

II. The Godhead

D. The Life of Christ

028.

Lecture, *The Catholic Columbian*, January 8, 1876

This series titled "Lecture in St. Joseph's Cathedral" was unsigned, incomplete, and poorly edited. But we are sure Bishop Rosecrans was the speaker, for on the first page of the December 11 issue is the notice, "The Bishop's lectures at the Cathedral Sunday evenings, draw appreciative audiences." The Sunday prior to publication, January 2, was probably its date of delivery.

LECTURE IN ST. JOSEPH'S CATHEDRAL.

No. VI

"Who was Conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

This is only another way of saying the WORD WAS MADE FLESH. The Prophet Isaias had said, long before, for a sign to the unbelieving Achaz, "Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son who shall be called EMANUEL," and when the time came a Virgin *did* conceive and fulfill the prophecy. The Second Person of the Divine Trinity took a human body from that of Mary. He had created her Immaculate for the especial purpose. The power by which He made that Body out of His [*recte* hers] was Divine; that is, was the omnipotence which belongs invisibly to the Essence of God. But as the work of Redemption is one of supreme mercy and love, it is attributed, in a special manner, to the Holy Ghost--the Spirit of Love.

So the sanctification of the Soul in Baptism, the remission of sins in Penance, the power of conferring these Sacraments in Holy Orders, are called works of the Holy Ghost, not because the power that works them belongs to the Holy Ghost any more than to the Father and the Son, but because the nature of the work is one of Love, and therefore belongs, by attribution, to Him who is the Expression of the Infinite Love of the Father and the Son.

There is no doctrine of the Creed which has not been denied by heretics. A pervert, named Jovinian, in the fifth century, denied Mary's prerogative, EVER VIRGIN, claiming that she had other children, and foolishly citing passages in the Gospels which speak of the brethren of Jesus. But the whole Christian world rose up against this monstrous departure from tradition, and Jovinian, "the Christian Epianus," as St. Jerome calls him, never obtained a following important enough to call forth a condemnation in any General Council.

He was born of the Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem of Judea, amid the songs of Angels, the adoration of Shepherds, but with the neglect and contempt of those who represented the world's wealth, luxury and power; He was born in a stable,

2 - Who was Conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary

"wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger."

And here, with the picture of that rude care and humble birth before us, let us meet the senseless, though still repeated cry against us, of neglecting Jesus Christ to honor His Mother. We do honor Mary; we will not deny it. There are three species of worship, according to our Theologians:

Supreme worship, which we pay to God as the Author of life and death.

Veneration to Angels and Saints, as friends of God;

and veneration of the Virgin Mary, as Mother of God.

Of course there is an infinite distance between Supreme worship and the other two. There is a very great, though not an infinite difference between the honor we pay to Saints and that which we pay to Mary. Although immeasurably less than God, she is far above all other creatures--exceeding in excellence all the choirs of Angels and all the ranks of Saints put together, and so we honor her above them all. Why? Long after that night of His birth our Lord asked a crowd of Jews, "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?" So we Catholics now ask of that Child in the manger--speaking to those who are scandalized by our devotion to the Blessed Virgin--whose Son is He? Is He not Mary's? Did she not conceive Him of the Holy Ghost, bear Him in her sacred womb, bring Him forth, wrap Him in swaddling clothes and lay Him in a manger? Of whom, then, is she the Mother? If you say she is not the Mother of God how can you escape the conclusion that Jesus Christ is not God? If you say that Jesus Christ is not God, then you forfeit the name of Christian and practically denounce Him as an impostor. But if she is the Mother of God, there is no honor short of sacrifice that is too great for her. Excellence, in the last analysis, is likeness to God, nearness to Him. But what conceivable creature can be nearer to God than His Mother? The Nine Choirs of Angels are far up in Heaven over our heads. But they are far down below the place she holds, who was made worthy by her Immaculate Conception, her almost boundless graces, and her untiring co-operation with them to become the Mother of God.

In proportion as we love her Son, we will honor her. It is a noticeable and melancholy fact that the sects which recede from the love of Mary lose the true conception of Jesus Christ. In a little while they deny His Divinity, or give Him a dreamy, unmeaning character, at which the unbelievers scoff and mock. Notice those mountebanks who travel up and down through the country, turning religion into mockery by their appeals to sentiment and neglect the understanding of their hearers, and see if they regard JESUS CHRIST as a real Person, having wit and will and observation and judgment over the world. To be saved through Jesus Christ is to be saved in *His way*. It is not to drag Him into common discourse and profane ridicule. It is not to say that any wretch who professes to repent and goes into convulsions before a public assembly has "gone to Jesus;" much less to give out that those who died unbaptized and unrepentant have been "called to Him." "Not every one who says Lord,

29 - Christ's Poverty. Christmas

Lord shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that does the will of the Father." You cannot be saved by Christ unless you submit to Christ. You must be docile children of the Church if you desire to claim any share in Him who is the Author and Life of the Church.

The Son of God was born of a VIRGIN that the state might be hallowed and placed in eternal honor. "Marriage is good," according to Paul. It is made a Sacrament by the appointment of Our Lord. But "virginity is better." It makes men like Angels. As St. Chrysostom says, "it makes them better than Angels." For Angels are pure by nature. They are not allured from their self-possession by what is beautiful in form or harmony. But man has to stand by grace, and in spite of temptation. Therefore he who stands among the "one hundred and forty-four thousand that follow the Lamb wherever He goes" has a merit exceeding that of the Angels themselves.

This is the reason why so many Religious Orders have existed in the Church, in which the virginity of Mary has been honored and imitated. The Clergy have been of this condition from the beginning, because they had to do His work who knew no other solace than to do His Father's will.

Purity is necessary for all states. No time or condition of life can take away the obligation of overcoming the wild impulses of unbridled passion. It is never lawful to subject the soul to the body.

Those in the married state must and can live in purity, but those in the virgin state can do it better and receive for it a greater reward.

029.

Sermon, Book 2, No. 6

Christ's Poverty. Christmas.

There are almost innumerable mysteries in the one great mystery of the birth of Christ which the Church commemorates with such joyous ceremonies to-day. All that is wonderful in the redemption of the human race from the counsels of God conceived in eternity to the smallest act of His providence in the guidance and protection of His Church hinges upon that one great event. Of these mysteries, some are too deep for even angelic understanding. Others surpass the comprehension of the great fathers and theologians of the Church: and others again are mysteries only to flesh and blood.

Of this last class is the mystery contained in the choice made by the Eternal Word of the manner in which he came into the world. Flesh and blood cannot understand the stable and the manger, the poverty and loneliness, the helplessness and suffering of Bethlehem nor see the meaning of the sign given to the shepherds -- an infant in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.

For after he had resolved to become man to open the gates of heaven to our fallen race the Son of God yet in the bosom of His Father had the choice of the manner

29 - Christ's Poverty. Christmas

in which he should appear on earth, and of all the circumstances attending his birth.

Did He wish to appear in power and glory? He had all power and glory at His command. Through Him kings reigned and princes decreed justice. At His beck empires sprang up, overshadowed the earth, and withered away. King by nature from eternity, He might have had the proudest of earth for the menials of His court. Yet He chose for His queenly mother to be without her regal state, to be of a party for which there was no room at the village inn.

Should He come in the midst of wealth? The earth was His and the fullness thereof. He had scattered pearls in the caves of the ocean and hidden gold in the bowels of the earth, when He made [it]. He might be born in the midst of its glitter, and surrounded by all it can purchase. But He chose the cold, the manger and the swaddling clothes. Should He be born in the midst of bodily ease and pleasure? Let Him but speak, and a palace would spring up on the heath where the stable stood. Servants would meet His mother at its golden gates and conduct [her] to rooms sparkling with jewels, and bewhile the softest breezes of Heaven laden with the perfumes of every flower and spice would rustle through the silken bed curtains. Sounds of ravishing sweetness would float on the air above Him; and forms of beauty would glide softly to & fro ministering to Him and her all that earth can meld or art invent to delight the taste. He chose the dark noisome stall for beasts, the cold December night, the loneliness of an abandoned house in a strange country.

This, beloved friends, is the mystery to flesh and blood. How when He could by wishing have honor, abundance and delight, he yet chose humility, destitution and sorrow. How, as St. Paul expresses it, "When joy was offered to Him he could endure the cross." This scandalized the Jews who said how can one of such surroundings, be He Who is to restore the throne of David and the glory of his line? This was folly to the Gentiles who scoffed at the idea of owing their salvation to a low born peasant child. It is the mystery of the cross, which Jesus began to teach at His birth and taught until He said "it is consummated." It is no mystery, but the power of God to every one who believes, and it is plain to the common sense of every one who thinks.

II.

It can be a mystery to no one who believes in Christianity. From the beginning Almighty God placed the same estimate upon worldly goods, that He placed upon them when He refused them all at His birth. Thus he thought nothing of depriving Adam and Eve of Paradise, when they sinned. He buried the magnificence of earth, and its inhabitants, in the waters of the deluge for a punishment of sin. He burned up the glory of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire. He kept His chosen people in bondage for six hundred years [!], to show them that temporal good is not to be sought first but His grace.

He divided the Kingdom of David, and let the holy city and the temple become the prey of the spoiler, though he yet held the children of Abraham for His elect. By the mouths of His prophets He cried out to every generation "All flesh is grass and its glory as the flower of the field," and all that delights it is vanity. In His dealings with men, in His chastisements and His blessings, He cried out continually, "Why are ye dull of heart O children of men. Why do you love vanity and seek a lie? Why do you dig in the earth for what is beyond the stars? Why do you cling to shadows and go down to the grave in their embrace, instead of grasping at the substance of happiness which the grave can never hide?"

These things God spoke in former times by His prophets, but now He speaks by His Son. Now He speaks to us through His Son. The little Babe speaks to us from the manger. The rude stable and the coarse swaddling clothes speak to us and "Blessed are the poor." The unattended state cries "blessed are the meek and humble of heart." The cold that pierces Him, and the tears He sheds, say blessed are they that mourn; and while the chorus of angels that rank upon rank reach from His cradle to the sky repeat again and again, "Blessed are the poor, blessed the humble, blessed the mourners!" He looks upon us with His soft infant eyes which say, "Behold Me your redeemer and model, in the state in which you must be to attain salvation. Your eyes are witness that I have no wish for honor or wealth or pleasure--so must you be to attain salvation." Beloved Christians look upon this infant God thus speaking from His crib, in poverty and pain and desolation; look upon you that are wasting your time and energy and talent in accumulating wealth; you that are panting in the midst of wild schemes, for a name and rank among men; you that plot by day and dream by night of voluptuous images, look upon that poverty, that dishonor, that pain voluntarily chosen by your Redeemer and model and say how long will you be dull of heart, why do you love vanity and seek a lie?

This, beloved friends, is the law of Christ. The mystery of the cross is not only the source of life but its model. If we would reign with the Redeemer, we must be like Him in His sorrows. Faith takes this law upon His authority, because He has the words of eternal life and there is none other to whom we can go.

But common sense also approves it, and sees in the fact that Jesus Christ came to redeem us, the reason why He came in poverty, as He did.

For to redeem us He must restore to us all that we had lost. But we lost in Eden not only original innocence but also the integrity of our nature, or the due subordination of its grosser to its nobler parts. Before their sin Adam and Eve felt no interior conflict of opposing desires. There was in them no law of their members striving against the law of their mind, no persuasion in one direction by reason, and in another by cupidity. The animal was subject to the intellectual, and the intellect was subject to God. They felt hunger and thirst only when they needed food and drink and

no appetite or passion stirred within them but at the bidding of reason, and reason never moved but at the command of God.

But when this harmony was broken up by sin, when the will refused to subject itself to God, then began the war of passion in the soul; and the intellect which had refused the All Perfect for a master was brought into degrading bondage to the flesh. In our first parents it sold its liberty for the gratification of appetite; and in their descendants it continues to be the slave of matter. Take away from the history of the world the account of what God has done for men--the events that center in the Incarnation of the Son of God, and what is left but a record of the efforts of mind to satisfy the caprices of matter? The history of kingdoms and empires, of the plans of statesmen, and legislators, does but tell what the immortal and godlike soul, like a giant in chains, has wrought[; a] structure of wondrous magnificence and of the ways to minister to the pride of life.

Commerce, inventions, the material arts, what we call civilization are all but instance[s] of the activity of mind employed in the service of the body. The wry genius of the philosopher and the inspiration of the poet, outside of grace the one building false systems, the other throwing a veil of beauty over ambition and cruelty and lust, sadly evince the hopeless though willing bondage of the soul to the body. It was not so much the malediction of God that shrouded the world in darkness, and from which we needed redemption, it was the curse of slavery, that was chaining down in us the incorruptible to the corruptible, the immortal to the transitory, that we were groaning under.

This slavery is all the more degrading because it is voluntary. Birds that feed on carrion are held in abhorrence, because, having wings to mount upward towards the sky, to scale the mountain's brow and look down upon the storm-cloud, they yet prefer to perch on festering carcasses and remain in gorged sleepiness in the stench and filth of corruption. So the degradation of the soul clinging to brutal pleasures or to perishing wealth, or vain honor, is all the greater from the fact that it might mount, and soar and seize up and enjoy a good that is immutable, a beauty that is without spot, a satisfaction that is without alloy, an honor that will live longer than time.

To redeem men the soul must be roused up to throw off this bondage. It must be taught its true dignity. It must be taught to look for its good in something [outside of] the circle of what appears to sense, to seek honor where worth can be known, riches where moth and rust cannot corrupt, or thieves break through and steal; pleasure, where there is no after shame and remorse.

Now what better way had the Son of God of teaching that wealth and honor and pleasure are not worth the wishing to the soul, than by being born in a state destitute of them all? How more plainly could He show us that no one is better or more honorable or happier for having all the world can give and take, than by choosing to be without

any possession, or attendance, or consolation? He came not only to purchase our freedom but to show us how to use it. Therefore it was fitting that he should be born in the manner in which He was--to show to us how, in the type of the perfect man, the accidents of time have no place.

For we are not to suppose any real degradation in the humility of the scene in Bethlehem, we are not to suppose that either the Infant Himself or His mother was surprised or baffled or cast down. In that desolation they lacked nothing that they loved. He had within Him all the glory and triumph and peace as He lay in the manger; and she leaning over him was blessed among women, all the time. The dignity and happiness of man consist in nothing that is visible to the senses or that passes with time. The created universe is not large enough to fill up the void in the soul, the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing. The true interests of the soul are not touched by the vicissitudes of material. The valley feels the alternation of shade and sunshine, but the mountain-top is eternally serene--so hope and fear, elation and depression chase each other through the sphere of passions, but never come near the true joy or sorrow of the soul.

Would that human nature could understand this, the true reason of its nobility, that pride could reach up to the height that would make it legitimate, and feel that the whole circle of human pursuits, and schemes, and rivalries is undeserving its slightest notice. Then instead of puffing itself up with the tinsel of its degradation, it would grow humble with the consciousness of its awful sublimity; instead of producing envies and hatred and rivalry, wars and ruin, it would make man tread the earth with eyes fixed upon heaven, and run with exceeding ardor towards the true dignity of children of God.

Pride once properly deserted, the love of gain and of pleasures would adjust themselves. The greed of gain, however insatiable it may be, however restless, untiring, all devouring, would aim at nothing less than the infinite Good and would be content; for no one is so avaricious but that God is treasure enough to satisfy him. And the love of pleasure properly enlightened, would no longer urge to degrading sensual actions in which no real enjoyment is found but would prompt to the pursuit of the abiding delight of Heaven. As those going to a feast do not stop to pick up crusts by the wayside, so the soul having its eye on the ocean of delight in the beatific vision of God would not stop to dally [with] what is thrilling to the senses of the corruptible and perishing body.

