

world acknowledges and praises him. But what is he in the balance of heaven? What shall we say of God's judgment of him? What about his soul?—about his soul? Ah, his soul! he had forgotten that, he had forgotten he had a soul, but it remains from first to last in the sight of its Maker. *Posuisti seculum nostrum in illuminatione, vultus Tui;* "Thou hast placed our life in the illumination of Thy countenance." Alas! alas! about his soul the world knows; the world cares, nought; it does not recognize the soul; it owns nothing in him but an intellect manifested in a mortal frame; it cares for the man while he is here, it loses sight of him when he is there; he is going out of sight, amid the shadows of that unseen world, about which the visible world is so sceptical; so, it concerns us who have a belief of that unseen world, to inquire, How fares it all this while with his soul? Alas! he has had pleasures and satisfactions in life, he has a good name among men, he sobered his views as life went on, and he began to think that order and religion were good things, that a certain deference was to be paid to the religion of his country, and a certain attendance to be given to its public worship; but he is still, in our Lord's words, nothing else but a whitened sepulchre; he is foul within with the bones of the dead and all uncleanness. All the sins of his youth, never repented of, never put away, his old profaneness, his impurities, his animosities, his idolatries are rotting within him; only covered over and hidden by successive layers of newer and later sins. His heart is the home of darkness, it has been tainted, handled, possessed by evil spirits; he is a being without faith, and without hope; if he holds any thing for truth, it is only as an opinion, and if he has a sort of calmness and peace, it is the calmness not of heaven, but of decay and dissolution. And now his old enemy has thrust aside his good angel, and is sitting near him; rejoicing in his victory, and patiently waiting for his prey; not tempting him to fresh sins lest he should disturb his conscience, but simply letting well alone; letting him amuse himself with shadows of faith, shadows of piety, shadows of worship; aiding him readily in dressing himself up in some form of religion which may satisfy the weakness of his declining age, as knowing well that he cannot last long, that his death is a matter of time, and that he shall soon be able to carry him down with him to his fiery dwelling.

O how awful! and at last the inevitable hour is come. He dies—he dies quietly—his friends are satisfied about him. They return thanks that God has taken him, has released him from the troubles of life and the pains of sickness; "a good father," they say, "a good neighbor," "sincerely lamented," "lamented by a large circle of friends;" perhaps they add, "dying with a firm trust in the mercy of God." Nay, he has need of some attribute which is inconsistent with perfection, and which is not, cannot be, in the All-glorious, All-holy God; "with a trust in the promises of the Gospel," which never were his, or were early forfeited. And then, as time travels on, every now and then is heard some passing remembrance of him, respectful or tender; but he all the while (in spite of this false world, and though its children will not have it so, and exclaim, and protest, and are indignant when so solemn a truth is hinted at) long ago he has lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and "lies buried in hell."

Such is the history of a man in a state of nature, or in a state of defection, to whom the Gospel has never been a reality, in whom the good seed has never taken root, on whom God's grace has been shed in vain, with whom it has never prevailed so far as to make him seek His face and to ask for those higher gifts which lead to heaven. Such is his dark record. But I have spoken of only one man: alas! my dear brethren, it is the record of thousands; it is, in one shape or other, the record of all the children of the world. "As soon as they are born," the wise man says, "they forthwith have ceased to be, and they are powerless to show any sign of virtue, and are wasted away in their wickedness." They may be rich or poor, learned or ignorant, polished or rude, decent outwardly and self-disciplined, or scandalous in their lives,—but at bottom they are all one and the same; they have not faith, they have not love; they are impure, or they are proud, commonly they are both together; they agree together very well, both in opinions and in conduct; they see that they agree; and this agreement they take as a proof that their conduct is right and their opinions true. Such as is the tree, such is the fruit; no wonder the fruit is the same, when it comes of the same root of unregenerate, unrenewed nature; but they consider it good and wholesome, because it is the produce of many hearts; and they chase away as odious, unbearable, and horrible, the pure and heavenly doctrine of Revelation, because it is so severe upon themselves. No one likes bad news, no one welcomes what condemns him; the world slanders the Truth in self-defence, because the Truth denounces the world.

