

St. Bonaventure, with his usual piety, sets before us this scene in the Coenaculum in these words:

"Behold how full all these things are of joy and gladness: *The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord.* They who before were affrighted, now rejoice in His presence. Oh! with what delight did they set meat before Him, that He might eat! How diligently did they serve Him! How gladly did they stand around Him!

"Contemplate also how our Lady is there likewise, for the disciples had gathered themselves unto her. See, then, with what unspeakable gladness she beholdeth these things, and sitteth familiarly beside her Son, and ministereth to Him with joy according as He hath need. And with great content doth the Lord Jesus receive service from her hands, and most reverently showeth her honour before the disciples.

"Neither shalt thou, in thy contemplation, forget Magdalen, the Beloved Disciple, the Apostle of the Apostles. See, how after her wonted fashion, she sitteth at her Master's feet, and eagerly listeneth to His words, and if in aught she may, doth most joyfully and most heartily minister unto Him. Oh! what has this poor little house now become, and how blessed a thing it were to dwell therein!

"And, if thou hast in thee any little share of devotion, doth this not seem to thee to be a great Pasch? I think it must.

"But the Lord doth tarry but a short time with them, for it is now late. And perchance they constrained Him to stay a little longer, begging Him not so quickly to

withdraw Himself from them. Dost thou not think that Magdalen, seated at His feet, would with trust and reverent boldness lay hold of the hem of His garment that He might not leave them? (For He was clad in vesture exceeding white, the raiment of His glory.) She held Him thus, not from presumption, but out of confidence; neither did one so loving and so loved displease the Lord. For the Lord, as He showed in the case of the disciples going to Emmaus, desireth to be held. At length, having done reverence to His Mother, and obtained her leave to go, He gave His blessing unto all, and departed from them. But they falling on their face before Him besought Him that He would return right speedily. For they were a-hungred and a-thirst for the Lord of Whose presence they were wont to have such plenty, and full often did they call Him back with sighings and desires."

## SCENE XXXII.

### THE CŒNACULUM. ST. THOMAS.

We have come to the close of the first Easter Sunday, the day of Resurrection. Sin and death are conquered; sin on Good Friday, death to-day.

*This is the day the Lord hath made*, Holy Church says to us, *let us be glad and rejoice therein*. Surely if any time on earth is to be a time of joy and peace, it is this new Paschal-tide.

Yet now, as always on this earth, *mourning taketh hold of the end of joy* (Prov. xiv.). One disturbing thought that mingles with the gladness is fear of the Jews. *Their doors are shut (barred) for fear of the Jews*.

Another trouble comes upon them when Thomas returns. *For Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came* (St. John xx.).

Some of the early Fathers think that he had not yet recovered from the great panic, or returned from his hiding-place to the Cœnaculum. Others contend that he must have been there in the morning when the women brought the news from the Sepulchre, because St. Luke writes, *they told all these things to the eleven*. This argument, however, does not appear conclusive to some of the best commentators, as the words, "the twelve," "the eleven," had by this time become generic names, like "the family," "the regiment". If one visits a family, it does not

necessarily follow that every one of the family is present when he comes. If a regiment is said to have won a battle, we cannot conclude that all the men of the regiment took part in the action. A considerable part stands for the whole.

What is certain is, that *Thomas was not with them when Jesus came*. But now he is returned.

### STATION I.

*The other disciples said to him : We have seen the Lord.*

*But he said to them : Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe (St. John xx. 25).*

*A. I will not believe.*

It is asked : "What sin did St. Thomas commit by his refusal to believe ?" Some of the early Fathers excuse him from all sin. They say that his love was very strong, and that his words are only an expression of his bitter disappointment because he had not seen the Lord. Others think that there was some sin, but not a grievous sin against faith ; because he was not denying a dogma fully promulgated. He was merely asserting that he would not give his adhesion till more sure of the evidence.

How did St. Thomas come to think, it is asked, that the wounds would be preserved in His glorified Body ? Probably the other Apostles had told him that they had seen and touched them.

*B. I will not believe.*

For a whole week Thomas remains in this disposition ; and consequently a cloud hangs over the Paschal gladness of the others. So must it ever be. When things go well with us, we have always near us on earth, and also in Purgatory, brethren whose need is sore and whose sorrows we must share.

*C. I will not believe.*

How well for Thomas that he has so many friends to intercede for him. If a young prodigal goes astray, yet if

he have good parents, like St. Monica, or many pious friends praying for him, there is always great hope. "The child of many tears will not be lost."

D. *I will not believe.*

But the loving and grateful Heart of Jesus, and the compassionate heart of Holy Mary, are thinking much more of his past fidelity and generous love than of his present resistance to graces. Happy those who by many works of charity and mercy deserve, as Peter did, to find mercy, even when they fall. They will not be cast off with Judas the unmerciful.

### SCENE XXXIII.

#### THE CŒNACULUM. THE OCTAVE DAY.

##### STATION I.

*And after eight days, again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be to you.*

*Then He saith to Thomas : Put in thy finger hither, and see My hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put it into My side ; and be not faithless, but believing.*

*Thomas answered and said to Him : My Lord and My God. Jesus saith to him ; Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed (St. John xx.).*

A. *After eight days, again Jesus cometh, the doors being shut.*

Is this apparition in Galilee, or in Jerusalem? The common opinion is that of St. Jerome, that the Apostles are still in Jerusalem, in the Cœnaculum. Possibly our Lord delayed their journey to Galilee till their prayers had obtained grace for St. Thomas.

B. *After eight days.*

Therefore this is on the octave day of the Resurrection. Some commentators suggest that already the Apostles

had been taught to keep the Sunday holy. St. Thomas has learned by his experience to keep close to the rest.

C. *Jesus stood in the midst, and said, Peace be to you.*

May we not try to form a habit of saying continually in our heart to all with whom we deal, *Peace be to you.* They who understand St. Ignatius' method of the Particular Examen, have helped themselves with it to form this habit of continual almsgiving to all persons with whom they have intercourse.

