

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE LITTLE GOSPEL.

“ When Jesus received his Name,  
Satan was vanquished and disarmed.”

After the negative decision of Mgr. Morlot, there was a short respite in the revelations made to Sr. Mary of St. Peter, regarding the Work of Reparation. Our Lord, during this interval, was pleased to console his servant by holy meditations on the mysteries of his Passion and of his Holy Name ; or by animating her zeal for the deliverance of certain souls detained in purgatory. One of these seemed to have awakened her sympathy in a special manner. We shall quote the sister's account of what passed on this subject ; it will enable us to judge of the holy ardor which prompted her to assist those among the departed who seemed to be most in need of help.

A most frightful and unprovided death had recently terrified the people of France. The Duke of Orleans, eldest son and heir presumptive of Louis Philip, was one day driving through Paris, when his horse took fright and became unmanageable, the Duke imprudent-

by precipitated himself from the carriage, and was almost instantaneously killed by the violence of the fall. The news spread through the country like a flash, and even reached the Carmelites of Tours. Everywhere it had produced the greatest commotion, the more so, as the Duke, a few years previous and to the great scandal of the catholic world, had married a protestant princess, notwithstanding the admonitions of the Archbishop of Paris. His sudden death was regarded as a well-merited chastisement from God.

“ One Sunday morning,” writes the Sister, “ when I was making my ordinary meditation, the thought of the Duke of Orleans crossed my mind ; I had been vaguely apprised of his death, but had forgotten to pray for the poor prince after his decease. During the office of the Little Hours, I suddenly became conscious that his soul was suffering in purgatory, and in great need of assistance. It seemed to me that the nearer I approached the Divine Heart of Jesus, the more my emotion increased ; tears so choked my utterance, that I could with difficulty recite the office. I felt great sympathy for this suffering soul, whom the Lord desired to rescue from the flames, and I offered the holy communion for him ; the Lord Jesus also inspired me to offer his infinite merits to his heavenly Father. During my thanksgiving after holy communion, it seemed that our souls met in the Lord. I then said to him : ‘ Poor prince, what remains to you now

of the grandeur and riches of this world ! How pleased you are to-day to have the benefit of the communion of a poor carmelite ! Remember me when you enter the kingdom of Heaven ! ”

“ Our Lord engaged me to pray for him with more than ordinary charity, and with greater ardor than that which I felt in praying for my relatives. He suggested to me to offer, with this intention, all that he had suffered when crowned with thorns and derided as a mocking, during his Passion. I spent the rest of the morning in prayer for the prince, before a picture of our Saviour crowned with thorns.”

“ Three times a day I recited, at the foot of the altar, six Pater and Aves, and Gloria Patris, in order to gain the numerous indulgences attached to these prayers for the souls in purgatory.”

“ The next day, Monday, I was again urged to receive holy communion with the same intention. The suffering soul seemed, as it were, chained to my soul ; I carried it everywhere with me, all the mortifications which I performed were offered for its relief.”

On the 20th of March, the sister writes as follows to the mother prioress :

“ The fortnight is now terminating, during which you have permitted me to offer myself to God for the soul in whom I am so deeply interested, and to abandon myself to the divine pleasure, to suffer all he would judge proper in order to obtain its deliverance. Permit me,

Rev. Mother, to give you an account of all that has passed in my soul from the 26th of February until the 19th of March.”

“I shall simply say that I have been to this poor prince, like the mother of a sick child, whose tenderness and anxiety keep her constantly on the alert in search of some new remedy to restore him to health. Night and day have I sought to relieve him; at length, I begged my guardian angel to allow me no rest until the dear soul would be happy in heaven. I believe that he has charitably heard my prayer, for I felt continually urged on to offer all I did for him. All my communions, except one which I was obliged to offer for one of our departed sisters, *all* that I have done, has been performed for the release of this soul. The holy sacrifice of the mass, the stations of the cross, and all the mortifications which I have been permitted to perform:—I have had the consolation of offering all to God for him. I have suffered but little physically, you have beheld my face swollen, it is true, but this was comparatively nothing; my greatest pain was to have had no more to suffer; the sweet union and interior peace I had been enjoying, has been followed by dryness and temptation; for he has hidden himself from my sight, and permitted that I should feel my unworthiness. Yet, if the Divine Master has afflicted me with one hand, he has sustained me with the other, and has given me the courage to say to him: ‘My

God, that this poor soul may possess and glorify thee the more speedily, I accept all these sufferings; provided I offend thee not, my Lord; this all I desire.'”

