

as regards the sacredness of the perpetual sacrament. So illogical and radically perverse are the first and second sentences of Mr. Storey's contribution that the reader becomes discouraged. However, in future issues we will continue the subject, as we wish to prove the absence of real knowledge of the subject on the part of certain secular and non-Catholic authors.

THE SUPERNATURAL.

In glancing over some of Aubrey De Vere's admirable and profound essays, we met with the following most comprehensive remark: "For some persons the Supernatural retains its charm only provided it can be dissociated from the glory of God and the good of man." True; and unfortunately the persons referred to are by no means the exceptions in the human family. Reflect, dear readers, upon that one sentence, examine it and turn it over carefully in your own minds, follow it out to its logical conclusions, and you will be astonished at the number of your friends and acquaintances to whom it applies; you will be even more surprised at the many ways in which it fits your own condition.

Man is possessed of finite faculties, but as every object in creation seeks to perform its mission, and as the end of man and the purpose of his creation must be to return eventually to the infinite source—God—from which he came, so the soul is ever athirst for the supernatural, the marvellous, the incomprehensible. We all love and seek knowledge; we all naturally incline towards the great mysteries behind, around and before us; we all desire to *know*, to have a proper conception of our origin, our actual surroundings and our future destiny. The inordinate desire of that universal knowledge brought sin into the world and all the consequences of sin. But the very yearning of the human soul for the infinite, for the supernatural, for a possession of a happiness away beyond the limits of this world's miseries, constitutes the grandest evidence of the immortality of our nobler part, the imperishability of that which is the image of God, and the existence of another life, another world, another order of being, and of an Almighty and all-absorbing Power upon which creation depends. Still so perverse is man—another consequence of sin—that he will gladly fly to any vulgar superstition, no matter how foolish it may be, and will cling to it with a confidence that borders on madness, while he will ignore and ridicule the mighty truths of revelation, the great dogmas of faith, the wondrous sources of all reasonable hope for here and hereafter. Let us look at the world to-day, in all its whirl of follies and insane ideas.

The doctrines of Christianity, with all their glorious mysteries are looked upon as the dreams of an effete superstition; while spiritualism, hypnotism, mesmerism, necromancy and all these thousand extravagances are looked upon as most sensible and merely the legitimate avenues of supernatural attainment. The perverse world has its own measure wherewith it gauges every action in life. To believe in the inspiration of the Scriptures and the infallibility of the Church, is superstition; to have faith in hypnotic influences, in the communications of mediums with devils and ghosts, is most rational and explained as supernatural. The Communion of Saints—that holy and consoling doctrine whereby we pray for the departed and plead for those suffering dear ones in purgatory—is common superstition; but to call upspooks to speak to the de-

parted by rapping on a table or by means of some equally silly incantations may be styled supernaturalism or some other "ism." Apparently sane people will not believe in the miracles at Lourdes, or the wonderful effects of contact with the actual relics of dead saints; they look upon these well-authenticated and humanly inexplicable facts as so many signs of a base and senseless superstition. Yet the same persons go into ecstasies over the advent of some necromancer or juggling medium, and with a confidence amounting to folly, they rush to the nearest fortune-teller to seek out the future, and guide their actions in life by omens, signs, warnings, dreams and all such phantasmagora. You may laugh at their belief in the mysteries of faith and they laugh with you; but the moment you dissent from their preternatural or fantastic opinion, they are up in arms and ready to defend their foolish and childish ideas with the energy of an apostle of some new faith. Catholics are countless who doubt the teachings of the Church on most important points and yet they have full confidence in the most insane theories of the first swindling mountebank magician that advertises himself in the town. They doubt the efficacy of prayer and they have no doubt in the efficacy of a spiritualist or some hypnotic operator; the "still small voice" of conscience goes unheeded, while the words of a mind-reader, who cleverly takes the money and laughs at his dupes, is barked to with faith.

Again we have people who claim that they pray constantly and are never rewarded: but they forget that prayer depends upon three conditions,—humility, sincerity, and a desire for the greater glory of God. How few pray for a grace, a gift or a favor in order to thereby attain—not their own happiness—but the glory of God! Still these same people will put faith in astrology and believe that some special combination of planets at some particular stage in their existence has an influence upon their lives. They grovel in that superstition, the most pagan and anti-Christian of superstitions, while they are ashamed of or lack confidence in the all-guiding Hand of God. The Church of Christ teaches that predestination is not compatible with the free will that God the Creator gave His Creature man; but many a Catholic believes the contrary or rather many a one professes to believe the teachings of the Church, while flying in the face of God and saying to Him, by their actions and theories: "No, you never gave man free will, you created him a slave, you bound him hand and foot to his destiny, you marked out what fortune and misfortune he must have, what wrongs he should commit, and you send him to hell for doing what you—unjust God that you are—forced him to do." Imagine the folly of the astrologer who talks of this or that planet guiding his fate: as if the Infinite Creator, in all the majesty of His sublime conception of the universe, gave to a material particle of that vast construction an influence upon the immaterial—the soul, the man, the being for whose soul all other objects were created and to which they are all but secondary. Imagine the human being, born to immortality, destined to live beyond the limits of time, to reign with God for all eternity, to go on in glorious life, when every material object, the earth, the sun, the moon, stars and all the objects of the universe shall have gone back to the dust, the chaos, the nothingness from which they were drawn; imagine that human being, made to the image of God, directed and guided by a star, his destiny

changed according to the regular revolutions of the heavenly bodies, that are millions of miles beyond even the range of vision, and God lowering His own image to the degree of a creature of destiny controlled by perishable and material portions of His vast creation. As well say: "God is the slave of His own material creation: He brings a soul into existence for His own glory; but yonder planet is greater than God, for it settles the fate of a being to whom He, in His bounty, gave a free will."

