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THE
WITNESS OF THE SAINTS

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THE SAINTS AND THE CHURCH

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THE WITNESS OF THE SAINTS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SAINTS OUR TEACHERS.

“YOU think of nothing but legends,” said John Columbini to his wife, “I have my warehouse to get back to;” and he threw the book she had given him into the middle of the room. He was a shrewd, prudent, practical man of business, a member of the Municipal Council of Siena, his native city, and known alike for his success in making money and for his administrative ability. He had come home hungry from his warehouse, and wished to return to it, as he said, as soon as possible. To read the volume of Saints’ Lives, as his wife suggested, whilst dinner was preparing, seemed to him simple waste of time. What could the Saints tell him of the price of cloth, of the fall or rise of stock, of imports and exports, of the doings of foreign markets? Could they show him how

to add one penny to his profits? Or, again, could they teach him any move in politics which would advance his power and importance, and enable him to deal more successfully with the nobles his opponents? No! such stories were fit reading perhaps for weak-minded women or children, but they were no more deserving the attention of a man making his way in the world than fairy tales or nursery rhymes. So he thought, but his conscience pricked him. He might as well see what the book contained. He took it up and began to read. When his wife announced dinner he was still reading. Page after page he studied, forgetting his hunger. Voices of earth were dull and meaningless as the music of heaven filled his soul. Truths opened out before him, deep, momentous, practical, which he had never learnt in the counting-house or on 'Change. He saw in these pages a picture not of the past, but of the present. The tale was of St. Mary of Egypt, but to him it was a revelation, the true history of his own life. He saw by contrast what a delusion that life had been. The gain for which he toiled unremittingly, the political success, the social advantage on which he had set his heart, were all worthless. Of the one thing necessary he had completely lost sight. What were his sacrifices compared to those of this penitent sinner? If heaven needed such effort what hope had he of winning it? When he closed the book he was a

changed man. He entered upon a course of almsgiving, prayer, and penance, became in time the founder of the "Gesuati," the poor sheep of Jesus, and after long years of penance died a Saint.

Such is the practical value of the lives of the Saints. Read in a proper spirit they show us, as nothing else will, the kind of service required from us as Christians; and unless we do make the Saints our teachers and guide our conduct by the precepts they set forth, we are in constant danger of forming our lives on a standard of our own or of man's making, and which, though it may win credit for us here, will not approve us before the judgment seat of God.

Let us see how this is. The Gospel of Christ or the message of God to man, as preached by our Blessed Lord and taught by His life on earth, may be summed up under three chief heads: a body of revealed truth to be believed; a moral law to be obeyed; and the appointment of an authority infallible and indefectible, which shall always teach that truth and enforce that law. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be condemned."* Again: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments."† Thirdly: "He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me;"‡ and: "Behold I

* Mark xvi. 16.

† Matt. xix. 17.

‡ Luke x. 16.

am with you always, even to the end of the world.”* But though our faith and obedience are thus placed under a definite and divinely certain authority, to fallen man there is yet room for doubt and rebelliousness. Faith may fail, obedience may yield to the suggestions of pride. What dispositions then are necessary to render faith secure and to bear perseveringly the yoke of Christ? Wide is the field to which this inquiry leads. For instance, am I to restrict my assent to what binds under pain of mortal sin, or short of heresy can I by certain sceptical carping habits of mind easily imperil my soul? Are the supernatural principles which faith gives to enlighten me only as regards the mysteries of religion, or am I to look at everything here below, politics, history, social questions, the conclusions of science, *omne scibile*, nay, every sorrow, pain, hope, disappointment that I feel, by the ray of that heavenly light? Is faith to be part of my life, or my life’s whole, its one sovereign guide?

Again, how is the Gospel to be interpreted, not as to dogma—by God’s mercy the Church fixes that—but as to the individual daily application of its moral teaching? Are its sublime maxims—an all-absorbing love of God; charity to our neighbour whether friend or foe; the forgiveness, immediate and entire, of wrongs the most bitter and injurious;

* Matt. xxviii. 20.

a purity, not only outward and of the body, but of thought and desire; a detachment from things of earth, a contempt for its best gifts; growing self-hatred and daily self-sacrifice; thirst for a perfection of which God Himself is the model—are these maxims for a time or for always? Are Christ's words and Christ's call to be obeyed and answered as simply as in the Gospel age, when men arose and left all and followed Him; or have they another sense now, so that they are not to be understood in their literal force, but to be accommodated to the exigences of our times and to the circumstances under which we live? This, then, has to be answered. With the commandments and creed in his hand, not only once, but again and again through life, a man still cries out with the jailor at the feet of Paul, "What must I do to be saved?"

And to this question there are, there always have been, and as long as man's trial lasts there always will be, two answers given. The one, the answer of human prudence, the other of divine wisdom; the one of the world, the other of God; the one false, the other true. And yet though the two replies are diametrically opposed to each other, the world's answer is so skilfully masked, its disguises are so subtle and manifold, its arguments apparently so reasonable, moderate, and just, and so sympathetic to our corrupt inclinations, that

the most fatal and pernicious doctrines, doctrines prompted only by the lust, the pride, the selfishness of man, are accepted as the right interpretation of the Gospel and the true teaching of Christ. And nowhere is this conflict between the two systems more clearly manifested than in the Saints, whose principles and aims are ever directly opposed to those of the world around them.

Our Blessed Lord, as he looked through the course of ages, though He had built His Church on a rock, saw the triumph not of truth, but of falsehood. "Do you think," he said to His disciples, "that when the Son of man cometh, He shall find faith on the earth?"* Nay, He warned those very men His own disciples, who had listened to His words, witnessed His miracles, and been trained under His eye, that there would arise even in their own time, within a few years of His death, "false Christs and false prophets, who would shew great signs and wonders, and deceive if possible even the elect."† And as He spoke, so it was. In the lifetime of the Apostles false teachers appeared, so like as it seemed to the Apostles themselves in the doctrines they taught, in their religious practices, and in their display of preternatural power, that they were classed as Christians by the heathen contemporary writers. "Knowledge," was their

* Luke xviii. 8.

† Mark xiii. 22.

watchword, their text "Seek and ye shall find." They promised to their followers the comprehension of all mysteries of earth and heaven, and the attainment of the purest spiritual life. The Jesus in whose name they preached was a Being far higher, they said, than the Apostles' Christ. Their Christ and Lord had never been contaminated by matter nor soiled by the dust of earth. The form He wore was apparent, not real; the body which hung on the Cross pierced and lifeless was another's, not His own. Here then was Christianity without its shame, and man purified without the humiliation of confessing a crucified Lord. And these teachers could appeal to Gospels and Epistles, bearing apparent signs of authenticity, and could point, as it seemed, to abundant miracles in proof of what they taught. No wonder then that followers gathered rapidly round them, or that Gnosticism, as the heresy was called, was to be found at the beginning of the second century in every part of the then civilised world. And Gnosticism was but the parent and type of all subsequent heresies. Each false teacher in turn boasts to have discovered some new and saving doctrine which solves every difficulty, and which, not being contained in the Church's teaching, accuses that teaching as incomplete or corrupt. Each again builds his theory on some interpretations or difficulties of Scripture and challenges investigation. And always with the

same result. Curiosity and pride of intellect are aroused, submission to authority weakened, and in the name and garb of truth falsehood gains ground.

How, then, does God secure the faith of His elect? Neither Pope nor Council can condemn beforehand all the diverse workings of error, which, at first hidden in the heart, spread secretly and vary from day to day. In the long fight between truth and falsehood one class has never been deceived, those to whom the faith was once delivered, the Saints of God. Not through human learning nor through any divine gift of infallibility, but through a supernatural instinct begotten of their love of Jesus Christ, they are to be found ever on the side of the Church. By thought and prayer, by daily life-long endeavour, prevented, sustained, and perfected by His grace, they have absorbed His doctrine into their souls, and like St. Paul they know nothing else. The Saints then are *lux mundi*, a light shining bright and steadfast through the mists of error and clouds of falsehood which overspread the world. They are, as Saint Liguori calls them, the Gospel in practice, real, palpable, visible examples of the whole circle of Christian doctrine. They make clear for us, says Saint Augustine, the difficulties of Scripture, and they form an historical supplement to the revelation therein contained. And the truth seen in their lives is unmistakable. Written words may be misinterpreted, definitions

minimized, their purport perverted or ignored, but the truth as witnessed to by the Saints is written in living letters, in characters of flesh and blood.

Our purpose then is to consider the light which their lives shed upon the divine character of the Church, and especially in manifesting her claim to be that body designated by the Nicene creed as one, holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.

CHAPTER II.

CHAMPIONS OF UNITY.

LET us consider first the world's teaching and that of the Saints concerning religious truth and error. The subject is important, for false teachers still abound, and the philosophers and the wise of this world lay down for us what they say is our only just mode of action. They say, then, and teach that since we are convinced we have the truth, we should not fear to meet our opponents and discuss our common differences, for that truth must prevail; or that if we both worship the same God, other points are unimportant;* or that truth and falsehood in religion are but matters of opinion, that one doctrine is as good as another, that the Creator of the world does not intend that we should gain the truth; that there is no truth; that we are not more acceptable to God by believing this than by believing that; that no one is answerable for his opinions; that they are a matter of necessity

* Cf. Newman, "Development of Christianity," p. 357, ed. 1878.

or of accident, that it is enough if we sincerely hold what we profess ; that religion is after all only a help to morality, and that if in any creed we succeed in leading good honest lives, there is no reason why we should change it. Such is the world's theory, and as such it is everywhere preached, and by most men accepted. The State proclaims it by its theories of government and by its educational laws ; men of science by their teaching as to what knowledge is certain and what not, historians by the causes to which they attribute the rise and fall of nations, and by their standard for discerning the worth of great men ; poets by the ideals they draw of love, courage, and sacrifice, and the meaning they give to life and death ; every popular writer who knows how to express the faith and feelings of the multitude preaches the world's theory of religious truth.

Now in contrast with this consider the actions and teaching of the Saints. We have abundant evidence of their manner of dealing with heretics from the earliest times. For the first three centuries the Church in general conclave never met ; such a large and public assemblage was impossible in those ages of persecution. The defence of the faith then was left in great measure to the individual testimony of the Saints. And their action in every age has been uniform, and will be found to be based on these first principles : that there is

a truth, that truth is always and everywhere one and the same; that the denial of that truth or the profession of a false religion is of itself a gravely immoral act, one of the worst of sins; that man's first duty is to seek that truth with fear and humility as a child wishing to be taught; that it is not given as a prize to the smartest disputant but as the reward of an earnest desire to be saved at all cost; that to discuss the truth as to whether it be true is an insult to truth itself and to the Lord of truth; that its possession is a most sacred gift which may be forfeited by reading or hearing aught written or said against it; that the Christian therefore, who without a just reason voluntarily associates with heretics or unbelievers, imperils his soul and dishonours his faith.

What else do the following examples show? St. Paul, who was *omnia omnibus*, all things to all men, so large was his heart, so gentle and universal his sympathy, comes across false teachers among his Galatian converts, and his nature at once seems changed. Where now his tender compassion for the weakly, the scandalized, the erring? He does not inquire into the nature of the new doctrines or the character of the teachers, but curses them on the spot.* So again with St. John, the apostle of love. He tells his children not to receive a heretic into the house or to say as much as God speed you

* Gal. i. 8.

to him, "for that he that saith to him God speed you communicateth with his wicked works."* And as he spoke he acted. In his life we learn that he refused to enter a bath-house because Cerinthus the heretic was within. He feared lest the roof should fall in on them were he to stay in such company. St. Peter calls heretics "irrational beasts, naturally tending to snare and destruction."† St. Jude says "they are corrupted in what they naturally know, and blaspheme what they know not; they are clouds without water which are carried about by the winds, trees of the autumn unfruitful, twice dead."‡ And the Saints in every age are one with the Apostles in their attitude to apostates and heretics. When the apostate Marcion met St. Polycarp at Rome, he asked the aged Saint if he knew him. "Yes," St. Polycarp answered, "I know you for the first-born of Satan." The answer came instinctively from his burning love of God. St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, in his book on the unity of the Church in the century after St. Polycarp, demonstrates that the Church is essentially and visibly one because it is built upon Peter, who alone has the keys. He then continues: "He can never gain the reward promised by Christ to His followers who deserts His Church. He becomes thence unsanctified and alien, and a down-

* 2 Ep. St. John, 10, 11.

† 2 Peter ii. 12.

‡ Jude i. 10, 12.

right enemy. He cannot have God for His father who has not the Church for his mother." St. Jerome proves the faith of St. Paula by external actions which showed her opposition to heretics. "A certain crafty knave, who thought himself very learned and wise, began without any authority to put questions to her and ask: What sin hath an infant done that it should be seized by the devil? Of what age shall we be at the resurrection, because if we rise at the same age at which we die there will be need of nurses after the resurrection, but if otherwise then it will not be a resurrection but a transformation?" Then he goes on to mention other similar cavils, which he says she answered according to Catholic truth, and then adds, "from henceforth she so detested that man and all of the same opinions, that she publicly proclaimed them to be 'enemies of the Lord,' and so much I have said to show the faith of this woman, who preferred to endure the constant enmities of men rather than provoke the anger of God by dangerous friendships."