D. *Then He saith to Thomas : Put in thy finger hither.*

When He now says, *Peace be to you,* Thomas is included in the fervent wish of His Heart ; He has come specially to bring peace to Thomas. Contrast His meekness and compassion with the way in which men sometimes treat a servant that is refractory, and stands out against them. Their wisdom says, "It would be madness to give in to him". But mothers are very patient and indulgent with a perverse child, and our Lord's love goes infinitely beyond the love of a mother, *Even if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee* (Isaias xlix.).

E. *Put in thy finger hither.*

Our Saviour doubtless requires St. Thomas to do His bidding now. We may therefore contemplate the Apostle, filled with astonishment and a most humble gratitude, putting his finger into *the place of (all) the nails,* and looking, as his tears fall fast, upon the sacred wounds, and then putting his hand, too, into the sacred side.

"Soul of Christ, sanctify me. Body of Christ, save me. Within Thy wounds hide me."

F. *Put in thy finger hither.*

Contemplate our Blessed Lady ; all the gratitude of her motherly heart for the mercy shown to her wayward son, *the son of my pain—for I know that Thou art a gracious and merciful God, patient, and of much compassion, and easy to forgive evil* (Jonas iv.). *My soul melted when He spoke* (Cant. v.).

We may contemplate also the joy of the other Apostles,

and of Magdalen and of the rest, because Thomas is now again entirely one of them.

*By this shall men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another (St. John xiii).*

G. *Be not faithless, but believing.*

With these words a grace goes into the heart of the Apostle. The word of his Master, like *the two-edged sword, reaches the division of (his) soul*. "Speak, O Lord, also to my heart." *Be not Thou silent to me, lest if Thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit (Psalm xxvii).*

H. *Thomas answered and said to Him: My Lord and my God.*

Contemplate the faith, the humility, the contrition, the gratitude, and the love of St. Thomas, when he utters these words. Beyond the Jordan he said, when Jesus was going to Bethany to raise Lazarus from the dead: *Let us also go, that we may die with Him*. From this hour till his martyrdom his heart will swerve no more from this loving thought.

"Blessed Apostle, pray for us that we may, as so many servants of our Lord have done, grow fond of thy short prayer: *My Lord and my God.*"

I. *Jesus saith to him: Because thou hast seen Me, Thomas, thou hast believed.*

Thomas has acted much in the same way as most of the other Apostles. We are not sure that any one of them believed till he had seen. Our Lord would have been more content if they had accepted the Resurrection on the testimony of His Holy Mother and Magdalen, and others. This would have been more humble. Still the charity and wisdom of the Divine Master draws good for us out of the incredulity of His Apostles. St. Gregory the Great writes: "We are more helped to faith by St. Thomas' incredulity than by Magdalen's prompt belief". Had the Apostles made less difficulty in accepting the fact of the Resurrection, sceptics in after ages would have scoffed more at their pious credulity.

J. *Blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.*

“*Attendite.*” Oh, stay to consider this word, so entirely favourable to us. We are the blessed ones who have not seen, and can believe. Each of us can be *the just man that liveth by faith*. We often say: “I do not feel contrition, I do not feel fervour when receiving Holy Communion”. A holy priest, in the days of persecution, thought it useful to write a book to explain to the faithful the difference between faith and feeling. Faith can be very strong without either seeing or feeling.

After this apparition, we may assume, the Apostles and disciples start on their way for Galilee. The news has gone abroad that the Lord is to appear to them there, so that all who can possibly leave Jerusalem bend their steps towards the loved places near the lake.

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We may doubtless assume that the Blessed Mother goes with them, seated, perhaps, once more on the ass.

Besides the Apostles, therefore, and the devout women, whom we have been contemplating, we may be sure that Lazarus and Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, now miraculously delivered from prison, and Zacheus and Bartimeus, cured of blindness, are joining this pilgrimage to Galilee. Veronica also, and Martha and Joanna and Susanna, and many more whose names we know not, are on their way.

It was the custom, we are told, for men to travel together in one party, and women in another.

Their journey lies due north, over a succession of hills. The continual ascent and descent adds to the fatigue of the journey. As we travel now-a-days, we can form little idea of the hardship of these long journeys on foot over bad roads, and with no comfortable inns to give shelter. If the rain chance to be falling, travellers are stopped in the valleys by swollen torrents, and have to wait for some

days till they can cross them. At this Easter-time, however, it is probable that the rain is not falling. We may be sure that the presence of our Lady greatly lightens the burden of the journey. She is now the glad Mother of many children, and from time to time on the road she is gladdening and warming the hearts of the disciples by giving them details of the early life of their Master.

We must not fail to notice the poverty of this journey, how simple and scanty their meals are, how poor their beds at night.

On their way to the north, they pass through many places that awaken recollections full of emotion. Here is the town of Ephrem, where Jesus lay hid with some of them after the raising of Lazarus. After journeying another day, they possibly rest at Sichar, where He sat by the well. Journeying on further, they arrive in great gladness at Nazareth. We can imagine with what feelings they visit every corner of the Holy House, and the Grotto of the Annunciation, and the workshop of St. Joseph, at a little distance. It is quite possible that St. Luke is one of this holy company. Some commentators argue from his words, in the beginning of his Gospel, that he never saw our Lord in the flesh, but his words (c. i. 2) only prove that he had not been an eye-witness from the beginning. As he narrates so many things concerning the Annunciation, and the early mysteries of our Lord's Life, we may assume that our Blessed Lady taught him much that he has written, and it is quite probable that she points out to him on this occasion the spot on which St. Gabriel stood, and the spot on which she received his message. According to tradition, the Archangel was in the grotto when he delivered his message, our Lady in the Holy House. We have seen in a former chapter, that this grotto joined on to the house like an inner room.

From Nazareth, their journey lies through Cana of Galilee, and it is quite possible that the bride and bridegroom of the happy wedding are there to point out where

our Saviour sat at the feast, and where the Blessed Mother pleaded for them.

