

APRIL 23, 1904.

PHASES IN THE LIFE OF ST. CATHERINE OF SIENNA.

FEAST, APRIL 30. The Dominicans.

Reading the life of St. Catherine, for the first time, one phase of it, her mystic personal communication with her Saviour and His elect in Heaven, seems so utterly opposed to the spirit of the present age that even, through the light of faith, we look upon her with wonder, but with no real understanding of her character, no intrinsic sympathy with her experiences.

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What the authority of the Church has declared, we, of faith, accept unquestioningly; we bow submissively to her judgment; we acknowledge that the saint was most highly and most wonderfully favored.

As the skillful workman chooses none but perfect tools for his finest work, so God, in His masterpiece, the salvation of souls, will have no blunted instrument, no flaws in the metal, and we also "have often been tried, and found wanting."

One of the first lessons taught in the spiritual life is that of utter renunciation of all attachment to creatures. The practical application of this principle is that we must put aside all love for created beings and center every movement of the heart in God.

To us it seems that the keynote both of the command of God and of the spiritual principle already mentioned is "love"; the apparent discord must result from an ill-executed and unskillful rendering of a divine harmony.

Christ was the Model for each and every state of life; the Master, the Teacher, and oneless above all others was His daily exhortation, "Love one another." Now what did He mean by "love?" His word was to all time, to all peoples; not to the school-man, the theologian. To the people, the unlearned, common words would have had common significance.

It was love always that was to be given, but a wider application of its influence was enjoined. Men may have perceived the word as to degrade what is highest and holiest, but we cannot believe that Christ, Who came to clear away the mists of centuries, would have left in His teachings obscurity and misconception.

The many degrees of love are conceded; and still it is love. To God we give its highest and fullest perfection, and we call it adoration. In some languages the word that expresses the deepest human love would read, literally translated into ours, "to adore."

By God's own commandment we must give to His creatures, also, love—not His, but as great as that we are to give to ourselves.

At the Day's Closing. The day is ended—its work is done—it befits thee, O my soul, before thou givest thyself to repose, to ask if that work has been well done.

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ing through the agency of a created will.

It must be true that no merely natural perfection can merit these extraordinary outpourings of special grace. It, from the dawn of reason, we had responded to the moving of each inspiration, worked out each prompting of God's Spirit; it, in the chain of duties, no least link were missing, nor even then should we deserve, nor might we expect as a right, that God would grant to our corporeal vision the sight of one of the least of His heavenly ministrants.

But may we not believe that such a perfect fidelity to His graces might not win from Him some such ineffable boon; some glimpse of that Divine Beauty for which our soul longs and sighs, without which it cannot and will not be comforted; towards which, amidst the darkness of earth's cloudy cares, it ever turns in yearning desire, and which in rare moments of God's special mercy, it discerns dimly as through a veil, in holy prayer?

We know that to each of us is given the supernatural strength necessary for a full correspondence with the special inspirations of the Holy Spirit at any particular moment.

St. Catherine presents a most perfect exemplification of this epitome of the commandments. Her union with the will of God was miraculously absolute and unchanging; her love for her neighbor, divinely beautiful, tender, all comprehending.

In our own day, we should say that she possessed a wonderful personal magnetism. It is impossible to meet her and not to love her. The high, the low, the rich and powerful, the ruler and the subject, the churchman and the laic, each lays his grain of incense on the altar of her memory.

It would be impossible to cite a life fuller than hers of personal and friendly relationships, founded either on relationship or special preference.

THEO. NOEL, Geologist, C. R. Dept, Yonge & Temperance Streets, TORONTO, ONT.

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