My brethren, if these things be so, or rather (for this is the point here), if we, Catholics, firmly believe them to be so, so firmly believe them, that we feel it would be our duty to die sooner than doubt them, is it wonderful, does it require any abstruse explanation, that such as we should come into the midst of a population such as this, and into a neighborhood where religious error has sway, and where corruption of life prevails both as its cause and as its consequence;—a population, not worse indeed than the rest of the world, but not better, not better because it has not in it the gift of Catholic truth, not purer because it has not within it that gift of grace which alone can destroy impurity; a population, sinful, I am certain, given to unlawful indulgences, laden with guilt and exposed to eternal ruin, because it is not blessed with that Presence of the Word Incarnate, which diffuses sweetness and tranquillity and chastity over the heart;—is it a

thing to be marvelled at, that we begin to preach to such a population as this, for which Christ died, and try to convert it to Him and to His Church? Is it necessary to ask for reasons? is it necessary to assign motives of this world, for a proceeding which is so natural in those who believe in the announcements and requirements of the other? My dear brethren, if we are sure that the Most Holy Redeemer has shed His blood for all men, is it not a very plain and simple consequence that we, His servants, His brethren, His priests, should be unwilling to see that blood shed in vain,—wasted, I may say,—as regards you, and should wish to make you partakers of those benefits which we ourselves enjoy? Is it necessary for any bystander to call us vainglorious, or ambitious, or restless, greedy of authority, fond of power, resentful, party spirited, or the like, when here is so much more powerful, more present, more influential a motive to which our eagerness and zeal may be ascribed? What is so powerful and incentive to preaching as the sure belief that it is the preaching of the truth? What so constrains to the conversion of souls, as the consciousness that they are at present in guilt and peril? What so great a persuasive to bring men into the Church, as the conviction that it is the special means by which God effects the salvation of those, whom the world trains in sin and unbelief? Only admit us to believe what we profess, and surely that is not asking a great deal, (for what have we done that we should be distrusted?) only admit us to believe what we profess, and you will understand without difficulty what we are doing. We come among you, because we believe that there is but one way of salvation, marked out from the beginning, and that you are not walking along it; we come among you as ministers of that extraordinary grace of God, which you need; we come among you because we have received a great gift from God ourselves, and wish you to be partakers of our joy; because it is written, "Freely ye have received, freely give;" because we dare not hide in a napkin those mercies, and that grace of God, which have been given us, not for our sake only, but for the benefit of others.

Such a zeal, poor and feeble though it be in us, has been the very life of the Church, and the breath of her preachers and missionaries in all ages. It was such a sacred fire which brought our Lord from heaven, and which He desired, which He travailed, to communicate to all around Him. "I am come to send fire on the earth," He says, "and what will I, but that it be kindled?" Such too was the feeling of the great Apostle to whom his Lord appeared in order to impart to him this fire. "I send thee to the Gentiles," He said to Him on his conversion, "to open their eyes, that they may be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." And accordingly he at once began to preach to them, that they should do penance, and turn to God with worthy fruits of penance, "for," as he says, "the love of Christ urged him," and he was "made all things to all that he might save all," and he "bore all for the elect's sake, that they might obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with heavenly glory." Such too was the fire of zeal which burned within those preachers, to whom we English owe our Christianity. What brought them from Rome to this distant isle, and to a barbarian people, amid many fears and with much suffering, but the sovereign uncontrollable desire to save the perishing, and to knit the members and slaves of Satan into the body of Christ? This has been the secret of the propagation of the Church from the very first, and will be to the end; this is why the Church, under the grace of God, to the surprise of the world, converts the nations; and no sect can do the like: this is why Catholic missionaries throw themselves so generously among the fiercest savages and risk the most cruel torments, as knowing the worth of the soul, as realizing the world to come, as loving their brethren dearly, though they never saw them, as shuddering at the thought of eternal woe, and as desiring to increase the fruit of their Lord's passion and the triumphs of His grace.

