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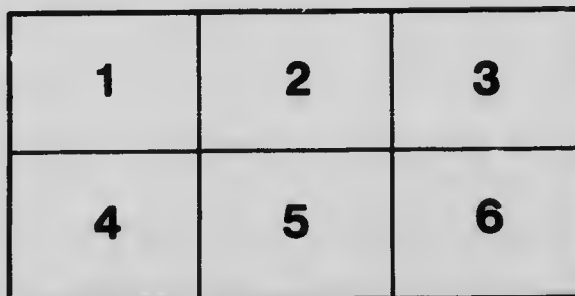
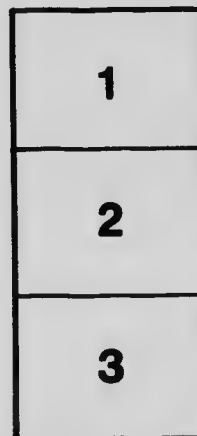
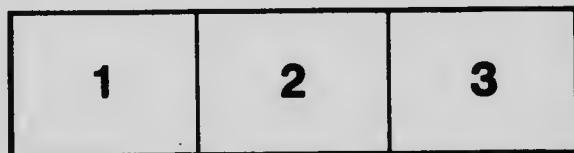
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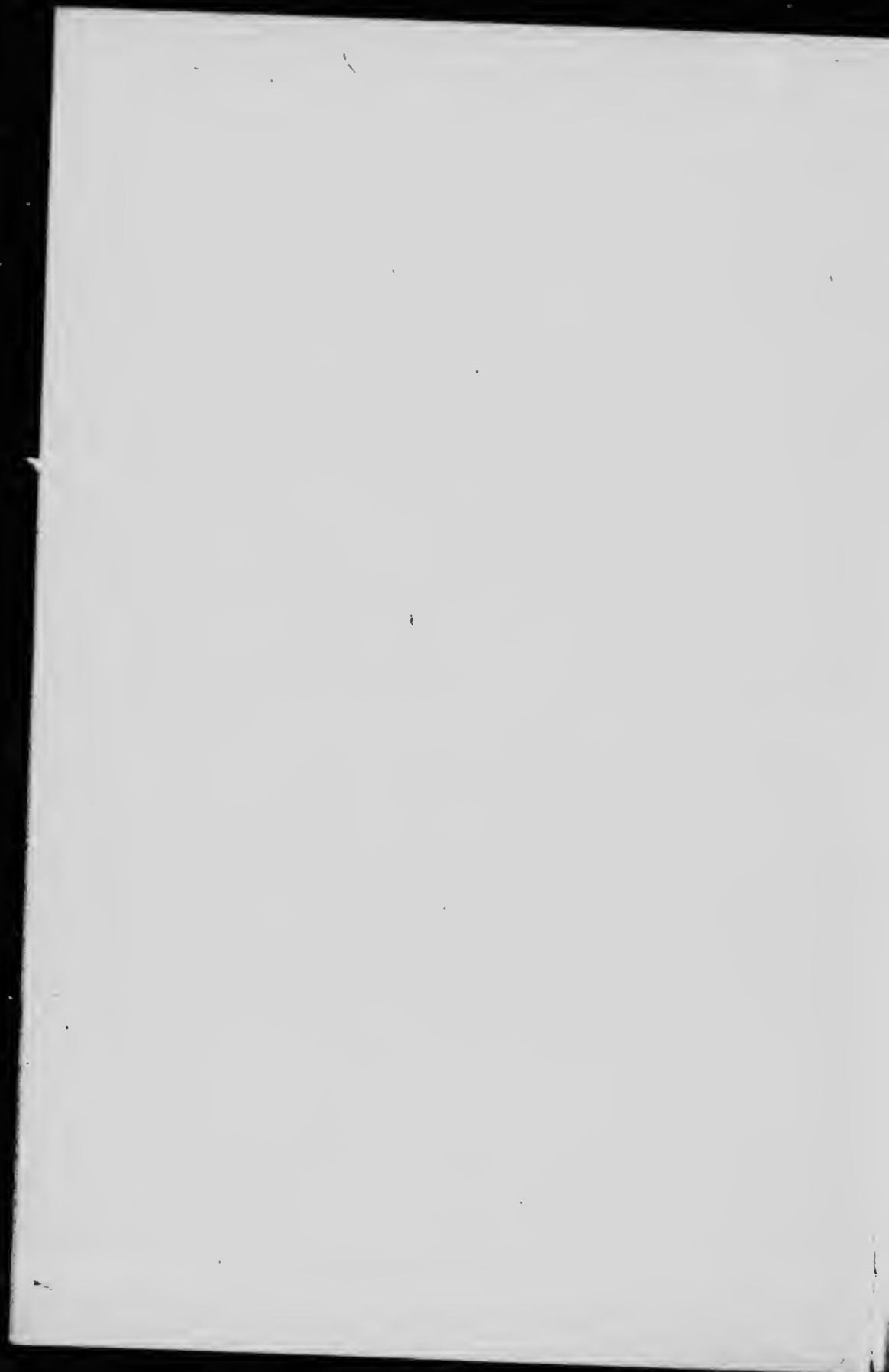
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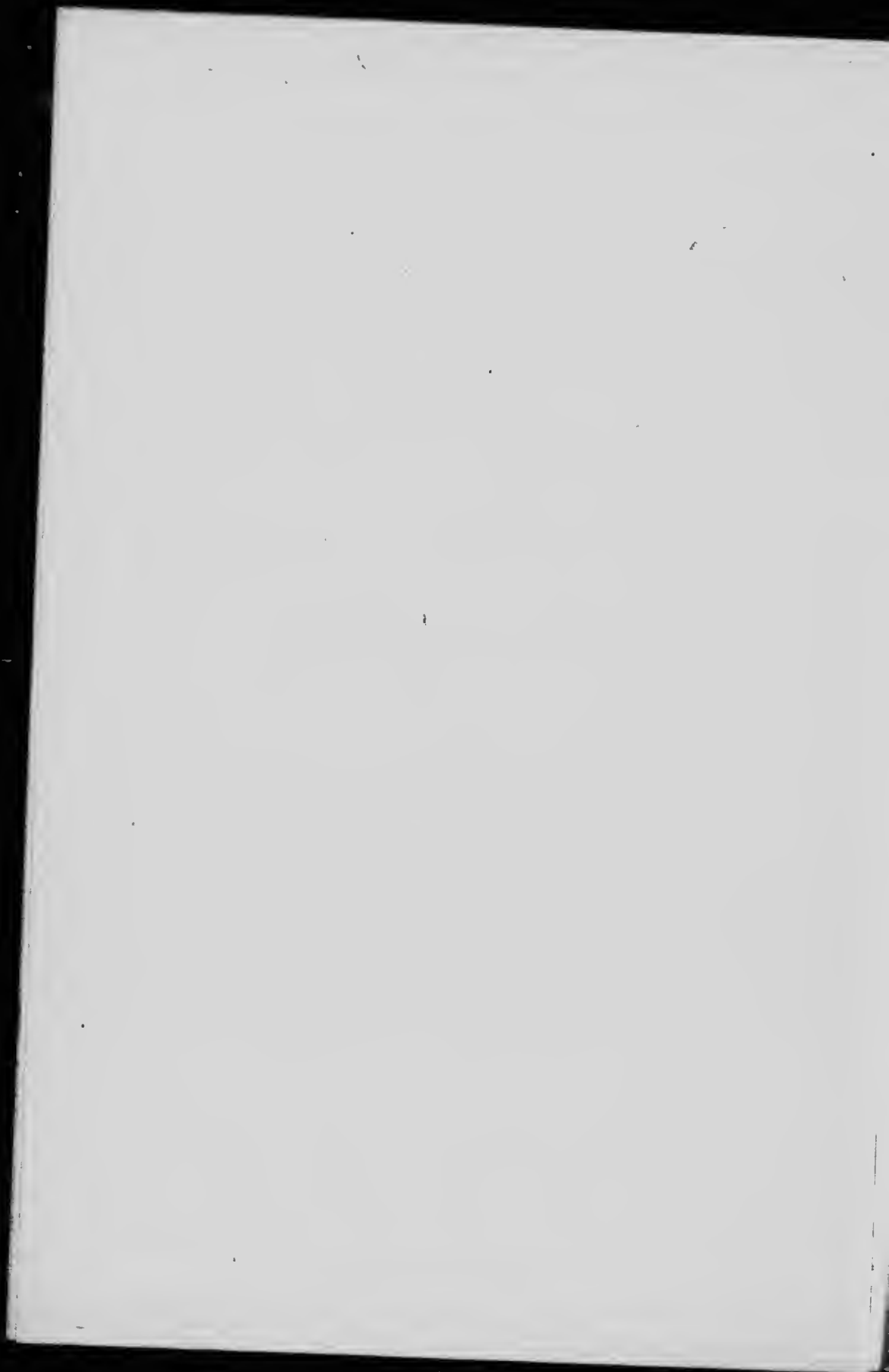


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WAIFS AND STRAYS



WAIFS AND STRAYS

Being a collection of some sermons,
some lectures, essays, etc.

OF

REV. HENRY A. BRANN, D. D., LL. D.

AUTHOR OF «CURIOUS QUESTIONS»

«TRUTH AND ERROR», «THE AGE OF UNREASON»,

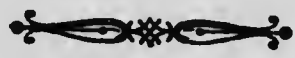
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Archbishop of New-York

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PREFACE

THese sermons and essays would never have seen light in book form if they had not been preserved by my faithful secretary, Mr. Joseph A. McAllister, and their publication had not been prompted by the good Franciscan Missionaries of Mary who are doing such admirable work among the poor of the East side.

I have been usually careless in preserving what I may have written. I have used and thrown most of it aside, with the intention of never looking at it again.

When, therefore, the Sisters asked me to permit them to publish my sermons and essays, I told them I had kept none of them, and besides, I did not think them good enough to preserve. But they said that they thought they could gather enough to make a book ; and then I suggested that if they could, and sell it for the benefit of their charities, I was willing to let them try. Sympathy for their work rather than a belief that I had ever preached a sermon, or written an essay worthy of permanent preservation prompted my consent ; and Mr. McAllister's care has done the rest.

Just before I left Rome in 1862, Pius IX said to me, the first alumnus of the American College : "As you are the first, defend me there in America." From that day I took his words in their fullest comprehension, and from that day I am not conscious that I have ever written or spoken a word disloyal to the teaching or to the discipline of the holy Catholic Church of which he was then the Visible Head.

HENRY A. BRANN, D.D., LL. D.



DEDICATED
TO MY FRIENDS
AND
PARISHIONERS
WHEREVER THEY MAY BE,
BY
THE AUTHOR



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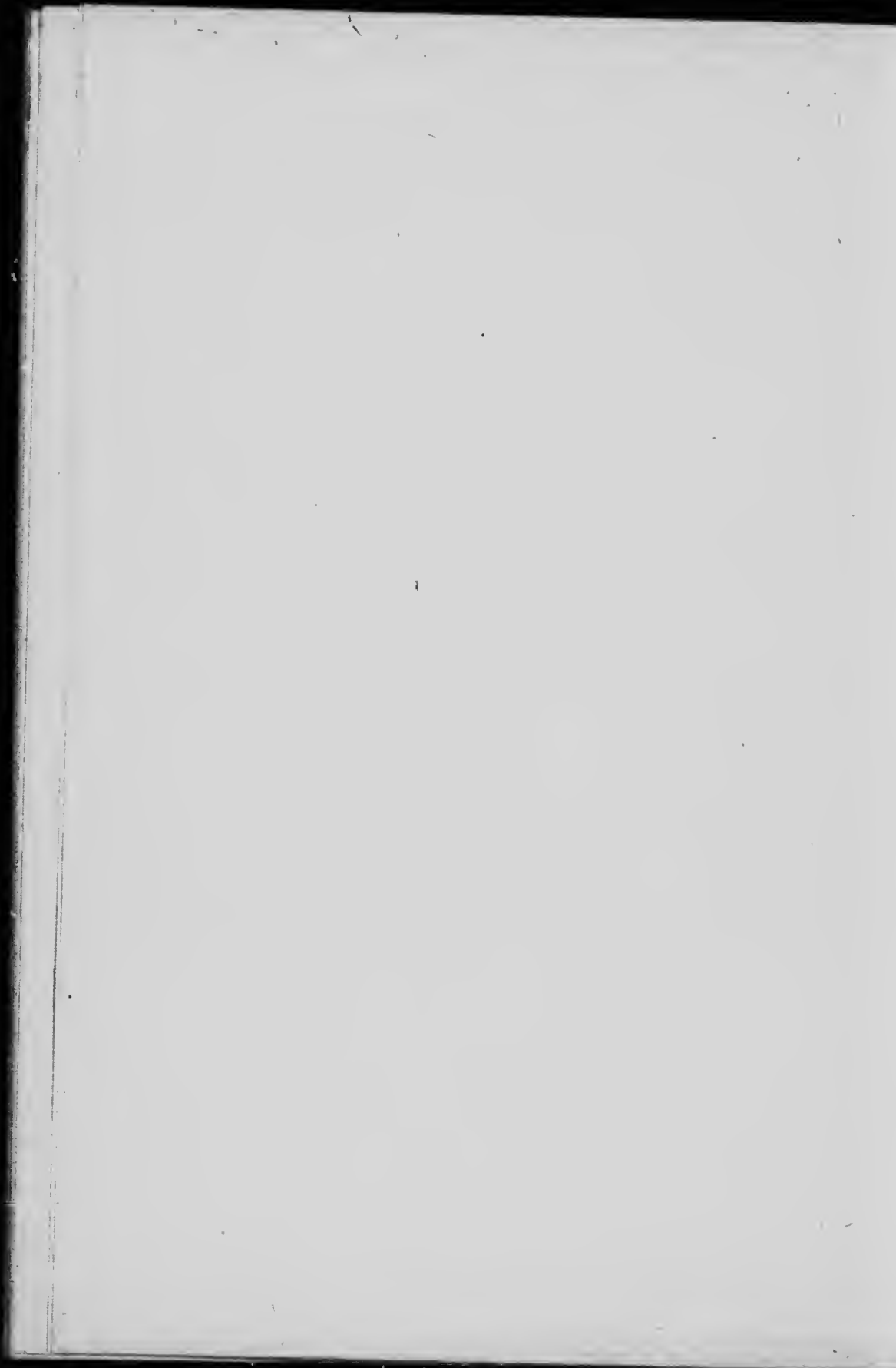
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ERRATA

- Page 5 : At the beginning of the 9th line, read *nineteenth* ; and on the last line instead of *days if Semler* read *days of Semler*.
- Page 175 : The last two words, read *is not*.
- Page 192 : The first word of the text should be *provide*.
- Page 226 : instead of *eargely*, read *eagerly*.
- Page 272 : 9th line, instead of *came to his rescue*, read *came to the rescue*.

FIRST PART
SERMONS



WAIFS AND STRAYS



SERMON ON SINS OF INTELLECT

THE Intellect is the highest faculty in man and its object is truth. Aided by the senses it compares ideas, judges and reasons. Being weak on account of original sin, it often makes mistakes or neglects to learn the truth. Influenced by passion or prejudice it often impugns the known truth. In the one case we have ignorance, and in the other, malice, greater or less, according to the degree of light and the opportunities for knowledge. In all these cases except that of involuntary error, we have a sin of intellect. Indeed there can be no sin in which the intellect has not a part, for the act of the intelligence always precedes the act of volition. Sins therefore in which the senses seem to have the leading part, are sins of intellect as well as those which cannot be classed under the head of sensuality. Yet we can legitimately set apart as sins of intellect, such as are of a more intellectual cha-

racter and regard more intellectual objects, such as are conspicuous in men of superior intelligence, and proceed less from temptations of the flesh, than from causes purely mental.

Pride is one of the chief intellectual sins and is the prompter to most others. Savonarola in his celebrated sermons at Florence always argued that pride was worse than sensuality, for the one showed greater malice in the evil act, than the other. We believe that his opinion is that of the best ascetical writers; and although common opinion looks with greater contempt on the sensualist who yields to the inclination of his animal nature, than on the proud, ambitious man who follows the bent of his bedizzened intelligence, yet sound philosophy as well as faith will give a contrary judgment. Lucifer was a greater culprit than Adam because Lucifer fell into a purely intellectual vice. The heresiarch who impugns the known truth, revolts against God and His established law, is a greater criminal, than the drunkard or the pick-pocket. Yet there is a tendency, especially among non-Catholics, to eschew altogether the notion of intellectual sins. Whence comes it? We think from a sceptical spirit; a disposition to regard truth as something unstable and changing, a mere

plaything of human intelligence. One of the most distinguished representatives of nineteenth century civilization said lately : " You Catholics teach as if truth were something solid, you feed your children's minds with it in a solid shape. You cut it into pieces and you say to them : the truth is this and that, and everything else is falsehood. But the nineteenth century does not believe in dogmas or in such dogmatism." We reply, " you have hit the nail on the head : the great difference between us Catholics and you non-Catholics, is that we believe in infallible certainty and infallible truth, while you believe neither in absolute certainty nor in any fixed truths, except perhaps in some historical facts. But as for any fixity in ideal truth you seem entirely to reject it." The non-Catholic world will hardly admit the existence of an intellectual sin such as we have described. The philosophy of Kant, Fichte and Schelling, the natural result of the religious scepticism introduced by the denial of infallible truth and infallible authority in the sixteenth century, has gradually yet surely spread throughout non-Catholic literature and the educational systems of the age. Scepticism has been rampant in biblical interpretation ever since the days of Semler and

Bauer ; and the denial of dogmas in religion is now almost general among the leading non-Catholic minds in Europe and in this country. Beecher is a latitudinarian, Bellows is a Unitarian ; Greely is a Universalist and we have Colfax, Summer, Philips, Dr Weiss and Frothingham who seem to believe in nothing except in their own notions, which vary as often as the chameleon's hues.

An idea with these men is nothing but a phantasm. A dogma is a mere assumption. They hold that God varies according to the different views men can get of Him. Religion is a mere sentiment. Rationalism or the licence of every man to think what he likes and say it against God or for Him, against Christianity or for it, is the system of the non-Catholic world. This system is based on the theory that truth, ideas, God, religion are mere matters of opinion, mere words, whims, purely subjective, constantly changing and perfectible by the law of progress. Do not Mill and Spencer deny the fixity even of geometrical axioms ? Has not Mill said somewhere that two and two might make five ; in short that even geometrical truths are purely conventional ?

Of course it is not our purpose to enter

here into a refutation of these erroneous notions; or to show the necessity of fixed principles for the benefit of the intellectual, social and moral wellbeing of humanity. Every one sees that if there is no certainty, no immutable truth, there can be no immutable God, consequently no God at all, and therefore no morality! In fact the teaching of the leading non-Catholic writers and orators would bring society practically as well as logically to this point, only for the stout defence of orthodox doctrine by the Catholic Church. All the clap trap about "liberty" and "progress", all the outcry against her raised by a shallow unprincipled press, and by non-Catholic orators in the pulpit and by pseudo Catholic statesmen in the forum and the parliament house, come from the fact that they are sceptics in practice if not in theory, logical if not actual atheists. Yet many sober minded men do not see the importance of getting the brain of the age into a sound condition; of instilling into the human mind true first principles, of instituting a true educational system based on religion and authority. This is why the non-Catholic world looks on Arius, Nestorius, Wickliffe, Hus, Calvin, and the Bashan bull of the Reformation, Martin Luther, as

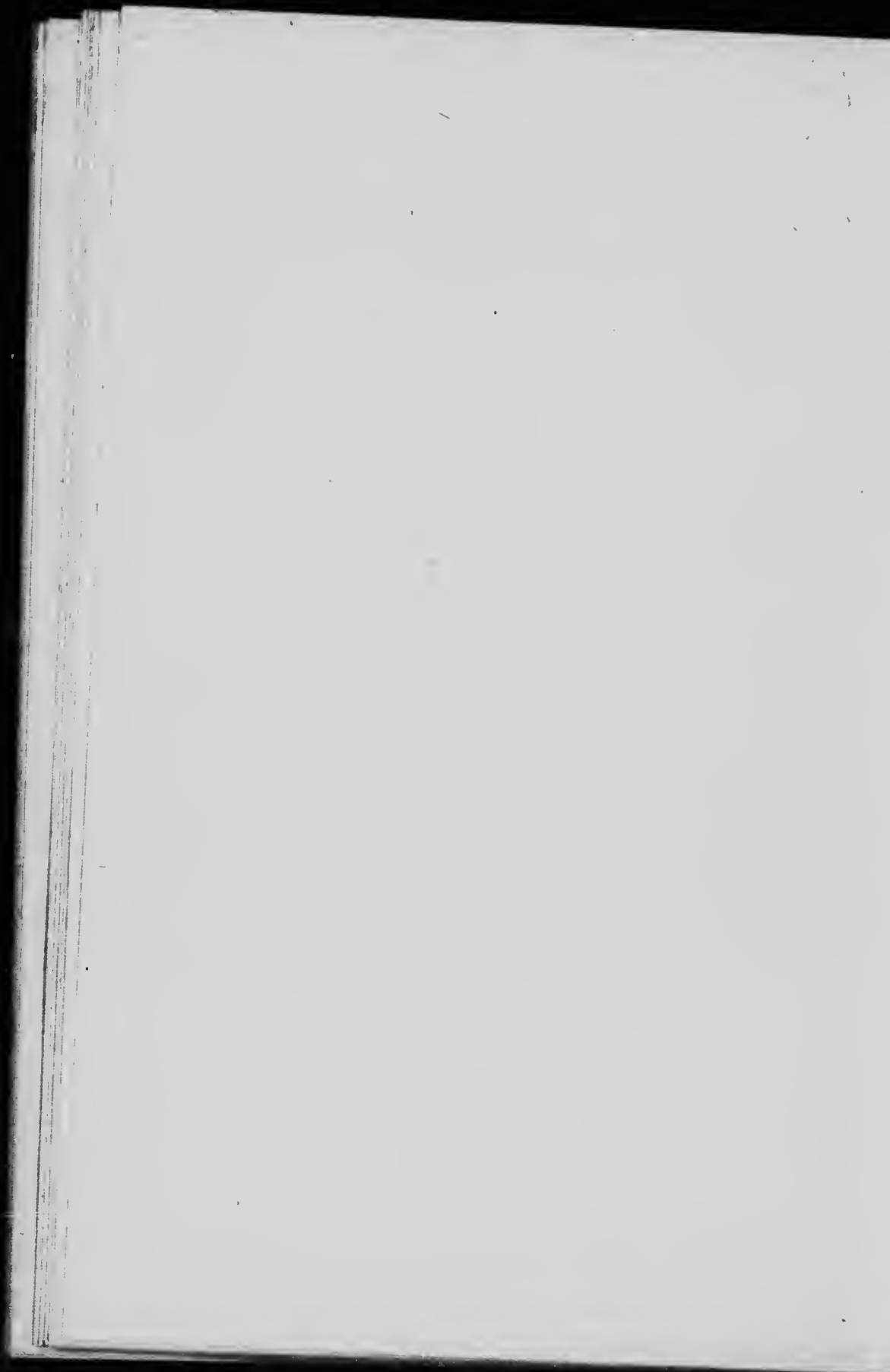
heroes, martyrs, models to be imitated ; while the Catholic considers them criminals of the worst character. They denied truth ; they revolted against God ; they helped to propagate falsehood, to corrupt the brain of society and consequently its heart. For immorality, is naturally the twin sister of heresy and the child of scepticism.

If the mere denial of a dogma or a truth were to remain in a purely intellectual state, the damage might not be so great ; but the denial of a truth works from the head downwards to the heart. Men of genius and intellect misled begin by denying principles. Their example is contagious ; their influence pernicious. The principle denied by the men of science, is denied by the masses in the long run ; so that what was a little leaven in the beginning soon corrupts the whole body politic. Massillon in his Lenten Sermons has well described the influence of the rulers and the great in society. In his time the rulers and the great to whom he spoke were the nobles ; with us the true leaders of the people, are the editors and the preachers. Their crimes of intellect are enormous. The man who picks your pocket or steals your horse is less guilty than the disciple of Leroux and St. Simon, the Communists

who denied the right of private property. The man who actually puts away his wife causes less injury to society than the preacher who defends divorce or the legislator who legalizes it. The denial of a moral principle or the assertion of a false system by a man of influence entails a multitude of practical applications by individuals in common life; while the simple individual without influence who violates the principle or the law has usually only his own act to answer for. He does not erect his vicious act into the dignity of a dogma or a law and often he does not try to defend it. He sins less directly against God, and gives less scandal to his neighbor. But the habit of impugning the truths of the ideal order, of denying true principles, ends in a disposition to deny the most self evident facts. A false principle must necessarily in its application come in collision with established facts. But what cares the vain, proud, conceited theorist for the facts? His theory must be sustained at all hazards and by all means. The desire leaps over the fact in order to gain its object; the passion to obtain the end blinds the intellect to the illegality of the means. Italy must be united. Here is the theory; here is the desire. But how? Any how! There is

a *grand fact* in the way, there is a pope who has rights ; you cannot take them away without violating justice, honesty, morality, the whole law of nations. That Victor Emmanuel violated the simplest principles of International law in robbing the Pope is evident to any one who knows what those principles are. If any sovereign in Europe could be called legitimate, certainly Pius IX was he. At any rate Victor Emmanuel had no right, title or shadow of a claim to the sovereignty of the papal kingdom, more than have the emperors of Austria, France, the king of Spain or the people of the United-States. As justly could our President send an army to take Rome as the Italian king did. Our own great lawyer, Chancellor Kent, lays down the principles of the law of nations applicable to the present case. It may be well to cite some of the passages regarding this point from his commentaries, vol. 1st, pp. 21 and 23. " Nations are equal in respect to each other, and entitled to claim equal consideration for their rights, whatever may be their relation, dimensions or strength, or however greatly they may differ in government, religion, or manners. This perfect equality and entire independence of all other States is a fundamental principle of

public law. It is a necessary consequence of this equality, that each nation has a right to govern itself as it may think proper, and no nation is entitled to dictate a form of government, or religion, or a course of internal policy to another. No State is entitled to take cognizance or notice of the domestic administration of another State, or of what passes within it as between the government and its own subjects. The principle of non interference with internal policies and government of other States was emphatically declared by France and England in the Autumn of 1830. "The Spaniards, as Vattel observes, violated all rules of right, when they set up a tribunal of their own to judge the Inca of Peru according to their laws." The robbery of the pope was one of the greatest sins of intellect of the 19th century ; a crime, the result of loss of faith and lack of conscience in the governing class of Europe.



SERMON ON ST. AGNES

PREACHED IN ST. AGNES'S CHURCH

JANUARY 26TH, 1890

But by the grace of God I am
what I am; and His grace in
me hath not been void.

I COR. xv, 10.

IT is now almost sixteen hundred years since the little girl whom we honor and invoke to-day was beheaded. It was the dreadful year of our Lord three hundred and three, in the darkest hour of the tenth persecution in the reign of the despot Diocletian. Christian churches were closed, Christian property confiscated; priest, bishop, and pontiff pined in dungeons or lay hid in caves, and the faithful were hunted like wild beasts. The tigers in the amphitheatre grew fat on the bodies of martyrs. In every town and city of the Roman empire, from Gaul to Asia Minor, the smoke and flame of the funeral pyre obscured the skies, and the sound of the executioner's axe rang out on the frightened air. Seventeen thousand of the followers of Christ were put to death in one month. The desolation des-

cribed by the prophet reigned throughout the fold of Christ : "How hath the Lord covered with obscurity the daughter of Sion in his wrath ! how hath he cast down from heaven to the earth the glorious one of Israel." (1) The whole machinery of Roman law and imperial power was used in one great brutal effort to destroy the Church, who sat like "Rachel bewailing her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." (2) Unlike Rachel, however, she was conscious of an immortal life that no human power could destroy.

Of all the victims of that dreadful persecution none has been more honored than the holy child who is the patroness of this parish. The early fathers and learned theologians of all times have deemed her worthy of their pens, poets have sung her virtues in canticles of praise, beautiful temples have been dedicated to her honor and have perpetuated her fame. In this very church the sweetest notes of voice and instrument echo her name, and year after year from this spot eloquence has told the story of the sublime and supernatural life of Agnes. Let us endeavor this morning,

(1) Lamentations ii., I.

(2) Matt. ii., 18.

my brethren, to recount her virtues and draw from them practical lessons for our own spiritual good.

The thought that arises naturally in the mind of the reader of her short and simple life, as told in the acts of her martyrdom, is that she was a miracle of grace. We know that, according to St. Thomas, (1) the word miracle is properly applied only to those works of God which exceed the forces or are contrary to the laws of physical nature. We know also that in the spiritual order it is often hard to tell where the divine begins and the human ends, so perfectly, at times, are the two elements in accord. But there are extraordinary facts in the spiritual order, in which we can find nothing human except the substance which underlies them ; there are lives in which the divine power seems to take completely the place of nature, subdue human impulses and passions and produce effects contrary to them. These results may be called miracles of grace. Such a life was that of St. Paul, once the fierce persecutor, then changed into the zealous apostle, who, after his conversion, speaks of himself in the words of my text : " By the grace of God I am what I am,

(1) *Summa theol.* p. prima q. 10, art. 7 ad im.

and his grace in me hath not been void ; ” (1) and again, elsewhere, he says : “ If by grace it is not now by works, otherwise grace is no more grace. ” (2) Such a life was that of St. Agnes, to whom the same texts fitly apply. For whether we consider her virginity or her martyrdom, or their logical outcome, the worship which she receives in the Christian Church, we find three facts in which there is nothing human, three facts contrary to the ordinary laws of human nature ; three miracles of the moral order, which prove the divinity of Christ and his Church almost as forcibly as the miracles of the physical order recorded in the Bible. I need not ask you, my brethren, to give me your attention this morning, while I briefly examine these three miracles and their consequence. You are the clients and admirers of St. Agnes. Your devotion to her will make amends for my shortcomings. Sweet saint, obtain for me the grace to do justice to thy fame and to the Holy Faith for which thou didst pour out thy virgin blood !

Virginity, my brethren, does not consist in bodily integrity, but in absolute mental purity and the fixed purpose to preserve it. St. Cy-

(1) Cor. xv., 10.

(2) Rom. xiv., 6.

prian calls virgins the "blossom of ecclesiastical seed, the glory and ornament of spiritual grace, the nobler part of the flock of Christ." (1) "Who," says the great St. Ambrose, the panegyrist of St. Agnes, "can esteem any beauty greater than the splendor of virginity, which is loved by the king, approved by the judge, dedicated to the Lord, consecrated to God." (2) Such was the beauty of Agnes, for she is counted among those who "follow the lamb whithersoever he goeth," and "sing a new canticle before the throne," which no one else can sing (3).

St. Agnes had made a solemn vow of virginity, the most perfect and the most heroic of all the sacrifices that have purity for their object. She had thus consecrated her soul and body to Jesus Christ, whom in the whole course of her trial she calls her Spouse, to the wonder of the judge and the anger and the jealousy of her pagan lover, who could not understand her. Her answer to his entreaties was that she was pledged for life to Him "whose ministers are angels," to One "whose power is greater, whose aspect is more charming, whose love

(1) *Lib. de virginitate.*

(2) *Lib. de virginibus.*

(3) *Apocalypse, xiv, 4*

is sweeter, whose grace is more ravishing than any one to whom he could be compared ; ” to Him “ at whose touch the sick are healed, and by the odor of whose virtue the dead are awakened. ” By this vow she sacrificed the right even to lawful pleasures, and put herself in opposition to every passion and appetite of human nature. No wonder that her pagan judge, her pagan lover, and her pagan audience thought the young enthusiast insane. They could not understand Christian self-abnegation. She could have been dispensed from the vow, and every means was used to change her purpose. Her wooer, Procopius, offered her lawful marriage. His friends and his father seconded his suit. He was the son of the prefect of Rome—the highest judge in the city, except the emperor. Procopius was young and handsome. He appealed to every motive that has influence in the human heart—to ambition, natural cupidity, and sympathy. He offered her great wealth, a palace, high rank, and the love of a devoted heart. Where is the woman of the world who would have refused such an offer of marriage ? Was not the refusal of Agnes divine ?

