

we have an inclination to judge our neighbor in thought and word and to hold him in contempt ; secondly, the inebriation of a weak mind and a heart filled with vanity. The influence of good thoughts and spiritual consolations received in the time of prayer produce this effect ; thirdly, the singularity of a mind gifted with great activity, but superficial and full of self-confidence ; fourthly, a love of change, with its innumerable plans and short-lived resolutions. This counterfeit fervor does much harm through the disedification it causes, and the errors it bears in its train. It throws discredit on piety by its whims and inconstancy. It must be remarked that fervor is not transitory, a phase of the noviciate or of our spiritual education : it constitutes a permanent state. It is not the passing effervescence which accompanies a conversion. Fervor coming from God is lasting. It may in youth be indiscreet ; but the influence of the Divine impulse will always be felt ; and that which the hand of God has touched remains sanctified.

How many pious persons looking back on the past, regret the purity of intention, simplicity of heart and good will, which marked their beginnings, notwithstanding their imperfections, and which have not been followed by greater things. Fervor never cools ; rather does it augment without ceasing. Its characteristic trait is to grow rapidly. As a stone falls with greater rapidity as it approaches the earth, so fervor develops by its practice and by its acts. It is even sometimes given to the Christian to have a presentiment of death, by his progress in virtue. It seems then that the soul hastens to consume itself in the flames of Divine love.

The seraphic Francis of Assisium, towards the end of his life, was more anxious than ever, to adorn his soul with virtues. " Let us begin to serve the Lord our God," said he to his brethren, " for hitherto, we have done scarcely anything." It may be said that habitual fervor is the normal state of a saint, who refuses nothing that God may