030.

Sermon, Book 1, No. 5

Christmas

Today the Church celebrates the manifestation of God in the flesh. Today the bending heavens kiss the desolate earth and the two are made one. God becomes man that man may become God. The Almighty without casting off his Power becomes a feeble infant, the Infinite is wrapped in swaddling clothes, the Eternal begins in time, the Impassible one shrinks from the rough hay in the manger, and shivers in the biting cold of the midwinter nights. The desires of the Patriarchs are satisfied; the Prophets are fulfilled. The desired of nations, the Prince of Peace, has come. Poor little Prince, on his straw couch, in the rough stable warmed by the breath of beast of burthen, with the howl of the winter wind about Him, with the sight of His lonely life and thankless toil in our behalf vividly before Him! Poor little Prince turned away from the inn, as He was to be too often from the cold hearts of ungrateful worshipers. At least we will not turn Him away today; but as we contemplate Him in his rough cradle will remember that Christ was born for us, and coming will adore Him; will tell over the benefits He has brought us, with thanksgiving and love.

We can honor more devoutly the festival of the birth of Christ by considering somewhat in detail the benefits that we have received from the Incarnation; and the explanation of Catholic faith on this point ought to be particularly interesting to those who having been educated to call themselves Christians have yet to learn precisely what they owe to Christ.

The nations of old expected the Messiah to be a restorer. To know what He restored then we must find out what was lost. St. Paul calls Christ the second Adam who was in all things the antithesis of the first, giving life when he gave death. We must consider therefore what we lost in Adam to determine what we gained in Christ.

On this point there are three prominent doctrines: the Calvinistic on one extreme, the Pelagian on the other, and the Catholic truth in midst.

The Pelagian doctrine, held by nearly all modern rationalistic sects, is that Adam was gifted with nothing but his nature in the beginning, and lost nothing but his personal innocence by his sin. If he injured anyone but himself, it was by the contagion of his example, and not by loss of his inheritance.

The Calvinistic doctrine, which has nearly the dark features of ancient Manichaeism and belongs also to the modern Jansenists, is that Adam had sublime gifts indeed but as due to nature; hence by his sin and forfeiture of those gifts his nature became essentially depraved. So that all the works of an unregenerate man are sins, his virtues vices, his impulses impious.

The Catholic truth is that Adam by his sin did an injury which only the

Redeemer could repair, both to himself and us, but did not render his nature depraved. To understand this, the difference between what Theologians call the state of pure nature and of elevated nature must be borne in mind. Pure nature is simply union of body and soul. Body being a material compound is liable to dissolution, or death. The soul, or will and understanding, has the capacity of meriting, without actual sanctity, and the power of learning, without actual knowledge. Moreover the body has its wants and the soul its aspirations and these do not always agree. When the body would enjoy the reason often says nay and when the soul would mount and soar the body clings to the earth, making the life of man on the earth a warfare.

Elevated nature is nature as just discussed to which are added supernatural gifts that perfect it in all its parts. Add immortality and freedom from violent appetite and pain, and the body is perfect. With actual knowledge the understanding is perfect; positive sanctity perfects the will and where by divine gift the appetites of the body are so kept in check as to correspond exactly with its necessities, the warfare between the flesh and spirit ceases, and the whole man is without defect. By these gifts nature is not taken away but lifted up to a new sphere, whence the phrase elevated nature.

A homely illustration or two may serve to fix this point in your minds. A peasant child adopted by a King is still the same child; but in his new sphere his wants, tastes and pursuits become entirely new and, as the world goes, loftier than they were.

Adam was by nature a child of mortality but his body would never have returned to its native dust had he been true to God. By nature his understanding was but the ability to acquire knowledge. His actual knowledge of the secrets of the animal and vegetable nature, of himself and God was infused into his soul by free gift. By nature his will was but the power to merit. The positive sanctity that made him well pleasing in the sight of the Blessed Trinity was the effect of sanctifying grace; and the perfect order that reigned in all his appetites, passions, feelings, and emotions came directly from that grace. These gifts, Immortality, Knowledge, Grace, order of passions, he would have transmitted to us, had he not sinned. By sinning he lost them; and, reduced to the poverty of simple nature, could transmit to those born of him only what [he] had.

Now the crowning feature of his loss was that of sanctifying grace; that was the chief loss and the cause of all the others. Without that grace, he could not attain the end which was to have made him happy; and he could not be, without it, sinless. So we his posterity ought to have been born with that grace in our souls. Lacking it, we are not pleasing to God, that is, are in sin. In Adam this state was brought on by an act of sin; in us it is contracted by birth. So, people are born with disease, deformity, idiocy, inherited from their parents, that is, are born deprived of what they would have had a right to if their forefathers had not sinned.

So we like Adam are born in a state in which the end we were intended for is

impossible of attainment. "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost he shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." We have fallen from the height on the plane of which our home was, into a valley, where we can still walk indeed but never up the height. Our journey through life is on a train that makes no connexion with our lost Eden, on a sea that floats our life barque but does not wash the shore of our fatherland, in a light that is not darkness but yet is not the true light of our souls. Grace held wisdom, order, and immortality in her train; and fleeing from the defiled temple of Adam's soul, she carried with her them also, to return no more, for aught he might do and suffer and repent, either to him or to his progeny.

People talk about that sin being such a little thing and say it seems hard that God should punish it so sternly. How do they know it is such a little thing? Was it because it was quickly done? Why the heavens and the earth were made as soon. The earthquake swallows whole cities as soon. Men pass from life to death as soon. Yet these are not small things. Was it because to taste of fruit is such a trifling action? Why, to taste of prussic acid is just as small yet it kills. It is a small thing to give a man a little push but if the push sends him headlong over a precipice it is not a small thing to him! Then again why is it that these people will not allow God some consideration in their reckoning of smallness and greatness? Is it a small thing to disobey God your Creator, to doubt His truth, to distrust His wisdom, to deny His love, to refuse His friendship, to defy His authority? Is it a small thing to have deserted the Lord God? Woe to the man who knows so little of God so to think—bitter woe and humiliation to those spoken of in the Psalm to whom the "Lord shall be made known doing judgments"—for they shall never taste his mercy.

Adam and Eve were told that to eat of the fruit was not for their good; they doubted God's word and ate. They knew that by doing so they would incur God's anger; they defied it; and it fell upon them swift and crashing as a thunderbolt. Forth from the fruits and flowers, the crystal waters, the soft air, and bright sunshine of paradise, forth from the evening concourse with the living God, leaving behind the sanctifying grace, the knowledge, the integrity, the immortality they had forfeited, they were driven into the earth shorn of its preternatural loveliness, to delve and toil and groan till death. Forth to find the soil they must till already bristling with briars and thorns, the arms of a rebellion against rebellion. As they wandered on, the birds that once knew them started screaming from their lofty perches; the beasts barked and snarled at them, or ran howling into the jungles; and the serpents hissed and darted forth their tongues as they glided out of sight in the dark weeds. Above, the heavens were hung with an impenetrable black; and but for the promise of God that the seed of the woman should yet crush the serpent's head and turn the curse into a blessing, they must have laid them down in the savage solitude and died.

Yet all this time nature was left them, undepraved. They could conquer the

solitude and turn the waste into fields of grape and corn. They could subdue the beasts; they could bend the forces of material nature and their uses. They could rear palaces, build cities, found empires; they could cultivate arts, make philosophy, invent theories; they could carve out images of stone and wood, and adore them as gods. But what good would all these things do? They could find no elixir of life for the body, no living water to quench the thirst of soul. Still in the midst of these triumphs death would go on sweeping off the generations, disease continue to rack them, the eye which is not satisfied with seeing would still be straining for a glimpse of something unattainable, and the heart would still be yearning after stable and enduring good in vain, to its final stroke still unsatisfied.

They could also look beyond the death of the body, for the soul is of its nature immortal—but only with shuddering and terror. As one who feels himself driven into a vast ocean, without a boat or a piece of timber to float on, or into a pathless desert without provision of food or water—so the children of men grasped [by] the icy and relentless hand of death would feel themselves hurled into an unknown and interminable region, where they knew not what would be their fate.

Nay few men pass the age of reason without incurring the sense of guilt and the need of forgiveness, which makes the approach of death still more terrible, and for which nature makes no provision. So that with all their beautiful world, their science, art, commerce, inventions, the sons of Adam were still unprovided and without a hope.

To the denizens of a city the lamplight serves the purpose of the daylight, enabling to buy and sell and labor; but to one who stands on some hill overlooking the city, the lamplights but disclose the blackness of the heavens overhead. So to generations of men, nature is light enough for commerce, for eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and what else pertains to the body; but to the same when through the gates of death they pass up the steep of Eternity, the light they had but shows the thick and impenetrable darkness of which they know nothing more than that they must dwell therein forever. This darkness overhung the earth for four thousand years. In it the Patriarchs and Prophets pined, trembled, hoped, walked justly, and died. In it they who chose went astray after the devices of their own hearts, became corrupt and abominable, losing the fear of God. In it monuments of human pride were reared and crumbled, impiety filled the world with demon gods, and human wrath filled the earth with the bones of slaughtered men. And still from generation to generation the tendency was to deeper corruption from abyss to abyss. As a beast suffering from thirst becomes less and less capable of finding water the more frantic the torture makes it, so men unable to quench their inward thirst for happiness yet predetermined to find it satisfied on the earth, still kept delving and digging down with idiotic energy into lower depravity and so would still be doing had not Christ come. He, the Sun of justice, heralded by Mary the Morning Star, chased the night

31 - And He was Subject to Them

away, opened the closed heavens, blotted out our guilt, restored the old time knowledge of truth, gave to his followers the victory over concupiscence, and restored to the body not the old but a better immortality. He was no mere human infant whose birthday has become a jubilee through the world. Human He was for his little body shivered with cold as the bleak wind howled through the crannies of the stable—how else could He do aught for us? But at the same time He was God the highest and how else could He atone for sin, buy back our forfeited Paradise.

He restores to us what we had lost, the same in kind but far better in degree. Sanctifying grace, but unspeakably more excellent. Knowledge that, beginning in this life, reveals more of God than Adam knew, and beholds Him as He is in the other; the mastery of concupiscence, which grace gives here with merit proportionate to the struggle; and immortality in which the grossness of the body is lost, after death, not evaded but met and conquered.

031.

Sermon, Book 1, No. 1

“And He was Subject to Them”

The actions of Jesus Christ are to us an example and a standard. What He did is not only honorable for us to do, but our salvation. “He was subject to them.” He obeyed his mother and reputed father, in the little concerns of the cottage and carpenter’s shop in Nazareth, until He was nigh thirty years of age. Even in leaving them He obeyed the higher law of his Father, exchanging one phase of obedience for another. He never sought His own will—but that of His Father. From the things He suffered He learned obedience. From the time He was wrapped in swaddling clothes a helpless babe to the time when He was lifted up from the earth by the crucifiers, He had no will or interests of His own, but constantly did the will of another.

Obedience is a virtue little understood and not at all popular among us. A few people retire from the world and try to practice it—but they are exceptions to the ordinary course of things and are looked upon as poor spirited and, in fact, prematurely buried.

To defy authority is the fashion in the world. Opinions, stupid and senseless, are made respectable, by being held in opposition to authority; and crimes of the blackest die, such as murder, arson, sedition, are changed into heroic deeds, if done in opposition to the powers that be. As Catholics we are bound to be on the side of Jesus Christ and in opposition to the world. We must believe obedience to be a virtue, and practice it. Let us examine the reason why.

Obedience is the submission of our will to that of another, and is the law for all created things. God could make what beings he pleased, but He could not make any

31 - And He was Subject to Them

that would be independent of Him. What we call natural laws, are but the decrees of His will. Nature is His creation. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without His notice because the fall itself is a conscious exercise of His power; the hairs of our head are numbered: because each one is there by His bidding. The sun gives light, the stars revolve, the seasons come and go, birth, growth, and decay mark and make the passage of time, not by any blind chance, or senseless destiny, but by the exercise of His power according to His plan. Alone immutable, infinitely exalted, on a throne whose foundations encircle, and contain all that is shifting and variable whether of spirit or of matter, He marshals the ages as a commander his army and sends forth the forces He creates to do His own errands at their proper times, until His all-searching design shall be accomplished.

From the nature of things we must do the will of God. Obedience as a virtue is only the willing acceptance of things as they are, the acknowledgement of God's supremacy. True, He has given us liberty, but not the liberty to defeat His plans, or to withdraw ourselves from the reach of His power. The wicked who refuse to obey simply destroy themselves; spurning His mercy, they dash themselves to pieces against His justice and still are subject to Him. The good obey Him meritoriously, because they acquiesce willingly in their natural condition, and in all things voluntarily make His will the rule of action.

The obedience we owe to God is not made up of an occasional action done for His sake—it does not consist in not opposing and defying Him openly but is the submission of all our powers to Him at all times, and under all circumstances. In comparison with Him we are as if we were not. Our understanding must submit to Him, in faith. Our will must thou serve. It is the blundering theory, no matter by whom received, that government is a partial surrender of liberty for the sake of social order and that if one were wholly free He would obey no one. Such freedom belongs to God alone. Man's freedom is not in having no superior. No one can serve two masters but every man must serve. In obeying God, man does not surrender but perfects his liberty, does not demean but exalts himself.

No one denies that we should obey God, of course. It is not obedience to Him the world scorns and repudiates. It is the yielding of the understanding to human authority, of the will to human commands, of the body to drudge for other's comfort that it loathes. Who is so base as to be a slave?

Would that the world were sincere in this profession. If men were disposed to remember that they are not their own but their Creator's; that they have not the right to do what they please with understanding, or will or affect, or power of speech, or education, or influence on society but that are accountable to God for every use they make of them, that disposition alone would be a great step towards being taught of God. But the spirit of ambition and avarice will not allow even theoretical submission

to God. It will not say "If God were to reveal to me a command not to do what I am doing I would cease from doing it." Its essence is in the declaration "I will not serve." "I will fulfill my own devices and there shall be none to say me nay." The very same spirit that of old dragged down from Heaven Lucifer the Morning Star. In the day of reckoning these cannot plead "I did not know."

True they did not know, that is they did not reflect upon, the end they were coming to; but they were not disposed to learn, never sought to know. But grant to the world what it claims for itself: that it does not deny man's dependence upon God.

The Church grants and proclaims that natural freedom of all men: There is nothing in one man's nature that gives him the right to domineer, or in another's that makes it his duty to obey and drudge. God alone is our master and Him alone we are bound to serve. The human soul is too mighty in power, too mysterious in its essence, too sublime in its end to be bound to bow down before any one less than the Creator! But what follows from this? That children are not bound to obey their parents, servants their masters, subjects their rulers, the faithful the Church? By no means; but only that what [binds] them to this obedience is [not] human but Divine authority. The sunlight is the sunlight, let it pass through even so many lenses; so God's authority is Divine though it speak to us thru Church, our parents, or our lawful rulers.

Is not this plain? God has a right to our obedience; and after He has told us "hear the Church" can we obey Him if we do not hear the Church? Can children obey Him who do not obey their parents; or subjects obey Him who rebel against their lawful rulers? To obey therefore is our natural duty. It is to confess in our actions that God made us and not we ourselves which is a truth so plain that we must be blind not to see it, and unspeakably perverse not to acknowledge it.

But the heart does not love to obey and it seeks all manner of pretexts to justify it refusing to carry the yoke. One I have already alluded to: that obedience is a mean spirited, base thing. Now we know, of course, that obedience being a virtue can have nothing base or degrading in it. Yet let us consider the objection which has been put forward more than once, and urged with particular clamor against the obedience of religious to their superiors.