We know that even the ordinary forms of

continence are impossible without divine grace, for the inspired wise man says : " I could not otherwise be continent, except God gave it. " (1) The proof of this statement is found in every page of history and of literature, ancient and modern, pagan and Christian. The Bible declares it from the Sodom of Lot to the Jerusalem of the days of Herod; from Dalila to Herodias, from the polygamous patriarchs to the adulterous David and Solomon. Even the Mosaic code, the purest of antiquity, tolerated polygamy on account of the hardness of Hebrew hearts. Oriental paganism proves it in the worship of the headless Venus Astaroth; Grecian and Roman paganism prove it by placing a libertine at the head of the College of Gods on Olympus; that Jupiter, of whom Juvenal sarcastically says :

" *Quam multas matres fecerit ille Deus.* "

The literature of paganism, its comedies and satires the public and private life of ancient Athens and of Rome, and their legislation, reek with the foul odors of universal sensuality. It is true that Rome had its vestal virgins, but there were only six of them at a time in the whole empire, chosen before they

(1) *Wisdom*, viii., 21.

were ten years of age, so young that they were not competent to make a choice, even if they had been allowed to do so. They were held in absolute bondage, and, by fear of the most dreadful punishment, forced to celibacy until they were forty, when they were free to marry. Their enforced chastity was only external, and was no proper symbol of the purity of Agnes, whose soul, by her own deliberate choice, had become the domicile of her divine Spouse. Judged by the Roman standard of that day and by the laws of climate, she was a mature woman when she made her vow, an act of heroic self-sacrifice honored in that Church alone to whose jewelled crown Agnes adds the splendor of her virtue. Even the Christian sects sneer at the vow of virginity. Their founder condemned it, and asserted that it was impossible for human nature to keep it. By his teaching and his practice he revived the pagan idea in regard to it; and the divorce laws of the modern state, as well as the erotic tendency of certain schools of modern art, literature, and drama, are the natural consequence of his loose doctrine and a further proof of the inherent concupiscence of human nature, and that the virginity of an Agnes is a purely divine gift. To no temp-

tation would she yield. As well expect the northern blast to melt the icicle as for human love to thaw her snow-like purity. It was the divinity within that hedged her virginity from every blight. Can human nature of itself produce so fair a flower? Ye false creeds, have ye borne one tender bloom like unto this? No! it is divine; planted by the hand of God and watered by his grace. It grows only in one soil, the soil of the faith of Jesus Christ. It flourishes only in one garden, the garden of the Catholic Church. Agnes and her imitators are the exclusive property of that Church, which is hated because she makes war on the flesh, and which bids sensual humanity bow the knee in homage before the altar of the immaculate queen of virgins. The unconquerable virginity of Agnes is a divine effect which proves the divinity of the cause, the faith and grace of Jesus Christ. By that grace she was what she was, and it was not void in her.

If we consider next the martyrdom of Agnes, the proof of its divine character is equally strong. That martyrdom was a complete work of grace. As the soldier who dies for his country shows his patriotism so does the Christian martyr prove his faith in Christ. "O

blessed martyrs," exclaims St. Cyprian, (1) "with what words shall I praise ye; oh bravest soldiers, how shall I extol the fortitude of your hearts!" Yet not every martyrdom is a proof of truth, my dear brethren, but only that which proceeds from Christian faith and charity. Only where divine truth and divine love are the sources of the martyr's constancy under torture and in death, is he a true witness for the faith. Men have suffered death for erroneous opinions, through pride or natural obstinacy, but such are unlike the martyrs of Christ. "If I should deliver my body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing," says St. Paul. (2) "The mother of martyrdom," says one of the fathers, "is Catholic faith, to which illustrious athletes have subscribed with their blood." (3) Martyrdom is the most perfect act of the greatest of the moral virtues, obedience; for it is like that of Christ, obedience even unto death. (4) It is also the most perfect act of the chief of the theological virtues, charity; for it is the sacrifice to God of all that man holds most dear, the sacrifice of

(1) *Epistola ad martyres.*

(2) *I Cor. xiii., 13.*

(3) *Maximus.*

(4) *Philip. ii. 8.*

life itself. Nothing does man dread more than physical torments and death, "the fear of which," says St. Augustine, "deters even brute animals from the greatest pleasures." (1) Yet the martyr despises tortures and death through love of Christ. "The charity of Christ," says St. Maximus, "conquers in his martyrs." Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends," says our Lord. (2) The martyr is therefore the special friend and lover of Jesus Christ. Hence, the fathers teach, in commenting on the parable of the sower, that martyrdom is the greatest act of the love of God, and that the good ground which brings forth one hundred fold is martyrdom. "The hundred fold," says St. Augustine, "is the merit of the martyrs, as the sixtieth is the merit of the virgins, and the thirtieth of those who are married." Thus the martyrdom of Agnes was more meritorious even than her virginity. But when we consider that martyrdom in all its details, we are forced to exclaim, was ever martyr, since Christ, like unto this; was ever such fortitude, such fearless contempt of death, such sublime love of Jesus Christ! A

(1) Lib. 83. quaest. quaest. 36.

(2) John xv, 13.

little girl is dragged through the streets of Rome into the court of the Roman prefect. What is her offense? Can it be that this young and beautiful girl has committed some terrible crime? No; the sole charge against her is that she is a Christian, and to be a Christian was, in the eyes of the Roman law, to be a foe of the gods and a traitor to the state. It is the same old charge, my brethren, against the Church. The Roman emperors, like many more recent rulers, charged the victims with being disloyal because they thwarted their tyranny. They persecuted her as an enemy of the empire, when she was the very salt that would have saved it from decay. The modern state persecutes her on the same false supposition. Her only offense is, that she will not, like all human creeds, "crook the pregnant hinges of the knee, that thrift may follow fawning;" but stands erect, defending true liberty of conscience, holding aloft the banner of spiritual independence which she will never lower either for hereditary despot or for the fickle mob crowned majority of a republic.

There sits the judge Symphronius, who is also the father of Procopius, the wooer of Agnes. Near by are ranged the statues of the gods and of the emperor, to which all but

Christians paid idolatrous worship. The pagan priests are there, with censers, ready for those who would offer incense. In a corner burns the fire near the statue of Vesta, to which Agnes is to be asked to pay homage. The court-room is filled with the enemies of the Christian name. If they were not brutalized by pagan superstition and bigotry, the youth and beauty of this fair child would move them all to sympathy. She has, indeed, some friends and admirers in the crowd, but they are cowed by her arrest. The mere charge of Christianity against any one meant a threat of confiscation of goods, and death. The accused Christian was shunned as if he had a contagious disease. Besides, interference would have been useless, for the Roman law against Christianity was as inexorable as fate. In the centre stands Agnes, like an angel just descended from the skies, her eyes clear and lustrous as twin stars on a frosty night, her cheeks flushed with the bloom of virginal innocence; like opening roses, her lips parted in prayer, and her two hands — so tiny that no fetters could be found small enough to bind them — her two hands, like two fair lilies, clasped together in supplication, not to the earthly judge, whom she did not dread, but to the Supreme judge,

whom she feared and loved. To this Judge, "whom no king can corrupt," to whom the whole Roman empire was less important than the honor of the little girl who was his special ward, she now appealed for justice and protection. Symphronius at first tried, by gentle means, to induce Agnes to sacrifice to the gods and marry his son. Twice, three times, did he summon her before him, after giving her time for reflection, and use every means of persuasion, intermingling flattery with threats, the intercession of friends with the menaces of the law. But in vain. The judge, at length, lost patience. He could be kind no longer without being suspected of disloyalty to the gods himself. He ordered her to sacrifice to Vesta, the patroness of the so-called vestal virgins. She refused to worship what she called a deaf-and-dumb idol, a vain bit of stone. This defiance roused the bigotry and the false patriotism of the Roman judge. His paganism made him both cruel and brutal. Now, what was his sentence? "Let me not name it to you, you chaste stars." Hang down your heads in shame for human depravity, ye Christians! and ye men of the world, blush for one of the most horrible crimes ever committed by one of your sex. What was the

sentence of a pagan judge upon a little girl whose only fault was that she would not sacrifice her purity or adore a piece of inanimate clay? "Let her be condemned for life to a public brothel." And the pagan crowd was silent. There was not a murmur. The Roman law authorized the sentence; Roman paganism sanctioned the execrable punishment. Where was the old Roman virtue then? Was there no descendant of Lucretia there? No son of that Roman matron who plunged the dagger into her heart at remorse for the forced desecration of the temple of her body? Was there no descendant of Virginius there, who drove the knife into his daughter's bosom rather than see her dishonored by a Roman official? Where were the sons of Scipio the Continent? Where were those old Romans who expelled the kings for just such outrages as this? Not a man lifted his voice or his arm in protest. One would think that at least Procopius, her lover, touched by her misery, would have had manhood enough to defend her from such an insult. But no! On the contrary, he exulted in her shame and, with a crowd of libertines, followed her to the house of ill-fame. His conduct proved, my brethren, that pagan love is but another name for the

most brutal sensuality. The old empire was rotting. Old Roman virility had dissappeared, and paganism had destroyed conscience, virtue and liberty. The measure of Roman iniquity was full, and Divine Providence was loosening from the leash the wild barbarians of the north, to send them in fury at their sickening quarry. "Arise, ye Goths, and glut your ire!" In the face of such a decree as this of Symphronius how could Gibbon regret the triumph of Christianity over Roman paganism? With such a black mark on its brow, how can any infidel extol it for the purpose of lowering Christianity in public esteem? Why, my brethren, the most depraved king or mob of Christian times has never done anything so vile as this Roman judge did with the sanction of imperial law. If any king or emperor or judge should now pass such a sentence, there is enough of Christian manliness left in the heart of even an apostate mob to rise in mutiny and destroy the man or the system that would authorize such brutality. Public opinion is still Christian, even though it have an infidel environment. Such has been the pervading influence of Christianity on public morals, that even infidels are dominated by it, and cannot escape its control.

“ Let her be condemned for life to a public brothel! ” For a moment the child staggers ; a shiver of fear, like an almost imperceptible wave, passes over her graceful and fragile form. Her cheeks flush with the shame of offended modesty. But it is only the momentary weakness of terrified maidenhood in view of the infamy to which she was to be subjected. The divine in her re-affirms its power. Her Heavenly Spouse adds to her new strength and grace. She knows that no harm can come to her without his permission. They shamelessly stripped her of her clothing, as the king of Virgins had been stripped before being scourged at the pillar ; but the celestial armorer of Christ, St. Michael, instantly covered her with a dazzling and impenetrable robe that protected her from the vulgar gaze, and blinded those who dared to approach her. The vile Procopius, who advanced toward her, was struck down at her feet as if by lightning. Her cruel judge then recognized her power and implored her to restore his son to life. She knelt and prayed, and her pagan lover arose, purified and converted to Christ. But the pagan mob and the pagan priests were only the more enraged when they saw her miraculous power. They were in open sedition,

and cried the louder for the blood of one whom they looked upon as a sorceress. Her judge, too terrified by the fate of his son to persecute her further, and yet too cowardly to let her go free in oppositon to the will of the mob, transferred her case to his unscrupulous lieutenant, *Aspasius*. This man condemned her to be burned alive. The fire was lighted. *Agnes* could still save herself by apostasy. One grain of incense offered to the false gods would have set her free. But her fortitude was divine. She mounted the pyre and stood praying, with arms extended among the flames, like a white consecrated host in the centre of a golden chalice. The flames refused to touch her sacred flesh. Still "the Gentiles raged and the people devised vain things." (1) Blinded by pagan superstition, they attributed her miraculous power to magic, and although the fire went out without singeing even a hair of her head, they still demanded her life. *Aspasius*, to appease the people and obey the law, then ordered that she should be beheaded. She was thown into a dungeon and loaded with chains. At last, to satisfy the longing of her heart, her Omnipotent Spouse, who had sufficiently shown his power by protecting her

(1) Psalm ii., I.

from insult and from the flames, decreed that she should "be dissolved and be with Christ." (1) The executioner presents himself before her with a drawn sword. Does she shrink, does she show weakness? No, my brethren. With the light of heroism in her eye and on her lips a smile as sweet and soft as a ray of sunlight on a bank of violets, she advances to the very edge of the flashing sword and exclaims: "Oh, what happiness! Strike! behold my bosom. Let your sword pierce to the very bottom of my heart. Spouse of Christ as I am I shall thus escape from the darkness of earth and rise to the abode of light." Then she laid her head upon the block that was, indeed, to be her bridal pillow. The executioner, with a single stroke, freed from earth her soul, that flew quick as the lightning flash, straight to the very centre of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ.

Now, is not this fortitude of Agnes above the human, and contrary to it? Consider her age and her sex, and the timidity which is natural to both of them. She stood dauntless in the face of dangers that would have made even a strong man grow pale with fear. She could have avoided all of them by doing a legitimate

(1) Philip. i., 23.

act, by accepting an honorable offer of marriage. For, had she done so, the prefect was powerful enough to save her from the accusation of being a Christian. But neither the frowns nor the smiles of the judge, the shouts of the angry mob, the weight of fetters, the darkness of the dungeon ; neither the scorching flames nor the sharp-edged sword could make her swerve from loyalty to her vow, or devotion to her faith. She died a miracle of grace not explicable by anything in nature. Her martyrdom was a completed supernatural work, a divine effect proving the divinity of the cause that produced it ; the faith and charity of Jesus Christ.

Finally, my dear brethren, our devotion to St. Agnes is supernatural, and also proves the divinity of the faith of which it is the logical consequence. Consider for a moment the causes and the circumstances of this devotion. Do we worship Agnes because she possessed some extraordinary natural quality, or because she did some great deed in the natural order for her country or her fellow-men ? No ! It is true that her youth, her innocence, and her beauty excite our sympathy and arouse our poetic and æsthetic sentiment, as would the lustre of a jewel or the perfume and color of

a rare flower. Our natural emotion in contemplating her is like that which we experience in listening to the first song of the birds in Spring, in looking at the first blossoms of the orchards in May, or in walking through a grove after a summer shower, when the boughs on every tree are glistening with diamond drops of rain; a natural feeling like to that which thrills the heart of the traveller on the Alps when he finds a flower among the ice and eternal snow, or like that which wreathes in smiles the face of a mother when she hears for the first time the prattle of her first-born. But this poetic sentiment never makes us kneel down and worship, or invoke the object that arouses it. These emotions are mere pleasant evanescent sensations and not acts of religion. Agnes never lived long enough to show forth any great mental gift, even if she had been endowed with it. She can be classed with none of those women who have been great in the State or in the Church. She was not a clever queen, like Semiramis, Zenobia, or Cleopatra. She was not a poetess, like Sappho, nor a philosopher, like her neoplatonist contemporary Hypatia, whose praises are sounded in fiction. She was not a great writer, like St. Catherine of Sienna or St.

Theresa ; nor the foundress of a religious order, like St. Scholastica or St. Clare. The Maid of Orleans, indeed, imitated her fortitude and was also a Saint. But the heroine of Domremy, who led the armies of France to victory and drove the foreign foe out of its territory, was older than Agnes, had the inspiring surroundings of the tented field to sustain her courage, died for an inferior cause — love of country and not for the pure love of God — and could not, as Agnes could, have escaped death by apostasy. In Agnes we see nothing but the natural weakness of extreme youth and of the gentler sex. But behind these we see God, who hath chosen “ the weak things of the world that he may confound the strong. ” (1) We see the supernatural power of God, whose weakness, says the apostle, “ is stronger than men. ” (2) Our devotion to her is supernatural in all its motives and circumstances. Her virginity and her martyrdom, both of which we have shown to be miracles of grace, are the magnets which attract our souls to her and draw our reverent bodies to her shrine. The light of the same religious faith, and of the same

(1) I Cor. iv., 27.

(2) I Cor. x., 25.

divine charity for which she offered up her life, illumines our intellects and warms our hearts. Her humility confounds our pride ; her virtue shames our vices ; her fortitude abashes our cowardice. Behold the spectacle and tell me, ye unbelievers, if there is any explanation of it to be found in mere human nature left to its own resources and passions ? See this maiden passing down the aisle of sixteen centuries, carrying in her beautiful hands two standards, one the white flag of virginal purity, the other the crimson banner of martyrdom, the two cherished ensigns of the Catholic Church. As she moves along, powerful and learned pontiffs take off their triple-crowned tiaras, holy bishops lay aside their mitres, mighty emperors and great kings lay down their sceptres and crowns and unite with millions of the most enlightened portion of mankind in bending the knee before her in homage, invoke her intercession, and would deem it a privilege to be allowed to kiss even the hem of her garments. Ah ! my brethren, these facts, which we witness even still, this worship of a simple maiden who was put to death sixteen hundred years ago, has no parallel in history outside of the order of grace. It is a miracle of the

moral order and we know who and what has wrought it. Its adequate explanation is found in the incarnate Christ alone. It is the effect of His divine power, a blossom of that supernatural faith which, in the language of the Council of Trent, is "the root and foundation of all justification." It is another proof of the divinity of Christ and of his Church.

And so again we hail thee, O Agnes, thou miracle of grace, sweet patroness of this parish and of this people, and say, blessed be thy name ! Blessed art thou, white rose of the fourth century, turned into crimson by thy own martyr's blood. From heaven extend over all of us thy saintly hands in benediction ! Bless the fathers and the mothers of this congregation, that they may bring up their children like unto thee ! Bless the little children, that they may imitate the purity of thy life and thy fearlessness in professing the faith of their fathers ; and bless him, too, who to-day begins the duty of guiding this flock on the narrow way that leads to the abode of the beatified, in which thou shinest as a most brilliant star ! May the blessing of St. Agnes and of her divine Spouse, Jesus Christ, descend on you and abide with you forever !

Amen.

SERMON

DELIVERED AT THE MEETING

OF THE

AMERICAN ST. CECILIA SOCIETY

IN ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, AUGUST 5, 1890.

« Praise ye the Lord with sound of trumpet ; praise Him with psaltery and harp ; praise Him with timbrel and choir ; praise Him with strings and organs ; praise Him on high-sounding cymbals ; praise Him on cymbals of joy. »

PSALM. 150, v. 1, *et seq.*

WE welcome you, members of the St. Cecilia's Society, to our great metropolis. We welcome you as votaries of an art which forms so important a portion of the beautiful liturgy of the Church—an art approved by general councils, cherished by illustrious pontiffs, cultivated by priests and bishops, and so potent a factor for the edification and sanctification of all the faithful. You are especially welcome to this edifice, which may be well called a symphony in stone, just as the grand compositions of the master musi-

cians may be called cathedrals of harmony. But you are especially welcome as members of a great society, which has for aim and purpose the improvement and the reform of Church music, a purpose sanctioned by the Council of Trent, by the Roman Pontiffs, by our own Councils and Synods, and by our Bishops in repeated approvals of your organization. Who shall say that reforms and improvements are not necessary? Although the words of my text show that the music of the Church is not confined to any particular school, but is Catholic as to instrument and to forms of expression, yet every school should suit the composition to the dignity of the theme, the sanctity of the place, and to the respect due to the inspiration of the words and the holiness of the theme.

No matter to what school we belong or what form we may favor, the musical composition must be religious and appropriate to the worship of the Most High. Whether we use the trumpet or the psaltery, or the harp, the timbrel, the high-sounding cymbals, the strings or the organ, plain chant or figured music, it must be Church music, and not the music of the camp or of the theatre. We are told to praise the Lord with all these instru-

ments, but we should use them in a becoming style, according to the rules and laws of Holy Church, and observe the decencies of the sanctuary. For there is Church music and there is a religious style of musical composition as there is a religious style of architecture. Just as the beauty of this Cathedral consists in its appropriateness to the worship of God, so the beauty of a religious musical composition consists in its appropriateness to divine worship. There is as much difference between a Mass and an opera as there is between a church and a theatre. The psalmist says not only to praise the Lord with musical instruments, but with the choir, which is a combination of the most beautiful of musical instruments, human voices, instruments not made by man but by the Creator of this universe of harmony. Now the particular excellence of the St. Cecilia's Society is its endeavor to improve and reform the choir so as to render it worthy of its place in divine worship. For, ever since that night in which our divine Lord sang in chorus with His disciples after He had instituted the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, vocal music has formed a part of the Church's liturgy. Christian voices blended together in muffled harmony when the mysteries were

celebrated in the catacombs in the days of persecution, and Christian voices have rung out their pœans of praise in the days of the Church's triumph. The most beautiful musical compositions that exist are of a religious origin, are more ancient than any profane music, and have never been equalled by anything in the finest operas. There is nothing in profane music comparable to that of the Lamentations of Jeremias, the *Exultet* of Easter Saturday, the Preface or the *Pater Noster* of the Mass. To keep Church music free from profane adulteration was the aim of Dr. Witt, your founder, and is the purpose of your powerful, praiseworthy and beneficent organization, the American leader of which has been specially honored by the Pope. Dr. Witt's labors were opportune, his task difficult. Who shall say that the music of our Church's choirs is always what it ought to be? Everyone knows that there has been deterioration from ancient simplicity; that the theatre has intruded itself into the Church choir in Europe as well as here. False taste had forced itself in many places into the Church's song even before the Council of Trent. To please a few, who are neither the most edifying nor the most generous in our parishes, music has been

sung that is out of place; and choirs exist which are more remarkable for pyrotechnical displays of voice than for rendering religious chant. Such choirs cost enough to give good music. Sometimes that portion of the pews which clamors for them does not pay enough to support them. Yet they have been supported sometimes from human respect to the detriment of more important interests. Churches that have no parochial schools have often high-priced choirs that from one end of the year to the other are inflicting on the ears of the people parodies of Church music and spreading a false taste for them among the people. This false taste was becoming prevalent in this country. With the increase of numbers and of wealth our churches were becoming infected with it. We can say with Horace:

*« Postquam cepit agros extendere victor et urbem
Latiore amplecti murus, vinoque diurno
Placari Genius festis impune diebus ;
Accessit numerisque modisque licentia major. »*

ARS. POETICA, v. 208, CH. SEP.

The Cecilia Society was organized in time to correct this evil tendency. The decay of simplicity began with the increase of wealth and of power. Against similar abuses which have crept into the Church choirs and into

Church music in the Middle Ages the Council of Trent long ago protested in its twenty-second session and ordered that "all musical performances which, either by reason of the manner in which the organ is played or of the chant, assume a licentious and sensual character, should be banished from the Church." The decrees and ordinances of the last Council of Baltimore on this subject fill a whole chapter and breathe the spirit of the Council of Trent. The Fathers of the Baltimore Council command rectors of parishes to exclude profane music from their churches and to permit only what is "grave, pious and truly ecclesiastical," and they repeat the desire of the Fathers of the preceding Council to have the rudiments of the Gregorian chant taught in all parochial schools. The fourth provincial Council of New York and the last synod of this Archdiocese express the views of all the bishops of this province and insist on the necessity of excluding profane music from the Church and of using only what is properly ecclesiastical in the Divine offices. "The whole music and the chant," says the synod, "should be devout and ecclesiastical." The synod even expresses the desire that congregational singing should be introduced, and says that the way

to begin it is by forming and educating choirs of boys. I may say, then, to you, members of the St. Cecilia's Society, that you have the approval and the sympathy of all the clergy in your efforts to foster liturgical music.

All honor, then, to the German Catholics of the United States from whom this movement had its beginning and who are still its chief, in many places, its only supporters. One of the brightest pages in the history of the Church is the gallant struggle of Catholic Germany to hold the faith, to propagate its doctrines, to defend its liturgy and to keep up its practices immediately before, during and since the Reformation ; and one of the most interesting chapters in the great work of Janssen "*Geschichte des Deutschen Volkes seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters*" is that in which he describes the revival of ecclesiastical music among the faithful Catholics of the Fatherland by Obrecht, Fink, Rham von Fulda, and others, in the fifteenth century. The singing societies of Mainz, of Arberg and of Nürnberg in those days annually sang a Mass and contended for a prize on St. Catharine's day in the city of Nürnberg. The spirit of song lives and acts in the German Catholic people. Through it they express the earnestness of

their religious belief and the sincerity of their character.

As I stood some years ago in the aisle of the largest catholic church in Frankfort on-the-Main and heard the grand chorus of thousands of voices in thunder tones singing out appropriate hymns at Mass, with voices earnest, strong and fearless, with an emphasis that told of manly faith and Christian self-reliance, I felt that I was among the sons of soldiers who had fought for the Catholic cause under Wallenstein and Tilly during the thirty year's war against northern Protestantism and the perfidy of Kings of France ; and I could well understand the victory of the *Centrum-partei* in the Reichstag, sustained as they were by such earnest Catholics in the empire. This earnestness and zeal the German Catholic emigrants have brought with them to this country. Your society and your efforts are the fruits of them. Wherever the German Catholic goes he finds a parochial school and in fact there is hardly a German Catholic parish in the United States which has not a parochial school in which Church music is taught. Zeal for the school is accompanied by zeal for the splendor of the Church's liturgy. Nothing conduces more to this end than religious chant.

Again, I repeat, all honor to the German Catholics of the country for their zeal in these matters. We are glad that they are growing in power and influence. Their increase and prosperity is the increase and prosperity of the whole Church. They are manly, they are fearless, they are earnest and they are zealous. They are obedient to the Holy Father, even in the most trying circumstances. We have seen an instance of that in the late submission of the Catholic leaders to his wishes. It is easy to enforce discipline on an army at rest ; but what must be the splendid discipline of an army which, after being galled by the fire of the enemy, and while in the full enthusiasm of victory, knows how to abstain, to halt, and stop the pursuit of the flying foe ? Let the people of the older Catholic nations look, then, to their laurels. German discipline, energy and earnestness, German love of Catholic education and of truly Catholic music, will bring the German Catholics to the front, and may give them the first place in the grand army of Catholicity in the United States. The older Catholic nations will lose their rank in the Church, if they lose their hold on Catholic principle, or allow politics or false notions of patriotism to emascu-

late their faith. If this should happen, then it will simply be the survival of the fittest, and we can say: *palnam qui meruit ferat*. Continue, then, your noble work, gentlemen, and may God's blessing crown your efforts with success.

SERMON ON THE NECESSITY OF FAITH

PREACHED AT THE CONSECRATION OF ST. JOHN'S CHURCH,

WHITE PLAINS, JUNE 9TH, 1892.

« Without faith it is impossible to please God. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is and is a rewarder to them that seek him.»

HEB. XI, v. 6.

THE scope of scriptural teaching, my brethren, directly concerns the supernatural order. Hence St. Paul limits his statement of the necessity of faith by its supernatural relation to God. Had the apostle intended to consider nature as well as grace, he would have laid down a universal proposition, and said that without faith it is impossible to please even man.

Faith is divided into two kinds—natural and supernatural. Natural faith is the acceptance of truth because of trust in the knowledge and the veracity of man, while supernatural faith is a divine virtue, and implies the acceptance of revealed truth on the veracity

of God. Let us first speak of natural faith. It is almost as necessary in the order of nature, as supernatural faith is in the order of grace. The foundation of natural faith is trust. Trust is essential to the peace and to the stability of society ; and even to the existence of commerce. If we went through life suspecting and distrusting every one, our minds would be always troubled, and earth would be a hell of groundless fears. The fact that we eat our meals without exacting the proof that they have not been poisoned by the cook, shows how natural is trust. The credit side in the books of every merchant shows how natural is confidence in our fellow-man. Natural faith is also essential to the acquisition of knowledge. The whole development of the human mind is based on faith. The child begins life by trusting the word and by obeying the authority of his parents. As he grows up he takes the statements of his teachers with absolute confidence in their truthfulness. He accepts without question all that is said to him by his superiors in years or in knowledge. He believes the statement because his parents or his teachers told him so ; and often when he finds that they have taught him error, he has not the courage to follow the

light of reason, which shows how foolish is his credulity and how ill-founded may be his prejudices. What child would dare displease his parents by a doubt or by a question implying that they did not tell the truth? Nor is this law of nature confined to the days of youth. Man is a believing and a teachable animal to the end of his life. He is always subject to the influence or to the authority of others. If he examined and analyzed all the knowledge which he has acquired, even after long years of labor, he would find that most of it is based on faith. Men read and believe the facts recorded in books, because they have confidence in the veracity of their fellow-men. Even the so-called exact sciences to a great extent are based on natural faith. The geometricians take for granted axioms and postulates which have never been proved, yet they form the basis of the whole science of geometry (1). If I were to go around among this audience now and to ask you one by one for the proof of what you believe, you would find that most of your information is derived from the testimony of others. How few ever saw the cities called

(1) See in the Brussels « *Revue des questions scientifiques* » Oct. 20. 1883, an article by Father Carbonnelle S. J., on « *Les incertitudes de la Géométrie.* »

Athens or Rome or Paris. How few could prove that this earth is a ball and moves round the sun ; that many of the stars floating in space are thousands of times larger than the globe on which we live. We believe these things on human authority, and we are daily making acts of faith in the veracity of geographers, of historians, of astronomers and of chemists, whom we never saw. If faith be then necessary for the knowledge of common things, why should it not be necessary for the knowledge of more important and elevated truths ?

How necessary it must consequently be for the knowledge of God. It is true that reason alone can prove that He exists. In proving His existence reason argues from the effect to the cause ; as we argue from the watch, with its system of springs, wheels and pendulum, to the watchmaker, or from the building to the architect. When we look at this beautiful church, consider its purpose and admire its graceful outlines and the symmetry of its parts, we draw the logical conclusion that it is the product of an intelligence which planned and devised its construction. In like manner from the finite created universe we prove the existence of an infinite Creator.

Again, from the existence of this earth, vaulted and illumined by the star-studded sky ; of this earth, producing crops in regular seasons and governed by physical laws, we conclude the existence of an intelligent cause adequate to produce these effects. From the study of our own nature, we are certain that we have not created ourselves, but that we have been made by a supremely intelligent and infinite being, who is alone equal to the task of producing man, the master work of the visible universe. For as the Psalmist says : “ The heavens show forth the glory of God and the firmament declareth the work of His hands ” ; (1) or, as St. Paul more fully expresses it : “ The invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made ; His eternal power also and divinity. ” (2) This truth that man and all things around him have been created by God out of nothing, is the basis of all science and law, for it involves the knowledge of the existence, nature and attributes of the First Cause, of His rights and of our obligations. But there are certain drawbacks to be considered in the rational proof

(1) Psalm IXII. V. 2.

(2) Rom. I. V. 20.

of the existence of God. This demonstration is impossible to childhood, because to make or to understand the demonstration of a metaphysical truth requires a developed and trained intellect. Therefore, the only way to obtain this all-important knowledge in childhood is by trusting the teaching of others. Besides, if men did not acquire in youth the knowledge of God by faith, some of them never would get it, owing to the weakness of the average intellect and the indolence of the average will.

And it is because of the existence of faith that the children of a Christian country understand divine things better than the greatest pagan philosophers. Questions regarding God that Plato and Socrates could not solve, are now answered with ease by Christian children of ten summers. If left to themselves, even adults are unwilling to study about God. They do not like the labor of it, or they are too occupied with the temporal cares and business of this life to have leisure for metaphysical investigations, and many are too dull to understand them. They presuppose much intellectual culture and much knowledge of other sciences. We know by experience how slow the majority of men are to appreciate the value of philosophical arguments, or to understand any

being which cannot be apprehended by the senses. The majority of mankind cannot understand the higher problems of the natural sciences, though competent teachers explain them. Out of a hundred children in a school, or of grown children in or out of a college, you may find half a dozen able to understand the higher mathematics. Since this is the case, we see at once how few, left to their own forces, would obtain a knowledge of the grand and sublime truths relating to the Supreme Being, whose nature faith at once reveals. Besides, even when by a logical demonstration matured reason proves these truths, it often lacks confidence and feels uncertain in its deduction. They are not always clear. Reason distrusts itself. "Human reason," says St. Thomas, "is very weak in divine things." (1) Even in the natural sciences the ablest philosophers contradict one another.

