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# Sermons in Miniature for Meditation

BY

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*"Give glory to the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever Who shall declare the powers of the Lord? Who shall set forth all His praises?"*

Psalm cv. 1, 2.

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# SERMONS IN MINIATURE FOR MEDITATION

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## HOPES FOR THE NEW YEAR.

“And after eight days were accomplished, that the child should be circumcised.”—*Luke ii. 21.*

TODAY, New Year's Day, the Church commemorates the Feast of Our Lord's Circumcision. Today we are reminded that the Great God (existing far beyond the confines of His material creation) has not only wrapped His divinity in the form of a helpless infant, but He has submitted to the humiliation of an ancient rite which had no direct meaning in His life.

In this act of divine condescension we may trace a threefold view of thought:

The submission of Christ to an ancient practise enjoins upon us the duty of accepting the following truth: that, under His guidance, we may use the past to construct the future.

This is an eminently fitting thought on New Year's Day—the practical lesson, that the dead year, which has just passed, has its uses in teach-

ing us how to construct the circumstances of the year which is to come.

In the great plaza before St. Peter's at Rome there stands an ancient Egyptian obelisk. To the superficial tourist, it would seem out of place and historic proportion, but to the acute observer it would symbolize the portentous fact that the Catholic Church has consummated and perfected all the religious civilizations of the past with the religion of the present and the future. Christ gave emphatic sanction to this principle of continuity in His words: "I came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it." Although in Our Lord's time the Jewish law of circumcision separated the Jew from the other nations, its original foundation was with the ancient Egyptians as well as with the Jews. Thus the law of Moses and Abraham concerning circumcision was an old rite with a new and figurative significance: "The wise householder bringeth forth treasures new and old."

The circumcision which was "a covenant in the flesh" became the ancient type of a future reality—the shadow of a coming substance—the consecration of the flesh, through the mystery of the Incarnation.

Thus does God use the raw material of the human to further the divine purpose of the Divine Will. We can, reverently, appreciate the historical fact that God uses even the human elements in the Church as means whereby the divine design may be manifested in His dealings with the world.

The old and the human under His beneficent inspiration become the new and the divine: "Behold I will make all things new."

So we are not shocked but filled with admiration when we notice how Christianity has, naturally, made use of ancient symbols, vestments, rites, art, traditions, government, customs and expressions of thought to serve its own divine purpose. The Greek terminology is used concerning Our Lord's Divine Nature in the Nicene Creed and in some of the writings of St. John. St. Paul wrests to the service of Christ's religion modes of reasoning familiar in the schools of the Rabbis. Christian philosophers and theologians, like St. Thomas Aquinas, have framed arguments, according to methods traceable in the works of the ancient masters of Greek and Roman thought.

This does not prove that the religion of Christ is a heterogeneous mass, made up of the elements of older religions, but rather shows a perfect system which has risen upon the ruins of the past and providentially selected and transfigured all that was good and best. It is in God's design that it should be so and over it all breathes His Holy Spirit.

Our Lord accentuated this historical truth in submitting to the ancient ceremony of circumcision.

This is a lesson for New Year's Day—that out of the deeds of the past we can learn to build a new and better life for the future.

Our Saviour's circumcision suggests another train of meditation.

He was humbly obedient to an ordinance which, apparently, for Him had lost its meaning and purpose. Another striking illustration of this abject obedience to a law which had no personal reference, was the submission of the Blessed Virgin to the ceremony of purification. The Holy One did not suffer her to see corruption and there was, indeed, no stigma upon her maternal dignity, yet she stood in the temple with all the other women and made, as they did, her offering of turtle doves to the priest.

The ceremonies of purification and circumcision remind us, somewhat, of our law of infant Baptism, except, indeed, that the latter has a very definite purpose. Circumcision was an initial rite by which the young Israelite made covenant with the God of his forefathers to keep the whole Mosaic law, moral and civil.

In Christian Baptism the child promises to obey the whole law of Christ as expressed by the Church.

The point, however, under more direct consideration now is the profound obedience of Our Lord and His Mother to an ancient and pious custom which had no special significance for them. In their humility we see a complete reversal of the ways of the whole world.

We needs must have reasons for our acts of obedience, else we will not obey. How narrow and foolish this seems when we realize, that compara-

tively few have the intelligence to grasp the full significance and scope of many laws. This is especially true of the laws of the Church which are sometimes entirely spiritual and subtle in their application. From Our Lord's example of the circumcision we should be constrained to obey, even when we do not see the reasons. This is reasonable, if we regard the Church as the faithful exponent of Christ's Will.

Yet this bright example of our Redeemer's obedience was only part of the economy of His atonement and propitiation on the Cross. Is not the sublime mystery one supreme act of obedience?

O Saviour of my soul, teach me the blessedness of perfect and humble obedience! Teach me to suppress the silly pride which has made me value but lightly the holy virtue of obedience! On this, the first day of the New Year, I form the resolution to be simple, humble and obedient to Thy law in the least things of my life—obedient to Thy law in struggling with my own wickedness and obedient to Thy law in every relationship with my neighbor. O, what a lesson of moral strength is contained in Our Lord's submission to the law of circumcision!

But there is a more startling thought to be gathered from the mystery of today's Feast.

He Who was everlasting purity underwent the humiliation and pain of a ceremony which implies the sense of shame that over-shadows our fallen nature. This was done that we might be persuaded

of the necessity of that spiritual circumcision—the destruction of inordinate desire—which was pre-figured by the circumcision of the flesh.

Indeed, the ancient dispensation taught a moral as well as a literal circumcision. There was the circumcision of the spirit and the mind: “Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart and stiffen your neck no more.” “The Lord, thy God, will circumcise thy heart and the heart of thy seed: that thou mayest love the Lord, thy God, with all thy heart and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.”

Beside the circumcision of the heart there is the circumcision of the lips. When Moses wished to tell of the defect in his words or utterance he “answered before the Lord: Behold the children of Israel do not hearken to me; and how shall Sharar hear me, especially as I am of uncircumcised lips?”

Again, there is the circumcision of the ears: “To whom shall I speak and to whom shall I testify that he may hear? Behold, their ears are uncircumcised and they cannot hear: Behold, the word of the Lord is become unto them a reproach: and they will not receive it.”

For us of the new dispensation the true circumcision is in modifying the passions of the heart. In his irresistible manner St. Paul makes this clear to the Romans and others, but his teaching is especially applicable to us all: “For it is not he is a Jew that is so outwardly; nor is that circumcision which is outwardly in the flesh.”

“For we are the circumcision, who in spirit serve God; and glory in Christ Jesus, not having confidence in the flesh.”

“Behold, I, Paul tell you, that, if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.”

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avail-eth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And whosoever shall follow this rule, peace on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. From henceforth, let no man be troublesome to me; for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body. The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.”

For the next twelve months, indeed for life, we should resolve to be on the alert to circumcise the heart, the lips and the ears.

The circumcision of the heart would mean to destroy those vicious tendencies which lie like wild beasts in the nooks and caverns of the heart; to eradicate those wayward impulses which are beginnings of moral evil; to regulate the emotions of the heart so that it may love only the things that are licit, pure, noble, fair. There are inordinate affections which if not controlled by the grace of God put a blight upon the heart and impede those interior operations of the Holy Spirit. The human heart, with all subtle sentiment, plays such a large part in the structure and formation of character that it needs spiritual circumcision, mortification, pain, and humiliation. Every love of the heart should be directed to its Supreme Object,

God the Creator, and creatures should be loved only in God the Creator of human and divine love.

Then, we have the urgent need of circumcision of the lips. We have the lack of restraint over speech which is almost a universal defect. O, who can measure the havoc and disaster wrought by the uncharitable and unruly tongue! The immorality of a lie is in the using the organ of speech to falsely reflect that which is truly in the mind. What shall we say of those who use the tongue to do the devil's work by sowing broadcast in the minds and imaginations of men the seeds of sin? What shall we say of him who has acquired fluency and grace in his ignoble talent of telling unseemly stories? There is the pollution of the lips. On this blessed New Year's Day, we shall determine to purify, to circumcise our lips; to avoid calumny, detraction, cursing, swearing, scandal-monging, lying and obscenity of speech. Then will this golden gift of speech, which, in a manner, differentiates us from the brute animal, become like the voice of the orator in the pulpit and the song of the bird in the woods, an instrument telling of the glory of God.

Finally, we shall consider circumcision of the ears: In Extreme Unction, when the dying members of the body are being anointed, the ears are not forgotten, so that God may forgive the sins committed through the sense of hearing. There are those who have a weakness for listening, for discovering the unwholesome imperfections in the

lives of others. The coyote on the Western prairies can detect the dead cattle for miles. The hyena skulks around the church yards by night and with his snout uproots the carcasses of the dead. He thrives best on that which is unwholesome and has an instinct for finding it.

There are persons who have a morbid instinct for finding out and listening to things abnormal and scandalous. Through hearing, come illicit imaginations and thoughts and from these come desires and from desires arise execution in deeds. This is the systematic process of sin, through the sense of hearing. The resolution to be formed from this is obvious.

Let us make a brief summary of all that has been said.

After the manner of Him Who was circumcised, we will make use of the ancient and the past to construct the new and the future life.

In accordance with Our Lord's obedience to the law of circumcision, we will resolve, on this New Year's Day, to be obedient to His law as reflected in His Church, even when this law seems to have no meaning or purpose for us.

We will perform the spiritual circumcision of the heart, the lips and the ears.

## IT IS EXPEDIENT TO YOU THAT I GO.

“But because I have spoken these things to you sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth: it is expedient to you that I go: for if I go not the Paraclete will not come to you.”—*John xvi. 6, 7.*

TOUCHED by the depression which came to His disciples the Lord Christ assures them that His very departure from this earth would mean a fuller dispensation of the Holy Spirit in their souls. The fullness of time had come for Him to withdraw His sacred Humanity from their presence. The charm of His personality had done much to attract and comfort them, and now when it would seem that their hearts beat high with expectation of success for the propagation of His gospel, He suddenly flings a shadow of gloom over the situation by intimating that He must leave them for their own good. They were men of flesh and blood as we are, and they became sincerely and fervently attached to Him although they did not understand all that He said and did. “I have yet many things to say to you but you cannot bear them now.” Except in rare cases divine teaching is gradual. It was said by a distinguished neo-pagan that perfection comes through a series of disgusts. To the believer in Christ everything is fair and excellent in itself

and spiritual perfection comes rather through a series of abstinences and reserves. It is a truism among spiritual writers that in proportion to our detachment—from things even licit, we gain greater freedom for the acquisition of grace and strengthening of human character. “It is expedient to you that I go”—as if the good Lord meant to say—you must not rely merely on the human. The human makes an excellent foundation but the superstructure must be more than natural. He who hopes to override a critical temptation by trusting to his own natural resources of temperament, character, environment, has not yet learned from a life of sin, how accidentally unsound and weak nature really is. The burden of the words of Jesus would be—put not your whole trust in human comfort, affection or strength. Do not even rest your religion upon the beauty of My Humanity for this may only provoke the emotion of the heart, and the heart is but one portion of the being and perhaps the most dangerous. “It is expedient to you that I go.” An act of religion is not merely sentiment—it is likewise a performance of the mind and the will. Women and children are naturally virtuous and are drawn to religion, as if by instinct, nor can they always tell the reasons. But such religion will not submit to the severe test of a violent temptation, if the subject be one who has weakened the will by repeated acts of sin, or one who is temperamentally passionate and has the wealth at hand to gratify the whims and caprices

of the sentient body. It would seem the more important exercise of religion is founded in the will. Keeping the mind clear from unseemly images we teach it to see truth in purer light.

Christ is the everlasting Truth and His Church is the living embodiment of Him in modern life. Our doubts against faith arise partially from ignorance and partially from our tendency to measure the spiritual by the human. Notice the promise of Our Blessed Lord was that the Paraclete would come after His absence. "It is expedient to you that I go, for if I go not the Paraclete will not come to you." Not that He would deprecate the human for men are drawn to God through the cords of Adam, but would make it the basis and not the whole structure of spiritual life, just as nature is the condition without which grace does not exist. In plain words the text implies this simple truth—that our faith must strike deeper and soar higher than the merely human. Religion is not to be sought merely for its beauty or exercised merely to acquire the favor of men or for the good example it may manifest to the citizens of a town or the members of a household. The Church is very wise in consecrating light, music, poetry, painting, drama, architecture, ritual, dogma, but these are human means to a divine end; that of the union of the will of man with the Will of God—"Thy Will," says Dante, the sublime peer of Catholic poets, "is our peace." But all these devices are human and indirect agencies and avail only re-

motely in the everlasting struggle between flesh and spirit. Moreover let us regard every denial of human delight, friendship, affection, beauty, health, strength, wealth as being expedient and straight out of the skies that the Paraclete may descend upon us. The law of detachment from the human is but the wise principle of asceticism which would save the soul from having its wings clipped and its horizon narrowed. With most men an act of religion is oftentimes so human as to be superficial, as with women it can be so human as to be merely emotional. Such religiousness does not stand the test of the stress of temptation in modern business methods any more than it will stay the impulsive heart from pouring out its wayward sentiment upon a forbidden object.

So must our spirituality therefore be practical and deep down below the human to the realm of the spirit. Then if reputation or power or money or love be suddenly withdrawn from us, as the Form of Christ was taken from His followers, we, like them, shall realize the promise that He would send the Paraclete—a word which signifies the everlasting help of God: “It is expedient to you that I go for if I go not the Paraclete will not come to you.”

## THE PEARL MERCHANT.

“Again the kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls. Who when he had found one pearl of great price, went his way and sold all that he had and bought it.”—*Matt. xiii. 45, 46.*

THE pearl merchant in the parable is a seeker after the one thing necessary, the true peace, the everlasting wisdom. “Again the kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls.” His quest is definite. Its ultimate effect must be for him appropriation, possession. In the beginning he knew not that it was one pearl that he was seeking—that there was one good that could put to rest his aspirations. At first he seeks “good pearls,” but one pearl of great price is the result of all his labor. Spiritual experience—divine teaching is almost always gradual.

It will add more color to the beauty of the parable, if we remember how in ancient days fabulous sums were given for the possession of one pearl of singular perfection. We gather more easily from this knowledge the force of the story that Cleopatra drank pearls dissolved in vinegar at the banquet which she gave to Marc Antony. The tale may not be true, but it must have been told to denote the queen’s strenuous desire to capture the

great Roman. Even to this day we can bear the excitement and exaggeration of being told that some gentle lady was seen at a social function and that she wore ropes of pearls about her neck. There is much curious erudition about pearls. The superstitions concerning their formation are interesting to those who have a taste for such learning. With us it is necessary to be seriously practical and to keep in mind that the pearl in the parable was one of great price and of very superior quality. If we are permitted to picture it to ourselves we may believe that it was smooth and round, with no yellow streaks in it to diminish its value but pellucid like the traditional celestial dew. For our merchant sought and bought only good pearls. He was a man of high and noble ideals even before he found the one pearl for which he sold all.

Our merchant must be represented as a searcher after light, a lover of truth, a student of the beautiful in nature or in art, a soul groping after that centre of composure and peace. There are many ingenious interpretations of the parable—one simple one will do for us. The pearl is the kingdom of God within the soul of man. For the most part all the interpretations resolve themselves into that.

## THE LOST SHEEP.

“And He spake to them this parable, saying: What man of you who hath a hundred sheep and loseth one of them, doth not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after that which was lost until he find it?”  
—*Luke xv. 3, 4.*

THE parable of the lost sheep is a picture of man's helplessness when separated from God. The image of a sheep dependent upon its shepherd portrays the deep truth of man's need for God. The sheep out of the fold is a striking type of abject helplessness. Wandering perhaps in quest of richer pasture it loses itself—then the night comes on and the frightened animal gives utterance to its fear with a cry for help. It cannot help itself. It cannot know that with each step it is advancing deeper into the desert. It cannot tell for whom it is bleating. Its instinct urges it to seek the other sheep, whereas in this predicament only the shepherd can be of service.

So is it with the history of man's soul. Entangled in the mazes of evil there must come to him a better moment when he knows that of himself he is helpless. He may not realize this at once. He may for a time blindly seek aid from men—as the blind instinct of the lost

sheep sought the sheep and not the shepherd—but at last he awakens to the consciousness that when lost in the wilderness there is no relief found in himself or men, but in God. Now, if man's help is from God alone, man becomes an occasion of God's accidental glory, and in a restricted sense we can say that God needs man. By the divine right of ownership we are the sheep of His fold. He will not—He cannot of His own nature let us perish if we cry for help—no more than the good shepherd could endure the plight of the sheep straying upon the moors. Although the calm, impassable being of God cannot be perturbed, there is in Him, nevertheless, something analogous to the human passions of grief and pity. The feeling of compassion and possession in God is represented in the shepherd seeking out his lost sheep.

Man seeks God naturally, but nature having been corrupted, it is difficult for him to direct His mind and will to God. This arises not from malice, but from weakness or thoughtlessness. We are wont to regard the sheep as a type of innocence and stupidity. How often is it true with man that he wanders away from the fold of the Church and the vigilance of the Shepherd, Christ, without malice but with indifference or ignorance. Not in scorn or rebellion, but in thoughtlessness he has gradually felt himself waxing out of temper with ecclesiastical discipline, with the restraint of the moral law and with the requirements of the Sacraments. It was not so with him in the beginning,

but he has wandered on and on and alone and a shock has come—he has committed a grave sin—and in his weakness and blindness he cries for help.

May the Great Shepherd grant us the grace to learn these three lessons from the parable of the lost sheep: first, that we need Him to keep us within the fold; second, that He needs us to keep His fold complete; and third that we need Him when we have strayed away from the fold.

## THE INDWELLING HOLY SPIRIT.

“At that time Jesus said to His disciples: When the Paraclete cometh, Whom I will send to you from the Father, He will give testimony of Me.”—*John xv. 26.*

THE Ascension of Christ, the Son of God, manifested more fully the reign of God, the Holy Ghost, within the souls of men. This is the meaning of the text above. When the light of Christ flashed upon the world, the dispensation of God the Father was not destroyed, but overshadowed. So, too, when the newer testament of God the Son was sealed there began the more intimate guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Although all three Persons of the Blessed Trinity have a share in our sanctification, to the Holy Spirit however is this great work more directly referred. Yet the gifts of the Holy Spirit have been sent us by Christ and this is what is meant by the words: “Whom I will send to you.” Moreover, the gift of the Spirit was sent to us “from the Father”—“Whom I will send to you from the Father”—so that the impress of the Trinity is branded upon our souls. In our mysterious being is faintly reflected the mystery that God the Father is related to God the Holy Ghost, as subject

to object—the relationship between each expressing God, the Son.

But this is a weak description of a transcendental truth, and we of untutored minds prefer to acquire the merit of a reasonable act of simple faith and leave to the wise and holy the discussion of the mysteries of the Divine Being.

This much, however, of the text is applicable to us: “The Spirit of Truth, Who proceedeth from the Father, He will give testimony of Me.” The Holy Spirit is the source of truth, internal and external. Internally in the individual soul redeemed by Christ, and externally in the living Church organized by Christ. It is of grave import that we realize this fact. The birth, growth and perfection of the spiritual life has for its principle the agency of the Holy Spirit.

“He will give testimony of Me.” Through the grace of the Holy Spirit we arrive at the overwhelming evidence of the Incarnation and of all the truths which radiate from this central truth. But if this “testimony” concerns only the interior life the exterior proofs of the divinity of Christ’s Church are equally unassailable. This knowledge, beginning in reason, ends in an operation which is above reason, and the primary agent of the act is the Holy Spirit. Thus is the Holy Spirit “the Spirit of Truth” within and without.

Sin, alone, in its various forms, greater or less, is the one force destructive of the influence of the Holy Spirit in the soul. All the instruments which

facilitate the interior workings of the Holy Spirit are to be sought for. They are found within and without—within through the habit of prayer—without through the system of the Sacraments.

A faithful obedience to the instincts of the Holy Spirit within, measured and balanced by the authority and teaching power of Christ's Church without, should be the ideal state towards which the Christian should strive.

## THE OLIVE TREE.

“I say then: ‘Hath God cast away His people? God forbid. For I am an Israelite of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.’—*Rom. xv. 1.*”

IN reading the eleventh chapter of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans it would seem that he intimates that the Jews as a whole will one day rehabilitate themselves in the Kingdom of Israel. This ending for such a royal race is more acceptable than the belief that they must ever wander over the face of the earth out of atonement for their sin against the light.

It is striking to read St. Paul’s words in such a light. He asks: “Hath God cast away His people?” And answers: “God forbid.” “God hath not cast away His people, which He foreknew.”

In a manner and historically the Jews are God’s people more than we are, for we the Gentiles are only the wild branches grafted in on the original olive-tree. If they have been cursed with the “spirit of insensibility” and darkness, these will be only “in some time, His good time,” and the definite hour will come when “ungodliness shall be turned away from Jacob.” Is it in God’s providence that the natural branches will be grafted

again into their own olive-tree? "For if thou wert cut out of the wild olive-tree, which is natural to thee and contrary to nature, how much more shall they that are the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive-tree?" Perhaps this modern movement termed Zionism is the far off beginning of this returning. Perhaps the lovers of Zion who are working for its reconstruction are building better than they know. For the true Jew the home of his heart is in Palestine. We have just had another Zionist Congress in Europe. It is the last expression of the most modern phase of the movement of Zionism. The previous Congresses provoked from the world pity, scorn and even laughter, but now at last the movement has received respectful consideration. Doubtless among the Jews themselves there are many shades of belief concerning Zionism.

What then is the Zionist idea? "The Lord thy God will bring back again thy captivity and will have mercy on thee and gather thee again out of all the nations into which He scattered thee before." From the days of the Babylonian captivity to this very hour, the Jews have hoped and dreamed of taking up their national history at the point where they left off in the Holy City of Jerusalem. The inspired visions of the Hebrew prophets, the wail of the harpists in their exile, the sincerest music in the sublimest psalms are touched with this golden desire.

"And so all Israel should be saved as it is writ-

ten: There shall come out of Zion, He that shall deliver and shall turn ungodliness from Jacob." All down through history has the Jew kept within his heart this high hope. He has gone through fire and water for his faith and only at the end of the last century, when heterodox or rationalistic Judaism began to violently assert itself, that the words Zion and Palestine were erased from the reform prayer-book of the Jewish ritual. This was unfortunate, for with the general obliteration of Jewish tradition there came necessarily the laxity of Jewish faith and a more ruthless interpretation of the Mosaic Code.

Yet in spite of centuries of persecution there is still alive the small flame that may relight "the altars" that have been "dug down," and the Hand not shortened may pile up the stones of the temple of Jerusalem—those stones that have not been left one upon another.

Ah! were it foolish to hail this new movement of Zionism, as an unconscious awakening of grace to the realization of the mission of God's chosen people? Great mercies may be in store for this race which has suffered so much. May the God of Jacob grant them!

"If thou be driven as far as the poles of heaven, the Lord thy God will fetch thee back from thence. And will take thee to Himself and bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed and thou shalt possess it; and blessing thee He will make thee more numerous than were thy fathers."

## WE HAVE TOILED ALL THE NIGHT.

“ And Simon answering said to Him: Master, we have toiled all the night and taken nothing, but at Thy command I will let down the net.”—*Luke v. 5.*

It is the one critical act of obedience to the divine voice of faith which lends merit to all our spiritual exercises. Entire willingness to accept and perform that which is inspired by the motions of grace is the end of a life of perfection. “ We have toiled all the night.” A paraphrase of this text would be that we are working in the dark until we recognize the reasonableness of an act of faith and are anxious to make it, while we reverence the authority of the one who demands it. “ But at Thy word I will let down the net.” This was not an act of blind but of reasonable obedience and confidence in the authority and power of the Master Who suggested it. The Church is the authentic reflection of Christ’s mind—subservience to her is licit and entirely gratifying to the intellect when we perceive the reasons for accepting her authority. Every act of faith is built upon reason. That which we are pleased to call blind faith is implicitly consonant with the dictates of reason since the basis of the operation is merely the acceptance of a statement from one who has authority to teach.

This state of mind underlies all the ordinary performances of daily life. We likewise arrive at the truths of science on the presumption that the utterances of scientists are always veracious. Alas! this is not always so. It is very distressing for earnest men to meet with modern teachers who throw out unwarrantable propositions (which seemingly affect religion) and abruptly withdraw them without apologies to religion or even a slender explanation for unbecoming misbehavior.

In the act of Christian belief nothing is required but that which is essentially reasonable. Heart and intellect are not contracted but immeasurably expanded. To run in the way of the Commandments adds brighter light to the mind and greater width to the heart.

“We have toiled all the night.” In special trials of faith the predominant virtue is patience. Even in the more intimate things of religion sweetness and light are oftentimes withdrawn. Our Communion may be dry and void of all sensible delight, the mysteries of faith more obstruse and, indeed, all our devotional exercises lacking in comfort, but there is more merit to be gained in darkness and aridity than there is in a sunny, equable condition of soul.

Confidence in times of desolation of spirit brings its own reward. For the most part the bidding to lower the net into the sea does not come until we have reached the shore after a night of toiling in the storm. We treat temptations against faith

as we dismiss unlawful thoughts. If we have not the mental ability to investigate the claims of faith let us, at least, cultivate the virtues of obeying that constituted authority which has the divine and human right to impose upon us the obligations of faith—"at Thy word I will let down the net."

## UNTO WHOMSOEVER MUCH IS GIVEN.

“And unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required.”—*Luke xii. 48.*

THERE is a charge against us that in spite of the severe discipline of the Church we are no better and perhaps less respectable than others who have no supernatural helps to virtue. Although men sometimes judge only externally, there is nevertheless something in this objection. Briefly stated, the answer to it is this: All the helps to virtue which the Church extends to us for use can through ignorance be abused and even wrongly used as substitutes for active individual exertion. Strangers are disgusted when they find us partaking of the Sacraments and attending Holy Mass and then slipping back again into our old habits of dishonesty or intemperance. Men err when they believe natural vigilance is enough to conquer sin, and they err perhaps quite as much when they forget that the instruments of grace were given not to destroy personal effort but to develop it. Of what use is the sacrament of Penance if we do not in union with it exercise strenuous personal exertion in eradicating an inveterate habit?

We are dejected at the frequency of our falls into impurity even after many fervent Communions, but the reason for it is because we have not yet learned that along with the action of the Blessed Sacrament upon our souls must go the exercise of a thousand and one little natural carefulnesses, without which chastity can never be secure. It is not faith but gross superstition which would prompt a man to have blessed a house which was bought with money acquired dishonestly in business or politics. This is to make one of the beautiful ordinances of the Church an anodyne to soothe a sinful or erroneous conscience. The pure heart and active will must operate in conjunction with the means of grace. The supernatural supposes the natural and supplies whatever is defective in it, but it never excludes individual action on the part of the one who receives the supernatural aid.

Faithful church members and weekly communicants are to be blamed for lack of individual effort when they do not show in their lives a constant and ever-increasing spiritual development. Scoffers strain the meaning of the text. "By their fruits ye shall know them." The purpose of supernatural aid is not to teach us how to escape mortification or prayer, but rather to teach us how to endure more and to pray more. We must not shrink from that effort which is part of our probation and the condition of merit. To develop a constant spiritual growth up towards God is the end for which we

must use the fruits of the Incarnation. We must not forget that we are not dispensed from our own personal share in the struggle of the Atonement and in the gift of regeneration. If we shirk the duty of personal action we are liable to transform our religious helps into substitutes for exertion and hindrances to virtue.

Men wonder why they cannot keep the pledge from drink, and yet they have remained away from the Sacraments so long that they have not been educated in strength of will by them. The sacramentals are stimulants to devotion, but sometimes they can relax personal effort—sometimes they can be abused, as when, for example, a man is found whose whole religious action seems to concentrate itself in the faithful wearing of a pair of scapulars. Such instances are not common, but few as they are they leave a very harmful impression upon those who do not understand that the worth of all supernatural aid depends upon the disposition and effort of the one receiving it.

## A NEW SHEEN ON AN OLD COIN.

“What woman having ten groats, if she lose one groat doth not light a candle and sweep the house and seek diligently until she find it.”—*Luke xv. 8.*

A SYRIAN woman lost a piece of silver—a Greek drachma—a coin—a groat. She lit a candle, she swept the house, she found the groat, she rejoiced. Christ in the parable is the woman, the lighted candle, Christianity, the lost coin, humanity. A hut in Palestine before the days of glass is like Christ's dark sepulchre before He rose. If perchance there be a window in it, it is shaded with lattice work, it admits but little light. When Christ with a candle in His Hand flashed from out the sealed tomb, He resurrected humanity. He picked it up from the dust as He would a coin, and put it in the palm of His Hand. When Christ rose from the dead, humanity was like a lost groat buried beneath the rushes strewn over the floor of an Eastern dwelling place. The resurrection of Christ has lifted the problem of immortality from out of the dark chambers of the dead, from the heart's deepest depression, from the twilight of intellectual doubt, into the sunlight of faith. With faith and hope and love as a basis it is no longer a matter

for speculation, conjecture; it provokes security, certainty.

