

Eclipse of the Sun

Second and Third Word of Jesus on the Cross.

A little hail had fallen at about ten o'clock,—when Pilate was passing sentence,—and after that the weather cleared up, until towards twelve, when the thick red-looking fog began to obscure the sun. Towards the sixth hour, according to the manner of counting of the Jews, the sun was suddenly darkened. I was shown the exact cause of this wonderful

phenomenon; but I have unfortunately partly forgotten it, and what I have not forgotten I cannot find words to express; but I was lifted up from the earth, and beheld the stars and the planets moving about out of their proper spheres. I saw the moon like an immense ball of fire rolling along as if flying from the earth. I was then suddenly taken back to Jerusalem, and I beheld the moon reappear behind the Mountain of Olives, looking pale and full, and advancing rapidly towards the sun, which was dim and over-shrouded by a fog. I saw to the east of the sun a large dark body which had the appearance of a mountain, and which soon entirely hid the sun.

The centre of this body was dark yellow, and a red circle like a ring of fire was round it. The sky grew darker and the stars appeared to cast a red and lurid light. Both men and beasts were struck with terror; the enemies of Jesus ceased reviling him, while the Pharisees endeavoured to give philosophical reasons for what was taking place, but they failed in their attempt, and were reduced to silence. Many were seized with remorse, struck their breasts, and cried out, 'May his blood fall upon his murderers!' Numbers of others, whether near the Cross or at a distance, fell on their knees and entreated forgiveness of Jesus, who turned his eyes compassionately upon them in the midst of his sufferings. However, the darkness continued to increase, and everyone excepting Mary and the most faithful among the friends of Jesus left the Cross. Dismas then raised his head, and in a tone of humility and hope said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when thou shalt come into thy kingdom.' And Jesus made answer, 'Amen, I say to thee, This day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.' Magdalen, Mary of Cleophas, and John stood near the Cross of our Lord and looked at him, while the Blessed Virgin, filled with intense feelings of motherly love, entreated her Son to permit her to die with him; but he, casting a look of ineffable tenderness upon her, turned to John and said, 'Woman, behold thy son;' then he said to John,



'Behold thy mother.' John looked at his dying Redeemer, and saluted this beloved mother (whom he henceforth considered as his own) in the most respectful manner. The Blessed Virgin was so overcome by grief at these words of Jesus that she almost fainted, and was carried to a short distance from the Cross by the holy women. I do not know whether Jesus really pronounced these words, but I felt interiorly that he gave Mary to John as a mother, and John to Mary as a son. In similar visions a person is often conscious of things which are not written, and words can only express a portion of them, although to the individual to whom they are shown they are so clear as not to require explanation. For this reason it did not appear to me in the least surprising that Jesus should call the Blessed Virgin 'Woman,' instead of 'Mother.' I felt that he intended to demonstrate that she was that woman spoken of in Scripture who was to crush the head of the serpent, and that then was the moment in which that promise was accomplished in the death of her Son.

I knew that Jesus, by giving her as a mother to John, gave her also as a mother to all who believe in him, who become children of God, and are not born of flesh and blood, or of the will of man, but of God. Neither did it appear to me surprising that the most pure, the most humble, and the most obedient among women, who, when saluted by the angel as 'full of grace,' immediately replied, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word,' and in whose sacred womb the Word was instantly made flesh,—that she, when informed by her dying Son that she was to become the spiritual mother of another son, should repeat the same words with humble obedience, and immediately adopt as her children all the children of God, the brothers of Jesus Christ. These things are much easier to feel by the grace of God than to be expressed in words. I remember my celestial Spouse once saying to me, 'Everything is imprinted in the hearts of those children of the Church who believe, hope, and love.'