



THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS.

I

THE first thing to be remarked is that Our Redeemer became the object of most violent persecution as soon as He commenced His work of blessing and elevating the human race. This was brought about by Satan, the prince of evil, through men, who have always been too susceptible to his influence. "The dragon stood before the woman, who was ready to be delivered, that when she should be delivered he might devour her Son." (Apoc. xii. 4.)

The powers of wickedness have already sought to destroy the tree of Jesse, so as to prevent the accomplishment of redemption, Pharaoh wished to exterminate the whole people of the Jews. Aman arranged for a simultaneous and complete massacre : Antiochus the same, in the time of Maccabees ; Athalia destroyed all but one of the direct line of David. Now Herod was inspired by hell to compass the death of the Christ in the general massacre of the innocents.

God did not obstruct the freedom of human action : He did not meet it with the methods of the world, with armed resistance, nor did He work a miracle. The Infant was carried into exile, as if too weak to meet the storm, and the efforts of Satan were effectually frustrated. So always : the Church of Jesus is waylaid by the dragon ; its destruction seems imminent ; it has no material strength for resistance : but God is with it, and it can never fall. Let nothing induce you to lose confidence in the arm of the Almighty and the success of His Church.