The hour had come for the solution of a tremendous question. Sweeping is not done without dust. When Christ was thrust down into the grave, the world was more unsettled than ever. Men were perturbed like grains of dust flying through the air from the sweeping of the Sweeper. Their hopes were buried beneath the linen coverings that shrouded the dead Christ. Long before the glimmer and crimson of Christianity's dawn, the noblest among Pagans had yearned for life beyond death. Most pathetic literature it is—the record of the burning thoughts of those great heathens who strove to grapple with the reality of living forever! The Sphinx of Egypt spoke nothing—immortal life was a riddle—a theory colored according to the hue of different minds. But the best men in their best moments, or even when buried beneath the world's dust felt that, like the lost piece of silver, they would be found again and ridden of all defilement. Man is not only like the Greek drachma; the groat, but also like the Roman denarius—Cæsar's coin. The piece of silver bears the impress of an owl or a tortoise or the head of Minerva. According to the theory of evolution, man bears the impress of former processes of lower life—emblems of dissolution—traces of decay. Man like the coin is stamped in deeper print with the image of a Monarch, the likeness of a King, this superscription expressing proof of an-

other life, of reinvigoration, revival, victory. It is because we bear in our bodies the flesh, the bones, muscles, tissue, tendons, joints, and blood of the risen Christ, that we shall rise again. Christ's Body, stepping forth from the gloom of the sepulchre, reflects the fortunes of the body of man, its curative triumph, its security from disaster's clutches, from the jaws of death. The glorified body, once motionless, and cold—it shall again quiver with quicker fire and truer expressiveness; the deliverance of Israel from Babylon, its freedom from Egyptian bondage. "And when I had seen Him I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying: 'Fear not, I am the first and the last, and alive and was dead, and behold I am living forever and ever.'"

Christ is a new species, but He collects all the lower species into one. The destiny of our bodies is included in the history of His—from the inorganic to the vegetative, from the vegetable to the animal, from the animal to the rational, up to the divine. The theory of evolution, if it be true, widens out the theory of the Incarnation and makes stronger the argument for final Resurrection. All nature is a great matrix in gestation—a mother laboring in the pain of parturition to give issue from her womb, the grave, to a resurrected Christ—a risen humanity. To support this portentous fact—by periods of elimination, selection, substitution—all nature is deranged—the dust will not settle because of the sweeping of the Sweeper.

Christianity, the lighted candle, is shedding radiance and illumines the darkness of the problem. The woman, or rather Christ, is the Agent resurrecting the buried groat—humanity—from out of the rubbish of historical doubt. The science of biology and embryology, would seem to hint at the truth of the Resurrection of man.

Human nature is a coin, a piece of moulded metal with a specific value, a medium of exchange between heaven and earth, the lodestone that resolves the mystery of death into the mystery of life. The dogma of the Resurrection shone out in the sparkle of the first mineral dug from the bowels of the earth, it is prophesied in the faintest perfume of the earliest flower, in the first cry of the newborn, in the first scintillation of thought. Legal and historical evidence prove that nature from her womb, the grave, delivered a perfect Christ, unlike the pagan fable of Minerva full-armed from the brain of Jove. A perfect Christ risen in perfection is the term of God's act. From God we came, to Him through Christ shall our bodies return. We shall be burnished bright like coin just newly minted. But, when our work is done, we shall learn that we were not minted to be merely bits of money—but rather the shining coins, those cherished heirlooms with which the Syrian women adorn the braided tresses of their hair. The ultimate end of the creation of man is not for him to be simply an article of commodity, but rather a thing of brightness to embellish the beauty of the

world. A Christ Who died, yet a Christ Whose Body did not submit to the irresistible workings of death, Whose Body suspended the laws of chemical dissolution, assures us of the everlasting character of the life of the body of man. Christ went about the tomb with a lighted candle. He revealed its grim secrets. He swept it. He did not answer all the difficulties at once, but He imprisoned man's enemy—death. He found the coin. He pledged eternal life. "Behold I am alive forever more and have the keys of death."

When the woman found the lost groat, she called together her friends and neighbors, or as the Greek would have it, her "female friends," better expressed in old English by "friendesses"—"neighboresses." The world of nature is a mother with feminine power, and there is special reason why she should rejoice at the magnificent import of the Resurrection. It was from nature's bosom—the mouth of the sepulchre—that there came the birth of the history of the Resurrection. The sorrows of her travail are past—she rejoices in her conquest over anxiety and struggle. Her alleluias reëcho in the laughter that ripples from water gurgling in the deepest recesses of the earth, in the harmony of the spheres, in the flutter of a bee's wing, in the chemical affinity of a piece of mineral, in the conflict of physical forces static and dynamic, in the motions of molecules and atoms in the constitution of matter, in the acid and alkali in the sphere of chemistry, in the astronomical laws of attraction

and repulsion, in the poles both positive and negative in the working of electricity. Not to speak of the angels, or even of man, all the world of physical nature is ever singing: "Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia." "Rejoice with me, for I have found the goat which I had lost."

## THE TWO SONS.

“What think you? A certain man had two sons and coming to the first he said: ‘Son, go work today in my vineyard.’ And he answering said: ‘I will not.’ But afterward being moved with repentance he went. And coming to the other he said in like manner. And he answering said: ‘I go, sir.’ And he went not. Which of the two did the father’s will? They say to him the first. Jesus saith to them. Amen I say to you that the publicans and the harlots shall go into the Kingdom of God before you.”—*Matt. xxi. 28.*

THESE words were addressed to that constituency of Jews which was so self-sufficient that it saw not the historical misfortunes coming upon it. Although it heard the cry “Harken, oh, Israel,” nevertheless it did not answer the divine call. Still it may not be amiss to say that, although the Jewish people said “I will go not,” the hour of repentance may yet come, and, pressing forward, they may take up once again the golden thread of their history. The cry may yet be, “I will go.”

Apart from the historical lesson of the parable of the two sons, there is a personal warning which may be practically applicable to us. I care not how impervious a man may be to religious influences: I care not however grave his doubts may be, there must come a moment in his career when the voice

of a personal God is heard within his spirit. Thomas à Kempis has written in his *Following of Christ* that the voice of the Lord ever says, "Behold, I have taught the prophets from the beginning and even now I cease not to speak to all." To all humanity the divine voice is ever sounding its note of duty, "Son, go work today in my vineyard." Each individual, however insignificant his life, is a unit in this vast and complex system. There is a hidden or manifest purpose in every human life. What the work is in the vineyard or how it is to be done it is man's bounden mission to determine.

In the parable of the two sons there are represented two types of persons, who meet the Divine call. One son is strong and impulsive and swayed by his inclinations, whereas his will is still predominant and so he conquers nature and enters into the vineyard to work. The other son is high-minded and emotional and impressed by the merely external beauty of virtue, but his will is diseased and weak and his natural desires gain the ascendancy over it, so he says, "I go, sir." "But he went not.

## THE CENSORIOUSNESS OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

“Jesus spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves as just, and despised others.”—*Luke xviii. 9.*

THERE are seemingly “just” men who sit in judgment on other men and “despise” them. There are seemingly men so strong morally that they are consumed with passion to destroy the morally weak. Having never known a struggle themselves they are merciless in dealing with others who may be overwhelmed with the fiercest struggles. Under the guise of personal piety and apparently with a desire to extend Our Saviour’s kingdom on earth they would cast off those whom He specially came to save. It is a strange and subtle corruption of Our Saviour’s teaching—it is the refined expression of Phariseeism.

A Publican praying in the temple may be an honest man and nearer to the Mind of Christ than he who thanked God that he is “not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers as is also this Publican.” It is a virtue to be relentless in our denunciation of sin, but it is a vice to “despise” the sinner. How searching are Our Redeemer’s words concerning sin, but oh! how exquisitely tender is He in the treatment of the sinner.

Some writer has used the expression: "the bad quality of virtue." We know, of course, that the statement is contradictory and that virtue can possess no bad quality. What the author meant to convey was something like this: that virtue can become so immoderate and inordinate as to frustrate its own purpose. An exaggerated truth may be a malicious lie. The censoriousness of the virtuous may impede the cause of virtue. The unfortunate woman who passes at night in the streets may be "despised" by her more fortunate sister. Yet it adds nothing to the virtue of the woman protected by a well-conditioned home to "despise" the woman who has sinned. The self-complacent man who has never been tempted to strong drink may "despise" and be disgusted with the drunkard reeling in the streets. Yet the Divine Judgment will not be meted out to this weak sinner in proportion to the self-righteous presumption of his stronger brother. What a startling assertion is that of Our Lord: "Amen, amen, I say unto you, the publicans and the harlots shall go into the kingdom before these."

If before the world we are thought to be in that goodly company of the just, we therefore do not gain the prerogative to pass judgment and "despise" others. Many a "just" man is "just" because he has never known the conflict with sin. Some of the virtuous have been saved from sin by divine grace, education, family, home, antecedents, temperament, innate refinement. To be

truly "just" means that we should be well-balanced even in the very passion for righteousness in others. Servants of God should look at the problem of sin in others as a most complex difficulty. If they have a sincere spiritual sense, they will see that the will of the sinner may be affected by myriads of influences—by environment, emotion, physical impulse, mentality and even by the very complexion of his body. There is not a "just" man in this whole wide word "just" enough to "despise" the most abandoned degenerate. This is the Mind of Christ expressed in the above text: "Jesus spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves as just and despised others."

## AT THE FUNERAL OF A LITTLE CHILD.

“He was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding or deceit beguile his soul.”—*Wisdom iv. 11.*

It is faith and hope and love which bid us put our fingers to our lips and say not an unseemly word in the presence of death, when it is young and when it is beautiful. I would not if I could—I could not if I would. It is the gracious will of our Holy Church that when a comely child such as this has fallen asleep in another life he shall be clad as befits his age. Likewise that a crown or garland of flowers or of aromatic and savory herbs, in token of his bodily purity and virginity, shall be laid upon him. Then, too, it is usual not to toll the bells. If they are rung it must be rather with a cheerful and festive sound. “Bless the Lord, all ye His chosen ones: keep days of gladness, and give praise to Him.”

A finely-strung spiritual creature, such as this, now cold in death, could never have survived, if the harsh blasts of an unmannerly world had visited him too roughly. Therefore He, Who is the Resurrection and the Life, took him to His own chaste bosom to harbor him from the unwholesome breath of the night—the blight of wickedness. “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord.” It was He, gentlest and

greatest of all, Who spoke to the holy world of childhood as if He yearned to take it to His heart: "Suffer little children to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

What brighter glory in history could come to a Christian mother than to place her own offspring—the fair fruit of her body—upon the altar of resignation to the Divine Will? "Young men and maidens, old men and children, let them praise the Lord."

What if our dead little one were, to the eyes of this gross and unthinking world, a hyacinthine boy of rare promise? What of that? What if to the eyes of love he had a face as delicate as cut marble and hair like the color of rich grain? What if tears would rise and kisses ever come at the mere sight of him—what be all these, fame, beauty, love, compared to the boom of having rendered back to the White Throne a soul as pure at the hour of death as when the saving dew of baptism fell upon the tender forehead? "He shall receive a blessing from the Lord and mercy from God his Saviour, for this is the generation of them that seek the Lord."

We are nearer the departed than we can ever imagine—we are closer still to absent little ones who are blessed, without any desert of theirs. In a day or so, and through the mere breaking of a cloud, we shall be with them forever. "May the name of the Lord be blessed henceforth and for evermore."

## THE FORCE OF HABIT.

“In the Lord I put my trust: how then do you say to my soul: Get thee away from hence to the mountain like a sparrow? For lo, the wicked have bent their bow; they have prepared their arrows in the quiver; to shoot in the dark the upright of heart.”—*Psalm x. 2, 3.*

I AM convinced that the reason men so often despair in trying to conquer an evil habit is that they have never learned the law which underlies all acts of the will. A few repetitions of an act will sometimes create a habit, whereas many constant repetitions of opposition against the act are necessary to eradicate the habit. As in nature, so it would seem in the moral world, it is easier to destroy than it is to reconstruct. Many are the processes of nature leading up to the first blooming of a flower, but an unseemly blast of wind can instantly blight it. It is the same law running through the realm of the spirit which explains why it takes years to conquer a habit which may have been contracted in a few months. As habits are formed by the repetition of acts, so they are uprooted by the same process of acts repeated against the habit already formed.

The mischief is in believing that a mere resolution or a few moral victories are enough to tri-

umph over a long-lived wicked habit. We do not lose the gift of perseverance when we realize that our failures are not real failures if the intervals between them are growing wider. The failures are to be expected in the process of uprooting the habit—our chief duty is to look to it that the failures are less frequent. This is about the only rule to be laid down for the regulation of habits. Apart from the theory of grace it is a psychological question.

Different men have different inclinations, and the habits which are more easily in accord with these inclinations take a much longer time to be eradicated. If, on the contrary, the habit was formed against inclination, it can more easily be got rid of. Lest discouragement come to us in trying to uproot an evil habit, we should frequently make acts of faith in the imperial power of the human will. Men are bewildered and overtaken with despair when, after some sincere resolution to overcome habits of intemperance and sensuality, they nevertheless fail. They have forgotten, or never realized, this truth, that the act of opposition to a habit must be far in excess of those repeated acts which created the habit.

These two evil habits spoken of above imply many violations of laws which the ordinary mind does not perceive. In the habit of intemperance, for instance, those subtle and finely constructed organisms both of the mind and nervous system have been slowly and perhaps imperceptibly disturbed. It is quite reasonable, therefore, to sup-

pose, according to this inevitable law, that the cure is very much more slow than was the disease in its formation. The same law holds good in all moral acts of the will. If we can grasp this truth and apply it when we are struggling with some inveterate habit of sin, despair, by the grace of God, will never encompass us.

## THE THREE WISE MEN.

“When Jesus therefore was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of King Herod, behold there came wise men from the East of Jerusalem, saying: ‘Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and are come to adore Him.’”  
—*Matt. ii. 1, 2.*

THREE wise men, of those ancient days, who knew something of the disposition of the heavens, watched by many nights for the star which was to herald the coming of Him Who was born King of the Jews. They scanned the skies in the secret silence of the night, while Herod, the priests and all the world slept. It is in watching and in stillness that we catch the primeval glimmer of interior light. The first impulses of grace may come to us without preparation on our part, but they cannot be perceived except we be on the alert and have composed ourselves by the habits of prayer and meditation. Moreover, the wise men went at once. This was necessary for as the star came into the system of a suddenness, so might it suddenly disappear. They therefore were not only watchers in the night, but they were constant watchers. There are graces freely bestowed which must be jealously watched and used else they vanish as subtly as they appear.

Mark, too, the sacrifice which was provoked by the sincerity of their quest for Christ. The jour-

ney was circuitous and attended with all the fierce dangers which accompany the traveler in the Orient. Earnestness, therefore, was a quality characteristic of these three kingly philosophers. Imagination and sentiment may beguile us in the beginning of our conversion, but enduring sincerity and zeal are quite other gifts. Unforseen dangers arise and the way towards the new-born King becomes not only monotonous, but hazardous. Special lights and directions are suddenly and mysteriously withdrawn and we travel by the sheer force of our abiding earnestness.

Faith follows, in patience and assiduity, the early flicker of light in the darkness of the journey of life. Christ is not merely the Life and the Light but He is the Way. We are the creatures of process. The possession of truth is seen at the end of the journey when the ruggedness of the road and the darkness of the night have vanished. Progress and ownership were inevitable: "And entering into the house they found the Child with Mary His Mother."

So, too, must it be a principle with all seekers after truth—the habitual state of internal vigilance, constancy, thoroughness and endurance. In these are found the first fruits of adoption, redemption and sanctification: "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law; that He might redeem them who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."

## THE FEWNESS OF THE ELECT.

“For many are called, but few are chosen.”—*Matt. xxii. 14.*

THIS is a fearfully solemn statement, issuing from the tenderest lips that ever expressed God's love for man. It grows in its seriousness when we view religiously the awful history of humanity, past and present. It is strengthened by such texts as, “Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it,” and, “Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in and shall not be able,” and still again, “Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat.”

These words bear out the historical fact of the fewness of the elect; that is, when this great world is measured by the Cross of Christ. The truth of the “small number” of the heirs of salvation is, in Scripture, so compact and insistent that it amounts almost to a doctrine. St. Paul would seem to make it a doctrine when he compares the spiritual situation of his day with the history of the old dispensation. He writes: “Even so, then, at this present time also, there is a remnant saved accord-

ing to the election of grace. That stirring word "remnant" is used frequently by those servants of God, the prophets, when they speak of the problem of the lost and the saved. Indeed, the clause sometimes becomes more explicit and is translated by the words, "small number" of the elect, or by the word "some" of the saved, in contrast with the "many" that are lost. Again, Esdras is stricken with horror, fearing that because of the sins of his people they shall all be lost. "Art thou angry with us unto utter destruction, not to leave us a remnant to be saved?"

Thus Christ and His Apostles and His Saints, in word and act, do but consummate and protract the ancient truth proclaimed from the beginning: "For many are called, but few are chosen."

Interpret as you will the universality of the Flood or the reality of the Ark, is it not horrible to think that out of all the catastrophes only eight men found favor with God? St. Paul, concerned with God's election in reference to the Jews, quotes Isaias to demonstrate the paucity of the chosen and the overwhelming majority of the lost: "If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved." Evidently what was a problem for the Prophet was equally so for the Apostle of the Gentiles.

Another tremendous consideration is that this world, with its manner of thought, its current opinion, its trend of civilization, prosperity, power and its vast numbers, seems to have no part with

Christ. "I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given Me, because they are thine." Mark, too, the assertion of Our Redeemer which again includes the fewness of the elect: "Fear not, little flock, for it hath pleased your Father to give you a Kingdom."

We begin to see the reasons for the intense fear of the Saints. If we regard them as extreme, singular, exaggerated, it is because we have not scrutinized the far-reaching depth of the problem why "many are called and few are chosen." It is futile to theorize about the mystery of it. It is a personal concern whether we are of the few saved or the many lost. Speculations about its horror are of no personal service to us. The majority of men are unwilling to believe it, because (among various causes) they will not seek "the strait gate" and "the narrow way that leadeth unto life." That "the many" will not accept it, is a remote indication of its truth. The question is not why God should act differently with individual men, but rather why individual men should act so differently with God. The soul's salvation rests personally with man. That a soul is lost is not the will or fixed decree of God. It is the final development of a state of hardened rebellion against God and Christ and His Church, insofar as the Church expresses the Divine Will in history and in life. There have been men who, rather than face the fact that "many are called and few are chosen," have invented misconceptions and taught errone-

ous views about it, with all the moral consequences which falsehood will produce.

But here, again, the question provokes interest and discussion. Is it not wiser to believe it; to pray over it, humbly and simply, in the fashion of the Prophets, Apostles and Saints? "For many are called, but few are chosen."

## THE GRAIN OF WHEAT.

“Amen, amen I say to you unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground, die; itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.”—*John xii. 24, 25.*

THE explanation of these words of Christ is simple. The seed of grain must be stuffed into the ground and die of rottenness before it can give birth to a blade of wheat.

So too is it with the seed of truth. It must be buried away in the darkness before it can germinate—corruption, distortion, gestation, are conditions necessary for purification, generation.

If it be an undoubted fact of science it would also seem to be a law in history.

Truth which is a manifestation of God in life must more or less receive opposition from the world and hatred from men.

Furthermore it would seem at times to be part of the eternal design that the prophets of the truth should be stoned, exiled and cast upon heaps of dung.

What are men or systems in comparison with the greatness of truth?

Christ's Body shackled with linen bands and

sealed in a sepulchre is another picture of the grain of wheat falling into the ground to die, and bringing forth much fruit.

For do we not look to the decay of death for life, and to the gloom of the tomb for light? If an embodiment of ideas be the expression of God's own truth, it will eventually prevail in the fact of opposition, intrigue, prejudice, misrepresentation. If this providential purpose is interlaced throughout the fabric of profane history, must we not believe that there is a more watchful care over the diviner truths—the corn of wheat sown in the sacred dust of Rome? Hardly had Christianity cast but a short shadow across the earth than St. Paul withstood St. Peter thrice and to face—yet truth embellished with the glory of Italian art has reared the same dome over the tomb of the two apostles. I would that I could tell the rich thoughts that flitted through my mind when saying Mass upon the spot where St. Peter spilt his blood or when I drank from the fountains that gushed sweet water at the touch of St. Paul's head, so grossly severed from his body. No lover of the holy Church of Rome can walk the streets of her capital without absorbing something of her magnificent composure. It may be that alien hands will yet wrest from her keeping the choice relics of four civilizations—but what of that? Even though the Pope were but a poverty-stricken pilgrim walking by the shores of the Tiber—he would still be the Vicar of Christ, the Chief Justice of the Supreme

Court of Christendom, the living mouthpiece of God in modern history. The principle once admitted, it matters not how distressing the human element of the Church may be. Once we have expressed our unfeigned loyalty to the Throne of the Fisherman it is of little import whether men will cry: "He who passed is a false prophet—lo, there is the truth! lo, here is the truth!" For us it is enough to believe that the holy Church is the custodian of the Revelation of Jesus Christ and as the Book of Proverbs has it, "An obedient man shall speak of victory."

The seed planted in the ground was a sound seed, yet it needed some wise conserving force to hide it away from the wanton birds of the air, to submit it to corruption, to destroy it so that it might fructify a hundred-fold. For why should we waste precious time explaining aright this or making a distinction in that when we know that our sentiment was, is, and shall be according to the mind of the Church, and that truth depends neither upon the sanctity nor the malice of men.

Enough it is to know that in loving what we believe to be the light of truth, the cords of our hearts are more strongly knitted to the Holy See. If we thrive within its imperturbable majesty why should we wane disheartened if men cry that through ignorance and lack of fidelity we have gone out from our father's house into a strange land?

Thanks be to the God of history for the calm sov-

ereignty of the Holy Father, the Pope. "And his place is in peace and his abode in Zion. There hath he broken the powers of bows, the shield, the sword and the battle. Thou enlighteneth wonderfully from the everlasting hills; all the foolish of heart were troubled. And his place is in peace and his abode in Zion. And his memory shall be in peace."

## JESUS AND THE PLAIN PEOPLE.

“And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; and others cut boughs from the trees and strewed them in the way; And the multitudes that went before and that followed, cried, saying: Hosanna, to the Son of David; Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord.”—*Matt. xxi. 8, 9.*

AMONG the wholesome things to be learned from the text one is perhaps more obvious than all others. It is the spiritual principle that we are to be detached from creatures if we would wish to realize the mission which God has in mind for us. Jesus had in Him nothing of the demagogue. Possessed of the majesty of truth, He therefore cared not for the secrets which provoke the approval of the crowds. On this occasion the popular welcome which He accepted was an honest expression of the wish of the common people. If it is not always in history, nevertheless, at this moment, was it, indeed, the voice of God since it was the truthful voice of the multitude which had not yet been swayed by the authoritative influence of “the Chief Priests and Scribes.” Jesus must have felt the sensible sweetness of that sincere applause of the plain people. They were quick-witted, as crowds usually are, to mark the salient features of

the fascination which He exercised over them. One was that although he sprung from the loins of noble stock—"Hosanna, to the son of David"—a line of gentility which though decayed was nevertheless, royal, the plain people divined, as if by some rude instinct, that Jesus, although of the blood of Kings, belonged to them as much as He did to empires and thrones: "Hosanna, to the son of David!"

They, moreover, noticed the divine seal and unearthly character of His mission: "Blessed, is He Who cometh in the name of the Lord." Though Jesus received with dignity and complacency this popular approbation, yet He put no undue estimate upon its value. If genius is analytic enough to detect the fickle nature of men and of popular movements, infinitely more so could the searching eye of Divinity perceive how readily the masses can under excitement be transformed into a howling rabble which will perpetrate any outrage—even the invocation of the innocent Blood of the Saviour of humanity upon its own head and upon the heads of its children yet to be born.

This, therefore, is the truth to be drawn from the interpretation of the foregoing text.

It is always wise to compute the relative worth of the favor of men. If in the fulfillment of our human destiny, our motives for personal action be subtly mixed or partially selfish there is the danger that at the abrupt withdrawal of appreciation and sympathy we may react upon ourselves,

wane discouraged and totally abandon our mission in life. When we are in prosperity or attractive or serviceable to others we do not lack trusted friendships, but let there come some unhappy misfortune, like the loss of health, wealth or reputation, and instantly we find men fleeing from us, as a flight of timid birds take to the wing, when suddenly shocked by some rude noise.

High above human applause and affection there is the inestimable gift of spiritual repose—the fruit of the possession of an unalloyed divine purpose in all that we do—a direct concentration of all personal action upon God, Who is the definite and lasting Object of all moral effort in life.

## THE STAR IN THE EAST.

“Where is He that is born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East.”—*Matt. ii. 2.*

THIS Gentile cry, once piercing the far ways of Persia and Arabia, bids fair to echo in Jewish hearts which are throbbing not only in Russia, Rumania or Poland, but in the alleys and side streets of our metropolitan city. There is a star hanging in the sky over the Holy Land, and the modern Zionists, consumed with a high passion, are building better than they know. Suetonius and Tacitus wrote that the wisdom of both East and West believed Judea to be the birthplace of men who would rule the world.

All that is fundamentally spiritual shoots from the imperishable stock of the Hebrew race. The evidence of the Divinity of Christianity is in a measure the evidence of the Divinity of Judaism. There is a rigid principle of continuity running clean through the two systems, at least, with that authentic and integral system which we call Catholicism. So constructive a mind as Cardinal Newman's, reasons that Christianity clears up the mystery which hangs over Judaism. He hails Jerusalem as the classical home of the religious principle which absorbs all fundamental religions.

Christianity absorbs them all, Judaism included. Rome belongs to the Jews as does Jerusalem to the Christian. That Jerusalem and Jesus are not national or racial was the perpetual cry of him who was Saul of Tarsus and a Jew of Jews. Rome, too, is as universal as Jerusalem is Catholic. Only Rome could, without an offensive anachronism, plant an Egyptian obelisk in the piazza before the dome of St. Peter's or bestow on a Hebrew convert the vision to institute a religious organization.

He who was of the tribe of Benjamin, already perceiving the impending dispersion of his race to the poles of the earth, could not believe that his people would be forever cast out. The Gentile is of the wild olive which has been grafted in the original tree. The sap and warm blood must thrill in the limbs of each that each may live.

Zionism is no longer a golden dream. Jerusalem is delivered in a manner that reaches to the roots of civilization. It is not the Jerusalem of Tasso, nor, indeed, the Jerusalem of the five Popes who struggled some six hundred years ago to slacken the iron grip of the Turk; it is a new Jerusalem, even for the American Jew.

With a fine sense of historic proportion British diplomacy has not averred but presumed that the Holy Land belongs to no man or nation. The sites of the temples and all the sacred places cannot totally belong to the Jews, no more than that Christ is his sole possession. But the Zionist with his wealth and sentiment can

now lift the tragic shadow hanging over his race in that mysterious country. This is to be consummated by the amalgamation of the most hostile, yet religious peoples, wandering over the face of the earth. Zionism is even now accepted by international agreement. It is to be financed by Jewish colonial trusts which have existed for a decade of years.

Zionism is not an historic rhapsody. It is a practical movement to ameliorate the religious, economic and agricultural status of the Palestinian Jew. But again it is more than this. The intuitive genius of the race, doubtless provoked by centuries of persecution, is now touched with reverence for a romantic and unparalleled, historic antecedent. It is racial but religious, since the racial is so much a part of the religious. The creed is in the blood. The barrier of social convention and the deeply founded antipathy, glistening like a sharp sword, between Jew and Gentile, will, in the courts of Jerusalem, be put into its scabbard.

Not excepting the English, the American Jew has less of the unassimilative strain in relation with the Gentile type. Naturally the dissolution of this strain is slow and sooner effected by our more democratic mode of life, education and social relationship. Much American anti-Semitism has been worn away by the constant association of Jew and Gentile in army camps at home, and in the close trenches and battlefields of France. Interesting it is that American Jews are among the

most ardent Zionists. A superficial observer would reason otherwise, presuming that their prodigious material success in the American Republic would constrain them to forget the ancient glories of Israel. If America is the melting-pot of Europe then Jerusalem is to be the melting-pot of both America and Europe.