Pass on to later times and we shall find the same loyalty, witnessed to not only by bishops and teachers, but by the faithful at large, of every age and sex. St. Louis of France, the flower of Christian knights, the defender of the fatherless and poor, passed a law that blasphemers should be branded on their lips, and when his courtiers

remonstrated with him for his severity, "I would willingly," he said, "have my own lips branded to root out blasphemy from my kingdom." God's honour was his own, and he would defend it with his life. Nay more, he was convinced that without the faith the highest natural virtue was untrustworthy, and that no safe dependence could be placed on its possessor. Once in Palestine an Emir held a dagger to his throat and threatened to stab him unless he raised him to the rank of Christian knighthood. "No unbeliever," Louis calmly replied, "could perform the duties of a Christian knight." Mere children felt the same inherent repugnance to heresy and dread of its poison. St. Jane Frances when only eight years old left her father's dinner table on perceiving there was a heretic among the guests. When a Protestant sought her hand she replied, "How can I marry an enemy of God and His Church?" Her master, St. Francis of Sales, the gentlest of saints, placed the Calvinists under most severe penal laws, and excluded them from all offices of the State. In all temptations against faith, he writes, "Say to the devil, Oh, wretch, thou hast left the Church of the Angels, and thou wouldst that I should leave the Church of the Saints. Begone, Satan; I will not dispute to please you. I adhere to holy Church and never will forsake her." Such instances could be multiplied indefinitely from the lives of the

Saints. They all bear witness to the sacredness of the truth and to the duty laid upon every individual Catholic of protecting it from contagion and of witnessing at all cost against unbelief.

Again, they show us the wisdom of the Church in prohibiting the reading of irreligious books. If the mere society of an unbeliever is to be avoided as pestilential, what poison must be imbibed by reading books, written in a scholarly, attractive style, and in a spirit apparently just and fair, but filled with unsound doctrine? How many Catholics have first begun to doubt through reading one such book or even one passage from them! How many souls have been wrecked for eternity through a dangerous curiosity, a wish for unlawful knowledge! Nor is this a peril to which we can be unknowingly exposed. Apart from any express prohibition of the Church, our own conscience, enlightened by grace, will unfailingly point out matter which poisons the mind, no less than temptations of other kinds which ensnare the soul. Reading dangerous books without due cause is a mortal sin. When their study is necessary to refute error, God's grace protects the soul, but even then great caution and earnest prayer is needed. St. Dyonisius of Alexandria is conspicuous among the Fathers of the Church for his learning and talent and also for his defence of the faith. When he was presiding over the theological school at

Alexandria he was obliged to study many works of heretics in order to refute them. Yet so little did he trust himself, so much did he fear the danger to his own soul, that it needed a vision to reconcile and encourage him. Our Lord Himself appeared before the future saint and doctor and addressed him thus: "Read all that cometh to thy hand, for thou art fit to correct and examine all." Those alone are safe who like St. Dyonisius place their faith under the guardianship of humility.

By their love of the faith, by their hatred of heresy and dread of its contagion, the Saints then teach us the essential unity of divine truth. But *secondly*, their lives illustrate the unity of her worship, and that on the one point in which she is constantly charged with admitting and encouraging change. Granted, it is said, that the Catholic doctrine is one in theory, that doctrine in practice and as understood by the masses varies from age to age; witness the new devotions that are ever springing up, as for instance in our own time to the Sacred Heart, to the Precious Blood, and to the Immaculate Conception. Now in order to see what light the lives of the Saints throw on these so-called novelties in devotion, let us first understand what a devotion means. A devotion is the outward manifestation of special homage and love towards any object which our faith puts before us. It may be some mystery connected with the life of our Lord and

His sacred humanity, or with some angel or saint ; it may be the response to some special favour or grace granted in a marked supernatural manner. As an object of faith it has always been contained, explicitly or implicitly, within the deposit or circle of truth revealed to the Apostles which was complete and final ; but it may have only been formally defined or become an article of faith (*i.e.* a doctrine which could not be denied without heresy) at such times as the Church in her wisdom and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit saw fit. This same Holy Spirit, which guides the rulers of the Church in their teaching office, prompts also the prayers and quickens the love of the faithful. Without His help we cannot say "Lord Jesus," nor cry "Abba Father." It is then under the impulse of the Holy Spirit that at certain periods devotions suddenly break out towards some particular mystery. But the lives of the Saints show us that although the general and popular manifestation of the truth was deferred till that period, it had been for long ages the object of individual prayers and worship with holy souls. The devotion of the Sacred Heart we are told by non-Catholic writers began with the dream of an imaginative nun in the seventeenth century. Read then the acts of the Martyrs of Lyons in the year 177. Among its victims foremost with the virgin Blandina stands the young deacon Sanctus. Hot plates of iron were applied

to his side, so that his body became one large wound; and when the writer of the letter from the churches of Lyons and Vienne asks himself how the sufferer could bear such torture, he can only reply "that he was bedewed with the living water which flows from the side of Christ." Such is the testimony of the early Church. Pass on to the Fathers and schoolmen, and we find age after age witnessing to the same devotion. In commentaries, in sermons, in their ascetic writings, in their own spiritual exercises, the wish to abide in the Sacred Heart, to exchange it for their own, to make it their treasure and storehouse, to enter into it daily, and to thrust in their hand with St. Thomas—these and similar expressions are constantly recurring. In the Middle Ages it received a new impulse from St. Francis of Assisi, St. Bernard, and St. Bonaventura. St. Catherine of Siena was privileged to receive not only the outward stigmata, but to bear within her the living Heart of her Lord. "Daughter," said our blessed Lord, "I have taken thine heart away and I give thee mine, that thou mayest live by it for ever." To St. Gertrude was granted a revelation which explained why this devotion was not to be propagated till later times. The Saint asked St. John, who appeared to her in a vision, why he had written nothing for our instruction concerning the Sacred Heart. She was answered that God "had reserved for Himself to make it known

in the last times, in the decrepitude of the world, in order to rekindle the flame of charity, which had grown cold." This devotion then had been in the Church for ages, but it was not till the close of the seventeenth century that it was preached to the world through the instrumentality of the B. Margaret Mary. It was manifested and spread when a special worship of the Sacred Heart was required to preserve men from the blighting heresy of Jansenism, for it taught as nothing else could teach the love of Jesus for sinners and His pain at their ingratitude.

Again, the devotion to the Precious Blood is to the outside world a modern Roman innovation. Yet St. Peter exhorts Christians to holiness of life because "they are redeemed not with corruptible things as gold or silver . . . but with the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled." St. Paul tells us it is the price of our redemption, by it we are to know the value of our souls; and the song of the Blessed heard by St. John at Patmos was one of special thanksgiving for the same most adorable ransom. Among the old Fathers, St. Augustine in the West and St. Chrysostom in the East were striking examples of devotion to this mystery. St. Gertrude in her revelations and St. Catherine of Siena in her correspondence alike declare its power. The latter saint may be termed its herald. She could not

begin a letter without the heading, "I, Catherine, the servant and slave of the servants of Jesus, write to you in His Precious Blood." At the beginning of her Dialogues, when she bewails the misery of man, who by the misuse of his freewill has hardened his heart like adamant, "If the blood cannot break it," she exclaims, "nothing can." Very often in her ecstasies the words, "O fire! O blood!" would break from her lips, meaning thereby the fire of divine love, which is kindled by the love of Christ. The chalice of St. Philip Neri was seen after the consecration to be full of the Precious Blood. The Chronicles of the French Carmelites contain many instances of a similar kind. Nor was honour paid it only in cloisters and secret sanctuaries. The relics of the Precious Blood have been publicly worshipped in France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, and Spain since the Middle Ages. In the thirteenth century Richard of Cornwall brought a relic of the Precious Blood from Germany to England, built a monastery, and founded the congregation of "good men" to guard and honour the relic. Yet it was not until the pontificate of Pius IX. of blessed memory that the Pope, returning from his exile at Gaeta, established a new feast of the Precious Blood for the universal Church on the first Sunday in July.

Lastly, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Protestants regard it as a figment of the

brain of Pius IX. put out to prove his power, and accepted by the faithful in blind and unreasoning submission. Timid Catholics, ignorant of the tradition of the Fathers and of the Saints, deemed the definition scarcely prudent. Yet the most superficial acquaintance with the lives of the Saints would have informed the reader of the singular position accorded to Mary from the first, both on account of her dignity and her spotlessness. The doctrine that she is the second Eve, untying the knot of Eve's disobedience, repeatedly recurs among the Saints of the first three centuries. And those who exclaim against the warmth of Italian devotions in her honour should open the life of St. Ephrem (A.D. 378). He addresses "the immaculate and pure Virgin, Mother of God," as the immaculate, most immaculate, the divine seat of God, the most divine Temple, who crushed the head of the wicked dragon, who is ever in body as in mind entire and immaculate, the Holy Tabernacle which the spiritual Beseleel built up." St. Alphonsus Liguori in his *Glories of Mary* contains no stronger praise of the Mother of God than is found in the Hymns of the holy Syriac deacon. The language of devotion in the fourth and nineteenth centuries is therefore one. We think this point important. The Church declares her doctrines to be unchanging because divine. Yet the spring of their developments is hidden, and their

outward announcement takes men by surprise. But is it not so also with the working of grace in the individual soul? The world is startled and shocked by conversions which break up homes, set parental authority at defiance, and entail every earthly sacrifice. To the spiritual-minded such phenomena are most common, and, as our Lord foretold, are a necessary consequence of the conditions under which He has established His kingdom on earth. So is it with devotions. To the world they are new and to be dreaded. To those versed in the science of the Saints they are manifestations of the Holy Spirit, working in the elect, with which they are long since familiar, and whose appearance they hail with delight as a means of paying fresh honour to the Lord and God of Truth.

CHAPTER III.

EXAMPLES OF HOLINESS.

ON these two points, then, of faith and worship, the Saints show us the Church is one. And now let us see what light they throw upon the second note of the Church, namely, her holiness. Founders of heresies have promised to their followers the certainty of salvation as a necessary consequence of joining in membership with their sect. Our blessed Lord, on the other hand, repeatedly declared that neither grace, acceptance, nor salvation were secured by the mere fact of external membership in His Church. He insisted on this fact, because the Pharisees, tainted also with the spirit of heresy, claimed by right of their descent from Abraham to be children of God. Our Lord replied, "If you be the children of Abraham, do the works of Abraham." Not only faith then, but obedience in each individual soul, are the conditions of justification and salvation. If He said, "Whosoever believes and is baptized shall be

saved;”* He said, also, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” † No tie of blood, even with Him the All-holy, nor mere outward profession, would avail without the inward conformity of the will with the supreme will of God. “Whosoever shall do the will of my Father that is in Heaven, he is my brother, and sister and mother.” ‡

Holiness, then, is the result of man's individual fulfilment, by the help of grace, of the law of God, to which his conscience bears witness. And this truth follows naturally and justly from the nature of the soul's origin and condition of existence, during its time of trial. Each soul is created singly and in God's image, and has therefore its individual life, its appointed measure of perfection, and its individual judgment and eternity. The personal responsibility involved in this fact is, of course, a most momentous truth. Under God the issue of our life and the determination of our hereafter depends, not on the circumstances of our birth or education, but alone and always on the individual will, which remains ever free, and on the works that flow from it. Now the law of God being holy in itself leads to holiness the humblest soul which follows it. Its observance ennobles the whole man, enlightens the mind, and strengthens the will to a

* Matt. xvi. 16.

† Matt. xix. 17.

‡ Matt. xiii. 50.

superhuman degree. Yet to our fallen nature the law is difficult. Man left to himself prefers his own corrupt passions, and accepts with pleasure any doctrine which enables him to escape from the necessity of daily doing violence to himself. But no theory of man's making, however plausible, can give his life a purpose, solve its mysteries, or strengthen him for its trials. To be thought of, helped, and loved by one higher than himself, to have a definite motive assigned to each action, to have a rule to live by, an ideal to strive after, to know how to meet and master temptation, pain, and sorrow, and how to make good his own nothingness—these are the wants of man's heart, and to supply these wants the Son of God took upon Himself our human flesh. The life, death, and doctrine of Jesus Christ alone teach man the true value of his human nature, show him God as his one end, and persuade him by the power of a divine example to embrace that law of self-denial which is needed to reach it. "Everything," says St. Augustine, "through the desire of having which we lived amiss, He did without, and rendered worthless. Everything, through avoiding which we shrank from the truth, He endured and made level to us. For it is impossible to commit any sin save by seeking for what he despised, or flying from what He endured, and therefore we have a perfect system of moral discipline in His whole life

on earth, through the man whom He deigned to assume."

