

## LOUIS BOURDALOUE

**L**OUIS BOURDALOUE, a noted French theologian and court preacher, was born at Bourges, France, Aug. 20, 1632, and died at Paris, May 13, 1704. Educated by the Society of Jesus, he became a member of its order, and professor of theology and philosophy in the Jesuit College of Bourges, and soon won fame as a pulpit orator. In 1669, he appeared in Paris, where he met with such success in the pulpit that he was called to the Court of Louis XIV and preached frequently before the King. Later on, we find him in Languedoc, after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, preaching to Protestants, and in 1686 he preached with great effect also at Montpellier. In his later years, Bourdaloue abandoned the pulpit and took great interest in charitable societies, hospitals, and prisons. His sermons have been published in France in seventeen volumes.

### THE PASSION OF CHRIST

**T**HE Passion of Jesus Christ, however sorrowful and ignominious it may appear to us, must nevertheless have been to Jesus Christ himself an object of delight, since this God-man, by a wonderful secret of his wisdom and love, has willed that the mystery of it shall be continued and solemnly renewed in his Church until the final consummation of the world. For what is the Eucharist but a perpetual repetition of the Saviour's Passion, and what has the Saviour supposed in instituting it, but that whatever passed at Calvary is not only represented but consummated on our altars? That is to say, that he is still performing the functions of the victim anew, and is every moment virtually sacrificed, as though it were not sufficient that he should have suffered once. At least that his love, as powerful as it is free, has given to his adorable sufferings that character of perpetuity which they have in

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the Sacrament, and which renders them so salutary to us. Behold, Christians, what the love of a God has devised; but behold, also, what has happened through the malice of men! At the same time that Jesus Christ, in the sacrament of his body, repeats his holy Passion in a manner altogether mysterious, men, the false imitators, or rather base corruptors of the works of God, have found means to renew this same Passion, not only in a profane, but in a criminal, sacrilegious, and horrible manner!

Do not imagine that I speak figuratively. Would to God, Christians, that what I am going to say to you were only a figure, and that you were justified in vindicating yourselves to-day against the horrible expressions which I am obliged to employ! I speak in the literal sense; and you ought to be more affected with this discourse, if what I advance appears to you to be overcharged; for it is by your excesses that it is so, and not by my words. Yes, my dear hearers, the sinners of the age, by the disorders of their lives, renew the bloody and tragic Passion of the Son of God in the world; I will venture to say that the sinners of the age cause to the Son of God, even in the state of glory, as many new passions as they have committed outrages against him by their actions! Apply yourselves to form an idea of them; and in this picture, which will surprise you, recognize what you are, that you may weep bitterly over yourselves! What do we see in the Passion of Jesus Christ? A divine Saviour betrayed and abandoned by cowardly disciples, persecuted by pontiffs and hypocritical priests, ridiculed and mocked in the palace of Herod by impious courtiers, placed upon a level with Barabbas, and to whom Barabbas is preferred by a blind and inconstant people, exposed to the insults of



libertinism, and treated as a mock-king by a troop of soldiers equally barbarous and insolent; in fine, crucified by merciless executioners! Behold, in a few words, what is most humiliating and most cruel in the death of the Saviour of the world! Then tell me if this is not precisely what we now see, of what we are every day called to be witnesses. Let us resume; and follow me.

Betrayed and abandoned by cowardly disciples: such, O divine Saviour, has been thy destiny. But it was not enough that the Apostles, the first men whom thou didst choose for thine own, in violation of the most holy engagement, should have forsaken thee in the last scene of thy life; that one of them should have sold thee, another renounced thee, and all disgraced themselves by a flight which was, perhaps, the most sensible of all the wounds that thou didst feel in dying. This wound must be again opened by a thousand acts of infidelity yet more scandalous. Even in the Christian ages we must see men bearing the character of thy disciples, and not having the resolution to sustain it; Christians, prevaricators, and deserters from their faith; Christians ashamed of declaring themselves for thee, not daring to appear what they are, renouncing at least in the exterior what they have professed, flying when they ought to fight; in a word, Christians in form, ready to follow thee even to the Supper when in prosperity, and while it required no sacrifice, but resolved to abandon thee in the moment of temptation. It is on your account, and my own, my dear hearers, that I speak, and behold what ought to be the subject of our sorrow.