How can it be otherwise, if Jewish Palestine is to be held in trust by Western civilization and developed and safeguarded by international polity? It is the shrine where must meet in amicable mood the Mahometan, the Jew, the Christian pilgrim and student to contemplate the sages, prophets, poets and saints who belong to all humanity. This world-wide constituency will perforce break the racial and religious conflict. The fundamental religions will be drawn to one centre; comparisons will be drawn within the area of Golgotha, where was lifted up He Who would draw all nations unto Himself.

In that hour the Jew will take up the golden thread of his portentous history. We may say what we will of Greece and Rome, but Theism was and must be the life of the Jew. His acute commercialism is incidental. Cardinal Newman, in his enigmatic but nevertheless illuminating work, *The Grammar of Assent*, writes, that to him the last age of Jewish history is as strange as the first. But he is convinced that this chosen people, "did sin and whatever their sin was, is corroborated by the well-known chapter in the 'Book of Deuteron-

omy,' which so strikingly anticipates the nature of their punishment. That passage translated into Greek, as many as three hundred and fifty years before the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, has on it the marks of a wonderful prophecy."

But now by a sudden twist in history, Jerusalem is free. Is this freedom to unravel the racial and religious entanglement of Jew and Gentile? Is Zionism, exclusive of its sociological purpose, to react to the significance of the Mosaic Covenant and the Messianic Idea? How can it do otherwise? These aspirations are woven in the fabric of Judaism. Its sublime literature, the expression of its soul, is replete with these undying hopes. Is it unreasoning optimism to believe that the eagle, that shattered the nest of her young and drove them out on the winds of heaven, has hovered over them and is now spreading her wings to bear them back? Is Zionism an adumbration of some historic religious boon to be vouchsafed to modern Judaism?

"The Lord thy God will bring back again thy captivity and will have mercy on thee and gather thee again out of all the nations, into which He scattereth thee before.

"If thou be driven as far as the poles of heaven, the Lord thy God will fetch thee back from thence.

"And will take thee to Himself and bring thee into the land, which thy fathers possessed and thou shalt possess it: and blessing thee He will make thee more numerous than were thy fathers."

## ST. MARGARET OF CORTONA, THE PENITENT.

“For Thy Mercy is magnified unto the heavens: and Thy Truth unto the clouds.”—*Psalm lvi. 2.*

ST. MARGARET of Cortona, because of the very human and penitential character of her career, has ever been more than many other saints an object of interest and special invocation for the faithful. The Tuscan chronicler puts it that her parents were obscure tillers of the soil in Umbria. They lived in Laviano, a tiny village near Pozzuolo, and situated in the valley of Chiana, a short distance from Lake Thrasimene.

When Margaret was seven years old she lost in death her good and gracious mother. After two years' bereavement her father remarried. Her stepmother, jealous of the child's love for her dead mother, treated her so harshly that the little one conceived a profound aversion for her. Thus at a time when the sky is blue and all without is joyousness, Margaret was tasting contradiction and sorrow. One happy day of childhood there was, however, when she received her First Communion and was confirmed by the Bishop of Chiusi.

Towards the age of fifteen, stirred by that need of affection which is natural to a young girl's heart,

and being denied it at home, she sought it from without in the innocent social gayeties of her native village. She was but a peasant girl, but nature had gifted her, we are told, with singular beauty of figure and carriage, a wealth of black hair and much intelligence and wit and an ardent heart. All her biographers say that her face, with its Italian profile, was, for all the world, like a fine antique cameo, and that the air of distinction about her made her to look rather like the daughter of nobility than a child of very humble origin.

Some think she was in her seventeenth year when she met, riding on a horse along the road, a young nobleman from Monte Pulviano. He was lord of the manor of Valiano and of the Villa Palazzi. Dazzled by her comeliness, he spoke words of love and offered her jewels and a necklace of rich pearls, and urged her to follow him. Her refusal was prompt. She alleged its impossibility because of the difference of their rank and fortune. He waived her objections and ardently promised to marry her. Womanlike, she put faith in a promise which was only a vile snare, and perhaps hoping to escape the odious guardianship of her stepmother, she succumbed to the temptation, to elope with her guilty abductor. In the secret night and across the difficult marshes of Chiana she went with him into the darkness of moral death, remorse and despair.

The rest of her story is of tragic pathos, until after twenty-three years of the austerest penitential

works we find her triumphant over nature and a favored child of grace. We behold her son a learned and holy Franciscan monk. We see her once again, thanks be to God, in all the glory of her moral and physical beauty. We revere the mercy of God while we look upon her as the ecstasica clad in the white raiment and the veil and the bridal ring of her mystic espousals. Lastly we kneel at her tomb in Cortona in presence of her incorrupt body and offer prayer to Him Who came to call not the just but sinners to repentance.

## A GREAT SIGN APPEARED IN THE HEAVENS.

“A great sign appeared in heaven: A woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet and on her head a crown of twelve stars.”—*Apocalypse xii. 1.*

THERE is a principle of continuity running through all the religions and Christianity has absorbed all that is excellent in all. It took that one authentic and integral form of Christianity to embody in flesh and blood all that the noble pagans and refined poets among the heathens had sung and dreamed of with regard to womanhood. As Christ's Mother rose above the horizon all the choice spirits among men beheld the ideal vision of the eternal-womanly. There then gathered troops of painters, poets, dreamers and saints to do her honor. Afterward was created that mediæval art which is the despair of the modern æsthetic temper. To confound the wise and as a stumbling block to the proud she, a Hebrew maiden, was chosen as instrument when the infinite in His condescension clothed Himself with the flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. The very thought of her moral comeliness elevated and chastened the imagination of man.

It is a common fact among spiritual writers to find them insisting upon the necessity of placing all our affections in God. The human affection of

the Mother of Christ for her Son was the noblest conceivable, for the term of its exercise was purely and solely God. In the play of the maternal instinct the human emotion was actually the divine. She therefore personifies ideal human love.

Those who would keep fresh and pure the sentiment of the heart should look aloft to her as the exemplar. High-class love is perfected in restraint and everlastingly crowned in death. Through a series of abstinences and reserves we come to perfection of heart, and blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God. He who would rend the veil and touch the ark must have clean hands. His eyes must be of the spirit to behold with composure the awfulness of the vision.

Religion is not altogether but somewhat of the heart, although in the balanced character mind and will should play as large a part. It is to the glory of Christianity that it has evoked all that is tender and fair and spiritual in human affection. This could not always be said of paganism, for there were times when it brought out in the region of emotion that which was seductive and impure.

How wise is the Christian Church in keeping before us the central fact of the Incarnation, and that, too, in a human representation. There is not a mood of emotion in the human heart which is not appealed to and directed in the integral economy of the Incarnation, and the Church in dealing with man humanly has striven to draw him to God through the cords of Adam.

Oh! thanks be to God for our holy Church of Rome, which has saved to the world of ethics these two morally fruitful ideas: First, the literal fulfillment in history of the ideal of womanhood, and secondly, the ideal expression of human love in actual life.

## THE NEW THANKSGIVING.

“I will praise Thee, because Thou hast heard me and art become my salvation.”—*Psalm cxvii. 28.*

ABOUT thirty years ago Robert G. Ingersoll, the American agnostic, delivered in New York what he called “A Thanksgiving Sermon.” It was splendidly fluent and rhetorical, but its blasphemy was terrible. He tendered no thanks to God or gods. What had the gods done for man, said he, that man should offer them incense and rear their temples to the sky? The Saints were the parasites of humanity. Christ had added nothing to the sum of human knowledge, that would alleviate physical suffering. He never once taught man how to weave raiment or build a house—how to shield himself from storm or fire, famine or plague, hunger or thirst.

To the eyes of faith it were no task to detect the tokens of Providence, made manifest in the suffering of each individual life. Now, since peace has come, it is possible, even historically, with our new American republic. In a manner and because of suffering, our heterogeneous country was never more homogeneous and a closer part of ourselves than it is today. A kindred suffering has made

us one. Suffering and the possibility of suffering have provoked thoughts more serious than ever before. The sight of blood demonstrates that we are in the throes of a new national birth: there is a new American Republic.

At this moment the world is on fire with hatred and encompassed with every species of misery and confusion: judged humanly and viewed without the spiritual sense, there is in it little or no cause for thanksgiving. Such is the world at large, but what of the American Republic? Is there in it any new development to warrant gratitude, any revelation to give us heart of hope for the future? Comparisons must be made to answer such a question.

See the principalities of the old world. Empires, kingdoms, republics, self-sufficient and eager for conquest, are now desolate and fearful. All things human have failed them, the keenest human genius and endeavor have proved futile. Europe has awakened to behold, through the tears of suffering, that God alone is great and that the outcome of this universal tumult is in the hands of an Invisible King.

France, our sister Republic, so Catholic at heart and dear to us—in spite of what has been said—has made expiation in blood. The mystical sense, always in the soul of France, has leaped to the surface, like good blood in reaction. The crucifix once wrested from the vision of little children is now, indeed, a symbol of suffering and flashes more brightly than ever in the Madeleine, at Montmartre

and Notre Dame. Once was von Kluck but seventeen miles from Paris and said the French: "God has blinded his eyes," and he turned south-east, never to enter the brilliant city. The religious awakening of France came from the shock of national suffering.

The England, too, of the Reformation is gone, never to return. Its new, religious birth has sprung from the loins of England suffering. Suffering, like Catholicism, is universal and a profound reality. So now the Catholic priest does the work of many an Anglican parson, and pallid, dying lips kiss the symbol of suffering which once was thought to be an instrument of superstition. There are prayers for the dead, where once there were never prayers for the dead. There are prayers for the dead where once there were neither prayers for the living nor prayers for the dead. Men pray who never prayed before. The war-shrines in the streets of London might deck the roads of Catholic Bavaria or the genial slopes of Southern Italy. May we behold again the England of St. Thomas of Canterbury, the intrepid Martyr, who shed his blood for England and for Rome!

Again, this new circumstance of English national suffering has leveled some barriers of class, and even race, distinction. In the bloody trenches of France there are within "elbow touch" not only the types of English nobility, gentry, commoner and peasant, but the Scotch, Irish, English and Welsh. This, at least, is a kind of democracy

dreamed of by some lovers of humanity. Democracy, that much abused word, that word of music and of magic, which falls so often from hypocritical lips, that genuine "brotherhood of man," is now to be consummated by the fellowship of suffering.

Considering our own country, are we, too, to be regenerated by our entrance into this dark zone of suffering? Can the American mind see that the vicissitudes of the yoke of suffering are only sweet when measured by the norm of the Cross? Without a doubt, the nations of Europe needed some measure of chastisement, for moral security. Are we so unwary as to imagine that we can attain moral worth without the discipline of suffering? As in other countries, so in ours, the new national life exists only on the terms of death, the shedding of blood. The spiritual gifts, so dearly purchased by older nations, must accrue to us and only on the same terms of suffering and death.

This suffering will create new manifestations of national character and conscience. If we have not been, as a nation, averse to religion, we have been indifferent to it. Suffering may, perforce, reveal its value, when craving interior solace. Strange fact, that suffering must overshadow a nation to constrain it to have no illusions concerning itself. We cannot hope to escape the operations of this inexorable law. We needs must be broken to discover ourselves. There is sore need for us to perceive that we are in no supernatural sense a great

nation. Our material prosperity has made us big, but not spiritually great. Our thanksgiving should not be merely for what, under God, we have done, but for what we hope to do and prayed to be. Already the red dawn in the sky betokens a new undying glory. Heroes have died that our country may live. Alas! The seed must die to bring the bloom and beauty of the flower and fruitage.

Measured briefly, what are the qualities to be ours in this new era? First, the religious instinct of the nation will be more largely developed, under the sharp sting of adversity. This will be a tremendous gain, for although we are not anti-religious, we are not a religious nation. We are not conscious of our spiritual limitations. We urge definiteness of expression and action in everything but religion, hence, in the deepest instinct of character, the religious, we are vague and indifferent as a nation.

Secondly, the national and racial divergences, like the social and racial in England and France, will be softened, merged and drawn by the discipline of suffering to a common centre. Never as now does the issue of the war give promise of diverse and even hostile races—Celt, Saxon, Scandinavian, Teuton, Jew and Gentile—all knit together by the common bond of suffering, the picturesque vision of many rivers flowing toward a central sea.

Thirdly, a seriousness of purpose and unselfishness have already come and will in a more intense

degree possess us, now that we have sincerely taken hold of the burdens oppressing the Allied Powers. To do for others always reacts and strengthens character, besides being Divinely meritorious. It is the appalling insincerity in politics, business, the press and in the general conduct of life which provokes us, at times, to lose confidence in our public men, public journals and public opinion. There are things said and written without conviction, and said and written by publicists and writers who have not character enough to arrive at a conviction. There are noble things, even virtues, like patriotism, charity, education, religion, hypocritically extolled for political and selfish purpose. Again, there are internal dissensions and economic difficulties to be settled only by the external distraction of caring for other nations, in their suffering and fear.

Finally, under the mellowing and potent influence of this new, national suffering, there shall disappear the false optimism, fraud, egotism and pretense. We shall awake to learn, under the spell of suffering, that we have found, indeed, our life as a nation by actually losing it. For this, or rather for the hope of this baptism of suffering, this national regeneration, we give thanks to the Almighty and Everlasting God.

## THE CURSE ON THE FIG TREE.

“He spoke also this parable: A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard and he came seeking fruit on it and found none.”—*Luke xiii. 6.*

NOTICE the peculiar setting to the image. The fig-tree is not planted in an orchard, but in a vineyard. In our wine country of California the vineyards are not broken by the growth of trees. Yet it is the experience of travelers in Palestine to see at times, not often, a fig, thorn or apple-tree jutting itself out in a cornfield or a vineyard. The learned who have studied this parable gather from the Hebrew and Greek languages a meaning which we cannot altogether get from the English. It was not a fig-tree which the vine-dresser had accidentally chanced upon. It was one which had been jealously nurtured. Moreover, it is said that the soil of the vineyard is eminently gracious to the thriving of the fig. Among the Jews there was a legal enactment that the vineyard must not be strewn with different kinds of seeds, but it did not forbid the setting out of single trees. Licit, therefore, was the desire of the owner of the vineyard that this fig-tree should bear not only much, but excellent fruit.

Obviously the first interpretation is that the Jewish people were divinely ordained to fulfill an extraordinary historic destiny. But the parable can without a strain be applied to the Gentile world. As a race we have shared in the fruits of redemption, sanctification, intercession, yet as a race how capable we are of signal failure. With the height and depth and width of the Atonement and with the infinite receptivity of the spirit of man, what comparatively is the value of the spiritual fruit which we have borne in the vineyard during all these nineteen hundred years? When I consider the unparalleled sanctity of Christ with even the noblest flowerings of sanctity, I more easily am resigned to the moral obscurities and spiritual confusion so characteristic of our world ever since it has been known—for these last six thousand years. “And the next day when they came out from Bethania He was hungry. And when He had seen afar off a fig-tree having leaves, He came if perhaps He might find anything on it. And when He was come to it, He found nothing but leaves. For it was not the time for figs. But answering, He said to it: May no man hereafter eat fruit of thee any more forever. And His disciples heard it.” The curse that fell on the fig tree let us not hope rested upon the world. There is a becoming propriety in the figurative method of looking upon humanity as a tree and the fruit thereof being the organic expression of its interior life. The history of humanity is not some-

thing fastened on to humanity from without. It is the personal utterance of the works of the race. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

How small and truly elect is that Communion of Saints when viewed in the light of the myriads of men that have gone to death. "Vinea mea, electa, ego te plantavi, dicit Dominus." "For it shall be thus in the midst of the earth, in the midst of the people, as if a few olives that remain shall be shaken out of the olive tree: or grapes when the vintage is ended." It is indeed wonderful to think that if humanity were not so vehement in its desires and possibilities we would not be struck so forcibly by the paucity of its fruits. If it is possible to put all the biographs of the saints on a few shelves, the same might be done with all the classical literature of the world. A few pictures reflect all the schools of art and a few cathedrals manifest all styles of architecture yet it cannot be proven that if humanity had striven more keenly its performances would be equally as slender. Although it is that spiritual aristocracy which has saved the world, its redemption has been purchased with sweat and blood. In our best moments, as a fig tree, we needs must feel digged about and dinged and planted in a vineyard. Then the master came seeking fruit and found none. "What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard, that I have not done to it."

There must come even to the lowliest perhaps but once or twice, the intuitions of our potential

greatness. Some apparent trifle in the realm of our nature or of grace may have made it manifest. Yet when we compare the world of humanity to a barren fig-tree in its setting of green on the vine-clad hills of Palestine we must not be depressed for "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It was Newman that sincere thinker who when the tumult and confusion of the world distressed him rushed back to the inner sanctuary of his being to find God and himself luminous and true. Yet all is well when God is in heaven and the voice of conscience rings strong in the spirit of man. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for." "And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season."

After all the lesson in the parable is individual. In our hearts we know the lights, inspirations, impulses and special privileges which have been granted us. The momentous question is—have they borne fruit?

"Blessed be the man that trusteth in the Lord and the Lord shall be his confidence. And he shall be as a tree that is planted near the waters, that spreadeth out its roots toward moisture: and it shall not fear when the heat cometh. And the leaf thereof shall be green and in the time of drought it shall not be solicitous, neither shall it cease at any time to bring forth fruit."

The rare achievement of genius and sanctity will disturb us less if we coöperate more freely with

the influences of divine grace. “ And now, O ye inhabitants of Jerusalem and ye men of Juda, judge between Me and My vineyard. What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard than I have not done to it?”

## THE NET CAST INTO THE SEA.

“ The kingdom of heaven is like to a net cast into the sea and gathering together of all kinds of fishes. —*Matt. xiii. 47.*

THE Church must be superior, yet not opposed, to the State, as the State must not be antagonistic to the Church, but each must have its own sphere. The Mediterranean to the south of France is quite unlike the blue waters of the Adriatic, and the Baltic Sea to the north of Germany is fringed with a country dissimilar from the Irish coast. By this I mean there is sometimes the danger of transplanting foreign measures to effect a domestic cause.

Italy and Spain are lands rich in poetry and sentiment, romance and melancholy, art and religion; where the women are easily beautiful, and the skies ever soft; where every grain of dust is tinged with martyrs' blood, and every church treasure house contains a sacred relic. In Spanish churches pretty children, clad in white, in streaming flowers, dance before the tabernacle. The Italian festa is a national holiday, and the patron saint of the town is the hero of the hour. These people are artistic—so is their religion. They live on

ideals, they love heroes, they must have bright lights and florid music, color, and form.

With us religion is accidently different; the country is practical; the people cast in severer mold. Essentially, we believe the same truths; accidently our applications are different. There are men in the Church today who will not make compromises in little things, thinking that they are sacrificing principle. They will not relax the cords of the net to give way to the action of the waters. The consequence is that the Church in many places is unduly under strain from the force of the current in the sea.

It is of the nature of the Church to yield to the pitch and violence, the dash and fretting of the waves. The fabric of its net was stitched to be worn upon the crest and trough of the billow; its texture gives way with pressure and rises with the heaving of the swell. Shall we not see that the fundamentals are few, that upon the outer margin of our line of work there is almost unfettered liberty, the capacity to adapt the Church to moving conditions in this new life in the United States?

There are pressing problems all about us, ripe for solution. Men nowadays are not troubled by ripples on the surface, they strike down to the bed-rock of the stream. It is not so much that they will not believe in a truth, but they deny the objective existence of all truth. There are the subtle difficulties of sociology, problems of justice, definition of rights, limitations of ownership, brokerage

and interest, usury and speculation, a more thorough understanding between moral ethics and medical science, questions of crime and heredity, the rights of life as against the agents of destruction and so on.

Men say we are narrow and sometimes they are right. We shall never probably be understood upon the question of education until we make it clear that we are not seeking to destroy the present system, but rather looking for some method that shall assure moral and religious discipline for the young. The ignorant will ever distort our motives until we show that our centuries of traditional teaching do not prevent us from bowing in reverence to the advances of pedagogy and all the sciences that are true. "He saith to them: cast the net on the right side of the ship and you shall find."

## WOMAN IN PUBLIC LIFE.

“And she rendered to the just the wages of their labors and conducted them in a wonderful way: and she was to them for a covert by day, and for the light of stars by night.”—*Wisdom x. 17.*

THERE is sweet solace in the thought that though the laws anent women may be as mutable as the sea, woman will remain ever and forever the same. The fluctuations of custom and fashion may excite her for the moment, but the novelty dies down and she reacts to her lovable and fundamental self. This is the only exhilarating truth in the general confusion of thought which overshadows us, now that woman has thrust herself into the public conflicts of men. With the measured pace of time, will there come the inevitable slump in the actual voting? The game has been perhaps too rough and she will awaken to discover that she is helpless in the domain of public performance both by nature and grace, in mind and in body.

Yet, for the present, her self-assertiveness will blaze up, inflamed by the ardent insincerity of the politician. She being credulous and trusting, as is her nature, will confuse patriots with politicians and in this exalted mood all her geese will be as swans.

Already, political manipulation is feeling for the fibres of her heart, since it cannot reach the gray

tissue of her brain. The subtle cunning of political method has divined that woman approaches the problems of life with her heart and not with her head. St. Thomas Aquinas said something of the same thing, but he was a Dominican friar and lived in the Middle Ages. Did it take the searching splendor of his genius to discover a truth known to every youth who has loved a maid? Coventry Patmore in an ugly mood clumsily translates the philosopher's words with the statement that woman is "scarcely a reasonable creature." Now we know the Saint completes the distinction between *irrationalis* and *vix rationalis*. He does not mean that the devout sex is irrational or scarcely rational, but that deep down in the very roots of its nature the emotional strain is dominant and the rational ever subservient.

This weakness or dependence seems to be parcel of the Divine scheme, and hence the perennial source of not only the interior influence but the inspiration of romance, poetry and art.

Moreover, woman's delicate reserve is the breath of moral life, the origin of her incomparable personal charm. Because of her inappropriateness for the things of strength, intellectual and physical, she will lose out in this unruly public scrimmage of politics. Can she be taught to do something which will subvert the fixed and unalterable economy of the Divine design? Can she upset the past and make anew her nature? If the suffrage movement is builded on a fallacy, wherewith shall

we defend woman from herself or adjust the defects of her qualities? Will she because of the glorification of a vote wax stronger physiologically and be adorned with an intellectualism never possessed before? Will her latent genius, as she calls it, exploit itself under this novel adjustment of circumstances, or will she retain her natural, primal instinct for motherhood rather than for the creation of a *Divina Commedia* or a Venus de Milo? Does the forcefulness of genius ride roughshod over untoward conditions? If so, woman's opportunity has come and gone, long since, and she still is the creature of infinite variety but within a circumscribed sphere.

The rude demagogue shall find no favor with woman, but what of the refined, wary, if not comely type of professional politician? Will he, like Richard, the wicked monarch, creep into favor with himself for the prowess of his vicious undertaking with the impressionable queen?

This if it be a truth will die hard, but woman's blatant self-sufficiency is evanescent and the more provoked by her tremendous efficiency in the critical suffering of the cursed war. In that she was her supreme and sweet self, for it sat well on her nature. Will she draw conclusions wider than the premises and mistake her deeds in a crisis for normal action in a permanent environment? If perhaps she does not, then some chivalrous politician will do it for her. Already we shudder to think that such a type of politician is extant. Will she

because of her susceptibility and sacrificial capacity be made a burnt offering on his new altar? So now, instead of one we have two problems embracing the complex structure of womankind. Its prodigious complexity is a byword even for those who have never studied a word of feminine analysts, like Balzac or Bourget or, the less psychological but diverse Englishmen, Meredith, Hardy and Patmore. They are of one mind that though there may be several species of woman in womanhood, every woman is several species of womanhood in herself. The gigantic proportions of the difficulty become at once obvious, its manifold aspects are unspeakable.

To compare the craft and erudition of the modern woman with opulent intelligence and secret power of the woman of bygone times, is to draw comparisons between the glowworm and the star. These iridescences of feminine splendor had everything of accomplishment and grace, in keeping with the eternal womanly. But they had it, naturally, for it was part of the Providential plan. Hence they never lost distinction or composure, nor were they ever consumed with hysteria for the possession of a public boon which ran counter to the impregnable walls of the womanly nature.

Furthermore, not only the criminologist but the moralist will venture to think that never was a more vital principle of psychological experience, applicable to this urgent situation than *corruptio optimi pessima*. Can the female become more

deadly than the male even in politics? If the Indian squaw in Utah can barter her Divine privilege of a vote for seventy-five cents, what is to constrain the negro wench from offering hers for the enormous sum of one dollar? But this is a merely incidental and can, perhaps, be regulated by a law, if not by a vote.

But can a vote alter something deeper than the foundation of the everlasting hills? The demoralization of the red woman will react on her papoose as the moral frailty of the black matrix will be vouchsafed to her pickaninies. If the salt be there, but lacking in savor, wherewith shall things be salted? St. Francis de Sales, who, like St. Vincent de Paul and Fénelon, understood the divine side of womankind, believed that there was nothing so malodorous as the foul stench of decaying lilies. This is, at least, a pungent fact, if the lily be the white symbol of inviolate feminine excellence. Lacordaire was a friar but of a modern type and of a mind which reasoned that the world can corrupt all things, even so fair a creature as a woman. Though shielded by angelic influence, the Blessed Joan of Arc slept in her steel armor. She was dealing with men. This new species of womanhood must be thrice armed to meet the devices of political action. It does not matter if her quarrel be just or otherwise. To discourse upon so fine a subject in so gross a fashion: it is the female dealing with the male as never before in history, the ways of a man with a maid.

The Spanish women are slender in form and rather vain of their tiny feet. Of old the feet of the Spanish Madonna were hid in fleecy clouds and folds of cloth of gold. It was the artists' passion to paint the ideal woman. If his jealousy was provoked by the protrusion of a foot, what would he have said to the exploitation of a modern woman? Would his idealism interpret aright, if he should conclude that the standards had relaxed? Will the feminine ideal eventually die and the people perish? Will our youth no longer see visions or dream dreams? If woman is now the business victim of merchant, broker, banker and lawyer, because these professions have no ideal sense, is there a budding evil already asserting itself in her novel relationship with the politician? That he has already dared to batten on the weakness of her strength is the first indication that he, too, is beginning to lose the ideal sense in reference to woman. How is she to make the best of this bad job? There is but one method—to be her honest self and seek the ministrations of the priest, the poet and the lover.

## JEWS AND IRISH.

“Lord, Thou hast blessed Thy land: Thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob.”—*Psalm lxxxiv. 2.*

EVEN when the fire of the Druids burned on the altars the Irish race had a consuming passion for symbolism. It discovered forebodings in the leaping music of the streams, in the notes of the lark, the linnet and the thrush. There was an omen in the sheen of color and the aroma of an odor, in the gleam and scent of the wild flowers, in the green and gold of the moss in the valleys, in the purple of the heather on the hills. Its mystical sense gave a preternatural twist to every mood of its mournful career.

The Irish race even likened itself to another elect and conquered race, the Jewish, and saw in its divinity some reflection of its own. Time was when we thought these comparisons not only limped but fell; that they were models of rhetoric fit for the orator's Celtic imagination and fluency of speech. But the historic similarity between these two most dissimilar races, Hebrew and Irish, grows more acute with the process of these portentous hours. At the outset there is the grim kinship of interminable suffering. The manifesto of Zunz, the Jewish patriot, anent the suffering of his race, is so comprehensive that it has been com-

pared to the prologue of a tragedy by the Greek, Euripides. To paraphrase only three sentences of it is highly commendable.

If there are ranks in suffering, Israel takes precedence of all the nations. If sorrow, borne well, ennobles, then the Jews are among the aristocracy of every land. If literature is an expression of life, what shall we say of a national tragedy in which the poets and actors were also the living heroes? This is a miniature replica of Ireland's history. Two irrepressible and ubiquitous races, possessed with a splendid inheritance of suffering, have this in common: they have not been crushed by their historic misfortunes. On the contrary, their national aspirations have never been more dominant. So profound are they that to the utilitarian sense they seem like overwrought rhapsodies. The moderate Irishman says of the Sinn Feiner what the rationalistic Jew says of the Zionist: "His head is in the stars so that his feet can never touch the ground."

Moses with his sheep at the foot of Mount Horeb and the Divine Voice out of the burning bush are remote historic pictures, but Zionism is a vital proximate reality. So is the dire pitifulness of an ancient people, alive with the passionate love of country and struggling at this moment to build for themselves a republic at the majestic portals of the wide sea. "In those days and at that time, saith the Lord, the Children of Israel shall come, they and the Children of Juda together going and

weeping; they shall go and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces, thitherward, saying, 'Come and let us join ourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual covenant.'"