Now the Saints are the most perfect followers of Jesus Christ. They became so not without effort, but by heroic endeavours. They were not stocks or stones incapable of feelings, nor angels without bodily wants and sufferings, but men and women like ourselves, sprung from the one sin-stained stock of Adam, and inheritors of the common curse. God might, had He chosen, by the infusion of His grace, have so thoroughly cleansed and sanctified their nature that they should have been free, not only from all sin, mortal and venial, but from every inclination to evil. Such, however, save in the case of His Immaculate Mother, was not His Will. St. Paul's conversion, by a miracle, was instantaneous and complete. He fell to the ground a persecutor, and rose up a Saint, yet not for that did temptation cease. He describes to us the bitter conflict in which he was subsequently engaged. "I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man, but I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind and captivating me in the law of sin that is in my members. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"* The Apostle's life as a Christian was, then, a daily renewed endeavour to put his natural self to death,

* Rom. vii. 19, 22, 23, 24.

that the new man Christ Jesus might live in him. For this he chastised his body daily and "daily died." He taught his disciples that by their baptismal vow, by their formal renunciation of the old Adam, by the character of Christ which had then been stamped on their souls, they too were bound to this incessant warfare with self. "Those who are Christ's," he says, "have crucified the flesh with its lust and concupiscences."* Again, "For if you live according to the flesh, you shall die: but if by the spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live."† And again, "Therefore mortify your members."‡

And his teaching has been practised by those striving for perfection in every age. In the time of the Apostles such was the fervour of the first Christians that many voluntarily sold all, and embraced poverty and all its hardships, when they were admitted to membership with the Church. The Catacombs furnish us with undoubted evidence as to the manner of life practised by the faithful during the next three centuries. Those dark mysterious caverns were at once their home, their church, and the resting-place of their relics. The profession of faith at baptism meant for those who dwelt there the absolute renunciation of the world, with its pomps and riches, often the separation from home and family, and in all cases the daily

* Gal. v. 24.

† Rom. viii. 13.

‡ Col. iii. 5.

risk of death. And when the persecutions ceased, and Christians were allowed to live as other men in the light of God's sun, those who would be perfect used their liberty, not to seek the comfort of earthly homes, but went, with one accord, men, women, and sometimes even children, into the deserts of Egypt, Arabia, and Palestine, to deny themselves night and day, and by prayer, work, and penance to win their crown. The lives of the Desert Fathers are recorded in many cases by contemporary writers—as that of St. Anthony by St. Athanasius—and we know in detail how their days were spent. We read in those simple biographies the faithful carrying out of the Apostolic teaching, and see how, in the barren and burning desert, were laid the foundations and the rules of Christian asceticism—a science which leads men from earth to heaven, by the observance not merely of precept, but of the highest evangelical counsels, and is founded on that complete annihilation of self which is to this day the special grace of the Church's Saints and their unshared possession.

But, it is said, do not fakirs and dervishes practise terrible austerities? They stand erect, with limbs outstretched, until they are rigid as statues; they hold their hands clenched till the nails grow through the flesh; they hang suspended from hooks fastened in the living body, day by day, without a sign of pain. Wherein, then, is mortifi-

fication so peculiarly a Christian excellence? St. Paul has again answered for us this objection. "If," he says, "I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."* Charity is love of God, and is proved by doing God's will. That will is made known to Christians, not by angels or private inspiration, but by his authorized superiors. The fasts of the Jews were unaccepted because they were self-willed. Those, again, of the Pharisees were profitless because done to be seen of men. So with the natural man in every time and place; pride and desire of fame are sufficient motives to make men endure most severe self-inflicted sufferings. The sanctity of St. Simeon Stylites, then, was proved not by his remaining on the column for long years, but by his readiness to descend from it at the first word of his superior. The monk Dositheus could perform no austerities owing to his delicate health, yet it was revealed to his abbot that he merited, by the perfection of his obedience in his few years of monastic life, as much as St. Paul the Hermit and St. Antony had with their severe and long mortifications. "One Pater and Ave," St. Jane Frances would tell her subjects, "said under obedience, is worth a hundred disciplines to blood." Obedience is the true test of the

* 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

inner motive, and it is by obedience that the mortifications of a Saint are tested. Outward chastisement of the flesh is only a means to the inward mortification of the spirit. The most painful penance is that which humbles and kills self-love. The Fathers of the Desert were trained not only to hard manual labour, but to that which was apparently as useless as it was hard. They often unmade at night the mats they had plaited during the day. "Ama nesciri"—"Love to be unknown and to be esteemed as nothing"—is a fundamental axiom of spiritual science which they have left us, and which is found in every school of sanctity. But there is a yet higher degree. The apostle says, "The world is crucified to me, and I to the world." He is not only indifferent to the world's opinion and to the goods of this life, but he abhors them as hateful, and embraces all that the world contemns. He deliberately prefers suffering to pleasure, pain to comfort, shame to honour; he has no glory, "save in the Cross of Jesus Christ." This sublime standard is that of the Saints. They arrived at it by the constant realization of their own sinfulness, of God's holiness, and thirdly, of Jesus Christ as the one means by which man finds his way to God. "Est hominis iter ad Deum per Deum hominem."

Self-knowledge, then, is their first study. "Noverim me, noverim Te." "Teach me to know

myself, teach me to know Thee," said St. Augustine; and it was in himself—within, not without—that he found the knowledge he sought, according to the words of his Master, "The kingdom of God is within you." Ordinary Christians examine their souls by the precepts of God and the Church; they are aware, probably, of habitual falls into venial sins of the coarser kind, but of the subtler workings of their self-love and of spiritual sins they know little. The Saints search their souls by the light of God's perfections. One ray of His eternal purity entering their hearts discloses as horrible deformities their least defects, while the closeness of their relations to Him shows these defects to be a personal outrage on the Divine Majesty. Before the eyes of a Saint thus enlightened, the All-Holy God is not only their Creator and Lawgiver, but the one Being on whose influx and support they depend for every vital action; according to the words of the Apostle, "In Him we live, and move, and are." From this arises their sense of the hideous malice of sin. "Every sin we commit, we commit in God," says St. Teresa; that is, we sin not only in His presence, but by the power of life which comes immediately from Him. Mortal sin is nothing less than the transfer of the sinner, body and soul, his powers, will, allegiance, nay, life itself, from God to the devil. By each grave sin, "a man,"

says St. Augustine, "sells not only his inheritance, as Esau did, for a passing pleasure, but his very life." St. Teresa speaks of a soul in sin "as a tree planted in the devil," as the just man is a tree planted by the waterside. The consequences of habitual sin are, mentally, spiritual blindness. "If any one should throw a black cloth over a crystal which is exposed to the sun, though the sun will shine upon it, it will have no effect on the crystal," writes St. Teresa. So the sinner becomes incapable of recognising his sin or the warnings sent for his salvation. The will loses its liberty and becomes the slave of the passions. "For of a froward will was a lust made," says St. Augustine, "and a lust served becomes custom, and custom not resisted becomes necessity. By which links joined, as it were, together (whence I called it a chain) a hard bondage held me entralled." Lastly, the soul, dead through evil habits to every supernatural impulse, is but a corpse. "Thou hast lost thy soul," writes St. Cyprian, "thou walkest on the earth carrying thine own corpse, and thou dost not weep bitterly, nor groan continually;" and St. Thomas Aquinas wonders how a man can ever smile who is in a state of mortal sin.

The Saints, then, understood sin in its nature and effects. They knew also, as no others did, how readily it finds its entrance to man's corrupt heart. It was this truth which made them resist

with holy violence the first approach of temptation. St. Benedict cast himself naked among the thorns, and St. William of Monte Vergine on a heap of burning coals, to be saved from the presence of evil. St. Thomas Aquinas, possessed of that wisdom from above which is "first of all chaste," drove from his chamber with a burning brand a wretched creature who had been concealed there to compass his fall. And there was that Christian youth, in the early persecutions, whose virtue excited the rage of his heathen torturers. They bound him hand and foot, and then led into his presence one trained in the ways of iniquity. The Confessor could not fly: he trembled for his soul's safety. By a holy impulse he bit off his tongue, and spat it in the face of the temptress, so that the agony of pain might consume all pleasure of sense.

Viewing themselves again by the light of God's holiness, the Saints accuse themselves of sin in a manner which seems to us exaggerated. When St. Ephrem was asked by St. Basil the Great whether he was not "Ephrem, the servant of Christ," he replied, "I am that Ephrem who has wandered away from the path of heaven;" and then, melting into tears, he cried out, "O my father, have pity on a sinful wretch and lead me into the narrow way." His only crimes, as far as we know, were, at most, two light faults committed

before his baptism, which he had received in his eighteenth year. St. Teresa speaks of "her sins, her great sins, her wretched life, her extreme peril of eternal damnation;" sees the place in hell which the devil kept in readiness for her, and which she had deserved for her sins. Yet her greatest faults were the excessive reading of romances, and too frequent conversations with lay persons in the parlour. The strongest case is perhaps that of St. Anselm. He writes a meditation, "*de virginitate amissa*," bewails the slime of hellish filth into which he has fallen; and in another meditation exhorts his sister to remember that she had been kept pure by the grace of God, whilst he, by yielding to the charms of sympathy and the licentious desires of youth, had been plunged into a whirlpool of enormities. Yet we know his life year by year, and the most that we can find against him is a relaxation of fervour when the hopes of accomplishing his religious vocation were deferred, and a great desire to excel in manly sports. His cry of penance and sorrow was prompted solely by the thought of what would have been his misery had he fallen. He anticipated the maxim of St. Philip Neri, who, speaking of the necessity of meditating on the four last things, said "that we should go down to hell alive, if we would be saved from it in death."

Nor was their sense of guilt confined to words

only. These Saints did penance in proportion to their self-accusation, as did also the youngest and purest Saints in all times. St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, St. Rose of Lima, St. Aloysius Gonzaga, tortured their bodies for what they called their great sins. But further the Saints ask God to chastise them, and He Himself takes in hand the purification of the just. The divine chastisements inflicted on the Saints, body and soul, are terrible to contemplate. Like Holy Job they have suffered the loss of goods, health, children, home, of all they loved on earth. St. Frances of Rome saw her house destroyed, her husband and children banished, and her eldest son taken as a hostage. St. Jane Frances lost by death husband, children, friends, and lastly St. Francis of Sales, who had been the guide of her life. The Blessed Lidwine, of Schiedam, whose name means "suffering much," spent her life on a sick-bed. Her body was a mass of corruption, and would have dropped to pieces but for the bandages which held it together. The poor shepherdess of Pibrac, B. Germaine Cousin, had a deformed right arm, and suffered from a scrofulous disease. She was shunned like a leper by her family, and slept in an outhouse with the animals. Often we find missionary Saints robbed of the very strength they needed for their labours. St. Lewis Bertrand, one of the great evangelizers of South America, suffered for many years from a

terrible hip disease, and other secret infirmities. St. Andrew Avellino, who spent his life in the service of the sickly and suffering poor of Naples, was for fifty years enfeebled by a most painful rupture, whilst the cincture intended for his support served only as an instrument of torture. St. Joseph of Leonissa escaped martyrdom by the Turks, whom he was converting by numbers, only to be afflicted by a cancer which slowly consumed his life.

Again, they have been the victims of every kind of calumny and insult invented by false brethren. The life of St. Gregory the Great was attempted once by a priest, and again by certain monks. St. Charles Borromeo was shot at while at vespers by one of the order of the "Umiliati," which he was engaged in reforming. The ball did not pierce his rochet, but left a mark on his flesh which continued until death. The venerable Giovenale Ancina, bishop of Saluzzo, died of poison, administered to him in a religious house. His name is not in the list of martyrs only because, on his death-bed, he forbade any measure which could lead to the criminal's punishment, and so to the proof of the fact. Besides the hatred of the wicked, they have endured the visible assaults of the powers of evil. St. Hilarion used to hear during the night the cries of beasts, the wailing of women, the roar of a battle being waged; at other times,

attractive and beautiful forms came before him ; and when he was faint with hunger, tempting viands appeared within his reach. Again, when he was at prayer, a howling wolf would bound past him, or a yelping fox. St. Antony the hermit was thrown down and beaten ; St. Catherine of Siena was raised in the air, cast into the fire, hurled from her horse, by the same evil agencies who gather themselves together at all times against the Saints of God. But by good people, and by their own superiors, as well as by sinners and devils, the Saints have been tried. St. John of the Cross, when engaged in the reform, which was approved of by his general, was condemned by the elder friars as a fugitive and cast into prison. Before his death he was twice publicly disgraced. St. Teresa was denounced from the pulpit many times, and the accusations made against her received the credence of pious men. St. Bernardine and St. Ignatius were suspected of heresy, and the latter were twice imprisoned by the Inquisition in Spain. St. Philip Neri was delated for allowing unsound doctrine to be preached in the pulpit of the Oratory. St. Joseph Calasanctius was led through the streets to prison at the age of eighty-six. His order, which he had spent his life in founding and consolidating, was reduced to a simple congregation, nor was it restored till after his death.