“The feast of our father St. Joseph, was approaching; I prepared myself by a novena, supplicating him to obtain of God, the speedy deliverance of this poor soul, promising at the same time, to continue the penances which were permitted me. On the eve of the feast, my ardor was inflamed anew. I was suffering very keenly from the intensity of my desires. In the refectory, I felt more inclined to weep than to take my meals. My soul was in great affliction, but from supernatural motives, for I had never known this prince. If I ever felt the privation which my vow of poverty imposed on me, Oh! it was at this moment! Were I still possessed of any means, I would most certainly have had requiem masses said for this poor soul; but a consoling thought came to my mind. I said to myself: I have renounced all things for my heavenly Spouse, consequently he has given himself entirely to me; therefore what is his, is mine. Then, full of confidence, I offered to the Eternal Father all the treasures of his Divine Son, as a supplement for my poverty, and I formed the intention of offering for the soul of this poor prince all the masses celebrated throughout the world.”

“Then Our Blessed Lord gave me to understand that there was yet one more act of

charity I could perform for him,—to offer the holy communion I was about to receive, thereby gaining the indulgence applicable to the souls in purgatory. I consented, but not without a little reluctance, for I had counted on this great feast to think a little of my own private necessities, and to apply to my soul the fruit of this indulgence; but since the Lord had ordained it otherwise, I submitted to his holy will. I have still continued to intercede for the prince with all the powers of my soul, and all the affections of my heart.”

“Since this day, reverend mother, I have no longer experienced any anxiety, I feel entirely free from responsibility, and say nothing for him now except the *Laudate*.”

“I believe that my little services, united to the fervent prayers of our sisters, have procured his relief. It was undoubtedly through the intercession of the most Blessed Virgin that he obtained his salvation, and through the powerful aid of our father St. Joseph that he gained his entrance into Heaven; for I think, and am even convinced, that he must have been delivered from purgatory on the feast of this great saint. However, of this my Divine Lord has given me no certainty; I adore his designs without any wish to penetrate them, for I am most unworthy.”

“The prince, as is well known, came to an untimely end by a very terrible accident; he may have made a sincere act of contrition

which saved him from eternal death. The mercy of God surpasseth all his works !”

Three years later, the sister received the assurance that this soul, the object of so many fervent prayers, had indeed obtained its deliverance.

On the 26th of April, 1846, she writes : “ After holy communion, our Lord Jesus said to me : ‘ Allow yourself to be guided by the impulse of grace.’ I obeyed, and my Divine Saviour commenced his operation. But how shall I speak of what I beheld ! O infinite goodness of my God ! assist me, that thou mayst be more loved, more known and blessed on earth ! ‘ Look !’ said he suddenly to me, ‘ Behold him for whom you have prayed ! I bring him to you to thank you for what you have done. Behold the excess of my mercy in his regard ! Had I allowed him to dwell longer on the earth, he would, in his ambition, have encircled his brow with a temporal crown ; and now, in Heaven, I bestow on him a crown of glory.’ ”

“ By an intellectual view, I beheld this soul standing by the side of Jesus. ‘ Ah !’ said I to him, ‘ It is Jesus, not I, whom you must thank ; as for me, I am mere nothingness : it is his merits that I have offered to God for you.’ The soul then said to me : ‘ It is to the Blessed Virgin I owe my salvation, for when I was brought before the tribunal of God, I was covered with the infinite merits of Jesus Christ ; and it is through the intercession of

St. Joseph that I have been delivered from purgatory.' 'Oh! most fortunate soul!' I exclaimed, 'Pray for France and pray for me;' and in a transport of gratitude to the infinite mercy of God, I repeated: 'Fortunate soul, pray for me; let us prostrate ourselves in prayer at the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ; pray that I may obtain the grace to fulfil my obligations to him.' Our Lord said: 'Now, he will pray for you: and I kept repeating, pray for me! But interrupting myself, I asked: 'How shall I invoke you henceforth?' He answered: 'I am called *Ferdinand*, call me *Ferdinand*; *Ferdinund* is my name.' It seemed to me that he thus repeated his name several times as a proof of the truth of what I beheld, for I was not aware that this was his name. He added: 'I now reign with Jesus Christ; I am crowned in Heaven.' I said to him: 'I know the mercy of God is unbounded, still I dared not hope that you had already entered into glory.' But I understood that this was only permitted by an extraordinary grace from God." \*