In a word, they who cry out "superstition" against the faithful believers in the supernatural glories of religion, are themselves the victims of a most pragmatic and degrading superstition.

BRO. AZARIAS DEAD.

As we go to press the sad news of the somewhat sudden death of Rev. Brother Azarias, of the De La Salle Institute, New York, has reached us. The sorrowful event took place at the Lake Champlain Hotel, Plattsburg, where the learned and saintly religious has been staying since the opening of the Summer School. Only a couple of weeks ago did we publish a synopsis of his magnificent lectures delivered during the session of the Summer School, that has just closed; only a week previous did we give our readers, from the pen of our able correspondent Walter Lecky, a splendid article upon Brother Azarias and his great work "Phases of Thought"; only the other day did hundreds sit on the seats of the Summer School, and drink in full draughts of knowledge and wisdom from the inexhaustible fountain of his erudition; and to-day the eloquent tongue is silent, the keenly critical and deeply philosophical mind is at rest, and the great, good, noble and pure heart of the foremost educator of America has ceased forever to beat.

Great God! How wonderful are Thy ways, and how inscrutable Thy designs! The lofty pine on the mountain is felled to earth by the lightning stroke, while the willow and the shrub remain untouched and undisturbed by the tempest; the sky-piercing spire is shattered, while the poor and insignificant cottage is saved from the convulsions that rock the earth. The giant of intellect, that has wrestled with the mighty problems of the ages in the arena of learning, is called from the scene of his labors and triumphs, even when his strength is greatest and his work becoming most effective, while we—poor, unimportant and feeble creatures—are permitted to go on through the mazes of life. Who can explain such wonderful, such mysterious purposes? We can but bow to that Supreme and All-Wise Ruler of the heavens and the earth, and acknowledge our insignificance in presence of His Majesty!

This is not a time for cold biography, nor is the place for an appreciation of that grand life, so lately brought to a close; while yet surrounded by the cloud of sorrow, that has shadowed the bright sky of Catholic literature, we can only pause, look on, adore and be silent. As Duffy said of Davis, so say we of Azarias: "It is not Death alone, but Time and Death that canonize the patriot. We are yet too near to see his proportions rightly." It is only when the "calmness of grief," in its depth and stillness comes to us, that we Catholics will feel able to contemplate the one that has departed and to judge of him impartially. To-day we can feel only the keen sense of a great and irreplaceable loss. It is almost as the child who has lost a father; the little creature knows that there is grief in the household, but it is only in after years that he

will learn what a fearful calamity has befallen him. We have but a moment at our disposal, as our form goes to press, but we snatch that moment to extend our sincere and heartfelt sympathy to the bereaved relatives of the beloved deceased. And while they feel most bitterly the loss, there is another, a larger family that mourns to-day one of the brightest ornaments it ever possessed—we refer to the Christian Brothers, of which community he was a member. His own immediate relatives, his brothers in religion, the Catholic Church at large, and every member of that Holy Institution, as well as every friend of education and lover of the good, the pure, the noble in literature and in the realms of thought—all feel the loss and all stand mute, but prayerful, over the ashes of that worthy son of the Blessed De La Salle.

But while the mists of natural sorrow hang upon the horizon of the present and lower in darkening aspect upon the hopes that had been formed for the future, high up in the pure sky, away in the immeasurable firmament of the soul, shines undimmed and inextinguishable the glorious orb of Truth. The finely tempered blade of a superior mind has worn out the scabbard of mortal clay that held it, and in the full blaze of that glittering sun, it now flashes victoriously. The Church Militant has lost a soldier, a captain, a hero; the Church Triumphant has gained an immortal saint to join in the glorious pageant that will, for unending cycles, go marching, in sublime review and under the eye of God, adown the vastness of Eternity.

Let us treasure his memory, collect his works, reap the harvest he has sown, and pay the tribute that he most would desire, the tribute of prayer for his soul! We have no fear to-day of shocking the humility that hid so much greatness beneath the cloak of a friar; he is now beyond the influence of praise; let us then perform what would have been his will—namely to profit by his labors for the good of souls and the glory of God.

"Dust unto dust!"

He died as becometh the faithful and just, placing in God his reliance and trust."

CATHOLIC SAILORS' CLUB.

THE following letter, signed Amable Kerr, and addressed to the London Universe, from Cromwell Road, S. W., London, on July 23, is an evidence that a Catholic Sailors' club is in contemplation in the great metropolis. In Montreal—thanks to the Catholic Truth Society—we are ahead of the Catholics of London. Who knows but the suggestion may have come from some one who has visited the Montreal Catholic Sailors' club. The letter runs thus:—

"SIR,—It has been determined to open a club for Catholic merchant seamen near the London and St. Catherine's Docks, the object being to make a beginning towards supplying a want acutely felt.

The number of Catholic sailors who annually land at the docks has been roughly put at 10,000, and hitherto there has been no centre where they can meet, or be met by, Catholics, or where, above all, they can be brought into touch with the local clergy. Even for the small beginning contemplated the sum of at least £200 is needed for the first year only, and it is to raise this sum that the present appeal is made.

A house has been secured in a suitable situation, but the only sum at present forthcoming is £20, contributed by the committee towards the expenses of furnishing, and it is hoped that all interested in the welfare of Catholic seamen will come forward promptly and generously, so that this desirable work may be started without delay. As treasurer to the committee for supplying literature to Catholic seamen, I shall be very glad to receive donations for the above object."