Bending now to the north-east, they pass by what is still called the Mount of the Beatitudes, the spot where our Lord opened His mouth and said: *Blessed are the poor in spirit; Blessed are the meek.* With what persuasive earnestness our Blessed Lady speaks to them of her Divine Son, and reminds them of His holy words.

Journeying on a little further, they come to the brow of the hill from which they look down on the beautiful Lake of Genesareth. When they arrive on the shore of the lake, they are about one hundred miles distant from Jerusalem.

The lake, or sea, as it is sometimes called, is about sixteen miles in length from north to south. On the western shore, the land is tolerably level. On the opposite shore there are high hills. The town of Tiberias, so called by the Herods to flatter Rome, lay to the south-west of the lake, and was perhaps the most important town on the shore. But the towns and villages with which the Apostles are more familiar lie at the northern extremity. From the Gospel context we gather that thither the pilgrims direct their steps.

Here at the top of the lake is Capharnaum; a little to the west Bethsaida;<sup>1</sup> at a short distance south from Bethsaida, under the shelter of a little hill, lies Magdala, the birthplace of Magdalen, and where she probably had considerable possessions.

Doubtless they find here a suitable resting-place for our Blessed Lady; and then, as they are not rich, the fishermen are obliged to have recourse to their old trade to procure maintenance for some of the pilgrims.

<sup>1</sup> There seems to have been another town or village called Bethsaida, on the east side of the lake. Philip the Tetrarch enlarged it, and gave it a Roman name, Julias.

SCENE XXXIV.

THE LAKE OF TIBERIAS AT THE NORTH.

STATION I.

*There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas who is called Didymus, and Nathaniel who was of Cana of Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples. Simon Peter saith to them : I go a fishing. They say to him : We also come with thee. And they went forth and entered into the ship : and that night they caught nothing (St. John xxi. 2, 3).*

A. *Simon Peter saith to them : I go a fishing.*

Some pious persons, when full of consolation on a great festival, might think it hard if obliged suddenly to undertake a long and wearisome journey and then spend the night in fishing. All this labour and drudgery seems to them out of keeping with their devout emotions and their foretaste of Heaven. But according to our Lord's plan, the best spiritual consolations most frequently come as a solace to hard labour.

B. *I go a fishing.*

Commentators observe that the fishermen go back to their trade after the Resurrection, but St. Matthew, the Publican, does not. One calling is innocent, and the labour is salutary; the tax-gatherer's work is too often an occasion of sin.

C. *We also come with thee.*

The Apostles are now, since the Death of our Lord, much changed. They are full of humility and charity. Prouder men might say to St. Peter: "We will not follow thee who denied the Lord".

D. *I go a fishing. We also come with thee.*

"Attendite." Let us stay here to learn from this model to be very obliging and accommodating when we can be

80.

E. *And they went forth and entered into the ship.*

Our Lady doubtless wishes them God speed! The others are gathered on the shore to see them start. The lake is lying still in the moonlight; and our Blessed Lady perchance reminds them how their Master used to tell them that it is a picture of His future Church. It has not always been, they remember, as calm as it is now; they have had to face the storm in their boat: *And what is it that hath been? the same thing that shall be* (Eccles. i.). They will have to face worse storms in the future.

F. *That night they caught nothing.*

Yet they are all dear to our Lord. At the Supper He said to them: *You are clean, but not all.* Now, there is no traitor. Why then is not their work more prosperous? Some, who have been great sinners, as soon as they have been to confession and are absolved, have been heard to complain: "Now that I am trying to serve God, why is not my trade blessed? Why am I left out of work?" Some converts, also, after being reconciled with the Holy Church, have murmured because Catholics do not immediately deal with them. The answer is, *Sursum corda*—"Lift up your hearts!" "*Æmulamini charismata meliora*"—*Be zealous for the better gifts* (1 Cor. xii.). *Seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall in good time be added unto you.*

Your sins have been absolved indeed, but may you not still have to pass through a Purgatory?

G. *That night they caught nothing.*

It is handed down to us from early times that between midnight and the morning, at the cock-crow, St. Peter always rose from his hard bed to weep for his sin. "Alas! I said: *I know not the Man.*" We may be sure, then, that in the fishing-boat he does not forget his contrition. Perchance he humbly thinks that he, the sinner, hinders the blessing of Heaven from coming down on the work of his holy companions.

"Holy Apostle, pray for us poor sinners, that we may have a lifelong contrition for our many sins."

## STATION II.

*But when the morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus therefore said to them: Children, have you any meat? They answered Him: No. He saith to them: Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and you shall find. They cast therefore; and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes (vv. 4—6).*

*A. When the morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore.*

The holy servant of Christ says: *Till the day break, and the shadows retire, I will go to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense (Cant. iv.), that is to say, till the day of eternity dawns, and the dark shadows of this world retire, the home of my heart shall be on Calvary, the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense.* If life is spent in this way, we can see on the Lake of Genesareth a picture of what will happen to us in the end. When we shall have passed through the storms of life, lo! Jesus is waiting for us on the shore of eternity.

*B. The disciples knew not that it was Jesus.*

*“Attendite.”* Stay long considering this word. For a thousand and a thousand times the same shall happen to us through life; Jesus will stand near us in the person of His delegates—as a poor man He will beg from us; as a Superior He will command us; by His Vicar He will teach us; as a neighbour He will live with us—and whatever we do to them we do to Him. As our Hidden God also He will ever be near us in the Most Holy Eucharist.

Alas! in our Purgatory how deep our contrition will be that we did not know it was Jesus. “I ought to have believed it, but did not.”

*C. He said to them: Children, have you any meat? They answered Him: No.*

As we have often seen already, He must hear our wants from our own lips; He puts aside all His infinite knowledge, as if He had it not, and listens to us.

As His *delights are to be with the children of men*, in order to keep us near Him He makes this binding rule, that we must tell our own wants, and perseveringly tell them. Ask, seek, knock.

