

## THE IMITATION OF CHRIST.

Of the "Imitation of Christ," that little book that has brought more comfort into the world than any other except the Bible, Brother Azarias wrote: "How, it may be asked, was the author able to compass within the covers of this slender volume so much wisdom, such a vast spiritual experience, such beautiful poetry and profound philosophy? And he has done it all with a grasp of terseness of expression to which no translation has even been able to do justice. It is because Thomas a-Kempis is more than a pious monk picking up the experiences of the saints and the Fathers who preceded him. He is one of the world authors, and the 'Imitation' is so clearly stamped with the impress of his genius that wherever men can read they recognize it as a book that comes home to their business and their bosoms for all time. Go where you will, you will find its silent influence working for good, and upon natures that seem the least prepared to be affected by it.

"Thus we read how a Moorish prince shows a missionary, visiting him, a Turkish version of the book and tells him that he prizes it above all others in his possession.

"Again, the book has always been a consoler in tribulation. Louis XVI., when a prisoner, found great comfort in its pages and read them day and night. La Harpe, in his love and admiration, or what, in his day, was considered elegant literature, thought the book beneath his notice, even as the Humanists before him had regarded St. Paul. But La Harpe comes to grief, and, imprisoned in the Luxembourg, meets with it, and, opening it, at random, reads: 'Behold, here I am; behold, I come to Thee because Thou hast called me. Thy tears and the desire of thy soul, thy humiliation and contrition of heart have inclined and brought Me to thee.'

"These touching words seemed to come directly out of the mouth of the Consoler Himself. It was like an apparition. He says: 'I fell on my face and wept freely.' Ever after the 'Imitation' was one of La Harpe's most cherished books."—Denver Catholic.

## SUPPORT THE PASTOR.

Pittsburg Observer.

Financial support of religion is implied in the first and greatest commandment. God is to be adored by sacrificial worship as well as by faith and prayer. The discharge of this fundamental duty naturally involves everything essential to the appropriate expression of becoming sacrifice. This divine injunction, therefore, carries with it the imperative necessity of supplying suitable places of worship and of maintaining a divinely appointed priesthood. To keep holy God's day and name, to respect the rights of parents and others, are divine commands. There is no less sanction for providing the material agencies necessary for carrying out the true intent of God's first law. There is here no question of charity or generosity, but of duty and justice. In issuing a special precept on the support of pastors (meaning everything pertaining to external worship) the Church merely emphasizes a commandment as old as religion itself.

To put the claims of religion last of all, to offer God crumbs from sumptuously supplied tables, to proffer him a percentage in the possibilities of fortune, is basely to insult the Deity. God does not ask for what man does not need, and He directs the unfolding of the future. He is pleased with the gifts that denote sacrifice; the poor man's penny, the widow's mite. They who promise to give of their abundance exhibit a wrong spirit. It is well to remember that the claims of the church are as positive and as pressing as other obligations; that these claims are to be paid not merely from the ample means of the rich, but also from the slender incomes of the struggling. God should not always be the deferred creditor—in fact, He ought to be the preferred creditor. The support of the Church is a duty of simple justice. Religion would go forward with leaps and bounds if pew rents and church dues were paid from a sense of homely honesty. The Church is suffering from too much "charity."

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A word and a stone cannot be recalled.