

Temerity and want of reflection equally marked the conduct of Peter. How could he hope alone to defend Christ against a crowd of men and armed soldiers? By striking the enemy, he must necessarily irritate him, thus exposing himself, as well as his Master and all the Apostles, to serious consequences.

Again, it was an insult to the Heart of Jesus to doubt His bravery for a single instant. "What!" said Jesus to him, "shall I not drink the chalice that My Father has given Me to drink?" Jesus severely reprehended His Apostle, and threatened him: "All that take the sword shall perish by the sword." They had to undergo this law of retaliation promulgated by God Himself at the time of the Deluge: "Whosoever shall shed man's blood, his blood shall be shed." Jesus, the new Lawgiver, renewed and sanctioned that most ancient law touching the crime of homicide. The Jews who came out against Him with swords, perished by the swords of the Romans.

Peter, although involuntarily, gave real pain to Our Lord. To wound one of His children, even though he were one of His enemies, was to wound His Heart. He was sad, also, because the act of charity called forth by the impetuosity of Peter, had not converted more of those hardened sinners.

And I, also, after the example of Jesus, do I know how to be silent under an injury, a slander, or some want of respect? On the contrary, do I not arm myself at once to defend and avenge myself? Do I ordinarily render good for evil? . . . after the example of Jesus who healed the wounds of His persecutors at the very moment that they had seized Him to put Him to death? Have I always known how to drink as I ought the chalice of bitterness that God, my Father, places in my hands? It is, however, that of Jesus. It ought to be sweet to my taste when I know that Jesus first steeped His lips in it. Am I convinced that trials, sufferings, temptations are graces, mercies, favors from my Father who is in heaven?

Pardon, O Divine Jesus, that sorrow inflicted on Thee by Thy imprudent Apostle at the painful moment of Thy arrest!

Pardon for all the resistance that Thy enemies obstinately opposed to Thy persevering love by steadily refusing to be converted!

Pardon for all Christians cowardly in presence of sufferings. Pardon for the souls in purgatory who did not know how to profit by this lesson of clemency! Pardon for myself who have so often disregarded the sweetness of Thy sacred chalice!

IV. — Prayer.

Ascended into heaven, Jesus has no longer anything to fear from the attacks of His enemies. There He reigns as Sovereign over faithful subjects.