

blessed martyrs," exclaims St. Cyprian, (1) "with what words shall I praise ye; oh bravest soldiers, how shall I extol the fortitude of your hearts!" Yet not every martyrdom is a proof of truth, my dear brethren, but only that which proceeds from Christian faith and charity. Only where divine truth and divine love are the sources of the martyr's constancy under torture and in death, is he a true witness for the faith. Men have suffered death for erroneous opinions, through pride or natural obstinacy, but such are unlike the martyrs of Christ. "If I should deliver my body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing," says St. Paul. (2) "The mother of martyrdom," says one of the fathers, "is Catholic faith, to which illustrious athletes have subscribed with their blood." (3) Martyrdom is the most perfect act of the greatest of the moral virtues, obedience; for it is like that of Christ, obedience even unto death. (4) It is also the most perfect act of the chief of the theological virtues, charity; for it is the sacrifice to God of all that man holds most dear, the sacrifice of

(1) *Epistola ad martyres.*

(2) *I Cor. xiii., 13.*

(3) *Maximus.*

(4) *Philip. ii. 8.*