

I. The Dispute of the Blessed Sacrament.

COPY OF

RAPHAEL'S FRESCOS

Placed on the wall above the main entrance of the chapel of our Lady of the Sacred Heart, Notre-Dame Church. (22x18 feet.)

This painting, commonly known as *The Dispute of the Blessed Sacrament*, represents the grandest scene that can be conceived by the imagination or brought under our view.

The action takes place simultaneously in heaven and upon the earth; nevertheless it is one. It figures Jesus-Christ triumphing in heaven and, on earth, hidden in the Eucharist; but on earth as in heaven, everything is centered in Christ and shows clearly that he truly is the Alpha and the Omega of all things.

Rio, in his work on *Christian Art*, says that this composition is without a rival in the whole history of Painting: "In whatever age or school where one would like to find a point of comparison to furnish an idea of this truly wonderful work, it would be difficult to meet in the whole domain of ideal and mystical art anything to surpass it. Any spectator, previously initiated into the mysteries and essentials of the religious ideal, will give a preference to this fresco, not only over the others of Raphael, but even over his most deservedly admired paintings, the famous Transfiguration itself included."

After this general glance, a few special explanations will throw more light on this remarkable work.

At the top of the scene above appears the Eternal Father. Full of majesty and grandeur, with his right hand he blesses and with his left holds up the world. Multitudes of angels radiate around him, and cherubs, who seem to be moving within that brilliant sphere, form his court. But if the Eternal created all things for his