A Saviour mortally persecuted by pontiffs and hypocritical priests. Let us not enter, Christians, into the discussion of this article, at which your piety would, perhaps, be of-

fended, and which would weaken or prejudice the respect which you owe to the ministers of the Lord. It belongs to us, my brethren, to meditate to-day on this fact in the spirit of holy compunction; to us consecrated to the ministry of the altars, to us priests of Jesus Christ, whom God has chosen in his Church to be the dispensers of his sacraments. It does not become me to remonstrate in this place. God forbid that I should undertake to judge those who sustain the sacred office! This is not the duty of humility to which my condition calls me. Above all, speaking as I do, before many ministers, the irreprehensible life of whom contributes so much to the edification of the people, I am not yet so infatuated as to make myself the judge, much less the censor of their conduct. But though it should induce you only to acknowledge the favors with which God prevents you, as a contrast, from the frightful blindness into which he permits others to fall, remember that the priests, and the princes of the priests, are those whom the Evangelist describes as the authors of the conspiracy formed against the Saviour of the world, and of the wickedness committed against him. Remember that this scandal is notoriously public, and renewed still every day in Christianity. Remember, but with fear and horror, that the greatest persecutors of Jesus Christ are not lay libertines, but wicked priests; and that among the wicked priests, those whose corruption and iniquity are covered with the veil of hypocrisy are his most dangerous and most cruel enemies. A hatred, disguised under the name of zeal, and covered with the specious pretext of observance of the law, was the first movement of the persecution which the Pharisees and the priests raised against the Son of God. Let us fear lest the same passion should blind us! Wretched pas-



sion, exclaims St. Bernard, which spreads the venom of its malignity even over the most lovely of the children of men, and which could not see a God upon earth without hating him! A hatred not only of the prosperity and happiness, but what is yet more strange, of the merit and perfection of others! A cowardly and shameful passion, which, not content with having caused the death of Jesus Christ, continues to persecute him by rending his mystical body, which is the Church; dividing his members, which are believers; and stifling in their hearts that charity which is the spirit of Christianity! Behold, my brethren, the subtle temptation against which we have to defend ourselves, and under which it is but too common for us to fall!

A Redeemer reviled and mocked in the palace of Herod by the impious creatures of his court! This was, without doubt, one of the most sensible insults which Jesus Christ received. But do not suppose, Christians, that this act of impiety ended there. It has passed from the court of Herod, from that prince destitute of religion, into those even of Christian princes. And is not the Saviour still a subject of ridicule to the libertine spirits which compose them? They worship him externally, but internally how do they regard his maxims? What idea have they of his humility, of his poverty, of his sufferings? Is not virtue either unknown or despised? It is not a rash zeal which induces me to speak in this manner; it is what you too often witness, Christians; it is what you perhaps feel in yourselves; and a little reflection upon the manners of the court will convince you that there is nothing that I say which is not confirmed by a thousand examples, and that you yourselves are sometimes unhappy accomplices in these crimes.

Herod had often earnestly wished to see Jesus Christ. The reputation which so many miracles had given him excited the curiosity of this prince, and he did not doubt but that a man who commanded all nature might strike some wonderful blow to escape from the persecution of his enemies. But the Son of God, who had not been sparing of his prodigies for the salvation of others, spared them for himself, and would not say a single word about his own safety. He considered Herod and his people as profane persons, with whom he thought it improper to hold any intercourse, and he preferred rather to pass for a fool than to satisfy the false wisdom of the world. As his kingdom was not of this world, as he said to Pilate, it was not at the court that he designed to establish himself. He knew too well that his doctrine could not be relished in a place where the rules of worldly wisdom only were followed, and where all the miracles which he had performed had not been sufficient to gain men full of love for themselves and intoxicated with their greatness. In this corrupted region they breathe only the air of vanity; they esteem only that which is splendid; they speak only of preferment: and on whatever side we cast our eyes, we see nothing but what either flatters or inflames the ambitious desires of the heart of man.

