

A Glance at the Obduracy of the Pharisees

How obdurate and obstinate the priests and the Pharisees of the Temple were, may be discovered from the small esteem in which they held the distinctions bestowed upon the Holy Family.

First Joachim's offering was rejected; but after some months both his own and his wife's were, by God's command, received.

Joachim was admitted even into the presence of the Holy of Holies and he, as well as Anne, was—though unknown to each other—led into the passage under the

Temple. There they met, Mary was conceived, and priests awaited them at the entrance of this cave under the Temple—all that took place by God's command. The sister of Lazarus's mother was her teacher and nurse. Her whole manner of acting was so remarkable, so marvelous, that I have seen great rolls written by aged priests about her. I think they still lie hidden with other writings.

Then came the wonderful manifestations at Joseph's espousals and the blossoming of his rod, the accounts of the Three Kings and of the shepherds, the Presentation of Jesus, Anna's and Simeon's testimony, and the teaching of Jesus at the age of twelve in the Temple.

But all this, the priests and Pharisees noticed not. Their mind was preoccupied by business and court affairs. Because the Holy Family lived in voluntary retirement and poverty, they were forgotten in the crowd. The more enlightened, however, such as Simeon, Anna, and others, knew of them.

But when Jesus appeared and John bore witness to Him, the teaching of the Pharisees was so directly contradictory that, even if the signs of His coming had not been forgotten by them, they would certainly not have made them known. Herod's reign and the Roman yoke had so involved them in quarrels and intrigues that their taste for spiritual things was weakened. They did not esteem John's testimony, and they soon forgot him after he was beheaded. They cared little for the teaching and miracles of Jesus, and their ideas of the Prophets and the Messiah were altogether erroneous. It is not surprising, therefore, that they so shamefully treated Jesus, and put Him to death, that they disavowed His Resurrection, the wonderful signs that followed it, and



even the fulfillment of His prophecy respecting the destruction of Jerusalem. Nor is it to be wondered at that they neglected the signs that heralded His advent, since He had not at that time either taught or wrought miracles. Were the blindness, the obduracy of these men not so incomprehensibly great, could it have lasted even to this day?

When I go over the Way of the Cross in Jerusalem of the present day, I frequently see under a certain ruined building a large vault, or many adjoining vaults, which are partly fallen in and filled with water. Standing in the midst of the water, which rises almost to a level with it, is a table. From the center of the table to the roof of the vault, rises a pillar around which are hung little coffers filled with rolls of writings. Under the table also I saw rolls lying in the water. Perhaps these vaults were once burial places. They lie under Mount Calvary. I think the ruined building is the house wherein Pilate once dwelt, and the treasure will after some time be discovered.