

"You are quite right."

"Very well, I understand how the work is done. But have you any objection to hear some difficulties that I have thought of?"

"Not the slightest. I shall be glad to answer any questions you ask."

"Well, first, it seems too much to expect that one should mark down every prayer he says, every aspiration for God's help, every good act he does."

"Yes, that would be excessive, and that is not required. But it is not too much to mark the occasional acts you do, or the special prayers you say, for the Particular Intentions given in the MESSENGER Calendar. For every such act or prayer, remember, the Holy See grants an Indulgence of 100 days."

"Ah! that indulgence is valuable and naturally inspires one with a desire to gain it. But now, can you say that saints, or good Christians, have ever been accustomed to count their acts of virtue, just almost as if they were keeping a Cash Book in a merchant's office?"

"I think I can answer, yes, to that question. St. John Climachus is reckoned among the Fathers of the Church, and he says that a Christian who is zealous for his spiritual advancement will daily examine his conscience so as to imitate the example of an excellent Book-Keeper. As such a Book-Keeper must mark through the hours his receipts and expenses, in order to know how he stands at the end of the day, so the earnest Christian must be solicitous and must call himself to account for each hour as it passes, and thus become a good Book-Keeper of his actions, of his spiritual profit and loss. (*Scat. Parad. Grad. IV. nn. 88.94.*) Again, the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius is a volume of which the Church has declared that 'all exercises therein, and each of them in particular, are extremely useful and excellently well fitted to promote the advancement of the soul in piety and holiness.' Now this book explains and