We, my brethren, are not worthy to be named in connexion with Evangelists, Saints, and Martyrs; we come to you in a peaceable time and in a well-ordered state of society, and recommended by that secret awe and reverence, which, say what they will, Englishmen for the most part or in good part, feel for the religion of their fathers, which has left in the land so many memorials of its former sway. It requires no great zeal in us, no great charity, to come to you at no risk, and entreat you to turn from the path of death and be saved. It requires nothing great, nothing heroic, nothing saint-like; it does but require conviction, and that we have, that the Catholic religion is from God, and all other religions are but mockeries; it requires nothing more than faith, a single purpose, an honest heart, and a distinct utterance. We come to you in the name of God; we ask no more of you, than that you would listen to us; we ask no more than that you judge for yourselves whether or not we speak God's words; it shall rest with you whether we be God's priests and prophets or no. This is not much to ask, but it is more than most men will grant; they do not dare to listen to us, they are impatient through prejudice, or they dread conviction. Yes! many a one there is, who has even good reason to listen to us, on whom we have a claim to be heard, who ought to have a certain trust in us, who yet shuts his ears, and turns away, and chooses to hazard eternity without weighing what we have to say. How frightful is this! but you are not, you cannot be such; we ask not your confidence, my brethren, for you have never known us; we are not asking you to take for granted what we say, for we are strangers to you; we do but simply bid you first to consider that you have souls to be saved, and next to judge for yourselves, whether, if God has revealed a religion of His own whereby to serve those souls, that religion can be any other than the faith which we preach.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

ST. PHILIP NERI AND THE ORATORIAN.

(From the Tablet of August 3.)

That the great Apostle of Rome, St. Philip Neri, is at present, from his throne of intercession in Heaven, exercising a remarkable influence on behalf of the Catholic Church in England, few observers of the state of religion will be disposed to doubt. Were it only the fact that some of the most powerful, devout, and generous minds among the recent converts have been congregated in his Order, this would be enough to show that England is indebted in a peculiar manner to that blessed Saint. Those conversions were indeed most unexpected and singular instances of grace, and, whatever circumstances characterized the movements which led to them, deserve attention and have their meaning. But, surely, there is more in it than the simple fact to which we have alluded. A particular Saint, hitherto not of extraordinary celebrity in England, suddenly comes into notice. He stands at the head of a body of religious men, who speak as his children; he energises by them; his name symbolises an extremely active system of operations carried on for gaining souls to the Catholic Church and rescuing Catholics themselves from the dominion of sin or the jaws of infidelity. Thus it is with the blessed Saints. They are not dead—or, rather, in death their real life has begun. Their relics are mighty—their spirits are full of influence and power. St. Peter is, in an eminent degree, an example of this throughout the whole history of the Church. When the Pope speaks, it is Peter who speaks; Peter, in fact, still governs the Church originally entrusted to him, and it is to Peter's chair we look when the Holy Father, as at this moment, is about to define any dogmas of the Catholic Faith. The Catholic Church speaks of Peter exactly as if he were (as, indeed, he is) still living and seated on his throne. So it is with the other Saints. No matter to whom we have a devotion, our Patron Saint will be near us, and sometimes startle us with what, in one point of view, is only a sweet and gracious coincidence, but which, to the eye of Faith, indicates that knowledge and love which the Saints possess by continually beholding the Blessed Vision of God. To have this fact drawn out in its fulness in regard to any one of those great patriarchs by whom the Most High moulds or changes the mind of whole orders, nations, or even ages, is full of edification; and we need only mention such names as St. Benedict, St. Francis, St. Ignatius, St. Teresa, St. Alphonsus, and the like, and all that has been done in this way by their holy biographers suggests itself. It is the object of the remarkable work which has suggested this article, not merely to show that St. Philip Neri's intercession is at this moment effecting great things in the world, that it is unspent, or rather not withdrawn; but that, in a particular manner, his spirit and genius are fitted to effect those very things, and do effect them, by their singular adaptation to the spirit of the age, and of the English nation, by their power of seizing it, and making it do exactly the work destined for it by Almighty wisdom, as other ages and nations, in the history of Catholicity, have done theirs.

