

meditating on St. Raphael's conduct, become an earthly angel, one of those men whose pure, holy, edifying life, full of devotedness and love, authorizes the Church to say that she also has her Angels ever ready to glorify the Lord and to fly to the assistance of their brothers.

Let us for a moment contemplate the excellence and virtues of St. Raphael. Many theologians think with reason, says Cornelius a Lapide, that Raphael belongs to the first order of angels, that of the Seraphim and is even one of the first of that order, from the words addressed to Tobias : « I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the Lord. »

Let us admire his beauty. If an ordinary angel be so beautiful that when the angels appeared under the old law, men took them for God Himself and wished to adore them ; what can we say of an archangel who shines among all through the excellence of his nature and of his employment ? Therefore is Tobias attracted by the amiability of the young man and he gives him his affection and his confidence. Do we desire to draw down upon us the eyes of God, of angels and of men to whom we are given as a spectacle ? Let us preserve sanctifying grace in our hearts, let us be distinguished by purity and innocence of life.

Let us consider St. Raphael's happiness. « I am, he says to Tobias, one of the seven Spirits who stand before the Lord. » What does it mean to stand before God ? It means to see him more closely ; to enjoy God ; to enjoy his happiness. Although Raphael then dwelt on earth, he ever saw the face of the Lord « I seemed to eat and drink with you but I use an invisible meat and drink which cannot be seen by men. » The Christian stands before God and sees his face through the remembrance of God, by a fervent prayer, by frequent visits to the Most Blessed Sacrament, wherein he finds the same God Who is adored by the angels and Who makes the earth seem a Paradise to Saints.

Let us recall St. Raphael's obedience, the promptness and joy wherewith he executes God's will. Tobias finds him ready to accompany him on his long and arduous journey and leaves him only when his mission is ended. Why cannot we, like the