There is an obedience, a surrender of one's own will to the will of another known in the world, which deserves all the reprobation it can get. It is where the surrender is made not to God and not on account of God but to man, on account of human respect, on base cupidity. To fawn and flatter, to disparage truth and natural feeling for the sake of ambition or avarice, that thrift may follow fawning, is indeed unworthy. But this is not Christian obedience; and in railing against it the world does but rail against itself. Christian obedience tolerates no wrong. It cannot be rendered to those who have no right to command or by the yielding of any right on the part of him who obeys. To obey thus is not to give up self-respect or manhood, or any thing that is noble in the human

32 - The Poverty of Jesus Christ

character, but only to carry out the glorious liberty of the children of God. The world's obedience is base but not so the Christian's.

032.

Thoughts on the Passion of Jesus Christ, Chapter 4

The Poverty of Jesus Christ.

In considering the Poverty of Jesus Christ we ought never to forget that it was his own free choice. "Joy being offered to Him, He bore the Cross." He was God, He could appropriate to Himself what He pleased of the things He had made. It was as easy for Him to heap up gold and gems about Him as to scatter them through the mines or over the bottom of the ocean. The wealth He had given to Caesar, He might have easily taken to Himself: Mary and Joseph were not poor of necessity, but only because He wanted them to be so. He had not "where to lay, His Head," not because He was not master of palaces, but because he chose to be houseless. He died in poverty, simply because He willed it. And He chose this lot for two reasons: first, to show the well-meaning that man can fulfill his whole destiny, without wealth; and second, to expiate the crimes of avarice.

I.

The world is going soon to be educated and free; all men will be equal; wealth will be distributed; and enjoyment universal. This is, to-day, the cry that goes forth to soften the sorrows of humanity. To-day is dark; tomorrow will be bright. Wait awhile, you that toil and sweat under heavy burdens, still looking forward, and seeing no sunlight: wait awhile, the day of freedom and plenty is at hand. So the age fools itself; and, self-deluded, mocks its own misery; for what but mockery is your "wait awhile" to the man whom hunger gnaws, and winter pierces, and debt burdens, and want stares grimly in the face? to the widow who, sick herself, comes home to her sick children without food or medicine? "Wait awhile," O cholera patient! do not writhe so with pain; the world will soon be regenerated. "Wait awhile," you gaunt workmen on the sidewalks, you querulous women in the cellars and attics, you ragged boys in the alleys, you slattern girls on the door-steps: kings will be dethroned and liberty established. And then? Why then the multitude will remain the multitude, burdened with the material necessities and evils of life; suffering from hunger, cold, fatigue, want, just as before, "hewers of wood and drawers of water" still. This is a free country, and you have become rich in it, Mr. Shoddy. Ours are noble institutions. But when you became rich, what did you but leave the great toiling, struggling, sweating multitude behind? There they are still in the midst of the toil and struggle, just as worthy of consideration as when you were one of them; and there they will remain, through all your revolutions, in spite of all your schools and legislation and clap trap. All men are equal

32 - The Poverty of Jesus Christ

before God, the Judge; but before God, the Dispenser of temporal gifts, all men are not, and never will be, equal.

"The rank is but the guinea's stamp;"

But the stamp gives the guinea currency; and all the world contains is nothing more. If kings no longer pass current, regicides will sit in their thrones; and power, denied to Legitimacy, will be wielded by demagogues; but the multitude will be the multitude still. Shall the multitude, therefore, gnash their teeth upon their leaders with envy, and accuse Providence of having created them in vain? If to be rich and enjoy comfort were all man, they might; for they can not hope to be rich and enjoy comfort. But they have hope beyond the grave. JESUS CHRIST, the PERFECT MAN; perfect in His soul, in His body, and in all His surroundings, lived and died without wealth. Therefore the enjoyment of riches is no part of human dignity or of human happiness. "To fear God and keep His commandments is all man." And it is as easy, nay easier, to do this in poverty as in wealth. To be sure there are extremes of physical suffering that try the soul of the poor almost beyond endurance; but there are also extremes of affluence that puff it, up with a pride beyond cure. The meshes of the net that drags us into sin are all made of our useless desires; and these multiply with the means of indulging them, and diminish in proportion to their hopelessness. The man stricken with hopeless poverty dares to want but little; and so his temptations are few. "Blessed are the poor; for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." We wrestle with the powers of darkness. As the wrestler casts off his clothes for the struggle, so that his adversary may find nothing to cling to in the strife, so ought we to cast aside all that can excite earthly desire, or give any lodgment to the Devil in our souls. Providence does this for the poor; and so, unless false to their opportunities, theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. This is the point of view from which to understand that saying of our Lord, "The poor have the Gospel preached to them;" that is, the poor receive glad tidings. No other but the Christian philosophy of life has any comfort for the poor as such. The professional world-reformers promise them escape from poverty through education, the ballot-box, and revolution. But Jesus Christ tells them "Yours is the kingdom of Heaven." To them He points among the shifting generations, and says to His Angels, "These are My brethren." I give to them the lot which I chose for Myself. If they accept it with submission, and bear it with patience, blessed are they! What they suffer is momentary and light; and the weight of glory is eternal. Now, indeed, they have sorrow; but soon they will remember no more the anguish, in the midst of the boundless wealth of Heaven. Therefore, blessed are the poor, not because they can get rich or become powerful; but because they are poor and helpless, and like to JESUS CHRIST!

This is the thought that peopled the deserts of Upper Egypt with solitaries, long ago, and to this day fills with inmates the monastery and the cloister. Poor young woman! she buried her splendid talents, her varied accomplishments, her marvelous

32 - The Poverty of Jesus Christ

beauty in the cloister! Dreamy, deluded enthusiast! when the world was bright before him he shrank from enjoying it, and hid himself away behind vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience! So the world says; because, to the world, Faith is but a dream, and death, judgment, eternity, words without meaning. But Death is a reality; and we must be judged and live on for ever in the home our works build for us. Do you pity the man who sold all he had and bought the pearl of great price, or him who made himself owner of the field wherein the treasure was hidden? Do you pity the man who cast away his baggage and swam ashore from the shipwreck? or him who loses all things and saves his soul?

It is not delusion that makes one drive a shrewd bargain. He is no dreamer who knows enough to exchange the temporal for the eternal. To be sure, there is much to fire the heart in the aspect of a God made poor for our sake; much that is alluring, in the peace that passes understanding, which steals over our souls under the shadow of the ALTAR where the BLESSED SACRAMENT is resting. But this Divine love only quickens, does not blind, the understanding; and the warmer it grows the keener is the soul's appreciation of the truth, "If we suffer we shall reign with Him!" When the handmaid becomes the king's bride, who says, "Poor maiden!" So, when the young virgin, prostrate before the altar, vows herself the bride of Christ, who but an infidel will dare to say, "She has thrown herself away?" Blessed are the poor; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven!

Let the poor then take comfort from the poverty of Christ. He would not have chosen poverty for himself if He had not loved it! He would not have chosen it for you if He had not seen it was for your good. If you are very poor, so was He. If you are forced to see those you love droop and suffer, so did He see His peerless Mother and His foster-father. If you have to be dependent, and suffer slights and contumely, so did He. "If we suffer we shall reign with Him." Let those have the world who choose it for their portion. Let them traffic and succeed, let them venture and accumulate, adding house to house, field to field, gold to gold. Let them monopolize the public press, the literature, the schools, the offices; but let us cling to Jesus Christ in His poverty, to share His wealth.

II.

Who can number the crimes of avarice which Jesus Christ expiated by being poor?

It is no sin to have wealth or to acquire it; but it is a temptation frightfully near to sin. The possession of money feeds pride, deadens natural kindness, and endangers charity. The acquirement of money benumbs piety, imperils truth, and endangers justice.

With men who lack faith, to be tempted and to fall are nearly the same thing. The word "pursesproud" is an odious one, often in the mouths of the envious. Yet it

32 - The Poverty of Jesus Christ

expresses a quality we can not fail to meet in the world, unless we go out of it. Men and women without ancestry, without education, without refinement, without any ennobling quality, still hold their heads high in air, speak of their inferiors, and pity their less wealthy neighbors, solely on the ground that they are rich. Why not? Wealth buys service and rank, and consideration, and flattery. The world cringes to it and fawns upon it. If a man may be proud of his dead ancestors, of his knowledge, of his talents, of his personal appearance, why not of his money? The pride of money is just as legitimate, and not a whit more fatal to the soul. The rank is the guinea's stamp; and if the rich clown finds himself passing current as master, why should not he respond by calling those about him servants? Suppose he does make himself ridiculous by groundless pretensions; by criticizing matters of art, science, philosophy, theology, which he does not understand. What proud man does not play the fool before God and His Angels? and who more than those who are puffed with so-called science. The world may envy him; but it can not condemn him without condemning itself. But Almighty God has to condemn him for his blind, obstinate, senseless pride. The Pharisee was condemned because he said, "I am better than this publican;" but the man whose heart is filled with pride of wealth, assumes as unquestionable, that he is better than others. That is the starting point of all his ideas, affections, schemes and even charities. He acknowledges all men to be equal, except himself; or takes the maxim in the sense, that he is as good as the best of them. As for putting his own interest, his own convenience, on a par with those of others, he never dreams of doing it. He regards his own caprices as law, his actions as models of perfection, his salvation as a foregone conclusion. He even learns to look upon himself as a sort of patron of the Deity, and to think that Christ died for others but not for him. In such a heart there can be no self-annihilation before God, no loving worship of the Babe of Bethlehem, or of the CRUCIFIED; no putting off attachment to the world; no love of humility or poverty; no room for grace; and, of course, no room for charity.

The proud rich may give away money; but they can never feel charity. Was there charity in the crumbs which Lazarus shared with the dogs, as they fell from the rich man's table? Is there charity in our imprisonment of the poor in county infirmaries and workhouses? Is it charity to toss money to the needy as you would throw a bone to a dog, and hurry on, so as not to be harrowed by the sight of their sufferings? No. There can be no charity without respect, without the feeling of kindred and fellowship which the proud man has not and can not have. There can be no charity where the poor and the rich make two nations, where the master is employed in getting much work on little wages, and the servant is busy in trying to deceive the master, where the wealthy help the needy to prevent riot and sedition, and the needy are held back from plundering only by the hand of power. How few among the rich give with the motive that sanctifies their generosity, with the respect due to the Image of Christ?

32 - The Poverty of Jesus Christ

How few too give in that proportion to their means which the law of charity demands. Two-fiftieths, says St. Liguori, of what remains over a decent support, is the least that any one can give to the poor, and save his soul. How few give even this! Many count among their charities what they give in support of their Pastors; they might as well count what they pay in discharging their debts! Yet even so, but few rich, out of the great number in society, do enough to fulfill the actual obligation of the law of charity; because the heart grows cold amid the cares of wealth, and its display and self-indulgence, and charity is driven away by pride.

But it is in the acquisition of wealth more than in its possession that the butchery of souls takes place. Beginning in the unchecked desire and ending in the lawless act, there is scarcely a passion that avarice does not foment, or a crime that it does not occasion.

The poor must not imagine that they never sin through avarice. They are blessed sharers in the lot of Jesus Christ, it is true. But, like the rest of men, they seldom know their blessedness. They do not love to be poor. They repine at their condition and complain of Providence, thus rebelling against God. They wither with envy of the better fortune of their neighbors and thus wound charity. They frame desires and indulge them as far as they dare without violating human law, and thus offend against justice. They often meditate, yea, and practice deceit and fraud, and petty thieving. These things were what made the poverty of Jesus Christ sharper to Him, for those were the things He had to expiate.

The greed of gain finds its first lodgment in the heart under a very specious seeming. Is it not laudable to desire not to be a burthen to others? Is it not right to wish to place those we love beyond the reach of want? Is it not even generous to aim at wealth as the means of doing good? O youth, youth, who give this name to the new emotions that are thrilling your heartstrings! you have begun a wrestle with a giant, and you arm him thrice, when you try to persuade yourself that he is a friendly one! You do not want to be a burthen to your friends! Is that the reason why you burthen them with a demand for capital to begin your career of independence? You want to place those you love beyond the reach of want! In a short time you will tell them to take care of themselves, to be frugal and industrious, as you have been, and they will not need the charity of others! You want the means of doing good! Do you do good with the means you have already? Are your sympathies and your efforts with the desolate now? Have you ever a kind look and a gentle word, for those that suffer? Alas! when you are surrounded by plenty, your desire of doing good will still remain what it is now--a dream. In the meantime, in climbing the steep road to fortune what may you not meet? You must buy cheap, and sell dear. You must give up, no you must sell, youthful freshness of heart, loyalty to your friends, the noble impulses with which you were once stirred, to be more than a benefactor to yourself. You must steel your heart

against natural affection and make your friendships pay. You must lay snares for those who trust you, and profit by their credulity. You find soon that good bargains are better made by lying, and you lie. You find it an easy way to prosper to appropriate what belongs to others, to yourself. This you can not always do by flattery and deceit, and you learn to steal. It may be you steal from the widow and the orphan. It may be that murder and arson are in the way of your gain, and you go through murder and arson. The greed of gain is an open gate to all crimes, to murder, robbery, cheating, theft, lying, oppression of the poor, hypocrisy of the most loathsome character. It fills prisons and makes scaffolds a necessity. It kindles conflagrations and stirs up wars. It sets class against class, kindred against kindred, and makes earth a hell. No wonder Jesus Christ was *very* poor--he had to expiate so many sins of avarice, and prove to such a multitude that no grade of destitution is an excuse for crime! What multitudes He had to silence by his meek example of poverty! Look around you and see if vice has not become almost the irresistible fashion. The servant filches from his employer; the laborer charges for work he never did; the artisan steals materials or does bad work for his customers; the trader can not make a living if he does not ask more for his goods than they are worth, and lie about the cost of them; the banker will break if he does not exact extortionate interests; the lawyer will not succeed if he does not foment quarrels, and urge on hopeless lawsuits; the capitalist will lose his fortune if he does not gamble in stocks, and use his wits to gain what others are losing. Everywhere in society avarice has set up its laws and established its maxims. Everywhere it makes traffic of patriotism, of piety, of charity, and family affection.

And this great torrent of sin Jesus Christ had to remove and efface by his life and death of poverty and pain. He did it thoroughly, and the door stands open for all who have begun to find that money does not pay for the soul, and to long for treasures where neither moth nor rust corrupts, nor do thieves break through and steal, to return to virtue and to God. He paid for each sin in kind, and we have but to ask him and he will blot out every one that stains us. Let us accept His mediation and profit by His offer.

033.

Thoughts on the Passion of Christ, Chapter 2

Christ's Agony in the Garden

36. And Jesus came with them into a garden which is called Gethsemani, and said to His disciples: Sit ye here, while I go yonder and pray.

37. And taking with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, He began to grow sorrowful, and to be very sad.

38. Then He saith to them: My soul is sorrowful even unto death; stay ye here

33 - Christ's Agony in the Garden

and watch with Me.

39. And He went a little farther, and fell upon His face and prayed, saying: My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will but as Thou wilt.

48. And He cometh to his disciples and findeth them asleep, and saith to Peter: Lo, could you not watch with Me one hour?

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

42. Again: a second time, he went away and prayed, saying: My Father, if this cup can not pass away except I drink it, Thy will be done.

43. And He cometh again and findeth them sleeping--for their eyes were heavy.

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

This is Saint Matthew's brief history of the Agony in the Garden.

