

softness? So far from gaining anything, we have become a degenerate race unfamiliar with the spirit of resistance and sacrifice, and easily vanquished when the day of battle arrives.

The early Christians were of a different stamp. Even young virgins and weak children resisted the world's seductions, braved the cruelty of tyrants, lived and died as heroes! They were whole-hearted Christians.

Why do we but rarely see Christians like these in our own days? What is there that existed then that does not exist now? Is there less strength infused in us by baptism now than then? Has the Church ceased to lend us efficacious aid in our struggles? And are the dangers around us less real than those of former times, different though their nature be? We know not when the hour of strife may come nor in how many and various ways our faith may be assailed. It behoves us then to be constantly furnished with offensive and defensive weapons.

These weapons can be found only in the armory of penance and self-denial; they must be tempered in the fire of sacrifice, and it is by the virtue of the Cross alone that we can wield them victoriously. Let us not be afraid and tremble at these words, but let us remember that penance and self-denial, like all that emanates from Calvary, hides ineffable sweetness beneath a hard or rough exterior.

And is not penance necessary? Which is without sin among us? Which of us is not a debtor to divine justice in a greater or lesser degree? Now, by patiently bearing some physical pain, some mental trouble, some contradiction, some anxiety of mind, some of the thousand and one little trials with which life abounds, is it not easy to pay our debt towards God, at least in part?

Why should we be so insensate as to neglect these precious opportunities of expiating our many offences, and instead of bravely accepting and offering them, as a Christian should, why should we behave as Pagan