What probability then was there that Jesus Christ, the most humble of all men, should obtain a hearing where only pageantry and pride prevail? If he had been surrounded with honors and riches, he would have found partisans near Herod and in every other place. But as he preached a renunciation of the world both to his disciples and to himself, let us not be astonished that they treated him with so much disdain. Such is the prediction of the holy man Job, and



which after him must be accomplished in the person of all the righteous; "the upright man is laughed to scorn." In fact, my dear hearers; you know that, whatever virtue and merit we may possess, they are not enough to procure us esteem at court. Enter it, and appear only like Jesus Christ clothed with the robe of innocence; only walk with Jesus Christ in the way of simplicity; only speak as Jesus Christ to render testimony to the truth, and you will find that you meet with no better treatment there than Jesus Christ. To be well received there, you must have pomp and splendor. To keep your station there, you must have artifice and intrigue. To be favorably heard there, you must have complaisance and flattery. Then all this is opposed to Jesus Christ; and the court being what it is; that is to say, the kingdom of the prince of this world, it is not surprising that the kingdom of Jesus Christ cannot be established there. But woe to you, princes of the earth! Woe to you, men of the world, who despise this incarnate wisdom, for you shall be despised in your turn, and the contempt which shall fall upon you shall be much more terrible than the contempt which you manifest can be prejudicial.

## ARCHBISHOP FENELON



FRANÇOIS DE SALIGNAC DE LA MOTHE FÉNELON, a distinguished French prelate, author, and orator, was born at the Chateau de Fénelon, Perigord, France, Aug. 6, 1651, and died at Cambrai, on the Schelde, of which he was archbishop, Jan. 17, 1715. His father, Count Pons de Salignac, dying early, young Fénelon came under the care of his uncle, the Marquis de Fénelon, who was distinguished for his piety, as well as for his abilities as a soldier and statesman. François de Fénelon was educated at Cahors, and in Paris at the Jesuit Collège du Plessis. Ten years of his life (1675-85) he spent as Superior of the Community of Nouvelles Catholiques, and while so employed he wrote, among other treatises, his notable work "On the Education of Young Girls." In 1685, after the expelling of the Protestants from France, disturbances arose in the districts of Poitou and Saintonge, and at Bossuet's suggestion Fénelon was sent thither to allay the irritation. After this, he became for six years preceptor of the Dauphin's son, the young Duke of Burgundy, a task for which he was well fitted, not only by his many accomplishments, but by his sweetness of temper, tact, and address. In 1695, Louis XIV created Fénelon archbishop of Cambrai, where the remainder of his life was spent in works of Christian piety and charity, and in the writings of books, of which about forty in all came from his pen. Outside of his diocese, Fénelon's career, in a public sense, may be said to be closed, for owing to a controversy with Bossuet, with whom the King sided, Fénelon was banished from Court, and placed under the condemnation of Rome. This, however, little disturbed Fénelon's saintly character, while it gave him the opportunity to pursue his career as an author and to attend to the duties of his diocese. His famous "Adventures of Telemaque," surreptitiously published, accentuated the King's disfavor, who regarded it as a veiled attack on his court. His other writings embrace historical and literary, as well as philosophic and theological works.

SERMON FOR THE FESTIVAL OF THE EPIPHANY, 1685

PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF FOREIGN MISSIONS, IN THE PRESENCE OF THE AMBASSADORS OF SIAM

"Arise, shine; [O Jerusalem!] for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."—Isaiah lx, 1.

**H**ARDLY is Jesus, the expectation and the desire of the nations, born, when behold the Magi, worthy first-fruits of the Gentiles, led by the Star in the East, come to render him homage. O Holy Church! O Jerusalem! rejoice, break forth into singing! Thou who art barren, thou shalt have children innumerable in the uttermost parts of the earth. Lift up thine eyes and see; they gather themselves together;