

Just then the angel pushed him so energetically that the unfortunate man lost his balance, fell into the rapids and was drowned.

"This is too much !" cried the hermit, beside himself with rage. "Not satisfied with thieving this evil genius commits murder too. Does God justify that ?" Had he been able to seize the angel, he would probably have tried to hurl him in turn over the bridge.

He forgot that if his host, when preparing a feast, had a right to slaughter the fowls which belonged to him, man's Creator has for more absolute right over a life He has given, which He can withdraw at will, and which He will restore.

The hermit walked on all day without opening his lips. At nightfall he was received by a new host, an excellent man who lavished hospitality on the pilgrim, giving him a bountiful supper and wishing him good night with courtesy.

Everything was going on well. It happened however that the host had a young child which lay weeping in its cradle. The angel went to the cradle and, placing his strong hand on the babe's mouth, silenced it forever.

"Enough !" cried the hermit, "the evil spirit which strangles children in their cradle - the children so loved by God - can not come from heaven but from the regions of eternal night. I will leave him this moment !" He sprang up and rushed to the door. The mighty angel barred his passage.

"Hear me, deluded mortal," said the spirit. "On account of thy weakness of soul which causes thee to be scandalized by events thou dost not understand, God sent me to reveal to thee some of His hidden ways. My mission is to prove that He is just and merciful at all times."

"Speak then, for what I have seen the last two days seems incompatible with justice and mercy."

The angel continued : "I took the cup from thy first entertainer because he was too strongly attached to that earthly object. He loved it and thought more about it than about God. I gave the goblet to thy wicked host to