One final trial remains. "A sinner," says St.

Augustine, "is punished by himself, by creatures, and by God." As our blessed Lord was made sin for us, He endured the triple penalty. He suffered first the shame, which follows the commission of sin, in His agony in the Garden; secondly, the punishment by creatures during the course of His Passion; and lastly, the penalty due to sin in the next world in His dereliction on the cross. Of this bitter chalice, the loss of all sensible faith or devotion, the Saints have drunk their full share. St. Teresa, the great teacher of prayer, suffered herself for twenty years such dryness and desolation of spirit that she had no unction in any spiritual exercise. St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, for over five years, was tempted to pride, gluttony, impurity, and lost all sensible sweetness in God or the Holy Eucharist, which was her chief devotion, whilst cries of blasphemy and despair would almost force themselves from her lips. St. John of the Cross has described, in his "Obscure Night," the spiritual darkness which shrouded his soul. God seemed to have forsaken him, and to be deaf to his prayers and sighs; so violent was his anguish in this state of privation that it seemed he must have died of grief.

What, then, was the strength of the Saints, and wherein lay the secret of their power. It was in this, that their purpose in prayer, in spiritual exercises, in penance, and in their hidden life, was

neither sensible consolations, nor heavenly favours, nor success in their works, nor credit with men, but only and always to do God's will. And to learn this lesson they had but one book, one model, Jesus Christ, "*Homo medius*," as we have said. "What would the Word teach," says St. Augustine; "God is light, come to him and be enlightened, let the Light show thee thy foulness that thou mayest perceive its beauty." "To us," says, again, St. Augustine, "now that we are believers, let the Bridegroom, wheresoever He is, appear beautiful. He is beautiful as God, the Word with God, beautiful in the womb of his Virgin mother, where, without losing his divinity, He assumed the manhood—beautiful in His miracles, beautiful under the scourge, beautiful in laying down His life, beautiful in taking it up again, beautiful on the Cross, beautiful in the sepulchre, beautiful in Heaven." And this because as he says, "*summa et vera pulchritudo justitia est.*" "The highest beauty, the real beauty, is that of holiness."

As Christ crucified was their love, all that was His the Saints made their own. Poverty was the spouse which he came down from Heaven to wed, therefore St. Francis chose it for himself. Suffering and shame were his constant companions, therefore the Saints sought the same portion. When St. Catherine of Siena was offered the crown of gold or the crown of thorns, she chose the latter,

that she might bear crosses and thorns for Christ, as He had done for her. "Aut pati aut mori," to suffer or die, was the prayer of St. Teresa for her remaining life. "Pati non mori," to suffer and not die, exclaims St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, in a still higher key of heroic charity. Through fifty years of incessant bodily pain and trials of all kinds, St. Paul of the Cross read everywhere the love of Jesus crucified, and would cry out to the flowers and grass, "Oh! be quiet! be quiet!" as if they were reproaching him for his ingratitude. It was ever the same vision of the Crucified, seen by faith or vision, which strengthened the Saints in their trials of body or soul. When St. Veronica Giuliani sank fainting to the ground, after carrying thirty pitchers of water up two flights of stairs, Christ stood before her bearing His Cross, and said, "See how heavy is this." St. Peter Martyr complained in prayer before his crucifix of a foul slander of which he was a victim; straightway the answer came, "And I, Peter, what did I do?" The Cross again was the test by which they proved the reality of spiritual favours offered. A bright and dazzling form stood before St. Martin of Tours as he was praying in his cell, and bade him adore it as the Son of God. "My Saviour came not in princely state," replied the Saint; "where are the print of the nails and the show of the wounds?" At these words the evil spirit, for it was he,

vanished as smoke. Christ Crucified again was to be their sole reward. When a voice from his crucifix asked St. Thomas Aquinas, "Thou hast written well of me, Thomas, what reward wouldest thou?" "Nought but Thyself, O Lord," was the Saint's reply, "Nihil aliud nisi te."

And be it ever remembered, they attained to this union with their Lord, not at once, but gradually, and by the same means which He gives us, namely, prayer, daily discipline, the sacraments. Their prayer was twofold, vocal and mental; no canonized saint omitted either. They teach with one voice its paramount necessity, "Man without prayer," writes St. Philip Neri, "is a dumb beast." It is the breath, the life, of the human soul, because by it he raises his mind to God. All men have the power of praying, and it is in this way, writes St. Liguori, that God wills all men to be saved; because by prayer they obtain the light and grace needed for their salvation. And both kinds of prayer were marked in the Saints by outward reverence, and an inward attention almost angelic. Of St. Francis of Sales, we are told that he prayed motionless as a statue, and would not even lift his hand to move the gnats and flies which stung his face and bald head. St. Aloysius Gonzaga would pray consecutively six or seven hours a day, till he had accomplished one full hour without a distracted thought. The matter and substance of their

prayers were found first in their own sinfulness, according to the words of St. Teresa, "Let your sins be the head of your prayers." When they had reached the summit and were confirmed in grace, so sinful did they still seem in their own eyes, and so infinitely distant was God above them, that their prayer was still that of the humblest penitent supplicating for mercy and strength. "Oh! my children," exclaimed St. Philip Neri, when past eighty years old, "when shall I begin to do good?" And at the point of death many, like St. Hugh of Lincoln, were laid upon the ground and strewn with ashes to mark their nothingness before God.

With their prayer were linked daily searchings of conscience, daily discipline, severe self-condemnations for the least offence, and daily renewed resolves to overcome their besetting defects. Nothing is perhaps a more consoling safeguard in the hour of despondency or failure, than a recollection of the temptations and defects of the Saints. The number of canonized Saints who have sinned gravely after their baptism is, we believe, comparatively very small. Yet the lives of all of them were spent in repairing some past defect by the most severe discipline and fidelity in daily life. The ordinary Christian, when he falls, is tempted to give up the struggle. The Saint on the contrary rises by falling. That is, he makes his temptations

and falls the occasions of redoubling his efforts to attain the contrary virtue. Because St. Clare of Rimini had yielded to self-indulgent habits, she became conspicuous for her penance. The gentle St. Francis of Sales was by nature violent and choleric. B. Sebastian Valfré had to bind himself by a vow for eighteen years to maintain charity with a certain person, so strong was his antipathy to him, yet his dislike was never declared by outward act. St. Thomas of Canterbury yielded, through human prudence, to an unworthy compromise with the king; his contrition for this fault led to his martyrdom. St. Bernard says that it is easier for a lay person to be converted from mortal sin than for a relaxed religious to recover fervour; yet St. Hyacintha Mariscotti is an example of one who became a Saint by her efforts to repair the scandal of a luxurious life led in a convent. Hence the blessed doctrine that the defects of the Saints co-operate to their justification, through the increased humility, penance, and watchfulness of which they are the occasion.

From what has already been said, it is evident the Saints would be fervent in their frequentation of the sacraments. The intensity of their contrition and the perfection of their self-knowledge made their confessions a real cry for pardon. Many, like St. Bridget, confessed daily; and all obeyed humbly, even when misunderstood and misdirected,

the advice given in the tribunal of penance. With regard to the Holy Eucharist, their conduct is equally marked, and points the strongest contrast to false spirituality in all times. Heretical and spurious ascetics, such as the Jansenist confessors in the last century, have advocated abstaining from Holy Communion in order by greater reverence to obtain more fruit. As early as the fourth century this objection was met and answered in the Book on the Sacraments ascribed to St. Ambrose. The words are—"If this is our daily bread, why do you receive it but once a year, as the oriental Greeks are accustomed to do? Receive daily what may be of daily profit to you, and live so as to be worthy of receiving it daily. He who is not worthy to receive it daily is not worthy to receive it once a year." "Whilst it is good sometimes to abstain from Holy Communion from reverential fear, St. Thomas says, yet love and hope, to which the Scriptures are ever inviting us, are better than fear." In practice none ever showed such reverence for the Holy Eucharist as did the Saints, and none received it more frequently. Of course, in this again they submitted themselves blindly to their confessors, and many, as St. Catherine of Siena and B. Margaret Mary Alacoque, abstained from Communion under obedience, though the privation occasioned them torture of body and soul. With their devotion to the

sacraments must be mentioned their reverence for sacramentals, and for other supernatural means of grace which the Church, through her blessing, affords us. The sign of the cross, holy water, rosaries, scapulars, medals, and Agnus Dei's—all those were in their hands powerful weapons of grace, and no soul spiritually illuminated ever thought lightly of them.

And now let us consider the Saint when he has attained, by self-hatred, bitter penance, love of Jesus Christ, prayer, discipline, and the sacraments, to the measure of a perfect man. The old Adam lies under the curse of ignorance, weakness, and the sadness consequent on loss of grace. The new creature of Christ Jesus possesses a mind free from all stain, a will firm in good, and a soul closely united to and occupied with God and divine things. And these three qualities, says St. Thomas, are the constituents of holiness. With his mind freed from the delusions of self-love, the Saint sees all things as they are, and all things thus seen are perceived to be but so many means to one end, the various steps by which he mounts, by the grace of Christ, to God. With this conviction the purified soul adheres, with marvellous constancy, to its divine resolve. Natural heroes have possessed some particular virtue, as temperance, fortitude, patriotism, but none of them possessed all collectively; and the greatest sages of antiquity were

stained with horrible vices. The grace of Christ working outside the visible Church may produce innocence of life ; but within the fold alone is found "that manner of life in which each action being modelled on the evangelical precepts and counsels, tends to the summit of perfection, being united to a firm and intense contempt of all earthly things, and a corresponding adhesion to God and things divine. Such a manner of life pursued uniformly and invariably, in spite of the continual assaults of the passions (conflicting at intervals with each other, yet always in league to seduce unto pleasure), doth so far transcend the condition of man's nature, that it approaches closely to the essentially changeless holiness of the Divine Nature, and therefore of itself suffices for evangelical heroicity, because of itself it constitutes a man perfect after the manner that our Father in Heaven is perfect" (Esparza, Ben. XIV. v. 1, p. 25). Never to pause, never to look back, never to relax the highest endeavour possible with grace, this is heroic virtue, and unchanging rest in God is the result. Not only sin and sinful inclinations, but all human affections, save so far as they agree with the Divine Will, in some ineffable manner fade away, and the love of God takes their place. The world knows little of holiness, but the lower creatures recognise its power and its beauty. The ravens bringing St. Paul the hermit his daily loaf, the lions digging his grave ;

the savage wolf of Gubbio tame as a lamb at the feet of St. Francis; the birds joining in prayer with St. Joseph of Cupertino; the fishes listening to St. Anthony's sermon; the trees lowering their branches to salute St. Rose of Lima—what are all these but tributes of homage to the sovereignty of grace in the heart of the Saints? We wonder that their faces shine with glory, or that their bodies are upraised, or that they hear Divine words and see secret things, yet when we know what God has done in their souls, the wonder is rather that they are left on this sinful earth. St. Ignatius Loyola made known that if his society, which was the fruit of his prayers, fasts, and penances, were dissolved as salt in water, it would cost him but one quarter of an hour to recover his peace. So it is with all the Saints; they live on earth, but their hearts are in heaven; the sum of their philosophy is expressed in St. Francis's "Deus meus et omnia"—"My God and my all." He is theirs and they are His.

CHAPTER IV.

PLEDGES OF CATHOLICITY.

WE have seen how the Saints are purified, enlightened, and at length united to God, their last end. Let us now consider how they illustrate the third note of the Church—her Catholicity. We think they do so in three ways. They have carried the faith to all lands; by their work and influence they have renewed human life in all its varied forms; and lastly, in themselves and in their disciples they show how the Church raises souls to sanctity in all time and in every class.

In charity to others as well as in their interior life a marked contrast presents itself between the servants of God and the great ones of the world. Merely human teachers and leaders are inclined to despise their fellow-men in proportion to their own advance in knowledge and power. It cannot be otherwise. Human nature viewed apart from grace is ignorant, corrupt, and degraded, and no merely human effort can raise it up. Knowledge was for

the few, said the Greek sage. It was only to be grasped by those who were kin to the subject and who lived in daily intercourse with the wise. For the multitude it was unattainable. The Pharisee thanked God that he was not as other men. He attributed his exemption from some gross vices and his possession of certain virtues to his own unaided merit, and he despised those who had not what he considered his special excellences. The Saint, on the other hand, ascribes to God alone whatever virtues he possesses, and sees in every soul a being created in the divine image, as capable as himself of attaining with the help of grace to eternal glory. Hence he loves others as he loves himself, that is, not selfishly but for God. He knows too how to help those he loves. Philanthropists may relieve man from some external evils—poverty, injustice, oppression—but they leave untouched his real wound, which is deep in the spiritual life. The Saint knows that the paramount evil of human nature is sin, and that grace is its sole cure. He knows further that, by a strange mystery of Providence, grace, all holy though it be, is to be dispensed not by angels, but by sinful man. Andrew found Peter and brought him to Christ. This is the law of the divine dispensation. Hence zeal for souls is characteristic of the Saints. Their first aim is to make men holy, and to teach them to seek their happiness not in being rich, luxurious, or

powerful, but in being poor, chaste, and humble for Jesus Christ's sake. With this end they preach but one doctrine, the Gospel as Christ preached it. No one but a Saint could preach it with success. Divine truths may indeed be learnt from sin-stained lips; grace is as truly conveyed through sacrilegious as through saintly hands; a Catholic people have remained true to their Church in faith and morals while the lives of many of the clergy have been a scandal to it; but to plant the faith in a heathen or heretical land, to preach purity, penance, and charity to nations sunk in vice and superstition, the preacher must first show by his example that doctrines so far beyond man's natural power are possible with the help of grace. The negro slaves of Cartagena, South America, obdurate to others, believed in the charity of Christ when preached by St. Peter Claver, because he himself was the slave of slaves. He spent his days in the holds of the slave-ships, breathing a pestilential atmosphere in a tropical climate. His one coat was covered with the stains of the wounds and ulcers of his sick converts, sixty thousand of whom were baptized by his own hand. The heretics of the Chablais first knew the meaning of Christian sacrifice when they saw St. Francis of Sales crawling along a frozen plank to say mass for his seven Catholics. Year after year he laboured unwearied and undisturbed in the midst of a hostile population, and when he went to his reward his

flock had increased from seven to seventy-two thousand souls.

