

the advance of night. At the end of four thousand years the most civilized nation in the world erected a temple to its thousand divinities!

Such was the state of the world at the coming of the Messiah. What shall we say of its morals? The revolt of the senses soon followed the revolt of the mind. Our first parents at once felt its baneful sting. Thenceforward the earth was the scene of every passion, of every excess. Cain opened the series with fratricide. The moral sense became more and more depraved, to such an extent that altars were erected to the most shameful vices. Most of the pagan gods were infamous wretches. Nothing can be said of virtue, of charity, of humility, of purity for not one of all these was known and still less practised.

Satan was truly *the prince of the world*. He reigned over it as a master; not as a king who loves his subjects but as a tyrant who makes so many slaves of them. His yoke was horrible and all the more so that no one thought of casting it off; like a prisoner who has long been in chains, who stretches them on the ground and sleeps on them!

But, suddenly in the middle of the night a hymn is heard: *Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax hominibus bonæ voluntatis*. Glory to God on high, and peace on earth to men of good will! This was sung by the angels who announced to some shepherds the birth of a poor child. This hymn, so short and so simple, stirs up heaven, earth and hell. To sing it the angels have left their abode; the earth, in the person of the shepherds, comes to the cradle; as to hell, it is disturbed, it arms itself, it breaks its bonds and swears death to the new-born babe.

Who is this child? It is Jesus our God, the Saviour of the world! Yes, the Angels were right in singing that hymn. Let us sing also and say with them: « *Gloria, Gloria in excelsis Deo* . . . Glory to God who has pity on us. » A child is born unto us. This child is Jesus. He comes to restore things as they were at the beginning; to restore truth to minds and purity to hearts.

Can we refuse to believe the doctrine that Jesus brings us? He calls himself; He is *Truth* (St. John 6). He teaches it to us with authority and, to perpetuate it, He founds His Church