

The Cross and the Winepress

As I was meditating upon these words or thoughts of Jesus when hanging on the Cross: 'I am pressed like wine placed here under the press for the first time; my blood must continue to flow until water comes, but wine shall no more be made here,' an explanation was given me by means of another vision relating to Calvary. I saw this rocky country at a period anterior to the Deluge; it was then less wild and less

barren than it afterwards became, and was laid out in vineyards and fields. I saw there the

Patriarch Japhet, a majestic dark-complexioned old man, surrounded by immense flocks and herds and a numerous posterity: his children as well as himself had dwellings excavated in the ground, and covered with turf roofs, on which herbs and flowers were growing. There were vines all around, and a new method of making wine was being tried on Calvary, in the presence of Japhet. I saw also the ancient method of preparing wine, but I can give only the following description of it. At first men were satisfied with only eating the grapes; then they pressed them with pestles in hollow stones, and finally in large wooden trenches.

Upon this occasion a new wine-press, resembling the holy Cross in shape, had been devised; it consisted of the hollow trunk of a tree placed upright, with a bag of grapes suspended over it. Upon this bag there was fastened a pestle, surmounted by a weight; and on both sides of the trunk were arms joined to the bag, through openings made for the purpose, and which, when put in motion by lowering the ends, crushed the grapes. The juice flowed out of the tree by five openings, and fell into a stone vat, from whence it flowed through a channel made of bark and coated with resin, into the species of cistern excavated in the rock where Jesus was confined before his Crucifixion. At the foot of the winepress, in the stone vat, there was a sort of sieve to stop the skins, which were put on one side. When they had made their winepress, they filled the bag with grapes, nailed it to the top of the trunk, placed the pestle, and put in motion the side arms, in order to make the wine flow. All this very strongly reminded me of the Crucifixion, on account of the resemblance between the winepress and the Cross. They had a long reed, at the end of which there were points, so that it looked like an enormous thistle, and they ran this through the channel and trunk of the tree when there was any obstruction. I was reminded of the lance and



sponge. There were also some leathern bottles, and vases made of bark and plastered with resin. I saw several young men, with nothing but a cloth wrapped round their loins like Jesus, working at this winepress. Japhet was very old; he wore a long beard, and a dress made of the skins of beasts; and he looked at the new winepress with evident satisfaction. It was a festival day, and they sacrificed on a stone altar some animals which were running loose in the vineyard, young asses, goats, and sheep. It was not in this place that Abraham came to sacrifice Isaac; perhaps it was on Mount Moriah. I have forgotten many of the instructions regarding the wine, vinegar, and skins, and the different ways in which everything was to be distributed to the right and to the left; and I regret it, because the veriest trifles in these matters have a profound symbolical meaning. If it should be the will of God for me to make them known, he will show them to me again.