The power of the Saints as missionaries is seen by the fact that every civilised country owes its beginning as a nation to their labours. The inhabitants of Ireland, Germany, Russia, Poland, remained mere savage tribes till SS. Patrick, Boniface, and Hyacinth subjugated them to the faith. The total change wrought by their labours spread to all classes, and welded together high and low, learned and ignorant, in the charity of Christ. This was done without any violent revolution or upheaving of society. Each individual learned to sanctify himself in his state, and to respect it as the one in which God had given him the graces necessary for his perfection. That sanctity was possible for all was proved by the fact that some of every condition were found in the roll of the saintly hierarchy. Kings and queens, soldiers, statesmen, lawyers, physicians, merchants, domestic servants, peasants, slaves, beggars, were to be found in the court of the great King, taking precedence by the degree of holiness they had attained. But on earth the real distinction conferred by rank, talent, or property remained. No Saint was ever a leveller or a demagogue. Christ, their master, recognised the power of the state, paid taxes, and showed respect to those in authority. Even in the time of the persecuting Nero St. Paul laid down the rule, "Fear God,

honour the king." On the other hand, since the ruler is God's representative, he is bound to govern according to the eternal laws of right and justice, and the Saints have strenuously resisted the encroachments of the civil power. Our own history shows this. SS. Thomas of Hereford and Edmund of Canterbury defended the rights of the poor as firmly as those of the Church against the tyranny of Norman kings and feudal lords. Whatever real liberty Englishmen now possess was won for them first by the courage and sufferings of the Saints.

So again with earthly goods. Property is real. Those who are drawn to lead a life where all things are common may do so by renouncing their own possessions and entering the religious state. The modern Communist begins by seizing on the goods of others; the first act of the Christian Communist is to give up his own. St. Francis of Assisi could preach with safety the danger of riches, because he had made poverty his bride. No one recognised more gratefully the natural right of man to have possessions, or did more to sanctify that right, than he in making his order subsist upon alms. The duties attached to rank or wealth, as understood and practised by the Saints, have brought a blessing on their possessors. The reign of St. Edward the Confessor was compared by a contemporary to the burst of spring after a long winter. He loved to stand at his palace gate to speak kindly to the

beggars and lepers who crowded round him, and whose wants he relieved. St. Ferdinand of Castile would never impose an additional tax on his subjects for the defence of his kingdom. "God will provide for it," he said, "by other means," and added, "I fear more the curse of one poor woman than a whole army of Moors." What better illustrates the charity which knit together the highest and the lowest than the meeting of St. Louis and B. Giles. The King had come to the tomb of St. Francis, and sent to tell B. Giles that a poor pilgrim was without. An interior light warned the brother that the pilgrim was no other than the saintly King. Running forward he fell on his knees before the monarch, who at the same time knelt to the saintly brother. They embraced each other tenderly as if they had been friends of many years, and at length parted, the one to his kingdom, the other to his cell, without having exchanged a word. "Wonder not," said afterwards B. Giles to the brethren, "that you heard nought; we spoke heart to heart of the secrets of God which cannot be put into words."

While labouring first for their neighbours' spiritual welfare, the Saints have also been foremost in relieving their temporal wants, as is seen by the innumerable institutions they have founded. Among them may be mentioned that of St. Camillus of Lellis, of ministers for the sick; of St. John of

God, for serving the hospitals; of St. Jerome Emiliani, for the charge of orphans; of St. Felix of Valois, St. John of Matha, and St. Peter Nolasco, for the redemption of slaves; of St. Vincent of Paul, for the assistance of the poor and needy of every kind. Nor did their works perish with them. The communities which they founded have continued age after age. Their enduring character is testified to by a Protestant writer. St. Antoninus, Archbishop of Florence, established a confraternity for the relief of the respectable poor, and for those of gentle and even noble birth who were ashamed to beg, and who, when misfortune came upon them, lay hid in the great houses of Florence, often till they died. The Brothers were called "Proveditori dei Poveri;" but the people in gratitude for their charity entitled them "Buonuomini di San Martino," after the church where they held their spiritual exercises. "The nearest parallel," writes Mrs. Oliphant, "we know to this work was the plan of Dr. Chalmers for abolishing all legal relief in his parish at Glasgow and substituting for it voluntary charity. But unfortunately the experiment, one of the most magnificent of modern times, ended, like a song or poem, with the genius which inspired and produced it. It is curious to think that a Scotch minister of the nineteenth century was but repeating the idea of the Dominican monk in the fifteenth. We are in the habit of thinking a great

deal of ourselves and our charities, and of ranking them much more highly than the good works of other nations; but it is nevertheless the fact, that while Dr. Chalmers's splendid essay at Christian legislation died out in less than a generation, and was totally dependent on one man's influence, Prior Antoninus's institution has survived the wear and tear of four hundred years."*

And here we are led to speak of perhaps the greatest work which the Saints have done for man, the foundation of the Religious Orders. We have already traced their first beginnings among the Fathers of the Desert. Ever since Saints have been raised up in such times as God sees fit to form spiritual families whose members are bound one to the other by the common bond of poverty, chastity, and obedience. Such a manner of life is ever a protest against the sensuality and selfishness which enthrall the children of the world, and teaches unmistakably the meaning of a perfect following of our Lord. The superhuman wisdom with which the founders have framed their constitutions is best shown by the number of Saints the religious orders have produced and by the work they have done. The family of St. Benedict alone claims amongst Saints and Blessed no less than 70,000 of its children. And other religious orders show a proportionate number of holy men and women, not

* "The Makers of Florence," p. 228, 3rd edition.

indeed known to the world or of famous names, but trained in secret to lives of perfect self-sacrifice and of the highest union with God. In these evil times, when the hand of the robber lays waste many a fair sanctuary, men ask of what use are monks and nuns? If the lives of ten just men would have sufficed to obtain mercy for the guilty city, what graces innumerable must these centres of penance and prayer have drawn down on a guilty world! Yet not only as intercessors, but as teachers and guides in every relation of life, they have been a blessing to mankind. They brought into cultivation desert wastes, unhealthy swamps, and rugged heights. Their houses have been the homes of learning and education; the great schools of theology have been formed and some of the mightiest intellects have been trained within their walls. To the religious of both sexes we owe also a literature of Christian asceticism peculiarly their own. One single book, written by a monk in his cell, with scarcely any other learning beyond what his Breviary contained, has been a mine of spiritual knowledge to men now for five centuries. The "Imitation of Christ" has been translated into every civilised language. It has gone through more editions than any book save the Bible. And this because it speaks to man as a wise and loving friend; it tells him the wants of his nature, expresses the truest sympathy with his suffering,

points out the vanity of all earthly things, and shows him that he can alone find safety, strength, and peace in Jesus Christ. Such knowledge of man and God could only have been obtained by a life of silence, solitude, and prayer.

Besides giving to the world an inexhaustible store of theological and mystical science, which forms the highest knowledge of the mind of man, the Saints have endowed poetry and the arts and the merely natural sciences with a divine interest and beauty. In his lectures on physics, chronology, music, mathematics, and medicine, the Venerable Bede knew how to raise his scholars' mind to God. When he expounded the Holy Scripture his compunction at times was so overpowering that his voice would break with weeping, and the tears of his scholars mingled with his own. He was employed up to the hour of his death in translating the Gospel of St. John from the Greek. At length, when the last sentence was written, he said to the scholar who attended him, "Consummatum est. Take my head into thy hands, for it is very pleasant for me to sit facing my old praying place, and there to call on my Father." And so on the floor of his cell he sang, "Glory be to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," and just as he said Holy Ghost he breathed his last and went to the realms above. Again, read the account of Fra Angelico, the saintly Dominican painter. Religious art, to which

he devoted himself, is now in many countries a thing of the past. We have studies of nature, studies of cattle, and above all studies of the human form, but anything higher is rarely portrayed. And this because the one true and high ideal, the sole exemplar of all beauty, is fading from the minds of men. Turn now to Fra Angelico. "He painted incessantly, but would never lay his hand to any subject not saintly. Humane and sober, he lived chastely, avoiding the errors of the world; and he was wont to say that 'the pursuit of art required rest and a life of holy thoughts; that he who illustrates the life of Christ should live with Christ.'" He never began his work without first placing himself on his knees, and begging God for the inspiration and strength needed for so great an undertaking, and when it was finished he would retouch and alter nothing, but left it as it turned out, "the will of God being that it should be so." Such was the man, humble, pure, mortified, holy, with a soul filled with the thought and love of God, and his paintings are the expression of his soul. His friars breathe the calm of the cloister and witness to its divine peace; his saints are men and women indeed, but transformed by grace; his angels are a spiritual creation and shine with the beauty of heaven. The mother of God is by herself the highest work of God's hands, inferior only to her Son, whose crucified form the Frate could

never paint without tears. He saw things as they are, not as they appear. Sin, no matter how attracting its guise, was to him a deformity, and he could never represent a sinner but as a being hideous and distorted without a single redeeming feature. Such pictures as these teach the great lesson that beauty is the expression of truth, and that there is no true "fairness save in God." And as painting should depict in sensible colouring man's highest ideal, so the office of poetry is to express in the music of song and metrical imagery that ideal which cannot be conveyed in definite terms. The sorrows and joys of man, his hopes and fears and highest aspirations, find their most perfect expression in the inspired rhythm of the Psalms. And second only to the poetry of Holy Scripture is that composed by the Saints. The Liturgies, both Greek and Latin, abound with their hymns. St. Clement of Alexandria, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. John Damascene, are among the more celebrated of the sacred poets of the Greek Church. In the Latin Church St. Ambrose and St. Gregory the Great composed the principal hymns for matins and lauds; St. Fortunatus those for our Lady's feasts; St. Bernard, "Jesu dulcis memoria." St. Thomas Aquinas wrote the office as well as the hymns and sequence of "Corpus Christi;" St. Francis' "Canticle of the Sun" is the first poem in the Italian language, and to his

disciples, Thomas of Celano and B. Jacopone of Todi, we owe respectively the two magnificent sequences, the "Dies Iræ" and the "Stabat Mater." The story of B. Jacopone's life reads like a heavenly romance. He had been conspicuous for his wild and lawless youth, and had married a beautiful and pious maiden of his native town. He loved her dearly, but his heart was not yet turned to God. One day he and his wife were assisting at the public games at Todi, when the gallery in which his wife was seated gave way, crushing its occupants in its fall. Jacopone extricated the lifeless form of his wife, and opening her robe of golden tissue, found within it the hair shirt she had worn in penance for his sins. Struck to the heart, he entered on a course of penance, and was admitted to the Friars Minor of St. Francis. His subsequent life was spent in suffering, self-imposed and inflicted by others. Sorrow for his wasted years and broken-hearted shame for his sins, with the tenderest regret for her whose life he had embittered, found expression in the poetry he has left. Its music sanctified his trials, soothed his sorrow, and sustained his hope. Every line is a confession of guilt and a prayer for mercy. His highest effort is the "Stabat Mater." "No plaint in the Liturgy," says Ozanam,* "is more touching or more sorrowful; its monotonous cadences fall like tears; its sorrow is

* "Poètes Franciscains," p. 195, ed. 1872.

like that of the angels, divine and consoling ; at the same time the popular Latin in which it is expressed is so simple, that women and children could learn by the rhythm and measure the words they did not understand."

