

endure all for the sake of establishing Christ's Kingdom in the regions still beyond. The way in which the Church has been able to adapt herself to circumstances and surroundings the most opposite, the wisdom and the skill with which she has discerned and applied the best methods and the most suitable means of reaching and subduing to Christ the most barbarous and stubborn tribes,—these features in her life and growth through the centuries are more than interesting to the student. They are irresistible evidences that she is not merely human but divine, that it is not in her origin only, but in her life and its powers that she is divine—because she is the Body of Christ, because she represents Him amongst men—speaking and acting in Him and for Him, so that those who hear her hear Him.

I may not do more than indicate here, as one amongst many, illustrations of this, the wondrous manner in which the Christian Church set herself to the Master's work amongst the untutored, wild, savage hordes of northern Europe, who completed the fall of the great Roman Empire. From its ruins emerged the Church alone, of all the countless societies and organizations for which the Latin race was famous. They were all dead—because the only life they had was from the systematic, orderly people who created them. The Church's life was as sound and vigorous as ever, because it is from God, because it is in Jesus Christ. Her circumstances and surroundings were indeed completely changed because her members are human, and they were involved in the loss and confusion and disorder which prevailed everywhere. Her life and powers were, however, unchanged. They were as fresh and buoyant and vigorous as before the Fall of the Empire, for their springs were not in human governments, and so the overthrow of these could not touch them. Her life and powers were not changed, but her position and her work were both seriously affected. Indeed the task before her was as gigantic and appalling as any which has been assigned to human beings—even as Christians, as members of the Church which is the Body of Christ, and therefore in possession of a life and powers which are from heaven, which are of God, which are Divine. That task was to subdue to the will of Christ the fierce tribes which had swarmed over Europe, taking possession of the fairest provinces of the Roman Empire and pouring down into Italy. Indifferent to the nature of human life, utterly careless as to the possession of any property or settled home; spending their time and energies in invading and destroying the homes of all who were peaceably disposed. Constantly engaged in deeds of cruelty and bloodshed, yielding to no control except that of force—proud, haughty, contemptuous—how were they to be won to Christ, how was the Kingdom of God to be set up amongst them? Hopeless and forbidding to the last degree must the very contemplation and much more the undertaking have appeared. The history of the monasteries in the middle ages shows how

the task so impossible, so little worth attempting in the eyes of unbelieving men, was actually effected. The necessities of those unsettled times when there was no protection for life or property led Christian men to band themselves together in Communities. These communities were the monasteries. The inmates tilled the land, took care of the weak and sick, taught the young and worshipped God. Their church and their music, their prayers and their study, their good works and their calm, quiet life shed an influence far and wide. The love of God and devotion to the Church as His own instrument for subduing all men and bringing them into union with Himself—these graces were developed and deepened by the daily life and labors of all in the monastery. How could it be otherwise, when prayers and good works engaged the hearts and hands of all, day in and day out, and far into the night, and sometimes through the night. Here in the monasteries brave, heroic men were trained, who went forth in little companies of ten, twelve or twenty, very like the forlorn-hope of some army, to make an assault upon the Kingdom of Satan—an assault in which they sought only to give the life and peace and hope of Heaven, and in which they received, wounds and death in many cruel forms. From the monasteries in Ireland alone proceeded almost countless bands of missionaries, who began their work by building their huts and chapels of wattles, which were to give place in time to stately churches and attractive monasteries in numerous districts all over Scotland and the north and east of England, and over large portions of France and Germany.

They thus made their own homes amongst the savage people, and won them to make their homes around them, and to follow with them the paths of righteousness and peace. Thus the Church accomplished for her Redeemer and her Lord a work far more full of peril and hardship and discouragement than any which lies before her in any quarter of the globe to-day.

Many of these monasteries, it is true, like most other things under the baneful rule of the papacy, drifted into shameful corruptions, but originally their work was missionary and pure.

During the last two centuries many difficult problems has the Church had to study and seek to solve in connection with her extension and work. A great many influences have been at work, rendering it exceedingly difficult for her to realize her own powers and responsibilities. First of all, the Puritan blight which fell upon the people after the Reformation, banished nearly all life and faith and love. Indifference, coldness and deadness, hidden under a fair exterior of respectability and morality, prevailed amongst all classes in society. Zeal and enthusiasm, wherever they showed themselves, were pounced upon and promptly banished as out of place in the Church, and inconsistent with true Christianity. When at last the life which was in the Church all the time—which had been kept in check and almost quenched by the narrow little