"All that I saw, heard and understood of the excess of the divine charity toward this

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\* A thought full of consolation naturally suggests itself to the mind of the most casual, after the perusal of this incident: In the most unfortunate accidents which appear to be a chastisement of the divine justice inflicted alike on the individual and on the family, there frequently is a mysterious and hidden action of sanctifying grace in favor of the individual, which is never suspected by the bereaved relatives, and which proves the infinite goodness of God toward the sinner, and proclaims the wisdom of His divine Providence.



soul, threw me into an ecstasy of joy ; my emotion vented itself in tears and sobs. But at this delicious moment, the parlor-bell rang, and as it was obedience that called me, I left our Lord Jesus to go and fulfil the duties of my office. Wishing to test the truth of what I had just experienced, I asked a sister whom I met, the name of the prince in question. She answered : 'His name was Ferdinand.' Her answer impressed me deeply, for I saw in it a proof of the truth. This operation of God in my soul was the strongest I have ever experienced." An account of the extraordinary event was placed in the hands of Mgr. Morlot, who beheld therein a communication so manifestly supernatural, that he thought it his duty to write to the pious mother of the deceased, Queen Amelia, who was very uneasy over the eternal fate of her son. As can be readily conceived, the letter was a consoling balm to the heart of the distressed lady.

This extraordinary fact, so minutely made known to our Carmelite of Tours, is not without precedent, or analogy in history. A similar instance is related of the deliverance of a soul from purgatory, by the prayers and sufferings of one of the first daughters of the Visitation, Sister M. Denise de Martignat. The circumstances are detailed in the life of this religious, by Mother de Chaugy. "Our Lord one day lead the sister to the borders of purgatory, and pointed out to her the soul of a great prince whose death had occasioned much regret,

and the shedding of many tears ; he was a most powerful prince when on this earth, and now, more destitute than could be imagined, for during his life he had not amassed many good works, which alone constitute the wealth of eternity."

Our Lord said to her : " My daughter, you have already offered many prayers for the salvation of this soul : now behold him, and continue to pray."

This prince was killed in a duel. " But," explained the sister, " by a master-stroke of divine mercy, he received the grace to make a sincere act of contrition for his sins at the last moment, and instead of being cast into hell, which he had but too justly merited, he was condemned for a great number of years to the purifying flames of purgatory." Sr. Denise de St. Martignat offered herself as a victim to expiate the sins of this poor soul, and to relieve him of a portion of his debt. From that moment, she was afflicted by the most peculiar maladies and excruciating sufferings. Several times, the soul of the deceased appeared to her, thanking her and encouraging her to continue and suffer still more for him. Shortly before her death, the servant of God received the announcement that the soul of the prince was greatly relieved ; but less happy than Mary of St. Peter, she did not know the precise moment of his final deliverance.

Another saintly practice served as a stimulus to the zeal, ever active and ingenious,

which animated Sister St. Peter for the salvation of souls. The Carmelites were still living in the house on Le Place St. Gregoire, (of which we had already spoken), while awaiting the completion of their monastery. Sr. Mary of St. Peter, portress for the interior, was perpetually besieged by visitors who were desirous of receiving consolation or advice. She would fain have excused herself from these pious importunities, in order to preserve the spirit of recollection.

“These good people,” said she, “felt that the little Breton nun, simple as they themselves, understood and sympathized with them in all their troubles and afflictions, seeking to encourage them to resignation by the solacing words of religion; they returned to their homes happy and contented, but soon came back to the convent with their neighbors. Notwithstanding the charity I felt for them, I nevertheless excused myself as much as possible from receiving them, in order not to fail in the spirit of silence, so necessary for a carmelite. Our Lord, beholding my desire, gave me the means of gratifying these people and also of comforting them in their maladies, by inspiring me with the pious practice of wearing the ‘Gospel of the Circumcision.’ Behold in what manner I arranged this practice in conformity with what had been communicated to me on the subject.”

