

those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before; we were inquiring between ourselves of what sort the eternal life of the saints was to be; which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive?"

The saintly soul in the fulness of her joy uttered her *Nunc Dimittis*. "Son," she said, "I have no further need of anything in this life; my highest hopes are now fulfilled. What do I here any longer?" Within five days she fell ill of her mortal sickness. "Here shall you bury your mother," she said to her weeping son. When asked whether she shrank not from leaving her body so far from her native city where she had prepared a tomb beside that of her husband, she replied, "Nothing is far from God, nor is it to be feared that in the end of the world He shall not know whence to raise me up." With such holy words, in supreme content, the blessed spirit passed away. When the weeping of the mourners was assuaged, with tearful voices they softly chanted around the bier the words of the Psalter, "I will sing of mercy and judgment, to Thee, O Lord."

Amid the ruins of the crumbling port of Ostia is still pointed out the traditional tomb of Monica, where, through the long centuries of war and conflict that have rolled above her grave, her ashes peacefully await the resurrection of the just at the last great day.

The remaining forty-three years of the life of Augustine were passed in ascetic austerity and in zealous labours, with tongue and pen, in expounding, enforcing, and defending the doctrines of the Christian faith. He was called to the episcopate of the North African town of Hippo, and bore its burdens for five-and-thirty years of arduous toil. Every day, and sometimes twice a day, he preached to the faithful and disputed with heretics of every name. His rigid theological system is most strikingly developed in his controversy with the British heretic Pelagius. His noblest work, "*The City of God*" (*De Civitate Dei*), is the monument of highest genius of the ancient Church, and in its kind has never been surpassed. Its immediate occasion was one of the great epochal events in the history of the race—the fall of the Roman Empire and the capture of its capital by the Goths.

"*The City of God*," says Milman, "is at once the funeral oration of the

ancient society, the gratulatory panegyric on the birth of the new. It acknowledged, it triumphed in the irrevocable fall of the Babylon of the West, the shrine of idolatry; it hailed at the same time the universal dominion which awaited the new theocratic polity. The earthly city had undergone its predestined fate; it had passed away with all its vices and superstitions, with all its virtues and its glories (for the soul of Augustine was not dead to the noble reminiscences of Roman greatness), with its false gods and its heathen sacrifices: its doom was sealed, and for ever. But in its place had arisen the City of God, the Church of Christ; a new social system had emerged from the ashes of the old; that system was founded by God, was ruled by Divine laws, and had the Divine promise of perpetuity."

The writings of Augustine comprehend over two hundred and thirty separate treatises, most of which have been many times republished in ponderous tomes, and many of them have been translated into every European language. Their influence for fourteen centuries on the theology of Christendom has been unequalled by that of any other writer. The rigorous assertion of his theory of predestination arises doubtless from his early Manicheism, and from the virulence of the Pelagian controversy. "*The Church of Rome*," sneers Gibbon, "has canonized Augustine and reprobated Calvin, yet the real difference between them is invisible even to a theological microscope."

The death of this great man was worthy of his life. Genseric and his Vandals fell like a simoon on the North African provinces. With fire and sword they persecuted the churches as in the direst days of the pagan Emperors. Augustine refused to leave his flock, and while the Vandal army besieged the city of Hippo, he employed his strength only to calm the fears and sustain the faith of his brethren. His worn-out frame succumbed to the perils of the siege before its fall, and he was spared the spectacle of the desolation of his diocese. His end was one of pious ecstasy, and the tears of a weeping multitude attested the depth of their grief for his loss. His body was transported to Italy, and slumbers in the Cathedral of Pavia. His doctrine has leavened the thought of Christendom for centuries, and his piety has inspired the faith of generations to the present time.