

Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord

CATHOLIC ANECDOTES

CHAPTER IV.

SECOND ARTICLE OF THE CREED.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, Our Lord.

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88. *A Woman Cured by Touching Our Lord's Garment.* -

In order to convince one's self that Jesus Christ is God, it is only necessary to see the miracles which He wrought during His life. I could tell you, my young friends, of more than a hundred; but as you can read them yourselves in the Gospel, I shall relate only one: Our Lord was surrounded by a crowd of people, who followed Him eagerly to hear His holy word. All at once a woman was seen dragging herself along, a well-dressed woman, too, for she was very rich; she was unhappily afflicted with an issue of blood, from which she had been suffering for twelve years, without being able to obtain any relief. She glided softly and stealthily through the crowd, saying to herself - "If I had only the happiness to touch the hem of His garment, I should surely be healed." Having at length succeeded in approaching Our Lord, she touched Him respectfully, and was immediately cured. No one had observed her except Jesus, who made a motion, and said aloud: "Who has touched Me?" His Apostles, quite surprised,

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answered Him: "Lord, no one touched You; It is because of the crowd pressing You on every side." "I say some one has touched Me, for I felt a virtue going out from Me:" The poor woman who had been cured trembled as though she had done wrong; she drew near, and confessed all. But Our Lord, who had doubtless done that only to make manifest her faith and her confidence, reassured her and said: "Fear not, daughter, your faith has made you whole."

- *St. Matthew*, Chap. IX.

89. *The Philosopher Struck Dumb.* -

You, doubtless, know, my young friends, that Constantine was the first Roman emperor who became a Christian; that was in the year of Christ 312. One day when this pious prince was at Byzantium, which is now the city of Constantinople (or Istanbul), the pagan philosophers came to complain to him that their religion was despised.

They asked his permission to open a discussion with the bishop of the Christians, named Alexander. He was a holy man, but had not spent his whole life studying like the philosophers who wished to attack him. He presented himself, nevertheless, full of confidence in his God, and requested his adversaries to choose one of their number to confer with him.

Their choice fell on a most skilful and practised orator. No sooner was he in presence of St. Alexander than, forgetful of his age and the decorum proper to be observed on such an occasion, he commenced a proud and arrogant harangue, as though he had already won the day. The holy bishop, turning

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towards him, contented himself with saying : "In the name of Jesus Christ, whom I serve, be silent!" He had no need to say more ; the philosopher was struck dumb on the moment, and could thus convince himself that religion consists not in fine words or self-sufficient airs.

- SOZOMENES, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book I., Chapter 18. (Sozomon wrote in the Fifth century of the Christian era.)

90. *How the Impious Arius Died.* -

Are we not happy to confess, my very dear children, that Jesus Christ is God? And yet there was once an unhappy deacon, named Arius, living in Alexandria in the fourth century, who dared to maintain that Jesus Christ is not God. This impiety was rejected with horror by the whole Church; it was only the ignorant and the perverse who declared themselves followers of Arius. After having disturbed the peace in the East and in the West, and banished St. Athanasius, their most formidable adversary, the Arians carried their audacity so far as to attempt to force Alexander, bishop of Constantinople, to receive the heretic into his church. The holy bishop would never consent to it; penetrated with profound sorrow, he went to prostrate himself at the foot of the altar and cried with tears in his eyes: "My God, if it be Your will that Arius should enter into Your Church, let me die before I witness such an outrage; but if You will have compassion on my Church, suffer not that he enter therein!" Meanwhile, the heretics, regardless of the bishop's refusal, would execute their impious project. On the following day they assembled in full

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force, and set out on their march towards the church.

It was a grand ovation; heresy prevailed; to hear the Arians, it was all over with the Catholics. They had reached the great square called Constantine's, when Arius suddenly turned pale, grew sick, and was obliged to enter the public privy, in the sight of all They waited some time for his return; but going at length to see why he tarried so long, they found him dead! The justice of God had overtaken him at the very moment when his impiety seemed most to triumph.

- TILLEMONT, *Ecclesiastical History*, VI., 296. (Based on the contemporary letters of Saint Athanasius.)