A light has been shifted toward Jerusalem although the Temple is not there. But who shall say that from antecedent destruction or because of the scattered remnants strewn over the earth, that the Jews cannot affect modern history? Zionism betokens a sign of a resilient and preternatural vigor. The dispersion of a race is no proof that it has lost its primeval strength or historic destiny. Rather, the pressure of its untoward career may be the condition of the fulfilment of its mission. For nations and races, as well as men, have vocations and are constructed to complete a purpose in the vast scheme of history. Moreover, it would seem that different historical issues are produced by the very dissimilar characteristics of different races.

The Irish symbolists of a mystical turn behold in the ancient Egyptian oppression of the Israelites a parallelism between their own vicissitudes and the lack of imagination, temperament and racial insensibility of the British Empire. Pharaoh met the appeal of Moses by oppressing the Jews with a more heavy yoke. Plagues and pillage come and go like infernal shadows, yet the King remains obdurate. Between Sinai on the south and Elim on the north, Jews die and die within sight of the Promised Land. But the black memories of an

honorable past do not stifle the hopes which spring eternal.

The cry of a royal and priestly people is ringing in the lanes of every Ghetto, in the doings of a people's parliament in Dublin, the pathetic and piercing expression of an Irish Republic. Again out of the burning brush comes the Voice: "Behold the cry of the children of Israel is come unto Me; and I have seen their affliction wherewith they are oppressed by the Egyptians." If there is a noble optimism in the Zionist eager to conserve his national genius which is his life, so, too, is there in the Irish struggle. Is it to be, once again a passionate and futile hope? Is it but a blessed dream, to behold a country gathering to her wings her exiled sons and daughters? From the Babylonian captivity to this very hour the Jews have never ceased to dream of taking up their national history at the point where they left it in the Holy City. The inspired visions of prophets, the wail of the harpists in their exile, the sincerest music in the sublimest psalms are strung to the one tone. The ancient bardic music of the Irish is a broken and vague lament for a home and a country.

All down through history have these two races kept through blood and sweat, fire and water, their high hopes. In spite of centuries of persecution there is still alive the small flame that may relight the altars which have been dug down, and the Hand not shortened may pile up the stones that have not been left one upon another. Ah! Were it

foolish to hail these natural impulses as an unconscious awakening of grace? Surely plenteous mercies are in store for races which have suffered so much. At least they have a cause for which youth, beauty and love might die upon verdant fields and in the echoing valleys.

It is obvious that the unassimilative quality in the Jew has conserved his type unique and secure. But how explain the distinct individualism, which is Irish, for as a race it is emotional, susceptible, assimilative and tender as woman?

There are reigning critics, some of them ignorant and others discriminating, who in every species of diabolism discover a black drop of Prussian blood. But it is not uninteresting to mark how the rugged genius, Bismarck, gave the impetus, about the year 1878, to that ignoble strife termed anti-Semitism. But what is more interesting is that out of its drastic confusion sprang Zionism, which was at first the organized fear of the Jews to shield themselves from the fury of Central Europe. Treitschke's cry, "The Jews are our curse," spread across to ungracious haunts in Austria-Hungary, France and Russia. Thus was Zionism born in the throes of Jewish misery. Shall it be perfected in glory when Jerusalem shall arise and be enlightened?

Ireland's brow is bound with the same fillet of divine misfortune and a day must come when the long cycle of suffering will close. He does not read history aright who sees nothing but the outcome of

human events even in the sacrificial blood of Easter, 1916, which now refuses to be washed from the gutters of dirty Dublin. Such a cause we are taught must be safeguarded with some assurance of success to be in keeping with the traditional teaching. But what if a series of such crises should ultimately prove successful. Then, these circumstances forced by men might be Divinely permitted to complete some Providential historical development. Who shall say? However, the rough fact remains, two ancient and honorable races, alike in suffering and in hope, stand at the gates ready for a boon which is the common heritage of every race and nation of the world.

## THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

“You are fellow citizens with the Saints and the domestics of God.”—*Eph. ii. 19.*

THE law of relationship or dependence is very apparent in the economy of the physical universe. It is a law equally evident in the operations of the spiritual kingdom. It is made more manifest by the doctrine of the Communion of Saints. Certainly, it is a very great discovery which we acquire from science, that there is a uniform law beneath all things and making for one common purpose.

In the domain of the spirit, this truth is explicitly revealed for us by St. Paul with the figure (in the text above) of the organism or household or body having members which are dependent for life, one upon the other.

The basis of the doctrine of the Communion of Saints is found in the law of dependence and the intercommunication of right and privileges among the citizens of Our Lord's spiritual commonwealth:

“You are fellow citizens with the Saints and the domestics of God.”

The beauty of this doctrine is discovered in the sense of proportion or relationship which one spirit has to the other. This proportion is likewise noticed in the material system. It explains much

of that unspeakable and marvelous beauty in nature.

The bright moon hanging in the sky is beautiful in its own native ruggedness, but because of its obedience to the law of proportion with the sun, its beauty is enhanced to an unusual degree. Of itself it has no warmth or light, but in due season, as it revolves in the heavens, the sun casts its light upon it—making it a “thing of beauty” and “a joy forever” to the poet.

In some such manner does Our Redeemer, the Sun of Justice—the Lord of the moral kingdom—reflect His spiritual light and warmth on every “member” of His “Body.” “For you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

There are stars and planets in the celestial system which gather their light from the sun. They receive it in proportion to their degree of relationship—for “star differeth from star” in the earthly as well as the spiritual economy. From this we can understand how the measure of grace is dependent on the law of obedience of the soul to Christ—the Central Sun of the ethical system. Although there is a diversity of gifts among us, we, all, even the most insignificant, are necessary to each other and play a part in the vast machinery of Christ’s world: “And some, indeed, He gave to be apostles and some prophets and others were evangelists and others pastors and teachers; for the perfection of the saints, for the work of the ministry, unto the edification of the body of Christ.”

In a spiritual as well as in a common government all participate in the benefits derived from actions done for the common weal—the public good—because all the citizens are parts of one complete spiritual or social organism: “From Whom the whole body, compacted and fitly joined together by what every joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of every part, making increase of the body into the edifying of itself in charity.”

Now the saints are the representatives and leaders in, what we may call, that spiritual democracy of common ownership. Every good deed which they have performed has made for the betterment of all. As with lovers of the people in a Republic, when lifting the standards of public life, all the people are benefited—so the moral ideals as embodied by the Saints react upon the moral vitality of the faithful. The Saints are our spiritual heroes, our moral idealists. We needs must be hero-worshippers for “when the vision dies the people perish.”

“After this there appeared also another man, admirable for age and glory and environed with great beauty and majesty. Then Onias, answering, said: This is a lover of his brethren and of the people of Israel: this is he that prayeth much for the people and for all the holy city, Jeremias the prophet of God.”

If a planet in the firmament shoots from its orbit there is chaos in the region about it, though the

general order is not disturbed. Sometimes a very small piece in the structure of a gigantic machine will thwart the whole purpose for which it was made. A most minute detail in the subtle works of a watch is an absolute necessity that it may keep time—a slight ill-adjustment in its mechanism will mar its purpose. So it is necessary that every soul should be in complete harmony with the Divine Will that the Divine purpose for which the world was created shall not be frustrated. It is, moreover, necessary that this constituency of souls should all fight together as against one common enemy—the enemy of Christ: “I desire first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions and thanksgivings be made for all men. For Kings and for all that are in high stations, that we may lead a quiet and a peaceable life in all piety and chastity. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God Our Saviour—Who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator of God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.”

This statement of St. Paul contains the whole doctrine of the Communion of Saints and shows how, with the mediatorship of Christ our King, intercessory prayer is of common service in withstanding our common foe, the devil.

This is the meaning of the Church militant. We are arrayed in one vast army pledged to attack “the principalities and powers of evil” which are “going about seeking to lay waste the vineyard”

of Christ. There are but two standards, with but two names—Christ and Satan.

Herein we mark the duty of acting harmoniously by our prayers, our charity, our deeds of mortification, that these may be converted into means of merit and be serviceable to our brethren in the household of faith. We need their help as they need ours: "A brother that is helped by his brother is like a strong city."

"That which we have seen and have heard we declare unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us and our fellowship may be with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ."

The beauty and truth of the doctrine of intercessory prayer are told in a verse of sublime poetry in the Apocalypse: "And the four and twenty Ancients fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints."

There are common graces flowing out into the souls of all, through the penances, Communion and Masses of the company of the just. Moses prayed for the people as the people prayed for St. Peter. It is not only a supernatural but a natural instinct which provokes so many to take it for granted that there is some kind of spiritual kinship existing among the members of the human family—living and dead. Wordsworth, the Protestant poet, divined this truth without the aid of Catholic theology. In his verses, entitled "We Are Seven," he tells of a "cottage girl" who naturally refuses

to consider death when speaking of her dead brother and sister. When she counts the members of the family she can think only of the dead as living:

“How many are you then,” said I,  
 “If they two are in heaven?”  
 Quick was the little maid’s reply,  
 “O master! we are seven.”

“But they are dead; those two are dead!  
 Their spirits are in heaven!”  
 ’Twas throwing words away; for still  
 The little maid would have her will,  
 And said, “Nay, we are seven!”

How good it is to know that neither the dead nor the living are alone in this great world!—that there is in suffering as well as in triumph a bond of fellowship kept together and vitalized with the spirit of the Lord Jesus:

“I am the Vine, you the branches.”

The living branches of this Vine are the suffering souls in Purgatory, and those on earth who are in the state of grace. The dead branches are those that are in a state of sin. As sap is necessary for the vitality of the vine, so is Baptism necessary for the sanctification of all the members of the mystical Body of Christ—the Church: “As in one body we have many members, so we, being many, are one body in Christ.”

In the early Church the first Christians were called Saints. Notice the following passages from St. Paul’s epistles: 1 Cor. xvi. 1; 2 Cor. ix. 12;

Eph. iv. 12. They had as a title "Saints" in the sense that all are called to be Saints: "This is the Will of God, your sanctification."

Amongst the early Christians, likewise, we find a more lively faith in the realization that we can be of service to that countless army of the faithful dead. We are nearer the dead than we can ever imagine. In the midst of its diabolism, fraud and deception, modern Spiritism indicates that the line which divides the visible from the invisible is very thin: "Are they all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them who shall receive the inheritance of salvation?"

"When thou didst pray with tears and didst bury the dead, I offered thy prayer to the Lord."

It is of faith that we are in communion with all, even departed souls, by helping all with our private and public prayers, ejaculations, alms deeds and our crosses suffered in the Christian spirit. In this manner we add something to that common treasury of spiritual goods from which all derive benefit—yes; all, even the dead who are members of Christ's spiritual kingdom: "For in one spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free."

This same law which binds the dead with the living under a common headship is discovered, by analogy, in the common authority and rights of the Church. Indeed, the Church on earth, with its system, government and hierarchy, is oftentimes likened to the celestial Jerusalem. "You are

come to Mount Sion and to the City of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of many thousands of angels. And to the Church of the First-born, who are written in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all and to the spirits of the just made perfect. And to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament."

Membership in "the new Jerusalem come down upon earth" gives a faithful soul a title to share in the same Sacramental system, the same eternal Sacrifice. It gives, moreover, a right of appeal to God, through the intercession of the Saints and the angels who stand before the Great White Throne: "Another angel came and stood before the altar, having a gold censer; and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar, which is before the Throne of God."

Oh! what a glorious doctrine is this Communion of Saints! Once we learn its beauty and inner meaning we derive strength and solace in our combat with sin. How comforting it is to know that we are not alone in our "conflict" with "the powers of darkness." We have preëminently, the King of the Saints, His Mother and the mighty troops of "the elect." Although the world is peopled with evil spirits and the very air charged with sin, there is that phalanx of the redeemed just ever fighting for us and resisting even unto blood.

"Call now if there be any that will answer thee and turn to some of the Saints."

This is the day, the Feast of the Communion of Saints, when we should let our minds meditate upon the holy doctrine, that its practical value may be manifested in every action of our lives: "Till we all meet in the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ." This happy consummation can only be brought about by "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit and watching thereunto with all instance and supplication for all the Saints."

## THE MORAL BEAUTY OF THE CROSS.

“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.”—*Matt. xvi. 24.*

FOR most of us Christ's is a hard saying and harder still does it seem in this our day when science has vastly increased the appliances of luxury. We are to bless science for every excellent thing that it has given us, yet scientists must not blame us if we believe that the spirit as expressed by the Cross be (if not precisely at variance with then) out of keeping with the material benefits which science has conferred on mankind. Christ added nothing to the sum of material knowledge. Although the strength of His spiritual teaching has affected law, economics, politics and diplomacy, it has done so indirectly and as it were by accident. It is evident from His life that if He did not disregard, He certainly passed by the mighty material kingdom of this world. He looked up to the heavens and told us nothing of its immensity, its numberless systems, laws and forces. He presented no opportunity for inventive genius to draw the electric flash from the sky and never a hint did He give that there are powers in the elements around us which if we could control, as perhaps we shall, would magnify the glory of speed, light

and flame, and shield us from the anticipated fear of all our bodily ills.

He graced poverty, which is material and social death, with a dignity and composure that are in contradiction to the temper of commerce, for the improvidence of voluntary poverty is the foe of competition—an instrument of paralysis for trade. He taught the doctrine of taking no thought for the morrow, of considering the lilies of the field and the birds of the air in our anxious quest for raiment and food. He preached the crucifixion of self and the laceration of the body, whereas science has softened bodily suffering. It has relieved the pressure of physical pain by the suspension of consciousness. It has captured disease in its very germ. That the whole commonwealth of the world should be awry with some higher and divine purpose is much less a mystery than that suffering should exist at all. Yet the cross gives something by which to measure the hopeless tangle of misfortune in history. The beauty of moral suffering, which is perceived even theoretically, is felt also personally and practically. The burden of the Cross is ugly in its exterior aspect, but there is an interior joy which comes only to the lover who is bearing it for sake of the Beloved.

A God who is not in some manner human is no God for man. Christ the living God in history has gathered every note of human sorrow around His Cross. With His Cross He has sounded

every sentiment of the heart, every desire of the will, every thought of the intellect. To the mind of theology and metaphysics, suffering is a deordination, and as such would be a defect, and could not cling to the calm, impassable nature of God. On the other hand, the unerring righteousness of the faithful, the sentiment of tradition, the testimony of Scripture, the doctrine of the Church, have clothed God with the majesty of human woe. But each opinion is a partial truth—the union of all gives the whole thought—that God in some super-eminent and exalted manner has suffered humanly, though without perturbing the equable character of the Divine Mind and Will.

To lovers of the externally beautiful—they who seek beauty for its own sake—the Cross will ever be an expression of deformity, as it is a scandal to the wise, a hindrance to science and a stumbling-block to the proud. Around the Great Martyred Hero of a lost cause, kneel the goodly company of the just—not the flatterers, but the lovers of an ungrateful people—they who carry the Cross for humanity—the weepers and the men of prayer—they who sit by the gates and grow sad at the sins of the city. In the opinion of science and to the minds of men of action the saints must ever be parasites, sluggards, and the enemies of material progress. At the hour when Europe broke loose from compact Christendom there was opened out a new era for scientific glory. It would shake our faith in the divinity of the Cross if we made mere

material success the fruitful mother of sweet contentment.

If death were the end then assuredly science would be the great saviour of mankind, and the Cross an intrusion and a folly. But the Cross is the norm by which we measure the burden of human life. The Cross is the revelation that the God Who laid it upon the shoulders of humanity is the same God Who out of love for man, touched the acme of human suffering. That early sin, which whatever its nature, was great enough to disturb the beauty of the moral order, has been atoned for. The God who suffered has not permitted suffering except that a greater good may come from it. The Cross is the abandoned confession from God that as He had loved man from the beginning, so He shall love him unto the end. Whatever may be the darkness of the mystery behind the cross, this much is clear, that it is a testament of God's love for man.

Yet if the Cross had simply revealed God's love it would not explain (as it does partially), why it has followed humanity down the centuries. In the same moment that it expressed overwhelming love for us, it revealed the awful nature of sin. The malignity and character of moral evil is to be measured by the Cross. The primeval disturbance must have been deep and far-reaching since it has cost so much. It reared the Cross for Christ and cast its shadow upon all the world.

What, then, is to be done? Shall we seek to

escape the horrors of the cross? We cannot if we would. Before the revelation of the Cross flashed upon the world men groped about seeking a solution for the indignities of existence. Christianity shed a new light upon the difficulty and lent a sweetness and merit to the burden of human life.

What, then, has science done that we should seek its glorification at the expense of the Cross? The mystery of the Cross is coëxtensive with every truth of science. Even if science has dragged man out of the cave and put a garment on his back and taught him to look up at the sun, what is all that, when the irresistible hunger of his spirit is wearing away his flesh? Every operation of his mind and mood of his heart whisper that to eat, drink, build and breed, are not enough. Man craves some pledge of God's love—some emblem of immortality.

The Cross stands as a rock in the midst of the sea. Petty men seek to stir up the tempest, they invent and reject scientific theories, then they reject and invent again without making any apologies. The waters may clip the rough base of the rock, because science is from God, but this is permitted that it shall eventually the better bring out the glory and statuesque proportion of the Cross—the sign of our salvation in the midst of the storm.

## THE SIN OF DAVID.

“To Thee only have I sinned, and have done evil before Thee.”—*Psalm l. 6.*

THIS psalm is a statement of the confession and repentance of David after he had sinned with Bethsabee, the wife of Urias. In the text above he does not make so much of the terrible facts that he had degraded a weak woman; disrupted his army and kingdom and lost the filial love of his son Absalom—nor does he make prominent the truth that by his sin he plunged his whole soul in remorse and contributed to that mighty volume of scandal and misery which is sweeping over the world because of sin. The fearful thought uppermost in his mind is, that, the malignity of his sin is in his act of wilful revolt against the law of virtue, which is the shadow of God's Being in history and in personal life.

The essence of sin is in the act of disobedience to or in the act of revolt against the Divine Majesty. The idea of sin or moral evil was acknowledged by the noblest among the pagans and by the leaders of the old Oriental religions. The flashes of divine light in Israel's history gave the chosen people a deeper sense of sin, but the keenest realization of sin came with the revelation of Christ hanging upon a Cross between heaven and earth. He did not in-

vent the idea of sin, but made clearer the horrors and profound malice of sin. This terrible fact would provoke sinners to despair, were it not that the Cross, besides being a revelation of the malignity of sin, it is, likewise, the most eloquent exposition of God's love for man. It is a revelation filling us with a wholesome fear of sin and yet, at the same time, becoming to us a source of pardon and strength.

Two resolutions are to be formed from these words: First, never to make little of even the least sin; and secondly, never to believe sin to be unconquerable.

## CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AND OUR IMMORTAL BODIES.

“And if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you; He that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead shall quicken also your mortal bodies, because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you.”—*Roman viii. 11.*

THE dogma of the Resurrection is a consoling one, assuring us that this body will attain the fruit of conquest after so dreadful a conflict with the soul and that it will not be denied the licit satisfaction of its mighty and indescribable longings.

Indeed, it is morally wholesome to believe that this our fleshly body, in some mysterious measure, shall go with us even after death. Although in life it is the humiliating part of our nature, nevertheless, the spirit lacks substantial completeness until it is one with the body. The equilibrium existing between these two realities was once disturbed. Since then the battle has been fiercely waging. The end of all rational asceticism is to reestablish this harmony. He Who came from on high clothed with the lowliness of flesh—He Who flashed forth from the sealed sepulchre, had for His purpose not only atonement for the law violated, but likewise the restoration of peace between body and soul. When Christ was nailed to the Cross sin

had done its worst. When Christ rose from the tomb He put to flight the forces of sin and death: "He routed them as with a breath of His nostrils." All our struggle is within the walls of the flesh. Even the subtlest of the higher temptations can be remotely traced to some latent and unbidden impulse of the flesh. The most delicately shaded moods of the imagination and heart—the most refined efforts of the will, have their beginnings in the flesh. Yet in the economy of the Resurrection—in the vast scheme of the Incarnation, the body is not disgraced or dishonored: "My covenant shall be in the flesh." Although the body be lower in degree of being than the spirit, it has relatively to its own purpose its own perfection. We have been redeemed through the flesh, the instrument of our weakness—the very poison has been changed as it were into an antidote.

In the plan of spiritual regeneration all things work together unto good. There were religions of old, as there are erring thinkers now, who through shame hide the corpse under heaps of flowers and consign it to forgetfulness. Not so with the integral plan of Christianity; even the shameful body does not suffer oblivion.

He Who was hanged nakedly for our shame in the sight of men, rose from the dead to save us from shame. Although physically and organically perfect, yet because of this subtle perfection was He more susceptible to the keen edges of shame. "There is no beauty in Him nor comeliness; and

we have seen Him, and there was no sightliness that we should be desirous of Him."

When Christ rose from the tomb He routed the forces of nature and healed the ravages of sin, which are the sources of death: "He awaked as one out of a sleep and as a giant refreshed with wine and He smote His enemies, death and hell, and put them to everlasting confusion." Compared to that sense of shame, the chemical reaction of the thirst in His mouth or the gushing of water and blood from His Broken Heart were as nothing. If it were preëminently proper that His Body should not taste the unwholesome savour of the tomb, so was it meet that she, of whose cloistered womb He was the fruit, should fall asleep and miss the corruption and undignified dissolution of the body. Indeed, the wonderment would be the more vivid if it were not so.

With us who bear in our bodies the vestiges of moral misfortune, it behooves us to slip into the cold arms of the earth for a brief season, if only to undergo penitence through the foul stench of unshriven imperfections.

Medical science opens and peers into every bone, muscle, artery and joint, but the marvel of the human body begins only where the point of the dissecting knife ends.

From the numberless troops of the unclean, as well as from the narrow Puritan, comes the cry of "Shame!" But the cry is fanatical or a cruel memory of lost chastity. To touch the ark and

part the veil one must have clean hands. The sensation of moral horror in us is the evidence of the mystery of the Fall in the beginning of history, and the traditional relic of it which we carry in our bodies to this very day.

Within this tenement of flesh and blood are hidden treasures so costly that the powers and principalities of good and evil are ever contending for mastery over them.

Within the body's sacred temple is lodged the Holy Spirit seated as upon a throne to diffuse blessings, but the Babel of contradicting passions smothers His Voice and provokes tumult. Man's body stands between the creation and the Creator. It is the crown of the material, and the last expression of the spiritual creation. With its crest sublime it touches the dome of the sky and plants its naked foot upon a clod of earth. It creates the mystery of space and defies the mystery of time.

Within its boundless reservations there glow the camp-fires by night and the din of battle by day.

Within its field of infinitude there is area enough for gaiety and despair, tragedy and wit, pathos and delight, hope and fear, life and death. It gathers all nature, art, music and poetry within the sanctuary of its sensible emotions.

The objective reality of external things would be dull and unresponsive were it not for the body which receives sense-impressions as the foundation of ideas.

The learned discuss many intricate questions concerning the relative value of these two realities—spirit and matter.

Much subtle thought is provoked from a study of the intimacy between soul and body, of their natures, qualities and perfection.

The philosophic conviction is that the body and soul do not acquire the respective perfection of their natures until they are joined together.

Whatever there is of sense perception in the soul has come through the avenue of the body. Only an act of special intervention can bestow the gifts of the body on the soul, when the soul is separated from it. However this may be, the body remains for us the battlefield of life's probation. Nor is it as it was with some ancient scholars and superstitious believers, a prison incarcerating the celestial aspirations of the spirit, or the sole principle of evil. This feeling of depression, which arises either from an insufficient study of Holy Writ or from a morbid sensitiveness of the havoc which lust is playing in the world, is not a normal state—the chariot is one and the steeds are of equal swiftness, but the charioteer is not sufficiently skilful. Heresy is but a partial truth, and they who taught that the body was essentially bad and the soul essentially good were giving to the world a most disastrous doctrine. The Saints, in their innocence, speak of their bodies as of everlasting companions. "I know that my Redeemer liveth; in my flesh I shall see God."

Supernal human delight is reserved for those who have not profaned the tabernacle of the body from that early time when the baptismal dew falls upon the white forehead to the last hour when the chrism anoints the dying senses of touch, taste, smell and sight. They who have not abused so intimate a consort as the body, can know the ethereal bliss evoked from inviolable affection. Once the soul has been directed towards its proper object, then the body is not an enemy, but avails supernaturally; for the very infirmity and mortality of the flesh is a condition of merit for the spirit. Through the Flesh and the Blood of Christ we are made partakers of the shining forth of His glorified and ascended Body. Somehow it shall yet come that this celestial light shall pierce through the sluggish senses of our bodies: "Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

St. Theresa once told about her vision of Christ's transfigured Body. Whatever value may be attached to the vision, her description is weak, for she pictures His Hand as being like unto limpid glass. Yet, how could human speech express the surpassing excellence and splendor of that radiant Form? There may have been some providential reason why the prophets but vaguely trace the divine mission and dignity of the body. The text concerning the bodily translation of Enoch and

Elias would seem to bear a strict interpretation. From the meagre record of the mystery of the Fall in the Book of Genesis we gather that that momentous temptation disturbed the state of concord which balanced spirit and flesh. So "the Word was made flesh" that man might restore, through grace and self-development, his flesh to a state of healthy relationship with his spirit. "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh."

According to the Mind of Christ, the Christian moralist seeks to create the synthesis between the two antithetical elements—soul and matter. The Church, which is the mystical Body of Christ in living history, has for its end the extension of the economy of the Incarnation—the protracted redemption of the flesh. In the Sacramental system, the flesh—the vulnerable element of our composition—is appealed to through the senses, "He hath made the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak."

As in the material world, so in the divine scheme, nothing is lost. The instrument of our confusion is captured by its own devices. Every caprice of the sentient body is supernaturally gratified through the merits of the Christ of the Resurrection. Through His Resurrection, palpable to the senses, and through the Incarnation all things are bent to its service; every visible rite and ceremony; every dogma which is the defined expression of truth; every text of Scripture interpreted by authority; all speech and action, reason and imagination, sentiment and thought are all transformed into ele-

ments of salvation to rectify the illusions of the senses of the body: "Behold, I have arisen and am still with thee; I am He that liveth and was dead; I am alive forevermore, and have the keys of hell and of death."

But not alone in the nobler arts—sculpture, drama, painting and song is the body appealed to; but inanimate, material nature is sanctified to its uses, and so for the most part the matter of the Sacraments and Sacramentals is bread, wine, water, oil, salt, wool, cotton and wax. Moreover, Christian ethics even enter into the sciences of economics and politics, with the indirect purpose of consecrating them to the salvation of man's body from fire, plague, hunger, thirst, cruelty and injustice.

Since, then, we are beholden to the body, let us look to it that we reverence it in decent fashion. It is for us believers the temple of the Holy Spirit; of immensely more historic interest than the temple of Jerusalem. Guard the walls of the city and the temple will be secure. Exercise custody, and do not permit the exterior senses to wander at will. Close all the city gates by night, so that the wayward traveler with his camel cannot pass through the eye of a needle.

The defilement of the human body might be more tragic in its consequences than the spilling of a prophet's blood in the portico of the temple. The body has its laws, prerogatives, capacities, and it is profoundly serious to thwart or destroy them,

else nature will turn the throb of health to a nervous tremor and the crimson glow of youthful beauty to the hectic pallor of disease.

Then, from a moral consideration, how horrible to think that in some manner we take with us in death bodily habits contracted in life; it would seem of momentous importance, therefore, to lay on the lash and whip disordered inclination into subservience to the sweeter instinct of the soul:

“Knowing that Christ rising again from the dead dieth no more—death shall no more have dominion over Him.

For in that He died to sin He died once; but in that He liveth He liveth unto God;

So do you also reckon that you are dead to sin but alive unto God in Christ Jesus Our Lord.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body so as to obey the lusts thereof.

Neither yield ye your members as instruments of iniquity unto sin;

But present yourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead; and your members as instruments of justice unto God.

For sin shall not have dominion over you; for you are not under the law but under grace.”

Ethical ideas such as these were even faintly suggested by the best of the Romans before the period of their moral decline, and with the nobler conceptions of the more refined among the Greeks. In the *Hecuba* of Euripides, the tragic author paints Polyxena with her throat cut and falling on the steps of the altar, but conscious even in death of her modesty, almost instinctively, she folds decently the snow-white raiment over her limbs. It

is the innate regard for the sanctity of the human body. This instinct was of course developed more keenly at the vision of Christ's glorified Body. Then, too, it was not until the advent of Christ's Mother that these thoughts of the high dignity of the human body began to be more fully realized. With vestal grace she combined in her virginal maternity the honorable dignities of the matron with the unspeakable charms of the virgin. So, indeed, she missed corruption, for the Holy One would not suffer her to see corruption :

“Therefore, holding a little thy soft breath,  
Thou underwent'st the ceremony of death.”