Picture to yourselves the villa, covered with fresh spring grass on which the dew is gathering; here and there a cedar or palm lifting upward its boughs to the calm starry sky; one group of tired men, eight in number, stretched lie soldiers, after a day's march, on the ground asleep. A little way off another group of three, between sleeping and waking; and slightly removed from them the Savior of our souls, "beautiful in form before all the sons of men," lying flat on His face, saying, again and again, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me." And, still, as the three disciples yield by degrees to their drowsiness; and as the spring breeze rustles among the palm leaves, and as the roar of the distant city murmurs faintly along from tree to tree. He lies prone on the turf and repeats, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will but as Thou wilt."

Who can define grief, and tell its cause, and take its measure? When you have felt it, you can not tell what it is. Tears are no measure for it; for they never come till it begins to grow lighter. Words can not express it; for the keener the grief the simpler and more terse the words the sufferer uses. We can stand by and look at our Savior lying on His face; we can see that face grow white with anguish; we can mark the throes of agony that shake His frame, as the storm shakes the branches of the pine tree on the mountain; we can see the red blood bursting through His pores, and tracing a crimson line along His white skin, fall upon the ground. But His grief is as great as the sea--we can not measure it; nor would I pause to dwell on it if He were a stranger thus lying in agony, on whom we had casually stumbled; but He is no stranger. The contemplation of His sorrow is not simply distressing. He suffers thus for our sins--to save us. I desire now to think of that sorrow, for it is the cause of our joy. "By His bruises we are healed."

Who is He that bows His head to the earth, writhing like a crushed work, with His garments and the grass beneath Him dyed in blood? In HIMSELF HE is God and

33 - Christ's Agony in the Garden

man; to the Angels, He is king of kings and Lord of lords, Creator and absolute Owner; in Heaven, the Rewarder of virtue; in Hell, the Avenger of guilt. To us, He is the Redeemer from guilt and its punishment.

REDEEMER is one of those words which means so much that we are dull to perceive any of its meanings. It means Him who ransoms us from hell; Who leads us to the truth, Who enlightens our understanding, straightens our crookedness of will; heals our infirmities, pardons our infidelities; Who meets us, at the opening of life with the grace of Baptism, and thence follows us with grace and Sacraments, to the very portals of the grave. It means our liberator and teacher, our guide and protector; our defender; the food and treasure of our souls; our GOD AND OUR ALL. Pardon me, sweet Jesus! Woe is me! for I am a man of polluted lips, to try to speak of how we ought to love Thee! Do Thou kindle Thy love within us for only the loving can understand Thy love.

That sorrowing man, Who let grief so over-come Him for our encouragement and consolation, is our God and our all.

How, then, could Peter and James and John fall asleep, if they know Him to be their all, when they saw the tide of that mighty agony surging in His heart? How could they not watch one hour with Him?

We must not reproach them; but put the question to ourselves. He is all to you and me that He was to them. We never had any good He did not give us. We will never get any comfort worth the name from any other. How is it then, that you and I fell asleep while He was agonizing? He agonizes when men sin. Did we not fall asleep after we had sinned? There was a lethargy on our hearts when we forgot our holy resolutions; left off going to the Sacraments; began to be fond of irreligious company and idle reading, and to indulge in thoughts of pride, anger, jealousy, and voluptuousness; and our eyes were very heavy when we went groping after what the world loves, and never once were raised to see God and Heaven above us. And Jesus was agonizing over us all the time, and saying, "Return to Me: why will ye die?"

Let us see if this sleepiness have not overcome us now, as it has overcome the world. Men seem to be bustling and restless; but their very occupation of growing rich, and feeding appetite, and over-reaching and out-stripping each other, are the merest idleness. They are sleeping, with no oil in their lamps, and "Lo! the Bridegroom cometh!"

Let us watch the one hour of life with Jesus, our Redeemer, that He may find us, when He comes, with our lamps trimmed and burning in our hands.

Jesus was left alone in His grief. He looked with sad eyes for one to console Him, and found him not. It is so with us. In the great struggle for our salvation, whenever we under-take it, we must encounter the sharpness of sorrow alone. It is so, indeed, with all the world--social intercourse is on joyous topics; society wishes you to amuse it, or flatter or divert it. It does not care about your interests, much less to be burdened

33 - Christ's Agony in the Garden

with the story of your sorrow. Men live in a crowd, but die alone. But if the soul is alone when it glides onward through the darkness, it is much more so moving upward toward the light. What you do for yourself must be done by yourself. The soul is so great that, in its struggles to reach its goal, it can have no companionship but God's. Friends can stand around a deathbed; they can say farewells and receive blessings; they can press the moist, cold hand, and look into the fading eyes; the priest: kneeling by the bed-side, can hear in whispered accents with what the conscience of the dying one is upbraiding him; but what can wife or brother or sister or child know of the mighty contest, the tumult of swarming memories and hopes and terrors and prayers and resolves with which, as life ebbs away, that soul is filled? They may weep, and tremble, and pray; the Angels and Saints may pray also; but none can comprehend, and teach, and guide, and save, but God.

When, therefore, in your endeavors to live well you find yourself assailed by a difficulty, which none of your companions seem to understand, so fearful that you dare not tell it to them, be not appalled. Let them sleep on, and do you go through your struggle alone. Even when your closest friends can not understand you, and your very spiritual director offers you no remedy but patience, struggle on! You are on the right road. It is in the desert that the springs of water are promised in the new dispensation, and the solitude that is to blossom as the rose.

I would not dare undertake, even after reading St. Theresa, and the devout book called the Passion of Christ, and other ascetic writers approved by the Church, to enter into the Heart of Jesus and try to describe His sufferings.

Of course He knew all things; that He had been betrayed, that in an hour or two he would be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles; be mocked, spit upon, scourged, put to death. He saw the scattering of His disciples, the denial of Peter, the tears of His mother.

There is but one point of His sorrow, on which I will dwell; endeavoring to understand, yet not pretending to fathom. The Prophet says, "God, the Father, placed upon Him, the iniquity of us all." To know how sorrowful, unto death, this made Him, we would have to understand His immeasurable hatred and horror of sin. As God, He hates nothing that He made; but He did not make sin.

Sin is an irreconcilable enmity to His essential holiness, as darkness is opposed to light, heat to cold, truth to falsehood, good to evil. In His infinite mercy He can forgive the sinner--the sin He can never forgive. And the reason why the torments of the fallen angels and reprobate men shall know no mitigation for ever, is because they have set themselves in identity with sin in such a manner that favor shown to them would be approval of their malice. In the eyes of God, there is more of evil; more to flee from and to loathe in one single sin, even of thought, than in all the calamities of earth, all the pains of purgatory, and all the torments of hell; so that, if one had it in his power to

33 - Christ's Agony in the Garden

restore to every living man the innocence, and peace, and immortality of Eden; to set free all the spirits that are waiting in patient sadness the end of their purification; unbar the gates of hell, and send the howling reprobate, fetterless, back, into light; yet, must do it by a single sin, a lie, a curse, an unclean thought, he must leave them as they are. There is more evil in the malice of a single sin than in the punishment of them all.

Now, Jesus Christ, in the Garden, felt Himself clothed with the iniquities of us all. "He placed upon Him the iniquity of us all." He had accepted the mediatorship willingly, looking to the end. Now, He suspended in His human soul the anticipation of the end, and looked upon Himself only in the present, waiving all thought of any coming change, as though the present moment held within itself the weight of Eternity. His soul was convulsed with agony at the sight of the horrible disfigurement given to it by our sins. The God-man Himself is held a blasphemer, a perjurer, a worshiper of idols, a drunkard, a glutton, one unclean. The Eternal Father looked upon Him as guilty of death. The angels hid their faces in horror, as He appeared to them an outcast, and a reproach in the universe. This was the thought that crushed Him to the earth, and made the hot blood start from His veins as the red juice gushes from the trodden grape. This was the cup He prayed might pass from Him. As if He had said, "I accept the betrayal by one I trusted, and called not servant, but my friend. Welcome judgment halls of Annas and Caiaphas, of Pilate and Herod; welcome calumnies, scoffs, blows, revilings, purple garment, and thorny crown! Lay on my shoulders the hard Cross; drive the jagged nails through my hands and feet;--but, O Father, do not make me a sinner; number me not with those who hate Thee and rebel against Thee. Gladly will I expiate the sin; but if it be possible, let Me not seem a sinner. Let this cup pass from Me, and I will drink the rest. Nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done."

Herein, reader, appears to our shame, how God's thoughts are not our thoughts. To us, the horror of Christ's passion is in the sensible sufferings He endured, added to His loss of reputation and favor of men. To Him, it was to be held guilty of sin. We look, with the same crooked vision on what happens to ourselves; and, if we do hate sin, we hate it, not in itself, but for the calamities it entails upon its author. "Do not sin," we say, when we mean our best, "lest evil come upon you;" lest you forfeit heaven, incur hell. Blinder still than we are, the respectable and decent world says, "Do not sin, lest you forfeit health, lose your credit and standing in society." Yet neither the world nor we see, as God sees, that where one sins the calamity has befallen him already. The sin is the calamity. It is an evil and a bitter thing to go away from the Lord God. You sinned--but soon repented and confessed; and so no harm came of it. "Ah! foolish and slow of heart; the harm did come of it, none the less, because its consequences fall, not upon you, but upon the innocent head of Jesus Christ. There is greater measure of evil, says St. Thomas, in the cause of evil than in the sum of all the consequences. There was a greater measure of evil, by fair comparison, in the sin of Adam, than in all its

33 - Christ's Agony in the Garden

consequences, which have kept his posterity groaning for, now, five thousand years. So, in the least of your or my sins, confessed and forgotten, there was more to be abhorred, and avoided, and regretted, than in the death we tremble at, and in the devouring flame in which no one dare to think he can dwell for ever. This is what Jesus Christ understood and we do not understand. How can there be so much, we say, in a transient thought, a fleeting word, or, even in an act that is begun and ended in a moment?

Inconsistency of human pride! that exaggerates our greatness, urging us to rebel against God, and puts forward our littleness to extenuate our guilt! God says, "Thou shalt not eat;" and we say, "Who is God, that He should dictate to us?" Then God says, "Thou shalt die;" and we say, changing front, "Who are we, that God should be so offended at what we do?"

This inconsistency marks the pride of our age. On one hand, man is too great to bow his intellect to the teachings of Christ, or submit his will to the laws of the Church; and, on the other, he is too little to be noticed and held responsible by God for what he does. Unworthiness is made the excuse for insolence--a man pretends that he must be allowed to annoy and wrong you, because he is worthless and contemptible. Though not great enough to escape the control of the Supreme God, we are still great enough to declare war against Him; and this declaration is greater evil than all others put together, as would be plain enough to our minds did we know what we mean when we say that God is the Supreme Good and the measure of all Good.

Our sins, more than His own calamities, straitened, in that hour of darkness, the Redeemer's heart. More than all others, the sins that we still cling to, and love, and excuse, and repeat. Our excesses in eating and drinking; our yielding to brutal appetites; our false oaths, blasphemies, infidelities, sacrileges; our envyings, anger, violences; our frauds, thefts, oppressions; our contempt of the laws of the Church and the graces of the Holy Spirit: were in the chalice which He begged might pass from His lips. Is it not time for us to repent of them, confess them, and forsake them once for all?

Do you pity Him? Were He a dumb brute so writhing on the ground, you would. But He is your Savior, and your heart aches as you see Him suffering. Why, then, relieve Him, by abandoning sin, and the thoughts and aims that lead to sin. Get you on the road to Heaven; cleanse your conscience from guilt; begin a life, on the end of which you are not afraid to think; and, as far as you can do, you have taken the bitterness from His chalice.

34- Suffered under Pontius Pilate

034.

Lecture, *The Catholic Columbian*, January 15, 1876

This series titled "Lecture in St. Joseph's Cathedral" was unsigned, incomplete, and poorly edited. But we are sure Bishop Rosecrans was the speaker, for on the first page of the December 11 issue is the notice, "The Bishop's lectures at the Cathedral Sunday evenings, draw appreciative audiences." The Sunday prior to publication, January 9, was probably its date of delivery.

LECTURE IN ST. JOSEPH'S CATHEDRAL.

No. VII

"Suffered under Pontius Pilate."

The Son of God became man to atone for our sins. God's justice is not as man's. Man can secure his rights and the rights of society, and, when that is done, leave guilt unpunished; that is, human penalties though punishment for crime, stop with being medicinal to the offender and protector of society. But God, being the custodian of all Justice and Truth, is bound by His nature to punish sin according to its merits. Therefore it was that Jesus Christ took the destinies of the human race into His own hands, when He became man. He honored the Infinite Justice by suffering in His most Holy Soul, and Innocent Body what men deserved for their sins. And opened thus to them the gates of eternal happiness. His first suffering was the immense humiliation of becoming a little infant. Sin came by man listening to the temptation--"ye shall become as gods." Healing came by God's saying, "so I come, as man." After this wonder, there is no wonder in any of His other humiliations. I mean that when we have once believed that the Son of God became man at all, we will not be struck with any surprise at seeing what kind of man He became. King or outcast, strong man or little infant, man of joys or sorrows, condemned to death or greeted with hosannas, the annihilation is all the same. When the heavens bend down to kiss the earth, it matters not whether they touch the tops of the mountains or the depths of the valley, the arch has fallen. But for the expiation of our sins He suffered the privation of all those temporal things which we, in sinning, prefer to the will of God; and for our instruction He suffered it from the manger to the Cross. Born in a stable, exiled into a strange country, bred in a carpenter's shop; in His three years of teaching without a roof to shelter, except when it was offered as a gift; dragged before the tribunals without any one to defend him, condemned to die he left nothing for His executioners to divide among them but His clothing; buried by charity in a stranger's tomb, He never enjoyed even for an hour the comforts of affluence. In all conditions of life, greed finds excuses and motives for sin. The rich must maintain their rank--and sin by oppression of inferiors and over-reaching equals; by the pride of state and hard-heartedness towards the helpless and needy. The

34- Suffered under Pontius Pilate

poor are urged to ruder sins. In them pride becomes envy, hate, sometimes theft and robbery.

Jesus Christ confounds both by showing that man can live out the sublimest life, in all its fullness, without the envy of the poor or the pride of the rich, but depending day by day on the watchful care of Him who sees the sparrows fall.

Ambition, the desire of being known and noticed, of commanding respect, how many crimes does it produce!

And Jesus Christ, choosing from the beginning to be poor and unknown, and at the last to become conspicuous only as an object of hate and obloquy, expiates and confounds them all by showing that man's true ambition is not for the homage of his fellow-men, but for the approval of his own and their master, God.

And so by His voluntary life of bodily suffering He pays the price of that other and monstrous disorder of the world, the subjection of the soul to the body.

That little infant body began to feel pain in the swaddling clothes, and never ceased to feel until, on the Cross, it ceased to feel at all.

He was a man of sorrows--not a fretful, murmuring, unwilling sufferer, but who when joy was set before Him, chose to undergo the Cross.

O all ye who pass by the way, look and see whether there is any grief such as my grief. Was there ever a body that bore such a bloody sweat, such scourging and buffeting, such bruising and such a burthen of the Cross, such a torturing crucifixion?

Was ever a spotless character so blackened by false accusations? Was ever so much worth covered over with such filthy calumny? Was ever modesty and dignity so trampled on and outraged? Was ever heart so loving so broken by desertion of intimate friends, so pierced with ingratitude of those to whom it gave itself? He came to His own, to the children of Abraham, to the keepers of the temple, the guardians of the law, the interpreters of the Prophets, and they who should have leaped with joy at sight of Him, and stood around Him in silence to listen to His message from heaven, received Him not.