91. *Julian the Apostate Seeks to Rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem.* -

The miracles of Our Lord prove His divinity, but no less do His prophecies. Of these the last one in particular has been much celebrated ; it is that in which he said, speaking of the Temple of Jerusalem: *There shall not remain of it a stone upon a stone.* The Emperor Julian, the Apostle, who lived in 362, undertook to falsify this so clear prediction. He announced to the Jews that he was going to rebuild their temple, inviting them to lend their aid. He attracted the most skilful workmen from every country, employed whole troops of labourers, and committed the superintendence of the work to Alypius, one of his most devoted officers. The Jews flocked to Jerusalem from every quarter of the world; they exulted, and published everywhere that the Kingdom of Israel was about to be re-established. They feared not even to insult the Christians in a thousand ways, because they felt themselves supported

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by the imperial power. What remained of the ancient temple was easily destroyed, so that the Scripture was literally fulfilled, and not one stone left on another. (The so called 'Wailing Wall' was not part of the structure of the temple but is part of the foundations of the courtyard built around the temple by King Herod the Great in the time of Christ.) With the same facility were the foundations dug out anew. But, as soon as the first stones were laid, there came a tremendous earthquake, which cast the stones forth to a great distance. Fierce whirlwinds arose, too, and carried off the sand, lime, and other materials, which had been heaped up in immense quantities. But what was most terrible, as it was most evidently supernatural, great globes of fire issuing from the building and rolling in all directions with frightful rapidity, threw down the workmen, cast

them forth, consumed their body and bones, and reduced them to ashes. The flames even sought and destroyed the hammers, pickaxes, chisels and all other tools which were stored away in a separate building. A torrent of fire winding through the place and shooting hither and thither burned or stifled the Jews, whom it seemed to distinguish from the Christians, and even from the pagans. The dread phenomenon was renewed several times in open day. By night, the Jews perceived on their garments, crosses so indelibly stamped that, do what they would, they could not efface them. A luminous cross was also seen in the heavens, from Calvary to Mount Olivet. The obstinate children of Israel failed not to return several times to their work. They encouraged each other to persevere, hoping to secure the favour of the apostate prince. Every time they were repulsed

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in a manner equally fatal and miraculous; so that many of them, and a still greater number of idolaters, openly confessed the divinity of Jesus Christ and asked for baptism. This truly wonderful prodigy has been recorded, not only by all the ecclesiastical writers, but by several pagan authors, and especially Ammianus Marcellinus who lived in that time. (British writers refer to him as Ammianus Marcellinus.) St. John Chrysostom even adds that, in his time, the foundations dug out by the Jews were still wide open and plain to be seen.

- REYRE, *Anecdotes Chret.*, 28.

92. *Good Day, My Little Friend!* -

That as God, Jesus Christ is entitled to the same homage as His Father, is evident. There occurs to me now a pretty anecdote on this subject, that will, I know, both amuse and instruct you, my little friends! St. Amphilocus, Bishop of Iconium, in Asia Minor, being at Constantinople, and seeing that the Arian party was still prevailing, urged the Emperor Theodosius to pass a law forbidding them to hold their assemblies and blaspheme the Son of God. But, although the Emperor was zealous for the Catholic faith, he did not think it expedient to grant this request, lest he might be accused of too great severity. Nevertheless, the holy bishop was not discouraged, and in order to obtain by pious address what had been refused to his earnest supplications, he came to court a little after Theodosius had declared *August*, (that is successor) his son Arcadius, only six years of age. He paid his humble homage to the emperor, but took no notice of the young prince, who sat beside his father. Theodosius,

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taking this omission of St. Amphilocus for an oversight, had him reminded of it. The prelate then approached with a familiar air: "Ah! good day, my little friend," said he to the young prince, chucking him under the chin, and caressing him as he would any ordinary child. The emperor, very indignant, ordered the old man to be removed. The holy bishop, turning then to Theodosius, and assuming a look and tone of great dignity, said: "Your Majesty cannot bear that any indignity should be offered to your son, who is but a child; think you, then, that the Father of the Word made Flesh sees with less indignation any one refusing to the adorable person of His Son the same honours that are paid to Himself?"

Theodosius admiring the holy ingenuity of Amphilocus, made him draw near, and granted him all he desired.

- TILLEMONT, *Ecclesiastical History*, VI., 628.

93. *Death of St. Michael, the Archangel.* -

There are two natures in Jesus Christ, the divine nature and the human nature. A Greek heretic of the fifth century, named Eutyches, dared to maintain that there was but one, which was the divine nature; so that, according to him, Jesus Christ would have suffered as God, which is absurd and impossible. I remember having read that a prince of the Saracens (a tribe of the Arabs), who was called Alamondar, and lived about that time, had the happiness of becoming a Christian. He was a famous warrior, whose very name made Syria and Phoenicia tremble. The patriarch of Antioch, named Severus, who had the misfortune of professing the Eutychian

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heresy, endeavoured to gain him over, and sent two of his prelates to indoctrinate him. The Saracen, having heard what they had to say, told them to return on the morrow. During this second interview, an officer to whom he had previously given the word came and whispered something in his ear. Immediately the prince became sad; his eyes were moist with tears, and he appeared very sorrowful. "What is the matter, my lord?" anxiously inquired the two bishops who were conversing with him. "Alas! I have heard evil tidings! Only think, St. Michael the Archangel has just died, and the angels of heaven are all in great tribulation." The prelates, unable to repress a smile, hastened to re-assure him by telling him that the angels are immortal, and can neither suffer nor die. "And you would have me believe; that though Jesus Christ has only the divine nature, He is dead. Can God, then, die?" At this rebuff, which they little expected, the two heretics lost no time in taking leave of a prince who had so much, good sense.