What is true of the Mother of Christ is, in this circumstance, preëminently true of her Son—since He was bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh. The jaundiced eye of modern heresy has weakened our visual power and sought to cloud this magnificent truth; and because heresy is the most mortal of sins it has colored with sickly hue things that are fair and excellent in themselves. So in times past moralists taught differently; their methods for the cultivation of ethical virtue were not so prohibitive and negative. They taught chastity not so much by the suppression of desire as by the presentation to the will of a pure object and the proper direction of the tide of passion. Consequently, modern life, outside of Catholic asceticism, knows nothing of the ardor that is virginal. Yet

ancient and mediæval Catholicism gave us saints thrice widowed who their

“Birth-times’ consecrating dew  
For death’s sweet chrism retained,  
Quick, tender, virginal, and unprofaned.”

From the ancient day when Cecilia so shone with the splendor of moral sanctity that Valerian could no longer look upon her, to the mediæval time when Henry, king as well as saint, knelt a slave to the virtue of his queen, it was a familiar doctrine.

Small wonder, then, that the Church, the Mystical Bride of Christ, should (at the early glimmer of the Easter dawning) abandon herself to transports of joy and praise. She would even call upon inanimate art and nature to rejoice and be glad with her. The splendid revelation of man’s transfigured body would never have been manifested if Christ’s Body had rotted in a Syrian grave. But He allowed His Sacred Body—blood, bone, muscle and tissue—to be profaned upon a gibbet of protracted agony and committed to the murky confines of the tomb, as a bleeding, mangled corpse—all, but to rise again, that by this He might open out a new and startling era for the history of the human body: “And when I had seen Him, I fell at His feet, as dead. And He laid His right Hand upon me, saying: Fear not, I am the First and the Last—and alive and was dead and behold, I am living forever and ever.”

We can no better conclude than with a sentence

from the searching sermon of Cardinal Newman on "The Resurrection of the Body." He says, in his own marvelous fashion: "Glorious, indeed, will be the springtime of the Resurrection, when, all that seemed dry and withered will bud forth and blossom. The glory of Lebanon will be given it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; the fir tree for the thorn, the myrtle tree for the briar; and the mountains and the hills shall break forth, before us, in singing. Who would miss being of that company?"

There is a curious old book of the Middle Ages called "Legenda Aurea." It is said to be compiled and put in form about the year 1275 by Jacobus de Voragine, Archbishop of Genoa, and done into the English of the time by William Caxton. It is a work remarkable for its learning and spiritual beauty. Of Our Lord's Resurrection it has a statement written in quaint old English, which succinctly expresses the authoritative teaching concerning the glory of the human body in the light of Our Saviour's rising from the dead. The words are: "At evensong time shall be weeping, and on the morn gladness and joy. The gloss saith that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ is cause sufficient of the resurrection of souls in this present time and of the bodies in time to come."

The difficulty of believing the doctrine of bodily resurrection is not founded in reason but in the imagination, when under the spell and play of the senses. But imagination is not reason. The mys-

tery of the human body is as imperious and urgent as the spirit itself, for what do we know of the substance of the human body? The accidents are all we perceive of it, and these only remotely.

Deep down beneath the frailty, degradation and enfeeblement of the human body there is the latent force and vital spirit of the Christ triumphant over corporal dissolution; hence the human body cannot be forever holden of death: "I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord." It is the terrific presence of physical decomposition, the chemistry of rottenness, which provokes us to doubt this truth. The form once aglow and quivering with warmth and expressiveness is pallid, motionless, cold. As pitiable mourners we hound that lean, emaciated carcass to the grave. We note the systematic advances—the gnawing, ruinous agencies of decay—then, spiritual sight having failed us, we end by proclaiming that the earth has forever consumed the body once so lovely and so fair. Now it was to deal with this gigantic difficulty that Christ burst forth from the guarded tomb. "He has broken the gates of brass and smitten the bars of iron in sunder." How beautifully is this truth of the transcendent human body expressed in the Book of holy Job: "And I shall be clothed again with my skin and in my flesh I shall see my God!"

## THE WOMAN THAT WAS HEALED.

“And behold a woman, who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him and touched the hem of His garment. For she said within herself: If I shall touch only the hem of His garment I shall be healed. But Jesus turning and seeing her, said: ‘Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole.’ And the woman was made whole from that hour.”—*Matt. ix. 20-22.*

It was a day in which Jesus was on the way to the house of Jairus. This ruler of the synagogue had an only daughter, twelve years old, who was dying. And it happened that as the Master went, great multitudes of people thronged about Him. In the crowd there was a sickly woman who had suffered for twelve years. She had bestowed her substance upon physicians and was in no wise bettered, but rather grew worse. She was perhaps in the motly shouting crowd merely out of motives of curiosity, or touched by superstition. Though her faith was sincere, she had, nevertheless, a gross idea of the healing power of Christ. She must have reduced it to some magnetic influence or magical virtue which existed apart from His Holy Will—for she said within herself: “If I shall touch only the hem of His garment I shall be healed.” This desire was the excess of faith and, therefore, not wholly culpable. The aroma

of Christ's sanctity must have diffused itself abroad. If nothing else, He was holy, and therefore, naturally and supernaturally attractive to her. Such a wondrous Man she may have believed to have not only such power from God, but likewise that native sanctity even rested on the blue border of His garment. Moreover for the Jew there was a sacred symbolism attached to the color of the wide fringe on the Levite's robe. "Speak to the children of Israel and thou shalt tell them to make to themselves fringes in the corners of their garments, putting in them ribands of blue."

Therefore the woman's faith, although accidentally imperfect, was essentially true. The hem of Our Lord's garment was the instrument of healing to the diseases of her body. He, Himself, was the Healer. She stealthily came behind Him and touched that sacred hem, and instantly she felt in her body that she was healed. Ah, what a gracious relief for her who had secretly borne so much! Then, as in our times, there were dishonest remedies for all species of disorders pressed upon the credulous and the unwary. Medical science, and, least of all, surgery, was not as advanced as it is now. Medicine is an empiric science and its modern teachers ought to be the humblest of men and ever ready to bow in reverence to the mysteries of the human organism. The woman's recovery was too instantaneous and out of the ordinary to be natural. Such a favor could only come

out of heaven, and it demanded some sacrifice on the part of the recipient.

So the Lord Christ, tender as well as just, extorted from her a confession of her weakness and her cure. "And Jesus said: 'Somebody hath touched Me; for I know that virtue is gone out from Me.'" Indeed our blessed Lord asked directly: "Who is it that touched Me?" St. Peter and those that were with Him denied that they had done so. So vehement were the multitudes that thronged and pressed about the Master, that His disciples could not tell who it was that took hold of His robe. Yet the woman was not hidden, for some in the crowd must have marked her. She came forth at the searching sight of Jesus. She could no longer deny—in reverent love there are no secrets—and so, trembling, she threw herself at the feet of Christ. Then she made her confession. There in the face of that ungracious rabble she declared for what cause she had striven to touch the tassel of Christ's garment, and that when she touched it she was immediately healed. It would have been a more severe discipline if she had been compelled to confess her misfortune before she had been cured.

It was not in the nature of things that such a joyous miracle should be wrought independently of the spiritual state of the patient. The interior gifts of grace need our personal coöperation to bear fruit within the garden of the soul. Acknowledgment of such a boon was the condition of its

final success. Not apart from Christ's desire was she healed. He willed that she should come out from her hiding place and manifesting that she was in a state of repentance, her pardon would be the freer. Consonant with perfect truth He simulated ignorance, as a playful father might evoke an apology from his wayward child. "Nathanael saith to Him, Whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said to him: Before that Philip called thee, when thou was under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered Him and said: Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel." There was an ethical motive in drawing an acknowledgment from the woman who was healed.

Religion will, accidentally, in small matters, degenerate into superstition. The shame of the woman that was healed was natural, but her hope and love were greater. "She came behind Him and touched the hem of His garment." To attain spiritual blessings it is not enough to believe the faith of Christ with the intellect, or to love it with the heart—it must, likewise, be professed with the lips. "She came behind Him and touched the hem of His garment." With the solace of sweet speech Jesus said to the sorrowing woman: "Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole." "And the woman was made whole from that hour."

"For she said within herself: 'If I touch only the hem of His garment I shall be healed.'" The

influence of personality, of mind over matter, and of health-giving suggestion, may, at times, be a licit instrument for good, in anointed hands and under the guidance of him who has the divine authority to use it. The self-abasement of the complaining woman was not the keenest misfortune she suffered. Unskillful doctors, and perhaps false prophets and would-be wise men, played upon the weak and believing with their unwholesome medicines and diabolic systems. To Christ must we go to stanch the ever-flowing fountain of evil. Through Him the ordinances of His Church become secondary implements for healing our moral and physical ailments. To touch the tassel of a sacred garment, to kiss a relic of a saint, to wear a scapular or the medal of a friend, or to keep as a pious token a flower taken from the sanctuary, may be remote acts which will eventually turn the face of Christ upon us while we hurry along in the vulgar and irreligious crowd. "For she said within herself: 'If I shall touch only the hem of His garment, I shall be healed.'"

Now there is another truth to be gathered from this text. Physical disease is, very often, the result of sin in ourselves, our ancestors, or others. Its cure, very often, is in the pardon of personal sin. Hence, those approved teachers of the Church, the theologians, speak of the medicinal character of the Sacrament of Penance. Mark, how the healing of the woman's disease was of supernatural origin—faith was one of the causes, eradicating a

physiological misfortune. The required condition for the cure was moral. The sickly woman was provoked to conquer false shame, human respect and to confess the existence of her weakness. "Who is it that touched Me? For I know that virtue has gone out from Me." There is always a close alliance between sin—the disease of the soul—and the humors of the body.

Among the modern religious systems, Christian Science and Faith-healing play a part. Now, there is no religious truth in any system which does not exist in an eminent and concentrated degree in the economy of our holy Faith. Physical pain is, partially, subjective in many instances. Sometimes the healing is in administering religious peace—peace of mind and peace of heart coming from the relief of the worry of sin. Another Evangelist, writing of this event, represents Our Redeemer as saying to the sickly woman: "Thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

It is most reasonable to look to Our Saviour's religion for some approved and stated method for helping the sick, for assisting sinners in acquiring sorrow, in laying the foundations of a new life, and finally imparting to them the assurance of the divine pardon. The touch of the garment is, as it were, the external ministry of Christ's religion and it is endowed, as the fringe of the garment was endowed, with His holiest prerogative of friendship. The New Testament confirms reason; it shows that the pardon of sins is to be set-

tled by means of an external ministry, which St. Paul terms the ministry of reconciliation. All of Christ's words and all of His acts have some reference to the disease of sin and its pardon—for His office and name is Saviour! Therefore He says to St. Peter and afterward to the twelve: "Whatsoever you shall bind on earth it shall be bound in heaven; whatsoever you shall loose on earth it shall be loosed in heaven." He refers to the dealing with sin and sinners. When He said to St. Peter, "I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven," He meant the keys that would unlock the gate that shuts men up in the hell of sin. To this day the power of the keys means the power of pardoning sinners—bestowing that subjective peace of mind, heart and will, which reacts on the physical organism and remotely contributes to the health and well-being of the human body. To this day, the priest says, with sacramental authority, what Christ said: "Go in peace."

"Who is it that touched Me?" Power of pardon includes a right to know what is to be pardoned. How could it be used intelligently otherwise? How can the Christian minister know whether the sinner is worthy of pardon or must be refused it, unless he knows what sins the penitent has been guilty of? Consider how many things bear a part in making sorrow true or false (and sorrow must ever be the essential thing), ignorance, worldliness, pride, feebleness of character, frivolity, false shame, even hypocrisy, self-deceit, excitement, hu-

man respect, slavish fear. How can these be considered unless one knows, as it were, the disease—the penitent's sins? Suppose you had heard Christ saying to His Apostles, "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained;" and afterwards had asked an Apostle to impart pardon to you; would you have been surprised if he had said: "My son, what is it you want me to pardon?" One cannot but be an intermediary of pardon, especially when one's chief office is to decide on the validity of shame and sorrow—"Who is it that touched Me? For I know that virtue has gone out of Me."

"If I shall touch only the hem." Confession answers a need in human nature. Sinners need healing, external attention, admonition, comfort, warning, encouragement, while striving to reform, to be cured, all of which supposes a knowledge of the disease and of what grade and number of sins they have committed. An intelligent, efficacious and comforting exercise of this ministry necessitates confession. For a thorough-going process of moral cure, of self-discovery, all must admit the Catholic process is most efficient—the practical side of contrition and amendment is well cared for.

Besides this, there are special psychological reasons for confession of personal weakness and worry. Every strong feeling demands expression. The soul which cannot tell its grief is doubly

grieved; he who cannot express his joy is but half rejoiced. Hence, there is hardly one denomination of Christians but has some sort of manifestation of conscience, some confession of sin to the church members or to the ministry, as a preparation for membership. Sin is the universal evil of our race; strictly speaking, sin is the only evil in the world—not excepting physical evil. And who can say that some time or other he has not offended God grievously, mortally? This thought, when we fully realize it, robs us of our good health, our physical composure, our peace of mind and embitters our every day. How shall I be rid of this nervous worry, this poisonous sting of remorse and self-hatred? Whatever answer is made, that answer is associated with the word “confession.” “Who is it that touched Me?”

It is related of St. Francis Solano, the Spanish Saint of South America, that through his means a poor woman was cured of an issue of blood. There was an Indian settlement in Sokotonio, Peru, and the drinking water ran dry. St. Francis feared that if the Indians changed the location of the settlement they would lose their religious faith, which, as yet, was not strong. He prayed as only a Saint can pray and sweet water gushed from the green earth. Even in the present day, the Spaniards and the Indians call the spot the “Well of St. Solanus.” It was to this well that a sickly woman, of Potosi, came, walking many miles. Through the intercession of the Saint she was in-

stantly healed, although she was afflicted for many years.

The Saints are with us in the church today, and the healing prerogative—that divine gift—has never been taken away. We must not forget the curative or medicinal quality of Sacramental Penance and prayer. “For she said within herself: ‘If I shall touch only the hem of His garment, I shall be healed.’”

## OUR BLESSED LADY.

“And thy own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts, thoughts may be revealed.”—*Luke ii. 35.*

THE Mother of Christ presents an ideal such as the noblest of the Greeks, the purest pagans that ever lived, had never dreamed of. She ennobles human affection by lifting the ideal of human sentiment. If we do not exercise our affections in God—if the source of all sentiment be not in God and God be not the term of all the heart's emotions, then all sentiment becomes mere idolatry. In Christ's Mother the term of affection was Christ Himself, and He was God, and she exercises this affection in the expression of two qualities, the two offices of woman in history—virginity and maternity. We venerate the virginal state and the maternal, but in her these two qualities are combined in their essential unity. Glorious mystery to be accepted by reason and by faith, and while it is a mystery, it is no less wonderful than the union of the two nature in her Son—the union of the human and divine. Thus the redeemed humanity, like the unfallen, stands before us in a two-fold aspect. The virginal maternity has given to Christian conduct a standard which the world of itself could not give. There it sits in the very heart of Christian-

ity, there it is lodged as upon a throne and thence it dispenses blessings to those who have the grace and light of reason to accept it. In the religions of the East they have shadowed forth something of this mystery. The Greeks had yearned for it, and in the Greek tragedies the noblest conceptions of womanhood are found. But the Greeks never believed that it was capable of realization in the flesh.

Thus this ideal has elevated the intelligence of man and proportionately raised his imagination. It roused the imagination of man by the revelation of beauty—beauty tender, yet simple, gladsome yet pathetic. Everywhere throughout the world of architecture, painting and sculpture shone out that beauty. And what was it? Simply the Mother of Christ—the vision of the Madonna—which all the nations have expressed beautifully in the noblest of their arts. The doctrine if rightly understood is supremely reasonable. The Body of Christ might have been made from the slime of the earth like the body of the first Adam. But no; God willed it otherwise. He made a woman part of the redemptive plan. Thus the idea of the virginal maternity of Christ's Mother is the sublimation of human love.

## ON THE ROAD TO BETHANIA.

“And seeing a certain fig-tree by the wayside, He came to it, and found nothing but leaves only and He saith to it: May no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever. And immediately the fig-tree withered away.”  
—*Matt. xxi. 19.*

It was the day after Palm Sunday, or rather the evening of the Monday of Holy Week—that our Saviour on His way to Bethania saw a fig tree near the road, covered before its time with leaves. He was hungry and looking for fruit on it but He found nothing thereon. He then cursed it. On Tuesday morning—as He and His Apostles were returning to Jerusalem they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots.

We are not, just now, so much concerned with Our Lord's transcendant influence over the laws of the natural world. He knew the secret of life in the tree. If a man, however virtuous, should go into Central Park, and curse a tree during one of these pleasant mornings, we feel sure that the tree would be quite as green and full of life the following morning. Neither are we interested, for our purpose, with the destructive nature of the miracle, nor with the question of the invasion of the rights of property by the blasting of the tree nor with the study of Our Redeemer's physical disappointment in finding leaves and not fruit. Our desire

is to make the application of the Parable personal unto ourselves.

When Christ cursed the tree He was acting symbolically. Israel, with its advantages, was an unfruitful fig tree and the Messiah came seeking fruit amid the leaves of promise. He comes today, as of old, seeking fruit in the soul of every man who has had the advantages of a spiritual education. This fig tree was in a sunny spot and the leaves came out prematurely in the month of March—the young fig should have been simultaneous with the budding leaves. The fig tree gave unusual promise, so to speak, which it did not fulfill.

The moral training of one young spirit is a process of development just as systematic as the growth of a fig tree. With the leaves there should be the practical expression of right moral conduct.

May this day be the beginning of a life fruitful in good works—not a life possessing the knowledge of Christian doctrine and making no application of it in personal character—but a life, like the good fig tree, having leafage and fruitage together—religion and morality. Then no blight shall come—nor will our life wither away to the roots before the Face of Christ at the last day.

## SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGES.

“Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”—*Matt. v. 20.*

PERMIT me to freely paraphrase the text in this manner: unless your virtue be more genuine than that of those outside of the one fold, you shall not receive your reward.

Why should this be?

Because within that one integral form of Christianity the spiritual advantages are so far in excess of all other partial forms of Christianity that much more is demanded of its members. If much be given much will be required. Let me indicate briefly one or two of these advantages. Of that mystical Body of Christ, the Church, we are the members, and from His Blood we draw that spiritual nutriment—grace—just as the branch draws its life from the sap of the tree.

We have the Sacraments—those channels of interior life, which follow us throughout our spiritual career—from Baptism which, lifting us out of the state of nature to the supernatural (gives an atoning merit to our every act), to Extreme Unction, which consecrates every physical sense, eye, ear, nose, hands and feet of our sinful bodies.

Not only the soul and body, but the mind also

is safeguarded by that criterion of interpretation which secures every dogma and perplexing text of the sacred books. So much for ourselves, but others too aid us; not only the intercommunication of sanctity from the Communion of Saints, but the participation in the good works and prayers of all the faithful.

Furthermore, through the Sacramentals, external nature becomes a means of grace to us, salt, oil, wax, wool and water, so that there is a hallowing power in the beasts of the field and every clod of earth. Not only this, but there is also consecration in the chiselled stone of the altar—in every mood of religious emotion provoked by the voice of a musical instrument—in every sound of a blessed bell.

This brings me to speak of the Angelus bell in the towers of our churches, monasteries and convents. When it rings three times a day, stop in the midst of your work, just as Our Lady stopped her work when drawing water from the well, to hear the angel's voice.

But this may not be quite to the point—the one brief lesson that I am trying to teach is this: That since we are part of this all-embracing economy of religion—the Catholic Church—with its exceptional spiritual advantages over all other sects of Christendom, we are bound to manifest the fruits of our advantages by the good example of practical virtue among our fellowmen.

## RENDER TO CAESAR.

“Then He saith to them: render to Caesar the things which are Caesar’s, and to God the things which are God’s.”—*Matt. xxii. 21.*

THIS text tells the story of the Herodians seeking to provoke popular tumult and to ensnare Jesus in His speech. They were eager to bring confusion in the minds of the people concerning the then important subject of the prerogatives of the Roman government, as against the claims of the Synagogue, which at Jerusalem was the organized expression of religion. In this, our day, we would speak of the same situation as the question of the relationship of Church and State.

Our Saviour, knowing the secrets of their hearts, warded off any possibility of misinterpretation of His words by asking for a coin of the tribute. Then noting the inscription on it, He asked whose it was, and they answered Him: “Caesar’s.” Then said He: “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.”

Thus in a few words does our Blessed Lord make clear the solution of that problem which has asserted itself all through history—the struggle of Church and State. Each institution has its own

rights within its own department of action, and one should not conflict with the other. A good, consistent Christian makes a good citizen. In proportion as a Christian is faithful to the laws of the Church and obedient to the dictates of his conscience, so is he the more on the alert to do his public and personal duty to the State and keep exalted the standards of public morality amongst the officials of the State. It was that rabble in the days of Christ which shouted: "We shall have no King but Caesar." This is a cry heard in some of the countries of Europe today. How infinitely better it would be for mankind if the cry was rather this: "We shall have no King but a Caesar ruled by a greater King Christ." Patriotism, love of country, is not only a pagan, but a Christian virtue. It is by no reckless combination of circumstances that we are born, under Providence, in one particular country rather than another. God has His designs in every circumstance and moment of our lives. To love our own people and our own home and country is a natural instinct consecrated and approved of by the example of Our Redeemer, weeping over the city of Jerusalem. He wept over it not only because of the coming destruction of the temple; not only because Jerusalem was a great wilderness of the souls of men and women, but He wept over it because He loved the country in which He was born. Jerusalem was the heart and head of the whole nation, and much more so than Paris is of France, or London

of England, or New York of the American Republic. We see the picture of Jesus weeping over His country and instantly we are reminded of the Humanity of God—the human note in the mystery of the Incarnation. In the midst of His tears, His melancholy words to Jerusalem are applicable to us this very day: “If thou didst but know in this, thy day, the things belonging to thy peace, but now they are hidden from thine eyes.”

## THE PEACE OF OUR LORD.

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled nor let it be afraid.”—*John xiv. 27.*

CHRIST alone could say that union with His Will would bring peace. There is sublime self-assertiveness in His statement. If it startles it is because Christ is Divine and the world does not understand His saying. We have heard it said and we know that the world does not give peace. Christ's assertion is repeated often but it touches the hearts of few. We fancy that the conditions for gaining peace are too severe—that the yoke is not sweet or the burden light. So we drag ourselves through a weary life and die without having tasted even a little of the sweetness of Christ's truth. How is such a gift to be gained? Is it a boon reserved only for mystics or for the spiritually great? No, it is a common right of every follower of Christ. Indeed peace of heart sits more easily upon the plain people who lead simple lives. Its secret lies in making the one critical act of human life—the act of absolute abandonment to the Divine Will. Until this act is made and becomes a permanent condition of the soul, life has very little value, less merit and no peace. Strange doctrine this, yet if men would accept it, it would

cast a new light over a dark world. Social and physical ills would be softened and the poor would become rich in spirit and the rich gentle of heart. Why permit life's carping cares to vex us when by a mere change of mind or heart we are strengthened to look upon them with grace and composure. This is not mysticism, but a truth comprehended and experienced by rude intellects and simple hearts. To make the Divine Will the measure of every thought, word and deed of the past, present and future is not so difficult or unintelligible.

At first it is acquired by repeated acts of the will until it naturally becomes an habitual state of the mind, and the heart enjoys a gracious sense of profound peace. This gift can thrive—even when the soul is disturbed by violent temptation—as the deeps of the sea may not be affected by the turbulence of its surface. If the bed rock of all action be founded in the Divine Will, the cruelty of the tempest is of little import to the soul. A truth such as this is very comforting to those who suffer—to those who are sensitive about the past and apprehensive of the future. By one prayer of entire submission to the Divine Will we can turn to meritorious account all the follies, mistakes, imperfections and sins of our past lives. Concerning the future there is even more solace in Christ's sentiment: "Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be afraid." He Who has counted the hairs of our head and controls the fall of the sparrow is responsible for our lives if we resign them into

His keeping. We presume upon nothing, yet we are confident of everything when the spring of all our motives works harmoniously with the Divine Will. This is the rest which the world cannot give. "Not as the world giveth do I give unto you." This doctrine is not mysticism and still less is it Quietism. It does not suspend action on the part of the individual soul. It is an experimental truth and must be tasted before we can relish it. If it appears curious it is because we are worldlings and the ways of the soul have no part with the world. Heavenly peace is the inevitable result of a life in accordance with the Divine Will. Christ has said it—some men believe it, but few have felt it.

## THE MUSTARD SEED.

“The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field.”  
*Matt. xiii. 31.*

USUALLY this Parable is interpreted as expressing the petty beginning and extensive growth of the Christian Church in the world. But it will have a closer application to ourselves if we look upon it as a type representing the processes of life in our souls under the action of grace. The life of grace is an organic growth subject to the slow and gradual developments of certain spiritual laws. As there is no such thing as a sudden fall so there are no sudden conversions. What we regard as sudden is in reality the first visible result of the secret workings of the Holy Spirit in the soul.

The grain of mustard seed had passed through a long series of natural operations before it manifested itself even a little. Equally so is it in the history of the soul. How obdurate and painful are those conflicts and failures in our combat with sin. We struggle on sometimes gaining a partial triumph and more times seemingly being conquered. Yet beneath all this there is progress if the purpose and intention to reform remain firm and fixed upon God. We are disheartened at the slowness and secrecy of the action of virtue. We

would have the mustard seed "which, indeed, is the least of all seeds," burst from the earth and blossom in a day, forgetting those periods of corruption through which it must pass before it shows its first glint of green. So, too, must we be tried in the fire of defeat and humiliation before we can experience even the least spiritual satisfaction. The one thing needful is not to lose courage and least of all never to submit to despair.

Moreover, it is worth noting that the grain of mustard seed was placed in the earth by a power external to itself—"which a man took and sowed in his field." If the mustard seed received the first impetus to growth, not from itself but from another, so does man receive his spiritual life from Him Who entered in and elevated nature to the life of grace. Of ourselves we can do nothing. According to nature we are hungry and naked. We need some strong, beneficent Hand to feed and clothe our sickly and wounded souls. The Arm of the Lord is not shortened. The external application of God's help makes possible those moral victories which man of himself could never attain. The capacity for growth in the mustard seed and the care exercised by the Sower bring about the desired result. The perfect coöperation of the life of nature and of grace bring about the ideal type of the Christian.

It is likewise quite necessary that we render our souls susceptible to the influences of grace, just as the slime of the earth bent all its power for

the productive generation of the mustard seed. The discipline of mortification and prayer make the soul more pliable and alive to the transforming operations of grace.

Three things of value, therefore, are to be gathered from the Parable of the Mustard Seed: first, that progress in virtue is slow but nevertheless sure, and sometimes hidden from ourselves; second, that unaided, nature is unable to make progress in virtue; and third, that progress in virtue needs the condition of coöperation on the part of the one desiring to reform.

## THE CRY IN THE SYNAGOGUE.

“And in the synagogue there was a man who had an unclean devil and he cried out with a loud voice, saying: ‘Let us alone what have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth?’”—*Luke iv. 33, 34.*

OUR Blessed Lord had come into Capharnaum, a city of Galilee, and it being on a Sabbath day He went to the synagogue and sat among the teachers, “and they were astonished at His doctrine, for,” says Sacred Writ: “His speech was with power.”

While all were listening to Him in breathless silence a man in the crowd cried out: “Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, Jesus of Nazareth?”

Some may have theories with regard to demoniacal possession, but there is a broader interpretation of this text to which all, believer and unbeliever, can readily submit—it is this.

If the cry of the man in the synagogue “Let us alone” partially voiced the sentiment of Judaism it likewise expressed the moral attitude of Paganism towards Christ at the moment when He took His place among the religious teachers of the world.

To be sure, there is no comparison between

the morality of Judaism and Paganism. It may be that the enduring power and glorious success of the Jewish people in the modern world can be referred to their adherence to the moral principles of the Mosaic Code.

Be this as it may, Greece, with all its human refinement, and the Roman Empire, with all its imperial strength, could and did cry out when there loomed up the white apparition of the chaste Christ: "Let us alone, what have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth?"

It may not be amiss to mark, although it is a common-place among scholars, that the flower of material civilization was full-blown and fairest in Greece and Rome at the time when the standard of morality was lowest.

It may teach us to remember that the moral life of our own dear Republic of the West is not to be measured by the fact that we have extended our empire across the seas and bestowed upon other races the benefits of our material genius.

The question of morality is a large one and still wider and deeper is the mystery of the Incarnation.

We shall confine ourselves to one department of morals, viz: Social purity, and show how the doctrine of Christ being God has enriched the modern world with this shining virtue. There are, of course, signs even now and here which remind us that "the Canaanite is still in our land," but the blackest records of modern moral depravity are as

light compared to the darkness of the moral world when Christ the Sun of Purity flashed upon the horizon.