“The devil uses every means in his power to snatch from Our Lord the inheritance won by

his holy cross ; and he is incessantly seeking to rob this Good Shepherd of the sheep purchased at so great a price. To prevent this ravenous wolf from approaching the sheepfold, Jesus desired, as he made me understand, that I should proclaim to all, that his sheep were marked with his Holy Name, and carried about them the Gospel announcing to all nations that the Word Incarnate was named *Jesus*. My amiable Saviour made me understand the depth of virtue contained in that sacred name, the very mention of which puts the devil to flight.—Those who will have recourse to this act of piety will receive great graces.—He told me, also, to place below this Gospel, the words recalling the victory which he had gained over Satan in assuming, through love for us, the name of Jesus. This little devotion was, first of all, approved of by my superiors ; their charity permitting *the Gospel of the Circumcision* to be printed, and a picture of the Infant Jesus to be engraved on the same leaf, with the initials of his adorable name. The leaf was then folded and enclosed in a small covering of woollen material on which was embroidered a cross with the Sacred Heart ; it was to be worn as a medal around the neck. It also received the approbation of the Vicar General, as being in conformity with the spirit of the Church ; for we see from history that the first Christians had the habit of wearing the holy Gospels.”

“Our Lord told me that these pious little

objects of devotion should not be sold, but that they should be distributed in his name, in order that every one might be able to procure one easily. That he asked this alms from the community for his glory, for which he would richly compensate us, and that he, himself, would transact the business of the house. Our worthy superiors gave me permission to comply with the desire of the Divine Infant ; soon a countless multitude were enrolled. They wore the gospel with great devotion, and the Infant Jesus was not slow in granting them many special graces. ”

“ I was continually occupied in distributing these little gospels, but although I was very assiduous in the work, I could not meet the demand of all who desired them. Our good sisters then kindly offered to help me. I was charmed with this new commerce which redounded to the glory of the Holy Infant. I made a very pretty little gospel for him, which I placed round the neck of his little statue. As I have said, he told me that these little objects of devotion were not to be sold, but as many wealthy persons wished to purchase them, I placed a small purse in the hand of my little king with the following inscription thereon :

*If you wish, give to Jesus ; it will enable us to purchase infantile clothing for him.*

“The Divine Child rewarded the good people a hundredfold for their alms, with the graces which he granted them. Quite a considerable

amount was thus amassed in his little purse, with which our reverend mother purchased clothing for Jesus. By this I wish it to be understood, corporals which are linens used in the service of the holy sacrifice of the mass. The sisters of the community, by the direction of our reverend mother, prepared these corporals, which were presented to the Holy Infant with grand ceremony on the feast of Corpus Christi, and afterward distributed among the poor parishes of the diocese. We also made a trousseau for a poor infant, in whom we pictured the poverty of the Infant Jesus at his birth."

The good sister informs us, furthermore, that Our Lord asked as an alms that these prayers be distributed as soon as possible; at the end of the prayers, he desired should be written: "When Jesus received his name, Satan was vanquished and disarmed. He permitted me to behold the amount of glory which accrued to him by celebrating his victory in these words, which make the demons gnash their teeth with rage. He promised that he would bless all who would wear this gospel, and would defend them against the attacks of the devil."

The Lord afterward informed her, that as this grace had been drawn from his heart, that the engraving of the Sacred Heart, together with the instruments of his Passion, should be stamped on the little covering containing this gospel, which would answer the

same purpose as a seal on a reliquary, which guarantees the authenticity of the relic. In honor of the five letters which form the name of Jesus, and in virtue of his five wounds, he promised to grant five special graces to all who would practise this devotion.

1st.—To preserve them from death by lightning.

2nd.—To protect them against the snares and the malice of the devil.

3rd.—To deliver them from a sudden and unprovided death.

4th.—To assist them to advance with facility in the path of virtue.

5th.—That he would give them the grace of final perseverance.”

As this last favor appeared excessive to the pious carmelite, the following words of holy scripture occurred to her mind, and reassured her: “Whoever will invoke the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Rom. X. 13.)