He gave His life for their example, His thoughts for their healing, His words for their enlightening, His blood for their redemption, His whole person with both entire natures, for their spiritual food, and they received Him not.

Alas, my brethren, before we denounce them for their ingratitude and call for fire to come down from heaven to consume them, let us think, "What spirit we are of."

He sorrowed over us as much as He did over them. Are we not His by Baptism, Confirmation, many Communion, by promises, acts of consecration and countless fleeting and broken resolutions? Come forth daughters of Sion, feeble Christian souls that shrink from avowing and practicing your Catholic faith, lest society might think you strange, lest you might lose the many advantages which connection with excommunicated societies brings, lest you might have to suffer the bodily discomfort of

34- Suffered under Pontius Pilate

a little fasting and a little self-denial. Come forth and behold your King wearing the crown with which the synagogue crowned Him.

Come forth ambitious plotters after worldly fame and power, you who desire place without daring to openly apostatize. See Him mocked and derided in His agony by that very class of persons upon whom you fawn, and with whom you join in putting down that reverence for the authority and spirit of the Church, without which faith is an empty and fruitless sentiment. Come forth you, that between Communion are continually falling back into the same sins of intemperance and impurity. See the crown you have crowned Him with. See the blood stains in His hair and on His face. See the mangled flesh hanging down all over His body where it fell in shreds when they tore off His tunic from Him. See the bloody and shapeless holes made by the great jagged nails through His hands and feet. This is the crown with which your shameful subjection of soul to body has crowned Him, and your indulgence in drink, wrings from His tortured lips the agonized cry, "I thirst."

Come forth you Catholics whose business does not give you time to attend to the Sacraments, who say one cannot get along in the world and be as scrupulous and devout as religion requires, who buy cheap candles for the Altar and dear houses for yourselves, who refuse to the poor and the orphans to add to what you have already got together. See how you have crowned your King! Stripped of everything, more destitute than any beggar, because you have sinned before heaven to accumulate. Remember He is your King, and will rule you either in love or power. The time is not far off when you will enter the other world as poor as He leaves this, and you will fall into His hands naked, destitute, abject and miserable.

It was from the height of the Cross that he spoke those words of the Prophet. Looking out over the nations and down through the generations. "I sought for one true to me, and there was none, for one to comfort me, and found him not, and they gave me gall for my food, and, in my thirst, vinegar to drink."

It is not too late for us to be touched with compassion, and resolve to console Him by renouncing our evil ways and subduing our unruly passions. Let us henceforth turn our ambition in its right direction and aim to be like our Master and Model. Let us postpone our enjoyment of pleasure until we come to where pleasure is pure, perfect and enduring. Let us understand the meaning of that craving after gain within us, and not mock it by giving to it the unstable riches of time, but fix it on the boundless and imperishable wealth bought for us by the suffering of Jesus Christ, the possession of the Infinite God.

This we can do by prayer and practice, by thinking of Him, asking of Him, and in all our daily actions striving to be like Him.

035.

Thoughts on the Passion of Jesus Christ, Chapter I.

The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus.

Jesus Christ could have expiated every sin by a single drop of His sacred blood. But to satisfy His exceeding love for us, and to manifest His utter abomination of sin, He chose rather to expiate it in detail, paying, as it were, the price of each kind of crime, by a suffering corresponding to it. This will appear to us, more and more, as we go on meditating the history of the passion.

Considered as an abuse of the gifts of God, all sin is treachery. Of His free gift, God endows us with being, understanding, and free will, and He tells us, as of old He said to Adam: of all that is good and beautiful in the universe you may partake. You may know every truth, love every good; but, if you abuse the understanding I give you, to seek error; if you pervert the will with which I have made you like Myself, to love any good out of its proportion; then you are My enemy, and shall die. After following up in kindness these gifts of understanding and free will, when He makes us Christians, He discloses to our understanding what truth is, and sets free our will from the bondage of original guilt and concupiscence by the Sacrament of Baptism.

Then, when through natural frailty or inconstancy of mind, we have forgotten that our happiness lies outside the dominions of sense and passion, and have forfeited our innocence through desire of the visible, He restores us to heirship by the sacramental absolution.

Knowing how weak we are, and how easily wrought upon by our terror of the anger or ridicule of our fellows, He strengthens us in this regard by the Sacrament of Confirmation.

To fill us with all grace and sweetness, He trusts us with his own body and blood, soul and divinity.

Now, our sin consists in treacherously abusing these gifts, as far as in us lies, to the injury of the Giver. We use our wit to thwart His designs; our will to oppose His law, and drag down our character of Christian, and the priceless graces of the Sacraments, into the service of God's enemies. This is why Jesus Christ suffered Himself to be betrayed. Of course He knew, beforehand, what Judas was thinking about, as he sat with averted eyes and scowling brow in the supper-room; and could easily have prevented his making the journey to the house of the high priest; but He did not wish to do it. He had complained, by the mouth of His prophets, of the hard treatment He received at the hands of men. "I have raised up children," He said, "and they have despised Me." (Isaiah i. 2.) "If My enemy had done this, and if he who stood up as My foe had spoken so much against Me, I could have borne it. But thou, O man, of one heart with Me! Thou who didst eat bread at one table with Me!" "What else

35 - The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

could I have done for My vineyard that I did not ?" "My people, what have I done to thee, or wherein have I made thee sad?"

But now, in order that we might see with our eyes the treachery of which He complained, behold to what He submits. It was not enough to endure the rancor of the jealous Scribes and Pharisees; the wild fury of the brutal mob. He must be betrayed and sold for a paltry sum of money, by one of His chosen twelve. "How much will you give me to betray Him to you?" asked the traitor, as if anxious to get some worthless commodity off his hands. Reader, have you ever heard a question like this? Did you ever hear of a Catholic ready to betray his faith, and asking, "What will you give me," among the politicians and men in power? of one wavering before the commission of some fraud or theft, and calculating what he would get by betraying his conscience? Did you never stand, hesitating between God on one side and the satisfaction of an unlawful desire on the other, asking yourself, "What will I get by yielding to wrong?" If the thought would but go one step further, and the question take this shape, "What can you give me in exchange for my soul?" sin would never gain dominion over us. "The traitor gave them a sign, saying, 'Whom I shall kiss, the same is He. Hold Him fast.' And, approaching, he said, 'Hail, Rabbi, and he kissed Him.'"

It is hard to be betrayed. The heart that trusts, clings in so many ways to the trusted one that, when cast off suddenly and rudely, it bleeds in many places at once. But to be betrayed by the sign of love is the cruelest of all. Hypocrites betray Jesus Christ with a kiss. False teachers, wolves in sheep's clothing, who preach heresy and calumniate His Church; who seduce souls with a promise of impunity for guilt, betray Jesus Christ with a kiss. Those who affect piety for evil and corrupt motives, betray Jesus with a kiss. But, pre-eminently false and detestable are those who make communion with the guilt of mortal sin on their souls; who have either concealed something in confession, or have not resolved to fly sin and its occasions, and yet, dare to kneel with the children of God, and to receive into their guilt-blackened souls the Author of Purity.

"Then, they laid hands upon Him and held Him fast." They conducted His arrest with all manner of insulting rudeness. They seized on Him as if He had been a wild beast, and dragged Him along through the streets. Some from rancor, but more from frolic, labored to give Him pain. It was rare sport for the rowdy boys and uncouth rustics, with whom the city was filled for the Pasch, to caper, and dance, and grimace about Him; to leer on Him and shout ribaldry and pluck His beard; and push, and strike, and trip Him. And it was rare enjoyment for the parasites of the high priest, to encourage them to do it. We, who have seen men of their profession fomenting the mob spirit against churches and convents, ought to be able to form some idea of the scene. Here it was, that He was "led as a lamb to the slaughter;" that He was a "worm and no man;" no longer master of His own movements; no longer in possession of that personal

35 - The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

dignity which afterward appeared so majestically in his mock trial before the high priest and Pilate.

The strongest and subtlest source of sin in the human heart is precisely that sense of personal dignity, or self-complacency, or self-reliance which the Redeemer permitted to be crushed thus rudely in Himself. It is an element of every sin, for it separates the heart from subjection to God. The true greatness of the human soul is the high estimate God puts on it; the value He puts on it. But pride places its greatness in some kind of importance, not only by comparison with other created beings, but also in the face of God Himself.

Before their fall, Adam and Eve walked fearlessly before God, and spoke freely to Him; because they never dreamed of trying to appear to Him but just as He had made them. But after their sin, after their understanding was darkened, they began to make comparisons, and to consider how they should meet Him, and greet Him, and entertain Him. That is, they no longer annihilated themselves before Him, and adored Him as their absolute and Supreme Master and Owner; but held their own lives inferior it may be, but still divided from His. So it has been ever since with their descendants.

The earliest perversion of the soul's consciousness of greatness is to exempt itself from subjection to God. Sometimes this manifests itself in shocking ways, as in those who worship idols of their own device, and images their own hands have made. At other times it is subtler, as when it corrupts the good works and poisons the humility of the children of God. But wherever it is, it works division between the heart and its Supreme God.

The beginning of all sin is pride. No man lives without his own good opinion. Deprived of one source of self-complacency, he is sure to find another. If he is not talented, he is rich; if he is poor, he is highly born; if he is a criminal, he outwits the world; or if he is stupid, and low-born, and wicked, and miserable, he was not always so, or he is not so much so as others whom he knows. So in virtue: he does not study his defects; but the excellences he has or imagines he has: If he is hard hearted, he is not one of your spendthrifts and drunkards; if he is a blasphemer, he does not steal or rob; if he is impure, he is no hypocrite. Let his conscience convict him of what guilt soever, he finds consolation in some virtue he imagines he has, as an offset against it.

It is this feeling of self-complacency that prevents the heart from turning easily to God when it is conscious of needing Him. It keeps people standing outside of the Catholic Church years after they are intellectually convinced of her claims to the obedience of their minds and souls. It keeps Christians from going to confession immediately after they have fallen into sin, and deceives them into waiting under the pretext of being better prepared. It prevents sorrow for sin from being genuine and pleasing to God--making it, not regret for offending the good and merciful Father of our souls, but bitterness and mortification at being humbled. It is in reference to this feeling

35 - The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

that the disposition to be reconciled to God is called *contrition*--a word signifying crushing, or grinding to powder, as grain is ground into flour between millstones, or earth to dust on traveled roads. The heart, that is, all the natural inclinations, affections, complacency, must be ground to powder, until nothing is left of their old form, shape, direction and consistency, and they are perfectly soft and pliable, and ready to take the new shape grace is pleased to give them.

"If any man shall come after Me let him deny himself and take up his cross." If any man should be a friend to God he must adore. He must not come claiming any right, or seeking any treaty, or stipulating, this much he is willing to concede to, but not that. He must yield all his intellect to God's teaching, his will to God's guiding, his affections to God's control. His whole heart must be contrite. He must have no views, no opinions, no aims, no affections, no thought of any kind, but such as God allows him; and God claims neither the rooting out of his natural affections nor the suspension of his mental operations, but only the control and mastery of them.

Contrition is the root of that "change of mind" (as it is expressed in the Greek Testament) or repentance, without which all shall perish, with those on whom the tower fell in Siloam.

Naturally, man lives in his senses. He satisfies his appetites; takes up with the ideas in vogue about him; gets his notions of fortune and misfortune from what happens the body, and sets himself to live as though life ended in the grave. All these thoughts and aims must be ground out of him by contrition. He must dwell as a stranger and pilgrim on earth, for his home is in Eternity. He must learn not to regard what the body fears or loves for its own sake; but to go right on, without shrinking from sickness or poverty, or censure, or death; or being elated at health or abundance, or applause, or promise of long life. He must change as completely as he changes, who from going downward begins to move upward. And this change implies the complete grinding into powder of the sensual heart, its self-complacency and carnal affections; or, as St. Paul calls it, "crucifying the man that once we were, in order to rise again, a new man in Jesus Christ."

Mary Magdalen is the example left us by inspiration to instruct us on this point. Before the Redeemer looked on her with pity, her chief delight had been in sensual enjoyment and vain display of her person and its ornaments. After, she forgot her appetite at the feast, and sat with streaming eyes and disheveled hair in the midst of an assembly she would once have loved to fascinate. But now her mind is so changed on those matters, that the humiliation costs her no effort, and her tears flow because it can be no compensation to Jesus for the licentiousness of her past undisciplined life. Her ambition that had been unbridled, and the warmth of her affection that had been wantonness, had been ground to powder by the grace of Jesus, and not annihilated, but transformed into the fine flour of unfeigned contrition and God-like love.

35 - The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

Jesus Christ, in being dragged through the streets of Jerusalem, suffered the apparent annihilation of His personal dignity, to atone for the obstinacy of our pride. "The Lord," says the prophet, "willed to crush Him in infirmity;" to crush Him, to grind Him to powder in all His outward seeming. Already He had annihilated the semblance of His Divinity in becoming man; the dignity of chief of a sect or school when He was betrayed and His disciples fled; the respect due to a well-meaning man, when he was seized as a felon, and now, as He is dragged and hooted at, He seems to lose the very semblance of manhood, and to become, in the estimation of the people, a wild beast. "The Lord willed to crush Him in infirmity."

My friends, unless we profit by His atonement, and partake of His contrition, we shall perish in the judgment. The dwellers in Sodom and Gomorrah, and the army of Pharaoh, which the waves buried, were at one time no nearer destruction than we. The fact that history records sins which we never committed is not going to save us. If the general bent of our inclinations and aims is toward earth, if our minds are set on money, and place, and pleasure now, there must be a change or we are lost. The old carnal heart must be crushed and ground to powder and a new one must take its place.

Yet, do not imagine that this contrition is to be effected, necessarily, with any tumult of sensible emotions, with noisy groans, and many sighs and tears. It may be done in the higher region of the soul, without any feeling whatever. Tears and smiles come and go, like sunshine and shadows over the surface of the ocean. Convictions are deeper and more abiding, like the waters that lie far down on the pearl beds below. One may be convinced that he has gone wrong, and wasted his life hitherto in trying to quench the thirst of his soul from broken cisterns that hold no water, without any vehement emotion or a single tear. Nay, he can see the truth so clearly, and resolve on a change of life so strongly, as to rejoice rather than weep, thinking rather of what he has found than of what he has lost. But, in every one there must be this change of mind or there is no salvation. Jesus, dragged through the streets by the mob, is our model of contrition. We must be, before God, what He was before men.

Another source of sin to us is false friendship; and, for this Jesus Christ denies Himself the solace of friendship that is true. "Then, all the Disciples leaving Him, fled away." There is no greater temporal blessing than a true friend: one who is sincerely virtuous; one who loves you too well to flatter you, or encourage you in wrong-doing. But such a one is so rare that the poet may well talk of grappling him with hooks of steel. Most friendships in the world are false, and hollow, and corrupting. Young people become friends, because each flatters the other's vanity--too often encourages his vices. In the butchery of souls that is going on in the world about us, all the time, the false friend plays a bloody part. He is the devil's right hand man in sins of rioting, gambling, drunkenness, and often bloodshed; in sins of disobedience to parents, frauds, thefts, that are to feed riots, in the nameless and loathsome abominations of impurity;

35 - The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

from the obscene word and wanton look, to the last extremity of brutish corruption. How many lives are wrecked and souls lost, not to seem rude, not to hurt a friend's feelings or forfeit his regard! This was why Jesus Christ allowed Himself to be deserted by His friends; "and leaving Him they all fled away,"--some to the right hand, some to the left. They stood by Him in the days of his popularity, and were ostentatiously of His retinue the day when the people strewed palm branches in His path, and shouted, "Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord." But, now, when the clouds have gathered on Him, "leaving Him, they fled away." There is no trusting any one for a friend who is false to God. The sooner we break with those who have encouraged us to sin, the better for us in every respect. They will soon leave us, if we do not leave them; and our Divine Redeemer, deserted by His disciples, calls upon us, in the most touching accents, to come away from His persecutors and share His desertion with Him.