94. *The Twelve Choir-Boys, Martyrs.* -

If you read the history of the Arians, who dared to deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, you would see, my dear children, all the atrocities they committed in regard to Catholics. But you would likewise see there the firmness with which the faithful endured the most cruel torments, rather than apostatize. I have read a pretty story about that, which will particularly interest those who have the happiness of being choir-boys

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When Hunneric, king of the Vandals, persecuted the Catholics, he sent into exile all those who refused to abjure their faith. Amongst these were twelve boys, who served in the church of Carthage, and were distinguished by their fine voices, but still more by their piety. They wanted to keep them to assist in the ceremonies of the Arians, and promised them everything they could wish, on condition that they became heretics. Admire their constancy, my young friends, not one of them would listen to such a proposal. They brought them back by force - they loaded them with caresses, and when all failed, they beat them with sticks. All was in vain, those twelve choir-boys remained faithful to their religion and their God. Hence, when the persecution had ceased, they were respected as real martyrs, and were called *the twelve apostles*. They went to reside in one house, and lived long together, giving to all around them an example of piety and virtue.
- VICTOR DE VITE, *History of the Persecution of the Vandals*.

95. *The Miracle of Typasus.* -

The Vandals, a people who became rulers of parts of Africa, were Arians, that is to say, they denied the divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. In 484, their king, named Hunneric, a cruel and barbarous prince, had caused a heretic bishop to be elected for the city of Typasus, in Mauritania (now in Algeria). The inhabitants, who were Catholics, would not recognize him; the greater part of them chose rather to expatriate themselves into Spain. The king, furious at this resistance, had three hundred who remained

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behind, seized, and commanded them to say *Jesus Christ is not God*, under pain of having their right hands and their tongues cut off in the public square at Typasus. Not one would consent to this impiety; they preferred to undergo the punishment wherewith they were threatened. But see, children, the power of God, when their tongues were cut out, they continued to speak as before, and delighted to repeat every moment - "*Jesus Christ is God! Jesus Christ is truly God!*" The authors who relate this prodigy add that several of these generous confessors journeyed through divers countries, and went to Constantinople, where the Emperor Justinian himself saw and spoke with them.
- VICTOR DE VITE'S *History of the Persecution of the Vandals*, Book V Chapter 6.

96. *Power of the Name of Jesus.* -

I think I have already told you something of the cruelties which the Arian Vandals exercised on those who would not deny, like them, the divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amongst those who distinguished themselves by their courageous resistance, figures Count Armogastes, who was the son of Genseric, the latter then being king of the Vandals. As he would never embrace the Arian heresy, he was bound hand and foot with cords, and thus left in prison. Armogastes had only to pronounce with faith the name of **JESUS**, and

immediately all his bonds fell off, as though they had been but a spider's web. He was then hung from a stake with his head down. Amazing prodigy! scarcely had

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they left him to himself, when he pronounced the Catholic words, "*Jesus Christ is God*," and fell into a peaceful slumber, without giving the least sign of suffering; it seemed as though he lay on a bed of rest. Such was in him the efficacy of the name of **JESUS**. And so shall it be with us, my young friends, if we pronounce that sacred name with all the faith and piety of which we are capable, as St. Paul assures us that at that name alone every knee must bend in heaven, on earth, and in hell.

- VICTOR DE VITE, *History of the Persecution of the Vandals*.