To accomplish this object, the Saint must evidently have been, in a singular degree, an imitation and expression of our Lord—which, of course, all Saints are, though some of them seem to be intended to preach one heroic virtue by example, and others another. Thus St. Aloysius is a very type of youthful purity, the St. John of modern times; St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi was called "the charity of the monastery;" holy silence was witnessed to by the martyrdom of St. John Nepomucene; and so for the rest. But those saints who seem to gather up a whole age into themselves, and to stand forth as the shining ideas of Christian perfection in general, do so in virtue of their being, so to speak, "portraits of Jesus" in their entire aspect—which, indeed, all Saints are, yet according to their various offices in the grand system of intercession. Such have been the founders of orders, great and heroic prodigies of holiness, called forth by God's Providence each in their own age—in one sense, the children of their age—partaking of its characteristics, and influencing it in their turn, but showing forth to that age the example of Christ, moving about in it like so many copies and images of Christ. Thus the feeble will and dull perception of humanity is helped onwards to that which is invisible.

The writer, therefore, having to show that St. Philip Neri's particular phase of saintliness makes him peculiarly adapted to the devotion of modern times—and, above all, of England—rightly begins by pointing out in what way this great Saint was an imitation of Christ. He makes this imitation to consist mainly in the fact that St. Philip was in so wonderful a manner at once a *viator* and a *comprehensor*—that is to say, that, like our Lord, he at once journeyed on earth and tasted the things of Heaven, living a life at once as ordinary as the most prosaic of the lives of the saints, and as abundant in the marvellous and supernatural as those of the most heroic—the Fathers of the Desert, or saints in later ages, in whom miraculous agency seemed a sort of efflux and spontaneous energy. He then enters into the biography of St. Philip, and points out other resemblances, such as his adopting not the exclusively active, nor yet the studiously contemplative life, but the mixed life, which St. Thomas considered the most perfect of all; his ardent desire for the conversion of the far-off Indies, and yet his perseverance in the charge over the sheep of the Holy City; his special and supernatural devotion to the Third Person of the Most Holy Trinity;

his forming a school of men by the system of discipleship, yet without drawing up any formal rule; his seeking out for sinners; his strange insight into the hidden thoughts of men; the mysterious way in which his character was never completely understood, even by those who knew himself most familiarly—all this the Oratorian poet and preacher draws with wonderful fertility and beauty. We must not omit to mention an extremely picturesque parallel drawn in this sense between St. Philip and St. Francis, and to which the writer afterwards recurs with a kind of fondness:—