D. *He saith to them : Cast the net on the right side of the ship and you shall find. They cast therefore.*

A wise man of this world might toss his head and say : "Who are you that teach me ? Why should I cast my net on the right side ?" How many of the so-called strong-minded say : "Why am I to confess to a priest ?" "Why am I to wash in the Jordan ?" "Why am I to believe in a Pope ?" The disciples on the lake are now happily in a more humble frame of mind. For it would have been an evil hour for them if they had proudly rejected the advice of Jesus in His disguise.

Let us bear in mind that the Vicar of Christ, when he teaches, is also, we may say, Jesus disguised. The priest, when he absolves, is, we may say, Jesus disguised, for surely no man of his own power can forgive sins.

E. *They cast, therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.*

*Who is like the Lord our God ? (Psalm cxii.) for all things serve Thee (Psalm cxviii.). For all the beasts of the wood are Mine, the cattle on the hills and the oxen. I know all the fowls of the air (Psalm xlix.). The eyes of the Lord are far brighter than the sun, beholding round about all the ways of men, and the bottom of the deep. For all things were known to the Lord God before they were created. So also after they were perfected, He beholdeth all things (Ecclus. xxiii.). For wrath is in His indignation and life in His good-will. In the evening weeping shall have place, and in the morning, gladness (Psalm xxix.). Oh, how blessed, O Lord, is the man that dwelleth in the aid of the Most High (Psalm xc.), who always casts his net according to Thy word ! Blessed is the man whose will is in the Law of the Lord : whatsoever he shall do shall prosper (Psalm i.). Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it (Psalm cxxvi.).*

*F. They were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.*

Men would wonder at the greatness of this miracle ; but when our Lord gives us good gifts of this kind, they are only forerunners, and sometimes types, of better things to come. When He created bread and wine for man, He saw that they were good, but He knew that they were only emblems of other gifts to come, heavenly and ineffable. So, too, the oil of the olive is good, but yet merely a type of that holy oil of grace which soothes the soul of man when the terrors of the Judgment are at hand. So now, the Lake of Genesareth is beautiful, but it is only a shadow of His beautiful Church. The catch of the fishermen is wonderful, but utterly insignificant when we think of what they are to do as fishers of men.

### STATION III.

*That disciple, therefore, whom Jesus loved, said to Peter : It is the Lord. Simon Peter, when he heard that it was the Lord, girt his coat about him (for he was naked), and cast himself into the sea. But the other disciples came in the ship (for they were not far from the land, but as it were two hundred cubits) dragging the net with fishes (vv. 7, 8).*

*A. That disciple whom Jesus loved.*

Why did Jesus love John specially ? The holy Fathers tell us that it was on account of his innocence ; he was Christ's virgin disciple. *Thou hast upheld me by reason of my innocence, and hast established me in Thy sight for ever. Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, from eternity to eternity ; so be it ! so be it ! (Psalm xl.).*

*Oh, how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory ; for the memory thereof is immortal, because it is known both with God and men. When it is present they imitate it, and they desire it when it hath withdrawn itself, winning the reward of undefiled conflicts (Wisdom iv.).*

*Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God (St. Matt. v.).*

*B. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter : It is the Lord.*

Therefore, there may be in the Church of God disciples whom Jesus loves more than His Vicar ; and who have graces given to them not given to His Vicar. The Pope will always be infallible in his teaching ; but some of his subjects may be higher in holiness than he is.

*C. Simon Peter, when he heard it was the Lord, cast himself into the sea, but the other disciples came in the ship.*

We may contemplate the exceptional ardour of St. Peter's love. Others can go slowly in the ship to Christ ; but he cannot bear the delay. He forgets, too, how once before terror came upon him when he cast himself into the sea. *Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it.*

Moreover, to swim is more difficult for him, as *he girt his coat about him (for he was naked, that is to say, he was partly undressed, and now put on his coat or tunic).*

#### STATION IV.

*As soon as they came to land, they saw hot coals lying, and a fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith to them : Bring hither of the fishes which you have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land, full of great fishes, one hundred and fifty-three. And although there were so many the net was not broken (vv. 9—11).*

*A. They saw hot coals lying, and a fish laid thereon, and bread.*

When a rich man comes home, his servants are expected to have his rooms comfortable for him ; so, too, a fond mother makes preparations for her son's return. See how our dear Lord is both servant and mother to His disciples. St. Paul the Hermit was deeply affected when St. Antony came to visit him, because the raven that

usually brought him half a loaf, on that day brought him a whole one. "How loving," he cried out, "is the Heart of our Lord to think so carefully of our wants." The three children in the furnace cry out in our hearing: *O every shower and dew, bless ye the Lord! O all ye breezes of God, bless the Lord! O ye cold and heat, bless the Lord.* "What are all these things but gifts from Thy hand, sweet Jesus? *It is by Thy ordinance that the day goeth on.* Every time the fire warms me, and the heat refreshes me, Thou, my God, art the Servant Who brings to me the heat and the refreshment."

*Our Father, hallowed be Thy name.*

B. *Although they were so many the net was not broken.*

Men, otherwise, sometimes think that the providence of God does its work forgetfully, as we do; that when He gives the holy oil to the dying He forgets how nervous dying people may be. But we see here that when He gives the one hundred and fifty-three great fishes, He at the same time strengthens the net that it may not be broken.

#### STATION V.

*Jesus saith to them: Come and dine. And none of them who were at meat durst ask Him: Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord. And Jesus cometh and taketh bread and giveth them, and fish in like manner (vv. 12, 13).*

A. *Jesus saith: Come and dine.*

And when we hear these words, we exclaim: *Oh, how good and sweet is Thy spirit, O Lord, in all things!* (Wisdom xii.). But how much more sweet is the word He says to us: *I am the Bread of Life; My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed. He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me* (St. John vi.).