97. *The Ingot of Gold and the Piece of Iron.* -

How happy you are, my dear children, in knowing your Catechism! A child who knows his religion well may puzzle learned men who do not know it. There were, in the 18th century, at Aleppo, a large city of the Turkish empire, in Asia, (now in Syria) certain missionaries who converted many people. Amongst their Christians was a young lad of fifteen years, who, in company, once attracted much attention, by his ready wit. An Armenian priest, who had the misfortune of being a heretic, would have him admit that there is but one nature in Jesus Christ. "I know well," said he "that Jesus Christ is both God and man; but the divine nature and the human nature are so perfectly united, that they make but one." "Take," said the heretic priest, "a large and a small piece of iron, fuse them together; they will make but one and the same piece, wherein you can no longer discern what made part of the little or what of the big." "That is true," said the lad

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"but, instead of the little piece of iron, take a small ingot of gold, and fuse it with the iron. Will the piece you thus obtain be all gold, or yet all iron? Will you not find it part gold, part iron? So it is in Our Divine Lord; the divine nature, represented by that ingot of gold, is united to the human nature; they make, indeed, but one single person, but in that person we still find the two natures. It was in His human nature that Jesus Christ suffered and died, and it was by His divine nature that He gave an infinite value to His sufferings and death." To this admirable reasoning the heretic could answer nothing; he soon beat a retreat, growling against the youth, and the missionaries who had so well instructed him.

- FILASSIER, *Dictionnaire d'Education*, II., 445.

98. *The Plague of Marseilles and the Sacred Heart of Jesus.* -

The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is entirely French insofar as the Good God revealed it in its current devotional form through the instrumentality of French speakers; it dates from the close of the seventeenth century, but it is especially since the famous plague of Marseilles that it spread through the provinces. In the month of May, 1722, this plague, which had been supposed quite extinct, broke out again in that city, and threw it into the greatest consternation. The Heart of Jesus, which had already protected it once, was again the happy resource of the Bishop, the celebrated Belzunce. At his solicitation, the magistrates, in a body, made a vow to go every year, in the name of the city, to the Church of the Visitation, on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, there to honour that worthy object of our love, to receive Holy

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Communion, to offer a white waxen taper four pounds in weight, adorned with the arms of the city, and, finally, to assist in the general procession which that prelate proposed to establish in perpetuity on that same day. This vow was pronounced publicly before the altar of the Cathedral Church, by the first of the municipal magistrates, in the name of all, on the day of the Fete-Dieu (the Feast of God), before the procession of the Blessed Sacrament. The Bishop held the Sacred host in his hands, and the magistrates knelt before him. All the people united in a vow from which they expected such happy results. It was heard in a manner that excited the admiration as well as the gratitude of all Marseilles.

That very day all the sick were cured, and no one was ever after attacked by the plague. Fear, which in those fatal plagues does often more injury than the malady itself, gave place to entire confidence; the inhabitants of Marseilles believed themselves safe in the protection of the merciful heart of the Saviour. The disease died

out so completely, that, six weeks after, the Bishop of Marseilles, in a pastoral which he wrote exciting the people to gratitude, said to them: " We now enjoy such perfect health, that we have not had for some time in Marseilles either deaths or diseases of any kind, a thing wholly unprecedented in a city so large and populous, and which goes to prove the miracle." It was in remembrance of this second favour, which appeared still more sudden and miraculous than the first, that the Bishop of Marseilles established

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in perpetuity a general procession on the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. All these facts are established by the pastorals of that prelate, and by the official deliberations of the municipal body of Marseilles. The procession was interrupted for some time by the French revolution; but it now takes place again with as much faith and piety as in the eighteenth Century.

- DEBUSSI, *New Month of Mary*, 316.

99. *The Crucifix of the Tuileries in 1848.* -

There happened something very remarkable, children, during the Revolution of 1848, at a time when there seemed to be but little disposition to protect what belongs to religion. It was on the 24th of February. The people came to invade the Tuileries, whence King Louis Philippe had gone but a few moments before. They flung from the windows the furniture, hangings and carpets. One young man, whose name, I am sorry, I do not know, ran in all haste to the palace-chapel, where the noonday Mass was just being said; he feared that it might be sacked, and wished to protect it. It had already undergone some disarrangement; some of the sacerdotal vestments were seen lying scattered in the sacristy; but no one had yet touched the altar. The young Catholic then asked some of the National Guardsmen to help him to remove the sacred vessels and the crucifix to a place of safety. "We will do it willingly," said they, " but on condition that we have with us a pupil of the Polytechnic School." Two of these immediately present themselves; they take the sacred vessels and

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the crucifix, and set out on their march for the Church of St. Roch. On the way there were some ill-disposed persons who began to scoff and hoot. The young man who carries the crucifix stops, he holds it up, shows it to the surrounding crowd, and cries out: "Citizens, you would be regenerated? well! I remember you can only be so through Jesus Christ." At these words many voices from the crowd cry out: "Yes, yes, it is true! *Vive le Christ! Vive le Christ!*" (which may be interpreted "Christ for ever! Long may Christ live and reign!") and respectfully baring their heads, they marched in procession to the Church of St. Roch, where the priest took the crucifix, placed it on the altar of the Blessed Virgin, and gave his blessing to the people.

- *L'Univers*, 28th February, 1848.