036.

Thoughts on the Passion of Jesus Christ, Chapter III.

The Trial of Jesus

"Then the chief priests and the whole council sought false testimony against Jesus, that they might put Him to death." Matt. XXVI. 59.

They accused Him of being a blasphemer, and therefore without conscience; an impostor and seducer of the people; an enemy to the established government and of the public peace; and, though they proved none of these accusations, yet they established them in the minds of the people. They succeeded in robbing Him of His good name so completely that, had He not risen from the dead, what is called historical truth would have set Him down, for all time, as Tacitus writes, "The attempted founder of a detestable sect, who suffered for his crimes, under Pontius Pilate the Procurator of Judea."

He whom the Father sanctified by communication of His essentially holy nature, and sent into this world that He might make compensation to God for the outrages sin had put upon Him, even to the shedding of the last drop of His blood, is held a blasphemer! The True Light, enlightening every one that cometh into this world, is called a deceiver by the courts and by the mob. The Author of all law, and the Upholder of all government, is called seditious and rebellious; and the very Prince of Peace, who brought together Heaven and earth, and gave tranquility to all the children of men, is punished as a disturber of the public quiet. He submitted to this ignominy to atone for our sins of human respect, or those sins which we commit for the sake of the good opinion of men.

There is an indirect idolatry in this sin: that is, a worship of the creature instead

of tile Creator; for God alone, as we are fond of boasting, is our Master. In His judgment, alone, we stand or fall. It makes no difference in our happiness, whether this man or that one, or in fact all who know us, think well or ill of us--we will settle in Heaven or Hell, according to God's sentence, all the same for that. The majority of society held the Martyrs and Saints of their time in derision; and, now behold, they are numbered with the children of God: and there is awful truth in the old monkish saying, sung among college boys as a refrain, "Plato and Cicero, and the great master, Aristotle, have sunk into the depths of Hell." Only God's judgments are just, and, therefore, only they are entitled to respect from the rational soul. Hence, to seek the applause of men--to wait on their opinions, is to put man in the place of God, and so put mortal affront on Him who has said, "Thou shalt have no strange gods before me."

The prophet of old shattered the statue Dagon, and then had it borne, prostrate and mutilated, through the city, crying out, as it passed in sight of the people, "Behold whom you worshiped!" In the Day of Judgment that idol of public opinion will be shattered by the power of truth; and, as the nations stand, in cowering groups, awaiting each his sentence, their terror-stricken aspect will say, plainer than words, "Behold what it was you worshiped!" These were they before whom you were ashamed to confess Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of your faith. For fear that these poor wretches would call you simple, or superstitious, or credulous, you outraged God and did violence to your own sense of duty. You bartered your birthright, sold your liberty, dishonored your character of Christian, to propitiate these who, instead of being judges, themselves now await the Judgment.

Let us call to mind, for one moment, the sins for which Jesus Christ paid, by the loss of His good name. Denial of Faith was the one He specially warned us against. "Him that denies Me before man, will I deny before the Angels of God." Experience sadly shows, as each generation goes by, how needful was the warning. The itching after novelty, which has made heresiarchs, from Montanus to Luther and Renan, or apostates, from Julian to Voltaire, is one form of human respect. All those weeds, that are yearly thrown out of the Pope's garden: unfaithful priests and scandalous monks who are a wonder and sensation in some sect, like the Mexicans that figured lately in Mr. Beecher's church, in Brooklyn, until their rottenness appears, are usually the product of human respect. What is called the learned world in this country, although by this time convinced that the truth is not to be found in its integrity among the non-Catholic sects, still gropes vainly outside the Church, because it dare not face public opinion, and say, after all, the Reformation is a failure and a delusion; a movement away front Christianity, from truth, and from virtue; and the old way is the right way, although it was trodden by popes, and bishops, and monks, and nuns. Here and there, indeed, one man, like Newman or Burnet, gathers courage to see this and to say it; but the learned world, though it fears it, dare not see it and dare not say it.

36 - The Trial of Jesus

"For this was I sent into the world," said Jesus Christ to Pilate, "that I might bear witness to the truth;" and Pilate, true type of the great world, asks neglectfully, "What is truth?" and passed out of the room without waiting for an answer.

Sure enough; what is truth, to the busy, scheming world? Men of research and study tell us, sometimes with sly irony, sometimes with refreshing simplicity, that the love of truth is what urges them on in their investigations. Yet they love only those truths in which the public take concern, and which promote the views or interest of their clique or party; and, because they are not mere debauchers or misers like the mass of men, they delude themselves with the persuasion that their pride of life is devotion to truth. It is a long way from the topmost point of the earth's atmosphere to the blue sky above, where the stars are set: so there is a wide space between the coarse, vulgar, brutal crimes of the herd of pleasure-seekers and money-gathers, and the virtues that have God for motive and end. And this space is filled with works better than beastly--worse than Christian--the works of misdirected mind--of mind that was clear enough to see the beauty of truth, but not humble enough to worship it.

The Church does not teach us to denounce philosophy, science, poetry, art, as did Martin Luther and others--his companions; but she teaches that they are useless when they do not lead to God--fragments of truth, disjointed from the main body; as the world keeps them--jewels, sparkling among the mold and darkness of the charnel-house. The philosopher, the poet, the artist, all aglow with eagerness to build themselves that old heathen vanity--a monument more enduring than brass--each thinks his aspiration sublime, because he is looking down on those below him, instead of up at those above him. One may be above a multitude, and not very high after all. Look up, through ten thousand times ten thousand circles of creatures nobler than we, to the inaccessible Light near which stand the veiled Seraphim, and into which, in wave after wave of melody, the never-ending Sanctus eternally roils, and see there, O aspiring soul! the immortality for which you thirst; see there, where the enduring monument is to be built, and judge thence, and not by looking down upon the poor worms writhing and wriggling among their filthy pleasures and sordid enterprises, whether or not your aims are as lofty as they should be. Are not those who have understanding enough to seek better things than food and raiment for the body, all the more inexcusable if they seek not that for which they were created? Are not the outrages God endures from us, all the more keenly felt when wit frames them? And is not His wrath more justly kindled, when we not only do it but teach it? Oh! the terrific judgment that awaits the seducer of souls! The false priest, that gave out the oracles of Satan, from the Sanctuary of God; the venal writer, who said, "Go to! I must not let myself be cried down by critics," when he pandered to unjust prejudices, and sent forth what he knew was false; the recreant poet, who sang what was popular, even when it was vicious and obscene; all those, who having received not one but five talents from the Lord, consumed them

in ministering to their pride of life. Woe unto blind guides! for them Jesus Christ is reduced to shame and dishonor in the sight of men. Look at Him, in the purple garment, with the reed scepter in his hand and the crown of thorns upon his brow--see Him, when the servant strikes Him in the face, saying, "Answerest thou the High Priest so?" when they all buffet Him, and say, "Prophecy unto us, O Christ, who it was that struck Thee!" when they "pass before Him, wagging their heads, and exclaiming, "If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the Cross!" or when the multitude shout out, "Set free the robber! Crucify the Christ!"

Look on Him, you who sought to be esteemed learned and wise! You took your prejudice for information; rejected doctrines you never examined; put forth assertions on topics you had never studied; played Sir Oracle to a little clique of dupes: for this, the Infinite Wisdom is reputed foolish; mocked as idiotic. It is you that should have borne those scoffs. It is you and I that should have worn that purple; for when we thought we were wise, were we not fools? When we clung to the earth, grasping after the applause of men, and letting go the good opinion of God and His Angels, were we not quite devoid of reason; and did we not deserve the mockery that fell upon our Redeemer, Jesus Christ? Look upon Him, you that would lead parties, and intrigue, and lie, and cringe, and flatter, and fawn, to win distinction and outstrip rivalry. His friends fled; His enemies triumphant--looking in vain for one to console Him or partake of His grief. Thus He pays for the success you won at the price of manhood, and conscience, and justice, and truth; for the crimes by which thrones are reached and nominations procured. Because you would mount up, He is brought low; because you would domineer, He is made obedient unto death.

Look upon Him--cut off from the land of the living, with none to tell His generation--you that extol yourselves, and deny the rights of others, through senseless pride of birth. You know that you were conceived in iniquity, born in sin; that the blood of Adam is in your veins, and the stain of original guilt was on your soul at birth; yet you take honor to yourself, because, since Adam's time there have been men of your ancestry who did not live by honest toil, but seized upon, and reveled in, the fruits of the toil of other men; nay, as if for lack of all other excellences, you puff yourself up with pride, because you were not born black, and, through this pride, sin in arrogating to yourself what is not yours, and denying to others what is theirs. And, for this vain boasting and guilty arrogance, Jesus Christ, in His Divine nature, co-equal Son of the Eternal God, begotten before all ages--in His human nature, miraculously sprung from a pure Virgin of David's royal line--is treated as "a worm and no man; crucified, with savage ferocity, before His Mother's eyes. After this, O follower of Christ! never speak of your birth, but of your baptism; recount and emulate the deeds of those who are your kindred, not by blood, but by grace.

For our pride of virtue He was called impostor and blasphemer. The custom of

37- The Crown of Thorns

doing good deeds before men, to be seen of them, did not die out with the Pharisees. There are other ways of making a show of piety than broadening phylacteries and praying at street corners. Who is there, with eye so simple, as to see only God in the virtue he practices, and the virtue he does not practice? Who is there that does not give a little more to the poor and the orphan, when the subscription list is to be published, than he does when the poor and the orphan come privately to beg? Who is there that does not fold his hands more meekly, cast down his eyes more modestly, in the presence of God and the congregation, than in presence of God alone? Who is there who does not modulate his tone, and shape his language, when he speaks of the things of God, somewhat at least, according to what he thinks the piety of those whom he addresses? Who is the Israelite, without guile, who seeks no one's favor or esteem but God's? I do not say that he does not exist; because I believe he does. It may be the child kneeling before the altar, that you thought looked so stupid or the poor old woman you saw blessing herself at the holy water font as you came into church; but wherever he is, like the man that never went after gold nor hoped in money and treasure, he has done wonders in his life. He has learned the lesson of his Savior's ignominy. He has found out why Jesus Christ suffered Himself to be esteemed a felon. He has learned not to flout the world, and rail upon it, and gnash his teeth at it, in wrath that it does not worship him; but simply and candidly to hold it as naught, and walk in simplicity of heart before God. Who is that person? Whether we find him a priest at the altar, a ruler in his court, a nun in her cloister, a servant in his master's hall, we will praise him.

It is not you, reader, that are satisfied with being as pious as your neighbor; that study his conduct as solicitously as you do your own. It is not you either, who are so touchy about what this one thinks and that one says, and so anxious to explain matters, and defend yourself; and so fearful that what you did may be misconstrued. Nor you, madam, who, for appearance sake, do not dance round dances nor go to the theater in Lent, and are sorry that appearance exacts it. You have yet to learn why the Author of all holiness was called the vilest name the universe contains--a sinner. Learn it to-day, and put Him to shame no more.

037.

Editorial, *The Catholic Columbian*, February 13, 1875

The Crown of Thorns.

Every Friday in Lent is set apart in the Roman calendar to commemorate some instrument or mystery of the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Next Friday it is the crown of thorns, which is the object of devout meditation. The soldiers in charge of their divine Prisoner had received Him with the understanding that he was an imposter, and the more cruelly they used Him the better service they would render to

38 - Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was Crucified Dead and Buried

the influential classes of society. So, after Pilate had scourged Him, and handed Him over to them, they proceeded to work their will on Him by all the rude methods of mockery their wits suggested. They heard He said He was King, so they clothed Him in purple rags, and plating a crown of thorns, they crushed it down upon his Head until the thorns, piercing the flesh in many places, caused the blood to flow copiously from it in frightful streams. Jesus, therefore, came forth before the people on Pilate's balcony bearing the crown of thorns and the purple garment, and he said to them, "Behold the Man!" These brief words are all the Evangelist has to give to that part of the sacred passions. Remembering now that the Redeemer instead of us suffered, it is not difficult to tell which of our disorders He atoned for in allowing Himself to be subject to this torment and contumely. Doubtless it was for our sins of ambition. We need not go abroad into the warring ranks of society, or back among the desolated nations of times gone by, to know the terrible power and corresponding evil of this passion that stirs us up to keep in advance of others. More or less curbed, more or less concealed, it lurks in every heart. Hence hate, envy, calumny, ingratitude, murmuring. Hence false science, heresy, infidelity, blasphemy and atheism. Hence the great corruption of the present--the *desire to seem*. Hence in our own hearts those repinings, those soulless prayers and fruitless communions. We are worms and we would seem kings; He was a king, and to show us the folly of seeming He was willing to seem a worm. "Go forth, daughter of Sion, and behold your King crowned with a garland." Timid and faithless souls, see the crown you have set upon the brow of your King, your Redeemer, and sole true friend, by your fear of the world, your crouching before its criticisms and your fawning for its smiles; and gazing down upon the Majesty you have covered with shame, resolve henceforth to live for truth, which alone can set you free!

038.

Lecture, *The Catholic Columbian*, January 22, 1876

This series titled "Lecture in St. Joseph's Cathedral" was unsigned, incomplete, and poorly edited. But we are sure Bishop Rosecrans was the speaker, for on the first page of the December 11 issue is the notice, "The Bishop's lectures at the Cathedral Sunday evenings, draw appreciative audiences." The Sunday prior to publication, January 16, was probably its date of delivery.

LECTURE IN ST. JOSEPH'S CATHEDRAL.

No. VIII

"Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was Crucified Dead and Buried."

Crucifixion was the extreme punishment of the vilest and most despised criminals. "Take away the very name of the cross not only from the body of a Roman

38 - Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was Crucified Dead and Buried

citizen," says Cicero, "but from his thought, his sight, his hearing." "Not only is the fact and the suffering of such a punishment unworthy of a Roman citizen and a freeman, but the very possibility, the anticipation, the mere mention of it." Cicero speaks the mind of his age which was the same in sentiment and almost in years with that of Our Lord's passion. Yet to this ignominious death our sins condemned Jesus Christ. He had come upon earth on purpose to suffer this death; and the blind malice of the Jews, joined with the malicious weakness of Pilate inflicted it upon Him. So man proposes and God disposes throughout all ages. So man is left free and God is left master. So man plots and toils until his end is carried, and just when he thinks he has come out victor, he finds himself at the beginning of the real struggle and vanquished.

In the council of the leading Jews on the question of what was to be done with Jesus of Nazareth--his teachings and miracles and growing popularity--Caiaphas, the high priest of that year, had finished the discussion saying, "It is expedient that one man die for the people." This was true, adds the evangelist.

It was true in God's sense that one man, Jesus Christ, should die for all people. But it was not true in the sense of the politician Caiaphas, that it would be a stroke of policy to cut off the teacher of the new doctrine that the people might be restored to tranquil subjection to their wonted superiors, that there might be no collision with the Roman authority, that the city might go on prospering. That very policy of rank injustice was the cause that dug the trench about Jerusalem, that leveled its walls to the ground, that gave its people to the sword and to famine and, at the end of the siege, delivered over the survivors to exile and bondage. It is so in all ages, for God reigns in all. The nation or power which adopts for policy the maxim of expediency before justice, may have a show of prosperity for a little time, but in the end it will be crushed and ground to powder.