"O Mother of God! pray for us sinners, that we may not be among those who, when invited by thy Son to His Banquet, begin *at once to make excuse.*"

B. *And none durst ask Him : Who art Thou ? knowing that it was the Lord.*

Why should they ask Him if they already know it is the Lord? These words show that there is knowledge and knowledge. There is a dim knowledge that does not content us.

“Grant us, O Lord, lively sentiments of faith, hope, and charity.”

Commentators discuss the question whether our Lord alters His features when the disciples do not recognise Him, as on the road to Emmaus, and when Magdalen thinks that He is a gardener, and now here, when the Apostles do not fully recognise Him. From St. Luke's words: *Their eyes were held*, they infer that the cause of their not knowing was in themselves, not from any alteration in Him.

C. *Jesus cometh and taketh bread and giveth them, and fish in like manner.*

Contemplate our most loving Saviour, the King of glory, and our own God, serving His servants; the great Creator waiting on His creatures. *Which is greater, He asked, he that sitteth at table, or he that serveth ? Is not he that sitteth at table ? but I am in the midst of you as he that serveth* (St. Luke xxii.). Hear Him also saying to us all: *Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching. Amen, I say to you, He will gird Himself, and make them sit down to meat, and passing will minister unto them* (St. Luke xii.).

## STATION VI.

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

A. *Simon, lovest thou Me more than these ?*

There are two parts to this question : (1) *Lovest thou Me ?* (2) *More than these ?* Our Blessed Lord is preparing His Apostle for his high office by humbling him. He is reminding him of his presumptuous words : *Although all should be scandalised in Thee, yet not I. Oh ! it is good for me (O Lord) that Thou hast humbled me* (Psalm cxviii.). The contrite Apostle will never say again : *I love more than these ;* but he will say once, twice, thrice, and a thousand times : *Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee. Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee.*

Alas ! are we to rest contented till we too are able to say : *O Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee ?* Is it presumption in us to say : *Thou knowest, O Lord, that I love Thee ?* Presumption it cannot be ; we surely are not aspiring too high ; for the first and great commandment laid upon us is : *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.*

B. *He saith to him : Feed My lambs.*

“*Attendite.*” Oh, stay here, to consider these words in our hearts. “*If you love Me, if you are sure that you love Me, prove your love, not by staying at My feet, but go and feed My lambs.*”

Our Blessed Saviour has told us the complaint that He

will make to some who profess love to Him : *The weak you have not strengthened ; that which was sick you have not healed ; that which was broken you have not bound up ; and that which was driven away you have not brought again ; neither have you sought that which was lost* (Ezech. xxxiv.).

These words are especially addressed to priests, but every Christian is to a certain extent a Christ, a Jesus, a Good Shepherd, to whom God hath given a commandment concerning his neighbour.

C. *Peter was grieved because He had said to him the third time : Lovest thou Me ?*

Oh, what a holy grief ! I can be grieved for the loss of goods, for the loss of health, for the loss of reputation ; but alas ! if by venial sins love for Christ has grown faint and feeble in my heart, I can laugh and still say : *What harm hath befallen me ?* (Ecclus. v.).

D. *He said to him : Feed My lambs, feed My lambs, feed My sheep.*

The lambs are His little ones, the great body of the faithful ; the sheep are the parents of the flock, priests and bishops, whom the faithful call by the name of "Father". In this hour, then, our Lord constitutes St. Peter the chief Shepherd of His entire flock, and His Vicar upon earth. When our Lady was exalted to the ineffable dignity of Mother of God, she was so rooted in humility that she could only call herself *the handmaid of the Lord*. Contrition, a loving contrition, is so crushing the heart of St. Peter, that the wonderful office entrusted to him does not elate him. *O Lord ! my heart is not exalted : nor are my eyes lofty. If I was not humbly minded, but exalted my soul ; as a child that is weaned is towards his mother, so reward in my soul* (Psalm cxxx.).

The wise of this world sometimes argue : "Simon Peter denied Christ, therefore he cannot be His Vicar". If he had not denied Christ and been forgiven, he might never have been humble enough for the sublime office. *It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me.*

STATION VII.

*Amen, Amen, I say to thee: When thou wast younger, thou didst gird thyself and didst walk where thou wouldst. But when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and lead thee whither thou wouldst not. And this He said, signifying by what death he should glorify God (vv. 18, 19).*

A. *When thou shalt be older, another shall gird thee.*

The young, when they arrive at manhood, think it time that they have more liberty. Christ's saints become fonder of the yoke as they grow old.

B. *Another shall gird thee and lead thee.*

This is a prophecy that, in his old age, Peter will be bound and led out to be crucified. How the bitter and the sweet are mixed together in his chalice! And how the Passion of Christ has made all things new! Peter is to sit on the very highest throne in this world, and yet to die crucified. With his cross before him, though placed in honour, he shall not be turned giddy and cease to understand (Psalm xlviii.).

C. *This He said, signifying by what death he should glorify God.*

"*Attendite.*" Oh, let us stay here to consider in our hearts. For a conviction has grown with our growth that every suffering is a curse and a chastisement. But here our Lord preaches to us all that He sends suffering and a cruel death to His chosen one, that by them he may glorify God. So long as I am unwilling to suffer, I practically say of my crucified Saviour, *I know not the Man*. His thoughts are not my thoughts; nay, *He is a censurer of my thoughts*, so that there cannot be close love between us.

## STATION VIII.

*When He had said this, He saith to him, Follow Me. Peter turning about, saw that disciple whom Jesus loved following, who also leaned on His breast at supper, and said: Lord, who is he that shall betray Thee? Him, therefore, when Peter had seen, he saith to Jesus: Lord, and what shall this mando? Jesus saith to him: So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? Follow thou Me. This saying therefore went abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die. And Jesus did not say to him: He should not die; but, So I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? (vv. 19—23).*

**A.** *When He had said this, He saith to him, Follow Me.*

Contemplate our Divine Lord, with care and diligence, giving private instructions to His future Vicar. Why do we fear to obey a man, when that man is specially instructed and enlightened by the Eternal Wisdom?

