

of men, he became an expounder of the laws of God. His fame spread far and wide. Disciples came to Milan from many distant points. Prominent among his followers appears St. Augustine, who, first attracted by the brilliant horatory, gradually drank in the true meaning of his words.

St. Ambrose was indefatigable in upholding the honor and dignity of our holy mother the Church. Indeed, his whole life was a constant warfare. Always, however, he battled with the old enemy, Arianism, who, though frequently defeated, for a long time seemingly could not be destroyed. St. Ambrose stood firm as a rock. He bore the brunt of the conflict and before he died he could complacently gaze upon the ruins of the enemy.

St. Ambrose was likewise zealous in upholding the disciplinary regulations of the Holy Church. He braved the anger of the emperors, aye, even death itself, sooner than yield an inch of what he felt convinced was demanded of him by duty. In this conflict he was again the victorious standard-bearer of the Church.

St. Ambrose gave instructions to Christians in the different states of life. Especially was he unceasing in his praises of the beauty of virginity. His words were not without effect, for hundreds of virgins forsook all and everything worldly to follow his counsels. It is related that many mothers prohibited their daughters from attending his sermons, fearing the effect of his exhortations. He wrote three books on "Virgins and Virginity." He also gave special exhortations to widows.

St. Ambrose was not only an author of many works on the fundamental doctrines of the Church, but he also wrote many beautiful and classical

hymns that have been immortalized in the Roman Breviary.

The importance of this great man was universally recognized. He was in personal correspondence with all the bishops and influential men of his time. His splendid qualities were conceded by all. When St. Ambrose lay on his death bed, the Emperor Honorius sent a messenger through his prime minister, asking him to importune heaven to prolong his life. "For," said the emperor, "on the day that this great man dies, the ruin of our country is complete." St. Ambrose died on the night of Holy Saturday, April 4, A.D. 397. Time proved how true was the emperor's estimate of the value of the saint to the country.

What are the practical lessons to be drawn from the perusal of this short sketch of St. Ambrose? They are:

First: Above all, we must imitate the great charity of our saint. His life was a life of charity. He sacrificed himself for his people. When he sank into his grave he had hardly passed the prime of life. But he died cheerfully, knowing that his charity would be rewarded by his Master. In response to the message of the Emperor Honorius, noted above, he answered: "I have not so behaved myself amongst you that I should be ashamed to live longer, nor am I afraid to die, because we have a good Master."

Second: He was also our model in the fulfilment of our duty. "*Zelo zelatus sum pro Domino Deo Exercituum:*" "With great zeal have I been filled for the Lord God of hosts." He would not allow anyone or anything to keep him from performing what he considered his duty. His courage was proof against human fear or human respect. In short, he personified Christian fortitude.