I will illustrate what I meant by an example. Shortly after the middle of the fourteenth century, the city of Siena, in Tuscany, even yet a strange medieval-looking place, seen far and wide with its uneven cluster of topheavy towers, sent forth into Italy, by a providential banishment, a little band of exiles, drawn in great measure from the middle classes. They were headed by the Blessed John Colombini. All they wanted was to be like Jesus; they were called Gesualti, from His name. The Blessed John went over hill and dale with his followers; they preached in the fields and in the streets; their sermons, as we read them in the pure old Italian at this day, were full of the unearthly sweetness and savoryunction of the discourses of our Lord. When they came to a town, they cried out, "Viva Gesù!" and when the startled inhabitants came out to look at these strange hermits, they preached repentance and the sweetness of Jesus. They were the poorest of earth's poor, yet kinder to the poor than the rich or noble were. When driven out of one city they betook them to another. Siena was their Nazareth, and Arezzo their Capernaum; and they had their Bethany, and their Bethphage, and their Bethsaida, and the rest, in Lucca, and in Pisa, in Pistoja and in Florence, in Corneto and Viterbo. And so they wandered on: their only passion was to be like Jesus. They were taken up as heretics: but the Cardinal of Marseilles and the Inquisitor acquitted them of the charge. Then Pope Urban favored them, and gave them a habit, and made them a religious Order, and they called themselves the "Poor Little Ones of Jesus." The blue waves of the Lake of Bolsena, with its heavenly island, and the fairy-land round about—these were to them the Lake of Tiberias, with its riodendron-covered shores. And they were blessed by God, because of their simplicity, and He gave a marvellous power to their interior doctrine; and barons and peasants, nay, churchmen and prelates too, were pricked to the heart, and put on the yoke of Christ, and paid obedience to the Blessed John and his rough Apostles. At last a fever came, and in the city of Aquapendente, a green, quiet, beautiful spot on the confines of the Papal states, the Blessed John gave back his soul to God, and went to see him whom he had been trying to copy with all the peculiar picturesque simplicity of the Middle Ages. Those ages present few pictures equal in beauty to that depicted in the tender quaint old Chronicle of the Blessed Colombini, and it was a book St. Philip was constantly fingering, and recommended to others as a simple tale that had the power to laugh all pride to scorn. Now, this was a copy of Jesus in a pictorial way, and in the external, objective style of medieval art. When I call St. Philip a copy of Jesus, I do not mean this, but something deeper and more significant.

We are then taken, in a second Lecture, over the field of modern times, as contrasted in character with the earlier ages of the Church; the age of the Catacombs; the Byzantine era; the medieval times; and, lastly, the Tridentine, which may still be regarded as the times in which we live. Changing circumstances, the phenomena on which the eternal principles of Catholicity had to operate, unquestionably have marked out the history of the Church into such epochs; and the sternness of a time and persecution, with its *disciplina arcanti* for the catechumens, and its severe penances for the relapsed, differed from an age of triumph, mingled with internal agitation, like that of the early Councils, as the latter differed from the gorgeous external development of the Church of the Innocents and Gregories, and that once more from the rich dogmatical expansion which has arisen from the conflict of Protestantism. Father Faber, with much originality of thought, points out the further distinction, of that spirit of love which carries out into action the great dogmatical decrees of the Church, which devises fresh and fresh applications of great Sacramental principles—the Perpetual Adoration for instance, the Quarant' Ore, the Benediction; and for the *cultus* of the Blessed Virgin, the Month of Mary, the devotion to the Immaculate Heart, and many others—all partaking of a certain character of freedom and joyousness, which the present epoch, in one sense, unquestionably exhibits, though it, too, may be viewed on its gloomy side. *Circumdanda varietatibus*; times change, the world grows worse; and yet she, the daughter of the King, shines more and more, as ages go on, and add successive Saints, and the virtues of successive generations of the Faithful, to that crown which shall adorn her in the heavenly Jerusalem.

But to proceed: Father Faber sketches in an extremely suggestive way several points in which the present times, to a Catholic, differ from other times. Such are the two features we have mentioned; the increase of dogma and consequent enlargement of ceremonial; the fading away of nationalities by the progress of civilisation, and the incessantly increasing facilities of transit—a thing certainly most providential, when we reflect if Australia, for instance, had been colonised in mediæval times, how enormous would have been its distance from the Chair of Peter; again, the manifest greater hold now possessed by the principle of Ultramontanism, both from this and other causes, the immense increase in the numbers of the Catholic Episcopate; the absolute and relative increase of the Catholic population over the world; and lastly, above all, for the object of the Lecture before us, the increased *subjectivity* of modern times; such are some of the points in reference to which the Oratorian looks upon his great Patriarch as peculiarly the Saint of modern times, as peculiarly qualified to deal with and impress them. It is on the last head—viz., that of the *subjectivity* of modern times—that he appears to us to argue most successfully. It

*Spirit and Genius of St. Philip Neri, Founder of the Oratory. By Frederick W. Faber, Priest of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri. London: Burns and Lambert, 1850.