After their resolution to destroy Him had been formed, they sought opportunity to lay hands upon Him. They had all the machinery of the courts, police, and military in their hands. So they did not trouble themselves about what charges they would make against Him. They had witnesses ready to swear to any thing. Let them but catch Him and they would invent His crimes afterwards.

In the Paschal week, when the city was thronged with strangers, adding hundreds of thousands to the vast population of the city of David, the devil threw Judas Iscariot in their way. "What will you give me for betraying Him to you?" he asked. They had given their souls already to bring about His death. But they bargained with this sordid looking ruffian, until he set his own price--thirty pieces of silver; and they paid it to him chuckling under the mask of their rigid faces and dignified robes, over His cheapness. Do you not think, my brethren, that there are many professing Christians, aye and Catholics, too, who sell their share in Jesus Christ very cheap? Have not you and I, when passion moved, often sold Him thus?

38 - Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was Crucified Dead and Buried

There have been writers, since the disaster called the Reformation fell upon the Christian world, who have tried to defend the Jewish Sanhedrim in their treatment of Jesus Christ, by saying that they acted for the best, according to their own understanding of matters, and their honest interpretation of the law. But there never was a crime which could not be justified by such an argument. That is, there never was a crime committed by one man which was not instigated by a passion which is common to all men--to you and me. But this proves only that we are not the ones to judge. It does not prove that God may not judge and condemn.

Besides, the persecutors of Jesus Christ had renounced conscience from the beginning of the plot. They did not say this man is a dangerous criminal, and must be put out of the way--but this man is robbing us of our ascendancy, and must be crushed. Their intention was their own interest, and so all they did was sin. The light in them was darkness, and so all was darkness from first to last.

So when betrayed by Judas, He was dragged before them, [and] they took no pains to conceal that He was condemned to death already. In their eagerness to convict Him they brought in witnesses who contradicted each other; and although the charges of sedition and rioting were muttered about amongst them in the courts of both Annas and Caiaphas, yet their main reliance was on the charge of blasphemy, because He said, "I am the Son of God."

Just as now, when the powers of this world and darkness are combined in a special effort to blacken the Catholic Church--the calumnies about her being opposed to liberty, to enlightenment, to the true interests of the people fall to the ground in the discussion, and the real charge against her in the mouth of Protestant, atheist, and pagan, that she sets herself up to be infallible, is shown to be the only ground of opposition to her.

He would not deny that He had said He was the Son of God. On the contrary, He said, "You shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven." And the high priest rent his garments saying, "He hath blasphemed, what need have we further of witnesses? What think you?" And they all said, "He is guilty of death."

They gained their point and, like hypocrites of all ages, were very scrupulous in observing the law in all minor particulars.

It was "not lawful for them to kill anybody;" and so they made Pilate kill Him by their slanderous tongues. Pilate used all the wiles of a cunning politician to save Him. He argued with them--"why what evil hath He done?" He had Him mangled from head to foot by the bloody scourges, and then showed Him from the balcony, with the crown of thorns on His head to move them to compassion, and said: "Behold the man." But there was no heart that dared to show itself touched in the mob below. "Away with Him! Crucify Him!" was the only answer to the crafty and cruel appeal for pity. Then Pilate took water and washed his hands before the people saying, "I am innocent of the

38 - Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was Crucified Dead and Buried

blood of this just man; see to it you." And the crowd instead of being awed by the tremendous warning, shouted: "His blood be upon us and upon our children!"

Then they laid His Cross upon His shoulders, and amid howls and execrations and triumphant jeers, of the mocking scribes and high priests, drove him out to Calvary. On the way He fell to the ground three times from weariness and loss of blood. Then they compelled a man named Simon of Cyrene to carry His cross for Him, not from compassion, but for fear He might die before He could be nailed to it.

Certain women of the city followed Him as He went out, weeping over Him with blind but tender feeling. "Weep not over me," He said to them, "but over yourselves. I shall soon be beyond the reach of human cruelty. But you shall live to witness the horrible meaning of the impious invocation, "His blood be upon us and upon our children." Arrived on Calvary they stripped Him of His garments, which being glued to His body by clotted blood, tore from it strips of flesh in coming off, and set the half-closed wounds bleeding afresh. They laid Him on the cross, and stretching out His right arm drove a jagged nail through the flattened palm into the wood. So the left hand. And then they drove a long spike through His feet. As soon as he was fastened to it they raised the Cross into a vertical position, and letting the lower end fall into the hole dug for it fastened it there by filling round with dirt.

He hung there for three hours, alive. His mother was there weeping. Some of the other women were there also, with John the beloved disciple, but with hearts broken and without thoughts of hope. The great crowd that surged around, however, were of his enemies, who, untouched by compassion, mocked in all the ways that malice and cunning could suggest. "He saved others, let Him save Himself." "If thou be the Son of God come down from the Cross." And they kept up this revel of cruelty until bowing down His head, He gave up the ghost. Then they were satisfied. They thought that what was consummated was their triumph over one they had foolishly thought dead, and exultingly dispersed. The shrewdest of these had an after thought, and provided against all possible contingencies. What if his disciples should come by night and steal His body and give out He is risen from the dead! The last error would be worse than the first. So they got a guard from Pilate, and set it around the sepulchre, and retired from the won battle, gleefully. Darkness came on the earth, when the Son of God "bowed down His head," about the ninth hour or three o'clock, afternoon. "The veil of the temple was rent in twain," and "the graves opened and the dead walked forth." To the Christian statesman night eternal had settled upon the hopes of man. Ages had waited, in the shadow of death, kept alive by the hope of the Messiah's coming. Now He had come just as the sceptre had passed from Juda, the child of the Virgin, fulfilling all the prophecies. He had come, and they thought He was to restore the kingdom to Israel, particularly when the multitude spread their garments before Him, strewed palm branches on His way. But the politicians had laid hold of the matter, and made

39- He Descended into Hell and Rose from the Dead

short work of the restoration. It was all over now. The promised one was dead and buried in a guarded tomb. The disciples have denied Him--those who adhered to Him, cherish Him as a sad memory. The dream is over. Hope has fled. Let the darkness come, let the temple fall, let the dead come forth from their sepulchres, and henceforth rule the earth, as their own, for there is neither life nor hope on it any more.

The scribes and Pharisees went home to exult together at the overthrow of a movement and a man that had threatened their supremacy. Pilate told his wife that he had done all he could to save "that just man" about whom she "had dreamed," and that his hands were clear and sent a message to Augustus Caesar at Rome, "that the riot was quelled without any collision between the military and the rioters." A poor fellow from Nazareth had been thrown to them, as a bone to dogs; and they had made way with him by the cross, and were contented. He was dead now, and they had been granted a guard of soldiers to keep his grave, for fear the half-starved Galilean fishermen, his followers, who had scattered, and denied all connection with Him, might turn politicians, steal His body, and give out he has risen from the dead!

There was no danger of that, without the guard--but there was the guard to make assurance sure.

Tradition tells of Pilate that he was haunted by remorse from that hour--that he lost his office as Proconsul, and went back to Rome and thence to France, where he died in despair.

What became of the scribes and Pharisees we know from history. Those that survived were involved in the destruction of the city in the dispersion and captivity of its inhabitants. They saw the end of their policy in destroying the nameless Nazarene.

039.

Lecture, *The Catholic Columbian*, February 5, 1876

This series titled "Lecture in St. Joseph's Cathedral" was unsigned, incomplete, and poorly edited. But we are sure Bishop Rosecrans was the speaker, for on the first page of the December 11 issue is the notice, "The Bishop's lectures at the Cathedral Sunday evenings, draw appreciative audiences."

Lecture in St. Joseph's Cathedral

No. IX.

[He Descended into Hell and Rose from the Dead.]

Our divine Lord went down into hell with His divine nature of course, and His human soul. His body subsisting in the divine person was lying in the tomb from Friday night, until Sunday morning. If during that time any one of the Apostles had celebrated Mass, under the form of bread, after consecration, there would have been the

39- He Descended into Hell and Rose from the Dead

divinity and body of Jesus Christ, and under the form of wine the divinity and blood of Jesus Christ. The separation of the body from the blood represented by the separate consecration of the bread and wine to signify the death of the Lord was, during that time, a reality. In saying that Jesus went down, the creed expresses the visiting of those who were fettered by sin or its consequences, and so held back from mounting aloft to God, where all rational beings belong, in the common language of the time. The point of the article is not which way he went in space, but what class of persons he brought joy to. Spirits do not fill space, and all the disembodied souls from Adam, down, may have found room in the valley of the brook of Cedron. There were three classes of these disembodied spirits.

1st. Those which went out from their bodies in perfect union with God.

2nd. Those which separated from life in union, but not perfect union with God.

3rd. Those that went out separated from God, by mortal sin.

Life is a trial time. God creates us immortal and free, for endless happiness. But this happiness cannot be made our own, in any other way than by our free choice. We cannot be happy as the beasts of the earth, the earth itself, the sun, moon and stars are happy by fulfilling the Creator's will, blindly and without volition. We must feel that we have fairly won what we enjoy before we can rationally enjoy it.

Now we win merit by obeying God's law; by taking Him for our master, and doing what He commands as far as we can discover it. We are not accountable where we are innocently ignorant.

Those who lived before Moses were judged by what they knew from tradition, coming down from Adam, and from natural reason.

Those who lived under the law of Moses were judged by that law; and those who live under the Church, shall be judged by her definitions of the will of Christ.

Whoever, says St. Paul, have sinned without the law shall perish without the law; and whoever have sinned within the law shall perish by the law.

We Catholics have no need to stop and consider the assumption of old pagans and modern infidels that the primitive man was a savage, if not an ape or a monkey. Under the Church we do not grope in the dark. We are not forced to distort the annals of our race, or ignore fixed traditions. We know that the primitive man, even in his fallen state, had vast knowledge and high aspirations, and that he communicated much of these to his children and theirs. We know that barbarism came into the world with unchecked passions. Corruption, which takes possession of all the thoughts and imaginations of the heart, is the parent of ignorance. How can knowledge enter the mind that is occupied all the time with thoughts and projects of avarice, pride and lust?

There were doubtless many in the primitive times, like Abel, Seth, Enoch and Noe, who looked up to God, and served Him with clean hearts, looking forward to that woman whose Seed was to crush the serpent's head. And when these died they needed

39- He Descended into Hell and Rose from the Dead

no purifying. Moses and the prophets seemed to have their purgatory on earth in the persecutions and contradictions they sustained. Still they could not see God fact to face, or enter fully into His joy, until Jesus Christ would lead them there.

2nd. Many others, such as we are, died not wholly clean, not wholly foul. These had to stay farther away from God and suffer. Of this number there were doubtless many between Adam and Moses, and from Moses to our Lord, many within the circumcision and without it, who had honestly wished not to live at enmity with God, but at the same time to get all they could out of temporal goods that would gratify them, short of losing God's favor altogether. These were waiting sadly, painfully, but patiently.

The last class were waiting in torment and without hope: the perverters of the primitive tradition, the inventors of systematized idolatry, the giants of the old days, the conquerors and enslavers of their fellows. Cain and all his fellow murderers, the engulfed but not consumed Sodomites, were waiting but not expecting. Jesus Christ had no glad tidings for them. He brought glad tidings to the others. He gathered them together and prepared them for what was to take place in forty days, and joy reigned among them, unmingled now with pain.

At first sight, it does not appear so readily why the clause of the creed, "He descended into hell," is linked with the other, "the third day he rose from the dead." Yet the connection is proper and admirable. His going down into hell was no act of weakness or suffering. He did not go down as victim, but as victor. From the moment in which, "bowing down His head he gave up the ghost," He was free from "those that can kill the body." His triumph began where theirs ended. From that instant He was to die no more. So the acts of His triumph are linked together in the articles of the creed. "The Third day He arose from the Dead."

The fact of the Resurrection is the first consideration. The meaning of that fact is the second. The fact is established by the concurrent testimony of witnesses, hostile, indifferent, and friendly.

The chief priests and scribes were afraid of some imposture such as they themselves were wont to practice, and they set a guard on the tomb. This very guard, composed of soldiers to whom the internal squabbles of the Jews were a matter of the utmost indifference, witnessed the disappearance of the body. His Jewish enemies bore witness to it when they offered to bribe the guards to get them to say that while they slept His disciples came and stole Him away. Some of the most touching things in the Gospel are told in the accounts of His meeting with His friends and disciples during the forty days that followed His Resurrection.

The first one He spoke to after rising, was Mary Magdalene. She had come to the sepulchre very early in the morning with spices to anoint the corpse. As she, with the mother of James and Salome, drew near to the place, they began to think of what the

39- He Descended into Hell and Rose from the Dead

eagerness of their love had made them forget before, how should they roll away the stone which sealed up the sepulchre. But reaching the spot they found the stone removed and the guard fled. For when the guard had seen Him come forth from the grave with a countenance like lightning and garments white as snow, they were stricken with terror, and fell on the ground like dead men--and as soon as they recovered had fled away in fear.

Stooping down to look into the tomb, all at once they beheld two angels standing by them who said, "Why seek you the living among the dead? Go tell His disciples to meet Him in Galilee."

This, Mary reported back to St. Peter, who with John, came and found the sepulchre empty. And Mary returned once more to the place, to weep over the spot where she had seen Him laid. There again the angels met her and asked her, "Woman why weepest thou?" And she answered "because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him." Then turning around she was Jesus, who asked her again why she wept: and she, taking Him for the gardener, said: "Sir if thou hast taken Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." Then Jesus turned to her and said with His own voice--that voice that long ago she had heard, through her tears--say: "many sins are forgiven thee, because thou hast loved much," her name, "Mary," and the whole current of her emotions changed from grief to joy, she cried out, "Rabboni," or "Master," and made a motion which led Him to exclaim: "touch Me not; for I have not yet 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 to your God." Then Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples: "I have seen the Lord and He said these things to me."

The very Sunday of His Resurrection, Jesus appeared to two of His disciples, on the road to Emmaus--a distance of two miles from Jerusalem.

"Why do you look so sad?" He said to them. They, not knowing Him, answered, "Are you a stranger in Jerusalem, not to have heard what has happened there within three days--about Jesus of Nazareth--a man mighty in word and works whom the chief priests have crucified? We had hoped that He was to restore the reign to Israel; and now come reports that He is no longer in the grave, but has risen." Then Jesus rebuked their faint-heartedness by the words: O foolish and slow of heart to believe; was not this suffering of the Christ the path to His glory, pointed out by the prophets? And beginning from Moses, He explained to them all that had been written of Him in the sacred scriptures, until they felt their hearts burning within them as they walked along the road. When they reached Emmaus they urged Him to remain all night with them. He refused, but ate with them, and they "knew Him in the breaking of bread when He left them."

Eight days afterwards the disciples were together and Thomas with them, Jesus

40 - The Resurrection

entered through the closed doors, and made Thomas touch His body, and put his hand into the wound in His side. And Thomas, obeying, said, "My Lord and my God."

He appeared again to the Apostles at the sea of Tiberius, where He instructed Peter on his duties as head of the Church.

He showed Himself to them also many other times, says the evangelist. But His last appearance before His Ascension was on the Mount of Olives, where He gave them His last orders, saying: "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth. Going therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and lo, I am with you all days, even unto the consummation of the world."

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Lecture, *The Catholic Telegraph*, April 22 and April 29, 1863

A LECTURE

BY THE RIGHT REV. DR. ROSECRANS, IN ST. PETER'S CATHEDRAL, ON EASTER SUNDAY.