These little gospels required no other blessing than that given to the palms used on Palm Sunday, in commemoration of the triumphant entry of Our Lord into the city of Jerusalem.

“Whilst I was seeking,” she writes, “the means of covering these little expenses,—(here she is referring to the first gospels which she had made) my Divine Master directed me to address myself to his servant, M. Dupont, and to say to him, that the Infant Jesus requested of him this work of charity as the tithe of all

the benefits he had bestowed upon him ; for this work was most agreeable to him. I then said to my Divine Saviour : ' If you would only promise me some recompense for him, or at least some grace for his family ! ' To which Our Lord replied : ' His love for me is so pure that he will perform this service without offering him any inducement. For his disinterested love and devotion, I will recompense him magnificently in Heaven ; as for you, you must do this little commission for me, because you are my little servant. Do not fear to ask in my Name ; and you will have the same merit as if you performed the entire work yourself. ' "

We can imagine with what eagerness M. Dupont responded to this request. In this, as well as in the works of piety and charity which gave him a certain *éclat* in the city of Tours, he proved worthy of the eulogy which the Lord was pleased to bestow on his generous love, and was well deserving the interest which the good sister manifested toward him and his family. We read in his life, that this fervent layman, with all the candor and simplicity of his ardent faith, aided the virgin of Carmel to pursue her cherished devotions, especially those in reference to the Infant Jesus. Before the little gospels had been printed, he, himself, copied them, and assisted to distribute them among the faithful ; esteeming himself well repaid by the prayers which the sister promised for his daughter Henrietta, who at



the time was preparing to receive her first communion.

On the feast of the most Holy Trinity, the Lord encouraged his servant anew to propagate this pious practice.

“Behold, as near as possible,” said she, “that which our Lord Jesus made me understand. ‘My child, be not afflicted because the work of your little gospels allows you no time to enjoy my presence, it is much better to sacrifice these consolations, that I may not be offended, for already has it been the means of preventing the commission of enormous crimes.’”

Addressing herself to the mother prioress, the sister adds: “Our Lord again informed me that with the money received for these little gospels, you might have fifty masses celebrated for his greater glory, and for the salvation of souls; and that afterward, if sufficient would be received, to pay the expenses of a new edition of the prayers of Reparation; that I should thereby recognize that there is no illusion on my part, but that it is my Divine Saviour himself who has communicated with my soul.”

“You are aware,” continues she, “that I thought no more of asking for the reprinting of these prayers, because the archbishop thinks they cannot be easily understood; and to-day, Our Lord desires them for religious, that they may invoke his mercy on France, and appease his justice, so that the wicked may be con-

founded. I abandon these things to your better judgment, reverend mother, all that I seek is, that the holy will of God be accomplished.”

The most wonderful graces were not wanting to sanction this devotion so simple, and at the same time, so ancient in the Church. The following are some of the wonderful facts which Sister Mary St. Peter herself had taken care to note down. We shall narrate them in her own words :

“At the time of the enlistment of soldiers, several of the young men of the city, urged on by the solicitude of their mothers who feared to lose in them their stay and the support of their old age, came to me in their sorrow to seek my prayers. I advised them to wear the little gospel, and they were not, in consequence, called upon to enlist in the army. These scapulars also wrought conversions, Among others, that of a young person who was a continual source of sorrow to her parents, owing to her violent bursts of passion ; but she was induced to wear a little gospel ; this alone was sufficient to vanquish the demon, to whose influence she had so long yielded ; she soon asked pardon of her parents and went to confession. A hardened sinner, reduced to the last extremities, obstinately refused to receive the sacraments : his venerable pastor, saddened on beholding this sheep of his flock about to become the prey of the infernal wolf, had recourse to the little gospel, one of which

he placed at the foot of the sick man's bed, the latter was immediately touched, asked for the priest and died a good Christian."

"Another, who for many years had abandoned the practice of his religious duties, was inspired to wear the little gospel, and to recite the prayer attached thereto: from that moment, he felt urged by a powerful impulse of grace, soliciting him unceasingly to return to God. For several months he resisted the call, but finally, yielding to the power of the Holy Name of Jesus, he threw himself at the feet of a confessor; his perfect conversion filled with joy those who had for so many years grieved over his past conduct."