What a Babel they make of theology when they are left to their own light! What confusion! What endless disputes! But when God Himself, Who can neither deceive nor be deceived, teaches mankind what they must believe about His essence and His works, He

(1) *Ratio enim humana in rebus divinis est multum deficiens*, • *Summa theol.* 2a 2ae art. IV.

adds the certainty of revelation to the certainty of demonstration. Then all things become clear, for the light of faith illumines them. The words of Isaias the prophet are then literally fulfilled : " All thy children shall be taught of the Lord ; and great shall be the peace of thy children. " (1) The peace of a double certainty is the result. Thus revelation makes the knowledge of God universal, gives it more quickly than reason, and makes Him known to the illiterate as well as to the learned ; and thus faith elevates reason, enlarges its view, and increases its power. Instead of degrading, revelation enlightens and elevates mankind by pouring special gifts into the treasury of natural truth and by adding new light to reason. But the fact of revelation depends on human testimony. We must prove by authentic history that God has spoken to man. All human testimony, as well as history, depend on the invincible propensity of human nature to rely on the veracity of honest witnesses. Therefore, faith is necessary to mankind for the acquisition of the knowledge of God even in the order of nature ; and therefore, from what we have said, it follows that faith is universally necessary in human society.

(1) *Isaias*. CHAP. liv., v. 13.

PART II.

But if faith, thus understood in its widest and natural meaning, be necessary for the attaining of scientific knowledge and for the stability of society, how much more necessary must it be in the higher order of revelation and of grace ? The supernatural order is a foreign region to the natural man. To enter it and travel through it he needs a guide who understands the language and knows the treasures and the beauties of the country. Such a guide is faith ; no longer mere natural faith, but a theological virtue infused into the soul by God to give light to the intellect, to understand and to move the will to accept the truths which He reveals. The necessity of this virtue is clearly shown from the Scriptures as well as from the very character of the truths which are its chief object. Our Lord Himself, before St. Paul wrote the words of my text, sanctioned His commission to the apostles to teach all nations by a promise and a threat, which imply the necessity of faith : “ He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be condemned.” (1) Again He says : “ It is written in the pro-

(1) Mark. xvl., v. 16.

phets : and they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard of the Father and hath learned cometh to Me." (1) By these words Christ makes humanity a school, God the teacher, and faith in Him essential to the reception of the benefits of redemption. St. Peter, the head of the apostolic college and of the Church, also specially teaches in his second great sermon that faith in Jesus-Christ is necessary to salvation, for "there is no other name given to men under heaven whereby we must be saved." (2) In like manner teach all the Fathers and Doctors of the Christian Church. St. Augustine, for instance, speaks of faith as that "from which all merit begins"; (3) and again as that "which is the first gift," and from which what we call "good works" take their origin. (4) The very nature of the supernatural order shows the necessity of this virtue. It is an order of existence above nature. Reason alone cannot give us a perfect knowledge of God. St. Paul says : "We see now through a glass in a dark manner ; but then face to face. Now I know in part ; but

(1) John, VI., v. 45.

(2) Acts, IV., v. 12.

(3) Lib. de *Gratia*, CHAP. 32.

(4) *De predest. Sanctorum*, CHAP. 7.

then I shall know even as I am known." (1) Yet we desire this perfect knowledge of God. The desire to know beings perfectly is innate and essential to man. The more we know the more we want to know. What scientist is satisfied with a mere superficial knowledge of what he is studying? He wants to master his subject thoroughly. Increased knowledge only stimulates his curiosity and inflames his zeal. Difficulty or mystery will not stop him. His brain will throb, his cheek grow wan and his eyes dim with study; his body will waste and decay with excessive application, but the desire to know spurs him on. The problem must be solved, and he never rests until he can shout "Eureka." This passion to know filled the flapping sails of the *Santa Maria* and saw hope at her masthead, though the storm clouds obscured the voyage of the great discoverer over the unknown sea. The cry of "Land, land!" compensated Columbus for all his suffering. The Supreme Being is all truth, and the human intellect strives to comprehend Him. He is supreme goodness, and all the virtues are streams that flow from and ebb back to Him. He is all beauty, and all the arts and all the artists draw

(1) I Cor. XIII., v. 12.

their inspirations from Him and try to copy the perfection of the Great Ideal. So long as there is something left that man does not know about this wonderful Being, whose works puzzle and amaze him, he will investigate and try to fathom the mysterious.

As he knows the effects produced by God, and from them learns some of the divine attributes, he wants to see the inner life and the essence of Him to whom these attributes belong. He wants to see God face to face. He is stimulated to this by the fact that the more he knows of God the happier he becomes. The more of truth we know the more of beauty we see, and the more of goodness we possess the happier we are. When we know Him entirely our happiness is complete, for there is nothing more to be known or to be desired, since the intellect is face to face with all truth, and the heart possesses the supreme good. The condition of man in this full possession is thus expressed by St. John: "We know that when He shall appear we shall be like to Him, because we shall see Him as He is." (1) St. Augustine expresses the same idea when he says: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our heart is unquiet till

(1) John, CHAP. III., v. 2.

it rests in Thee." But in order to look into the divine essence the eye of reason must receive the light of faith. To reach the supernatural, man's nature must be lifted up by God. Even the intellect of a Socrates or of a St. Thomas had not natural force enough to see the inner life of God, or to comprehend the three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, perfectly equal, existing from all eternity in one divine nature. This mystery, and others of a similar character, become known to men only through faith, which St. Paul appropriately describes as "the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidences of things that appear not." (1) Nature can go no higher than nature, as water will go no higher than its source. When the evidence of reason ends, faith begins, and becomes "the evidence of things that appear not"; the evidence sufficient to exact submission of the intellect to all the truths and mysteries of revelation. All these mysteries and truths are means to salvation. In order to make the way of salvation easier and smoother, God, in His mercy, reveals even truths which the intellect could discover without the aid of faith. These truths, as well

(1) Hebrews, xi., v. 1

as those exclusively of the higher order, are the object of supernatural faith, which is required for their acceptance. Without this faith it is impossible to please God. "For he that cometh to God must believe that He is and is a rewarder to them that seek Him."

From all this you see, my brethren, why the Council of Trent calls faith "the beginning, the root and foundation of all justification" ; (1) and how conformable to Holy Writ and to reason are the utterances of the Vatican Council, which declare that faith is the beginning of human salvation, and then add : "Since without faith it is impossible to please God, or to be associated in the fellowship of the children of God ; therefore no one has ever been justified without faith, nor does any one obtain eternal life without perseverance in faith to the end." (2)

But while it is thus proved that faith is necessary to the perfect acquisition of knowledge, whether of things natural or supernatural, some may specially object to that class of truths known as mysteries, and say : "Why require us to believe in what we cannot comprehend ? Revealed mysteries are

(1) Council of Trent, Sess. VI. CHAP. 8.

(2) Constit. Dei filius, CHAP. 3.

unfathomable by reason, and appear to us to be self-contradictory. We are willing to believe in one God, but we refuse to believe that there are three divine persons, or that one of them assumed human nature and died on a cross for our salvation. Truths rational we accept, because we can understand them ; but mysteries we refuse to believe, because they are above our reason."

To this common difficulty the answer is easy, my brethren. God would not be God if He were not mysterious, or if man could comprehend Him. God, being infinite, cannot be perfectly understood by a finite intelligence. If man could perfectly understand God, man would be equal to God ; man and God would then be the same being. How can the finite fathom or measure the infinite ? The line can sound only its own length. If it is not long enough, it cannot touch the bottom.

Besides, those who make this objection are inconsistent. They believe more than they understand, even in the natural order. If they would only believe what they thoroughly understood, their knowledge would be very limited. Why object to believing the mysteries of revelation, since they believe so many

in the domain of nature? There is not a grain of sand on the seashore nor an atom that floats in the sunbeam but is full of mystery, because all things in nature come from, tend toward, and end in the infinite and the incomprehensible. Men cannot explain the growth of the waving grain in the fields. They cannot understand the production of a full ear of wheat or of corn, in the Summer or in the Fall, from one seed which was planted, died and rotted in the soil, in the Winter or in the Spring. Then why expect to be able to explain the Trinity or the Incarnation?

Can man explain the mysteries of animal production, or of the propagation of the human species, or of the action of mind on matter? Or how the will moves the body or directs voice and gesture; or how the voice of the speaker floating through the air strikes the ears and awakens thoughts and emotions in the minds and hearts of the hearers? These phenomena are all full of mysteries, which men believe, but cannot explain. Then why be so reluctant to accept the truths of revelation? The answer to this question is not complimentary to human nature. It is because these truths imply moral obligations

and impose restraints on human passion. Why, my brethren, if the statement that two and two make four implied a restraint on human passion, men would be found to deny this self-evident proposition as they do the mysteries of Christianity. There is no real contradiction in any mystery. We understand the terms used to express it. What we do not see is the reason or the mode of their relation. We see enough in nature to make us understand the terms of revealed mysteries. We see an image of the Trinity in the simplest things around us ; in the clover, for instance, with its one stem and three leaves. We see an image of this mystery in the three faculties of our own soul — will, memory and understanding. In fact, there is less apparent contradiction in the mysteries of Christianity than there is in some of the problems of mathematics. For instance, mathematicians so far have not been able to explain the contradictory results of similar calculations in plain and spherical geometry. (1) Yet these contradictory results are accepted without explanation by men who refuse to accept the mysterious facts and doctrines of Christianity, based on well-authenticated testimony

(1) See Father Carbonelle's article already referred to.

and revealed by an all-wise and infinite intelligence.

Christian faith is supremely rational ; and the more we study and examine the more we shall be convinced that submission of the mind to Christian truth is a "reasonable service." (1) All dependent and subordinate beings have two kinds of action, says St. Thomas : one in their own sphere and the other in relation to the superior being on which they depend. Thus the ocean is moved toward its own centre, and it is also moved to ebb to and flow from it by the action of the moon, on which it depends. (2) But as on God man depends, there is in him this double action, one natural, the other supernatural. Just as this earth revolves on its own axis and at the same time around the sun, on which it depends for light and heat, so man's intellect in relation to God acts in the sphere of reason and again in the sphere of faith. To this latter sphere religious mysteries exclusively belong.

St. Paul, struck by the mysterious nature of the Supreme Being, aptly exclaims: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and

(1) Rom. xii v. 1.

(2) 2a 2ae art. III.

the knowledge of God ! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways !” (1)

How false, therefore, is the theory of those who think that they can be saved without faith. Certainly faith alone will not save us. It is an article of our creed that good works also are essential to salvation. The Catholic Church holds, with St. James, that “as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without good works is dead.” (2) But works without faith will not save any one. Without the virtue of faith, you may be sober, honest and just ; you may be benevolent and kind to the poor, and be distinguished for great natural morality, yet “without faith it is impossible to please God.” Reason declares it, the Scriptures teach it and the Church defines it. They all show that as faith is necessary to salvation, so wilful unbelief is criminal and one of the worst forms of immorality. The gravity of sin is measured by the malice of the act ; by the dignity of the faculty which chiefly offends in the transgression ; by the character of the person injured, and by the impor-

(1) Romans, xi., v. 33

(2) St. James, ii., v. 26

tance of the good which sin takes away. But the intellect of man is his highest faculty. By it he is most like to God and to the angels. "Thou hast made him a little less than the angels," (1) says the Psalmist. When, therefore, man denies religious truth or refuses to accept revelation, his sin is specially malicious. It is like the sin of Lucifer, which was a greater offence than the sin of Adam, as the intellectual pride of Lucifer was greater than that of Adam. Sins of intellect are usually deliberate transgressions, and have not the extenuating circumstances which are sometimes found in other offences. The intellect precedes the will, and is the first and the highest human faculty. It should be the first, therefore, in an act of worship, the first in an act of religion. Submission of the intellect to God is the highest form of worship; its disobedience to Him is the worst offence. Sins of intellect are direct insults to God, and consequently greater than sins against our neighbor or ourselves. Besides, sins of intellect are usually followed by all the others. The laws of morality depend on the creed; and actions generally follow belief.

The refusal to believe what God teaches is

(1) Psalm viii., v. 6.

an open act of rebellion against Him. It is an act of high treason. Other sins deprive ourselves or our neighbors of some special good; but the refusal to believe God is a denial of His right to rule us. It is a denial of His veracity. It is a logical denial of His existence. Moreover, unbelief strips us of the very condition necessary to the spiritual life of the soul. Wilful heresy nips not only the blossoms and the leaves, but kills the very root of justification, for without faith there can be neither hope nor charity. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." "The sin is the greater," says St. Thomas, "in proportion as it is a deviation from some principle which is first in the order of reason." (1) But faith is the first principle in the work of human salvation, and consequently a sin against faith is more grievous than any other. "If we consider them in relation to their object, the greatest sins," says he, "are those that are committed against the deity, as are the sins of infidelity and of blasphemy." (2) God has created man, and consequently owns him body and soul. God has, therefore, the first right to man's intelligence, and

(1) 1a 2ae q. 73.

(2) IIIa pars q. 5.

imposes on it the obligation of accepting truth. God has the first right to man's will, and imposes on it the obligation of doing good, of obeying laws, natural, divine and human, for all law derives authority from God; "for there is no power but from God." (1) God has the first right in the family, and no power can interfere with His plenary jurisdiction. God has supreme power over the State. Its executive and its legislative powers have no authority except from God. "By me kings reign and lawgivers decree just things." (2)

From the necessity of faith, my brethren, you can now understand the uncompromising and unbending character of the Catholic Church. The Church is the custodian of the rights of God, as she is His representative to teach and guide mankind. She must fulfil her office at every cost. Hence it is that she is so uncompromising in matters of faith; so inflexible in everything that touches dogma; so watchful over what concerns the belief of her children. Hence she watches so carefully over the primary education of youth lest false doctrines should find a resting place in their

(1) Rom. XIII., v. 1.

(2) Proverbs, VIII., 15.

minds. She may compromise in discipline, but in faith never. On the sacred platform of truth she takes her stand, and from it she teaches alike kings, kaisers and people. The whole power of the great Roman Empire ; the whole force of bad mediaeval German, French and English kings ; the whole despotism of modern infidel republics could not make her minimize truth. She will not yield one jot or tittle of it, though mobs rage and kings threaten and persecute. Her sons may desert her as the Jews deserted Christ when He taught them the unpopular doctrine of the real presence in the sacrament of the altar. (1) Nations may revolt, as England did when the Church sustained the sanctity of marriage against an adulterous king. Yet, rather than yield an iota of divine truth, she will let them go, suffer herself to be shorn of earthly power and splendor and descend again to the poverty of the Catacombs.

Hence when she reigned supreme in the ages of faith, heresy, blasphemy and apostacy were loathed and execrated. In those days men believed in the rights of God and defended them. The civil laws protected them. The whole of Europe rose in arms when the reli-

(1) John, vi.

gion of Christ was assailed. But now the State, divorced from religion, cares less about God than it does about man. Even the education of little children is divorced from God. We seldom hear now of the rights of God, but often about the rights of the State. Men build jails for those who violate the rights of man. Man shoots the aggressor who touches his property or his wife, while greater criminals who try to abolish the idea of God, the very foundation of right and law, go unpunished and unhindered in their efforts to crucify again the divine founder of Christianity.

The spirit of the crusades is dead, because men have forgotten that "without faith it is impossible to please God." But you, my brethren, believing in its necessity, not only for the salvation of your souls, but even for the protection of your natural rights and for the safety of your country, rejoice on this day on which is consecrated a temple of faith, another house of the living God. I congratulate all the inhabitants of the beautiful and historical town of White Plains on this event. I congratulate your zealous rector, who continues the work begun under the administration of his able and amiable predecessor, whose memory we shall always fondly cherish.

But chiefly I congratulate the noble lady who has done this work. We all owe her a debt of gratitude. She has the honor of being the first to present to this diocese a temple of God absolutely free from debt and consecrated. This church is a monument of maternal affection ; of that eternal love which only a Christian mother can feel for her child. It is a proof to the poor that wealth can be unselfish and beneficent. It is an example of beneficence to those whom God has blessed with riches. For her it will ensure the prayers of the people and a share forever in the holy sacrifices offered by the priest. It will perpetuate her name and her piety to future ages. On her head it will bring down the blessings of God. In the name of all I thank her, in the name of all I pray for her. May the splendor of God's grace, like a golden veil, through which no cloud of sin or sorrow can enter, surround her in life, and when she dies, may the patron of this parish, St. John, the beloved apostle, greet her ; and may seraphs carry her generous soul to the bosom of the Incarnate God, to whose honor and glory she has erected this monument of faith and love !

Note : The church was built by Mrs Jules Reynal.

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THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON LITERATURE

SERMON PREACHED IN ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, N. Y.

ON THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT 1893

« I am the light of the world : he
that followeth me walketh not in
darkness, but shall have the light of
life. » JOHN VIII, v. 12.

THE subject of this morning's conference, my dear brethren, to be fully treated, should be considered both historically and philosophically. It were easy to show from history that Christianity, that the Catholic Church which is Christianity legitimately organised, — has from the beginning fostered letters, and has done everything to promote their study and cultivation. The history of schools, colleges and universities founded in Christian times and under Christian auspices is the strongest proof of the Church's love of literature as well as of art.

But time will not permit, and perhaps the occasion is not the most appropriate for a mere historical examination of this question.

Let us therefore confine ourselves to the philosophical side of the case, and briefly show you how Christianity by its doctrines and their influence has elevated literature not only in matter but in form, not only in thought but in expression ; and let us pray that the result of our examination will be an increased respect for our holy faith, increased devotion for the holy Church, its infallible custodian, and increased love for its founder, Jesus Christ, the " light of the world", " the light of light ", " the true light which enlighteneth every man coming into this world ".

Literature, my brethren, is the artistic expression of human thought in writing, intended for the amusement or the instruction of mankind. Literature is not merely the expression of thought ; but its expression according to the rules of rhetoric. Nor is it the mere expression of thought in speech. To constitute literature, the words must be written for a purpose, viz. to amuse or to instruct mankind. Literature is consequently found in what are called books, and its best models are the works of historians, philosophers and poets.

But the expression of thought is usually

in proportion to the character of the thought itself. If the thought be well conceived, — clear, deep, beautiful, elevated, grand or sublime, — the expression will partake of the same characteristics. Between thought and expression there is the relation of cause to effect. Expression without thought is mere tinsel. A word without an idea is an empty sound. The expression bears the stamp of the thought. The human word is begotten of the human thought, as in a more mysterious manner the Eternal Word is begotten of the Eternal Father.

Since then expression bears a necessary relation to thought, and since Christian thought, is immeasurably superior to pagan thought, the superiority of Christian over all other literature logically follows. It is not necessary to read and compare the masterpieces of both literatures to discover this superiority, and to see how Christianity has elevated letters. It is only necessary to know the sources of both, the distinguishing principles of the two forms of thought and the specific difference between Christian and pagan doctrines and ideas. From these, the influence and superiority of Christianity necessarily follows. The source of Christian

thought is in revelation and in an eternal, uncreated God who is the all-perfect Ideal of Truth and Beauty ; the source of pagan thought is on a lower plane, — in nature, in material forms and in a mythological system created by human imagination. It is the difference between the one, infinite, all-pure Spirit, the Infinite, All-seeing God, Whose providence guides and rules all created things from the smallest atom to the highest of the angels ; and a blind, inexorable fate whose decrees bind even Jupiter the master of the roistering, quarrelsome and jealous divinities of Grecian and Roman mythology. It is the difference between the Omnipotent, Incarnate God, our Divine brother, Jesus Christ, the Light of the world,—and Jupiter the crowned libertine of Olympus ; the difference between the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and the disreputable Venus ; the difference between the naiads, dryads, nymphs, satyrs and cupbearers of the sensual pantheon, and the choirs of pure spirits who for ever sing “holy,” “holy” before the Throne of the Triune God. These differences at once show themselves in the higher, purer and nobler substance of Christian literature.

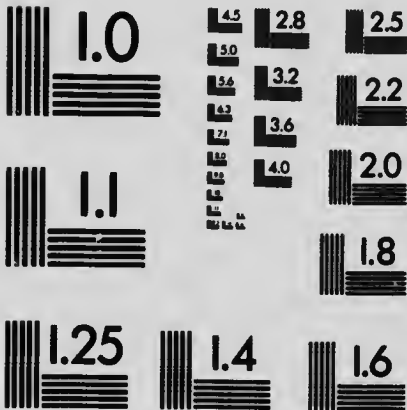
Besides superiority of doctrine, Christian

thought has many other special advantages over pagan thought. Let us name some of them. The first is certainty. Paganism is doubt, Christianity is certainty : the double certainty of faith and of reason ; for the light of faith dissipates doubt on many questions of the order of nature. Christian metaphysics solve important problems, for revelation gives the key ; while pagan philosophy is a struggle through a quagmire of uncertain discussion even of the most important and vital questions where certainty is most needed but cannot by pagan methods be found. Even when the pagan philosophers or poets get at a truth, although it be only a natural one, they hold it with a weak grasp. They show distrust in their manner of expressing it. They often express it as a problem to be solved, a doubt, or a possibility ; they are not sure of what they say. Even history in paganism is a labyrinth to which there is no clue ; while Christianity to guide us through its mazes supplies the thread of Ariadne in the doctrine of a Divine Providence which, co-operating with free human wills, explains all things and turns all evil into final good for the greater glory of the Ruler of the Universe.



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Christianity not only gives certainty and sublimity to human thought, it also enlarges the human mind and adds a new field to the domain of human investigation. Faith lifts reason up to a higher plain. Revelation opens new realms of thought, new lands for the intellect and imagination to explore. Paganism tied to the earth the intellect of man. The pagan marched to death with his eyes on the ground studying nature and mere physical forms. If he tried to fly he succeeded only by fits and starts like the ostrich ; while Christianity raised the intellect of man from the earth, placed it on the back of an eagle, and bid it soar to the sun.

A Christian who reads the pagan classics feels at once their inferiority to his own literature. Whatever great, noble, or sublime thought they contain is chiefly so because it approaches the Christian standard. " He speaks like a Christian, he writes like a Christian, or how like to Christian doctrine", is the greatest compliment we can pay to a pagan author or his work. We admire it if we find even one gospel truth or Christian sentiment in its pages. The great, the pure and the noble is the exception in pagan literature ; while in Christian writings, the

sublime is common. Even Christian children think and speak more sublimely than the greatest pagan philosophers; they had not the light of the world; their intellects were obscured by ignorance and sin, before the Sun of Justice rose to show the road of truth and regenerated the moral and spiritual life of humanity. "You were, heretofore, darkness, but now you are light in the Lord," says St. Paul (1); and what he said to the Ephesians is true of all pagans prior to the coming of Christ.

Christian mysteries are the fathomless fountains into which the human intellect is ever diving; and although it never touches bottom, it always comes out of the bath, purer and stronger. The Doctrine of the Triune God, — of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, — although it explains all and is the source and cause of all phenomena, — is the cloud-capped mountain which Christian genius is ever trying to climb. Genius is vivified and strengthened in the ascent; but it can never, in this life, reach the summit. Pagan genius could climb to Olympus and banquet with the gods on its summit; but Sinai, and Thabor, and Calvary, — while they invite

(1) Ephes. Chap. v; v. 8.

genius to ascend, and offer new views, at every step, — are immeasurably more sublime than Ida, Parnassus, or Olympus.

Besides, even where the pagan writer expresses a noble thought or a sublime truth, there is generally with it some dark and noisome error. The dramas of Aeschylus and Sophocles show us human misery without a ray of sunshine. Their heroes are the victims of a whimsical, merciless power without justice or pity; there is no hope, no future expectation of reparation for them. Neither are Plato, Cicero or Tacitus sure of the consoling and ennobling doctrine of the immortality of the soul. Yet such is Christian influence that even apostates from Christian faith cannot prevent the sunshine of Christ's atonement, mercy, clemency and goodness from illuminating, in their writings, the death scene of the repentant sinner. Christian influences dominate rebellious genius in spite of itself. The sweet notes of the "Ave Maria" forced Byron to his knees while writing an immoral poem, and made him pen some of the sweetest lines that were ever sung to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God; the infidel dramatist is forced to make *La Tosca* grasp the Crucifix and put it in pity at the

head of the ruffian whom she has murdered. Even Goethe, who tried to write a purely pagan poem, could not free himself from Christian influences. The weak, loving, guilty and unfortunate "Marguerite", remorseful and repentant, is not a pagan heroine; the element of Christianity softens her character. The true pagan woman is the Medea of Euripides, who stands, fierce, pitiless and un-repentant over her bloody work, like a cruel and carnivorous vulture on a barren hill-side, tearing out the vitals of a lamb and defiantly feasting on the bloody banquet. What pagan genius ever equalled in beauty, sublimity and grandeur of thought or of style the last Cantos of Dante's "Divine Comedy" in which his wonderful mind portrays the beauties of paradise and the glories of the Madonna.

But it is not merely in the metaphysical and moral elevation of thought or in its ordinary expressions that Christianity has shown its influence on literature. Even in literature as an art the Church has improved on pagan models. Although paganism made a special study of form, — and in this, if in anything, might be expected to excel or to equal Christianity, — the religion of Christ still bears the palm for

excellence even in the art of rhetoric. Paganism concentrated itself on the aesthetic element in composition and has indeed left models of classic beauty, models of grace, of polish and good taste, worthy of imitation ; yet the noble Christian thought has added new splendor and expression, and put a heaven born spirit and a divine soul into the carnalism of pagan style. Christianity has added even something absolutely new to literature. Rhyme may have been known to some nations before Christianity ; but it is not found in that literature which we usually call classic, and which is the best of the ancient literatures. The beauties of rhyme are not found in the classic poets. The first appearance of it in Latin verse comes from the Christian muse of an Irish Saint, Sedulius. Another addition to literature was made by the Christian pulpit. The short, crisp and pungent phrases of Demosthenes excite our admiration still ; and the sonorous periods of Cicero still charm our ears by their harmony. But what are their phrases compared with that eloquence of which paganism knew nothing : the eloquence of the Christian pulpit ? The eloquence of a Chrysostom or of a Bossuet, robed in the clouds of Christian

majesty and hurling the thunder bolts of denunciation at the vices of purple-robed courtiers in the very presence of imperial and royal power? The substance as well as the form of this species of literature was unknown to paganism. The graces derived from rhyme and the sublimity of pulpit eloquence are entirely Christian. The superior character of Christian thought necessarily gives superior beauty to its well fitting vesture. But let us see by a practical illustration what Christianity has done to improve the substance and the form of literature. Let us take some of the greatest masters of Christian thought, and compare them with similiar great ones in Paganism. Compare, for instance, St. Augustine with Plato; St. Thomas with Aristotle, and Dante with Homer. In each case the Christian often used Pagan ideas and forms of expression, but added to them new matter and new beauty. Behold the difference in thought! The three Pagans disagree and contradict one another. Plato's system was radically different from that of Aristotle; and Plato was so hostile to Homer that he proposed to exclude from his ideal state, the great poet, on account of his fabulous mythology. On the contrary, the three great Christ-

ians agree. Their God, their Creed, their ethics are the same. Dante, the great poet, is the product of St. Augustine and St. Thomas, the great Theologians and philosophers. Plato, the disciple of Socrates, in his writings has the moral blemishes and uncertainty of his master. Plato teaches the legitimacy of polyandry and infanticide and is unable to answer the simplest questions so easily and so rationally answered by the Christian : What is the destiny of man ? What is God ? Is there a future state ? Is the soul immortal ? Plato doubts or hesitatingly affirms. But Augustine speaks with authority. In him all is clear, plain, certain. His " City of God " is the divine edifice without flaw or defect in the architecture. In Plato the sublime is occasional and accidental ; in Augustine the sublime and the beautiful are in every phrase.

Aristotle is superior to Plato in analytical power. The Stagyrte analyses human thought and human action with the skill born of natural genius. He was the greatest of the pagan intellects. Yet how grossly he errs in many things so clear now to the Christian mind. He denies for instance the providence of God. The God whom he finds at

the end of his syllogism is a heartless being, living in solitary selfishness and caring naught for the world of which He is the master without being the Creator. For Aristotle denied the fact of Creation. St. Thomas, with a mind perhaps naturally not superior to that of Aristotle but elevated above nature by Christian faith and charity, produces in his "Sum of Theology" the greatest master-piece of human thought in the world. The Christian theologian takes the scattered truths of the Stagyrite, clears up his obscurities and refutes his errors. He rests all the truths of nature, and of revelation, on their common centre, God; and shows their relations, connections and dependence. He takes the marble from the Pagan quarry, or the slabs half-finished and polished by the pagan philosopher, who did not know how to finish his work. St. Thomas chisels, shapes, classifies, arranges, writes, cements them into an organic whole, into a vast Cathedral of science, perfect in symmetry, radiant in beauty and spanning the whole small ken of human intelligence.

Again in the realm of poetry in which imagination as well as intellect plays so large a part, behold the supremacy of Christian genius. Compare Homer with Dante. The

machinery of the pagan poet is coarse and carnal. His heroes are brutal prize-fighters. His gods grotesque and gross, fit to be classed only with the bluebeards and ogres of our nursery rhymes, foul wretches lower than the lowest and meanest of man-kind. Of all the gods and goddesses in the poems of Homer there is not one that realized the ideal of a Christian gentleman or of a Christian lady. There are Jupiter, the libertine, whom Juvenal scores in the well known lines : *Quam multas matres fecerit ille deus* ; the bully Ares and ox-eyed Juno, the common scold, — and Venus the disreputable wench. The form indeed of Homeric verse is beautiful ; his metre musical, his metaphors grand ; but the color of flesh is about it all without the ennobling influence of the spirit. Dante, on the contrary, is spiritual throughout because he uses the machinery of revelation. The Christian has the advantage of having the nine choirs of angels, realizations of intelligence, of purity and every virtue, to embellish his masterly creation. With Christian faith, he descends into the deep caverns of the spiritual realm of the departed and among the spirits of the dead, he teaches us by their example to hate vice and love virtue,

to pity the suffering, and to admire the justice of God ; or on the wings of faith and charity, he lifts us above the earth, above its mountains, and its clouds, to the very abode of the Triune God ; and in heaven shows us the superiority of spiritual over material beauty. He makes us despise the things of sense, trample on carnal passion, cleanse the wings of fancy from the dross that clogs their flight, and in an ecstasy of love, among the angels, in a rapture of spirit, unite our disembodied souls to the very essence of the All-perfect and Eternal Being who made the world out of nothing. And all these magnificent truths and ideas are robed in the splendor of the most majestic style.

So paganism has produced no literary work which Christianity has not equalled and excelled. Paganism could never produce the " Divine Comedy of Dante " or Milton's " Paradise Lost ".