It is very consoling to find, if not a faint blush of shame, nevertheless, a sense of secretiveness beneath all that is obscene in modern art, science, life and literature.

Things regarded as gross sensualism now, would have been taken as matters of course, by such pure and noble pagans as Plato and Marcus Aurelius. This gives us a faint idea of what the vehemence of that surging sea of passion must have been when the Lord Christ stepped upon its waters and whispered: "Peace, be still, it is I."

It is not inaccurate to say that all that is ethically ideal in modern Scepticism flows directly from the limpid fountain of the Christian system of morality. Agnosticism cannot construct principles of moral conduct except those built upon the presumption that human nature can of itself resist temptations against the holy virtue of purity. But you and I, and, if I may say it, Jesus Christ, infinitely above us, knew better than that. He knew that it is impossible for nature of itself to be chaste, because of that primeval accident when man somewhere and somehow revolted from the Light and Source of Everlasting Purity. How then harmonize the severity of His moral doctrine with His exquisite tenderness in the treatment of sin?

He Who struck at the spring of moral opera-

tion with the terrific statement: "He who looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath already committed adultery with her in his heart," is the same sweet Christ Who shielded the adulteress under the mantle of human sympathy. They who were eager to put her to death skulked away at the world-wide accusation: "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." Would it not be a cruel and impracticable teaching to impose upon humanity the beauty of an ideal, knowing that nature had not the capacity wherewith to attain it? Would not Christ have only tortured the morally sensitive spirits among men, by manifesting the unrivalled splendor of His own chastity and leaving weak nature without succor in its fierce struggle with the flesh? If He meant to be only an exemplar of perfect purity He would have added nothing to the dispensation of the Hebrew law. If He simply laid down principles of moral restriction without giving man the capacity for realizing them He would be much more distressing than Buddha, Confucius or Mohammed, for His standard of moral perfection is infinitely more exalted than theirs. But our dear Jesus knew human nature so well. Therefore He did not draw men to purity (as medical science in its mercy might do) by dilating upon the horrible physical effects of sensual indulgence. Such treatment of moral perversion is not the radical remedy. The onward impetuosity of animal passion is too strong even for the knowledge of this fact. Likewise useless are theories of heredity,

temperament, natural virtue and philosophy when one constructed of flesh and blood stands face to face with a strenuous temptation.

The unclean spirit cries out: "Let us alone, what have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth?" If Christ, then, with overwhelming self-assertiveness placed before the world such a strict norm of morality, how then could He believe it to be attainable by helpless nature unless He Himself regenerated nature and bequeathed to it a new life of grace? According to Catholic dogma this He has done, and in this lies the relation between the mystery of the Incarnation and the source of Christian morality. To him who is a believer that Christ is divine and assumed human nature to heal it and lift it to a higher moral level—to him the assertion: "that it is impossible to be chaste" is nothing less than blasphemy.

The Divine Master of moral life makes light of no temptation which befalls man, for although sinless, He, Purity itself, had suffered the humiliation of not the moral, but the more subtle and intellectual attacks of the powers of evil. He takes human nature as he finds it, naked, lone and hungry. He nourishes it and breathes into it His own warm life, as some tender-hearted woman might, when stirred by pity, suckle to her bosom some sickly and abandoned child of moral misfortune.

If the higher power of God had not entered

into nature through the Incarnation and transformed and energized it, all the moral principles of Christ would be as so much sublime philosophy, but of no more practical value to tempted humanity than the treatises of Cicero or Seneca. God Incarnate is the quickening and sustaining power in us, of which St. Paul was constantly writing and preaching. It is this inseparable reality and living presence of the Holy Spirit of God in the soul of man which make it possible for him to cry out in the face of repeated moral failures and seeming defeat: "I can do all through Him Who strengtheneth me."

It is not extreme, or the result of hasty judgment, to assert that all theories or movements constructed on the belief of self-perfectionism in nature, viz: that nature is self-sufficient to morally support itself, that all these efforts have been proved ere now to be futile. The highest expressions of morality which this our planet has ever known, were realized in the lives and Communion of the Saints of the Christian Church. They drained away their life blood upon the battlefield of the flesh. With whip and scourge and steel thongs and iron chains, they fought the body on its own ground, and the unclean spirits skulked away as they did when Christ exorcised the possessed man of Capharnaum. "Let us alone, what have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth?"

Considerably outside His own set of followers,

Christ has morally affected not only the sects of Christendom (which but partially represent His truth) but likewise indirectly the circles which do not acknowledge His claims. In spite of the depravity and insincerity of modern art, politics, law, literature and social life, the general desire is towards a pure standard of morality, even when it is not expressed in action and in speech.

If the Eternal Light of Ideal Purity has poured its rays down upon humanity—nay, rather if “the King in all His beauty” has clothed Himself with our erring flesh as with a tattered garment and still remains “every inch a King,” is there any feat of moral heroism which, through Christ, human nature cannot perform? Again from the crowd comes the piercing cry of the unclean spirit: “Let us alone, what have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth?”

In proportion as we study and appreciate the economy of Christ’s Sacramental union with nature, the more reasonable will be our motives in struggling for unalloyed purity in our private and domestic lives. We are left as prey to animal degradation when our faith is faint—when we doubt or when we are indifferent to or entirely forget the existence of an indwelling Divine Presence in the soul of a frail and enfeebled humanity.

As a Christian moralist, St. Paul was obliged to say to the lustful Corinthians: “Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?” To violate the divine tabernacle of the delicately con-

structed body, to thwart the natural issue of its laws, to physically abuse its prerogatives, is, indeed, a sacrilegious act. O! blessed be that integral form of Christianity as organized in Christ's living Church, which has safeguarded the rights of the body and saved the virtue of purity to the modern world.

Blessed be that mouthpiece of Christ's Mind in modern history, which, in spite of the noise and tumult of this great world, has ever sung out the moral harmonies of the Incarnation, even to the very stars. The life of morality must be fed on the fruits of the Incarnation. We must draw to the service of our moral conduct the efficacy of the Sacraments, the cruel and humiliating discipline of the confessional, the frequent participation of Holy Communion for the sustentation of the spirit, the meditation on ideals as found in Scripture and spiritual reading, the gracious obedience to the laws and traditions of our holy Church of Rome.

Furthermore on our own part, we must be severe and constant in our mortifications, faithful in prayer, vigilant over every flitting thought, temperate in meat and drink and fearful of unseemly occasions, both remote and proximate. We must likewise capture and consecrate the senses of the body, by the employment of the nobler arts in the cause of religion, by sculpture, painting, architecture, poetry, music, ritual and even the highest in the drama.

Suffice it to say that with all these spiritual and æsthetic influences at our command and a strong faith in God as man, it will not be difficult for even youth to be chaste as the driven snow. But if we are indifferent to the supernatural gifts of the Incarnation the unclean spirit will remain with us and cry out from the synagogue of our shameful bodies: "Let us alone, what have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth?"

## THE MEDIATOR.

“For there is one God and one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”—*1 Timothy ii. 5.*

CHRIST is Mediator by the force of all the qualities of His Being. The ministry of His Mediation has its essence in His two natures, which are united in His one Personality. Divinely, Christ as the Son of God is one with the Infinite Deity. Humanly, as the Son of the Virgin according to the flesh, He participates in all the humiliation and weakness of our nature, excepting, of course, its sin. Thus He is the embodiment and living expression of the tie existing between earth and heaven. Before the eyes of humanity He is the historical confession that God looks to the salvation of the world. He is the expression in history of the Mind of God with regard to His creation; He is the instrument through which have come all the spiritual and supernatural gifts from God, the source of all grace. In God's sight He is the Ambassador representing man.

Humanity is accidentally sinful and feeble; nevertheless, it can in union with Him be strengthened. His Atonement, from the moment of His birth to His death upon the Cross, becomes meritorious for us, and we share in all the benefits of His

grace. His spirit is still given to us by His living Church and His Sacramental system, so that we can although weak, share in all the merits of His Cross. It is easy to see that man after the Fall could not restore himself to his original nature. This has been done for him by Jesus Christ, God and Man. This fact is startling, that the All-holy and Infinite God should have stooped and taken unto Himself flesh and blood to save humanity; to reconstruct in it a new nature; to bring about terms of peace between the human and divine. But this tremendous truth is startling only because we do not understand the truths which lie still deeper. The economy of the Incarnation does not seem incredible if immortality be a reality and if sin be everlasting in its horrible effects. The theory of grace which adjusts the ill-proportioned effects of moral evil in the world, becomes logical from the Incarnation with its benefits of the Atonement, intercession, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and the faculty of the Sacraments to re-create and perpetuate the new life of grace. Even from the point of reason, when we study the nature of God philosophically, are we not provoked to come to the conclusion that the redemption of a race which somewhere and somehow revolted from the First and the Fairest is less a mystery than that God should have created this race, which has been the object of such overwhelming misfortune?

But they who have once seen the beauty, the truth and the power of the Incarnation are able to

look across the world, with all its tumult and confusion, to a country charged with the atmosphere of faith and love. They who have once grasped the entirety and magnificence of the economy of the Incarnation behold clearly the efficacy of Christ's death, the living power of His Holy Spirit; the usefulness of His Sacraments; the exalted ideals found in His Gospels; the divine origin of that organization, the Holy Catholic Church.

## THE HIDDEN SECRETS OF THE SPIRIT.

“The Spirit breatheth where He will, and thou hearest His Voice, but thou knowest not whence He cometh and whither He goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.”—*John iii. 8.*

SACRED writ and mystical science are freighted with the fact that the Spirit works in secret. When Nicodemus slunk away in the secrecy of the night to find the secret of the second birth, Christ answered by making the secret more dark than ever. The wind whistled through the alleys of Jerusalem, it crept through the crevices of the house; yet the Jewish doctor knew not whence it came or whither it was going. After a fashion and in the same dark manner we behold in the infectious streets of the modern city, amid the din of commerce and the cry of war, amid scenes of horror and misery and death—we behold from out of them all, glories yet to be fulfilled, though we have no evidence whatever, and much less a single argument. But what of that? The very mystery of it all makes hope the livelier! Furthermore, neither the dreams of the Greek nor the Oriental satisfy. We must have the exalted visions of the Hebrew prophets to feed our hopes for the future. Whence do our hopes spring? “Thou hearest His Voice but thou knowest not whence He cometh and

whither He goeth." How apt is the Parable that the secret of the Spirit is like unto a treasure hidden in a field. Look across the field of the world. Is it not covered with confusion? The husbandmen are tilling and grubbing the earth for victuals. Seed falls by the wayside, and the birds of the air swoop down and carry it away. Seed blooms rich in fruitful promise, and the thorn chokes it and it dies. Seeds falls upon stony ground, and the sun scorches it and it withers away. Yet the harvest shall be white and bending low to clasp the reaper's scythe. What if cockle be found in the bundles of wheat? It shall be burnt and the wheat shall be gathered into barns. Our God is, indeed, a hidden God, in His world. "The Spirit breatheth where He will."

It is again the story of the treasure hidden in a field. It is the prophet's scroll, a page of human history—a fold of the human heart. Though the tares should smother every blade of wheat, the field would be precious beyond goodly pearls, for below it there is hidden a secret treasure. Once the treasure is possessed it can buy the field, but somehow it is hidden. Let us plod and sweat and stumble about with pruning-hook and scythe and plough-share until we find it. Why should the treasure be hidden? Why should the gift be mysterious? The answer is partial but reasonable. There is no merit without an effort, there is no love without a secret. "So is everyone that is born of the Spirit." We have a hope greater than

paganism. We do not believe in Neptune or that he strikes the cave of Æolus. There is only One Who can let loose the secrets of the wind. "The Spirit breatheth where He will, and thou hearest His Voice, but thou knowest not whence He cometh and whither He goeth."

The field of the world is of little value compared with the treasure that is hidden below. The world itself is of little value compared with the life that moves above and beneath. In the world no virtue exists which is not the fruit of the Spirit. In the field every ray of light, every lifeless stone, every breath of air, every grain of wheat is increased in worth, a hundred fold, because of the hidden treasure. Oh! give us the mystics and the hermits, the dreamers and the seers, who sing that there is to be a fuller outpouring of the Spirit across the field of the world. Give us the rare spirits who see the hour when the treasure shall no longer be hidden, but shall be opened to show jewels so precious while the world has not dreamed of them. "So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Our duty is plain. It is to open out our hearts to the Spirit's influence as a vine-leaf to the drops of the dew. It is so to construct the end of all spiritual science that nothing shall be done to obstruct the Spirit's operations: to cease the multiplication of devotions that touch but the borderland of the soul. To dig deep for the treasure that contains the source and fountain of all grace—the grace that consecrates the humblest flower that

blossoms in the field. Within, the Holy Spirit; without, the Eucharist. Within, the Holy Ghost—the Author of grace, the Sanctifier; without, Jesus Christ—the Minister of grace, the Redeemer. The synthesis makes the perfect man. “So everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Those that know the men and women of today must think our hopes unfounded. Yet with wider intelligence and fuller liberty, who can tell what man can do. In the words of the contemplative the Spirit speaks: “I have taught the prophets from the beginning, and even now I cease not to speak to all.” Parliaments of men have decreed that America is wondrous in the progress of its ways, yet who could say that its spiritual life has kept pace with its material march? We are busy cultivating the field. We have forgotten the hidden treasure. We are strengthening matter at the expense of spirit. We look in vain for one recluse—one ascetic. The blessed have not come to us. Listen in the marketplace and the chambers of exchange to the jingle of gold and of silver, the clatter of quotations in stock. We are a generation of money-getters and vulgarians. We build ships for conquest and houses for trade. Our weapons are checks and coin—brick and mortar, silks and perfume.

“The Spirit breatheth where He will and thou hearest His Voice.” Every movement for social reform, every impulse towards sweet religion, is charged with the Spirit’s force.

Heaven is stooping to kiss the earth, but where is the priest to bless the nuptial bond? The Spirit is crying upon the house-tops, along the wharves of the river, in crowded tenements, in dark factories, but who is the prophet—the Ezechiel, the Isaias, the Jeremias, to interpret the cry? We hear His moan in the wail of modern religious despair, in the shouts of the street preacher, in the Salvationist's hymn. Everywhere, everywhere, the Spirit without—the Spirit within, the Spirit everywhere. The whole universe is God's field and the hidden treasure is His Spirit beneath it all. His Voice is in the flapping of the eagle's flight across the mountain—in the bleating of the ewe for her lamb, in the echo in the clefts of the rocks—in the roaring of the blast—in the rhythm of the planets, through boundless space—in the music of the Angels. Christ's economy reveals the Eternal Spirit as the Omnipresent, the immediate Minister of Grace. His breath, as the wind, stirs up waves across the field of wheat, like the sea in storm. It sweeps across the field of man's mind, of man's will, of man's heart. He breathes new life into every drop of blood and particle of flesh that make up the living body of humanity. "The Spirit breatheth where He will, and thou hearest His Voice, but thou knowest not whence He cometh and whither He goeth; so is everyone that is born of the Spirit."

## THE LEAVEN IN THE LUMP OF MEAL.

“The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened.”—*Matt. xii. 33.*

JUST at present I can find no more trenchant figure than the Parable of the Leaven to represent the processes of transformation that seem to be passing through the religious world. Even the least observing see these changes; but seeing them, they see them not, neither do they understand them. They are taking place at our very doors—within our hearts—for the Kingdom of God, the new life, is within.

As the leaven is seething in the lump of meal, I believe I see beneath the fermentation of modern religious aspiration the leaven of God's Spirit, generating a new life, which is giving a new form and a new nature to the mass of humanity. The leaven is leavening, probing, penetrating, pushing up and out into the three measures of meal, into three directions: religiously, socially, individually.

The last two divisions may be reduced to the first. They are at bottom religious. It has been denied, but it nevertheless seems true, that as of old so in the modern history of Europe, all the great struggles have been fundamentally religious. The most

popular among religious questions is that of Christian Unity; but it has been mooted so much of late that we almost grow faint at the mention of it. This arises, not because we deem the subject unimportant, but because we have seen it used as a peg for men of shallow habits of mind to hang their words upon, out of lack for other and sincerer thought. But it is the strongest expression of that fermentation which is stirring beneath the religious mass. And there are choice spirits among us, who constrain us to believe that to gather together the splintered sects of Christendom seems a dream which is not all a dream. Christ's preëminent prayer, the songs of prophets, the aspirations of holy men throughout the modern world, provoke the conclusion that no mere negation in history could arouse such universal demonstration. Enthusiasm concerning it has become contagious, and, like all great problems, the many are waxing fervid about it, but few contribute much to its solution—"seeing it, they see it not." It has become the fashion in lectures, speeches, essays, and even sermons, to deal in contrasts, to alarm by prophecies of war as against peace, to draw on popular sympathy by the accentuation of striking inequalities, as, for instance, the horrible contrast between the poverty of the poor and the wealth of the rich. Yet in all this, it would not be unfair to say that much of such eloquence is but sham and pretence. As for the union of Christendom, my human intelligence, my knowledge of history, assure me that

it is not only impracticable but impossible. Yet it is in the nature of religious movements that oftentimes, like leaven, their workings are in secret and their agents led not so much by human wisdom as by Faith—so it may be with the question of Christian Unity. No light is being shed, but voices may be speaking in the darkness of the night.

The woman in Christ's Parable hides the leaven in three measures of meal—it is buried deep down in the dough. Its operations are hidden; its results we see. We know that if certain hindrances are not placed, certain effects will follow from a certain cause—the method of its workings we do not pretend to understand. So, too, it may be with the leaven underlying all modern religious vitality. It may be a latent principle secretly transforming the sodden mass of meal. It is a principle among scholastics that from corruption proceeds generation. It is a principle in the physical world, and it occurs too in the realm of the spirit—from darkness light, from blood issue, from travail birth, from decay life. Timid souls are being frightened at the ruthless destruction of religious belief, but upon its ruins is being reared what would seem to be a wider structure; upon the horizon is the glimmering of a more crimson dawn, perhaps the advent of some new era. The mass of dough is fermenting. From that lump of sluggish, inert matter may come loaves of substantial bread.

The greatest event that has happened to this planet arose from out of historical misfortune—

upon the relics of decay. Greek culture had touched its acme and was on the wane. Rome had brought back captive the treasures that supplemented the perfection of its own external civilization. Yet it has become a commonplace to describe the moral rottenness that lurked beneath these classic glories. Men said that the Fall of the Roman Empire meant that all was on the verge of dissolution; but it was then, at this most distressing period of history, that Jesus Christ, the Leaven of the Nations, hid Himself in three measures of meal—the three civilizations: Greek, Roman, Oriental—until the whole was leavened—the purification of the body politic of the world. History is repeating itself, and that which has happened several times before may happen once again. Philosophers who weep over the present do not know history. They should shed their tears in churchyards, over the graves of the dead. It was from amid the débris of the fallen pillars and the broken arches of the temples of the gods that there loomed up the pathetic figure of Christ, a Teacher so divine that to speak of Him in connection with Buddha, Mohammed, or Confucius, seems like blasphemy.

Is our age religious? I cannot tell—I do not know. Yet of this am I convinced, that if it is not a religious age, it certainly is not irreligious. What is the meaning of this recent reaction against the glorification of science, except it be a dim recognition of the higher life which moves beneath

and above the material bulk? Why have the most material scientists changed their complexion of mind in relation to religion? Why have they begun to appreciate so keenly its usefulness even while they deny its validity? The conversion of a great mind and the change of intellectual basis of a great thinker are mental transformations, which ought not to be made little of when studying religious problems.

I fully realize that there are clouds in the religious sky which are not lined with silver, and many more not tinged with roseate hue. At times there is the lightning's flash, the distant peal of thunder, and all the purple hills seem shrouded in infernal black. To reconcile some of the jarring Christian sects!—it would be as feasible to link a war-steed and dray-horse to a chariot and drive them across a battlefield, thick with wounded soldiers. I see, too, the tremendous gap between the grosser forms of materialism, and the higher things of the spirit. Christ's sublime dictum: "Man lives not by bread alone," is denied. The sum and end of life is to shield man from the storm and the wind, the frost and the heat; from plague and pestilence, fire and water; to weave raiment and suckle infants, to plan bridges and build houses. Some years ago and, amid the applause of a multitude, the saints were dubbed as vermin, lice; and the bridal robes of perpetual chastity, the habiliments of night and death. In such a case and with such a crowd under the spell of an orator, applause is of little real

worth, and the mad violence of his language proves the seething restlessness of doubt. The visage of doubt has become shrunken and dejected, the eyes hollow, as if peering into the mouth of a cavern. The shadows of death are chasing him to the brink of the grave, and his voice, full of melancholy, makes its act of faith, with the piercing cry: Reason says "perhaps;" Hope says "yes!" His following confession is tinged with tragic pathos: "In the night of darkness Hope sees a star, and listening Love hears the rustle of a wing."

Almost all the high-class Agnostics see the indispensableness of religion to human life. The spirit must be fed on something, even more than the body! Everywhere the vehemence of religious discontent is intense. What more frequent than religious conventions, public controversy, missions, revivals, open-air meetings for prayer, street preaching, evangelical alliances? Ministers of different denominations are taking each others' pulpits, ministers of different denominations all taking part in one and the same service, ministers of different denominations denying doctrines that, they have preached for years although in many of these acts there is radically a denial of the objective value of known dogmatic truth, although they may manifest the principle of the relativity of human knowledge; nevertheless they portend the nature and violence of religious dissatisfaction, and the widening out of religious sympathy. Religious investigation is not infre-

quent even among the laity. Of course, those who are merged in business generally do not study religious questions, except as they affect the interests of business. Yet religious difficulties are naturally talked about in clubs and academies and wherever serious men are associated. In society it is not polite to provoke religious disputation, yet religious opinions drop very glibly from the lips of the worldly-minded, and in the most frivolous gatherings. In the universities, where religion is oftentimes cold—sometimes dead—it is nevertheless used as a practical good, while it may be considered only an abstract good. This is no greater phenomenon than to find a student who admires Christianity, as being conducive to a high ethical standard of morality, yet who would do all in his power, because of some inherent personal prejudice, to oppose its extension and embodiment.

As indicative of the spirit of inquiry in the science of religion, a new word has been coined to distinguish a fundamental idea: "Churchianity" as opposed to "Christianity." Curses are hurled at Churchianity—benedictions showered on Christianity. Christ is applauded, the Church hissed. Declamations are filed against churches, creeds, and clericalism, because they shackle and choke the freedom and essence of religion. They are charged with having wrapped around the beautiful body of religion a vesture woven of the human accretions of the centuries. Nevertheless

religion is praised, sometimes exercised; but theology is attacked—attacked because it is considered to be the creation of ecclesiasticism: the expression of the minds of successive generations of priests and parsons. Nevertheless religion is respected, sometimes loved, but Scripture is discredited—discredited because of errors in history or geography or science.

Yet the dominating intention in all this opposition is to promote religion, but in a freer and fairer form. Men seek to safeguard the idea of religion, yet, at times, will not admit the necessity of its concrete living embodiment. It is illogical, to be sure, but that such a distinction should be made at all betokens religious thought, and a craving for change, transition, or upheaval. This craving for something religious seems to me to give the reason why a partial negative religion, why a moral system like Buddhism, could get a hearing at all in a country like ours. The appetite for the curious, the mystical, the occult, prompts emotional natures to listen and accept, just as if Christianity did not possess for them every healthy religious idea, every jewel of religious truth, and in a more precious setting. Similar reasons may be presented for the spread of Christian Science, Spiritualism, Faith-healing, Theosophy, Palmistry. Just where the diabolism in these beliefs begins and where deception ends, and what part hysteria plays over all, it is very difficult to determine. However, these weaknesses argue not the lack but the excess

of faith. Doubt is the lack of faith, superstition its excess. Beliefs like these show the symptom of that fermentation, upheaving the torpid religious mass—it is the chemical reaction, so to speak, necessary for the leavening of the meal. From out of the heaviness and dulness, the sourness and stench, the kinks and bubbles in the lump of dough shall be quickened into life the sweet and wholesome bread of religion. So, too, is it unreasonable to hope that below this complex religious disturbance there is throbbing something more than human, an energy which it pleases me to call the new leaven in modern life? “The Kingdom of heaven is like to leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened.”

## THE DIVINE VOCATION OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC.

“Expect the Lord and keep His way and He will exalt thee to inherit the land.”—*Psalms xxxvi. 34.*

THOUGH my country be only a spot where Providence has placed me to do the most that I can for humanity, nevertheless it is dear to me for another reason. It is an object of sentiment; it prompts the affections of my heart as deeply as do the remembrances of those who are bound to me by the strong ties of blood. There is a divine purpose beneath every mood of emotion. Love of country, love of home, love of kin are in their varying degrees but human and personal loves, yet they control very largely the issues of history.

But doubly dear to me is my country if I believe or hope that she has a special mission to extend Christ's kingdom across the face of the earth. She becomes lovable beyond expression if the feeling comes to me that she has a sacred vocation among the nations. Yet every nation has been or is possessed more or less with the same idea. Impartial students of history, however, know beyond doubt that not only nations but whole races are no

longer destined to play heroic parts in the world's future drama.

How strange are Providential workings! Time was when Spain covered the seas with her ships of commerce; when from her realm there rose troops of saints and heroes, artists and poets, soldiers and statesmen; and now there are none so low as to do her reverence. Her decay begins with the dawn of the eighteenth century, while two centuries before that—in the period of romance and chivalry—her Flower of Castile shed her jewels to reveal to Europe the vision of a new world. Spain's golden era was in the reign of Charles V., her decadence begins with the Bourbon dynasty. For the last two centuries the deep interior Catholic spirit which once characterized her has been losing its vitality, and in high places her holy religion has become merely external and official. Yet the power that lurks beneath religion and the craving for religion has saved her people to the faith.

Along with this spiritual degeneracy has come the waning of her material splendor. Suffering anæmia within, she sought aid by drawing blood from without. She taxed her possessions beyond measure. She intimidated her peoples. Her officials became venal, and some of her clergy the victims of the state.

To speak of the defects of one race at the expense of the other argues a lack of the philosophic spirit. Nations as well as men fulfil their ends in human life; then die and are confined to the tomb.

It would be a vulgar national feeling which would provoke us to glory over a feeble foe; but if an inspiration has possessed us that our Republic has a work to do, it would be but false humility to deny it. The sun of a strange century is lifting itself upon the horizon. A new race with the mingled blood of Saxon and Celt and Latin has risen up to adjust a new complication in history. Let us not sin against the light or deliver our trust into the hands of men, but into God's. The retention of the recently acquired fruits of conquest seems inevitable if we are to complete the humanitarian purpose for which the higher spirits open out an unseemly war. Islands—some of them mere barren rocks in the sea, others laden with fruitage and flower—seem to be honestly ours in the judgment of the world.

Of old it was said of the Romans that they lusted for dominion. True as this may be, Heaven rewarded them for their civic virtues by converting their world-wide colonies into gardens of Christian civilization. It has a very weak parallelism in modern history in the example of the British Empire. With our inventive genius and political temper it is obvious that material amelioration would be shed upon every land that our hands could touch. But most of all can we breathe new life and inject new blood into millions of peoples who have lost the first fervor of the religion of their fathers. A thousand difficulties present themselves. The horror of it all is that perhaps in our

country religious bigotry will be violently tempted to vent its spleen in vandalism worthy of barbarians. The art treasures, the churches, paintings, jewels, mosaics, and sacred vessels must not be polluted by irreverent hands. Let us gently and prudently, if we must, separate State officialism from Church government, but let us revere as is becoming a liberal Christian nation every expression and embodiment of religion. Most pathetic it is to see the England of today striving in her mediæval cathedrals to remove the whitewash from wondrous frescoes, and gathering together the fragments of rich stained-glass which religious bigotry shivered into a thousand pieces. It is good that at this moment we are distracted away from our internal problems.

The very competition among the contending missionary forces of the different Sects will evoke from our souls the desire to sacrifice ourselves in the name of that Church which has ever been the fruitful mother of heroes. Possibly in few countries of the world can you find a clergy so much like ours, leading lives of such holy freedom and high moral purpose. It is no reflection upon other countries to believe that our methods for the propagation of Christ's gospel are quicker, healthier, and more thorough. We are increasing so rapidly that we must soon have an outlet to spend our energies, else tepidity shall take hold of our spirits, as it has in many of the nations of Europe.

Our leaders of state are men unskilled in the

arts of diplomacy. Our country has had little intimate relationship with any foreign power. We are young and quite unused to the ways of the old world. The fear is that to hold our new position we shall be driven to create fresh armies and build strong ships, but this is the least part of the difficulty. The danger shall rather be when we lose the consciousness that our purpose in history is to effect the betterment of high and low types of races by imparting vigor to their religion and giving them the material benefits of our mechanical genius.

O glorious mission for the Republic of these United States! Again and again in history the sceptre passes from Juda, and tribes which were chosen as divine instruments forget the fact and wander over the face of the earth.

