

acting according to His mercy, promised us our redemption and freedom ; but we had to wait for the time appointed and for those who were to deliver us. Ages rolled by, the prophecies were slow in their fulfilment : all the Patriarchs and the Souls of the Just waited in painful expectation. Abraham had passed, and his descendants ardently yearned for the day which would behold the fulfilment of the mystery of Reparation. Moses caught a glimpse of it through the veils of the figures ; he hoped to be the happy witness of the great event. That hope crossed the desert, it upheld the Judges, it was again confirmed unto Samuel : David made those of his own time skip with joy by announcing the nearness of its fulfilment. The choir of the Prophets proclaimed in bold accents that the Christ was soon to come forth ; but one after another they disappeared deceived in their hope, for the appointed hour had not yet come, and those who *were worthy* had not yet shown themselves. At last the Creator of all things found unto himself among His ancestors the worthy instruments of His designs, Anne and Joachim, the parents of Her who was to determine the accomplishment of the promise. To them, therefore, do we owe the Author of our Joy and the first pledge of our happiness."

In order to be penetrated with deep respect and holy reverence towards our neighbor and ourselves, St-Paul has said : " Know you not that your bodies are the members of Christ ? " (1) And elsewhere : " We are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones." (2)

We must not see in these words a pious exaggeration ; they contain more than a purely mystical image, they attest a real, physical fact ; they express a kindred of a particular kind with the God made

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(1) I, Cor. VI, 15.

(2) Eph. V, 30.