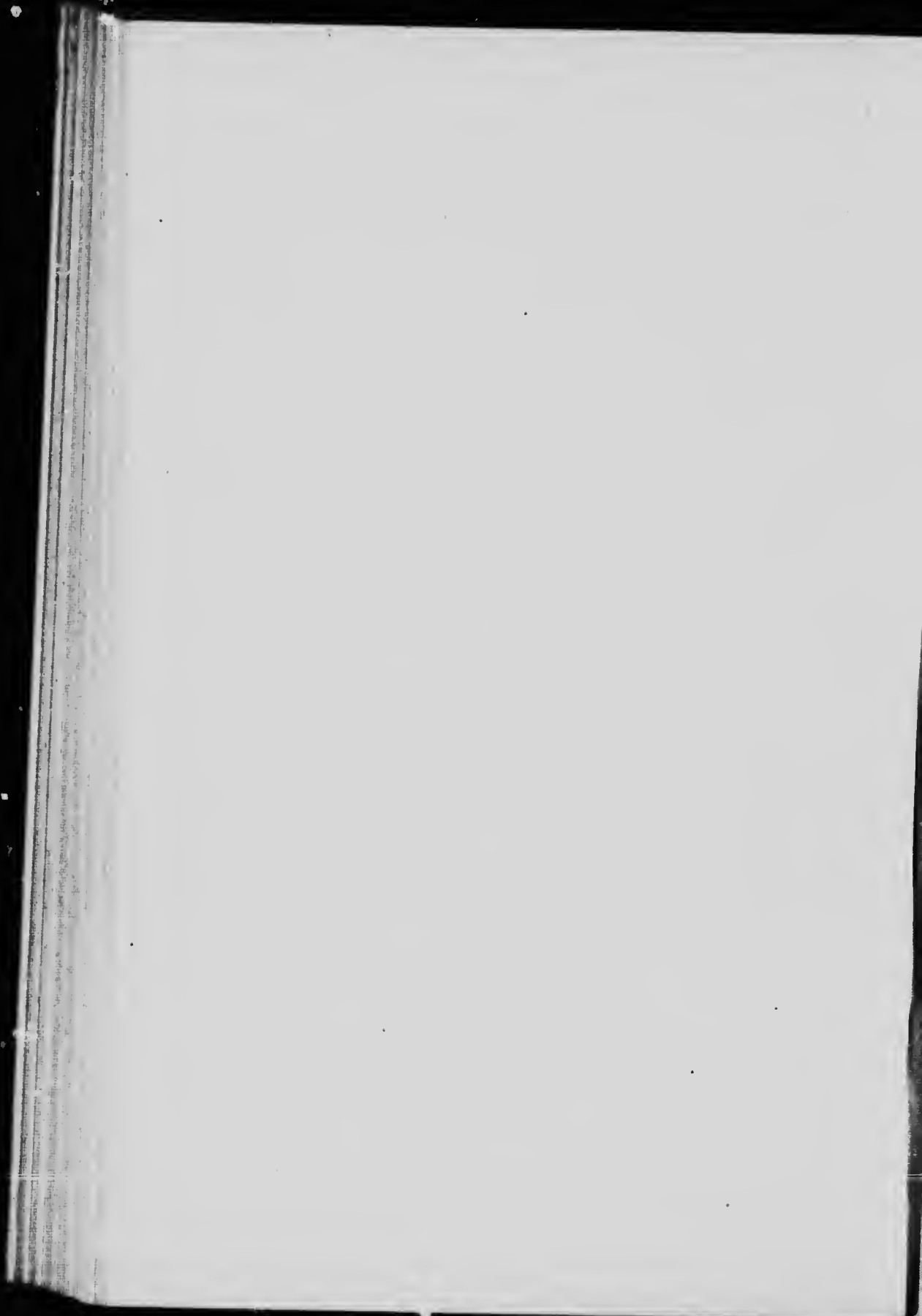
Let us therefore cherish and cultivate Christian literature and protect it from what ever tends to sully, or degrade it. In our time a school has arisen which aims at substituting for the Christian ideal a low and coarse realism. Writers of this school have already both in dramatic poetry and in works of fic-

tion retrograded towards the low level of pagan models. So far however no dramatist has dared to outrage public decency by representing on the stage the unnatural vices which degrade even the best efforts of the Athenian writers of comedies. These modern realistic writers poison the wells of good taste, and of good morals. Yet Christian public opinion is still strong enough, even in half apostate communities, to prevent the stage exhibition of the unnatural vices which are common in the classic comedies of the Athenian Aristophanes.

Christian truth and the noble principles of Christian ethics are still found like lost diamonds glistening even in the mud of Modern Realism. Let us then be true to the Christian ideal and to the Christian model. From the lowest to the topmost round of the ladder of mental culture ; from the primary school to the university, let Jesus Christ reign, — Jesus Christ the way, the truth and the life ; Jesus Christ the beacon of civilisation and of genius ; Jesus Christ the true light which enlighteneth every man coming into this world. To this Light let our intellects be ever turned, and to It with that great model of Christian style, Cardinal Newman. let us pray : " Lead,

kindly light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on :

 The night is dark and I am far from home,
Lead thou me on. ”



PANEGYRIC
OF ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA

PREACHED IN ST. ANTHONY'S CHURCH NEW YORK

« All men are vain in whom
there is not the knowledge of
God.»

Wisdom x, III, v l.

THE word vain, in this text, my brethren, means worthless, fruitless, and ineffectual. The life of St. Anthony of Padua, the Patron of this parish, illustrates its meaning by contrast. He was one of the greatest saints and theologians as well as one of the greatest preachers of the 13th Century. In holiness of life and devotion to the work of saving souls he was the worthy son of the seraphic founder of the illustrious Franciscan order. St. Anthony was born in Portugal August 15, 1195, but his labors were chiefly in France and Italy, where he left behind him a luminous track of miraculous sanctity and sublime eloquence. He became a brilliant star in the galaxy of saints and scholars of the age. His special work was preaching. He began this

work when he was 27 years old. The field was ripe for his zeal and his eloquence. The people were then ignorant and scandals desecrated the sanctuary. The reforms begun in the Church by the great Gregory VII and continued by his successors and the Lateran Councils had not yet borne full fruit. The Waldenses and the Albigenses, aided and abetted, as heresy always is, by ambitious political leaders, had ravaged the vineyard of the Lord. These heretics had taught the people to neglect and despise the clergy and the sacraments, and had filled the popular mind with false notions of Christ and the Church. To succeed in this they had taken advantage of scandals, which were then prevalent, until they had inflamed against Pope, bishops and priests the passions of the ignorant people and induced them to accept erroneous and vicious doctrines alike destructive of Christian faith and of Christian morality. St. Anthony was fully prepared for his work. For years as an Augustinian friar he had applied himself to the acquisition of sacred learning. He knew that the knowledge of God was necessary to success in his mission. Later, attracted by the self-sacrificing spirit and the heroic poverty of St. Francis, he became a Franciscan. His

first years in the order were spent in solitude, sanctifying his own soul and especially studying the Holy Scriptures, the treasury of pulpit orators. The result of this study afterwards appeared in his celebrated ascetical commentary on the Psalms. Then as now the Scriptures were known by priests and people. Although he was known as a learned professor of Theology, no one suspected him of possessing oratorical powers, until one day by command of his superior, he preached a sermon before an assembly of the fathers of his order. This was the beginning of his fame and of his public life. From that day he became a great missionary, whose burning eloquence brought back to the Church thousands of the people who had been led astray by heresy which always thrives best in a condition of ignorance and vice. He made war on the vices and errors of the times. He instructed the people in the truths of the Catholic faith ; he refuted the false doctrine of the Albigenses ; he rendered sin odious and vice detestable. His success was wonderful. God testified to the sanctity of His servant by giving him the power of working miracles wherever he preached. By his zeal and labors of nine years the devastating tide of heresy

and vice was stemmed and driven back from Italy and southern France.

The chief work of St. Anthony was preaching. He was a model preacher for all the priests of his order, and not only for them but for all other priests. He was a model for the laity too ; for laymen, my brethren, in a certain sense are also preachers. They can preach by good example and by good words. Their church is the home, the shop, the factory. Their audience the people with whom they associate, or meet in daily life. A brief study of the salient points in St. Anthony considered as a preacher will therefore best show his character and be a source of edification to ourselves.

In studying his character we find that he prepared himself for his missionary life as Our Lord prepared Himself for His public mission. In long seclusion and retirement St. Anthony filled his mind and heart with the knowledge of God without which all men's words and works are vain. He prepared himself by closely imitating our Lord in the three things that characterized His preaching and ministry. First : in holiness of life before he began to preach ; secondly : in abnegation of self and renunciation of all earthly

things ; thirdly : in the interruption of his preaching by frequent retreats in which he gave himself up to prayer and contemplation. Let us briefly consider these three points.

“ No one, ” says St. Thomas, “ should assume the office of preaching unless he has been purified of sin and become perfect in vertue, ” as is said of Christ that He began “ to do and to teach ” ; (1) that is He began to practise before He began to preach. Thus after His Baptism He practised the mortification of a forty days fast and then entered on His public mission. Thus did He give a lesson to preachers to tame their own passions before undertaking the task of converting others. Thus St. Paul the great preacher who so closely imitated his divine Master tells us (2) : “ I chastise my body and bring it into subjection ; lest perhaps when I have preached to others I myself should become reprobate. ” St. Anthony like Our Lord and St. Paul practised all the virtues that he preached.

Secondly : He imitated Our Lord in His poverty and detachment from the things of earth. “ Christ, ” says St. Thomas (3a pars

(1) Acts I. v. 1.

(2) I. Cor. v. 27.

quaest. 4 art 1.), led a life of poverty, because poverty is "appropriate to the office of preaching, to do which He came down to earth; as He said: "Let us go into the neighboring towns that I may preach there also; for to this purpose I am come". (1) Hence when Our Lord sent His apostles to preach He said to them: (2) "Do not possess gold, nor silver nor money in your purses." The apostles following out their instructions realized that they could not properly discharge the duty of preaching if they were immersed in secular pursuits, for they said as a reason for appointing deacons to look after the material things of the Church: "It is not reasonable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables." (3) The spirit of holy poverty which characterized Our Lord and St. Francis, inspired St. Anthony also and fitted him for the self-denying work of the missionary. He forgot himself. He gave up the world and the things of the world. He practised abnegation. By the vows of the Franciscan order he could not claim ownership of anything. Absolute

(1) Marc. i. v. 38.

(2) Matt. x. v. 9.

(3) Acts 6. v. 2,

poverty is in the whole spirit of the order.

Thirdly : St. Anthony as a preacher imitated Our Lord by frequently retiring from public life to study and to pray. St. Thomas says (1) that Our Lord frequently retired from the public gaze, to set an example to preachers. He loved solitude. His three places of refuge when the crowds pressed on Him, were a ship, a mountain or the desert. These places He sought for repose of body or for prayer ; or to teach us that we should shun human applause. "He shunned the city and the forum and sought the mountain and solitude," says St. John Chrysostom, himself a great preacher and a great saint, "to teach us to avoid ostentation and the noisy crowd". St. Anthony found solitude, opportunity for meditation, and necessary refuge from the continual distractions and temptations of a public life, in the Franciscan convents by the hillsides or in the valleys of Italy and France. Repose for a time always renewed his zeal and activity in the work of God. He left his retreat only to undertake new conquests. It renewed his spiritual forces as the touch of mother earth revived the strength of the giant with whom Hercules struggled. The very

(1) *Tertia Pars Sum. quaest. 40 art. 1 ad 3 m.*

words of St. Paul, the words of all zealous missionaries, addressed to the Laodiceans, inspired St. Anthony in his love for the Italians of his day (1): "For I would have you know what solicitude I have for you and for them who are at Laodicea that their hearts may be comforted being instructed in charity, and with all the riches of the fullness of understanding, with the knowledge of the mystery of God the Father and of Christ Jesus in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

My brethren, a field similar to that in which St. Anthony labored is before our eyes now, not only on the other side of the ocean but here. Thousands of the countrymen of St. Francis are pouring annually on our shores. They come from a land which has been specially blessed and privileged by God; from a land which has enjoyed more than eighteen hundred years of Christian civilization; the land in which St. Peter was crucified for the faith and in which he established the primatial see; the land of popes and cardinals. On account of these privileges the people of Italy should be the best Christians in the world; the best instructed in the

(1) Coll. Chap. II, v. 1, 2, 3.

faith, and models of virtue for the rest of Christendom. St. Paul writing in the first century gave thanks to God that the faith of the Romans was known to the whole world.

The Italian Christians of his day were the best. Are they so in our day? Are they the first in faith, the first in morality, and the first in loyalty to the vicar of Christ? And if they are not what is the reason and whose is the fault? If many of them who come to this country, instead of being a cause of edification are a cause of scandal to Catholics of other nationalities, whose fault is it? This is a serious question and one which I do not care to answer. But you all know that there is a field among Italian Catholics both at home and abroad, for the missionary zeal of a new St. Anthony of Padua. His brethren, these sons of St. Francis who have built this beautiful church, have shown that his spirit has inspired their zealous labors and borne fruit in this very congregation. May that spirit pervade the whole order of which he was so distinguished a son. May the God of science and of eloquence infuse his holy spirit into all the preachers of that order so that they may emulate the example of their holy patron!

May the fruits of their labors be equal to his ; and may we all be helped by his holy prayers to realize that " all men are vain in whom there is not the knowledge of God. "

PANEGYRIC OF ST. PATRICK

PREACHED AT ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL

"The just shall be in everlasting remembrance.

PSALM III, V. 7.

IT is exactly fourteen hundred years to-day since St. Patrick died. He was a just man, that is to say a virtuous, a holy man and he was also a great apostle.

"A just man indeed, was this man," says an old writer, "with purity of nature like the patriarchs; a true pilgrim, like Abraham; gentle and forgiving, like Moses; a praiseworthy psalmist, like David; an emulator of wisdom, like Solomon; a chosen vessel for proclaiming the truth, like the apostle St. Paul; a man full of grace and the knowledge of the Holy Ghost, like the beloved John. His sanctity, the source of his fame, after so many centuries keeps his memory as green and as fresh in the minds of all civilized men, as the verdure that decks the meadows in the land he loved and converted. His remem-

brance lives in his work, which is the conversion of the Irish race to Christianity.

In the doing of that work he closely followed the example of his divine master. The record of St. Patrick's holiness, fastings and mortifications, vigils and constant prayers, sufferings, miracles and zeal, read like an imitation of the life of Christ as told in the New Testament. Even the manner of his preaching closely resembled the preaching of Jesus-Christ. When Our Lord stood before the multitudes, He illustrated His lessons from scenes that surrounded Him, from objects perfectly familiar to His hearers, from grass on the plains, the sowing of the fields, from the tares and the wheat, the trees in the groves, the fig-tree by the way side, the birds of the air and the lilies of the field, which "sow not neither do they spin."

All is plain, all is simple in the sermons of Christ. And when at Tara before Laeghaire, King of Ireland, who was surrounded by all his great men, his learned druids, judges and valiant chieftains, St. Patrick stood and preached, he explained the fundamental truth and mystery of Christianity by a little plant picked from the garden of the royal palace. On that occasion which may be called

the birthday of Christianity in Ireland, St. Patrick gave to the nation an emblem which has ever since continued to be the symbol of the faith and of the virtues of the Irish race.

On the soil it loves the shamrock grows watered by the tears and warmed by the smiles of a passionate sky. The shamrock's verdure never dies. It thrives in sunshine and storm.

Its three leaves and one stem are a symbol of the three persons and the one nature of the deity ; a symbol of that mystery from which all the other Christian mysteries spring, or with which they are intimately connected. It is also a symbol of the three theological virtues, faith, hope and charity, which are the root, the branch and the flower of justification. The freshness of the shamrock recalls Irish faith which is ever green ; its tenacity of life in the ground, for it " will take root and flourish though under foot ' tis trod," recalls the undying hopes and aspirations of the people ; while its pure white blossoms are symbols of charity and of love.

The shamrock reminds us also of the great virtues that characterize the Irish race ; virtues which are the effects of Christian belief and practice. These virtues, my breth-

ren, as they appear in history, are three : faith, chastity and courage.

No one who has read history can deny that the Irish race is specially remarkable for these three virtues.

The religious faith of the Irish, like that of the Romans as extolled by St. Paul, is known to the whole world. The island of saints was a beacon light of faith and of science, when the rest of Europe was in darkness. This has not been a dead but a living faith manifested by missionary zeal and good works. No sooner was Ireland converted than it became a hive of apostles for the rest of Europe. It is a historical fact that Irish missionaries reconverted Europe. Into England and Scotland they went ; into France they travelled ; up the Rhine they sailed into Germany ; over the Alps they climbed into Switzerland, descended into Italy, and they crossed into Spain, everywhere preaching the gospel, reforming degenerate Christians, denouncing vice and heresy and founding schools and religious institutions for the enlightenment and reformation of an ignorant, corrupt and semibarbarous population.

The chastity of the Irish race followed as a natural consequence of their Christian faith.

Even during the life-time of St. Patrick the whole island blossomed with convents and monasteries filled with men and women vowed to purity as well as to poverty and obedience. The Irish apostles preached and practised chastity. Wherever the Irish missionaries travelled they founded monasteries and enrolled in them the best talent and the best virtue of the Italian, of the German and of the French people. Grateful writers of those races tell us the authentic story.

Ozanam, Montalembert, Greith and others bear testimony in classic pages to Irish chastity. The monasteries of Bobbio in the north of Italy ; of St. Gall in free Switzerland ; of Altenmunster on the Rhine ; Luxeuil, Malmédy and Stavelo in Gaul, attest the fact that everywhere the sons of St. Patrick established centres from which the rays of virtue were diffused among the darkened nations.

The names of more than three hundred and sixty five Irishmen, patron saints in different parts of the continent of Europe, from the name of St. Cataldus in Tarentum in the south of Italy, to St. Gall the disciple of the great St. Columbanus in the frozen Alps of Switzerland, to St. Virgilius and St. Kilian in the south of Germany, and to St. Fiacre in

France, are proofs to this day of the holiness and of the deep learning of your forefathers.

Never yet was there a great Irish saint who was not at the same time a scholar. And the cold statistics of modern times, although often compiled by unfriendly hands, show Ireland to be still the first among European nations on the score of morality ; and that part of the island to be most moral which is most Catholic.

The daughters of St. Patrick are as pure and their modesty as fragrant as the blossoms on the hawthorn hedges of Erin. Nor can any one question the third great quality of the race, which is courage. By courage I do not mean merely the daring of the soldier who fearlessly storms the fort, or charges desperately on the foe. That, my brethren, is not the highest form of courage ; that is often the courage of excitement and of impulse. The highest form of courage is fortitude such as the martyrs showed in the times of persecution.

The soldier who patiently endures the sufferings of the long march, or who under the provocation and challenge of a hated enemy, obeys his officers, and awaits their orders for the time to charge, is more valorous than

the undisciplined recrait who rushes madly and blindly to the conflict.

Self control, endurance and patience are the elements of true courage and the Irish have shown all these qualities.

They have endured persecution for seven hundred years, and although inhumanly outraged and often scourged by famine resulting from the misgovernment of a foreign oppressor, they have never as a nation used unlawful means to right their wrongs. No people under such oppression would have shown so few instances of the violation of law. The Irish have always been too brave to resort to the arts of the coward. Although the foreigner despoiled them of their property and sometimes brutally slaughtered their wives and children, the men of Ireland seldom retaliated except in open manly warfare and with fair weapons. Fierce though Celtic passions are, the influence of the Catholic religion has held and will hold them in check.

Yet there are some who from time to time tell us that the Catholic religion has been the foe of Irish success, and that it would be better for the Irish race to forget the traditions of the past, and to give up the faith and

morality which St. Patrick planted in Irish soil in the fifth century.

They say that a divorce between the priests and the people, between the Catholic Church and the Irish race, would render the people more successful because less scrupulous about the means to be used and the leaders to be chosen in furthering the interests of patriotism. But, my brethren, God forbid that such a divorce should ever take place. It would mark the decadence of the Irish race ; the loss not only of their faith and morals but even of their manly courage. Religion is the heart, as chastity is the marrow and the bone of valor. Infidelity and impurity are the parents of weakness and cowardice. No nation has survived that sacrificed religion. All history proves this. The Old Testament from Genesis to the Maccabees ; the history of the Grecian republics ; the history of Rome and of more modern peoples, show that patriotism and soldierly courage die with the loss of faith and of morals.

When God is exiled from a country, no man will consider it his duty to die for fatherland, for the idea of duty depends on the idea of God. When the generation of pure mortals becomes extinct in a land, there is no one able

to give the thews and sinews of strength required to make valiant soldiers. Faith and chastity are the parents of true courage.

The men who clamor for a divorce between people and priests are therefore traitors to their race, and would destroy its glory, its honor and its manhood.

The false patriots who have resorted to means condemned by Christianity, to the dagger of the assassin, or the bomb of the anarchist, have only excited the hatred and the contempt of civilized men ; and have injured the cause of Irish restoration to right and to freedom.

Such patriots would bring back the snakes into Ireland. No ! St. Patrick forbid that a taint of infidelity or of immorality should ever tarnish the just cause for which his sons have fought for seven centuries as Christians and as honorable men.

Their fight against the foe, like that of the brave Spaniards for eight centuries against the Moors, must be won without dishonor.

In the future their most glorious victories will be achieved by the indissoluble union of Christian faith and patriotism ; as their greatest victories in the past have been won when the shamrock was entwined most lovingly

around the cross : the three leafed symbol of faith and of virtue clung around the cross, on the Good Friday in the year one thousand and fourteen, when Brian Born and his Irish soldiers defeated the infidel Danes at Clontarf and then forced them to leave Ireland.

And Brian was the only King in Europe who was able to drive the Danish invaders from his shores.

Were the Irish soldiers who fought on that day less brave, because their chief standard was the Crucifix ?

Was their love of country less because they loved God more ? Did not their devotion to Holy Church make them strike the harder for their native land ?

Again the shamrock and Cross were united on May 11, 1745, at Fontenoy, when the King of France saw his army mowed down by as gallant a body of soldiers as ever shouldered musket or charged with bayonet.

Fourteen thousand English soldiers steadily advance, in spite of every obstacle, almost to the very heart of his position. The French King is in dismay. His whole army is on the verge of defeat. One hope is left, the reserves : and they are Irish Catholic exiles that stand impatient for the fray. Most of them

had gone to confession the night before the battle, and Irish priests, exiled like themselves after the treaty of Limerick, were among them bestowing blessings and giving absolution. Could these men retrieve the fortunes of the fight? Would their religion prevent them from being good soldiers? Would they fight less valiantly because they had gone to confession? "Lord Clare", said Marshal Saxe, there are your "Saxon foes." Now watch these exiles as they receive the command to charge. They bless themselves with the sign of the cross. Before them they see the enemies of their creed and country, and then they forget their surroundings. They imagine themselves again on Irish soil; beneath their feet the shamrock seems to grow; before them rise the ruined walls of Limerick and the lordly Shannon flows majestically to the sea. They remember the cruelties and perfidy of their adversaries, and with a shout that strikes terror into the heart of the bloody Duke of Cumberland they sweep down upon his regiments like an avalanche from the Alps.

Clubbing their guns in hands that were strong because they were inherited from pure mothers, they beat the enemy back and scattered his ranks in disorder over the fields.

Victory is won and the lily of France is saved by the shamrock of Ireland.

But it is not necessary to go so far back in history for a proof of the statement that nations decay when religion and patriotism are divorced ; and that peoples are never so great as when the love of God and the love of father-land are united. In the late war between France and Germany the infidel recruits of Paris, who were good only at killing peaceable priests and archbishops, had often to be driven to the fight by the swords of their officers ; while the Catholic Bretons and Vendéans ran to the charge on the double quick ; (1) and the best fighting on the German side was done by gallant Catholic Rhinelanders and by Catholic South Germans.

And you soldiers of the 69th whose torn flags and whose numbers (2) decimated in our Civil War, tell the story of Irish courage and of Catholic patriotism in the cause of our great, free and noble American Republic, could you have done so nobly if you had come of an impure or of an unbelieving race ?

Are not those stout limbs, broad shoulders and strong arms of yours the product of Ca-

(1) A fact attested to the preacher by a French officer

(2) They were in the audience.

tholic purity ? And did not your religion give courage to your hearts in the camp and consolation to the wounded and to the dying on the field of battle ? You who represent among us the men who fought at Clontarf and at Fontenoy ; you who have followed the starry flag to victory on many a Southern plain ; you whose achievements have made the cheeks of your countrymen flush with pride, did the blessing and the absolution of the chaplain lessen your valor or break the force of your onset ? No ! you know that your religion makes you better and braver soldiers and more honorable men. Sad experience shows that men who are traitors to God cannot be trusted with the interests of their country. Use all your influence then against these false teachers, who for selfish purpose would make you forget the teachings and the practices of the religion of St. Patrick.

Remember always the symbol of the shamrock. Be true to the faith, practice the chastity, imitate the courage of your forefathers ; and the blessing of God the Father, of God the Son, and of God the Holy Ghost, will abide with you for ever.

ST. CECILIA

AND GOUNOD'S MASS IN HER HONOR

THE life of this Saint as told in the records of her martyrdom affords a subject for a noble drama in four acts.

In the first we behold the home life of this young and beautiful lady. She was born in the third century, about seventy years before our patroness, St. Agnes, of one of the oldest and richest families in Rome. On the Appian Way, the great road that leads to Rome from the Campagna, there still exists the famous sepulchre of Cecilia Metella, one of her distinguished ancestors. Our Cecilia was born and brought up in the City of Rome in a house on the Campus Martius or field of Mars, where she lived until her marriage. Upon the spot where once her cradle was rocked, there has been erected to her honor by the liberality of a Roman Pontiff, Benedict XIII, a church bearing her name. The people still call it the church of divine Love.

Her house was surrounded by groves of trees. It was furnished with every luxury that Roman patrician wealth could provide, and the trophies and crowns of her distinguished pagan ancestors decked its walls. Here she spent her early years in prayer and in the practice of every virtue. She was a Christian even in her infancy. Most probably a Christian nurse was the means employed by God to teach her the doctrines and practices of the Church. Yet although the young Cecilia was a Christian, her parents were pagans ; but they were tolerant of her belief and did not interfere with her religious practices.

This was during the reign of Alexander Severus, an emperor friendly to the Christians and unwilling to enforce the laws against them. He knew that members of his own family and many of the patricians who frequented his palace and some of the most important officers of the state were believers in the religion of Christ, for whose character and teaching he had the greatest respect. Cecilia was allowed to attend the assemblies of the Christians, and during a lull in the storm of persecution, she professed and practised her religion openly. She frequented the crypts of the martyrs where the Christians

were wont to gather to celebrate the festivals of the Church, and was known and beloved by all. St. Urban I, was then Pope ; he was living in concealment. As he was the head of the Church the persecutors entertained particular hatred towards him and discovery would have cost him his life. The Christians alone knew his hiding place, yet not one of them would betray him. Through them the wealthy Cecilia helped and befriended him to the hour of her death. She had by vows become the spouse of Christ. Peace reigned over her early life, but this peace was soon to be followed by storm and persecution.

The second act brings other persons into the life of Cecilia and records her marriage ; a marriage, however, which never interfered with the preservation of her virginity.

When the time was fitting, her parents, proud of their beautiful and accomplished daughter, sought for her a suitable alliance among the noble families of their acquaintance. Valerian was the one selected. He was a pagan ; but in those days marriages between Christians and pagans were permitted. The will of the parents was the law for the children in the old Roman days. Parental authority could not be opposed under

penalty of death, if the father wished to inflict it on the disobedient child. Whatever therefore were Cecilia's wishes and notwithstanding her vows, she had to obey her parents and accept Valerian. He was handsome and generous and he was deeply in love with her. He had a brother named Tiburtius to whom he was also attached. The day was appointed for the wedding and the virgin bride, dressed magnificently in lace and gold, went to the place appointed for the wedding ceremony. She did not yet feel inspired to explain that she would never break the vows she had made to her first love Jesus, the spouse of her soul. The wedding took place in her own place ornamented with all the extravagance of Roman luxury under the Empire, and filled with representatives of all the patrician families of the city. At sunset of the same day, according to the Roman custom, she went with her husband to his house beyond the Tiber. In this house she lived until her martyrdom and on its site a church was afterwards erected in her honor.

When the feast was over and all had retired for the night, Cecilia thus addressed her husband : " My generous friend, I have a secret to confide to thee ; swear that thou wilt res-

pect it. I am under the care of an angel whom God has appointed protector of my virginity. If thou shouldst violate it, His fury will be enkindled against thee and thou wilt fall a victim to His vengeance. If on the other hand, thou wilt respect it, He will favor thee with His love and obtain for thee many blessings. ”

Although not yet a Christian, Valerian was a gentleman ; and a gentleman always respects the wishes and the person of a lady, particularly of the lady who is his wife. Through her intercession, God bestowed on him the gift of faith, and permitted him to see the angel who guarded the purity of his virgin wife. She then sent him to Pope Urban who was in hiding on the Appian Way about three miles from the city. The Pope instructed and baptized him. He became at once a fervent and devoted Christian and very soon converted his brother Tiburtius to whom he had always been devoutly attached.

The third act tells the story of the martyrdom of these two brothers. They spent their time in alleviating the sufferings of the poor, in burying the dead and in doing the other corporal works of mercy with that zeal which characterized the early Christians. Valerian

and Tiburtius were names held in benediction by all the suffering and unfortunate in the city. The brothers were known to be Christians, but no one yet dared to urge against them the enforcement of the penal laws against Christianity. Few wished to punish such benefactors of the poor. Alexander Severus was still the Emperor and residing in the city. For twenty-seven years the Christians had enjoyed comparative peace. The Church had grown; the Christians had multiplied; and the public practice of the Christian religion was tolerated within the shadow of the Emperor's palace in the Eternal City. But unfortunately for the Christians the Emperor was now obliged to leave Rome to lead an army against the enemies of the Empire; and the civil authority of the city was left in the hands of Turcius Almachius a man well known for his hatred of the Christian name. The brothers were denounced to him for violating the law forbidding the interment of the martyrs and for their large donations of money to the poor. Almachius did not at first intend to put the noble pair to death. He wished merely to intimidate them and force them to be less generous in their charities. They were arrested. "How

is it possible," said the prefect to them, "that you scions of a noble family can have so far degenerated from your blood as to associate yourselves with the most superstitious of sects? I hear that you are squandering your fortune upon people of the basest extraction and you go so far as to bury with honor the bodies of wretches who have been punished for their crimes." The prefect acted without the orders of the Emperor, but yet, according to law, and persisted in his purpose of punishing both Valerian and Tiburtius. But they could not be intimidated. They professed openly their faith, refused to sacrifice or burn incense to the gods of Rome, whom they publicly denounced as demons and stupid idols. For this they were scourged with whips and then sentenced to be beheaded. They had a last interview with Cecilia before their martyrdom. She exhorted them to be steadfast in the faith. They were beheaded, and their constancy and virtue had such influence that Maximus the notary of the prefect and many of the soldiers who witnessed their martyrdom, became Christians. Maximus afterward died a martyr to the fury of the pagan prefect.

The fourth and last act gives us the account

of Cecilia's own martyrdom. The witnesses of the martyrdom of her husband and of her brother in law came back to Rome and told her the glorious story of their heroism. She had the consolation of burying them in the cemetery of Pretextatus about two miles from the city. She now longed more and more to die for Christ and go to join her husband in heaven. She became more fearless in professing her faith and in the practice of her holy religion. Almachius had ordered the confiscation of the property of Valerian and Tiburtius and hoped to get control of it himself, but Cecilia had taken care that the persecutor should find none to confiscate, for she had distributed all their movable property to the poor. This greatly irritated the prefect. She so publicly defied all the powers of paganism that he now deemed it necessary to order her to sacrifice to the gods. He hesitated to act, however, for he feared the power of the noble family of the Cecillii. But pagan public opinion and his own hatred of Christ urged him on. He first attempted to compromise, and sent officers of justice to her house to get her to sacrifice privately to the gods, so that it could be said that she had complied with the law. But

she refused and made so eloquent a defense of Christianity to the officers that they became Christians. The "Acts" of her martyrdom tell us that she taught all that came near her by word and example the doctrines of Christ until she had gathered around her no less than four hundred converts. These Pope Urban secretly baptized in her house. Knowing that her end was approaching, she then transferred all her property to one of the converts named Gordian, so that it could not be confiscated but delivered over to the Church for religious and charitable purposes. Her mission was now accomplished. She was at last arrested and brought before Almachius.

"Young woman, what is your name?" said the Judge.

"Men call me Cecilia," she replied, "but my most beautiful name is Christian."

"Know you not that our masters, the invincible emperors, have ordered that those who confess themselves Christians are to be punished; whereas those who consent to deny the name of Christ are to be acquitted?"