**B.** *Peter saith to Jesus: Lord, and what shall this man do?*

“*Attendite.*” Oh, stay here to note how his contrite and humbled heart has become unselfish, and thinks of his companion. *What shall this man do?*

“*Fac Cor amans Jesu mei.* Sacred Heart of Jesus, grant us to love, to love Thee, and to love Thy brethren and our brethren for Thy sake.”

**C.** *Jesus saith to him: So I will have him to remain till I come.*

Many interpretations of these words have been offered. One perhaps may be that Peter hearing that he was to die by martyrdom, wished to know what was to happen to John; and that our Lord answers that no violent death is to come to him. *So I will have him to remain till I come.* Or it may be that Peter hearing that he is to be shepherd over sheep and lambs wants to know what dignity there is for John, and that our Saviour answers: He is to have no other official position beyond what he has. He is the guardian of the Blessed Mother. He is priest, bishop,

apostle. He is to be Evangelist and Prophet; but not to have any higher position in the Church.

D. *What is it to thee? Follow thou Me.*

“*Attendite.*” Oh, that these golden words may be imprinted on our souls! When men are telling us worldly news, or political struggles, of rich legacies, and the rest, our Saviour is whispering: *What is it to thee? Follow thou Me. One thing is necessary.*

E. *This saying went abroad that that disciple should not die. And Jesus did not say to him he should not die.*

It is worth our while to observe how easily words are changed as they pass from lip to lip. Hence careful rulers, both in domestic life and public life, have often made it a practice to send no verbal messages, but to write their commands and instructions.

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St. Matthew writes: *The eleven disciples went into Galilee unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them, and seeing Him they adored* (c. xxviii.). St. Paul writes: *Then was He seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, of whom many remain until this present* (1 Cor. xv.). It is thought by commentators that this apparition to the five hundred took place on Mount Thabor. If so, we can understand St. Matthew's words, *They adored, but some doubted.* For those who doubted can scarcely have belonged to the eleven, who had all seen our Lord in Jerusalem.

While, then, the disciples are at the Lake of Genesareth, the news is spread abroad in Galilee—at Cana, and Nazareth, and Naim, and elsewhere—that all the followers of Jesus are to assemble on Thabor. Thabor is a beautiful mountain, not very high, but very steep, and well wooded. It lies about a day's journey to the south-west of the Lake of Tiberias. From the top of Thabor, the lake could be seen to the north-east: and on the southern side the town of Naim and the town of Endor and the large plain of

Esdraelon. Nazareth lies to the west of Thabor, at a distance of not more than six or seven miles. But, on account of the ranges of hills that lie between, a traveller requires two or three hours to accomplish the journey.

St. Mark writes : *At length He appeared to the eleven as they were at table, and He upbraided them with their incredulity and hardness of heart, because they did not believe them who had seen Him after He was risen again* (c. xvi.). Commentators find great difficulty in determining when this apparition took place. They are not agreed. Perhaps a tradition still existing in Galilee may give a little light.

In a small chapel at Nazareth there stands a large block of stone about seven feet long, three feet in height, and three or four in width. This stone is still called the *Mensa Christi*, and the chapel is still called the Chapel of the *Mensa Christi*. The tradition is that Christ there dined with the eleven. This dinner may have taken place on the return from Tiberias to Jerusalem, after leaving Thabor. In this supposition the words : *He upbraided them with their incredulity*, would mean that our Lord there explained to them, that as He had foretold to them His Resurrection, and as they had seen Him raise Lazarus to life, they ought to have accepted with more docility the message of the angels that He was risen. As men will have to accept their testimony by faith, so ought they to have believed without seeing.

SCENE XXXV.

THE CŒNACULUM. ASCENSION DAY.

STATION I.

*And eating together with them, He commanded that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but should wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard (saith He) by My mouth. For John indeed baptised with water, but you shall be baptised with the Holy Ghost not many days hence (Acts i. 4, 5).*

*A. He commanded that they should not depart from Jerusalem.*

Here, then, our Lord directs them to remain with His Blessed Mother in a Spiritual Retreat, preparing themselves for the coming of the Holy Ghost. She doubtless will teach them how to contemplate, and tell them many things which as yet they know not concerning her Son's Hidden Life. In compliance with His direction, *they were, we read, persevering with one mind in prayer with the women, and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and with His brethren (Acts i.).*

*B. Eating with them.*

"He wishes," St. Bonaventure writes, "before His departure, to dine with them, and this repast will be in after years a recollection full of love and joy." While, then, they are at table, in great gladness, during this last dinner with their Master, the Lord said to them: "It is time that I return to Him that sent Me, but do you remain in the city until you are clothed with strength from above. Afterwards you will preach the Gospel to every creature, baptising them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you; and behold, I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world (St. Matt. xxviii.). And these signs shall follow them that believe. In My Name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take

*up serpents; and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay their hands on the sick, and they shall recover* (St. Mark xvi.).

We may contemplate the great gladness awakened in the hearts of all present by these affectionate words of our Lord; and above all, the wonderful motherly joy that abounds in the soul of Holy Mary when she hears all that her Divine Son has won for His Church by His Passion and Death.

*C. Eating with them.*

But in the midst of this great gladness her tears are falling, because she knows that this is the parting-day. "What shall I say," St. Bonaventure writes, "of His Mother who is at table by His side, and loves Him above all others so intensely? Do you not believe that when she hears Him speak of His departure, all her motherly love is awakened and set in motion, and that she leans her head upon her Son and rests upon His breast? For if John had this privilege at the Supper, much more may we assume it for her now. Sighing, then, and with many tears, she beseeches Him, saying; 'O my Son, if it be Thy will to leave us, take me with Thee. But, my Son and my God, not as I will, but as Thou!' Then our Lord consoles her, saying: 'I pray thee, My beloved Mother, do not grieve for My departure, since I go to the Father. But it is expedient that thou for a time still sojourn here, to strengthen those who believe in Me. Then will I come to thee and take thee to My glory.'"