The account of B. Jacopone's conversion through the death of his wife brings us to another important lesson taught by the lives of the Saints. In these days we hear a great deal of the rights of women. We are told that they have been deposed from their proper place in society, that they are in no way inferior to men naturally, and that therefore they ought not to be placed under any merely legal disqualification. Now in any state of society unsanctified by grace women have occupied an unworthy and degrading position. Woman was the first to sin, and on her fell heaviest the curse. She has either been the slave of man, or what power she has won has been obtained by means which condemned others and herself to a yet more degrading servitude. How, then, are women to be elevated and set free? The world answers, "Treat them like men." The Church replies, "Make them holy and they will fill the mission and post for which God created them." That place was fixed in the first page of Revelation. Man by himself was not complete, and woman was made to be his help, "*adjuvatorium sibi.*" And a help not merely in satisfying his natural affections, but to attain the highest end

of his life, the knowledge and love of God. Nor after the fall was the high mission of women lost sight of. From the beginning of Israel's history saintly women appear, who in one or other way assist in the formation of the people, lead them to victory, weep with them in sorrow, and rescue them when fallen. Rachel, Rebecca, Judith, and Esther were in their own sphere, as fully as Moses, Josue, and David, the pride and glory of the people of God. Without a record of the gentle virtues and mighty deeds of the daughters of Sion, the history of her strangely chequered life and divine destiny could never have been written. That destiny was accomplished in the birth of the God-man from a virgin mother. And as under the old law her matchless perfections were foreshadowed by the holy women of Israel, so under the new law noble women have been raised up to reflect the glories of Mary, and to show forth how grace has triumphed "where sin did most abound."

The pious influence they have exercised over men, the perfection and dignity to which they have raised their sex, the union they have displayed of feminine tenderness and heroic courage, of divine wisdom and childlike simplicity, make their lives some of the most beautiful in saintly biographies. As daughters, wives, mothers, widows, they have sanctified every relation of human life. In public affairs they have been the champions of the Church

in some of the darkest periods of her history, and have borne a most important part in some of her greatest works.* If St. Constantine raised the Labarum on the Capitol, St. Helen planted the Cross on the ruins of Jerusalem. By the side of the great Fathers of Eastern and Western monachism, St. Benedict and St. Basil, we see their sisters St. Scholastica and St. Macrina aiding in their work. The prayers of St. Monica won from heaven the conversion of St. Augustine. St. Jerome dedicated the Vulgate to his fellow-labourers St. Paula and St. Eustochium. The B. Matilda supported St. Gregory VII. in his long and heroic conflict. In St. Clare St. Francis found a young maiden of but eighteen thirsting to embrace a state of poverty equal to his own; the mighty soul of St. Teresa sustained St. John of the Cross in the reform of the Friars of Carmel, and established it in the sisters of the same order. Reverence for woman penetrated in Christian times to all ranks of society. "We must venerate all women," says a poem of the thirteenth century, "since God's mother was a woman." In that century alone five knightly orders sprang into existence to defend the innocent and weak, and the knight kept vigil before the sanctuary and received the Church's blessing on his sword and shield before buckling them on. The

* Cf. Ozanam, "Dante et la philosophie catholique au treizième siècle," p. 411. 1872.

great Christian poet of the same age chose three women to impersonate his three highest characters, Beatrice for divine Wisdom, Lucia for divine Charity, and she who inspires them both is Mary the mother of God.

As an example of the combination of heroic strength and feminine tenderness in a saintly woman, we would instance St. Catherine of Siena. The daughter of a humble tradesman, she was summoned from her obscure home to conciliate various Italian cities which had formed a powerful league against the Holy See. Armed with Papal authority and accompanied by three confessors, she travelled through Northern Italy, reducing the rebellious cities to obedience, and finally prevailed upon Gregory XI. to return from Avignon to Rome. In behalf of the Church she corresponded with kings, queens, cardinals, prelates, knights, with some of the most cruel and vicious of the disaffected nobles and leaders; and her letters display marvellous force, tact, and statesmanlike acuteness. But equally wonderful was her loving care of the poorest sinners, especially of condemned criminals, with whom she had a singular influence. We know in one instance from her own pen her way of dealing with them, and how she won their souls to God.* A young knight of Perugia, Nicholas di Toldo, was condemned to death for attempted rebellion. He had

* "History of St. Catherine of Siena," A. T. Drane, p. 228.

led an irreligious, lawless life, and had not even made his first communion. The news of his sentence drove him to despair. In his utter misery he thought of Catherine. He had never seen her, but her name was on all lips. After their first interview he confessed and was absolved. At his request she took him to mass on the morning of his death, when he communicated for the first time. Its effect was to inspire him with sentiments of perfect conformity to the Divine will. "I went then," writes the Saint, "to the place of execution, where I ceased not to invoke our Lady and St. Catherine the Martyr. But before he arrived I knelt down and placed my own neck on the block; but, alas! my desire was not fulfilled. Oh, how I prayed that our Lady would obtain for him at that last moment light and peace of heart, and for me the grace of seeing him attain his end. My heart was so full and the impression of the promise I had received so deep, that in the midst of all that concourse of people I saw no one. At last he came, and like a meek lamb he smiled when he saw me, and desired I would make the sign of the Cross on his forehead. I did so, saying 'Depart to the eternal nuptials; soon, very soon, you will be in the life that never ends.' He extended himself on the scaffold, and with my own hands I placed his head under the knife; then I knelt by his side and reminded him of the blood of the spotless Lamb.

His lips murmured the words, 'Jesus' and 'Catherine'; then the knife fell, and I received his head in my hands." A vision afterwards assured her that Nicholas was with God, and our Lord Himself thanked her for having gained for Him the poor criminal's soul.

We have already said that the works of the Saints live on, and it was the example of such acts as Catherine's which led to the formation of the Confraternity of San Giovanni Decapitato, for the assistance of condemned criminals in the hour of their death. Any one who has witnessed their labours must thank God for the Saint who inspired their holy enterprise. The day before the execution, habited, and with their faces masked, the brethren collect alms for masses for the soul of the condemned person. They see that he is provided with a priest and offer prayers for him. On the morning they walk with him from the prison to the scaffold, and form a circle round it, while the priest ascends and holds a crucifix to the lips of the culprit. Then, as in unbroken cadence the *Credo* of Christian faith is recited, the drop falls, and the soul passes to judgment supported by the prayers of the brethren. Meanwhile the "agony bell" from a hundred churches warns the faithful to pray for the departing soul, and to assist at the masses offered for its repose. Thus a death, horrible in itself, has been sanctified by the zeal of the Saints

and robbed of its worst terrors. The sense of eternal pardon which the scene conveys is testified in the fact that the death of those who thus suffer is called the death of the predestinate.

And now let us pass from the Saints conspicuous in history to those who have lived in humble obscurity. Secular knowledge is now considered as the one remedy for the miseries of the poor, and indispensable for their moral or mental improvement. Yet the class of Saints we refer to show clearly that without books or human teachers the soul can attain its highest development and become possessed of a wisdom more valuable than is acquired by any earthly learning. St. Veronica of Milan was a poor peasant girl. In her desire for perfection she rose secretly at night to teach herself to read. A vision told her that other things were necessary but not this, and bade her study three great lessons—purity of intention, abhorrence of detraction and criticism, and daily meditation on the Passion. On these she formed her life, and though never more than a humble lay sister, was the mainstay of the community to which she belonged. The Franciscan lay brother St. Didacus could not read or write, and being bound to poverty could give no alms; yet rich and poor flocked to him for advice, and the beggars used to say that “the brother’s words were worth more than other men’s gold.” The magistrates of

Lucca are called by Dante the "Elders of Santa Zita." She was the one model of all that was good and wise in that city. In life she was for forty-eight years a servant in the same household, and died in that employment. Her schooling was of prayer and work. St. Isidore the ploughman is the patron Saint of Madrid. He could not read or write; he learnt divine wisdom in his daily labours, and the proud Castilians have chosen him, in preference to many learned doctors and teachers, as their guide to Heaven. It was to a Capuchin lay brother, St. Felix of Cantalice, humble and unlettered, that St. Charles Borromeo submitted by St. Philip Neri's advice the rules of the Oblates, and by him they were revised. The simple Brother Giles was venerated and consulted by Pope Gregory IX. on account of his superhuman prudence. One day he asked of St. Bonaventura, "Father, can a dull old idiot love God as much as a great scholar?" "A poor old woman," replied the Saint, "may love Him more than the most learned doctor." On this Brother Giles ran to the garden gate facing Rome and cried out, "Come the poorest, the simplest, the most ignorant old woman, love the Lord our God, and you will be holier and higher and happier than Brother Bonaventura." And this truth is as fully realised by the Church in the nineteenth as it was in the thirteenth century. The venerable Anna Maria Taigi, who died in

1837, and whose beatification is now in progress, lived and died a poor sempstress. Young men sought her advice in their temptations and difficulties; prelates and statesmen consulted her in times of political trouble. B. Benedict Joseph Labre passed his life as a poor beggar, with no home but his favourite shrines. By the light of the sanctuary he could read men's hearts and tell them the secrets of their lives. "Surgunt indocti et rapiunt regnum Dei, et nos cum nostris litteris demergimur in profundum." "The unlearned rise and seize the kingdom of God, and we with our sciences are plunged into the depth." Thus wrote St. Augustine, the greatest intellect of his age, convinced that true wisdom was only given to the humble of heart.

Such then is the Catholic aspect of divine grace working in the Saints. We see souls moulded and perfected in every class of life and under the most adverse circumstances, and the souls thus purified and sanctified do not break off from her or form fresh centres of their own, but become new lights in her firmament, showing men the narrow way to Heaven. The so-called modern idea of one great human family, preached by the sects, which has proved impossible of attainment by any merely natural means, was fully realised through the influence of the Saints. That influence, we suppose, was never greater than in the thirteenth century.

It was the age of St. Francis and St. Dominic ; of St. Philip Benizi, the founder of the Servites of Mary ; of St. Peter Nolasco, the founder of the order of Our Lady of Ransom ; of St. John of Matha and of St. Felix of Valois, the joint founders of the order of the Trinitarians. Five religious orders and three knightly orders—those of the German Knights of Mary, the Knights Templar, and the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem—were founded in this one century. There were Saints in every grade of society from St. Louis the King to St. Nothburga the cook. It was an age of feasts, processions, pilgrimages, of frequent miracles—an age which the world calls “of darkness,” but the Church “of faith.” What was the effect? The closest union of all men in the bond of charity. “All baptized persons, as fellow-members of one communion, held one common view of life, and worked together with kindred sympathy for one common end. Christianity was to all, priests and laymen, nobles and people, not a mere idea or doctrine, but an existing fact, the very element in which they lived and breathed. The faith was man’s best possession and the chief source of his happiness. There was felt a delight in the Church, in her inward and outward glory, and a deep spiritual peace, flowing from the enjoyment of her gifts such as never since prevailed.”*

* Vilmar, Hettinger, “*Essay on Dante*,” p. 2.

And if we would find this picture of earthly happiness realised now, we should turn, not to any large constituency or great centre of commerce, manufacture, or fashion, but to some quiet village in the Apennines or the Abruzzi, and enter it on the feast of its patron Saint. The place stands on an eminence, backed by rich chestnut woods, under the blue canopy of an Italian sky. At the entrance of the main street we find a triumphal arch of goodly and just architectural proportions, such as we might search for in vain in many of our largest towns. On the superstructure, emblems and inscriptions tell of the virtues of the Saint and of the gratitude of his clients. From the houses hang draperies of varying colours; the façade of the church is festooned in velvet and adorned with various artistic devices; to the doorposts are affixed sonnets in honour of the Saint; within, the nave is decorated with painted or woven tapestries representing incidents in the Saint's life; on the altar, encircled with a blaze of light, is a relic of his holy body. At length the procession issues forth: the band in their richest uniform, the confraternities with their crosses and various banners, the municipal authorities with the insignia of their office; then the clergy; and last the image, it may be in silver, of the patron Saint. The day has been a feast for all. High and low have fed in the morning at the one Eucharistic banquet; high and low have

taken part in the innocent recreations provided for this day of rest, and now the Saint comes forth to bless them before they part. The little children bear his name, all know his life, all have besought his aid, all owe him gratitude for some special favour. He is their friend, their guide, their protector, as truly now as when he walked with their fathers long years since. Therefore they have given him their best. Music, art, poetry, sculpture, sacred eloquence, have been pressed into his service, and as his clients file past, chanting in one voice hymns or litanies, we see the perfect charity which unites all ranks, while the mingled dignity and humility of their demeanour marks their respect for him whose escort they form. When the circuit of the town is complete, the crowd is dismissed with the solemn Benediction of the King of kings, in whose court the Saint reigns in glory. Such a day lifts the heart from earth and from earthly sorrows, and the poorest and humblest have their full share in its joys. Compare the best amusements offered to our people on any public holiday with the feast we have described, its attendant functions, and their power to soothe, refine, and sanctify, and we cannot but envy those who dwell in a land of faith, and are born, live, and die under the shadow of a Saint.*

* Cf. Wiseman, "Essays," iii., p. 518.

CHAPTER V.

HEIRS OF THE APOSTLES.

APOSTOLICITY is the fourth mark of the Church, for as Christ promised to be with the Apostles and their successors to the end of the world (Matt. xxviii. 20), His Church must be able to show her descent from the Apostle, and their divine gifts as her inheritance.