"Your emperors are in error as well as your excellency," she replied. "The law

which you quote simply proves that you are cruel and we innocent. If the name of Christian were a crime it would be our part to deny it, and yours to force us by torments to confess it. ”

“ But, ” said the prefect, “ the emperors have enacted this law through motives of clemency that they might provide you with a means of saving your lives. ”

“ Can there be anything more unjust than your conduct towards Christians ? ” replied the virgin. “ You use tortures to force ordinary criminals to acknowledge the time, the place and the accomplices of their guilt : whereas our crime is that we bear the name of Christian, and if we do but deny that name we obtain your favor. But we know the greatness of this name and we cannot deny it. Better die and be happy than live and be miserable. You wish us to pronounce a lie ; but in speaking the truth we inflict a much greater and more cruel torture upon you than that which you make us suffer. Christ alone can save from death and deliver the guilty from eternal fire. ”

Almachius still hesitated to put Cecilia to death publicly, for the Roman patricians respected her and all who knew her, loved her.

Therefore he ordered her to be privately smothered in her own bath-room. This attempt, however, failed, for the angels of God refreshed and shielded her in the great heat. He then ordered her to be beheaded ; but the aim of the executioner, from awe of her, was so unsteady, that, although he struck her neck three times with his sword, he left his horrid work incomplete. The law forbade him to strike again, for it ordered that if the victim was not beheaded with the third stroke no more should be struck. St. Cecilia was thus left bleeding to death for three days. During this time the Christians flocked into her room to console her and be edified by her last words. Pope Urban also paid her a visit and wept to see the sorrowful sight. " Holy Father, " she said to him, " I asked our Lord for this delay of three days that I might place in the hands of your holiness my last treasure, the poor, whom I feed and who will miss me. I also bequeath to you this house in which I have lived, that you may consecrate it as a church and that it may become a temple of the Lord forever. " Then the angels received her soul, and the Supreme Pontiff himself, on the night following her death, had her body carried to the cemetery of St. Callis-

tus on the Appian Way and there buried near the very spot in which his predecessors in the See of Rome were interred. Urban himself was soon after put to death for the faith.

I have not given you, my brethren, the whole of the interrogatory of our Saint before her judge because it would take too long to relate it. It is highly dramatic, both beautiful and sublime, and affords matter for the poet as well as for the musician, not only for a great drama, but for a great oratorio, or a great opera ; and even for a successful one, if our modern taste would be satisfied with the substitution of the chaste love of Cecilia and Valerian for the profane love which is the usual theme, and for the sensual love which is often the disgraceful theme of the modern stage.

Both the Greek and the Roman liturgies have continually paid homage to her memory. The Greek liturgy says of her: " Cecilia worthy of all praise ! thou hast preserved thy body from all stain and thy heart from sensual love ! Thou hast presented thyself to thy Creator as an Immaculate Spouse, whose happiness was consummated by martyrdom : He received thee as a spotless virgin and owned thee as His Spouse ! "

Churches and shrines have everywhere been erected in her honor ; poets have sung her virtues. One of the finest odes in the English language has been inspired by the story of her life. Christian genius has adopted her as its patron Saint ; and Christian music has made her its muse. No wonder then that the greatest musical composer of France should pay to her the homage of his genius in the Mass which is being sung for us by the choir this morning. He has left us two masterpieces of his talent ; the one profane, the other sacred, "Faust" and the "Mass of St. Cecilia." Both manifest the character of the man and of his genius. He was a Christian artist, a man of faith. That faith never left him ; and although for a time he did not practise its precepts, still it asserted all the power over his soul in the end which it had asserted in the beginning of his life. Even in Faust, his greatest profane work, the influence of Christian faith and sentiment is clearly manifest ; and if Faust be his tribute to the influence of profane love, the Mass of St. Cecilia shows the influence of divine love on his soul. He published this Mass and it was sung in 1855, in the church of St. Eustache, exactly forty years ago. The greatest musical critic

of the time in Paris, Joseph d'Ortigue, wrote then of Gounod and his work : " I believe that this young master possesses in an eminent degree the qualities which ought to distinguish the composer of sacred music. His composition is broad and noble, calm and solemn ; it is in accord with the requirements of the liturgy ; it is the work of one who is convinced, who believes. " There are however a few minor liturgical errors in this mass.

Musicians, my dear brethren, do not agree as to what the correct style of Church music should be. Some would exclude altogether classical music and restrict the service to plain chant. But although the Church prefers plain chant for her ordinary services and sometimes uses it exclusively, she does not condemn the use of modern music, provided it be truly religious and liturgical. Perhaps there is no place in the world where more liberty has been allowed to the composers of Church music than in the city of Rome. The Church treats music as it treats all the arts, with generosity and broadness. Every style of architecture ; every style of poetry ; every school of painting and sculpture flourishes in the Church, provided they violate not the

canons of good taste and propriety. So it is with music ; the composition which will do for a requiem mass will not be appropriate for Christmas ; and the music of Good Friday should be different from the music of Easter Sunday.

Gounod composed this mass for a day of joy ; for the feast of the glorious Cecilia, virgin and martyr and the patroness of music. Hence, although we find in the *Kyrie*, echoes of plain chant of which Gounod was a thorough master, plaintive notes that express the petition of the people for mercy and forgiveness ; we find in the *Gloria* peals of triumph, shouts of joy, echoes from the angelic choirs that first sang it on the birthday of the Redeemer of mankind. Plain chant cannot fully express all these harmonies of joy and triumph. The plain chant echoes, partially disappear in the *Gloria*, yet still the music expresses the ideas and the sense of the text. The *Credo* follows solemn and majestic like the sound of an army of Crusaders marching to battle against the hosts of infidelity. The *Et Incarnatus est*, *Et Resurrexit* and the *Et vitam æternam* forcibly express the meaning of the words. Gounod wrote it at the very time when Lacordaire, the greatest

of modern French pulpit orators, was thrilling France with his eloquence in vindicating Christian faith from the assaults of rationalism. His influence was felt by Gounod, and as we listen to the magnificent harmony of this *Credo* we imagine the echoes of the pulpit of Notre-Dame, falling on the ear and inspiring the genius of the great master who wielded the baton at St. Eustache. For oratory as well as music puts a soul into the dead world, and inspires the human heart with noble thoughts.

And yet master of all the forms of classical musical composition as Gounod was, and although he composed a *Requiem* upon which he worked even on the very morning of his death, he left orders that nothing but plain chant should be sung at his funeral. To this simple music of the Church of which you have a specimen in the "*Preface*" and "*Our Father*" sung by the celebrant of the Mass, he paid the tribute of his genius. "I do not know," said he, "any work sprung from the human brain, that can compare with the redoubtable majesty of those sublime chants which we daily hear in our churches, during the funeral ceremonies, the *Dies Iræ* and the *De Profundis*. Nothing has reached their

sublimity nor their power of expression and of impression. ”

Still he speaks thus only of masses for the dead. We can not and we shall not depreciate his great religious work. The harmony and sweet melody of the *Sanctus* and of the *Agnus Dei* to which we shall soon listen, are copied from ideals known only to the angels. The music of the “ Mass of St. Cecilia ” will last for ever and Gounod's name be made immortal if not by his own genius, at least by the immortality of the Saint whom he has honored. Most beautiful, most pure virgin and martyr, patroness of all earthly melody and harmony, grant that we may one day listen with thee to the nine choirs who ever sing the *Sanctus* to GOD in heaven !

Note. — This sermon was preached long before the appearance of the *Motu Proprio* of His Holiness Pius X on Church music.



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

SERMON FOR FIRST SUNDAY OF SEPTEMBER

« They that instruct many
to justice shall shine as stars
for all eternity. »

DANIEL XII, VERSE 3.

THE word *justice* in this text and often elsewhere in the Bible means sanctity or whatever leads to it or forms part of it : as faith, good works and piety.

From this text therefore we learn that the good man or woman who has on earth, by word or act, by precept or example, instructed others in the way of salvation, will be specially distinguished and rewarded for all eternity in heaven. Saint Paul tells us in his First Epistle to the Corinthians, that the saints differ from one another as "star differeth from star in glory." (1) Each has a special glory. Thus, the virgins are surrounded by lily white radiance ; the martyrs shine in ruddy splendor and those who ins-

(1) Cor. xv, 41.

truct others to justice will " shine as stars for all eternity."

There can be no more important work than the education of the young in the principles of Christian faith and in the practice of Christian virtue. Children come into the world incapable of self-support or of self-education. They depend on others far more than the young of the brute creation. The bird can fly and pick in a few weeks ; the lamb, walk and frisk about in a few days. But human babes are helpless for years. The Creator has so willed that parents and seniors might gain merit by instructing them in the paths of justice and thus deserve to " shine as stars for all eternity. " For " They that instruct others to justice shall shine as stars for all eternity. " — Daniel xii ; verse 3.

The mind of the child can be moulded like wax and formed into any shape. The intellect and the will of the child can be bent as the young twig of the forest ; and we know that as the twig is bent so is the tree inclined. The inclination to evil or to good is formed in childhood. Hence the importance of correct early education.

What work can be nobler than to mould the mind of the child and give it the right

shape ? to plant in it the knowledge of God and of law, to make the child docile, gentle, respectful, obedient to the law of God and to the law of man, which is founded on the law of God ; to correct the propensity inherited by original sin ?

But this cannot be done except by constant care from the beginning. The training should begin in the home ; and the first to instruct children " to justice " should be the parents. But too often the parents have not the time to discharge this duty. The father cannot do it, for he is all day and sometimes a part of the night at work. The mother has so many cares or so many children that her time is taken up in cooking their meals, mending their clothes and keeping them and her house in order. She has little time to spare in their education. Unfortunately also parents who have the time have not always the inclination, the capacity or the conscience to educate their children. Some parents prefer to shirk their duty either because they are not competent or not good enough to do it. All parents are not educated themselves, and all are not edifying. Some alas ! by their misconduct ruin their children instead of teaching them to walk in the path of virtue.

Such being the case in the home, the only hope of the children is in the school where they shall receive instruction from teachers specially called and appointed to take the place of parents. These teachers being the representatives of the parents should educate the children exactly as the parents wish or as they are morally bound to wish, that is according to God's will.

Agent and principal are bound equally by the moral law. The child has a God-given right to receive from both a proper education, that is a religious and moral even more than a secular education. As the child has been created to know and love and serve God on earth and afterwards to possess Him in heaven, the child should receive from those on whom he necessarily depends instruction regarding God, His attributes, His works and the duties imposed by Him on mankind. Such is the will of God. "For this is the will of God your sanctification." The will of God is manifested in a creed and in a God. (1 Thess. iv ; v. 3.)

There is no parent but should admit this obligation. There is no good teacher but recognizes this duty and wishes to perform it if possible. Every teacher feels the help that religion

gives in educating children. How much easier to encourage the slothful, to punish the disobedient or to reform the depraved child, if the teacher can use religious means in the doing of the arduous task. To be able to say to the child : " God loves good children. God loves the good boy ; God will reward the good girl ; " to be able to inculcate obedience and respect by the example of the divine child Jesus ; to be able to offer Him as an example for boys to imitate ; to be able to correct the vices of young girls by pointing to the example of His pure virgin mother, makes the work of the teacher lighter and more effective. All good teachers feel restrained when they cannot apply religion in their work, and find themselves embarrassed by a dry hard godless system which compels the unnatural divorce of religion and morals, of faith and science. The teachers' efforts to train young minds are impeded by the exclusion of religious teaching from the schools.

The State is cruel to the teacher when it prevents him from using religion, the most powerful means of preserving order and discipline in class or school ; and compels him to hide religious convictions in the discharge

of a duty where religion is necessary both for himself and his pupils. The State is unfair to the teacher when it compels him to teach children everything but religion, the most potent factor in education.

Education without religion is unnatural. No good parents want such education for their children. Parents want their children to learn their religion as well as to spell and to read. No good teachers want religion excluded from education. The teachers prefer a school system which would allow them to appeal to the religious convictions of their scholars in enforcing discipline. Certainly, no good Catholic wants to see religion excluded from the school. It is a sign of the decay of Protestantism in this country, that the Protestant churches and clergy have permitted religion to be turned out of the school. In the early years of our country it was not so. In New England, in the olden time, the schoolmaster was generally a theological student or the minister of the parish and the schoolmistress was his wife (1). The old New England primer put into the hands of the children was of a religious character. Two-thirds of

(1) *History of the People of the United States*, by John Bach McMaster, vol. 1, pages 15 and 22.

the pictures in it " represent biblical incidents, " and the reading lessons consisted chiefly of the " Lord's prayer, " the " Creed, " Watts' hymns, and the whole of the Protestant catechism (1).

What a change has taken place in Protestant convictions as to the necessity of religious education in primary schools since the days of " the New England Primer! " But it is a change for the worse. It is a giving up of the great facts of Christianity and of the last remnants of Christian belief. Yet bigotry has not been changed. The old American felt that the intellect of the child, as the first and the highest faculty, should receive religious instruction as the essential basis of morality ; the modern teaches that the " intellect is not to be cultivated by means of religious instructions. " (2) This is infidelity, the logical outcome of Protestantism.

The words quoted are of a former superintendent and of an assistant superintendent of public schools in this city. Now if the intellect is not to be cultivated by religious instruction, what part of the child is to get religious instruction ? His stomach ? His animal

(1) McMaster, Vol. II., p. 570.

(2) The Cyclopaedia of Education, by Kiddle and Schem, p. 731.

appetite ? For some religious instruction is necessary for the human mind.

“ Teach the children, especially the girls, plenty of physiology, let them know how many teeth and bones they have, and what is the character of each one of the different parts of their body, and illustrate the whole science by skeletons and charts, but do not teach them any religion ! Their souls are of small consequence. Teach the girls to be goddesses of liberty ! ” Such is the teaching of men who out of the pockets of the Christian poor who pay their share of the taxes, draw large salaries for destroying the religious belief of the rising generation, and for helping to make the future American, an infidel and an agnostic, preparatory to his becoming a communist, a socialist or an anarchist.

Shades of the manly old Puritans, arise and rebuke your degenerate children ! The wolf is already at the door ; or rather the horrible three-headed dragon. Atheism is his backbone ; and his heads are Communism, Socialism and Anarchism. The goddess of liberty and her children are in danger. Will the champion of Christianity defeat the monster ? That champion is the Christian school. Will you help it ? Children believing

in and practising the Christian religion will not become the dragon's prey. If Christians will not aid the good cause, then the day will come when their children will lose faith in God and respect for the laws and institutions of our beloved country ; and a large standing army will be necessary here as is it in Europe to keep down those who believing not in God recognize neither the rights of property nor of person. Dishonesty and impurity will stalk abroad.

Consequently by assisting the cause of Christian education, Catholics are not only patriots helping their country, but are doing their duty as Christians and they shall deserve " to shine as stars for all eternity, " for "they instruct others to justice. " Daniel, XII, verse 3.



GRATITUDE

SERMON PREACHED IN ST AGNES' CHURCH

FIRST SUNDAY OF SEPTEMBER, 4th, 1897.

" In all things give thanks;
for this is the will of God in
Christ Jesus concerning you
all.

I THESSALONIANS, Chap. v.,
verse 18.

THE summer vacation is over, and we have all enjoyed it. There is no one but has had a few days of rest from labor. Young and old, rich and poor, have been able for a time to go out of the hot, busy and crowded city, to the sea or to the country to admire the beauties of nature, the glorious works of God. Now all are returning. They are coming back from the mountains, where the limpid lakes sleep amid the pines and the tamaracks ; from the glens where the brooks glide under the shady willows, and where the silvery trout leaps in the tremulous shadows at his flying prey ; from the woods where robins and orioles mingled their melodies with the

songs of larks and bobolinks ; from the meadows which dotted with vari-colored wild flowers, made more beautiful mosaics than the hand of man ever formed. While the quail whistles on the fence as he watches the ripening of the golden corn in the field where his brood is sleeping ; while the squirrel skips from bough to bough and chatters his delight as he sees the abundant food on the nut-tree ripening for his winter's banquets, the people are coming back to work : the school boy to his books, the teacher to his desk, the merchant to his ledger, the mechanic and the laborer to their daily toil. For labor is the rule, and leisure is only the exception, in human life. From Adam to the last man, the law is binding : " With labor and toil shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. " (Gen. iii ; v. 17.) The capitalist and the day laborer are subject alike to this inexorable law. The toil varies, but the law does not.

Now, what is our first duty, my brethren, at the close of this summer vacation ? It is one of gratitude, to return thanks to God for His fatherly providence over us. He has given us an opportunity to admire the beauties of creation. From storm and wave ;

from lightning stroke, and rush of torrents ; from dangers of boat and rail, He has saved us and brought us back to home, to family and to friends. Let us then sing our *Te Deum*. Let us say with Mary in her outburst of gratitude : " My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, for He that is mighty hath done great things to me, and holy is His name." (LUKE i., v. 46.)

There are sublime and universal reasons which impose on us at all times the obligation of practising the Christian virtue of gratitude. Let us, this morning, briefly consider some of them, and the means by which we may put them into practice.

Firstly. We should be grateful to God, because He is our Creator. He is the principle and the cause of our being. He gave us everything that we possess. He created us out of nothing ; gave us our faculties of body and soul, and He preserves them at every moment in existence. For us He created all things — sun, moon and stars. The sea, the rivers, and the dry land, the plant, and the animal, are for our use and benefit. They are under our dominion. Under Him we are the kings of earth, and other earthly creatures are

our subjects. If, then, we are grateful to our fellow-men for favors which they do to us, should we not much more be grateful to God, upon Whom we totally depend, and Who is to us the Giver of all good gifts ?

To God we owe a debt of gratitude in the next place, because He is our Redeemer. Spiritual gifts are of a much higher order than temporal goods. But spiritual gifts we have received in abundance. The grace of God has been poured on us in fertilizing showers, and flowing through various channels, is the beneficent cause of virtue and sanctity. This gift of supernatural grace, which enlightens and elevates our intellect and strengthens our will, is our common inheritance as the adopted sons of God and the brothers of Christ, the Redeemer. He has not been content with providing us with the ordinary channels of this grace in prayer, but He has instituted extraordinary means of conveying to our souls light, strength and sanctification. He has given us the seven Sacraments as efficacious causes of grace.

He has also selected us to be members of His infallible Church, the only safe guide for human reason on the road to eternity. While millions are left to grope in the

darkness of paganism or of heresy, He has lightened for us the task of saving our souls. Do we fully appreciate these special privileges? No! But we would if we fully realized the truth of the words of our Lord: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew XVI., v. 26.) If the salvation of our souls be the end for which we have been created, then the Church, Christian faith and the Sacraments, the means given for attaining that end, are the most valuable of our possessions. Reason and religion, therefore, both urge on us the payment of our debt of gratitude to God. Through this virtue we show our love for Him because He is good to us; as by charity we love Him because He is good in Himself. Charity is the fountain of gratitude. God is good to us, because He is good in Himself. Gratitude is thus the daughter of charity as well as of justice, and proceeds from the Sacred Heart of Jesus Christ.

Ingratitude, on the contrary, is always a sin, as St. Thomas teaches, (1) because it is opposed to a special virtue, gratitude. Hence St. Paul reckons the ungrateful with blasphem-

(1) *Secunda Secundæ, quæst. CVII., ART. I. C.*

mers, with those who disobey their parents, and with the wicked. (1) And by common consent, no vice is more despicable than ingratitude, even when it is shown by man only to his fellow-man.

But what are the means by which we can try to repay God for all that He has done for us? These means are both spiritual and temporal; as His gifts are both spiritual and temporal. The spiritual means are at the disposal of all. These means are expressed in every act of adoration and petition. The Lord's Prayer, the greatest of all, contains an act of thanksgiving in the very first phrases. After the act of faith and homage implied in the words, "Our Father Who art in Heaven," gratitude is expressed in the wish that His name should be hallowed of all men, that His glory should be extended all over the world; and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And so with other prayers. They are only perfect when they include an offering of thanks to God. But particularly is gratitude expressed in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Thanksgiving is one of the objects and a substantial part of this supreme act of worship, and hence it is called the Eucharistic

(1) II Tim. CHAP. III, v. 2.

Sacrifice. The word Eucharist literally means thanksgiving. Before the priest begins the Canon or the prayers which immediately precede the Consecration, he says: "Let us give thanks to our Lord God;" and the people answer: "It is truly meet and just." The Holy Sacrifice of the New Law is a sacrifice of thanksgiving as well as of propitiation.

Other spiritual means will suggest themselves to the mind of the grateful soul. Thus, time belongs to God; we can pay Him back a portion of it by spending it in His service, by making visits to the Blessed Sacrament, by saying the Rosary, by visiting and consoling the poor and the sick or by instructing the ignorant. We can sing the praises of God in the choir, or we can teach the catechism to the children in the Sunday School. Why should this work be usually left to women? Have men no zeal? How few show their gratitude to God by the doing of any of these easy but meritorious works! How many pass through life and begrudge their Creator the smallest portion of their idle hours, of their comfort, or of their labor! Sacrifices they will make for pleasure, for appetite, for fashion, for dress and for vanity; for these they will turn night into day, and destroy the

health of their bodies as well as of their souls. But with God they are stingy. Even when they obey His laws, they do so with complaint and grumbling. Thus a little shower of rain will prevent many from hearing Mass on Sunday, while a great storm would not keep them away from a pleasure party.

However, all are not equal in the power of manifesting gratitude to God by temporal means. In this respect the rich have an advantage over the poor. The owners of temporal possessions should therefore rejoice in being able to do more for God than ordinary mortals. It is the duty, and it should be the delight of the rich to use their surplus for the glory of God and the good of the community. This is the teaching of Christ, as explained by St. Thomas, and by Our Holy Father, Leo XIII(I). God is the sole and absolute owner of temporal things. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and all that dwell therein." (2) If He be the first owner, why should men who are only His stewards or His tenants at will, fail to use their possessions as He wishes for His greater glory and the good

(1) *Encycl. Rerum Novarum.*

(2) *Psalms xxxiii, v. 1.*

of the community? It is but just to say that many of the wealthy use their surplus as God wishes; but not all do so. Many are the opportunities of doing good by the proper use of wealth. The poor cry for bread. There are orphans in the tenement houses. There are hardworking widows, striving to support their fatherless children. There are bright, talented children in our schools who, if they had the means of higher education with religion, would become stars in the social world and in the Church. There are charitable institutions, asylums, educational establishments to be supported or endowed; churches to be built, church and school debts to be paid. It is only necessary to look around to see objects worthy of assistance on every side. Do you help them according to your means? Why do you not use properly what God has given you? He will demand an account of your stewardship at the last day.

Even small sacrifices would produce great results. A classic writer well says: "The nakedness of the indigent world might be clothed from the trimmings of the vain." (1) Yet parsimony is a vice to be specially avoided by the rich. They should be generous in

(1) Vicar of Wakefield, CH. IV.

spending, for they have abundance. What they spend well helps the poor. "The hand of the poor," says St. Peter Chrysologus, "is the treasury of Christ, for whatever the poor receives, Christ receives." There is a special virtue of the great and wealthy, which is called "magnificence," by St. Thomas and the other theologians. It indicates greatness of soul and nobility of character. It is a part of fortitude, and holds the middle place between parsimony and prodigality. This virtue of magnificence (1) is manifested in the generous giving, or in the spending of money for the community. It is, as Bellarmine says, an imitation of the magnificence of God, (2) and an effort to pay back to Him a portion of what He has so bounteously bestowed. It is a virtue which helps to destroy the natural envy of the poor for the rich. The rich man who is "magnificent" in the use of wealth is always beloved by the poor as well as by the angels of God.

Even if we suffer by losses, or from poverty and sickness, we should be grateful to God. Our misfortunes, our diseases and our sorrows are means of atoning to Him for our sins and

(1) 2a 2e quest. 134, art. 3.4.

(2) De Officio principis Christiani, LIB. I, CAP. 14.

recompensing Him for all that He suffered for them. Have you not read the history of His life and passion in the New Testament? Do you not know that His poverty, His sorrows, His sufferings, mental and physical, and His death upon the Cross were all endured to atone for your sins, and to open the doors of heaven to your souls? Even the sacrifice of our life, if we had to make it, would not compensate our Redeemer for all that He has done for us. Being Christians, then, you should rejoice to suffer with Him, and to bear the cross for His sake, as He bore it for yours. "Christ suffered for us, leaving an example that you should follow His steps." (1) How beautiful the answer made to me a few weeks ago by an old woman whom I met going to Mass. Age and sickness had bent her venerable form. She was hardly able to walk; still she tottered along, determined to go to church and adore her God. "How do you do?" I asked. "I am not well at all, Father," she replied. "I have been very sick. All my bones are paining me, but thanks be to God." And as she said the words, she lifted her eyes to heaven. She thanked God because she had an opportunity of uniting

(1) 1 Peter II., v. 21.

her sufferings with those of Her Redeemer.

This is the spirit of the true Christian ; of one who is a follower of Christ, not merely in faith, but in morals ; of one whose soul after death will fly straight to the bosom of God where gratitude ends in perfect love. "In all things, then, give thanks," by temporal as well as by spiritual sacrifice.

THE SIN OF IGNORANCE

SERMON PREACHED IN ST. AGNES' CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 25TH, 1898.

« Be not deceived ; evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake ye just and sin not. For some have not the knowledge of God : I speak it to your shame. »

I. COR. XV. v. 33-34.

BY the knowledge of GOD, St. Paul means that knowledge which comes to men through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; the knowledge of the doctrines and precepts of the Church which He founded and commissioned to teach and guide mankind on the road of eternal salvation. In our text, the great apostle of the Gentiles reproaches some of the Corinthians for their ignorance of this knowledge. Not all such ignorance, however, is culpable, for there are many whose ignorance is not voluntary. Men may be ignorant of Christian truths, because they have had no opportunity of knowing them. Even when culpably ignorant, men are not equally guilty. There are different degrees of guilt according

to the relative importance of the truths we should know, the obligation of the person who is bound to know, and the opportunity of acquiring knowledge. Evidently St. Paul knew that those whom he was upbraiding had no excuse for their ignorance. They were either Corinthians who had already received the Gospel, and who, owing to their own malice and association with pagans, had become ignorant and corrupt, for "evil communications corrupt good manners," or they were Corinthians who had deliberately closed their eyes to the light and their ears to the truth. Both classes were grievously guilty of sin, and hence he tells them that they should be ashamed, because they "have not the knowledge of God."

How many are still like those Corinthians ! I do not speak of that immense body of men who live in the midst of Catholic light, near to Catholic priests and Catholic churches, and with opportunities on every side for obtaining Catholic books explaining the doctrines, the moral teaching, and the ceremonies of the Church, or defending her action among the nations, yet neglect or refuse to read or examine, so as to know the truth. Such people are inexcusable. Their ignorance would often

be laughable, if it were not so grievously sinful. Nor is it only the illiterate who are befogged by this crass and supine ignorance? The minds of educated men are often sullied and obscured by it. Newspaper editors, public lecturers, so called preachers of the gospel, writers of novels and of histories are its victims. How much ignorance of vital truths exists among the so called educated classes!

Let me give you amusing instances of such ignorance. Some time ago, I read in an American newspaper, or in some book, that an archbishop was the subdeacon in a solemn mass, that an apostolic delegate wore a canopy on his back when he pontificated and that mass was said after supper. In popular novels, ignorance of this kind is frequently shown by writers who are otherwise educated and enlightened.

But it is not of this ignorance that I wish to speak at present. I shall confine myself to that ignorance which exists among our own Catholic people who are particularly bound to know their religion, and be able to answer the chief objections, doctrinal or historical, against the Church in which they were baptized, and confirmed. Ignorance in their cases is always inexcusable. It is a

sin against faith. Any one who remembers his catechism knows this, for he remembers the question : " How does a person sin against faith ! " and the answer " A person sins against faith, 1st by not trying to know what God has taught ; 2nd, by refusing to believe all that God has taught ; 3rd, by neglecting to profess his belief in what God has taught. " Again he remembers the question : " How do we fail to try to know what God has taught ? " and the answer " We fail to try to know what God has taught by neglecting to learn the Christian doctrine. " These ignorant Catholics can read and write. They spend the greater part of Sunday morning with their faces glued to newspapers, many of which are injurious not only to faith, but to morals. But they never look at a catechism, perhaps never read a prayer-book, or a work on Catholic doctrine or Catholic history. They have never opened a catechism since their confirmation or first communion. Hence they have forgotten the little of Catholic doctrine which they knew, and have become so ignorant that they cannot answer the simplest question put to them by the Protestant or the infidel. Let me see. You are a thousand souls who fill these aisles and galleries. Some

of you are well educated ; none of you are illiterate. Among you are merchants, lawyers, doctors, school teachers, clerks and mechanics. You would be offended if some one should call you dull or stupid. You would feel hurt if you were accused of disloyalty or treason to the Church founded by Jesus Christ. Yet if I were to ask you some of the simple questions of the catechism, how many of you could answer them correctly ? How many of you could answer the question : " What do you mean by the Immaculate Conception ? " Perhaps you know that there is a feast on the 8th of December in honor of that Catholic dogma. But what does the dogma mean ? Can you explain it to a Protestant ? Ah ! you are guilty ! You are ignorant. You forget that it means that the Blessed Virgin was preserved from the stain of original sin by a special privilege, from the very instant of the union of her soul with her body ; that she was the only one so exempted from the general law ; as the Protestant poet says : " Our tainted nature's solitary boast. " What do you mean by the " infallibility of the Pope ? " That question is likely to be asked of you at any time by Protestants who are usually ignorant of the meaning of this dogma

decreed by the Vatican Council. If you cannot answer, then I say with St. Paul "I speak it to your shame." "You have not the knowledge of God." You ought to know that papal infallibility means that the visible head of the Church when he speaks officially as judge or teacher to the whole Church on matters of faith and morals is protected by the Holy Ghost from falling into error; and that infallibility does not mean that he cannot sin or make mistakes in matters outside the domain of faith and morals.

If you were bound to know your catechism when you were children, why should you not be obliged to know it now? Some of you have forgotten the simplest things. What is holy water? How is it made? What is a scapular or an *agnus Dei*? Simple questions these, yet why can you not answer them?

But not only should you know the doctrines and practices of the Church, you should also know her chief laws and ceremonies. There is a great deal of culpable ignorance in this respect among Catholics. If the priest forgets to announce the holiday or the fast day, or if for some reason, the announcement is not heard in church, many imagine that they are excused from

their obligations. This is a great scandal. Catholics are bound under pain of sin to know the laws of the Church, certainly those laws which are common and easily learned. Catholics ought to know, for instance, that the banns must be published for at least two Sundays in the parish church before they can receive the holy sacrament of matrimony. Yet how frequently they come to the priest and imagine they can be married without preparation or preliminary. They do not appreciate the holiness and the responsibility of the sacrament of marriage and of the married state. They forget that they should go to Confession first. They are ignorant of the simple and universal law requiring the publication of banns.

"Is this a fast day?" "Can you eat meat to-day?" says one to the other. "I don't know. I did not hear it announced in the church last Sunday." This is inexcusable ignorance; especially as it is so easy to remember the fast days. They are all the Fridays in Advent, every day in Lent except Sunday, the quarter tenses which occur four times a year, and the vigils of Pentecost, of the Assumption, of All Saints and of Christmas.

Again the priest is often ashamed as St.

Paul was of the Corinthians at the lack of knowledge displayed regarding the holydays of obligation. Yet in this country, they are only six in number : the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Christmas, the Feast of the Circumcision (New Year's Day) ; the Ascension, the Assumption (August 15th) and the Feast of All Saints (November 1st). Perhaps it is on account of this ignorance that so many children are absent from Mass on the holydays. Some of their parents seem not to know that it is a sin for children who are seven years of age as well as for adults to miss Mass on a holyday or Sunday, unless they have a legitimate excuse. Of course the children who go to our parochial schools know all the holydays ; but the ignorance of the children who go to the other schools is painful. A little fellow who had been listening to the Bible read in the public school for years, when I asked him the other day, what was the Old Testament, told me that it was " the history of the United States."