"Many persons have experienced the marvelous effects of this salutary devotion during their maladies or corporal infirmities. A little girl had been suffering from a terrible fever, which had reduced her to the last extremity; all were expecting the angel of death, when her uncle tied around her neck the little gospel; they recited the prayers during nine days and the child was perfectly restored. For seven years, a lady had suffered from an ulcer in her throat which, at times, prevented her from taking her proper nourishment, she had difficulty even in swallowing the holy communion; many different remedies had been given her, but all to no purpose.—Having put on the little gospel, she was cured so promptly, that those who took care of her were greatly astonished, until she made known to them

the holy remedy to which she owed her restoration.”

“A great number of women in childbirth have been miraculously delivered by this little gospel ; upon these especially it has operated the most extraordinary effects.”

“A little girl, to whom we gave a gospel of the Holy Name of Jesus, fell and was seriously injured. When she was picked up, she was unable to make any movement ; her disconsolate parents feared that her limbs were broken, and wished to send for the doctor immediately, but the child cried out : “No, no, don't go for the doctor, but give me my little relic, the good Jesus can heal me !” The little gospel was put round her neck, and she immediately ceased crying and fell into a profound sleep. On awaking, she was so completely cured that she did not feel the slightest effect of her fall. Thus was the faith of this child recompensed ; all who believe like her shall not hope in vain.”

“Many missionaries carried this gospel of the Holy Name of Jesus to foreign lands ; I shall give, in conclusion an account of the conversion of a great sinner.”

“On the 26th of December, 1845, a person weeping bitterly, came to recommend to our prayers a man reduced to the last extremity. ‘There is no use speaking to him of the sacraments,’ said she, ‘for he is furious.’ We gave her a little gospel to be placed round the neck of the sick man, with the prayers to be recited

in honor of the Holy Name of Jesus. This lady full of faith and zeal, having learned that some men were going to sit up all night with him, begged them to try and put the little gospel round his neck, and to recite the prayers attached thereto. They acquiesced, and were so successful in their mission that the obstinate invalid was suddenly changed, and appearing more calm, they proposed sending for the priest. He assented, much to their surprise, and after his confession, received the Holy Viaticum, and died in the best disposition. Satan, furious on beholding the escape of his prey, in revenge turned all his rage against me. God alone knows what I endured at the moment of the death of this man ; during two hours, I was surrounded by a legion of demons, I was as if possessed. I seemed to hear their horrible voices soliciting me by their most seductive language ; never have I had a similar combat to sustain, but the Divine Spouse of my soul fortified me by his power ; and his grace rendered me victorious. I ran and threw myself at the feet of our reverend mother who was terrified at the pallor of my countenance. I discovered to her the agony of my poor heart and she had the charity to console me ; when she gave me her benediction, I was immediately relieved and passed the rest of the night in peace."

These prodigies have continued even in our days. We shall only cite one more example, which happened at Tours quite recently. A

foreigner had long neglected his religious duties, and had even shown very little respect for our holy religion during his public career. He was finally attacked by a mortal malady, and those interested in his salvation beheld him with sorrow, refusing to listen to all the advances made on this subject. Finally, a lady, who had for a considerable time conversed with him without making any impression, adroitly slipped under his chin a little gospel, and prepared to depart. She had not gone from the door of the sick-room before the invalid called her back saying: "However, I do not wish to appear before God without having set in order my accounts with him; send for a priest, if you please." From that moment he was entirely changed, and thought only of his salvation, and of the best means of repairing lost time by a sincere and public repentance.

It was in this manner that our Divine Lord sustained his servant, by giving her the occasion of making a trial, and so to say, a preparatory test of that which was to be more largely accomplished by means of the great Work of Reparation. By the Little Gospel, he glorified his name, the blessed Name of Jesus; he healed the sick, he brought back sinners to the true fold. By the Work of Reparation he will glorify the Name of his Father, this Holy Name of the Eternal God, outraged by blasphemers. He will cure the sick, save the sinner, and convert France, that nation formerly the glory of Christian Europe, now gangrened even to

the heart with godlessness and impiety. But mercy shall be extended to her, a child of the cloister shall point out the path of salvation, and France shall once more be reinstated in all her glorious privileges. Such is the object of the noble mission confided to the humble daughter of Carmel.