

possible for us to entertain the least doubt as to its character, we might turn to the prophecies of the Old Testament for an answer. It is to be found unmistakably in the ninth chapter of Ezechiel. "Go," said the Lord, "through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem: and mark Thau upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and mourn for all the abominations that are committed in the midst thereof. And to the others He said in my hearing: Go ye after him through the city, and strike: let not your eye spare, nor be ye moved with pity. Utterly destroy old and young, maidens, children and women: but upon whomsoever you shall see Thau, kill him not, and begin ye at my sanctuary." According to St. Jerome and other interpreters, those to be spared in this dreadful massacre were to be marked with the letter T (Thau), which, in the ancient Hebrew character, was the form of a cross.

The Cross, therefore, long before the coming of Our Lord, but in prevision of His choosing it as the great instrument of His oblation was already potent to avert the wrath of the Most High, just as it will become, in the latter days, the glorious seal or mark of the elect. Still, in ages antecedent to the death of Christ, the mysterious and saving *Thau* was not identified with the ignominious gibbet of the malefactor: for all held the latter in execration. Few now are aware of the sickening spectacle of abjection, of anguish, of torture it disclosed to the onlookers, when it was reared aloft bearing the form of some notorious criminal, hanging in mid air, an object of horror and commiseration.

The God of all might and majesty, wishing in His infinite wisdom to make manifest His power in the person of His Beloved Son, decreed that this same infamy of the Cross should become a source of incomprehensible glory. It was for this that the Saviour Jesus Christ, though His life was without blemish and without even the shadow of imperfection, ended that life as an outcast and a criminal. And as if abasement and death alone were not ignominious enough,