SCENE XXXVI.

THE ROAD TO OLIVET. ASCENSION DAY.

STATION I.

*And He led them out as far as Bethania* (St. Luke xxiv. 50).

A. From these words it seems clear that our Blessed Saviour did not, as some writers think, disappear after this dinner in the Cenacle, and then reappear on Mount

Olivet; but, in order to show His affection, walked with them on this last journey.

How changed all is since the last time He went with them, on Holy Thursday night, down from the Cenacle to Mount Olivet.

Contemplate His tender affection in these last hours. *The goodness and kindness of God our Saviour appeared* (Titus iii.).

*B. He led them out as far as Bethania.*

He does not therefore take them by the direct and shortest path to the top of Mount Olivet, but He goes round the base to pay a last visit to the loved home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus, and to the house of Simon the Leper, and ascends Mount Olivet on the eastern side.

St. Ignatius bids us mark how well our Lord understands how to cheer and comfort His disciples, even as one friend comforts another.

*C. He led them out.*

Emboldened by His wonderful condescension and kindness, and full of their happy thoughts, the Apostles begin once again to give expression to the notion concerning the Messiah which had so long taken possession of their minds. St. Ignatius of Loyola, in his admirable Rules for the Discernment of Spirits, warns us that even when God Himself visits our souls and speaks to us, we are very apt to mix some of our own imaginations with His inspirations; and if we do not afterwards, with the aid of some wise master, sift carefully and separate the wheat from the chaff, we may pass off as God's revelations conceptions of our own.

*They therefore who were come together asked Him, saying: Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel?*

Here we have the delusion so widespread among the Jews that the Christ would drive out the Romans and restore the Jewish supremacy.

*But He said to them: It is not for you to know the times*

*or moments which the Father hath put in His power. A golden sentence! Our Father in Heaven is Lord of all, and Father of all; we can safely leave ourselves and all things else in His care. If He keeps His secret, and will not let us know how long our present suffering is to last, or when we are to die, most reverently we must say: Not as I will, my God, but as Thou. It is not for (us) to know the times and moments.*

*D. He led them forth.*

We see in this instance how our Lord combines all the tenderness of perfect charity with all the strength of perfect charity. True charity is not weak; does not ever sacrifice God's honour to human respect; knows how to *weep with those who weep* and to *rejoice with those who rejoice*, and to *be all to all*; but also can be strong as death when any one craves for indulgence not salutary.

*E. He led them forth to Bethania.*

We may contemplate the affection and gratitude awakened in the hearts of Magdalen and Martha and Lazarus and Simon the Leper, as they pass by the blessed home at Bethany, and by the grave of Lazarus, and how heartily the Blessed Mother takes part in their consolation.

*F. He led them forth.*

They pass on, mounting the steep side of Olivet, walking through Bethphage. Here the scene of our Lord's humble triumph on Palm Sunday is all brought back. *Fear not, daughter of Sion*, was the prophetic watchword on that day; *thy King cometh sitting on an ass's colt* (St. John xii.).

To-day the triumph will not be poor and mean. The Lord Jesus will appear in His glory; but His word to His disciples is still the same: *Fear not*. His meekness, His humble Heart, His charity is unchanged.

SCENE XXXVII.

MOUNT OLIVET. ASCENSION DAY.

STATION I.

*Jesus coming, spoke to them : All power is given to Me in Heaven and on earth (St. Matt. xxviii.).*

*You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you (Acts i.).*

*Going therefore, teach ye all nations, . . . and behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world (St. Matt. xxviii.).*

*Jesus coming, spoke to them.*

“*Attendite.*” Let us listen to every parting word, and lay them all up in our hearts. Let us also with our eyes watch the burning charity that lights up our Lord’s sacred face in this last hour, and from Him spreads to all present. Let us note too how our Blessed Lady’s eyes are riveted upon Him, and how fast her tears are falling—tears of perfect love.

Once more He consoles them all by the assurance, *I will not leave you orphans. I am ascending to My God and your God, My Father and your Father.* But I leave My beloved Mother to be a Mother to you all. And in a few days My Father will send another Comforter to perfect the work which I have begun. *I have many things yet to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when the Paraclete shall come, He will teach you all truth.*

He interrupts these words from time to time to embrace each of His Apostles, and He does not forbid Magdalen and the devout women now to clasp His sacred feet and kiss the wounds imprinted there. Last of all, with most perfect filial love, He takes leave of His Holy Mother, and asks her full consent that He may leave this earth, and hears once more her word, so full of reverence and service and love: *Be it done to me according to Thy word.*

*It is, He says to them all, expedient that I go.*

## STATION II.

*And when He had said these things, while they looked on He was raised up (Acts i.).*

*And lifting up His hands, He blessed them. And it came to pass that while He blessed them, He departed from them, and was carried up to Heaven (St. Luke xxiv.).*

*And the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up to Heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God (St. Mark xvi.).*

*A. And lifting up His hands, He blessed them.*

We may be sure that this word of blessing is no empty word. A great parting grace goes with it into the hearts of all present. For this is an *acceptable time, a day of salvation*. *Ascending on high, He led captivity captive, He gave gifts to men (Ephes. iv.).*

*B. Lifting up His hands, He blessed them.*

We may contemplate the Holy Mother falling on her knees, and all the others kneeling round her to receive His last blessing. And their eyes are fixed on the Lord as He slowly ascends, their hearts burning with a stronger love for Him than ever they felt before. As they gaze, He enters into a cloud, and all is over. They see Him no more. *A cloud received Him out of their sight*. The first career of our Lord on earth, which began in Nazareth in the house of the Annunciation, closes in this hour. His Eucharistic life will still go on.

He is gone, but, as we read, the parting was not in bitter sorrow. His disciples were full of joy. *They adoring, went back with great joy*.

