

DAY 38.

The veil of the Temple is rent in two.

THEN was the veil of the temple rent in two, the earth trembled, the rocks were burst asunder, the sun was darkened. All these marvels and wonders took place, that both the heavens and the earth might reprove the unbelief of the Jews and all unbelievers, and that in like manner they might bear witness, by such clear signs, that Christ crucified was their Lord and God. For at the terrible cry of their Creator all creatures trembled and groaned, desiring themselves to die with their Maker, as if they were wearied with serving any longer rebellious and ungrateful men, and that they were ready to fight for Him Who made them, and avenge His wrongs. And as a proof of this indignation, the sun changed color, the earth trembled, and all irrational creatures, as if seeking for vengeance, were moved by reason of their Creator. See here how great is His power, and strength, and majesty, Who but just now seemed so powerless, weak and abject—He showed forth a sign in heaven to show that He was the very Lord of heaven. He showed forth a sign on earth, to proclaim and announce that the earth was the work of His hands, and that it was subject to Him, and obeyed Him. He also showed forth a sign in the temple, to prove that He was above the law, above all ceremonies, above all sacrifices, and that with Him lay the authority to abolish the law, even as His, had been the power to establish the same. Therefore it was that He rent the temple veil in two, that the naked truth might be laid open, which thus far had laid hidden under the veil and coverings of the latter; and, at the same time, that He might declare by this very fact, that mysteries, and figures, and prophecies had all been fulfilled and unveiled, when He Himself, the Eternal Truth, for Whose sake all things had been written, made Himself manifest on the Cross to the whole world. Moreover, by the rending of the veil, He uncovered the Holy of holies, and showed that every kind of sacrifice that had been offered with the blood of sheep had now become old, and was abolished, and had lost all holiness. For

Christ, the High Priest, entered by His own Blood into the now uncovered Holies, and offered Himself without the city upon the Altar of the Cross openly for all the people, being made a general and everlasting sacrifice to His Father for all mankind, above all, for those who sought after and desired Him.

Now, therefore, I pray, let us compassionate our Lord God, Who made us; otherwise the hard rocks and the elements will condemn us, for these had compassion for their Maker. With devout tears and loving sighs let us beat our breasts, and say: "Oh! what have we done, what have we done?" He was, indeed, the very Son of God, and we sinners have crucified Him. Let us measure the greatness of our iniquities by the power and dignity of Him Whom we have offended. For it is not a patriarch, or a prophet, or some common king of the Israelite people, whom we have despised; but it is Jesus Christ the Son of God, the King of kings, Whom we have crucified afresh, Whose Blood we have shed, and Whom we have pressed out, like the grape, under the heavy burden of our sins. With all sorrow, therefore, and devotion, and compassion, let us celebrate His funeral, Who was slain for our sins, and Whom we confess that we ourselves have slain. If it be possible, let us weep with all our members, for we are provoked to this, even by the creatures that have no sense. Oh! who can understand the pain and torment of the tearing asunder of that knot, which that Holy Ghost had knit together, and in which Christ's noble Soul had been bound up with His worshipful Body in love, even as the lover with the loved one. Who can marvel enough at that obscure eclipse of Christ's bright eyes, which by their look had given light to the earth, and, like two shining stars of the firmament, had enlightened the world with their rays, but which now have become darkened in the black cloud of death. In truth it was no marvel that darkness covered the face of the whole earth, when the Sun of Justice was taken away from the earth, and had closed His eyes.

O marvelous organ! O delightful harp! O sweet sounding trumpet, you are living voice of Christ Jesus, whose melody has given gladness to the Father, and joy beyond measure to the angels of heaven, whose blessed sound has taught the living, and raised the dead, and healed the sick, and refreshed the hungry, and put the demons to flight, and which still stirs up the slothful and them who sleep, and arouses them to action; who, I ask, has imposed on You this hurtful silence, that, deprived of Your honeyed words and sweet and pleasant sound, we should now have fallen so wretchedly into the sleep of death?

O glorious breast of Christ! O couch of God! O ark of heaven, where are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge, and are contained all riches of virtues and of graces, and which breathes the spirit of life into the face of all creatures; who has taken away Your life?

O blessed hands! the instruments of the most high Creator, which by your very touch have cast out all diseases, and by which benediction has been given to the world, who has dared so inhumanly to fasten you to the Cross, forgetful of that great salvation, which has been brought through you? O Jesus Christ, meekest Lamb, why are these cruel wounds in Your hands? He answered by the Prophet: "These are the wounds by which I was wounded in the house of those who loved Me;" that is, of those who by right and deservedly ought to have loved Me, and who seemed to love Me.

O sacred feet of our Lord Jesus! Columns of the temple of God, founded upon the bases of justice, polished, and adorned with the capitals of charity. O feet that have never wandered from the path of truth, but by your walk have shown to all the way of the highest perfection, and have left to all for their everlasting instruction the footprints of double love; who has made you so stiff, so immovable? Who is it that has not feared to wound you, before whom that blessed lover Magdalen, obtained so

rich a grace, beneath whom the sea stood still, and offered a solid path for them who walked on! The very elements, as was fitting, here paid you reverence, and cruel men have nailed you to the Cross!

O glorious Body of Christ Jesus! precious ciborium of God, where the temple of the most holy and adorable Trinity is marvelously constructed, made by the mystery of the Holy Ghost out of the excellent nature of the most pure and noble Virgin Mother, adorned with the beauty of all virtue, who has so pitiably destroyed you, and laid you low, and cast you down even to the ground? O synagogue of the Jews! which so many times has turned aside in shameless impudence from the loving embraces of your lawful husband, God the Most High and Mighty, and has been polluted by strange men and false idolators; you have looked even upon this fair Joseph with lustful eyes, and has desired to embrace and touch a simple man, not believing Him to be the Son of God. But this Joseph is spotless and innocent, nor has He ever hearkened to your pestilential voice, nor given faith to your false words, nor come down to you from the Cross; but as a proof of His inviolate innocence, He has left His torn garment in your hands, and has fled naked out of your filthy bed-chamber unto the Father, choosing rather to suffer the loss of His garment, that is, of His Body, than to stain His Soul. O Jerusalem, and all you Israelites, who by the light of faith have reached unto the knowledge of God, and who yet have crucified your Lord and King by your deeds of evil, shed tears, weep and mourn. For what was once the place of peace, is now the valley of wickedness and the plain of battle and dissension; what was once the holy city, is now the hateful den of thieves; what was once the chosen people, is now cast away and accursed, as murderers before God. Behold the innocent Blood of your Brother, which you have taken upon your own heads, and which you have cruelly shed, cries loudly from the earth to the Father of heaven against you. Sprinkle your heads with ashes, put mourning garments upon you, for in the midst of you the Saviour of the people of Israel has been slain. Let your eyes fail and grow dim for weeping, for you have rejected the only Son of the Most High King.

Look now, O man, on the face of Christ your Lord, on which the angels gaze with delight unutterable; see how it is all disfigured, and pale, and filthy; and how there is no more beauty in it. Turn here and there Christ's sacred Body, and from the top of His head to the sole of His feet, you will find nothing but wounds and blood: yet, at the same time, impress upon your heart this disfigured image of your Redeemer. Let His pitiable face be ever before your eyes, and let it be so fixed in your feelings and thoughts, that you may utterly forget all vanities.