Our prayer to the God of nations must be that there shall come no strained relationship with our new and foreign friends. If we find it wise not to respect all land tenures, let us at least be not ruthless in confiscation of Church and school properties. We have much to learn from England in her treatment of India. English subjects are confined to penal servitude if they violate the sanctity of the temples of the natives.

As Catholics we have nothing to fear from Protestant Boards of missions to our new countries. Wealth is the weakest power in missionary tactics. The warmth and glow and strength of Catholicism, so fitly represented in America, will as easily

conquer not only those who are Catholic to the marrow of their bones, but likewise the Mongolian, the Negro, and the Malay.

We cannot leave the Antilles and the Philippines, to be fought over and gobbled up by European kingdoms. Our love of those historic realities—liberty, progress, democracy—will not permit it. Of themselves these peoples are helpless, without armor for protection and susceptible to internal revolution.

It is easy to see how European Catholics, who are ever dreaming of their golden past, should from motives of sentimentalism sympathize with Spain, the last great Catholic kingdom. Students of history are likewise influenced in her favor when they remember how she pushed on civilization and broke the storm of Saracenic tyranny which threatened to darken the sky of Christendom.

This last consideration affected to some small degree a few of our own public men, who could not be accused of lack of love of country. But the past is gone. Our duty is to construct new methods of usefulness for the future.

There are social conditions utterly unlike our own which must be accepted for the present. There are historic privileges and vested rights which in strict justice may not be destroyed unless by full compensation. It must not be forgotten that Christianity is the greatest moral force in the world; that religion does infinitely more to dispel savagery and tyranny than bayonet and sword. Ex-

cesses and abuses arising from land ownership, government grants, and public moneys can be remedied without poisoning religion, the well-spring of morality.

Of course, as yet, the problem viewed from all points is insoluble; but eventually, with a due control of all the facts and a reverence for the principles of justice which are intimately bound up with the facts, it will, let us hope, be brought to a happy and honorable solution. It will not be wise to dampen the ardor of missionary enterprise. The older countries recognize this fact in their treatment of even their smallest colonies—as instance the case of France with the isle of Madagascar.

We have reasons to be apprehensive, for in our country, as in other countries, the fury of religious differences may be converted into political capital.

The addition of millions of Catholics to the already millions who are children of the United States will in no way affect the even tenor of the present ways of Church or State. These new peoples are unconsciously pining for that untrammelled freedom which is the secret of the purity and success of the Catholic Church in the Republic of the United States.

## OUR REDEEMER'S LONELINESS.

“ Then He saith to them: ‘ My soul is sorrowful, even unto death; stay you here and watch with Me.’ ”—*Matt. xxvi. 38.*

THAT Peter should have succumbed to the temptation of falling asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane is more easily understood than the fact that John also fell asleep and left Christ alone to watch and pray in His agony. For John seems to have been a man who was undivided in his love—he was naturally lovable; he had all the mysterious charm of virginity; he had felt the healing sweetness of the caress of Jesus; he had known many secrets, and he kept them; but he was like us—he was human; he fell asleep and left his Beloved to struggle alone with a terrific temptation. If John had been a woman he would have watched. Why? Because the women did watch in the other crises of the Passion. The French infidel, Renan, thinks that Christ craved their watchings. Of course He did. I do not know whether Renan was bad-minded or whether he was moved by the spirit of blasphemy. I do not know but he uttered a truth which is utterly independent of the morality of his private life, just as he divinized Christ in the very book with which he tried to prove that Christ

was only human. Yet the yearning that Jesus had for human sympathy must not be mistaken for the belief that He had permanently lost the consciousness of His Father's presence.

Christ, when alone and lonely, sought the impetuous affection of Peter, appreciated the virginal ardor of John, and accepted the refined luxury of feminine sympathy; yet, after having tasted the delight of the greatest gift in human life, human love, He experienced the sensation that these delights do not suffice; and once again Jesus was alone and lonely, and had to fight His temptation alone. "My soul is sorrowful, even unto death; stay you here and watch with Me." No one must believe that we underestimate the value of human love when we say that it does not satisfy, when we say that we are still alone, and that nothing but the consciousness of God behind our loneliness can give us the strength to conquer the agony of Gethsemane.

Christ was most alone when He shared the comforts of human companionship. There came a time when these things failed to be of service to Him. In a trial He gave over His mother's love to John. There was an hour when He could no longer accept the gift of Magdalen washing His feet with her tears and wiping them with the tresses of her soft hair. Was not His death a grave scandal to the world and a proof of His aloneness before God? Was He not condemned by the voice of authority? Was He not stripped of every stitch of His raiment and stuck up between heaven and

earth, with a criminal at either side of His cross, and a reclaimed harlot at its foot? Oh! oh! what a shocking scandal is the crucifixion of Christ! Christ, how lovable Thou art in Thy loneliness! When alone we find in Thee the tenderness of the woman, with the strength of a man. Thy teaching is the only doctrine to feed the loneliness of the intellect. Thine example helps us when secretly struggling with the sins of the will. Thy comeliness fills all the hidden hunger of our hearts. Christ, how dreadfully alone we would be if it were not for Thee—the highest manifestation of God! The favor of men, the love of child, the devotion of a faithful woman—these are not enough; we are alone—alone like Thyself with God. God and myself! How can I get rid of the idea of God in my loneliness any more than I can get rid of the idea of myself? God and myself! Two distinct ideas; a double consciousness that I am never alone in my loneliness. The things which the world holds dear did not tempt Jesus, but He sought the support of human help when He was alone. “Then He saith to them: ‘My soul is sorrowful, even unto death; stay you here and watch with Me.’”

Wealth, with its securities from hunger and thirst, heat and cold, famine and plague, was not enough to tempt Jesus to convert the stones into bread. Nor could fame, even from the pinnacle of the temple of Jerusalem, look fair to Him. Glory is only a temptation to the insane, to weak minds

and to little children, but some men are lunatics or little children all their lives. By a strange paradox in history fame crowns only the brow of the genius who scorns it.

Christ's temptation—and it was not all a temptation—seems to have been a desire for human love while His spirit was depressed. "Then He saith to them: 'My soul is sorrowful even unto death; stay you here and watch with Me.'" How often is affection the stay of man's melancholy life! We should not fear misinterpretation when we discourse about it freely and holily. For a believer in Christ speaks of it not as Anacreon, the Greek poet, who forgot that the spirit shines through the senses of the body, while Plato made it the stuff of dreams and Dante beheld his blessed one standing upon the crest of a cloud. Human love is great, but God, Who is love, is not only greater, but greatest. Behind and beneath and above is the deep truth that God alone suffices. Our hearts are restless until they are flooded with God.

There is a lone line in the heart which the whole universe cannot fill. God alone can satisfy. He is our first beginning, our last end. Throughout the gamut of passion, from the most brutal and gross up to the most æsthetic form of love from there up to the most cultivated mental sympathy that ever existed is it not, in spite of its thrilling satisfaction, nevertheless unsatisfactory? We are alone, and there is something in us which cannot be shared with the one creature who may have entered the

inner sanctuary of our being. What we want is God. God! No man is alone who loves God. If he feels that he is, then he is alone as Christ was; his loneliness is temporary, mental, subjective. That it is an effort for man to think of God does not take away from the value of this truth. I defy any man to lose honestly the consciousness of the Divine Presence in the bloodiest temptation ever waged in Gethsemane.

Though I were given all the gifts that the world can give me, though all the nooks and crannies and crevices of my soul were most intimately penetrated by the choicest spirit ever created, nevertheless I would be alone, as I am alone, and as you are alone, when God withdraws His light. Man without God confesses that he is alone, confesses it even amid an embarrassment of human delights. Let love be strong as death, complete, unalloyed, abandoned, uttermost in its intimacy, an entirely surrender, yet when God stares at us in the eyes we are alone with Him.

Are there not times when we are afraid to look into ourselves, to face squarely the mystery of our own being? Are there not times when we distract ourselves away from ourselves by change of excitement? Some can do it, because they have wealth; wealth is a tremendous force in human society. Indeed, a man does not know the strength of its control until he has tasted the rigors of poverty. The scorn of the world is at times overpowering; yet its ridicule was nothing to Jesus. No man is great

until he can honestly say, as Christ said, "I pray not for the world."

Neither power, nor wealth, nor fame, nor love, nor all the things that this world considers sweet can feed the insatiable loneliness of man's soul for God.

We have considered the gifts of the world; let us look away from this world, up to the sky, and see if there be gifts in the other planets to dispel the loneliness of our Gethsemane.

There is a tradition that the moon was full and tranquil on the night when Jesus suffered in the Garden. Now, His Mind contained not only all the worlds of the physical universe, but He saw at a glance and in one instant all the moral evil perpetrated in the past, in the present and in the future. Not only the sins of Babylon, Sodom, Gomorrah, London or Paris, but the sins that are to be committed in this city tonight.

The moon shone with chaste light, but it lent no solace to Jesus. For what is the moon after all but a scarred, burn-up planet, all shriveled like the withered hand of a hag! What is the moon but a token of the departed, like a lock of hair belonging to the dead! It has a certain beauty, to be sure; but it is the beauty of death, for death chastens and makes comely the features of the corpse. The moon gave no comfort to Jesus, no more than did the olive and the fig trees. Indeed, nature made Him more lonely, for nature is terribly silent. Studying nature, peering into the clouds, thinking

of the immensity of space—these thoughts do but increase our loneliness and throw us back into communion with God. Here we are, a mass of scrambling humanity, building and brooding on this petty little planet. Consider the thousands and thousands of comets which have been found and which are being found very frequently. The stars, too, are something more than jewels stuck in the vault of heaven. There are the spiral star clusters, stars in a blaze, dark stars which have cooled down, white and bluish stars and fixed stars of the color of yellow.

There are suns forty times brighter than our sun; larger and of greater heat than our sun; suns with red, blue and orange light. And every one of these suns has its own planetary system. What a stupendous and admirably splendid spectacle the sunsets of these planets must be! Our system, therefore, is neither the best nor the most brilliant. Then, again, what is beyond that line which marks the boundless space within which our system revolves? What is beyond? I do not know. Does anybody know, except the Being Who is the active principle of all things? However, a plurality of other worlds and the countless number of beings who have gone before us, though they may increase our loneliness, they nevertheless cannot take away from us the consciousness that it is God's own Hand which drops the veil over our eyes in our Garden of Gethsemane. To some of us the veil may be over our eyes for only a moment; to some others half

a lifetime; to some of us, forever, since we deliberately keep it there with our own hands, in spite of the Divine Will. Every drop of grace in the whole universe flows from the Blood that trickled in Gethsemane. St. Jerome says: "God collects all histories of the worlds here and the worlds above us, and sums them all up in Jesus Christ." Palestine may be the centre of Judaism for the Hebrew; Rome the centre of Christendom for the Christian; but this earth is the centre of the world for all—the centre of our salvation.

We cannot get rid of our loneliness by making use of the implements of this world or any other world. Our struggle is with ourselves, despising this world and other worlds and looking within for God. To sin against the light of this tremendous truth is a greater sin than the sin of despair, and despair is a great sin. It is a sin that is something more than a mistake. The great sin of human life is to be untrue to the conviction that God is with us, even in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Plato, the pagan, regarded such sinners as criminals of the State, and Dante, the poet, instituted a special region of hell for them.

## THE MODERN WOMAN AND CLOISTERED NUNS.

“But Mary kept all these words pondering in her heart.”—*Luke ii. 19.*

HE was a strategist, Ignatius Loyola, who, when he beheld authority being impugned, marshaled his forces toward the weak spot. His cohorts were to bleed for authority. At a command they must do. This Ignatian method could be reverently termed the exaggeration of the virtue of obedience to counteract the excesses of an historic vice, the denial of authority.

That light-hearted spiritual genius of Assisi, exploited a similar spirit, with his organized protest, against the glittering luxuries of the thirteenth century. The sordid indignities of poverty would offset the illicit opulence of the king, the courtier and sometimes the prelate. When the coarse habit of this sanctified reformer was frayed and tattered, his disciples constrained him to slough it off, if for no other than for hygienic motives. After a perfervid disputation he consented, but in his sublime infatuation for the Lady Poverty, he took the patches from the old garment and sewed them on the new. It was the exaggeration of the virtue of holy pov-

erty as a counter-irritant to the prodigality of that picturesque time.

Now, breathes there a man with manner so ungallant as to accentuate the contrast between the suffragette and the cloistered nun? Yet it were no rash deed to aver that if one is not a counter-irritant to the exaggeration of the other, one could be a saving complement of the other. The other could impair the defects of the one. The one could requite the insufficiencies of the other. The cloistered nun might become a sociological necessity to adjust the suffragette to a novel situation, with which, at present, she seems out of joint. If perchance, a philosopher should be so absurd as to fancy that the suffragette symbolizes a deordination, then the nun being her complement could coördinate all that is wholesome in each estate to a common end.

This would not be so much the curing of a vice by the exaggeration of a virtue as it might be the healing of an imperfection by the assertion of a quality. To be sure there is a prodigious dissimilarity between the exoteric publicity of a suffragette and the vestal privacy of a cloistered nun. The contrast is acute but the rights of the one do not overshadow the prerogative of the other.

Shall we ever forget the romantic Victorian woman, sometimes found in fiction like Trollope's, who so gracefully swooned away at the sight of her ecstatic lover? Love was her life and so profoundly reacted on her frail body that smelling-

salts were as imperative as victuals. We have ridiculed the delicacy of that Victorian woman because our women are rapidly returning to what Chesterton calls the coarse and candid women of the Elizabethan period. This vulgarity has matured, in some measure, from a merciless mode of civilization which has thrust the tenderest shoots of feminine flowering into avocations which normally belong to man. The promiscuous dealing of woman, who is naturally refined, with man, who is naturally a vulgarian, has demoralized the woman. Herein lurks the grim and black humor of woman suffrage. The romantic and æsthetic inferiority of the modern man has dragged woman so to the deeps that she is screaming for emotional and economic self-assertion. Is the vote an unction for so wide a wound?

However, there are sedatives for ruffled neurological conditions. Could the equable composure of a cloistered nun be an anodyne to the tense tumultuous life of a suffragette? It must be more than a contrast. The Divine placidity of the one must tender a balm to the feverish spirit of the other. Perhaps there never was a riper era for the reassertion of the feminine contemplative ideal to counteract the ruthless and cruel waste of feminine activities, political and otherwise.

St. Teresa, no mean mistress of the science of life, it was, who declared that more good is done by one minute of reciprocal contemplative communion of love, with God, than by the founding of fifty

hospitals or even fifty churches. Is the suffragette, who in fine frenzy, discourses in the public square of more sociological value to the community than the cloistered nun, who under the wing of the Sacramental Presence chants her propitiatory and plaintive song, at midnight Matins, by way of atonement for the excesses of our imperfect life? It is but flippant to presume that her heart is narrow because it is cloistered. Indeed, it is wider than all the political systems of the world. For as she detached herself from the thralldom of the things of sense, her heart dilated and there was opened a larger horizon. It is not for the suffragette to judge her. She is the judge of her life as is the suffragette.

The tremulous cry of a conductorette in the Subway or even the elegant chatter of a feminine gathering at a fashionable hotel betokens an overwrought but doubtless necessary condition. But the mellow and cadenced artlessness of a nun's voice when intoning the Divine Office in the cloister chapel seems as natural as a bird singing in the tree or the cooing of a dove in the clefts of the rocks.

It is a rigid verity that we cannot touch political pitch without being defiled. So the suffragette has lost not only poise, intuition, manner and distinction but another grace, the voice soft and low, that most excellent thing in woman. Can the sacred silences of the cloister be the agency of atonement to stem the floods of vehement verbiage which

threaten to inundate the region of sincere thought concerning the dignity of woman?

The loose speech and lax method of ratiocination have not only a reference to Feminism but also to Prohibition and Socialism. That such modes of crooked belief have come into vogue is because we are still immature experimentalists. We have not as yet the perspective sense to look to the sharp realities. As for dispassionate, judicious thinking, we are standing on our heads and not on our heels. Oh! for the *Homo simplex* of the Romans, since now the female of the species is more complex and incompetent amongst the ruins in the realm of modern thought.

Yet we are saved by the orisons of the righteous. They avail much. Cloistered nuns are women. Women are still parcel of the redemptive and sacrificial scheme which balances the world. By their stripes we are healed. They die for the many. If the suffragette shall close her eyes to this vision, the cloistered nun cannot, since it is the law of her life. She is therefore not a luxury but a profound social necessity for the feminine ideals of civilization. She is now, more than ever, a rod and a staff for the moral support of the suffragette. This is why the perfection of one finely heroic spirit is of infinitely more worth than the propagation of innumerable ordinary types of the race.

The fashionable, though charitable, society leader at the Waldorf and the militant suffragette storming the White House at Washington are of

infinitely less worth as economic factors for amelioration than the cloistered nun kneeling erect in prayer before the Tabernacle. One is all fuss and feathers. She symbolizes the tempest in the tea-pot. But the cloistered nun represents the Divine Energy which wraps itself around our helpless world.

Even the Romans, in their period of moral decline, never lost this womanly ideal. The standard of feminine morality ran low, but the discerning spirits insisted that the ideal at least must be held on high. Thus, the vestal virgin plighted her vow of inviolate chastity for one year. Her life was of reparation and possessed all the esoteric exclusiveness of a cloistered nun. She kept aloft the snowy banner of a noble ideal. If she violated her vow she was buried alive. So now, our goodly array of consecrated virgins, be they Teresian contemplatives, Poor Clares or Nuns of the Precious Blood, are by atonement, propitiation, sacrifice, lending an ethical and economic value to the modern devices of the suffragette.

## ST. AGNES, A TYPE AND CONTRAST.

“When I had a little passed by them, I found Him Whom my soul loveth.”—*Canticles iii. 4.*

WHEN the whole world is plunged in tumult, it is difficult even to think with composure. One thought, however, is dominant with the serious at present. It is this—that what we called “progress”—a word, meaning “the greatest happiness for the greatest number,” is as far away from us as it was in the Middle Ages.

It has always been clear, to many, that the fine arts have not developed since then: that, with us every phase of architecture is but an imperfect reflection of the past; that no paintings, reliefs, mosaics, no stained-glass, sculpture, no literature in the modern world, can bear comparison with the exalted creations of the past. However, in the domain of what we call material genius, we discovered a definite advance. But that very instrument which gave us heart of hope for, at least, the physical betterment of humanity, was converted into a means for the destruction of human life. Indeed, the course of civilization has been thrown back several centuries. We find ourselves encompassed with all the moral weaknesses of the past—its barbarism and passion for destruction—without its virtues, its hidden moral beauty, its sentiment and romance.

If in the æsthetic and material order we have fallen far short of high standards and must revert to ancient ideals, this is eminently true in the region of morality. Is there one spot in this wide world, at the present moment, where the tenor of conduct seems in harmony with the Mind of the Founder of Christianity? Christianity is in a manner an experimental science. It must be tried before we can judge of its results. "Taste and see that the Lord is sweet," are the words of the sacred writer. So we must react toward the past—to the golden visions that still loom on the horizon, for the eyes of faith—to the moral ideals ever ancient, ever new.

This brings us to the truth that we must again turn our eyes to that Eternal City hard by the yellow Tiber—Rome—when sick at heart, looking for the things of peace and for the moral heroes and heroines that never die. The world is placed between utter ruin and restoration of law, and there is nothing to restore it but the moral power of the Papacy. Time was when the voice from the watch tower in the capital of Christendom might have stilled the storm of this universal conflict which has shaken the whole world. That day is past but who shall say never to return? "All day long have I stretched forth mine arms to a foolish and gainsaying people but they would not."

Yet if the living authority of authentic Christianity cannot now, as of old, practically force itself upon a world which is already on fire with hatred, nevertheless its moral influence, principles, ideals

cannot perish from the hearts of the faithful. It is to Rome then and to a heroine of the moral order that we come to learn a lesson and draw a contrast.

Rapt in imagination and with the light of love glistening in our eyes, we look toward the City of the ages. From the Porta Pia we follow the main road, the ancient Via Nomentana which crosses the broad Della Regina. We pass beautiful villas until we come to the American Academy of Arts of Rome. On the left, about a quarter of a mile further, stand the Catacombs and the Church of St. Agnes Outside the Walls. Even now, it has not lost some of the evidences of an early Christian basilica. It was built by Constantine over the tomb of St. Agnes. It has been reërected and restored several times and finally by Pius IX. in 1856. In this church are blessed the lambs from whose wool the pallia are woven for the archbishops of Christendom.

This church must not be confused with another church of St. Agnes, very rich and beautiful, within the confines of the city. The latter was built by Pope Innocent X. near the circus where our youthful virgin suffered martyrdom and exposure before the populace.

St. Jerome says in one of his letters of this resplendent figure of inviolate chastity, that "the tongues and pens of all nations were employed in her praises. None is more praiseworthy than she, for whose praise all mouths are fitted." "Her

name," remarks St. Augustine in one of his sermons, "being interpreted, signifieth chaste in the Greek and a lamb in the Latin language." St. Ambrose fixes her cruel death at the age of twelve. St. Augustine at thirteen. Even though she may have been more mature than our women at the same age, the tender youth of her martyrdom has touched the heart of Christendom, from the fourth century to the present day. All agree on the youth of this virgin who won the martyr's crown. It is difficult to be precise about the time of her death. Prudentius makes it March in the year of Our Lord three hundred and three.

Agnes' exceeding beauty and wealth provoked the young noblemen of the most distinguished families in Rome. She had but one answer: that her heart was consecrated to a Lover beheld not by mortal eyes. At that moment she could have sung snatches of the Cantic: "And when I had a little passed by them I found Him Whom my soul loveth," or as the verse in her Breviary lesson puts it: "He hath sealed me in my forehead that I may let in no other lover but Him."

Beauty incites love, and Christ, the comeliest moral beauty, provokes the fairest love. Our virgin and martyr saw in Him all the strength of the man and the tenderness of the woman. Her words in the first antiphon of the third nocturn of her Office are: "I keep my troth to Him alone, at Whose beauty the sun and moon do wonder." Henceforward she was impregnable to the arts

and importunities of her suitors. The bridal robes of perpetual chastity could never be for her the habiliments of night and of death. Unrequited desire when not perfected by restraint, may readily degenerate into violent wrath. So they who sought her hand in marriage and were refused, reported her to the Roman governor for a Christian.

The poetic panegyric of Pope Damasus, however, tells us that after the imperial edict, not of Diocletian against the Christians, but after Decius, she voluntarily declared herself to be a Christian. She was dragged with clanging chains before the idols of the heathen shrine. One pinch of incense offered before so chaste a goddess as Diana would have saved her but, says St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, she could not be compelled to even move her hand except to sign herself with the Cross of Christ. Thrust into the fire, she gave no thought to the torment of the flames, but sought to shield her chaste body, with her wealth of soft hair, from the lecherous eyes of the heathen mob. A foul cruelty it was! Fire failed. They clothed her, however, for her execution and loaded her with fetters but St. Augustine avers that she went to the place of her death more cheerfully than other maidens go adorned to their nuptials.

“I am wedded to the Lord of Angels—and His Blood is red on my cheeks.”

“You may,” said she, “stain your sword with my blood, but you will never profane my body, it is consecrated to Christ.”

The faces of some in the crowd turned white when Agnes gave her tiny hands to the iron shackles and bent her tender neck for the stroke. Some of the spectators wept—she herself shed not a tear. She quailed not. The hand of her murderer trembled as though he were the criminal—but his aim was direct. With one blow he cut her head from her body.

There is a lovely scene in one of the tragedies of the Greek poets—from the *Hecuba* of Euripides—which describes Polyxena's warm body severed from the head and rolling down the marble steps of the altar and how, conscious even in death of her modesty, she decently arranges her snow-white raiment over her limbs. The blessed Agnes sings in Matins: "The Lord hath clothed me with a vesture of wrought gold and adorned me with a necklace of great price. The Lord hath clothed me with the garments of salvation and hath covered me with the robe of joyfulness and hath set on my head a crown as the crown of a bride. He hath put pearls beyond price in mine ears and hath crowned me with the bright blossoms of the eternal spring-time."

St. Basil and Tertullian both witness that, during those early persecutions, Christ wonderfully interposed in defence of maidens who pledged their virtue to Him. Lewd profligates were seized with awe at the sight of them. So it was that a rude youth, who rushed at Agnes, was struck blind and fell trembling to the ground. The Holy One would not

suffer His elect to see corruption. St. Cecilia so charged the air with the aroma of her moral presence that Valerian could no longer look upon her. Henry of Bavaria, Saint as well as King, closed his eyes and knelt a slave to the virtue of his Queen.

Primitive and mediæval Catholicism gave us thousands who retained, unprofaned, the consecrating dew of baptism until the sweet chrism of anointing touched the pallid forehead of the dying. Even the senses of the body, so often the instruments of our humiliation, were won over to Christ.

“From the graced decorum of the hair  
Even to the tingling, sweet  
Soles of the simple, earth-confiding feet.”

Only at times does the modern mind know the merit and value of the ardor which is virginal—nor does it always appreciate a life of atonement and propitiation. Yet the ancient Romans, even in their period of moral decline, saw the sacredness of these blessed things. If the vestal virgin violated her vow, which she was to keep for a brief time, she was buried alive.

Some of the great efficient leaders of moral reform in the Church, like St. Dominic, St. Francis or Ignatius sought to cure prevailing vice by what the world would call the exaggeration of virtue. It is on this principle that the ideal of inviolate chastity is so necessary for modern life. If at the breath of an obscene word a saint would swoon away, should we not be moved to tears not only at our lost innocence but at our recklessness of speech

and action? It would seem that we lose something of the angelic virtue when we discuss it. Yet in our modern methods of education, matters are investigated and studied by all which should make the morally sensitive shudder with confusion. Modesty is only a special circumstance of chastity, yet it is its complement and unfading flower. So incidental a thing as a prevailing dance may indicate how our standards have relaxed. Even the harmless instinct to enhance beauty may bring about the modern indignities of fashion.

As in the past so in the present we look to types like Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Anastasia and Cecilia. What a tremendous contrast! If the standards are lowered with woman they will be lowered in a greater degree with man. "Ye are the salt of the earth and if the salt be lacking wherewith shall the earth be salted." "Yet the world can corrupt all things," says Lacordaire, "even so fair a thing as a woman." "Of all kinds of corruption," writes St. Francis de Sales, "the most malodorous is decaying lilies." To the general confusion which overshadows the region of thought, at present, woman has added another complex problem. She has thrust herself into the public conflicts of men. Into a game that is so rough that she will be helpless both by nature and grace, in mind and body. Joan of Arc, even when guarded by angelic influences, slept in her steel armor for she was dealing with men. After the crisis she returned to her home and to the sheep

feeding on the green grass of Domrémy. The modern woman must needs be thrice armed to meet the more subtle manipulations of political warfare.

Because of unjust economic conditions, woman has been mercilessly pressed into mercantile pursuits. Would it be an exaggeration to say, since all consider it an evil, that because of this she has lost something of the distinction of voice and manner always an indication of that delicate moral reserve which is the source of woman's incomparable charm? When the great thinker, St. Thomas Aquinas, wrote that the devout sex was *vix rationalis* he did not mean that it was *irrationalis*. He meant that it approaches the questions and sociological problems of life with the heart, rather than with the head. In the secret kingdom of that heart is born the power which redeems the world. Though the heart of a woman encompasses the world, its action is not public or external. Its influence is subtle, moral, interior. "My heart was dilated," sings the Psalmist, "when I ran in the way of Thy Commandments."

So we hark back again to Rome and to a Roman maiden whose heart was so enlarged by the love of Christ that it broke forth like a flower from the fetid atmosphere of the catacombs outside the Roman walls. It pushed itself up through the earth and the stones of the sacred city to bloom for us today and forever in the garden of the moral world.

## LOVE, MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE.

“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”—*Matt. xix. 6.*

It was the glory of Salvini's Othello to interpret those finely modulated shades of Shakespeare's genius which are missed by mediocre performers. The revelation of Desdemona's seeming infidelity overwhelms the Moor of Venice with shattering despair. He is bent on her murder. He will not spill her blood for that would leave a scar on her skin whiter than snow and smoother than monumental alabaster. The light of the candle shines on his victim sleeping in her bed chamber in the castle. At the vision of her excelling beauty he cries out in a paroxysm of grief; “It is the cause, it is the cause, my soul.”

This would mean that Othello, if he were to reason it out with a mind not crushed by his towering jealousy, would say to the chaste stars that he and Desdemona are as nothing in the light of the flaming fixity of the moral law. The constraining subtlety of his conscience compels him to reiterate the eternal character of the ordinance. The euphony of the Italian language and the richness of Salvini's voice, lent music to the mechancholy of his cry: “It is the cause.”