And one grace given to them all in this last hour is a firm belief that the Blessed Mother is their Mother. The glorious sunlight has passed away from this earth, but the loveliness of the moonlight is come to preside over the night and cheer away the darkness. They all turn their eyes to her, more beautiful and full of grace than

ever. For if the Lord had parting gifts for all, what an out-pouring has there been into her soul!

*"Ave gratia plena."*

All the heavenly choirs of angels and men are contemplating her with a most loving and admiring compassion, and wondering at her humble charity that so cheerfully consents to remain in exile. *The Mother was to be admired above measure, and worthy to be remembered by good men; being filled with wisdom, and joining a man's heart with a woman's thought.*

### STATION III.

*While they were beholding Him going up to Heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments, who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to Heaven? This Jesus Who is taken up from you into Heaven, shall so come as you have seen Him going into Heaven (Acts i. 10, 11).*

*A. Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to Heaven?*

Alas! would that the blessed angels had to chide us for looking up to Heaven! We have to cry out with the Psalmist: *My soul hath cleaved to the pavement; quicken Thou me (Psalm cxvii).* To us the angels say: *Sursum corda! O ye sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart? Why do you love vanity, and seek after lying? (Psalm iv.).*

"Let not your hearts find their peace in your possessions here below. Look up to the home of your eternity. The Lord Jesus is your Brother, gone up to His God and your God, His Father and your Father. You are to follow."

*B. This Jesus will so come as you have seen Him going into Heaven.*

On the wedding-day, the bride and bridegroom are reminded that death will come to part them. And on this day of the admirable Ascension, the disciples are reminded of the Judgment.

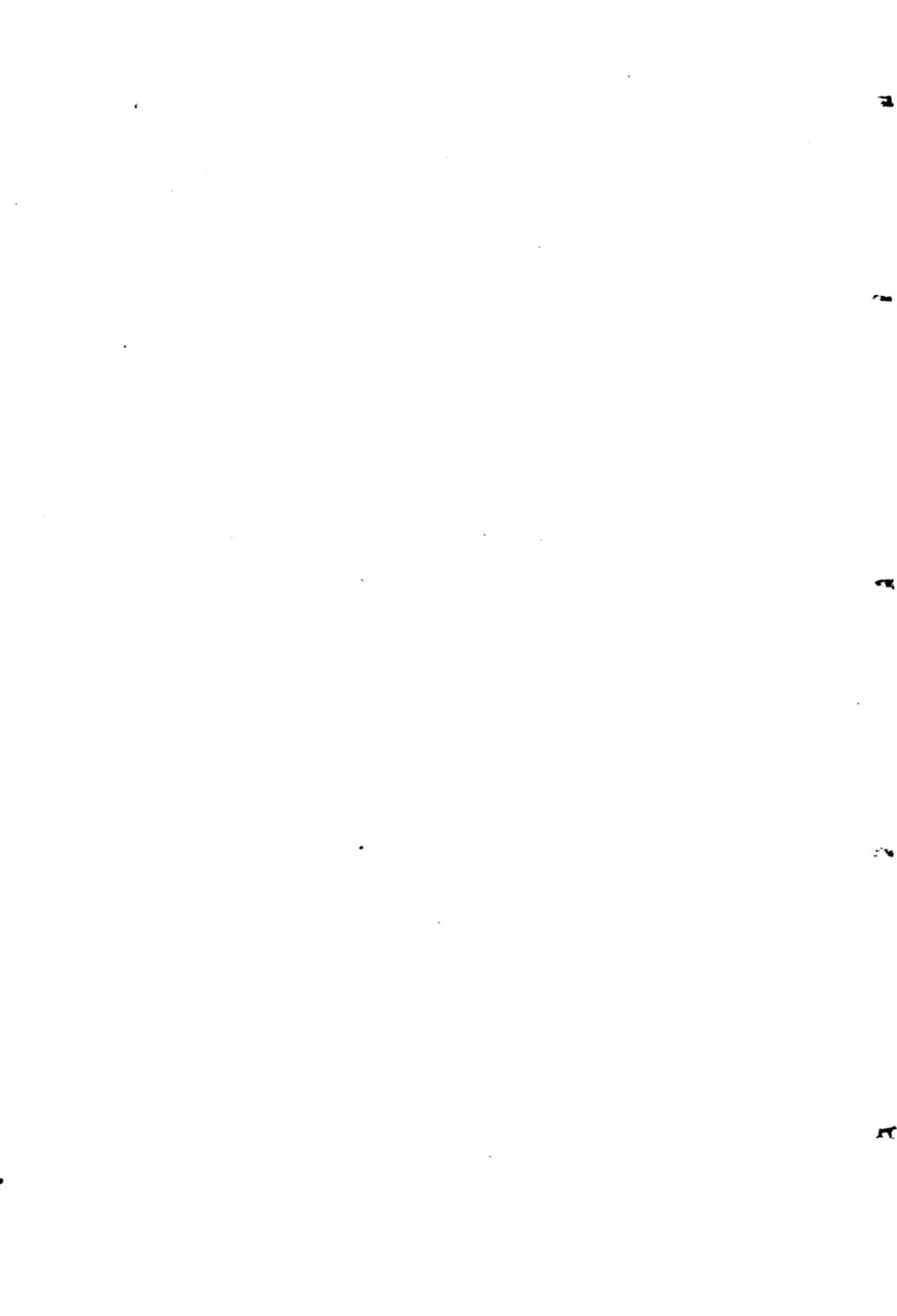
*C. This Jesus will so come as you have seen Him going.*

Therefore waste not the short and precious hours; re-

deem time past. Let man go forth to (do) his work till the evening. For the night cometh when no man can work. Trade till I come. Save your own soul, by helping to save others. Help to feed My lambs. Go and make your promise to the Ever-Blessed Mother of mankind: *I will seek that which was lost; that which was driven away I will bring back; and I will bind up that which was broken; and I will strengthen that which was weak* (Ezech. xxxiv.).

St. John ends his Gospel with these words: *But there are also many other things which Jesus did: which if they were written every one, the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written* (St. John xxi.).

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