[The Resurrection]

Human science can accomplish much. It can analyze the forces of material nature and enslave even the mightiest of them to the uses of man. But it cannot create life or baffle death. Though but the twinkling of an eye is consumed in the passage from life to death, yet that moment suffices to put a measureless gulf between the reach of science and the dead. When in the sick room the heart grows still, when the mirror held over the mouth of the invalid by the watcher is not clouded, when there is no tremor in the flesh, no quivering along the nerves, the physicians pack up their instruments, the nurses gather up their phials, sponges and napkins and clear the room. Close the eyes, you that were the oldest friend, raise the windows to air the room. That is a corpse now to be buried. Wealth, influence, friendship, science, skill, can never make that heart throb again. God alone could give it life. He alone could start the blood, leaping warm through the veins again, light up the eyes once more, and make the white lips, now clammily compressed over half of the projecting teeth, move and utter, "I have passed through the shadow and come back."

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ, then, was clearly the work of God.

His enemies had made sure of His death. The Chief priests had stood by and seen His side opened with a lance, and had marked the blood and water that gushed forth from it. Pilate had heard the centurion's report of His death, and had given His body to Joseph of Arimathaea.

The Apostles, skulking in their hiding-places, had heard all the particulars of it from St. John and the pious women who witnessed His long agony; and a guard of Roman soldiers, under the inspection of the Chief Priests, had been placed to watch His

40 - The Resurrection

sepulchre.

For Him to return to life would demonstrate that He was master of the power of God. If He could resuscitate that bruised body, He would show that its weakness was voluntarily assumed; if He could heal those gaping wounds, He would make every blood-drop a rose in His wreath of triumph.

This was precisely what He had promised all along to do in proof that He was the Son of God.

When, as the son of Mary and reputed son of Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth began to preach a new doctrine in the villages of His native province, He proved His authority to say what He said by special miracles on the sick, the lame and the blind in the districts where He preached. But after He had acquired a name in Jerusalem, He invariably appealed to the great miracle of His resurrection as the seal of His authority and proof of His Divinity.

Thus we read in the 18th chapter of St. Matthew that after He had declared Himself Lord of the Sabbath, and solemnly asserted that He cast out devils by the power of God, "Some of the Scribes and Pharisees answered Him, saying, 'Teacher, we wish to see a sign from Thee.'" You say You are Lord of the Sabbath; You say You can cast out devils with the power of God, and that You have brought upon us the kingdom of God. Now prove it by doing before our eyes some work of God. We wish to see a sign from Thee.

Jesus answered and said to them: "A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh for a sign, and a sign shall not be given to it but the sign of Jonas the Prophet. For as Jonas was three days and nights in the belly of the fish, so shall the son of man be three days and nights in the bosom of the earth."

You seek no sign from sincere desire to be convinced, but to cavil at. I will give you, therefore, no sign but one beyond the reach of cavil--My resurrection from the dead.

On another occasion, recorded in John, ii., He took a whip of small cords and drove from the temple the traffickers in money and sheep and oxen out of the temple, saying, "Take these things hence and make not my Father's house a house of traffic." And the Jews asked Him, "What sign showest Thou to us that Thou doest these things?" You assume the right to denounce customs allowed by the authorities, and to call this temple the House of Your Father. Now, whence have You this right? If from God, show us the sign that authorizes You.

Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple and in three days I will build it up." You ask a sign of my right to take the name and authority of the Son of God. I give it to you. Take my body, bind it, scourge it, crucify it, bury it; and when you have done your worst upon it I will raise it up in three days.

When He wrought His other miracles He seems to have been actuated by some

40 - The Resurrection

particular motive belonging to the circumstances of each. Thus at the nuptial feast He changed water into wine because He could not deny any request from His Mother. At Naim He commanded the widow's son to return to life out of compassion for her tears. He raised Lazarus from the dead for the love He bore him, and his two sisters, Mary and Martha.

He often enjoined secrecy on those on whom he wrought His other miracles. His rising from the dead was not to be concealed, but was to be the test miracle that was to establish His divinity, and the truth of all He taught.

He appeared before the Jewish nation and the world, saying, "I am the way, the truth and the life," the fulfillment of the ancient types, the Messiah of whom the prophets spoke, the Redeemer of men; I am the Son of God, co-equal with Him, to Whom belongs all power in Heaven and on earth, the teacher of truth to Whom every intellect must yield, unreasoning, the dictator of law that every will must obey, the judge unto Whom every knee must bow. In proof of this, I will show that I am the author of life and death. I will deliver Myself into the hands of wicked men. They shall blacken My good name, outrage My person, destroy My life, scatter My disciples. And when their power to do harm has been utterly exhausted, I will baffle them all. I will take up the life I laid down. I will change My ignominy into glory, gather again My dispersed disciples, plant My Church to bury the synagogue, crush Gentilism and live on through the ages triumphing as I have triumphed over human craft and violence to the end of time.

With this appeal to His resurrection as the test of His divinity almost upon His lips, Jesus Christ died. On His resurrection, therefore, hung the endorsement of God. If He rose, God was made responsible for all He said. If not, then He was an imposter, His miracles deceptions, His virtues hypocrisy, His doctrine a snare. "If Christ be not risen," says St. Paul, "our preaching is vain, your faith is vain."

The Chief Priests and Scribes understood this well, and took cunning precautions against any attempt at fraud. "We remember," said they to Pilate, "that while He was alive this seducer said, 'after three days I will arise'; order the sepulchre to be watched, therefore, lest His disciples come and steal the body, and give out that He is risen, and so renew and redouble the old tumults, making the last error worse than the first." The Roman Governor, detesting their malignity but deferring to their position, told them, "Go, you have guards, watch it as you choose." They set the watch upon it speedily and carefully, thus furnishing one more illustration of the truth that they who undertake a contest against God always work towards His ends.

Joseph's brothers, to prevent him from ever reaching a position in which they would have to bow to him, sold him into Egypt, where they were afterwards to come and beg him on their knees for bread. Haman, the Syrian, after plotting destruction of Ester's brother, was driven by what seemed the natural course of events, to hang

40 - The Resurrection

himself upon his own gibbet.

So, while the Apostles were too bewildered to watch and the pious women dare not venture near the tomb by night, the enemies of Jesus surrounded His sepulchre with incontestable witnesses of His resurrection in their eagerness to make Him appear false in the promise on the fulfillment of which He had solemnly rested all His claims to authority.

They knew perfectly well that if the opinion of His resurrection got abroad among the people, their prestige was at an end, and they must appear before the world in their true character of cruel hypocrites and calumniators, gibbeted in undying infamy, and hence their solicitude and the guard. So, precisely, the Apostles regarded the fact of the resurrection when they had recovered from the stupor into which surprise and grief had thrown them.

You wonder at their slowness to remember His promise to rise, and His foretelling them His sufferings. Yet, well considered, it is not so marvelous, since the Apostles were but men.

After leaving their nets and avocations to follow Him, drawn by a charm so sweet that they did not want it explained, they had lived on in a state of joy and wonder ever new. The sight of His miracles, the sweetness of His conversation, the wisdom of His doctrines, was every moment giving them fresh delight, and left them no time to analyze their own thoughts, to understand their own aspirations, to know what spirit they were of. They felt they had entered upon a new and glorious era. The morning breath of the opening age thrilled them, and like all people on the threshold of mighty changes, their hopes were vague, bright visions, without settled plan or aim. They heard Him speak of rising from the dead in proof of His divinity, but as they believed that He was Christ, the son of the living God, already, they scarcely heeded what he said about it, as of something in which they were not concerned. Hence, when they came up to Jerusalem for the last time in His company, with the understanding that then all things were to be fulfilled that were written concerning the Son of Man, they felt sure He was going to have a triumph. They did not note what He said of being betrayed and suffering. That must refer, they thought, to some attempts of the Scribes and Pharisees, which He would foil. They might stir up some bad men to seize upon Him and harm Him. But the people would rise up and rescue Him, and by enthroning Him inaugurate the new age.

They were sure of this when the multitude met Him with palm branches, strewed their garments in his path and cried Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He who cometh in the name of the Lord. But when on Thursday night they found that instead of eluding His betrayer He was captured, instead of being defended He was assailed by the people, instead of being enthroned as a king He was crucified as a felon, their hearts withered away within them and their hopes went down into His sepulchre.

40 - The Resurrection

It is all over, they murmured through their tears to one another in their hiding places, the vision of beauty is vanished in blood, the sky of the future is black with the shadow of the cross. Go back to your cabins, hunt up your nets and boats, fishermen of Galilee. You had thought it was He that was to redeem Israel, and you were to be princes in His kingdom of Justice. Go back to your trades. Caesar shall be king, Pilate Proconsul, the Scribes and Pharisees rulers, and as of old injustice shall grow fat, corruption run riot in high places, and the poor struggle hopelessly on to their only rest, the grave.

Thus they all felt the pressure of a grief that tears cannot relieve, of a despair that made the thought of the future intolerable, and drove out of their minds even the remembrance of His promise to rise again.

When Mary Magdalen and Mary the mother of James and Salome coming with sweet spices at early dawn, found the tomb open, and were told by the man clothed in a white robe, "He is not here; He is risen," instead of giving way to joy, they went out and fled from the sepulchre, for fear and trembling had seized upon them.

And when they told these things to the Apostles, their words seemed as idle tales. Still, Peter and John thought best to examine for themselves, and they ran hastily to the place; and Peter stooping down at the mouth of the sepulchre saw the linen clothes that had shrouded the corpse lying by themselves, but yet returned only wondering in himself at what had happened. The two disciples going to Emmaus, to whom Jesus appeared, were simply amazed at the stories told about the body disappearing from the tomb; and although as they walked with Him, and heard His explanation of the Prophets, they felt their hearts burning within them; still they did not dare to raise their thoughts, even for a moment, to the truth.

At last, however, when He had appeared to the women, to Peter, to John, to the two disciples on their journey, to the eleven locked in the upper room together, conviction was forced upon them. As the word "now is the Lord risen indeed" passed from lip to lip, every heart grew tremulous, as if rising and falling on the waves of a great ocean of joy, and tears as it were the overflow of that ocean, moistened every eye. Their joy was not the selfish pleasure of having one more among them, nor the unselfish one of feeling that He could suffer no more, but higher and more spiritual in the thought that their faith in His divinity was sealed, their hopes of a golden era in the glad future sprang with his body from the tomb.

So when St. Thomas, the most incredulous of all, was convinced by seeing the print of the nails in His hands and feet, and by touching the wound in His side, the confession of his faith was not, "I believe Thou are risen," but, "My Lord and my God." To the Apostles as to the scribes and Pharisees, Christ is risen meant Christ is God.

In a sermon, Acts xiii., St. Paul declares that God raising Jesus from the dead fulfilled what is promised in the second Psalm, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." Not as though Jesus Christ, who was begotten before ages, became His

40 - The Resurrection

Son by the Resurrection, but was demonstrated to the universe as His Son in that miracle. And in Rom. 1,4. he says that Jesus was predestined the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead, that is, from all eternity it was predestined that He should be demonstrated the Son of God by His resurrection, according to His own saying.

In the Acts of the Apostles, preaching the doctrine of Christ is called bearing witness to His Resurrection. In filling the place from which Judas had fallen, St. Peter said that some one must be chosen who could be a witness of His resurrection; and St. Luke says the Apostles, with much power, bore witness to the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hence, when the Apostles, fulfilling the Redeemer's prophecy, bore His name before kings and princes, from Rome, where St. Peter and Paul fell, to India, where St. Thomas was put to death, their language was not called preaching, but testimony, *martyrion*, and they and their converts who were dragged before tribunals and to the gibbet are not named philosophers or opinionists, but witnesses of the Resurrection. They had not controversies to hold with philosophers and theorizers of any sort, but only to say we know that Jesus Christ was crucified and is risen.

If He is risen He is God. If God, His authority takes the ground from under the feet of all speculation and conjecture. Kings and statesmen, philosophers, poets and priests are on a level before Him; they must renounce what they know already, and like newly-born infants, desire to be fed with the doctrine which Christ has commissioned us to teach.

Hence, it was the practice of the Apostles to baptize, without further delay, all those who professed their faith in the resurrection. They reserved further instruction on the seven sacraments, and especially the Eucharist, to a time of more leisure.

"Here is water," said the eunuch to Phillip, "what hindereth me to be baptized?" and Phillip said, "If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest;" and he answering, said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God;" and he baptized him. Acts 8, 36.

This baptism of those who would acknowledge their faith in the resurrection is doubtless what is meant by the baptism in the name of Jesus only.

Hence, you see how it is that Christianity was to be established on the ruins of buried Judaism, and the shattered idols of the Gentiles as a simple fact. Though in nothing opposed to human reason, yet it was not to be indebted for its triumph to human reason; though crushing no innocence and human affection, it was not to appeal to any human affection or interest; though promoting pre-eminently social prosperity and the stability of just laws, it asked no aid from those who loved the one, no protection from those who administered the other. Christ crucified and risen was all the Apostles had to preach to Jews and Gentiles. In the cross was all they had to glory. Whoever believed in Christ was afterwards instructed to do all things whatsoever Jesus had commanded, but was called upon for no new exercise of faith. His faith in the

40 - The Resurrection

divinity of the teacher was belief of all that He taught.

This is the attitude of the Catholic Church before the world today. The authorized successors of the Apostles preach Christ crucified and risen still before the great and small of the earth, as the corner-stone of faith, as the sole reason for believing her doctrines and obeying her laws.

I believe the Catholic Church because Christ, who appointed her to teach, and is risen from the dead, is God. I obey the laws of the Church, keep fast and feast at her dictation, because Jesus Christ, who appointed her to teach all things whatsoever he commanded, is God.

I submit to her will and intellect not because her dogmas are sublime and clear, not because her doctrines are consoling, her rites majestic, her sacraments strengthening, but simply and solely because Christ, who was crucified, is risen again. Thus, and thus only, can I escape my own weakness, reach and grasp something to rely upon, outside of myself and others erring as I.

The spirit asks for unwavering faith. Those who cry the "Bible," can never give you anything more than their opinion, and leave you still to depend on the flickering light within yourselves, giving you no reason why you have not as good a right to differ from them as they from their predecessors. But the authority of the Church is a rock on which the soul can stand fast amid the eddying ocean of human doubt and opinion, and rest secure while those to whom the cross is folly, one after another, go down under its dark waves, leaving no sign.

The doctrine of the Resurrection is no isolated point of Christian teaching, but the cornerstone of all. That is not Christianity whose adherents, when asked why they believe in this or that article of their faith, cannot answer, "I believe because Christ rose from the dead, because Christ is God."

Those do not rightly understand the divinity of Christ who, while imagining they believe in Him, think that His plan for teaching mankind failed, and left men in damnable idolatry for 800 years, until a Saxon monk appeared as the destroyer of the past, or who claim the right to reject one jot or tittle of the doctrines He teaches.

They must receive all or none--the twelve articles of the creed, the seven Sacraments, the real presence, the sacrifice of the Mass, purgatory, worship of saints and images, all with one act--I believe all that Christ teaches through His Church, or they can have none at all.

Those outside of the Church may believe many truths of Christianity, but they can believe none for the right reason: because Christ is risen.

He is the only world-teacher and the only world-reformer. If that feverish desire for a brighter era that now makes the passions of men so easily be stirred by innovators, that now hangs a cloud surcharged with revolution over each nation, is ever to be satisfied, if God, in His mercy, will give Himself time to do anything before coming in

40 - The Resurrection

His wrath, it will be by moving the hearts of the people to return to their old-time loyalty to the ancient Church, to build up the shattered altars that civilized their fathers, and burying in oblivion the mad dream of ten generations, that struggled to have Christianity after having declared Christ a failure, bow once more to the living authority of the risen Redeemer, wielded by His spouse, the Church.