It is the cause then or the authentic law as strong as granite in the eternal hills, which is the subject of our story. Upon that law dependeth the constancy of love, the Sacramental aspect of marriage and the erotic viciousness of divorce.

When Othello asserts that he knows not where there is the Promethean heat to relume the light or to give vital growth to the plucked rose, it is but another fashion of declaring that Desdemona, by the violation of her vow, has upset a fixed principle for the right ordering of a fierce and alluring instinct. The Greek fatalists, as evidenced in their tragedies, saw the iron rigidity of that law even when they had nothing to soften or coördinate the wayward impulses of the passion itself. Matthew Arnold wrote a metrical translation of a choral ode of Sophocles which depicts this established ordinance which is begot not of man but of the gods. The minute before Othello smothers Desdemona to death, he kisses her on the lips, uttering with pathos the inexorable and everlasting nature of the covenant in the sublime verse:

“Oh, balmy breath, that doth almost persuade  
Justice to break her sword.”

When King David, in his outburst of affliction, prays God to blot out his iniquity, he seems to put in abeyance not only the horrors of the ravishment of the woman, and the consequent disgrace of her spouse but also the loss of Absalom's filial love, the

revolt of his soldiers and the disruption of his kingdom. For the moment the dominance of his penitential spirit is centred in the sorrow that his fall has struck at the Divinity of the moral law which is an adumbration of the Substance of the Divine Being in history and in life. The interior genius of the Hebrew language makes such a translation impossible but the verse of the sacred Psalm, even in English, reads: "To Thee only have I sinned and have done evil before Thee, that Thou mayest be justified in Thy words."

It is the cause then, it is the steel-clad impregnability of a divine convention. It is as hard as flint in its application when viewed only with the eyes of unaided nature, but it is soft and yielding as moss in golden and verdant valleys, when beheld under Sacramental light. The supernatural interpretation of the Sacrament of Matrimony signifies that that which is lacking in nature, is by a gracious participation in the Divine, supplied to lover and beloved. It is a moral strength which of themselves they could not possess.

Theories of moral conduct built on self-perfectionism, that is, that love can morally support itself have proved ere now to be futile. This is the reason for the structure of the Sacramental system, which secures the fidelity of the marital estate and makes of divorce a mode of action applicable only for immorality. Is it not noticeable, that when the professor of free love falls in love he seals it with a personal, if not a public vow?

It was in a picturesque region of our country and in a not far distant time that there loomed a fair woman who was flattered to the top of her bent by the appreciation of an Australian merchant of ample wealth. Both beauty and beast were married personages, each with children. The poetic figure is mixed because of confusion in locating, even in the final scene, which is the beauty and which the beast. Gradually there were endearing palliations termed elective affinity, soul-mates, psychical intuition and other things. But the attentions of our hero and heroine ripened and ripened to corruption—like tainted fruit that falls from the tree. Their moral recklessness was compared to the crystalline ingenuousness of Dante's high and hopeless love. It was the perilous imaginative adolescence in distinction to the rugged reality of fact. Reason fleet footed fled, and truth with winged flight flew over the hills and far away. Passion came out of the palace of the Furies and riotously ruled. In the lawlessness of such a moral tumult the State provided a livelihood for a corps of lawyers by legally interpreting the mad delirium of lechery as the exalted sentiment of love. The court then became the fertile mother and polite patroness of a tragic horror which increased in volume with the process of the years. Who can measure the width of demoralization brought to women and children in the disrupted homes of divorced parents?

Our beautiful heroine was divorced from her

husband and two children, to marry her rich paramour, who in turn was divorced from his wife and two children, to marry her. Some relic of the parental instinct remained when each asked for one child. This made the moral dissolution for the children more complete, for there lived one child of each parent in each house. The abnormality of the relationship of each parent necessarily reacted on the character of each child. Moreover, the diversity of religious belief deepened the ill-adjustment, for among the four parents, one was Episcopalian, the second Baptist, the other Catholic and the last in a religious sense nothing at all. In the Greek tragedies and the bloody dramas of Shakespeare, the innocent often bear the stripes of the malefactors. The blameless live to wince under the keen edge of infamy, bequeathed to them by the divorced and guilty dead.

But illicit love cannot possess forever the serenity of the genial landscape. Hamlet in his sublime fury rushes at his incestuous mother, but the filial instinct holds him, when he realizes that she is already punished. She shall have no peace since her infatuation for the King is a passion which grows by what it feeds on. Shakespeare sees the canker in our nature. Hamlet cleaves his mother's heart in twain, with the statement: "Rebellious hell can't mutine in a matron's bones."

To revert to our domestic tragedy enacted not in Denmark or Venice or Florence, but under our own eyes—a tragedy which is an expression of a moral

laxity, that even Tolstoi thought was making for our national enfeeblement—it was consummated for all in profound woe. The wealthy lover shot his second wife, believing her to have shown favor to his chauffeur. The chauffeur eager to shield the woman in the scrimmage was also shot. They lay prostrate on the path of the rose garden. The assassin glared at them as did Lanciotto at Paolo and Francesca da Rimini. He reloaded his revolver, put its point to his head, fired and fell dead. The chauffeur lived to tender the ignominy of his ill-repute to his wife and children. The beautiful woman died in lingering agony. As the priest bent over her, for she was a Catholic, the surging tide of conscience came to the top and she openly confessed her remorse. Likewise the primal instinct of maternity asserted itself like good blood in reaction, and she implored the sight of the one child she had not seen for some years.

The game was not worth the candle. The desolation consequent upon this inordinate emotion was the evidence that it was awry and out of joint with the purpose of the Divine Will. Its roots did not strike into the world of the invisible and the real. It was not that Sacramental love which is paradoxically deepened by misfortune, perfected in restraint and crowned in death.

While Othello believes Desdemona to be inconstant in wedlock and false as water to him, by loving Cassio, all his frame shakes with his sobbing, yet he comforts himself with the creed that she

must be destroyed to conserve the design and economy of the moral decree. Shakespeare's one line uttered by Salvini, with majestic grief, is simply this:

“ Yet she must die, else she'll betray more men.”

This living law of morality, even in the splendor of heightened passion, is shown again in Browning's stupendous tragedy—“The Ring and the Book.” Caponsacchi's half earthly, half spiritual fervor for Pompilia is safeguarded not only by the conventional law of Florence, but by the gentle though authoritative rebuke of Rome. Even with the highest mystics the criminal conceits of passion must be balanced by the external norm of spiritual authority. The scamp Guido, the chaste Pompilia's husband dragged her from under her bed, where she hid, and stabbed her twenty-two times. Yet when sentenced to death by Innocent XII., he refers to the fact, though execrable as he is, that he has a wife and his appeal becomes:

“ Christ! Maria! God!

Pompilia, will you let them murder me?”

Chesterton thinks this is a splendid acknowledgment of an ancestral tradition, an ineradicable bond, in spite of dire incompatibility between man and wife.

Some regard George Bernard Shaw, the satirist, as a moralist. How so elusive and inconoclastic a personality could be considered such, is beside the point of our discussion. If there is any sincere

purpose in the play of *Candida* it would be something like this. Humanity is beguiled by the glamour of romance, which will make the lover behold Helen's beauty even in a brow of Egypt. To disabuse lovers of this lack of mental equilibrium, which the pure pagan Plato called "insania furor," Shaw would turn an ancient ordinance upside down. So in his "Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant" the cart often comes in before the horse, the mousetrap runs after the mouse and some of the puppets stand on their heads and try to place their feet in the stars.

However, *Candida* recovers herself in time to observe the absurd kink in her love-affair, with the poet who temporarily gratifies her æsthetic and romantic sense. She returns to her uninteresting husband whom she needs and by the law who needs her. Alas! the amorous poet being a poet, does not turn a summersault from his frenzied heights to land on the rock of propriety and common sense. Nevertheless, he leaves *Candida* trusting that his love, like Dante's and Petrarch's, will be consummated somewhere in the skies. Shaw's cynicism is patent, but we are not so much concerned about it as we are at the phenomenon of his presuming upon the existence of a law, as old as civilization, always consistent in its operation and independent of the individual lover and beloved. That Shaw should construct a play in keeping with the issue of this law is an astonishing situation for this apostle of moral confusion.

## ALL KINDS OF FISHES.

“The kingdom of heaven is like to a net cast into the sea and gathering together of all kinds of fishes.”—*Matt. xiii. 47.*

ONE night when wandering away from the town of Bognor, on the southern coast of England, I came upon the hut of a fisherman. The sea was very calm, the sky very beautiful; the fisherman's net was spread out on the shore; it had done its work for the day. The light was out, the fisherman was asleep. He too had done his work for the day. The whole scene seemed a picture of that blessed night of rest which is to come; that hour when there will be no deordination anywhere in God's universe, either upon the sea or upon the shore, by water or by land.

This is not today's picture in the Parable. The Fisherman is not asleep, but awake; we have not the cool shadow of the night, but the lurid fervor of the day; the sky is not decked with stars, but heavy with clouds; the sea is not still, but ruffled; the net is not upon the shore, but in the sea. What a marvellous figure is Christ's Parable of the Net! The net is swamped below—is part of the sea; yet it retains its distinct nature—its own individuality. So does the Church, in relation to the world. Times

there have been in the Church's history when, to the careless eye, it would be hard to find; when the world seemed all sea and the Church a net that had lost its moorings, a net sunk into the deeps with its precious freight. But, somehow, with the stakes firmly rooted upon the shore, with the durable fibre of the net attached thereunto, with the strength of some invisible Hand, the captive fishes are slowly dragged to shore. This we must not forget. Rationalist historians do not give sufficient natural causes to explain this historical fact.

Is it, then, extreme to say that we of the present have lost confidence in the divinity that preserves our mission?

Is it unsafe to say that what we call tempting Providence is but superstition and human fear?

Is there anything irreverent in believing that we do not presume enough upon the Divine Power that is safeguarding the Church—the stake that binds the net unto the shore?

The Church's principles are divinely protected. They are reflections of God's immutable nature. We have clinched every argument for their support; they are expressions of the truth that shall live for ever, in spite of the buffeting of the fluctuations of time. The essence of religion is safe. It is indelibly sealed upon the Church's constitution by a stamp more impressive than man's. Christ's promise to the commonwealth of the Church is of no value unless it holds good today! Therefore we may broaden out methods of work,

make them more elastic, adjust them to new situations in modern thought, to new complications in modern history. Fishes are fishes all the sea over, as men are the same everywhere in the world. Yet fishes divide themselves into finny tribes, as do men into nations and different tongues. Fishes take on the color of the flood that stirs above them. They are affected by the vegetation that grows in the caverns of the deep. So do men vary, in temperament and racial characteristics. They are part of the institutions of their countries, they are even influenced by climatic conditions. Likewise must it be with the Church—a net cast into the sea and gathering together of all kinds of fishes. The Church's methods for the placing and drawing of the net must perforce differ with different circumstances.

## AT THE DEATH OF A GREAT AMERICAN.

“Thou hast conducted Thy people like sheep, by the hand of Moses and Aaron.”—*Psalm lxxvi. 21.*

ON an event so public and in so sacred a place as this, few words are best. They who are most sincere in paying tribute to the noble dead say least while their minds follow them to the kingdom which is not of this world. It is always licit by that law of God (through which there is neither Jew nor Gentile, bond nor free) to lend the fellowship of our private prayers to the goodly company of the dead. But more so is it becoming to remember spiritually him (who under the working of Providence) gave service to a whole nation and in a more or less critical time. To stand with composure amid the cruel light and unmannerly speech of criticism (which is not always discriminating) may provoke admiration, but infinitely more impressive is it, to this thoughtless world, to have lived a life of domestic purity and to have crowned it with that supreme act of Christian abandonment to the Divine Will: “Not my will, but Thine be done.” It was during the career of our Chief Magistrate that there came to us (through the lawful representatives of the people’s wish) a gift which it would now seem to be God’s Design that we should keep. Of old it was said of the Romans that

they lusted for dominion; be that as it may, Heaven rewarded them for their civic virtue by converting their world-wide possessions into fruitful gardens of Christian civilization. So, too, it may not be ungraceful to intimate that there is a divine vocation to the American Republic and we, its fortunate citizens, can, if the ideal be retained, elevate lower types of races by imparting to them the vigor of our holy religion and all the material benefits of our mechanical genius. It was while the silent dead lived that this mission came to our beloved country. He left us in a tragic and untimely manner, yet his national policy lives and what is more to the purpose of this discourse to teach, is, that his spirit, as of all men, is immortal. "But now Christ is risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep. For by a man came death and by a man the resurrection of the dead. And as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive."

To us believers in eternal life it is fitting that we regard not so much the genial personality of the man or the commercial prosperity of the nation during his administration, as the momentous truth that we, the living, can, either privately or publicly, be of spiritual service to the innumerable army of the faithful dead.

It is, moreover, at a moment like this, when civic virtue should be most apparent. That word of music and of magic—"liberty"—can be uttered by lawless lips. If we, the adherents of Christianity, sleep too deeply our enemies may steal the

Christian watchword liberty and incite the helpless and oppressed to violence and discontent. According to the mind of Jesus Christ it is the truth which will make us free. Although liberty be difficult to define it is nevertheless an historical reality and it is to the glory of this Republic of the West that it has played a large part in contributing the gift to humanity. Yet liberty among an unenlightened people is like a sharp instrument in the hands of a wilful child. All radical economic gifts should be balanced by the external norm of authority. Authority is not an end but a means to an end, yet as a constructive principle it must underlie the progressive operations of Church and State—of domestic and individual life. In times past the Church in social conflicts dealt with kings and thrones; her mission of peace now is with the people, for by them will salvation come to Israel. There are students who believe that the reasons for the endurance of our popular government are very few. All Europe looks upon our country as a legislative experiment, which may succeed or fail. If a deed such as the one which brought us here this morning would provoke us for a moment to think so, our strong faith in God and in the sense of law in the hearts of the American people would compel us to believe otherwise. Therefore in the same breath with which we invoke peace on the ashes of the dead who served us well, we pray that the power of God may keep the Republic of these United States peaceful unto the end.

## THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE.

“Again the kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls, who when he found one pearl of great price went his way and sold all that he had and bought it.”—*Matt. xiii. 45, 46.*

AROUND us in common life there are spirits ceaselessly searching after the light—the Pearl of Great Price. There are men who cannot be satisfied with the ordinary things of life; men thoroughly sincere, who know as if by instinct that there must exist some supreme good which can give a purpose and consistency to their lives. It is not intellectual pride, but earnestness that will provoke men to study questions which the multitude has never even dreamed of. The pearls which the merchant sought were mean and of little value in comparison with the unique pearl of preëminent excellence for which he spent a lifetime in finding.

Nothing fills us with pity as the sight of a man who, having denied himself the legitimate pleasures of life, cannot, nevertheless, find the secret of his soul's contentment. Some of the choicest, noblest spirits of modern life are in such an intellectual and spiritual condition. This is a mystery, that Light so often inaccessible should not shed abroad Its rays upon the sincere, while many a man seemingly less worthy rests under Its effulgence; but “My

ways are not your ways, saith the Lord." When the merchant spent his years testing the good pearls it was not a waste of time. The senses of sight and touch were becoming keener until he had become a connoisseur in his profession. All the years of weary searching were a condition of the final discovery; all his years of trial were an education of his character for the last great sacrifice. There is but one solution for such a spiritual difficulty: to rid ourselves of those illicit influences which hinder us from possessing the Pearl of Great Price,

## AS THE HART PANTETH.

“As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God.”—*Psalm xli. 1.*

SOME scholars believe that the author of this Psalm was a King, others that he was a Levite exiled in the mountains on the eastern coast of the Upper Jordan. Whatever be the truth this much is certain, that his heart-hunger, as reflected in the picture of a gazelle thirsting for water, is but a page of the history of every human heart. For, after all is told and every caprice gratified, there still yawns that immense void which can be filled only by an Infinite Object. We are famished in the midst of our feasting. What, then, is it that man yearns for but God? I crave God! I want neither book, nor church, nor dogma, nor symbol, nor rite, except as these are Christ's consecrated instruments in aiding me to possess God. They are but human means to a divine end—the possession of God. If Christianity has deepened the hunger of the heart it has also furnished the Food through the medium of the Incarnation as vitally and historically expressed in the Eucharist.

Man craves all he can of God and the highest in man. The consummation of love is union. The acme of Divine love is union with God. The final

cause of the Blessed Sacrament is union with God through Jesus Christ. No type, memory, figure or token can satisfy the overwhelming hunger of the heart of humanity. The Divine life of God must consume the human life of man. The union between God and man is the closest possible. It cannot be more intimate even in Paradise, for the mode of union is the same, only here the effects are different. To arrive at this personal union with God and consciously express it in our lives should be our constant endeavor. For such a spiritual condition the first act required is negative and consists in the purification of all relics of sin. The second operation is positive and has for its purpose the plunging of the soul into the sea of the Divine Life by the frequent reception of Holy Communion.

Once the life of God is possessed it absorbs and impresses all our being, yet without suppressing our individual nature. Then the faculties of mere nature are rehabilitated into the new life of grace and far beyond their personal capacity. Their exercise is turned toward things which only prophets can see and saints speak about.

## THE REASONABLENESS OF THE INCARNATION.

“And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us (and we saw His glory, the glory as it were, of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.”  
—*John i. 14.*

THE Incarnation is the warrant of all the hopes of humanity. From it comes the efficacy of Christ's Death upon the Cross; and the power of the Sacraments to create and sustain the supernatural life within us. From it also is derived the Divinity and strength of the Church of Christ. The mystery of the Incarnation is less a mystery than the mystery of the creation or the Redemption. If God be a Being of unsurpassed moral beauty, if time and immortality be realities, if the idea of sin be at variance with the unparalleled sanctity of the Divine Mind, then the Incarnation is not only possible, but must be actual.

We do not fully understand the Incarnation because we do not understand the nature of God or the overwhelming malignity of sin. Moreover the Incarnation of the Blessed Son of God is the Revelation of the particular interest which God has in the work of His Hands. Likewise is the Incarnation the explanation of the mystery of the Fall, for Christ shows to us not what our race is, but what it was

capable of before it revolted from the First and the Fairest. Is this not enough to oblige us to accept the mystery, just as it is, without straining our minds to find the difficulties which surround it? So let us make an act of obedient faith to that Church which infallibly reflects the Mind and the Heart and Will of Him Who, though bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, has lifted our fallen humanity so that it may participate again in the Divine Nature.

Once the lesson of the Incarnation has been learned the trials of faith become less severe, the misfortunes of life become less horrible, and the whole world takes on an aspect which it did not have before. So it is a part of our duty not to embarrass ourselves by speculative criticism, or by theories, when we can practically find a reason for struggling on with life at any cost whatsoever.

## THE PARABLE OF THE PATCHED GARMENT.

“And He spoke also a similitude to them: That no man putteth a piece from a new garment upon an old garment; otherwise he both rendeth the new, and the piece taken from the new agreeth not with the old.”  
—*Luke v. 26.*

IN the reading of this Parable a piece is cut out of a whole garment to patch a worn garment, with the disastrous consequence that it destroys the new garment and does not agree with the old. Both garments are therefore disfigured.

Among many interpretations of the Parable of the Patched Garment the following will be the most practical for us. Christ does not patch a worn-out garment; He does not add anything to our weak and impoverished nature. The effect of His economy is deeper. He gives us a new robe, a new nature, a new birth, regeneration.

Christ, as it were, says: “I am not come to patch up by a series of reformations and the decaying moral code as left by Moses, the great lawgiver.”

How often we find men—religious men—who are inconsistent yet nor hypocritical. The solution of such complex characters may be found in the Parable of the Patched Garment. The characters have lost unity; they have merely taken a patch from the garment of religion and stitched it on to their own unhallowed nature. How often are men

driven to God by some repentant shock after the commission of a grave sin. Yet it is the humiliation and personal remorse which drives them towards religion. Religion has never radically touched them. Divine grace has not thoroughly made itself felt in all their character.

Men of the world who look out on this inconsistency among religious men judge of religion by its results in particular cases whereas, in reality, religion has never thoroughly taken hold. Men may simply use a patch to cover up the revolting effects of their own nature. Men may do this in sincerity; they may do it unconsciously.

There was a woman in the crowd who, when she saw Jesus passing, cried out: "Oh! that I might touch the hem of His garment!" There was a healing power in the four tassels that hung from His white and seamless robe. That desire of the woman to kiss the garment should be the desire of every believer in Christ. But it is likewise within his power to possess that garment—the unpatched garment of regeneration.

## AN IDEAL FOR HUMAN IMITATION.

“I came forth from the Father and am come into the world, again I leave the world and I go to the Father.”  
—*John xvi. 28.*

THIS text, spoken by Christ, implies two statements. First His kinship with God or (if you will) His Divinity. Secondly, the vivid expression of that Divinity in the likeness of our sinful flesh and before the eyes of men. Our Christ is not merely a human Christ, but God also and the highest in man. His Atonement for the sins of men has fully satisfied the Infinite Majesty of the Father, while His humanity has presented an Ideal which is capable of human imitation. Yet if Christ bids us to be imitators of His perfection, He does not mean that the capacity for so doing exists in our weak and sinful nature. Our capacity for imitating Christ comes from the indwelling Presence of Christ in the mind, heart and will of the regenerated Christian. Christ as the living Absolute Truth brings into captivity and obedience the mind of the true Christian and thenceforward the Church (as being the reflection of Christ's Mind) is unconditionally obeyed. In this manner and through the grace of His indwelling Presence, He likewise gains control over and tames the will of the sincere Christian. Then, finally by the unutterable beauty

of His character, He captures the heart of man with all its moods of affection.

This spiritual triumph of Christ over the interior being of humanity is much more wonderful and deep than the influence of His religion over the standards of art, literature, civics or social intercourse. Zealous lovers of Christianity ought to keep this in mind when they are fearful of the spread of modern unbelief and indifferentism.

Christ's complete victory over the faculties of the soul of man is not a mere theory constructed by the subtle imaginations of men. It is the real and sweet experience of many devout disciples of Christ. If, as yet, we have not felt it we should seek those measures at the Church's command for its realization. It will lend much rest and comfort to the mind, heart and will and prepare us for that unspeakable life which is to come when we are dead.

## THE NATIVITY.

“He was in the world and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not.”—*John i. 10.*

It was a cloud above the Ark which manifested to the Israelites a definite manifestation of God. Now this would have drawn away the mind of man from the Spiritual Nature of God had not God willed to demonstrate His Presence in such a fashion that the Ark and the cloud above it would be a mere shadow of a coming historical substance. In the suburb of a Judean village, in the manger of a stable, hewn out from a limestone rock, was born of a Syrian maiden Jesus Christ, the Everlasting Redeemer of the world—Our God.

To make such a statement in the face of the modern scientific world seems somewhat audacious, for it bespeaks the blending of two modes of being—the spiritual with the material, the humanly dependent with the Absolutely Divine. We have little inclination to discuss the serious subject as to how far the old civilizations confounded the phenomena of nature with the Being of nature's God. We are the believers in the mystery of the Incarnate birth of Jesus Christ, the Eternal God. It is much more to our purpose, since we are the children of the dawning hopes of

humanity to venture an assertion that the Nativity was a new starting point in the sphere of human liberty and material progress. There is but one question for every individual: "Have I any distinct relationship with Him Who out of Everlasting Love for me clothed Himself with my erring flesh and assumed unto Himself the whole of the physical creation?"

## THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

“In the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for Thou art with me.”—*Psalm xxii. 4.*

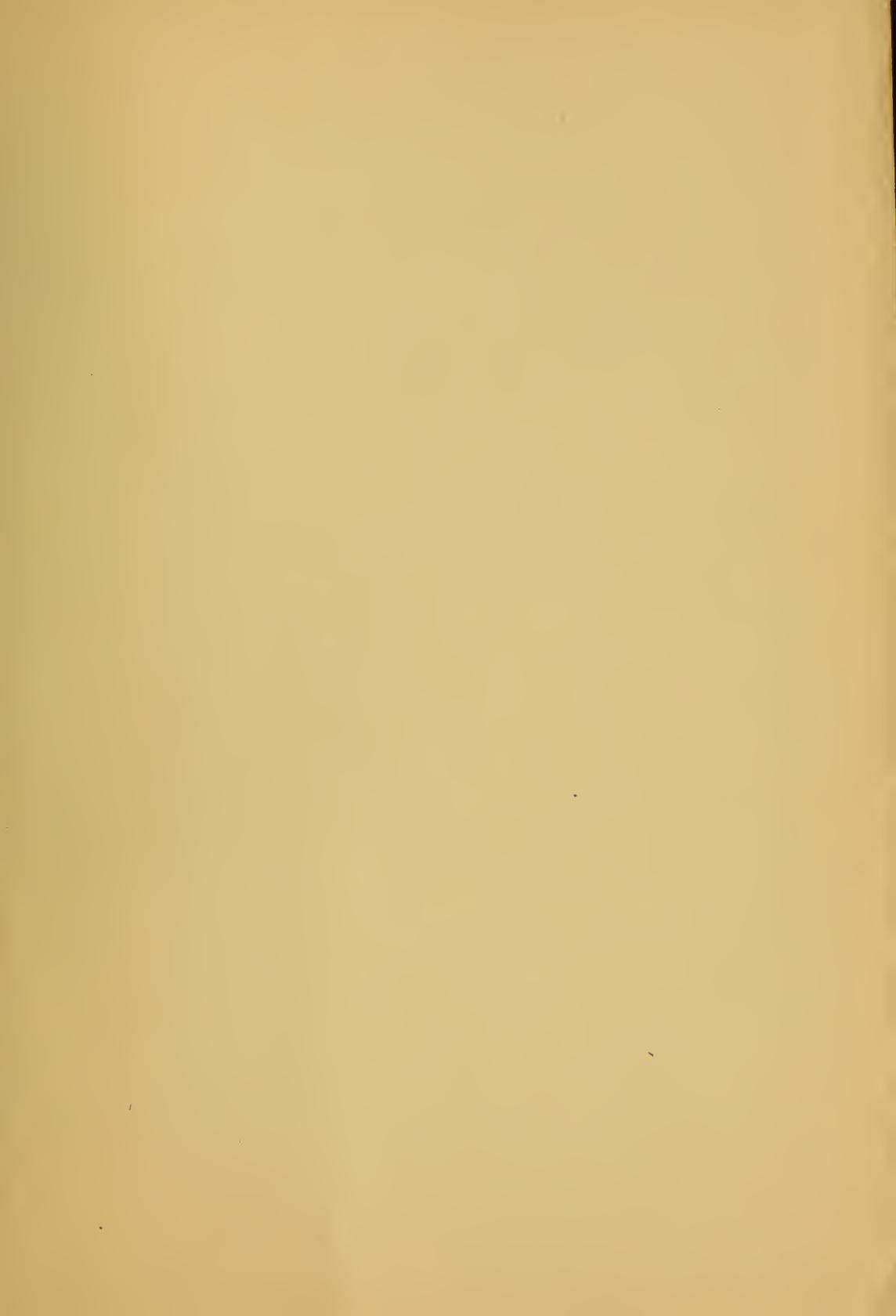
How vastly different is the aspect of life when viewed in the light of death! It is told of St. Vincent de Paul, that he never went to sleep without preparing himself for death—so vividly did sleep remind him of death.

The horror of death is a sensation common to the human race. For the Mohammedan death means annihilation. The choice spirits among the Pagans hoped rather than knew that the immaterial in man would survive the grave. The Hebrews, perhaps, had a closer knowledge of the mystery of death, but it remained for the believers in Christ to learn to look upon it with composure. Death has many sides. To one it is a cause of fear—to another, a cause of longing. To some even it has a joyful aspect, as we gather from the lives of the Saints—the chief servants of God. To some others, indeed, to most of us, it wears but a sad and tragic aspect.

Death is sin's punishment overshadowing the world. To a believer in Christ, death may be serious, but it is never a cause of despair.

It is impossible for us to tell how much physical pain there is in the action of death. The feeling

of abandonment must be horrible at that moment when the spirit is severed from the body. The mental agony must be infinitely more depressing than the physical. The thought of death is not constant to us, because we are so largely plunged in affairs material—we are distracted by the senses—we are the creatures of sense impressions. This is how we account for the fact of our indifference to the mystery of death. It were wise to so dispose our lives that at the end we shall have no regrets or fears. The physical powers are so wasted when we are dying, that we cannot (except with grave difficulty) bring ourselves to think of the dread hereafter. While there is time let us enter seriously into the thought of it, for it is the entrance into our fuller life. If we do so now, then, when we are lying on our death-bed, the sense of abandonment will be lessened and our fears and regrets shall depart. We may even come to rejoice in the thought of death, or at least learn to view its horrors with composure as the Psalmist did: “In the midst of the shadow of death I will fear no evil for Thou art with me.”



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