Let us see, then, lastly, how the outward life of the Church in the apostolic age is repeated in the lives of the Saints. Two special characteristics mark the Church during the first centuries—her miracles and her martyrs. St. Peter's first public act was to heal the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple; his next was the sermon at Pentecost, in which he spoke with the gift of tongues and converted three thousand souls. Similar wonders mark all the apostolic labours, and like gifts have been bestowed continuously upon the Saints. Protestants, who have discarded the Saints, teach that the power of miracles ceased with the Apostles. The Catholic Church declares with logic and con-

sistency that it ever abides in the one fold. She teaches that God, according to our Lord's promise, bestows this power upon a certain number of the just, for the confirmation of the truth which they teach and to testify to the sanctity of their lives. The gift is not given to all, because it is not necessary for the general good of the Church that all the just should be raised up to work for others; and secondly, as St. Augustine says, "Lest the weak should be deceived in a fatal error, thinking that greater blessings consist in them than in works of justice by which eternal life is obtained." It is of faith that the gift of miracles is always in the Church, for at all times her truth and her holiness are to be testified to before men. At the same time miracles are not as frequent in later ages as in the first, because her continued life, surviving every attack and persecution, is of itself a very great miracle, and sufficient to prove her Divine origin.

Such is the reason for miracles, and now as to those recorded in the processes of the Saints. Nowhere is the Church's love and jealousy of truth, as such, more marked than in her manner of dealing with the character of those who in life have been her devoted servants. The world, when her great ones die, canonizes them at once, raises monuments to their memory, and records their names with every virtue that can possibly be assigned to them, while defects are buried out of sight. The Church,

on the contrary, examines her children before the light of the great Throne and subjects their every action to the closest possible scrutiny. Virtues—that is, the calm persevering discharge of every duty towards God and man—must be proved to have existed in an heroic degree before evidence as to miracles is taken. Any apparently imprudent action or course of conduct is sifted as to its origin or motive, and only passes judgment when proved to proceed from God. At length, when the whole life from childhood to death emerges unscathed from this searching ordeal, the miracles are investigated. Those required in a process of canonization must be proved to be each an effect not merely extraordinary, but one exceeding the whole order of nature, and in its results instantaneous, permanent, and complete. As in other matters of human testimony, witnesses may be too anxious to prove their point, and a diagnosis may be imperfect, but no impartial person who has studied the processes of canonization could deny that the evidence in support of many miracles is simply beyond question. Take, for instance, the following from the process of St. Thomas of Hereford.* On September 6th, 1303, Roger, the infant son of Gervase, a warder of Conway Castle, crawled out of his bed at night and tumbled off a bridge twenty-eight feet

* Cf. F. Ryder's "Essay on Catholic Miracles," *Dublin Review*, V. xxvi.

high into the moat below. The next morning his lifeless body was discovered by his mother on the hard rock which formed the bed of the moat. Simon Waterford, the vicar who had christened the child, John de Bois, and John Gyffe, swore upon the Gospel that they saw and handled the child, dead. The king's coroners, Stephen Ganney and William Nottingham, were sent for and went down to the moat. They found the child's body cold, stiff, and white with hoar-frost—stark dead, indeed. While the coroners were writing down, as their duty was, what they had seen, one John Siward, a neighbour, felt the child's body, and finding it quite dead, made the sign of the Cross upon his forehead, and prayed earnestly as follows:—"Blessed St. Thomas of Cantalupe, you by whom God has wrought innumerable miracles, show mercy unto this little infant, and obtain he may return to life again. If this grace be granted he shall visit your holy sepulchre and return humble thanks to God and you for the favour." No sooner had Siward finished his prayer than the child began to move its head and right arm, and forthwith its whole body was quickened with vigorous life. The mother took the child in her arms, went to a church hard by, and heard mass in thanksgiving. On her return home the child walked about the house as usual, and felt no pain. The witnesses above named and many others deposed to the miracle. Take one other case in this, the

nineteenth century. On July 31, 1817, at Cathara, in Sicily, a young married woman who was carrying a sack of flour up a ladder to a loft fell from the top step to the ground. She was found with her body crushed under the sack, which weighed above two hundredweight, with a dislocated thigh, and various most severe internal injuries. For three days her stomach would perform no vital function, and she received the last sacraments. On the evening of August 2 her agony seemed to have set in. She had been anointed with oil from St. Alphonsus' lamp, and she and the bystanders were invoking him earnestly. Suddenly she saw a light and said, "The Saint is coming to me." She declared that he had touched her, and that she was cured. She rose, suckled her child, was quite well, and remained so. The witnesses were the patient herself, the parish priest, the doctor, the lawyer, the mother, sisters, husband, and a host of neighbours. The doctor declared that he had assured himself by eye and hand that the thigh-bone was out of the socket, that it had set itself, and that there was no trace of mischief in the other parts of the body. Now, such evidence as the above would, we submit, be accepted in any court of justice, and it can only be refused credence not on reason or evidence, but on the mere *a priori* assertion that miracles are impossible.

While declaring and proving the wonderful works of God in His Saints, the Church, and the Church

alone, knows how to distinguish clearly between faith and superstition, and severely condemns the latter. False miracles and false prophets appeared in the apostolic age, and we know how they were met. St. Peter cursed Simon Magus the magician, and St. Paul smote Elymas the sorcerer with blindness. The latter warns his disciples against fables and genealogies, and at Ephesus the books on curious arts were publicly burnt. Throughout the Church's history we find councils condemning each blind superstition as it appears, and warning the faithful against the powers of darkness. On the other hand, it has been the enlightened men of the day who, while refusing to believe the truths of faith, have readily embraced and supported any imposture or invention provided it emanated from a non-Catholic source. "For a century and a half," writes the Protestant author, Menzel, "a superstitious belief in ghosts and devils prevailed universally in Germany; more persons were burnt there for witchcraft and magic than for heresy in Spain." In our own times it is the Church which condemns spiritualism and the pernicious juggling attending it, while sceptics and freethinkers have proved its most ardent disciples. Besides the gifts of miracles, the other supernatural powers, "*gratiæ gratis datæ*," graces given for the benefit of others, which were granted to the Apostles, have been conferred upon the Saints and for the same Divine purposes.

St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Lewis Bertrand, St. Francis Xavier, and many other missionaries have spoken with the gift of tongues. St. Philip Neri was assisted in his labours as a confessor by the gift of prophecy and of the discernment of spirits. So also St. Margaret of Cortona knew the consciences of men who came to her for advice. St. Ignatius, who had spent his life in the court and camp, by inspired knowledge, composed his Book of the Exercises, and St. Francis of Assisi, without human learning, instructed men in the mysteries of Heaven. Next come visions and apparitions. From the beginning of history God has been pleased to appear in various forms to man. He walked with Adam in the afternoon air under the form of angels, He accepted the hospitality of Abraham, spoke to Moses in the burning bush, and by divers visions revealed Himself to the Prophets. And even after the Incarnation, though He dwells with us body and soul in the Sacramental species, yet the hidden presence does not satisfy His love. After His Resurrection He manifested Himself repeatedly to the Apostles, and after His Ascension to St. Paul. So again, throughout the lives of the Saints we find Him appearing to them again and again, but in a more tender and peculiar way than to prophets and patriarchs of old. He appeared on the Roman road to St. Peter, to prepare him for his martyrdom; betrothed St. Cecilia as His heavenly spouse, walked

with the holy child Catherine to school, was laid as an infant by His Blessed Mother in the arms of St. Felix and St. Antony, printed His sacred kiss on the cheek of St. Catherine of Bologna, exchanged His heart for that of the B. Margaret Mary, and stamped His five wounds on the hands and feet of St. Francis. And as St. Peter and St. Paul were wrapt in ecstasy and saw secret things, so were St. John of God, St. Joseph of Cupertino, St. Teresa, St. Gertrude, and St. Catherine of Siena, instructed by visions to know Divine mysteries and to teach others therein. Each gift has its appointed purpose and communicates to the Saint first, and through that Saint to others, fresh wonders of Divine knowledge and love. And when we look back over a vista of nigh two thousand years represented to us by the Saints' lives, and see the same marvels repeating themselves age after age—the dead raised to life, the lepers cleansed, the sick healed, the mere presence or shadow of the Saint working with Divine efficacy, his body and soul upraised, transfigured, radiant by his union with God, what is the effect? Is our intellect burdened or our conscience oppressed by the difficulty of accepting these marvels because they surpass the action of natural laws and the power of a created agency? Nay, rather they prove the truth of the Divine promise that the disciples would do greater things than the Master, and that He is ever work-

ing in their midst. These Divine wonders raise our faith and hope; and our hearts, sickened and depressed with the falsehood, heresy, and corruption of the world, turn with joy to the stream of supernatural life, which flows on like some mighty river, gathering volume in its course to make glad "the City of God."

The second characteristic of the first age is that of the Martyrs. The Apostles sealed their doctrine with their blood. To them and to their martyred disciples was first accorded, as we have said, the title of Saint; their relics were the first revered; to the martyrs were the first churches dedicated, and the "Acts" of their bold confession have been preserved for us almost with as much care as their sacred remains. These "Acts" lead us to the amphitheatre, the dungeon, to dens of iniquity, to the common scaffold, to the place of torture, to frozen lakes by night, to heated furnaces, to boiling cauldrons, to the cages of wild beasts. We see living human forms strapped to dead bodies that a common corruption may consume both alike, besmeared with honey and left in the sun to be stung to death by noxious insects, lowered into pits the abode of poisonous reptiles. Before us appear women and children done to death like dogs, with every possible aggravation of torture and shame. Such is the natural side of the picture, and it is one to sicken the stoutest heart; yet viewed by

the light of faith, nowhere is the triumph of grace more conspicuous, or the beauty and perfection of holiness more variously displayed. It was as if a new generation of mankind had come upon the earth. Brave soldiers, like the Theban Legion, suffered themselves to be butchered in meekness and silence for the faith of Christ. Tender, timid women, like St. Perpetua and St. Felicitas, descended to the arena and died with the courage of men. The innocent St. Agnes endured exposure before a heathen crowd, and then hastened to the torture like a bride on her wedding-day. The penitent St. Afra was reproached by the judge for pretending to be a Christian after leading so scandalous a life. "Christ," she answered, "had come to save sinners." When she was bound to the stake her contrite prayers were heard above the roar of the flames. This indomitable courage is to be explained by no human motive. Patriots have bled for their country, but the martyrs were of every race and had no common natural tie. Men will, doubtless, face torture and death for the applause of their fellows, but the martyrs' sufferings were often ignominious and unseen. St. Sebastian was shot at like some stuffed target to show sport to his own soldiers. St. Zoe was hung up by the heels and stoned to death by a brutal crowd. Immediate entrance to Heaven was indeed promised as the reward of perseverance, and

a holy enthusiasm at times marked their actions, which seemed as if they saw already, with the martyr Stephen, the radiance of Divine glory. They tore down imperial edicts, flung back the taunts of their heathen judges, and embraced the implements of torture which their very persecutors hesitated to employ; but the horrors of death were in many cases lingering and long; witness the martyrs of Sebaste watching through the winter's night while their limbs grew stiff and frozen, or the variety of cruel and protracted torments to which St. Arcadius, St. Thecla, and many others were subjected.

When the heathen persecutions ceased, new trials began. The tendency of the State is ever to be jealous of the Church. In heretical or schismatic communions the civil power finds instruments docile to its will. Arian bishops and patriarchs were mere tools of the State. The emperor's aide-de-camp presides at the council of the Russian schismatic Church. Of the power of the State in the Anglican body Cardinal Newman says, "Elizabeth boasted that she tuned her pulpits; Charles forbade discussion on Predestination, George on the Holy Trinity; Victoria allows differences on Holy Baptism." The Catholic Church claims to rule and teach the nations in absolute independence of any civil power by the authority of God alone. Of this, her Divine supremacy, the Saints

have ever been the foremost champions. At the cost of suffering and death they have defended the whole circle of her teaching and discipline against the tyranny of the State and the hatred of heretics. When St. Basil refused to admit the Arians to communion, he added that he feared neither the wrath of the emperor, nor exile, nor death. "Never," said the Prefect, "has any one dared to address me thus." "Perhaps," suggested Basil, "you never before met with a Christian bishop." St. Flavian was martyred by the Eutychian heretics; St. Cyril of Alexandria was imprisoned by the Nestorians; St. Hiliary and St. Fulgentius were banished by the Arians; St. Josaphat was martyred by the Ruthenian schismatics; St. Dunstan was forced to flee the country for his bold condemnation of the vices of King Edwy. St. Stanislas of Poland was slain at the altar because, like another Baptist, he had excommunicated an adulterous king. St. John Nepomuc was racked, burned with torches, and finally drowned, for refusing to reveal to the Emperor the confessions of his wife. St. Anselm went twice into exile sooner than submit to the spoliation of the Church by Henry I. St. Edmund and St. Richard of Chichester were in turn victims of the tyranny of Henry III. St. Thomas laid down his life rather than yield to the oppression of Henry II.