Then, why not know also the simple ceremonies and rubrics of the Church ? Do you know when to stand up and when to kneel down during Mass, or are you not always watching some one who does know to set

you the example of what you should do? Why does the priest sometimes use white vestments, sometimes red and sometimes purple when he says Mass? If, therefore, you desire to become an intelligent Catholic you should read carefully your catechism and prayer-book from cover to cover at least once a year.

But besides the knowledge of God contained in your catechism and prayer-book, you ought to try to be able to defend His Church from the ordinary charges that are made against her. If you do not know, try to learn. You would be a poor specimen of a citizen if you did not know something of the history of your country, and show zeal in defending her from foreign attack, even though the attack be made only by pen and tongue. And is not the Church of God of more consequence than country? Should not our first aim be the worship of God? Has not our divine Master said: "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and His justice." How much educated Catholics who know history can do to dispel ignorance and prejudice by explaining and defending the doctrines and the actions of the Catholic Church and by repelling the false charges made against her.

“The Church abhors bloodshed” is a well known axiom of the Church law, an axiom that is not modern but comes to us from the middle ages. Let the Church be judged by her laws and doctrines, not by the crimes of so called Catholic politicians. Whoever therefore is responsible for the cruelties of the Spanish Inquisition or such incidents in history as the “St. Bartholomew’s day” massacre, the Catholic Church should not be unjustly charged with them. All Catholics should know the true history of these events.

Tell the man who makes accusations against the Church from a historical point of view, to read the Code of Catholic law, if he wants to know what the Church really teaches and does, when she is free and unfettered by Kings, Emperors, Republics or by lay and clerical politicians. The history of the world since the foundation of the Church, shows that she never has been absolutely free. Emperors, Kings, Republics have been always interfering with her action, always intruding in the Sanctuary, sometimes defiling it and then blaming the Church for their own dirt. The laws of the Church, the Canon law, as it is called, is the true criterion of her

action and not the acts of nominal Catholics, be they Kings, Queens, Emperors, or bad clerics.

If time permitted, I could give you many cases of historical lies which you would be able to expose if you would only read good Catholic books.

In conclusion let me say that Catholics should buy and read frequently a good history of the Church. They should also subscribe for one of our Catholic magazines, like the *Messenger*, the *Catholic World*, the *Rosary* or the *Ave Maria*, in which subjects of controversy are frequently treated. The reading of these magazines will enlighten your intellects and increase your faith. Such reading will remove that ignorance which causes so many scandals, and prevents the doing of so much good to Protestants and infidels who often seek in vain information from Catholics who "have not the knowledge of God."

Be first in intelligence and education, my brethren, as you are first in faith and morals, in loyalty to God and to country.

TRUE AND FALSE FRATERNITY

SERMON PREACHED IN ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL,
THANKSGIVING DAY, NOV. 24TH, 1898

« And finally be ye all
of one mind, having
compassion one of another;
loving the brotherhood,
merciful and humble.

I PETER III, v. 6.

Men and Brethren :

THE words just quoted were written by the head of the greatest fraternal organization that has ever existed, of a brotherhood instituted for the whole world, for Jew and Gentile, for rich and poor, for savage and civilized. This brotherhood is the Catholic Church. Its founder was God who assumed our human nature, and thus became our brother, and elevated us to the dignity of being the sons of God. Christ and we have the same eternal Father, although the mode of His paternity is different. He is the Father of Christ by generating Him from all eternity, and our Father by creating us. "Is not He

thy Father," asks Moses in the canticle, "that hath possessed thee, and made thee, and created thee." (1) We are His sons and are like Him both in the natural and in the supernatural order. In the natural order, we are like Him by intelligence, and in the supernatural order, we are made like Him by grace. Does not St. Paul clearly say it? "You have received the spirit of adoption of sons whereby we cry Abba, Father. For the spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God." (2) Through Christ, we "glory in the hope of the glory of the sons of God." (3) Hence St. Peter in his two epistles, again and again, urges upon all the members of this universal brotherhood the necessity of cultivating this spirit of mercy, humility and love, which are essential to the well-being of the organization. The prince of the Apostles learned from the Master who had planned it, and to it gave its constitution and laws. From the divine Master's lips, he had heard the command to spread the brotherhood over the whole world in unity of government, faith, and charity. He had seen

(1) Deuteronomy xxxii. v. 16.

(2) Rom. viii., v. 15, 16.

(3) Rom. V. v. 2.

the divine Master institute the fraternal banquet, at which all the brethren sat down in perfect equality, and which was to be repeated to the end of time. Peter was present at the first feast where Christ sat with the twelve as brothers at the same table, a love feast that continues to be celebrated every day in the year and in every land, "from the rising of the sun even to the going down." (1) It was this banquet and the spirit of it, that made the early Christians call one another brethren, and made them known as brethren even to the pagans.

This great brotherhood is a living and fruitful organism and hence the creator of organizations like to itself in spirit and character. They are the product of its fecundating love. As a great lake, overflowing with the waters of never failing springs, sends many streams through the plains and valleys to refresh and fertilize them, so the Catholic Church sends out from her inexhaustible bosom, countless organizations for religious and benevolent purposes. Her religious orders, her societies of St. Vincent de Paul, her societies for the propagation of the faith, for the redemption of captives, and for

(1) Malachias I. v. 2.

purposes similar to the benevolent one which has brought you into fellowship, are all the fruits of Christian fraternity. They are the product of Christian faith, and Christian charity, which, being Catholic, concern the welfare of the whole man, body as well as soul.

We all see the action of this fraternal spirit in the world of to-day. We know now that where that spirit exists, there is genuine Christianity. But the spirit of fraternity is now so common, that we often forget its origin, and the cause which produced it. We often ungratefully forget that it was the Christian religion, which not only produced fraternal organizations of its own, but acting outside of itself upon all the natural sources of fraternity, purified them where they had become adulterated by paganism, and made them wholesome springs for the regeneration of the world.

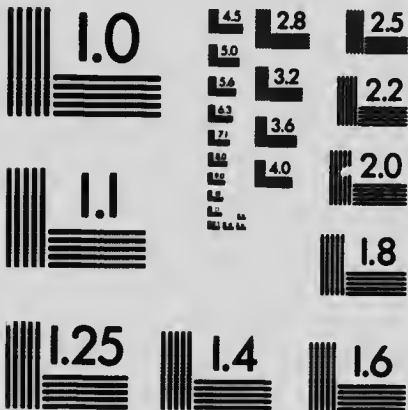
It is this action which I would ask you to consider specially this morning, my brethren, so that while you thank God on this day that He made us a great and successful nation, you should especially thank Him for His chief blessing, that He has made us Christians, and given us the idea of the Christian home and the Christian nation.

The natural sources of fraternity are chiefly two, the family and the nation. The family is the first source of fraternity. Children of the same mother, living in the same house, eating at the same table, are brothers ; and in a wider sense, relatives are brothers, because the same stream of blood flows in their veins. This is in accordance with the law of nature, the law of consanguinity. Now, how did the Christian Church find this law when she undertook to evangelize the world ? She found the natural law ignored and trampled on. The father stood in the family an uncrowned despot, having practically the power of life and death over his wife and children. Neither natural justice nor the voice of nature controlled his action. The family was a cold, heartless creature of the state ; agnation, which was simply an extension of the father's despotic power in the line of his own relatives before marriage, instead of consanguinity or the more direct tie of blood, controlled the descent of property and the right to inherit. Compare the laws of the twelve tables, and the commentaries on them of the pagans, Ulpian and Caius, with the great code of the Christian emperor Justinian, if you wish to see how Christianity



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restored the family to the rights which it had by the natural law, and which it has by the laws of Christ ; how Christianity curbed the power of the father, elevated the mother through the sacrament of marriage, and restored the rights of children to life, to liberty and to property. Through the Christian Code, they became not only the subjects of their parents, but brethren and co-heirs in Christ. Christianity made the child the brother of his own father.

It is a note worthy fact, that when politicians apostatize from the Christian religion, and with the hatred of apostates wish to destroy its influence, they return to pagan models, and make war on the natural rights of the family. For instance, they make laws of divorce, or laws enforcing godless education — the one to degrade the mother, the other to rob the child of an inalienable right ; or they make laws to punish Christians for trying to sustain the teaching of Christ. Thus the only fraternity of the pagan and the apostate is one of hate. They combine to destroy the rights of the family which Christianity defends and protects.

The second great source of natural fraternity is the nation or the race. We have a natural

attachment to the land in which we were born, to its mountains, valleys, rivers, and lakes, and to the people among whom we have lived, whose feelings and aspirations we share. The man who does not love his country is a monster.

« Breathes there a man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land. »

The quotation is trite, but the words are always appropriate. This love of country becomes stronger with age, and especially when besides the natural beauties, the justice of its laws and constitution make the country doubly dear to the inhabitants. Our own great land is a case in point. There is no flag which represents such excellent political institutions as our starry banner. It is the only flag unsullied by religious or political persecution. No other people can say that of any other flag. After every civil war in Europe, hecatombs of victims have fallen, sacrificed to political hate. After our civil war we let our erring brethren go, and in a short time forgave and forgot their offenses. The history of every nation in Europe is stained by bloody penal codes to punish religious opinions. Our government alone has

never put a man to death for his religion. And, therefore, we have double reasons for loving our country. It has acted so far, according to the spirit of Christianity. Our laws are tempered by its spirit and teaching. The laws of nature, the rights of individuals, and the laws of the Church are recognized. Our civil laws leave her free, respect her discipline, and protect her persons and property. Our political system is aptly calculated to make our nation one great Christian fraternity.

Now whence has our country derived the spirit of equity that reigns in her constitution and law? Certainly not from the pagan idea of the state or nation. Paganism made the state God. From the state all rights were derived. Religion itself and the priesthood were the creatures of the civil power. Hence the first Christians, who dared to practice a religion not recognized by the state, were accused of treason, and punished as traitors. The fact that they professed belief in the divinity of Christ was deemed a mortal offense to the divinity of the emperor, and deserving of death. Yet it is this very theory of the power of the state that the apostate politicians of modern times accept.

They claim for the state a spiritual as well as a temporal supremacy. Acting upon this claim, in Europe they have imprisoned and disfranchised clerics, and confiscated Church property. They have claimed for Cæsar the rights of God, and made laws oppressive of the conscience of the people. They have established state Churches, and governed them as if they were purely political institutions, as in England. They have made the will of the law-maker, whether he be a czar in an empire, or the majority in a republic, the supreme criterion of right and wrong, the god whom to disobey is treason. Acting upon this pagan theory, the so-called republic of France is as much a foe to fraternity as Russia. Fraternity implies a union of hearts of the whole people. How can there be fraternity when the majority is always depriving the minority of its natural and God-given rights ?

Thank God, the majority in this country, that is to say our rulers, in spite of certain pagan tendencies, has not yet begun openly and directly, to deprive the minority of its legitimate rights. The spirit of our people and of our institutions was unknown to Grecian or Roman paganism. This spirit nis ot

of barbarian origin. We have not derived it (although some say so), from a race of ferocious pirates, who, before they became Christians, held their brothers in slavery, and whose fundamental principle of law was that "every man should have a lord," and who spent most of their time in butchering one another. The spirit of our laws, like the laws of the good King Edward, and the laws deriving their origin from Magna Charta, is Christian. It is in the Christian code of Justinian and in the Canon Law of the Catholic Church, that you must seek the origin of our enlightened legislation. The limitation of the husband's power, the right of dower for the wife, the right of property, as it now exists for the children, are all of Christian origin. Long before our system, the political systems of Spain, France and Italy in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries breathed the spirit of Christian fraternity. The separate provincial parliaments holding the authority of the kings in check, the *fueros* of Spain, the *coutumiers* of France, the privileges and exemptions of the Italian republics and princedoms, were all foreign to the despotic idea of pagan government, and are the product of Christian ideas. They

were not perfect governments, for nothing human can be that ; but they were immeasurably superior to the cruel, centralized despotism of the pagan system, which destroyed both in the family and in the nation the idea of fraternity. Christianity, by fostering that idea, softened the severity of the civil laws, and made mankind realize that all were descended from a common pair, and created by a common Father who is in heaven.

In fact our very political system seems to be copied from the idea of Catholic brotherhood as realized in the Church. There is no political organization in the world so like the Catholic Church as that of the United States. Just as in the Church we have many dioceses, each having its own laws and its own rulers, yet subordinate to the central power in Rome, so have we in the United States many states, each having its own laws and home rule, but subject to the central power in Washington. We have that unity in variety which makes political as it helps to make all other beauty. The spirit of Christian fraternity pervades our laws, and makes all the citizens equal ; as in the Church all the faithful are equal at the same sacramental banquet.

Let us then resolve on this day of Thanksgiving to cherish the spirit of fraternal charity. The manner in which this word, fraternity, has been abused by those who accept it in a pagan sense, should teach us to cherish our Christian heritage. The anarchist cries "fraternity" and stabs the head of the state. The representative of authority is not his brother. The socialist cries "fraternity" and proceeds to rob the rich. The owner of property is not his brother. The French revolutionist shouted for liberty, fraternity and equality, yet in the same breath he cried: "The aristocrats to the lamp-post." Aristocrats or priests could not be his brethren, because his ideas were pagan. But the Christian calls every man his brother, whether he be friend or foe; no matter what his color, race or nationality; because all mankind are descended from the same Adam and Eve, and Christ died for all men. "There is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in us all." (1)

Then let us guard Christian fraternity which has made us a generous, enlightened and united nation. Let us beware of the anarchist, and the socialist, the enemies of law

(1) Ephes. iv. v. 6.

and order, on the one hand ; and on the other, beware of an equally dangerous foe to our liberal institutions, the cruel centralizer, whose galling and petty despotism would ignore or destroy the rights of the weak, engender discontent, break the tie of fraternal love, and sow the seed of future insurrection and rebellion.

“ Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another ; loving the brotherhood, merciful and humble. ”

DEDICATION
OF ST AGNES' CHURCH

SERMON PREACHED ON THE 8TH OCTOBER 1899

• This is no other but the
House of God and the Gate
of Heaven. »

GENESIS XXVIII, v. 17.

THIS building, my brethren, is called the House of God because in it He lives, teaches and sanctifies. All the chief instruments and agencies of the Christian religion are contained within these walls.

You enter the door under the cross, the symbol of salvation. Inside the building you are in face of the sacramental, the hierarchial and the doctrinal system of the society which Christ founded nineteen hundred years ago for the instruction, guidance and salvation of mankind.

Let me briefly show that the sacramental, the hierarchial and the doctrinal elements in the Church are represented in this edifice.

Firstly, consider that the means of giving the seven Sacraments are here.

At the door is the baptistery, to which the unregenerate are brought to receive the first Sacrament which Christ instituted to purify men from the stain of sin, original and actual, and to make them children of God and heirs of heaven. "Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." — John, iii., v. 5.

Coming closer to the altar is the confession-al for the administration of the Sacrament of Penance. This has been well called the second baptism, for it cleanses the Christian from actual sins after they have been duly confessed to the priest and absolved by him as Christ's representative. "Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven them, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained." — John, xx., v. 23.

This is a text easily understood. How could the Apostles and their successors absolve or refuse to absolve if they did not know what the sins were? How could the priest know what the sins were if the penitent did not confess them?

At this altar the Sacraments of Confirma-

tion and of Matrimony are received — the one to make us strong and perfect Christians, the other to give the married couple the grace to bear the trials of a union which only death can dissolve.

In the ambry or small box next to the high altar are kept the holy oils, among them the holy oil used in administering the last of all the Sacraments, the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, which is given to those dangerously ill, in accordance with the words of St. James : " Is any man sick among you ? Let him bring in the priests of his church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. " — James, v., v. 14.

On the altar, which is the most striking object in the House of God, is kept the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. In it God is really present under the appearances of bread and wine. The altar is also the special place of sacrifice. Sacrifice is that first and most necessary act of religion by which we acknowledge God's total dominion over us and our total dependence on Him. From the days of Adam and Eve sacrifices were always considered the essential element of divine worship by Jew and Gentile. All the sacrifi-

ces of the Hebrew law recorded in the Old Testament were types and symbols of the great sacrifice which is offered up in the New Law in the Catholic Church. Except that there is no shedding of blood, the sacrifice of the Mass is the same sacrifice as that of Calvary. Jesus Christ invisibly comes down on the altar to be offered up by the priest for the sins of the people, and when He comes down He stays with us night and day in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and resides in the tabernacle, which is His private chamber. For the sacrifice is also a sacrament, the sacrament of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, the indetical sacrament administered by Christ to His Apostles at the Last Supper, when, changing the bread and wine into His Body and Blood, He said : " Take ye and eat. This is my body. " " And taking the chalice, He gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, ... This is my blood of the new Testament. " — Matth. xxvi., v. 26.

The shining lamp hanging before the tabernacle tells of the August Presence within, and bids the worshipper genuflect and adore. It is a mystery, my brethren, but all things in this world begin, exist and end in mystery.

Secondly, consider that inside the sanctuary

are different members of the hierarchy, men who have received the Sacrament of Holy Orders and the principal species of jurisdiction in the Church. Here is the simple priest with consecrated hands to bless, offer sacrifice and absolve, yet with a jurisdiction limited to a parish. On the feast of the dedication you will see the bishop with greater orders and a wider jurisdiction ; then the archbishop, higher still ; and lastly by a happy coincidence you have seen here the representative of the Vicar of Christ, the successor of St. Peter, whose duty it is to feed the lambs and the sheep with the divine guarantee that his faith will never fail. From the Vicar of Christ the right to receive the sacrament of Orders and all ecclesiastical jurisdiction are derived. He is the head and centre of unity, catholicity and apostolicity in the Church.

The house must have a foundation. The invisible foundation is Jesus Christ ; the visible foundation is His Vicar on earth. The house must have unity and order. Hence there must be only one head, only one judge to settle controversy. With unity you have certainty of belief, peace and charity ; without unity, you have divisions, conflicts and uncertainty. As a State without

a supreme interpreter of the law and a supreme authority to execute it, is continually torn by sedition and rebellion, so is a Church. A Church without a visible supreme law-giver is only an aggregation of conflicting theories and opinions ; a human institution without divine origin or sanction. Neither Bible nor creed, nor discipline will be safe where there is no pope.

“ Thou art Peter and upon this Rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. ” Matth., xvi. v. 18.

Not only do you find the sacramental and the hierarchial system of the Church represented under this vaulted roof, but you have here her teaching. This pulpit is the throne of the Holy Scriptures. Here stands her priest to expound the law because he is lawfully commissioned by the legitimate successor of the Apostles to whom Christ said :

“ Going therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. ”

“ I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world. ” Matth., xxviii. v. 18.

Reason and faith here reign together in peace. Infallible logic here defends reason

and the rights of reason, and unites with infallible authority in explaining revelation. Here the Bible is safe from the wolves of infidelity, who howl and prowl around the fold. Around the sacred volume the great doctors of the Eastern and Western Church are grouped in circles of light. Basil and Gregory, Athanasius and Cyril, blend their light with the splendors of Jerome and Augustine, Gregory and Hilary, Ambrose and Leo. They illumine and protect the Catholic pulpit. That pulpit alone guards the authenticity, the canonicity and the entire inspiration of the Holy Book, and interprets it by unerring rules. Twenty general Councils from Nicaea to the Vatican the Church has stationed like fortresses along the road of time to defend the sacred deposit of Christian revelation from ignorance and schism and heresy.

The word that is here spoken is not the invention of the human intellect or of the human imagination, but the word of God, the word that became flesh and dwelt amongst us. It is the word in instant action, for it is the word of the Eternal Creator. It operates grace in the sacraments, it fecundates souls with sanctity. The same Word turns the

sinner into a saint, and changes bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. It breathes on humanity to sanctify it. It moves the architect to build and the painter to decorate the home of God with holy pictures, and the sculptor to chisel the holy statues; the poet to write his sublime hymns, and the musician to set them to the grand harmonies of Sacred Song, which is the eternal serenade of the Church to her Spouse, the Christ.

But in conclusion, my brethren, do not forget that the aim and purpose of all these things, of this building and of all that it contains, of sacraments and of teaching, of everything in the whole Catholic Church from the simplest sacramentals and ceremonies to her great institutions, to the most sublime works of her great theologians and canonists, have but one aim and purpose. That is the sanctification of souls. For that purpose, and for that alone, the Church is working, through all her channels of influence, like her Divine Founder. She does not labor in vain; that these means are efficacious is proven by her history and the history of her saints. Their lives have been written, and form the most extraordinary literature in the world. Even this sanctuary is hardly

spacious enough to contain the tomes which tell the story of the heroic virtues and noble deeds of the holy men and women of the Catholic Church, of apostles, martyrs, confessors and virgins who have spent their lives for God and for the true interests of humanity. No similar record exists elsewhere. They were sanctified by her teaching, by her sacraments, by her laws and ordinances. Obey them as the saints did, my brethren, and you, too, will be sanctified by them as the saints were. "For this is the will of God, your sanctification." — *THESSALONIANS, IV., v. 3.*

THE DIRECTING CLASSES

A SERMON PREACHED TO THE HOLY NAME SOCIETIES OF NEW
YORK IN ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, NEW YORK,
ON NEW YEARS' DAY, 1902

« Provide out of all the
people, able men, such as fear
God, in whom there is truth,
and that hate avarice. »

EXODUS XVIII, v. 21.

[T is sometimes necessary, my brethren, to teach the teachers. Sometimes the lesson is given by the pew to the pulpit and by the cottage to the palace. To-day I see a great lesson which you, who are humble, practical Catholics, can give to the whole community, but particularly to those peculiar classes which by their education and wealth have been properly called the directing classes. For I find in you qualities which I do not find in them, qualities implied in my text. The words of that text were used by Jethro, the priest of Madian, advising his kinsman Moses, when he was about to choose leaders and rulers of the people of Israel. But the

words which apply to the leaders and the rulers of a people elected to make or to execute the laws are applicable also to the special class of citizens who, by social position, are the exemplars and the models of the multitude.

Jethro insisted on three qualities as necessary for these leaders of the people : first, ability ; secondly, the fear of God ; and thirdly, hatred of avarice. Let us on this, the first day of the new year, briefly analyze these qualities, and by them test the character of the directing classes of the day.

By ability, Jethro meant the possession of a superior intelligence. But this alone is not sufficient. It must be a properly educated intelligence. Intelligence dominated by error, ability without conscience, perverts the multitude and leads them on to perdition. Men of great parts have often made the worst rulers and the most dangerous guides of the people. Hence Jethro qualifies the ability required in the leaders by insisting that it must be ability which knows and fears God. The intellect is the highest and the noblest faculty of the soul. But while natural superiority of intellect is a direct gift of God, an educated intellect is the result of correct and

careful training. The acquisition of truth is the object of the intellect, and Jethro insists that the able men must possess the truth. "In whom there is truth" are his words. In the acquisition of truth, the intellect is governed by the inexorable laws of logic. Both in the domain of facts and in the domain of ideas, truth must be the basis of intellectual belief; otherwise the intellect will deviate from the straight line, fall into error, and thus fail to possess the acquired ability. A man with a crooked or ill-furnished intellect is not a truly able man.

Judged by this standard of Jethro, where is the ability of the modern directing or governing classes? Their sources of culture are all poisoned with error and falsehood. They learn their facts from histories, not one of which is reliable. There is not a popular history written by a non-Catholic within the last three centuries which is not filled with ignorant misrepresentations or downright falsehoods. In the domain of ideas, the directing classes are in a worse plight. They get their ideas from dreamers and charlatans. The men who pretend to lead, learn their ethics, if they learn any, from self-conceited theorizers, who violate the laws of logic and

of good sense by denying God and by formulating Godless systems which are pitfalls for the unwary. The more one enters into them the deeper he sinks, without the possibility of extricating himself from the black and poisonous water. The minds of many of our non-Catholic preachers, of editors, of college and university professors, as well as of the millionaires, statesmen and politicians, are infected by infidelity and by infidel theories ; and the contagion spreads from them down to the multitude. " The truth is not in them ; " and therefore by the standard of Jethro, these leaders are not able men.

Cutting loose from tradition and from the experience of the wisest and the best of every age, they have undertaken to build up Babelic theories in philosophy, in theology, in faith and morals, in religion and in politics ; and these theories have led them to scepticism in philosophy, to agnosticism in theology, and to socialism and anarchism in politics. I appeal to the facts ; they are notorious.

From the philosophy of Kant and Hegel, to the theology of Voltaire and Tom Paine ; from the histories of Hume, Robertson and Gibbon, to the political speeches of Bebel, Crispi and Waldeck-Rousseau ; from the

editorials of the great newspapers, dealing with social or religious questions, to the sermons written or spoken by our best known non-Catholic preachers, all is confusion and contradiction. Almost all of them show ignorance of facts and of correct principles, and there are consequent false teaching and erroneous leading of the people. There is more ignorance of the great truths, and more malicious lying, among the cultured classes to-day, than there ever was among an uneducated mob of the thirteenth century.

Yet this ignorance sometimes parades itself in the name of science, and is always pretentious, intolerant and grotesquely dogmatic. Now, what is this science? From the general let us come to the particular, from history and philosophy to natural science. Scientists have dug into the earth, measured the stars, analyzed the gases and all the elements of material creation, with what result? They have come to the stupid conclusion that we are descended from apes. They insist that all material things can be reduced to two elements, an atom and ether. But not one of them can prove his theory or tell us what is the nature of the atom or of

ether, or how they come to exist. These scientists are like bugs, that burrow into the dirt and live in it ; and will not believe in the existence of a first cause or of a spiritual substance, because they cannot smell or taste it. They are led by the senses and not by the intellect. They contradict one another ; Huxley contradicts Hæckel. Worthy associates are they of the lying historians, of the philosophical dreamers, of the political quacks who mislead instead of guiding the masses of the people. They are not able men, for they know not the truth. Real ability is found therefore only where truth illuminates the intellect ; that is, among the great Catholic writers and thinkers who have submitted their reason to the guidance of the infallible Church, which is logical, conservative and true in her whole curriculum of teaching and of practice.

The second quality required by Jethro in a leader of the people is the fear of God. " The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. " The fear of God, like the love of God, is shown by obedience to His laws. " If you love me, " says Christ. " keep My commandments. " In baptism the priest says to the person to be baptized : " If thou wouldst enter

into life, keep the commandments of God :
Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with thy
whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and
with thy whole mind, and thy neighbor as
thyself. " And after administering the sacra-
ment, the priest's last words to the person
baptized are : " Keep the commandments
of God so that when the Lord shall come to
the nuptials, thou mayest meet Him with all
the saints in the heavenly court, and have
life everlasting. " But how do the directing
classes keep the commandments ? How do
they respect, for instance, Christ's law
regarding marriage, that what God hath
joined, no man should dare to put asunder ?
Although the indissoluble tie of this sacra-
ment is necessary for the unity, perpetuity and
purity of the family, which is the basis of
political society, yet our leaders and guides at
home and abroad have loosened the tie, and
step by step, have increased the number of
causes for which divorce may be legally
granted ; so that soon, in our own country,
the American citizen will be like the Roman
in the days of Juvenal, who, as the poet tells
us in his sixth satire, could divorce his wife
if she had the misfortune to show evidence of
a cold in the head. The little State of Rhode

Island has been granting divorces, if we are to believe the press, at the rate of almost a thousand a year, and most of the greater states are following her unchristian example. The old Puritans pinned a red letter, "A," made out of cloth, on the breast of the adulteress ; but if they came back to life and wished now to inflict the old penalty, they would have to build new shoddy mills to supply the demand consequent on divorce made easy. Even in those states where the causes of divorce are limited, the tendency is towards relaxation ; so difficult is it not to accept the logical conclusions of a false doctrine. It is absurd to make laws against simultaneous polygamy in Utah, and defend it under cover of divorce in New England and New York. But you, gentlemen, can teach the teachers ; you have the happiness of belonging to the Church of Jesus Christ, which never has sanctioned and never will sanction this crime against society, a crime which is unjust to the child, degrades woman, and confuses to such extent the relations of consanguinity, that in a short time brothers and sisters will intermarry with results fatal alike to the physical and the moral life of the republic. Let the leading classes learn from

you to fear God and they will respect the sanctity of marriage.

The third quality required by Jethro in the leaders of the people is a hatred of avarice which Dante calls the great enemy. Avarice is the excessive love of money, and is usually accompanied in the directing classes by ambition which is the love of power. Jethro must have had these two passions in his mind when he warned against avarice, for they are closely connected. When ambition succeeds, it becomes a potent means of gratifying avarice. He that has the power can control the money and he that has the money can win the power. The "able men" of Jethro were therefore to be men without avarice and without evil ambition. He knew that they would be tempted by the offer of bribes to get office ; or by natural cupidity, to get wealth by any means, however unjust. They needed no Iago to tell them to put money in their purses. Ambition, although a noble passion, is often but an instrument of greed. Men tell us that they are working for the commonweal when they strive to get political control ; but experience shows that they are usually striving for power as a means of supporting themselves, their families, their followers, out

of the public treasury. Even Napoleon, probably the most ambitious man of the century, showed when he reached the summit of power that his chief purpose in striving for it was to put his brothers and sisters on thrones, and to bestow fat principalities and dukedoms on his faithful marshals. Our own republic abounds in similar examples, for in matters of this kind republics are no better than monarchies.

Ambition and avarice are at the root of the great heresy which runs through the whole of modern history and has dominated kings and emperors, republics and monarchies, statesmen and lawgivers. This heresy is founded on the pagan idea that the state is God. It is an importation into modern life of the pagan Roman notion that the emperor was divine and that incense should be offered to his statues as to the statues of a god. The idea of the divine power of the state is well formulated in the phrase of the Roman lawyer, Ulpian : " that whatever pleases the king has the force of law. " On this false theory are founded the Russian and the Turkish systems of government, and to a certain extent, the English system. The supreme head of the State, under these three systems, is also the supreme head of religion ; and when there is no parliament

to limit his powers, he can make either an article of faith or a new law as he thinks proper. No matter how absurd the dogma or unjust the law, he is a criminal who resists. Some of the Roman emperors, even after they became Christians, tried to carry out this despotic theory, and the Arian emperors and Leo the Isaurian are good types of this class. In the Middle Ages, both in Germany, France, England and Spain, the great battles fought for the liberty of the Church and for human liberty at the same time, by popes and by bishops whose names we all know, were fought against the ambition and the greed of monarchies dominated by this same heresy. France to-day, copying the worst features of a dead past, is enforcing this heresy against many of the best citizens of the country, until men are asking themselves whether the despotism of a Bourbon king or of Bonaparte could be more autocratic than the majority of a republic. By the fiat of that ignorant and wicked majority, the rights of God, private right, ecclesiastical right, the right of property, the right peacefully to associate in doing good work for God and man, are sacrificed. The ukase of a Czar in Poland, the firman of a Sultan in Armenia,

could hardly be more absolute than the ephemeral and wicked majority of the present French *opera bouffe* republic.

Beware, my brethren, of the majority in a republic if that majority has no fear of God, no conscience. It is the most ignoble of all despotisms, for there is neither honor nor family traditions to temper it, as there often are to temper royal despotism. It is usually ignorant and soulless, a brute force fattening on spoils. It is terrible to think that a majority of one vote may turn a conservative republic into a socialistic or anarchistic government and inaugurate a reign of terror. Yet the one vote which can make this majority, may be the vote of a thief, of a socialist, or of an anarchist.

