

The life of the Carmelites is indeed austere : Saint Theresa willed it so, and every prescription of her Rule bears the stamp of mortification, of sacrifice and self-denial in a real apostolic sense. She desires her spiritual daughters to be Apostles, entirely devoted to the wants of their brethren, to lay them before God and solicit with fervor the graces necessary for one and all. Their mission, of course, is not public ; hidden, on the contrary, from all human eyes by the screen of close seclusion, and entirely separated from the world, they pass their lives in perpetual retreat and silence. They never even speak to each other, except during recreation, or when compelled by necessity. They do, nevertheless, exercise an Apostolate, but one of prayer and sacrifice. Such is the noble mission entrusted to them by the great Saint whom they love and venerate at their Mother, whose lessons are their rule of life, and whose virtues they strive, though imperfectly, to imitate. In the following passage St. Theresa traces out to her daughters their line of conduct, and initiates them to her spirit :

“ Hearing, she says, the damages and losses the  
“ protestants were causing in France, I was extremely  
“ afflicted ; and, as if I had any power, or was anything,  
“ I wept before our Lord, beseeching Him to remedy so  
“ great an evil. It seemed to me that I could have given  
“ my life a thousand times for the salvation of even one  
“ of those unhappy souls, who were being lost in such  
“ great numbers. But seeing that I was only a woman,  
“ without worth, nor means to render any service in  
“ promoting the cause of our Saviour, I desired that,  
“ since there were so many enemies, and so few friends,  
“ these few at least should be good. I then resolved to  
“ perform the little in my power, that is, to follow with  
“ all possible perfection the evangelical counsels, and to  
“ engage the Sisters who are here to do the same. It  
“ seemed to me that, by devoting ourselves to continual  
“ prayers and supplications for those who fight the