At length came the revolt of the sixteenth

century, and the blood of the martyrs flowed again as in the apostolic times. Ireland presented the astounding spectacle of a whole nation tortured and dying for the faith, and second only to Ireland is our own country in the roll of martyrs she can claim as her own. English martyrs of these later times met their death with the same courage and joy as St. Agnes, St. Alban, or the bravest of the early Christians. When Sir Thomas More saw from his prison window Father Houghton and his brethren of the Charterhouse going by to execution, "See, Meg," he exclaimed to his daughter, "these blessed fathers be now as cheerfully going to their death as bridegrooms to their marriage." Father Campion used to raise his hat as he passed Tyburn gallows, both from reverence for its victims and because he himself would suffer there. When news of a fresh martyrdom reached the Douai Seminary, the whole college repaired to the chapel to sing a Te Deum. And the suffering of the martyr was not simply capital punishment as now inflicted. There were preliminary tortures to be undergone. He might be stretched upon the rack, bent double in the Little Ease, or thrust into a loathsome pit. During these bitter pains he was plied with insidious questions to obtain from him the names of friends, or to wring from him any statement which might be interpreted as an admission of guilt or an act of apostacy. The death

itself began only with the hangman's rope, it was completed by a barbarous and revolting mutilation of the whole body. The mildest forms of death meant long years of lingering imprisonment, a bloodless martyrdom, and therefore, perhaps, the most trying to an ardent soul desirous of giving its life for Christ and of speedily attaining to bliss. Philip Howard, Earl of Arundel, was torn from his young wife and confined in the Tower till he died. During the ten long years that he wasted away he fasted thrice a week on bread and water, and gave himself to continual prayer and mortification. The walls of his cell still bear the inscription, "*Quanto plus afflictionis pro Christo in hoc sæculo quanto plus gloriæ cum Christo in futuro.*" Women, too, were tortured and put to death. Margaret Ward was scourged and afterwards hung at Tyburn for assisting a priest to escape. Ann Line, a widow lady, who at the time was so ill that she had to be borne to her trial in a chair, for entertaining a priest was hung at Tyburn. Margaret Clitheroe, the holy martyr of York, was charged with harbouring priests. She refused to plead lest she might endanger the lives of others, or be accessory to the jurymen's sin in condemning the innocent. She was accordingly pressed to death between two boards with a stone beneath her back. Her agony lasted one quarter of an hour. No one can peruse the accounts of the sufferings of these English

martyrs without being struck by their likeness, even in details, with those of the first centuries. Both suffered simply for their faith. Both were loyal subjects of their persecuting sovereigns, whether a Nero or an Elizabeth. Both met their end like their Master, praying forgiveness for their murderers. St. Philip Neri used to salute the youthful students of the English College at Rome with the hymn for the Holy Innocents, "Salvete Flores Martyrum." Writers like Cardinal Baronius in his Roman Martyrology on December 29, and Cornelius a Lapide on Heb. x., praise the glory of their martyrdom as equal to, if not surpassing, those of the first ages.

Such were the martyrs. They are the first-fruits of the Precious Blood, and its efficacy is no way lessened by lapse of time. Japan, China, and the Corea have offered their sons and daughters to swell the ranks of the white-robed army, as each persecution has broken out. And in our own days and within sight of our own shores we have seen the blood of the martyrs flowing. We hear a great deal of modern liberalism, progress, humanity. We have but to look across the Channel a few years back to the country which first inaugurated the doctrines of equality and fraternity, and we see a fair city in flames and the dead bodies of those who were butchered simply for their faith. The walls and stones of the Rue Haxo are still stained

with the blood of the forty religious, priests and laymen who laid down their lives for Christ. In the nineteenth century as in the first, the antagonism between truth and falsehood is even to death. The truce between the Church and the world may at any moment turn into a fierce persecution, and when it does, martyrs are found ready and joyful as the Apostles to shed their blood for the faith.

And now looking back on the lives of the Saints, what has secured their faith, trained and matured their aspirations and efforts after holiness, directed their labours for others, supported them in their sufferings, kept them safe from pride and delusion in their supernatural favours, and finally set the seal of sanctity on their lives and raised them on the altars of the Church? One power only, the Holy See of Rome. From Rome missionaries like St. Augustine and St. Willibrord started on their labours, and it was in the strength of Peter's blessing they hoped for success. For love of Rome our English kings and queens, like Ina and St. Ethelburga, laid aside their crowns and travelled as poor pilgrims to the Apostle's tomb. Bishops like St. Wilfred, abbots like St. Benedict Biscop, went to Rome that they might learn to conform in all things, faith, discipline, and ritual, with the usage of the Apostolic See. To Rome travelled St. Dominic, St. Francis, and St. Ignatius before they dare begin the foundation of their mighty orders.

To Rome St. Theresa, St. John of the Cross, St. Peter of Alcantara, appealed in their work of reform. Doctors like SS. Thomas Aquinas and Bernard, mystics like SS. Gertrude and Bridget, submitted to Rome's judgment their teachings and revelations. Recluses like St. Guy and St. Colette offered for the Vicar of Christ their long years of solitude and penance. From their union with Peter and Peter's chair the martyrs and confessors in every age have received the inspiration and the strength to suffer and die for the faith. And as the Roman See is the mother and mistress of the Saints, so have the Roman pontiffs been first in the example of holiness they have set. Even those popes, whose lives have not seemed in keeping with their sacred trust, have known how to detect sanctity and to support with the whole weight of their authority the labours and works of the Saints. It was no other than Alexander VI. who encouraged St. Francis of Paula to found his severe order of the Minims and approved of the Rule of the Annunciation instituted by St. Jane of Valois in honour of the mother of God. But few indeed are there against whom even heretics can cavil. Of the two hundred and fifty-nine popes who have sat in Peter's chair seventy-seven are canonized. Beside the thirty martyred in the first three centuries, thirty popes were compelled to go into exile, four were imprisoned, four were unable

to set foot in the Eternal City, seven reigned in banishment at Avignon. And the sufferings which they have endured have not only been for the cause of truth, but for the sake of the holiness and perfection which is the heritage of the one Eternal Church.

Thus in spite of persecution, calumny, and insult, of increasing infidelity, lawlessness, and corruption, the Church of God lives on, one holy, Catholic, Apostolic, as we see it in the lives of the Saints; and if we would ask one final truth which they teach it is this, "Unde malum?" "Whence is evil?" "Why does your God permit all the pain, sorrow, and sin that we see in the world?" asked the philosophers of St. Augustine. "Ut per cos exerceanur boni et conuertantur mali." "For the conversion of the wicked and the probation of the good," replied the Saint. And the lives of the Saints show how this Divine purpose has been accomplished. It is precisely the falsehood and calumnies of heretics and infidels which have urged the great doctors of the Church to defend and illustrate the truth. The ignorance and degradation of idolatrous nations have fired saintly missionaries with zeal for their conversion. The innate corruption of the human heart has nerved the confessors to do penance till death. Nay, more, the purity of the virgin gains lustre when it shines forth as with a St. Agnes amidst the foul

vapours of pagan lust; the martyr wins his palm only by the persecutor's sword. Noe floating safely on the waters of the deluge, Lot kept pure in the guilty city, the three children unscathed in the midst of the fiery furnace—these are but types of that greater miracle which preserves in every age the souls of the elect holy and undefiled in the midst of a corrupt world, and makes the very assaults of evil turn to their good.

Thus, then, in the apparent confusion which this world presents the Divine order is ever preserved and the Divine purpose is being steadily accomplished. From all eternity the elect were chosen in the mind of God. He has already set them apart. He knows who are His own. He calls His sheep each by name. He forms singly the hearts of each. He counts the very hairs of their heads. For them He sent His only begotten into the world. The Son claimed them as His own, and no one takes them out of His hand. For the elect, and not for the world, He prayed; and prayed not that they might be taken out of the world, but that they might be preserved from evil. For them He died, sanctifying Himself that they might be sanctified in truth. He ascended again to open Heaven to them, and will return at the last day to lead them in triumph, body and soul, to the thrones prepared for them from the foundation of the world. These, then, are the first and last separa-

tions of the elect in the mind of God, and as accomplished in the sacrifice of His only Son. But meanwhile, and on earth, a third separation is taking place, namely, by the indwelling of the Spirit in their hearts.

Though both good and evil men inhabit the same earth, are warmed by the same sun, use alike this world's goods, are outwardly the same, inwardly they are daily and further diverging apart. "The two cities," as St. Augustine calls them, have each their special characteristics, their proper and distinct ends, which he thus describes. The city of the devil consists in the things of this world. It is here not as a pilgrim, but as a fixed dweller, and has here its chosen end. It has a self-love which mounts up to the contempt of God; it boasts in itself; it seeks glory from men; it is swayed by lust of empire; it loves its own virtue in its own great men and its sages, living mere natural lives, has no joy save in some temporal good, nor sorrow save for some temporal loss. But the city of God lives in the hope of God; always enduring the earth and hoping for heaven; it knows no evil save in offending God and the loss of His promises, nor good save meriting God and obtaining them. It despises itself and glories in the Lord, crying, "I will love Thee, O Lord, my virtue." In it there is no wisdom of men save piety waiting for the reward in the society of

Saints, angels as well as men. "Ut sit Deus omnia in omnibus." "That God may be all in all."

May the study of the Saints' lives lead us to separate ourselves each day more completely from the city of the devil, however attractive it be, and unite us more closely to the city of God—that poor, despised, but blessed and well-ordered society of the just, who have fixed their hearts not on the world but on God, and love each other in Him. "Cujus rex veritas, cujus lex caritas, cujus modus æternitas." "Their king is truth, their law charity, their manner of being eternity." (St. Aug., Ep. cxxxviii. 17.)

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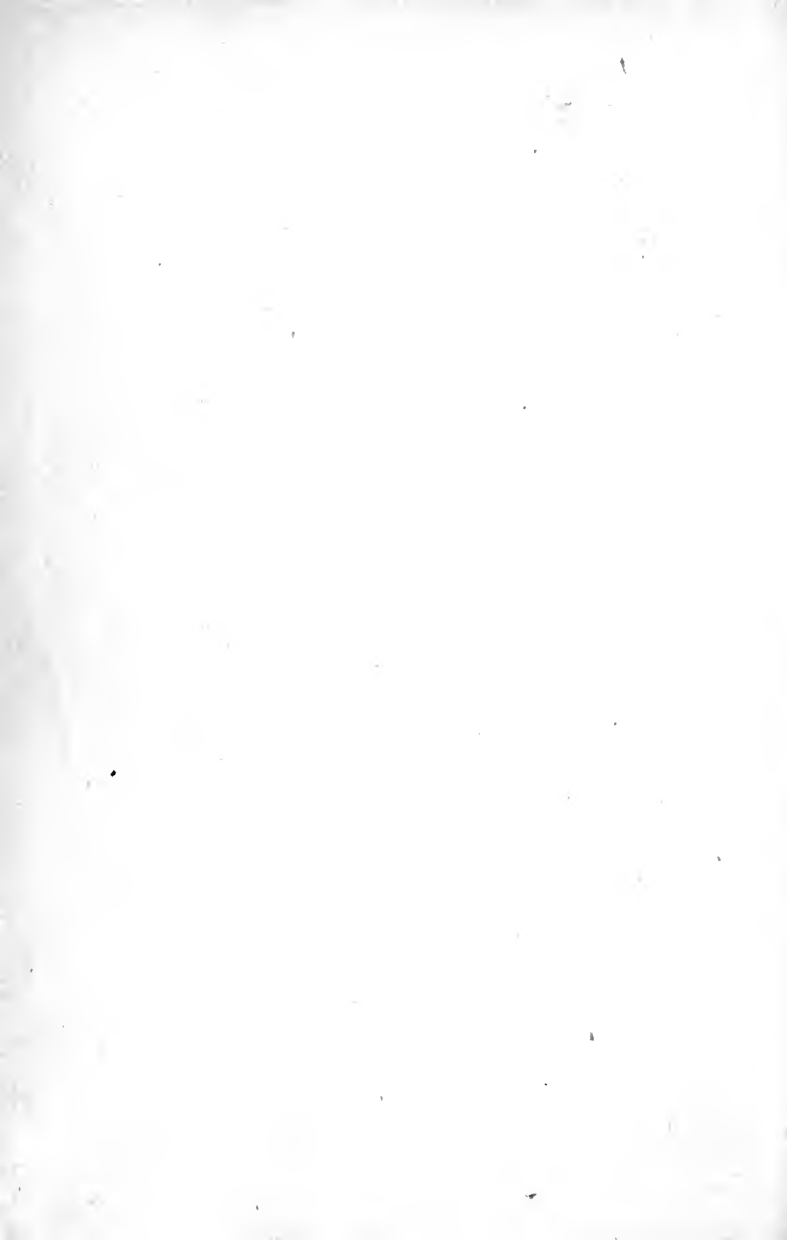
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