Even here, where liberty is supposed to reign supreme, the heresy, that the state can do no wrong, prevails ; and under the influence of a misguided majority, we see the rights of conscience violated, the rights of parents denied, and citizens subject to double taxation in the matter of education. An ill-informed and bigoted majority, made up from both political parties, persists in forcing on the children of the country a Godless system of education, sustained by blind prejudice

and by the cohesive power of public plunder well distributed in large salaries to superfluous functionaries, and for useless luxuries ; while the most important things, the soul, the faith and the morals of the child are neglected. We have the spectacle in our own free state, of a public official, the well paid creature of a majority, vested with the powers of a czar, and dictating not only what the children of the state shall learn in the schools but also what kind of dress their teachers shall not wear. Can anything be more ridiculously despotic than the ukase of a state official in a free republic against the bonnets and the skirts of the Sisters of Charity ?

Oh ! when will some great statesman arise to rouse our laborers and our mechanics, now paying two taxes for education, to realize the injustice of the directing classes ? When will justice have the majority on earth ? Justice, my brethrən, will reign supreme only when the majority of the people believe, like you, in God, bless the Holy Name of Jesus, and practice the morality which He inculcated. Then will the advice of Jethro be followed among us to “ provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, in whom there

is truth, and that hate avarice." Then will the strong nations cease to crush and grind the weak nations ; then will the people fear God and keep His laws ; then will justice and peace be universal, for all knees will bend in adoration before the Holy Name of Jesus Christ.

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THE THREE RINGS AND THE FIVE RAILROADS

SERMON

PREACHED THE 1ST SUNDAY OF SEPTEMBER, 1903, IN ST. AGNES' CHURCH

Written by request for a secular newspaper.

“I and the Father are one. The Jews then took up stones to stone Him. Jesus answered them: many good works I have shown to you from my Father: for which of these works do you stone me? The Jews answered him: for a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because thou being a man, makest thyself God.”

JOHN, xv. 31-33.

THIS is only one of the many texts of the New Testament in which Christ asserts a dogma, that of his own Divinity. In fact from beginning to end, he taught special, particular and dogmatic truths; and so the Church has always interpreted His teachings. Hence the score of General Councils from Nicaea to the Vatican has had for chief purpose, to defend, protect and maintain every particle of His teachings as laid down in the New Testament. With this view the first General Council of Nicaea thought the vowel

I of so much consequence, that the Bishops gathered there, considered and anathematized the Arians as heretics for inserting it in a single word. So essential does the Church consider the creed which Christ sanctions by a threat of eternal damnation, against those who will not accept it. "He that believeth not shall be condemned."

But for some centuries the world has been in rebellion against dogma; although the opinion of the ablest men in many creeds is that the human intellect has been weakened by giving up dogmatic teachings and belief. When man's highest faculty, the intellect, by improper training ceases to hold positive dogmatic convictions, it becomes weak and decadent. Since the sixteenth century the human brain has been watered; and the philosophy of doubt and the religion of skepticism are the sources of the watering. What pigmies the so-called great intellects of the infidels of the last three centuries are, — usually apostles of ruin and destruction, — compared to the great intellects that preceded them, builders and creators of science and learning in its highest and noblest forms. Even Priestly, in his historical lectures, admits that the men of his century were incapable of understanding the

subjects which the men of the thirteenth century easily understood. Take the old thought builders like St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas and Dante, how they outshine the modern word builders and thought destroyers, Kant and Spencer, and the minnows of the new philosophical schools, who try to nibble away the truths of Christianity and reason.

In this sad injurious work, literature has done and is doing its share. Let me illustrate by a well-known example and by a well-known theory resulting from it.

Every scholar knows the story of the three rings. It was picked up by Boccaccio, well named "Dirty Mouth," among the bric-a-brac literature of the Middle Ages, and is told by him in the Decamerone, a book, the reading of which nothing will justify except the permission of one's confessor and a justifiable desire to know Italian literature. The story is not of the obscene ones which the great Italian prose writer loves to tell, but in its import and tendency it is more harmful than much that he has written; for everyone revolts at obscenity, but everyone is not on guard against the insidious influences which undermine and destroy faith and orthodoxy.

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The story is rehashed by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing in his drama of "Nathan der Weise," which still ranks as a German classic at least among Teutonic unbelievers. I say in the opinion of these, because it represents their views by teaching the uselessness of Dogma, the absolute equality of all religions, the impossibility of finding out which is the true one, and consequently by inculcating indifference to all forms of belief, on the excuse that all are equally false and useless. The popularity of the drama is shown by the large audiences which applaud to the echo the story of the three rings, which may be called the climax of the drama, whenever it is staged either in Germany or America. Possibly the sarcastic Heine had the popularity of this dull play in Hamburg in his mind when he wrote in his "Memoirs of Schnabelmopski" that the citizens of Hamburg patronized theatres, on Sunday nights, rather than the churches, because the dramas played were far more serious, more stupid and much longer than the sermons.

The Teutonic members of the lodges and their affinities, however, do not represent genuine German literary taste; for many of those who admire Goethe and Schiller look

on "Nathan der Weise" as an insipid, prosy, twaddling, diluted poem in sophomoric blank verse.

But I want to speak about theology and not about literature, and hence I hasten to give the story of the three rings as Lessing tells it :

"In ancient times there lived a man in the East who had inherited a priceless ring. The stone was an opal which reflected a hundred different colors, and had the secret power of making its owner acceptable to God and man. No wonder, therefore, the man in the East never took it off his finger, and was firmly resolved to keep it forever in his family. He bequeathed the ring to his favorite son with the condition that he in turn should bequeath it to his favorite son, and so continually, the favorite son without regard to priority of birth should own the ring, and by virtue of his ownership should be the head and prince of the family.

At last this ring passing from son to son came into the hands of a father who had three sons who were equally devoted to him and whom he consequently loved with equal affection. From time to time he seemed to prefer one in turn more than the others,

according as one was alone with him and the others not present to share his love ; so that each of the three in turn he deemed worthy of the ring and to each in turn he had the weakness to promise it. This went on for some time. But when he came to die he found himself greatly embarrassed, for by giving the ring to the third he would have pained the other sons who had trusted his promise. What was he to do ? He sent secretly for a goldsmith and ordered him to make two other rings, and to spare neither skill nor cost in forming them exactly like the original. The goldsmith obeyed to the letter so that when he brought the rings to the old man even he could not distinguish the imitations from the original. Rejoiced at the success of his plans he sent for his three sons, gave to each a ring and his blessing, and died. But hardly was he dead when the sons came each with his ring to claim the headship of the family. And then began investigations, quarrels and complaints. But in vain ; for the true ring could not be determined. And then, adds Nathan, the Jew, addressing himself to Saladin, the Mussulman, — “In like manner the true faith is not demonstrable.” God, according to Lessing, did not care

enough about truth to give us the means of knowing it ; hence the inutility of dogma.

Lessing wrote his drama on the eve of the French Revolution, and the theory which he inculcates, of indifference in the matter of religion, was the fashionable doctrine of the German and French conspirators of the age. To them, as they spoke in their secret lodges or wrote for the purpose of corrupting public opinion, Mohammedanism, Judaism and Christianity were on the same plane ; and the dogmas of Christianity were simply as baseless and undemonstrable as the tenets of Judaism or of Mohammedanism.

Speaking of the story of the three rings, a cultured gentleman, a graduate of one of those universities where no one seems to learn logic or correct habits of thought, recently said : " Lessing exactly represents my opinion of religion. I believe with him that Catholicism, Buddhism and Protestantism are equal. I respect all the religions and sects ; but none of them has a monopoly of the truth. " A graduate of another of those universities which teach as if they believe that the way to train human intellects is to cut off their beautiful tops and make them pollards, said to his brother : " I can illus-

trate your theory by a better story than Lessing's. It is my story of the five railroads. There are five trunk lines that go from this city to the city of C. No matter which route you take you will reach the goal of your desire. So it is with the Churches ; provided you are a good sort of fellow, it makes no difference to which you belong. They all lead to Heaven."

This is very liberal doctrine. It is the doctrine of modern freethinkers as well as of the old ones ; and hence all hate the Church that claims to have an exclusive right to the truth and to be the only true way to Paradise : and they all contradict the express dogmatic teaching of Christ as exemplified in my text.

"What do you say to that doctrine," asked a gentleman of a Catholic, who had been listening to the champions of the equality of all creeds. "Well," said the Catholic, "I think the doctrine is absurd. The Church is not like a railroad. And I am astonished to hear educated men speak thus. It is like saying that two and two make four and five at the same time. There is a defect somewhere, but it is fundamentally in their principles and in their elementary education. Think for a moment, and consider some generally admitted truths, which I have not the time

to develop in detail ; and you will see the absurdity of the "ring" theory of Lessing in the year 1779 and of the railroad theory of the modern universities in 1902. "

Reason unaided shows that there is one God and that He alone is the Truth and must consequently love the truth, and desire everyone possessing an intellect to know it and to love it because it is Himself. Being infinite He can have no end but Himself ; nor can any of his creatures have any other end than God Himself. The finite cannot be the last end of the finite ; for the finite implies the infinite as the last end. The intellect of man is his highest faculty and should therefore be the first in homage and worship of the Creator. The Creator must want the homage first of that which is first in dignity and power among men and most like Himself. Hence He wants the obedience of the intellect in faith. He must be known before He can be loved, and the office of the intellect is to know Him the Truth, for the Truth is the object of the intellect. But the Truth is a unit. There can be no contradiction in a unit, for it cannot be one and two at the same time. When God acts, He must act according to His nature and essence. Hence

unity characterizes all His works. To suppose God the author of two or three contradictory creeds is to suppose Him a Being with a dual contradictory nature, each nature working independently and limiting the other, and this would be to destroy the very idea of omnipotence and infinity in God, and so destroy God. An illogical God is no God. Even His omnipotence could not make a circle which would be at the same time a square.

The theory, therefore, that God could be the author of Mohammedanism and Christianity implies a contradiction and destroys the idea of divine veracity. Now to say that God contradicts Himself, is to assert atheism, pure and simple ; and in fact, Lessing and all the freethinkers, ancient and modern, some without knowing it, are atheists in principle if not in practice. They would despise a man who contradicted himself, how can they esteem a God who, according to their theory, contradicts Himself ?

Given the divinity of Christ as a truth, there can be no union between Him and Belial, or between Him and Mahomet. Given the divinity of Christ, there can be, as His apostle declares, only "one faith and one baptism ;" and one faith implies one creed,

and one baptism implies one sacramental system, and one sacramental system implies one legitimate hierarchy.

What is the guilt of those who deny these truths, is another question. The Catholic Church, inexorable as she is in asserting and defending the unity of the hierarchy, and of the creed and of the Code of Christ, makes great allowance for the weakness, temptations and passions of men in judging their accountability for their unbelief. The human intellect is clouded, and it often is hard to dispel the clouds. The prejudices of education and of family associations, the sacrifices to be made of lust, greed and pride are impediments which keep men from the truth. She knows how hard it was for Augustine to give up his lust ; how hard it was for Ignatius to give up the glory of a military career ; and how hard it was for Newman to follow the kindly light that led him ; and hence, while she is intolerant in matters of faith and morals, she has the heart of Christ for the weak, the ignorant, and even for the guilty and the vindictive. But no matter how much the world may stone her for saying it, she will still cry out ; " Truth is one and I alone possess it. "

THE SIN OF AVARICE

SERMON DELIVERED ON AUGUST 13TH, 1905,
AT CLIFF HAVEN, CATHOLIC SUMMER SCHOOL.

Gospel of the day Sunday.

" Gospel. Luke XIX,
v. 41-47."

IN this gospel, my dear brethren, there are two distinct parts, although they are not separate. On the contrary they are closely connected. The first part tells us that Our Lord wept over Jerusalem, and prophesied its downfall. In the second, we see Him enter the temple and cast out of it those who had desecrated it by turning it into a market place. In the first, we see Christ the patriot and the prophet ; in the second part we see Him the hater of greed who scourges a vice which was one of the chief causes of the ruin of His country and one of the chief causes of the spiritual and temporal ruin of all countries. " He came near to Jerusalem ", the holy city, the capital of the Jewish nation, a city and a nation that he specially loved. He was a Jew according to

the flesh ; His mother was a Jewess ; His foster-father, His apostles, disciples and friends were nearly all Jews. Born in Bethlehem, raised at Nazareth, accustomed to wander through the country, preaching the gospel and healing the sick, he knew and loved the hills and valleys, the brooks and lakes of His native land. Who could know its wonderful history and grand institutions so well as He ? He had a human heart and human affections, and they went out in loving sympathy for the sorrows and sufferings of the chosen people of the Eternal Father who had brought them out of the house of bondage, who had led them through flood, famine and war into the promised land, who had punished them for their transgressions, but who had forgiven them when repentant. He loved them, for He was their fellow-citizen. He loved them so much that He was going to offer up His life for their salvation. He was the model of all true patriots, in His love and labor for the material and spiritual welfare of His race and nation. Hence He wept over their miseries and sins, for He knew and saw what was going to happen. The day would soon come when hostile camps would be set around the holy city, the heathen army of

Rome would soon come to smite them with the sword ; fire and engines of war would destroy the beautiful palaces and the temple of Solomon until a stone should not be left upon a stone of the high walls and monuments of historic and once glorious Jerusalem. He knew also the reason for this destruction which occurred soon after His Crucifixion ; and He tells it : " Because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation". He had preached to the Jews as the prophets of old had done ; He had reproached Scribe, Sadducee, Pharisee and Herodian with their crimes against God and the State, with their voluntary blindness and hard-heartedness. He had forewarned them that their sins would bring ruin on them and the city, and had taught them to flee from the wrath to come. But this stiff-necked race would not listen, or if they listened, perversely refused to accept Him or His teaching. Their crimes culminated in the horrible murder, in the deicide, perpetrated on Good Friday. On that day they murdered the greatest of their race, even if He be considered only as a man. His teaching, measured by ordinary human standards, was more sublime than that of Isaias, or of Ezechiel, or of the author of the

Psalms ; His laws nobler and more beneficent than the code of Moses ; and His life and death, the life and death of the most wonderful miracle worker and of the most perfect type of innocence and of sanctity that had ever ennobled the Hebrew or any other race. And what crucified Him ? Malice, hate, sin. He was crucified by lust, ambition, and greed ; by lust which hated Him, because he had denounced adultery and praised virginity ; by ambition, and jealousy because he had opposed the domination of the false leaders of the people and sapped the foundation of their rule ; and by greed which betrayed Him for thirty pieces of silver. Greed particularly hated Him, because He had denounced the cruelty of the rich, extolled poverty of which His life was a heroic example, and preached His gospel specially to the poor and to the humble.

In the second part of this gospel it is the vice of greed which he scourged in the persons of the money-changers in the temple. As a patriot he knew that it is a vice which destroys national life everywhere, and that it had corrupted the national life of the Hebrews. They were peculiarly prone to it from the day when they first adored the golden calf ; and that vice is their ruling

passion even to the present time. " For from the least of them even to the greatest all are given to covetousness ". (JER. VI, v. 13.)

It was the special vice of Judas who was to betray Him, as it was afterwards the vice of Ananias and Sapphira who lied to the Holy Ghost. It was the vice prevalent among the political factions in the holy city at that time. It had invaded public life, made the magistrates and other officials venal and mercenary. Even the priesthood and the sanctuary had not escaped ; for we find the buyers and sellers invading the holiest parts of the temple, seducing the priests from their duty, as it had done in the days of Heli and his sons. " Now the sons of Heli were children of Belial, not knowing the Lord, nor the office of the priests to the people : but whosoever had offered a sacrifice, the servant of the priests came and robbed him. Wherefore the sin of the young men was exceedingly great before the Lord ; because they withdrew men from the sacrifice of the Lord. " (I KINGS, CHAP 2, v. 13-16.)

Thus does avarice in the Church destroy religion, as avarice destroys civic virtue in the State.

Unfortunately the Hebrews have not a

monopoly of this vice ; for greed is common in all races and nations, and hence, my dear brethren, in this Gospel, there is more than one lesson for us. The epistle of to-day, correlated to the Gospel, records some of the catastrophes that befell the Israelites in ancient times, and tells us that all these things happened to them " in figure and they are written for our correction" (I COR. C. V. 6-13). The whole of the old Testament was typical and symbolical of what was to happen in the New. In the New as well as in the old Testament there is a spiritual sense underlying every line. St. Thomas tells us this in his clear style: " In the new law the things done are signs of the things which we should do ". " The old law is a figure of the new ; and the new law, as St. Denis says, is a figure of future glory. Since the literal sense is that which the author intends, and since God who comprehends all things in His intellect, is the author of Holy Scripture, it is not improper (*non est inconveniens*), as St. Augustine says, that besides the literal sense in a word of Scripture, there should be several senses. " (I PARS, QUÆST. I, ART X. of the Summa Theol.) Indeed some Biblical texts are so full of meaning that a long period of time could be

profitably spent in their explanation. This is not surprising when we consider the meaning of the words, the meaning of the sentences, in short the literal sense of the text, and then its spiritual or typical sense, with all its subdivisions into mystical or ascetical senses.

Let us apply some of them to our own lives. In the first part of to-day's gospel, the city of Jerusalem is a symbol of the human soul which experiences many tribulations, has committed many sins, has again and again been forgiven but has not known the things that are for its true peace and happiness. The terrible threat is made to that soul, as well as to the holy city, that its enemies, its own passions from within and the devils from without, will one day surround it, beat it to the ground, and destroy it because it has not known the time of its visitation. Grace was often given to it and often rejected, until God grown tired of offering and angry at refusal made no further offers. Ruin followed and the soul was lost ; lost frequently on account of the very vice of the money-changers whom Our Lord beat out of the temple, men who had turned it and Judea into a den of thieves. The love of money, my brethren, is⁵⁷ admitted to be one of the worst of vices,

by universal consent. The pagan poet agrees with the Bible in this, for he has said: "*Quid non mortalia pectora cogis, auri sacra fames!*" The cursed hunger for gold has destroyed many a soul. Of the three animals, the leopard symbolizing lust, the lion representing pride, and the she-wolf symbolizing avarice or greed, in the first Canto of Dante's *Inferno*, the great poet seems to have found the she-wolf the most dangerous antagonist on his ascent of the mountain, and it is greed that he scourges most severely in his wonderful poem, sparing neither high nor low in Church or State who were slaves of this vice. The Church hates this vice so much that the severest legislation of her Canon Law aims to drive it out of the Christian sanctuary as Christ whipped it out of the temple.

It is a vice which has been a concomitant or a principal cause in every persecution of the Church. Greed in the State confiscated the property of the Church in all the French Revolutions, and greed in the Church made the apostate priests and bishops like Talleyrand who were the disgrace of the Gallican Church in the 18th century. Every confiscation of Church property in France, in Italy and in Spain, has had greed for its impelling cause.

Greed prompted the feudal lords of Germany to harbor the heresy of Luther ; and the Feudal lords of Switzerland to foster the heresy of Zwingli and of Calvin ; the greed of an English monarch and of his avaricious barons drove Catholicism out of England ; and greed in the sanctuary there, the fear of losing property, created the most cowardly, the most shameful apostacy of ecclesiastics and of laymen that has ever disgraced the Church ; and kept the apostates in heresy and schism, for they knew that if they went back to the true faith they would have to make restitution of stolen Church property.

We should therefore take to heart the lesson of the last part of this gospel. At a time when ravenous greed is corrupting all classes of society in our own country, from the capitalistic and ruling classes whose tentacles are spread out to grasp and accumulate money without regard to the rights, the interests, or the necessities of others, to the working classes at the bottom of the social ladder who are becoming tainted with socialism which is but another name for the legal stealing of others' goods ; we should set our faces against every form of fraud and theft, by discountenancing breach of contract, failure

to do the work for which one is paid, the robbing of the poor by the rich, and the robbing of the rich by the poor ; in a word by condemning the thousand different ways in which the commandment " Thou shalt not steal " is now daily broken, as it was in the time of Christ. By denouncing greed and practising honesty in all our dealings, we shall imitate the patriotism of Christ, help to save our country and our souls from the degrading vice of the money changers of the temple, and deserve the blessing recorded in Ecclesiasticus : (Chap. xxxi) " Many have been brought to fall for gold, and the beauty thereof hath been their ruin. Gold is a stumbling block to them that sacrifice to it ; woe to them that eargely follow after it, and every fool shall perish by it. Blessed is that man that is found without blemish, and that hath not gone after gold, nor put his trust in money nor in treasures " .

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THE FORTY HOURS' DEVOTION
THE FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI
AND THEIR CAUSE

BY request I shall treat of the subjects at the head of this essay, and not to fatigue the attention of the distinguished members of the Eucharistic Congress here present, I shall be brief.

I. — THE FORTY HOURS' DEVOTION

The Forty Hours' Devotion is probably an offshoot of the "perpetual adoration" which began to be practiced in the Church at an early age. It was practiced by the Akoi-metes, or "sleepless monks," of the East, whom St. Alexander, in the fifth century, placed in a monastery near the Euphrates. These religious were divided into bands which relieved each other day and night in praying, singing and watching in the Church. There was a celebrated monastery of them in Constantinople, and another called the Irenarion outside its walls. In the same city, in the year 463, a former consul, Studius,

founded a monastery in which a thousand of these monks worshipped. During the schism of Acacius, in part of the fifth and sixth centuries, the Akoimetes were among the strongest champions of catholic orthodoxy against schism and the Eutychian heresy. One of them had the courage, which cost him his life, to pin into the mantle of the schismatic patriarch, the papal anathema which he had refused to receive. But unfortunately they eventually fell into the Nestorian heresy and were anathematized by Pope Agapetus about the year 536.

In the Western Church we read of the custom of "continuous psalmody", "*hymnodia assidua*," established in a monastery at Agaunum in the year 522. The custom traveled farther in the seventh century, for after that date we find it at St. Denis and St. Germain in Paris ; at Corbie, Dijon, St. Martin of Tours, and in many other monasteries. In 814 we find it at Picardy, and no doubt it must have spread in some form or other to many of the convents and monasteries in the rest of Europe.

The local customs throughout Christendom of having a certain number of hours on certain days for special prayer, antedate by centuries

what is now known as the "Forty Hours' Devotion," representing the forty hours during which Our Lord was in the grave. This devotion in our churches began in Milan about the year 1534. To the Capuchins belongs the honor of introducing it into the Church, through Father Joseph; but the honor is shared by a pious citizen of Cremona, named Bono, and by a fellow townsman, Anthony Mary Zaccaria, the founder of the Barnabites. St. Charles Borromeo introduced the devotion into all the churches of Milan. It is probable that at first the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament did not take place during the prayer of the forty hours; but when it was taken up in Rome, the Exposition always accompanied it. Bacci, the most ancient biographer of St. Philip Neri, tells us that the brotherhood of the Holy Trinity, founded by the saint, practiced the FORTY HOURS' DEVOTION with the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on the first Friday of every month and during Holy Week. A brotherhood founded by Pius IV in Rome had a similar custom of Exposition on the third Sunday of each month, to awaken the spirit of lukewarm Romans, and to remind them of the forty days' fast of Our Lord. Clement VIII. seeing the Church

pressed on all sides by Turks and heretics, issued on November 25th, 1592, a Bull establishing the Forty Hours' Devotion in the churches of the city of Rome, with a plenary indulgence forever; and ordering the devotion arranged so that "day and night during the whole year without intermission, incense should ascend in the sight of the Lord." Although in this Bull ("*Graves et diuturnae*") there is no mention of an Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, yet since the year 1600 it is certain, from the rubrics, that the Exposition accompanied the devotion in Rome, and in the other cities to which the devotion soon spread from the Eternal City. Paul V, in a brief of May 10th 1606, confirmed the act of his predecessor, but modified one of the conditions of gaining the indulgence, which had required an hour's visit to the Blessed Sacrament, to an ordinary prayer— "*Tempore quod cuilibet fuerit commodum.*" (1)

The custom of interrupting the Forty Hours' Devotion during the night began in the kingdom of Naples, and Benedict XIV sanctioned it in the whole Church, in a brief of November 28th, 1724, and requested the bishops to announce the modification. It was

(1) « To be said at each one's convenience »

customary from the beginning to make the devotion in the manner of a *Triduum*, or three days' prayer ; and from this fact arose a special devotion called the thirteen hours' prayer—that is a prayer from morning until night on the same day. This prayer sometimes formed a part of the Forty Hours' Devotion, but was more often a separate devotion, for specified purposes, most frequently, as in Prussia, for the benefit of the growing crops. In some places the forty hours prayer became a perpetual one. The other facts in the history of this now universal devotion are so well known that, for the sake of brevity, I omit to narrate them.

II. — CORPUS CHRISTI.

The origin of the Feast Corpus Christi is well authenticated. It is a peculiar feast in many respects. Nearly all the great feasts of the Church commemorate past events. Thus Christmas, Easter and Pentecost relate to facts that happened nearly two thousand years ago. The Feast of Corpus Christi is a conspicuous exception to the ordinary rule, for it refers to the present, to a fact that takes place every day, to the Living Reality in the Sacrifice of the Mass and in the Sacra-

ment of the Eucharist, to a mysterious fact that is the soul of religion, and the sun of the Sacraments, for the mystery of transubstantiation is the inspiration of the whole liturgy.

The little kingdom of Belgium, in which the banner of the Crucifix still floats in victory, has the honor of having originated the Feast. A heresy or a schism always brings out special manifestations of Catholic faith and piety ; so when about the thirteenth century, Berengarius and Scotus Erigena broached their errors regarding the Real Presence in the Eucharist, and when the Albigensian and Waldensian heretics preached false spiritualism and in their unbridled frenzy desecrated churches and demolished altars, Almighty God inspired Blessed Julian, of Cornillon Mont, near Liège, and two other Belgian nuns, Eve and Isabel of Huy, to urge on a Catholic Bishop the creation of a special feast of the Blessed Sacrament, to offer public honor to Jesus Christ and to atone for the insults of heresy and scepticism. Juliana, in the year of Our Lord 1208, found a willing ear to her request in James Pantaleone, the archdeacon of Liège, who afterwards became Pope Adrian IV., A. D. 1261. In a short time

after Juliana's inspiration, A. D. 1247, under Bishop Robert of Liège, a local Feast of Corpus Christi was celebrated in that diocese, and A. D. 1264, after the "miracle of Bolseno," where the Sacred Flesh of Christ showed Itself through the species of bread, Adrian IV, then Pope, by the Bull "*Transiturus*," extended the Feast to the whole world; but his death prevented its publication. Clement V published it and made it a part of the Canon Law, where it forms one of the Clementines. In the general Council of Vienne, he enforced the law of Urban to its full extent, so that in the fourteenth century the Feast became general throughout Christendom.

It was Urban IV who selected St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Bonaventure to write the Office and the Mass of the Feast; and we all know the story that the composition of Aquinas was accepted because the learned and saintly Franciscan, in his humility, destroyed his own work as he listened to the sublime words penned by his Dominican brother.

There are in the liturgy of the Church most beautiful and sublime compositions both in prose and in verse; prose like the "*Exultet*" of Holy Saturday, or hymns, like the "*Stabat*

Mater," which have never been surpassed. But taken as a whole, the Office of Corpus Christi is the grandest in our liturgy. Whether we consider the choice and the collection of the antiphons from the treasures of the prophets and of the psalms ; the grouping of the figures and of the types of the Old Testament in relation with the Reality of the New ; the selection of the best thoughts of the ancient Greek and Latin Fathers on the nature of the Sacrifice and of the Sacrament ; or the logical order in which the passages of the New Testament, most directly bearing on the innocence of life and exemplary conduct required in the priest who is to celebrate, and in the people who are to receive the Holy Sacrament, are arranged, in the Mass, from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Introit, to the Gospel of St John, declaring the mystery and the miracle of Transubstantiation — all, both in Breviary and in Missal, is a masterpiece worthy of the genius who wrote the Sum of theology. Such excellence in the prose work we should expect from St. Thomas, but he excels himself in the Hymns. Oh ! for a quiet spot away from the noise and the cares of the busy world with the Office of the Blessed Sacrament and the third part of the Sum of

St. Thomas as companions of study and meditation ! Than these gems of the Angelic Doctor, there is nothing more profound in philosophy and theology, and nothing finer in literature, sacred or profane ! The "*Lauda Sion*" is a chant of the universe in praise of the Mystery. Nowhere outside of Dante's "*Paradiso*" can one find such force, clearness and condensation of thought as in this immortal hymn. St. Thomas condenses into its clear, cut verses, the whole teaching of the third part of the *Summa* from the seventy-third question, to the eighty third inclusive. Every line contains an essay :

"Dogma datur christianis, quod in carnem transit panis, et vinum in sanguinem.

Sub diversis speciebus, signis tantum et non rebus, latent res eximiæ.

Caro cibus, sanguis potus, manet tamen Christus totus, sub utraque specie.

A sumente non concisus, non confractus, non divisus, integer accipitur.

Sumit unus, sumunt mille ; quantum isti tantum ille ; nec sumptus consumitur.

Sumunt boni, sumunt mali ; sorte tamen inæquali, vitæ vel interitus.

Mors est malis, vita bonis ; vide paris sumptionis, quam sit dispar exitus.

Nulla rei fit scissura ; signi tantum fit fractura, qua nec status nec statura, signat minuitur. ”

In the words and music of that song we hear the choirs of the angels blending with all the sweet harmonies of the material universe in honor of the Incarnate God. “ *Sacris Solemniis* ” and “ *Verbum Supernum Prodiens* ” are models of profound and compact thought. There is an eloquent sermon in every word of them. Consider these lines :

« *Se nascens dedit socium
Convalescens in edulium
Se moriens in pretium
Se regnans dat in præmium.* »

Here is a summary of the whole spiritual life. In the “ *Pange Lingua*, ” after summing up the fact of the divine institution of the Blessed Sacrament, he closes with the *ergo* of the great logician, “ *Tantum ergo Sacramentum, Veneremur cernui.* ” It is the conclusion of his analysis, of the whole summary of his prose and of his poetry on the Blessed Sacrament. The elegance of the diction and the force and clearness of these hymns rival some of the best of Dante’s cantos. The Office of the Blessed Sacrament may be called an inspired work.

A natural consequence of the Feast of Corpus Christi, which occurs on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, is the annual procession which began to be held during the pontificate of John XXII. The priest or bishop who celebrates the Mass carries the Host through the church or out of it, as the custom may require. In the whole manifestation of religious belief, in all the ages, nothing has ever equalled the procession of Corpus Christi in beauty, grandeur and meaning. Whether this procession occur in Rome, where the Supreme Pontiff carries the Host while Cardinals and Bishops, princes and nobles, soldiers and peasants follow with bowed heads; or in some other great Catholic city, where the emperor lays aside the sceptre and crown and bareheaded follows on foot the King of kings and Lord of lords concealed under the sacramental veils, the scene is always inspiring and imposing. But perhaps more beautiful are the humbler processions in town and hamlet, with the banners of sodalities and societies, with the white-robed children and variegated dress of the peasants, wandering down the mountainside, or by the river in the valley, at the season of the year when verdure and blossoms clothe the earth and

foliage the trees, and all the birds are singing in harmonious accord with the choirs that intone the hymns to the Lord of Hosts. The human voices are answered by the invisible choirs of angels and make the whole scene a union of heaven and earth in the worship of the Supreme Creator.

The mosaic of created nature in all its varied robes of green, and blue, and white, and gold, is almost surpassed in beauty by this mosaic of human processions, testifying to the power of Christian faith and love. All inferior nature unites with man in this act of public homage and worship. The whole earth and sky thrill with love of their Creator. The flowers deck the altars, the sweetest perfumes blend with the incense ; the voices of rippling brooks, of leaping cataracts, of mighty oceans, and of all the singing birds, unite in the chorus of the "*Adoro te devote, latens Deitas*" ; while the angels answer it in heaven ; and the stars dance for joy in the blue empyrean, and the Sun, himself, seems to pay visible worship. The Feast of Corpus Christi is the homage of the Universe to the Incarnate God, in Whom all things live, move and have their being. *Tantum ergo Sacramentum, Veneremur cernui.*

III. — THE CAUSE OF THE DEVOTION
AND OF THE FEAST.

Such is a brief history of the Devotion of the Forty Hours and of the Feast of Corpus Christi. If we now seek the cause of these manifestations of love for the Blessed Sacrament, we find this cause in the nature of the Real Presence. Leaving aside the theological side of this dogma, and considering it from the standpoint of philosophy alone, it is the most logical and the most sublime doctrine that has ever been offered to the human intelligence for acceptance. Although of supernatural origin, and not necessitated either by the nature of God or of man, the subject of the dogma is suggested by reason, as a consequence of God's plan and motive in Creation. It realizes all the highest aspirations of human nature, and satisfies the requirements of natural and supernatural religion. Both cry out for it as the perfection of that union between God and man which is the necessary consequence of Creation and of the Incarnation.

Two texts of St. Thomas summarize the motive of Creation of the Incarnation and of the Blessed Sacrament, its complement.

"It is the nature of goodness", he writes, "to communicate itself to others. Hence it is the nature of the Supreme Good to communicate Itself in a supreme manner to the creature ; and this is done in the highest degree when It joins human nature to Itself so that one person combines three entities, the Word, a soul, and flesh." (1)

And again he writes : "The Eucharist is the consummation of the Spiritual life and the end of all the Sacraments ;" (2) and he quotes Pope Alexander I as saying : "Nothing can be greater in sacrifices than the Body and Blood of Christ, nor is there any oblation greater than These."

The created Universe is necessarily fashioned from a model in the divine intelligence where all is ideal order and ideal beauty.

*«Le cose tutte quante,
Hann ordine tra loro, e questo e forma
Che l'Universo a Dio fa semigliante,» (3)*

as the great poet epitomizing the teaching of sane philosophy and sound theology, which he had learned in the school of St. Thomas, expresses a fundamental truth. This order

(1) Tertia pars quaest. 1. corp. art.

(2) 3 pars quaest. 73 art 3 corp. art.

(3) Paradiso, Canto 1. v. 103, 4, 5.

implies the absolute dependence of creatures, not only in their existence, but in their action upon the will of the Creator. Their being is derived from Him, and they cannot get away from Him even when they try to do so by the abuse of free will. Their life requires His immediate presence and action ; and their acts are impossible without His immediate concurrence. If any creature could even for a second be independent of the Creator, that creature would be another omnipotent God ; and then we should have the contradiction of two infinites existing at the same time. Thus, then, the order of the divine plan which places in the universe beings more or less partaking of the divine nature, and consequently more or less representing its perfections and its beauty, requires that all should be held in their course by the Divine Hand, and return to their source by a necessary attraction. The Hand never lets go its hold, and it is always drawing them back to their source. Even when they sin they seek evil under the appearance of good. "Because the universe is not the result of chance, it is necessary that in the divine mind there should be the form to whose likeness the universe was made " (*Summa, I pars, art. 15*), says St. Thomas

Aquinas. And again, "All creatures seek God as their end" (Summa, I pars. art. 15).

Now order in the divine mind consists in the conformity between the divine intellect and the divine will. Religion in the Trinity is the knowledge of, and the mutual love of the Three Divine Persons for one another. Religion, outside of the Trinity, arises primarily from the fact of Creation motivated by divine love and of that order according to which it has been modelled; and is therefore a necessity for creatures endowed with intelligence and will, like the Creator. The law is universal that creatures should return to their Maker, the inferior creatures mediately through the beings especially endowed with faculties competent to know and love Him as their last end. Religion is the bond, the link, between creature and Creator. It is the light of the creature's intellect by which he sees God; it is the motor of the creature's will, impelling him to adore and love God. Even those intelligences and wills that have deviated from the true and good and have thus failed by their own fault to reach supreme happiness, the end for which they were created, still form a part of the divine plan, and in their fate show forth the justice, the power, the wis-

dom, and even the love of the Creator. The great poet showed that he was also a profound Christian theologian when he placed these words in the inscription over the gate of Hell:

*« Giustizia mosse il mio alto fattore,
Fecemi la divina potestate.*

La Somma Sapienza e il primo amore. »

All creatures, whether they will or not, show forth the glory of the Lord.

On this earth, the part of the Universe with which we are most conversant, the specially endowed creatures are men, beings gifted with souls to know and love God. When they know God and love Him they are true to the obligations of religion, for religion is the tie which binds the intellect of man by knowledge to the divine intelligence and his will to conformity to the will of God as expressed by law.

Now this tie or bond of union must be perfect to have perfect religion ; and its perfection consists in mutual love, for love is that spiritual tie that binds two persons together. On the part of God this tie is perfect. His creature is His child ; and the Father, especially a Father Who is all perfect, necessarily loves His child. He has created it by His omnipotence ; He has endowed it out of His own

treasures. Whoever admits the existence of a Creator must admit these truths of the natural order. But if we go higher, to the order in which the Creator specially reveals His own nature and the depth of His love for creatures, if we consult the documents which contain the record of revelation, we find the Creator again and again expressing His love, and desiring union with the creatures whom he has specially endowed with imitations of his own attributes of intelligence and will. "He thirsts to be thirsted after", as St. Gregory of Nazianzen says. "Can a woman forget her infant so as not to have pity on the son of her womb: and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee." "The bridegroom shall rejoice over the bride, and thy God shall rejoice over thee."

The records of revelation show this intense love of God for men, this desire for union with them. What is the story of the life that began at Bethlehem and ended on Calvary, but the story of God's love for men? Christ taught them to call His Father: "Our Father, Who art in heaven"; the Father not only of the soul but of the body also; the Creator of matter and of form, of substance and of accident, for He made all, and He loves all.

It is true both intellect and will have gone astray. But the Father forgives the prodigal, and rejects him only when he finally refuses to return love for love. After the Fall, the love of the Father continued and even seemed to grow stronger. Before the Fall, the union between the Father and the created son was chiefly mental. The body of the creature had not been originally united to the Creator. Atonement for sin made this union necessary and it became a fact. Man could not satisfy for the first transgression. He was finite and could not go far enough down in humility to atone for the sin of attempting to go too high by his disobedience. Dante has put this truth in four immortal lines :

*Non poteu l'uomo ne termini suoi
Mai satisfar per non potere ir giuso
Con umiltude, obbediendolo poi
Quanto disubbediando intese ir suso.*

— *Paradiso, Canto VII., v. 97-100.*

The offence was infinite considering the dignity of the One offended ; the attempt of the creature by his own acts to atone could be only finite. Hence, to make up for human nature's incapacity, God united Himself corporally to human nature in the Incarnation, and thus elevated and ennobled matter as well

as spirit beyond its natural condition. At the same time God added new ties of union to his creatures, by new light and new force, by supernatural grace poured into the human intelligence and will. The sin of man became a "*felix culpa*," for it made God's love for him more intense and more extensive, so that the divine love really exhausted itself in the Incarnation by establishing the closest and most extraordinary union possible between man's soul and body and God. The Real Presence, the consummation of the Incarnation, by which it is possible for every human being to become a partaker of the divine nature and of the human nature which the divine Person assumed, effects the closest union possible between the creature and the Creator. The Eucharist, in which Jesus says, "My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed," is the complement and the perfection of the Incarnation. It is a sacrifice and a sacrament, the heart and soul of religion. Through this Divine Bread God unites men into one spiritual body: So says St. Paul, "For we being many are one bread, one body, all who partake of one bread" (1. COR., XVII, 5); and through this Divine Bread He unites mankind to Himself. Thus the sacra-

ment is the source of love of our neighbor and of love of God.

In the natural order, light and air do not so penetrate earthly bodies as God penetrates everything in heaven and on earth. At the same time, in the supernatural order, the Son of God is really and corporally present on this earth under the appearances of bread and wine, and becomes part of man's flesh and blood. Thus Christianity becomes by this Sacrament not only a spiritual but a realistic religion, taking in man's body and man's soul.

But, on the part of man, is there no response to this divine love, to this desire of the Eternal Father to have his sons come back to His bosom? Yes! When man is sane and sinless, when his intellect sees the light, and his will follows where it kindly leads, he desires, with Paul, to be "dissolved and to be with Christ"; with St. Francis of Assisi he cries out, "My God and My All"; and he feels the real meaning of the hymn, "Jesus Lover of My Soul." Such a man is capable of being wrapt in ecstasy, of soaring to heaven in his prayers, of receiving the sacred stigmata of love on hands and feet, and side, and forehead, of enduring torture for Christ, and of dying a martyr with joy on his counte-

nance. Is not the history of the men and of the women who, uniting themselves almost daily to the body and soul of God in the Sacrament of His love, have arisen above the weakness of human nature, practiced virtue heroically, and approached the condition of angelic nature by the purity and the sanctity of their lives, so extensive that its volumes would fill the sanctuary of a great Cathedral?

But even in unrepentant and unregenerate man, with intellect still darkened and will still unassisted by sanctifying grace — with man the prey of temptations and passions, in the midst of his misery and his pride, there is an answer to God's desire of union with him. What do we see shining out through all the gropings of blinded men after truth and goodness, through the weird and visionary dreams of Oriental pantheism, through the superstitions of paganism; through the false philosophies of the moderns who have left the way, the truth and the life, and have tried to carve out new paths through the wilderness, and to seek for water in poisoned wells? All of the great systems of anti-Christian and un-Christian philosophy are pantheistic, whether in the Orient or in the Occident. Pantheism — or the identification

of the Creator with the creature, of God with man, of matter and spirit — is the dominant system which has led astray men who abused the natural gift of intelligence, or who never had the light of Christian faith. This general error is the most natural one for men who worship the idols of their own minds instead of the Triune God. For the great difficulty of human reason is to distinguish and separate God from His creatures, rather than to unite them. Reason sees that there are creatures, and consequently that there must be a Creator. But what is creation? How can a being be produced out of nothing? This mystery, poor, benighted reason cannot fathom. It cannot see beyond the chasm; and when it loses the light of primeval intellect it denies the existence of the chasm, and identifies the Creator and the creature. But this very identification, asserted and taught by the greatest pagans, ancient and modern, is a proof that the human mind realizes that there must be union between God and man, and that man craves for the perfection of that union. The limit that separates the true from the false is narrow although it is essential; and the cry of the pagan who wants to go into the "Nirvana" or into the Hegelian heaven, sounds

like the cry of St. Paul, "*Cupio dissolvi et esse cum Christo*," or like the teaching of St. Peter, that we are "*divinæ consortes naturæ*," or like the teaching of the theologians, that grace is the beginning of glory. The false in reasoning resembles often the true, as a false note in music resembles the true one. They are both struck from the same instrument and by the same player, man's intellect.

The Real Presence alone solves the problem between man and God. Here there is a union of the finite mind to the Infinite, the union of man's body to the Body of God. It is the "assumption" by man of the divinity of the eternal Son, as St. John Damascene says. Yet there is no identification, no confusion of the finite and the Infinite. The creature remains a creature, and remains a distinct person, although united so closely to God that it is hard to say where the action of the One begins and of the other ends.

The Real Presence being, then, the perfect union of the human and the divine, becomes the animating principle of religion; the Sun illuminating, warming and fructifying the whole Church. The rays of the Real Presence shine through literature and art; through poetry, music, architecture, painting,

sculpture, and give them a beauty and a perfection as near the ideal as is possible in the created universe. The divine acts on the human : refines, purifies and ennobles it.

Only men who believed in the Real Presence and who had been inspired by physical contact with the Body of God could have planned the Cathedrals, embellished the altars, carved the sculpture, painted the pictures, written the hymns and the poems, which show forth the fecundity, the beauty and the ideality of the religion of Christ. Only men and women constantly and closely united to God in the Eucharist could have done the heroic deeds and manifested the extraordinary virtues recorded in the " Lives of the Saints. "

There is in the works and actions as well as in the very faces of those whose lives have been transformed by the Real Presence an ideality and a beauty not found elsewhere. The divine flashes through the human as the sun shines through a cloud ; while religions that have no Real Presence are like northern icebergs, cold and frozen, but slowly melting away as they float down to the tepid waters of doubt.

There are persons who fail to see either the

beauty or the truth of the Real Presence, and oppose to it difficulties which should have little weight with a truly profound scholar. The Christian who has the virtue of humility and who believes in the inspiration of God's written word, and that Jesus Christ means what He says and says what He means—finds no difficulty in accepting the literal meaning of His words: "This is My Body; this is My Blood." The philosopher who knows the limited power of the human intellect and who studies the nature of matter, of substance and of space—although he may not have the gift of faith, finds the objections against the dogma, superficial and puerile. The greatest geniuses, the profoundest metaphysicians and theologians of Christendom have accepted it. Whether one follows Aristotle, as explained by Thomas Aquinas, or follows Leibnitz, or Kant, or the modern scientists in their analysis of the nature of matter, of substance, of force, or of space, he will find no serious difficulty against the doctrine of Transubstantiation. Who can show that God cannot change one substance into another, since He is the Creator of all substance? What is matter? What are its elements? What distinguishes it from spirit? "Exten-

sion," says Descartes; but the scientists have rejected his theory. Extension is not a necessary quality of matter. Its nature, the nature of substance, of force and of space, all lie beyond the domain of the senses; and we can arrive at a knowledge of their intrinsic qualities only by inference. In fact we know more of spirit than of matter; because we have consciousness of spirit, but not of matter. What is substance? What distinguishes it from its modes, and what are the modes of a being? Is substance identical with force, as Leibnitz teaches, or something different from it? In either case, we cannot see, feel, touch or smell it; for the only things that come within the ken of our senses are the phenomena, the effects, the modes, and the appearances; and not the substantial realities which underlie the accidents. Substance is always invisible and intangible. What is Space, in which transubstantiation and replication take place? Can any one of those who deny the Mystery answer? No! All they can give us are theories, more or less probable, but never certainty. For space, like matter and substance, is in the mysterious world of the invisibles. The man who studies the nature of God, the nature of matter, of substance,

and of space, will always find the objection, which denies the possibility of transubstantiation, flippant and superficial.

Neither metaphysics, nor chemistry, nor biology shows the impossibility of transubstantiation. On the contrary, their deepest researches insinuate its possibility. Behind matter, and substance, and space, there is God, who creates and modifies them as He wills. As in the mystery of Creation, we can only admire and adore the Omnipotence of the Supreme Being manifested in His creatures without comprehending Him; so in the Incarnation, and in the Real Presence, its sublime complement, we bow to the mystery in a universe full of mysteries from the smallest atom on earth to the highest seraph in heaven.

*Tantum ergo sacramentum,
Veneremur cernui;
Præstet fides supplementum
Sensuum defectui.*

SERMON

PREACHED AT

CONSECRATION ST AGNES' CHURCH

« How lovely are thy taber-
nacles, O Lord of Hosts. » —
Ps. xxxv.

A stranger passing through yonder street this morning would naturally ask two questions. What is this building and what does it stand for? The answer to the first question is short. This building is a Catholic church, consecrated to the service of God. But the words Catholic Church have a wider meaning than the building. The Catholic church in this wider meaning is the spiritual society founded by Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, with a creed to be believed and a code to be practised by the whole human race. It is in this wider sense that we must answer the second question, for its very nature requires us to go from the particular to the general in giving our answer.

But before giving it let me say that there is no question made by the stranger that could give us greater pleasure to hear than this,

"What does it stand for?" That is the question we love to hear, for it implies, firstly a confession of ignorance, otherwise the question would be unnecessary; secondly, a desire to know, to be informed, and this is laudable. Now the Church complains of the ignorance of strangers and of their neglect to instruct themselves or to be instructed regarding her nature, her creed and her code. Therefore she is pleased when she hears some one ask, "What does she stand for!" She hates ignorance as the joint product of Satan and sin, and she hates both, fights both, and strives to free man from the influence of both. "Seek and you shall find" is one of her counsels, and she is therefore pleased when she hears the question, "What does it stand for?" for her answer is ready and she knows and feels that her answer is unanswerable and always beneficent to the intellect and to the will of the questioner.

"What does she stand for?" The occasion requires that I shall be brief, and I shall be brief. Firstly, she stands for truth, but truth has many species. Well, she stands for all the species of truth.

She stands, firstly, for scientific truth. She loves to see men explore the material universe

and discover in it new facts or new laws that always show more clearly the glory and greatness of Him of whom it is written, "The Lord's is the earth and the fullness thereof." She blesses the telescope of the astronomer, the retort and the alembic of the chemist, the scalpel of the surgeon, the microscope of the biologist, the spade of the geologist and all the experiments and investigations of science.

Her history and her universities prove this. Her honored scientists prove it. If there are scientists who are hostile to her it is either because they do not know enough, because they have not investigated enough, and yet draw general conclusions from imperfect premises. There is a class of scientists whose general scholarship is very limited, who start out to investigate by taking for granted what is false, or denying what is true. There is no man more likely to fall into error than the man who is blinded by the exclusive study of one thing. The expert metaphysician, the expert theologian, the expert lawyer, is often mistaken when he goes out of his own sphere and presumes to be an authority in the domain of natural science. In the same way the specialist in natural science who is not versed in metaphysics and theology often errs

when he undertakes to play the judge in their domain. The bird requires both wings to fly properly ; and it would benefit many scientists if they had another wing. Yet some do not like the Church for telling them what is so plain. There never was a scientist yet who confined himself to the legitimate conclusions of his science who was not honored by the Church. And if one is ever condemned, it is because he has gone out of his sphere or denied some fundamental truth of metaphysics or of theology. The Church does not assume to be an expert in natural science, but she is an expert in defence of the creed of Christ. And when any scientist pretends to have made a discovery that is contrary to any article of the creed, the first article, for instance which is most frequently assailed, " I believe in God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and of earth," she knows he is wrong, and the unanimous voice of science agrees with her ; for no fact or principle has ever been discovered that contradicts an article of the creed or that disproves the proposition that God created the heavens and the earth and all things therein. The effects prove the existence of the cause.

She stands, secondly, for historical truth.

She demands that every historian shall, so to speak, be put on his oath to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth; that he shall not be like a parrot, repeating words and charges that he has heard or learned from an unauthentic source, but that he shall produce the document, the original document or its authenticated copy, for every statement made. De Maistre, one of the ablest, most voluminous and most erudite French writers of the last century, has well said that history for three hundred years has been a conspiracy against truth; and the Church agrees with him. Historians whose only merit was grace of literary style, prompted by malice, or by prejudice, or by ignorance, have been the means of spreading more calumnies against the Church than all other writers. The semi-educated or the ignorant have taken these unauthenticated assertions for truth, and then the minds of the multitude have been poisoned by the misrepresentation of facts and principles. But thanks be to God, a new race of historians has arisen to vindicate them; and some of the best refutations of the calumnies have come from historians honest in spite of the spirit of sect or of rationalism. She stands for metaphysical and theolo-

gical truth. Here the vista is without a cloud and the demonstration is easy. Jouffroy, a very clever philosopher who had studied all the philosophies of all the schools, and of all the nations, with their materialism, their nominalism, their atheism and their scepticism; a man who had become their victim so that he had come to doubt his own existence, returning at last to the Christian faith of his childhood, openly confessed that there was more true philosophy in the little Christian catechism than in all the volumes written by ancient or modern pagan metaphysicians; and in saying this he simply reasserted the statement of Thomas Aquinas that the Christian child can give an answer to problems that puzzled the brains of the great geniuses of paganism.

She stands for true theology. Consult the acts of her twenty parliaments, of her twenty general councils, from Nicea to the Vatican. They are public and accessible to all. She asserts the divinity of Christ,—a dogma without which there can be no Christianity,—the immortality of the human soul and the freedom of the human will, without which there can be no foundation for morality, private or public, and for all the other great truths of

the Creed so often assailed but still as impregnable as the rock of Gibraltar, or the moon at which so many silly dogs bark.

She stands for the Bible as the inspired word of God, and claims to be the sole authoritative interpreter of it. Experience has taught that she is the only one who understands it and knows how to defend its inspiration properly. The teaching of the illogical and fanatical minds that claimed long ago for every individual the right to interpret it, has simply led to religious anarchy and the destruction of the Bible, and degraded the inspired word of God to the condition of an ordinary work of profane literature.

She stands for the flag of our country. The Church teaches with St. Paul that all authority is from God and that he who resisteth the law resisteth God, by Whom kings reign and law givers decree just things. Neither the hostile political nor the hostile religious opinions of the head of the State could destroy the loyalty of the Church. To her, sedition and rebellion are crimes deserving of punishment in the next world as well as in this. Her sons obey with equal loyalty the pagan Cæsars and the Christian emperors. Every one knows that no national flag can

float that is not embedded in the solid rock of purity and honesty. When you weaken or destroy the ten commandments, thou shalt not steal, for instance, you weaken the foundation of the flag. Does the Church weaken those commandments? Is it not her immutable practice to guard the laws of social purity at every risk?

She stands for truth in every order, natural and supernatural; she defends reason and the rights of reason, man and the rights of man, but, above all, the rights of God, who is the Eternal Truth from whom all secondary truths flow, as the rays of light from the sun; and the "truth of the Lord remaineth forever."

Lastly, she stands especially for the salvation of human souls. The Church is the tabernacle of God, the house of God consecrated to His service. It has no other purpose. There is no commerce, no politics, here. We leave the world and worldly things outside the door when we enter to concentrate our thoughts and our desires on spiritual things and on eternal life. We come here to pray and to prepare specially for the life beyond the grave; all things here remind us that it profiteth a man nothing if he gain the whole

world and suffer the loss of his soul. It is the house of the sacraments and of the grand liturgy of our divine Redeemer. At the door is the baptistery in which He washes away original sin ; and yonder are the confessionals in which He washes away actual sin. At this altar we receive the sacrament of Confirmation with the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost to make us strong and perfect Christians, and at this altar we are united to Him in the closest possible bond of love in the sacrament of the Eucharist. From this pulpit His inspired word in the Old and New Testament is explained with authority. All that is holy and beautiful in religion, in sacrifice, sacrament, ceremony and song, is found here. And when we are dying, perhaps at the midnight hour the priest will enter this building, open the tabernacle door and carry to us what has been our greatest spiritual consolation in life, and after blessing our eyes and our ears and our nostrils and our mouth, our hands and our feet, will give to us the sacrament of Christ's love and attach to our souls pinions to fly to the realms of eternal peace, eternal life and eternal happiness. And therefore we cry with the psalmist. " How lovely are thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts ! "

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THE GREATEST OF THE POPES

SERMON DELIVERED AT THE CHURCH OF

OUR LADY OF LOURDES, NEW-YORK CITY,

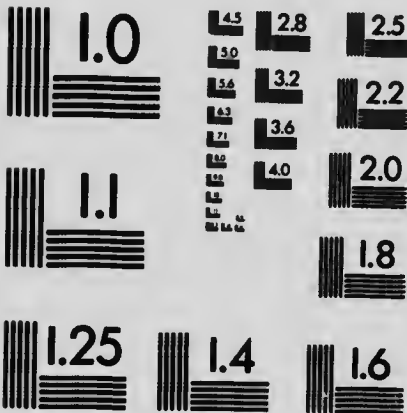
And written for *The Monitor*

THE great Pope and Saint, Gregory VII, whose feast is on the calendar of the Church for May 25th, was called Hildebrand. He was a North Italian, and the son of a carpenter. His career as ruler of the universal Church for twelve years of the eleventh century was extraordinary. He died an exile at Salerno, a small city in Southern Italy, in the year one thousand and eighty-five. Among the Popes there have been greater scholars than he, for some have won the laurels of fame for erudition, like his learned namesake, St. Gregory I, like that mine of learning, Benedict XIV, and like the late illustrious theologian, philosopher, statesman and poet, Leo XIII. Although a profound scholar, who had stored his mind with the treasures of learning in the monasteries of Cluny and of Monte Cassino, Gregory's active life of constant warfare and struggle against the Emperor, the feudal tyrants and false prela-



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tes, who at one time imprisoned him in his own eternal city, and finally drove him into exile, gave him no leisure to publish the volumes that lay dormant in his masterly brain. His sermons therefore became great deeds, his victorious achievements were the books he wrote; and he has stamped his fame and his influence on all the Canon Law, dogmatic and ascetical theology, and Church history written during and since his time.

He was the ruling mind of five Papal administrations; sometimes as simple monk, then as abbot, as legate and as Cardinal. He persuaded Leo IX to throw off the yoke of the German Emperor: he caused to be elected, and gave courage to Victor II, made Stephen X the first free choice of the Roman clergy and people after forty-six years of Teutonic usurpation of Roman rights, inspired the councils of Nicholas the Second, and was the right arm of Alexander II, whom he reluctantly succeeded in the year one thousand and seventy-three.

HILDEBRAND'S GREAT QUALITIES

The special qualities of this great Pope and saint were an indomitable will, unflinching

constancy and persistence in a purpose once formed, combined with great fortitude, wisdom, zeal, patience, charity and humility; these qualities and virtues made him a canonized saint. He displayed in a heroic degree all these qualities and virtues in his conflicts with the civil powers and corrupt ecclesiastics of his time, for the freedom of the Church and for purity of morals. If Cicero could have preached his panegyric he would have called Gregory "the Magnificent," for the Pontiff possessed in an eminent degree the virtue which the orator calls magnificence, that is, "the conception and the administration of great and exalted things with a broad and splendid purpose." The great and exalted things Gregory conceived were the preservation of the Church of Christ, in a period of great danger to faith and morals, the propagation of the divine principles and of the divine code of laws entrusted to her custody, and a fixed determination of conquering, even at the sacrifice of his life, every obstacle that impeded the carrying out of his holy purpose. Hence his fortitude — we might almost say his audacity, his constancy and perseverance in his endeavor, his patience in trials and difficulties, his humility and his charity.

THE CONDITION OF THE CHURCH

To appreciate his arduous task and wonderful work as a guide and a reformer, let us look at the condition of the Church when he assumed the tiara, and behold the play of all his great qualities in the fight he made for Christian faith and morals in an age of semi-barbarism. He found the Papacy in chains; the emperors of Germany dictating the name of the candidate who should assume the office of Vicar of Christ. The prelates were subservient to the civil authority — in France as well as in Germany — because from it they had bought their offices. Simony was almost universal. Church benefices were sold to the highest bidder. The imperial, the royal or the ducal hand was always extended to receive the bribe offered by the would-be bishop or abbot, who frequently had not received Holy Orders, or who was not an ecclesiastic at all, and who was consequently unfit for the discharge of the duties of his holy office. There seemed to be a conspiracy among the civil rulers and the simoniacal clerics to destroy the unity and the catholicity of the Church, and to make her a merely local, national or provincial institution. The king, the em-

peror, the duke was to be the head of the Church instead of the successor of St. Peter. But simony was not the only vice prevalent. Licentiousness had invaded the Sanctuary, and the open concubinage of clerics was common; so that the two vices, intrenched behind civil protection, stood in the path of Gregory the Liberator, and the Reformer. Besides, in France, there was the heresy of Berengarius who denied the Real Presence in the Holy Eucharist — thus anticipating Luther by five hundred years. In Germany and in Italy the vineyard of the Lord was filled with weeds. Even in Rome and in its suburbs, petty nobles had built their castles, embroiled the country in civil war and plundered the Church and the poor until their castles became nests of vultures; well were the great families of those days named after wild beasts: Orsini, bears; Volpini, foxes; Lupini, wolves. The authority of the Pope and of the Church was set at naught. The tide of barbarism that the Church had driven back in the days of Leo and of Gregory the Great had turned and seemed about to submerge the whole of Christianity. As Dante says: When the saints looked down on earth they blushed for what they saw in the Church of God. ”

HENRY IV.

The worst of these enslavers of the Church and destroyers of public morals was the young licentious and despotic emperor of Germany, Henry IV. This is the emperor of whom the enemies of papal independence, every champion of the superiority of the civil over ecclesiastical power, whether he be court lawyer, Gallican or Jansenist ; every heretic who would destroy the unity and the catholicity of the Church and make her a purely national institution tied to the foot of the throne with golden chains, has made the eulogium. The spirit of this emperor was inherited in Austria from older usurpers, and still existed there until the election of the present Pope, the saintly Pius X. Even during the last conclave a Cardinal Bishop, in the name of the emperor, Francis Joseph, dared to veto the election to the papacy of Cardinal Rampolla. This spirit of interference with papal elections began long before Hildebrand's time ; and this spirit and this interference he was determined to break. His flag bore as its chief inscription : The Church must be free from the influence of the secular power. Through Gregory's influence, Stephen X, Alexander II

and Gregory himself were elected free, in spite of the emperor, who, seeing the Pope's power and popularity with the people and with the majority of the nobles, sent to him an humble apology for his misconduct in the Church and in the State. But he was a hypocrite. At first he secretly and then openly opposed the Pope's reforms; and, supported by some of the bad bishops (who had bought their appointments from him or from other secular princes), he inaugurated a schism in Germany and raised the banner of an anti-Pope. Gregory excommunicated them, declared Henry to have forfeited his throne as an excommunicated person hostile to the faith and to the interests of the Christian Church.

THE LAW OF NATIONS

The law of nations then and subsequently authorized the papal act. (1) Henry and his satraps declared open and fierce war on the fearless Pope, and threatened his life. But the spirit of faith in Christ and reverence for the papacy prevailed among the people and the nobles; and Henry, beaten, deserted by

(1) See the Abbé Gossein's Classic book « Le pouvoir du pape au moyen âge. » I used to serve the Abbés mass at St. Sulpice Paris.

his subjects, and humiliated, had to go to Canossa to do penance and beg the Pope's pardon. But the Emperor's repentance was again insincere, for as soon as he was able to gather a new army he marched on Rome and besieged the Holy Father in the Eternal City.

THE NORMANS

Then the Normans, under Robert Guiscard, hurrying from Naples, came to his rescue, drove the emperor back to Germany and freed the Pope, who had been a prisoner in the Castle of St. Angelo. But the Normans were little better Christians than the soldiers of Henry. Civil war, caused by Norman crimes and Henry's intrigues, soon raged around Rome, and through the whole of Italy; the emperor returned to the siege of Rome, and the Pope had to fly to Salerno, in Southern Italy, where he died an exile, because, as he said, he had tried to make the Church "free, pure and orthodox; because he had loved justice and hated iniquity." Almost his last act was to renew the sentence of excommunication against Henry, and his creature, the anti-Pope, and his followers. Thus did he prove that he meant, even unto death, the

noble words he once wrote to the Bishop of Metz: "As fear drives the coward so that his flight becomes more despicable the farther he runs away from the battlefield, so does a manly breast inspire a valiant soldier to push to the front of the battle. He that rejoices to stand in the front rank in the battle for the faith of Christ is the nearest to God the Conqueror, and the most worthy in His sight." And so God the Conqueror took his heroic soul after the battle to the mansions of the blest.

ATTACKS ON HILDEBRAND'S CHARACTER

Now, it is natural that the character of such a great Pope, and of such a great saint, who had fought so valiantly against the powers of evil and of corruption, should not escape attack and imputation from the enemies of the Church. Many charges have been made against him, but the chief of them all is the charge of ambition. It covers all the others and is the only one we deem worthy of notice. Ambition! How can a man be charged with ambition who twice refused the highest honor known to man? But Hildebrand twice refused the papacy. When Leo IX died (a Pontiff to whom Hildebrand had been chief coun-

sellor and guide) the clergy and the people of Rome tried to induce him to become the successor of St. Peter. But the humble and learned monk firmly refused the tiara; and so successfully used his influence that Victor II was elected. If he was ambitious he could have used for his ambitious purposes the influence which he had obtained as legate in France during the reign of Victor II; as Apostolic Delegate in Germany under Stephen X; as the most powerful ecclesiastic in the reign of Nicholas II, the "soul" of whose administration Hildebrand had been called; and as the chief promotor of the election of Alexander II, who was his greatest friend; yet the facts show that in every case he sacrificed himself for the good of the Church and for the promotion of others whom he thought more worthy than himself to govern and reform her. When at last he assumed the tiara it was only after repeated refusals and incessant and urgent importunities.

A THEOCRACY

But, urge the enemies of Hildebrand, he tried to establish a theocracy, and this attempt is the cause of all the "crimes" of the papacy,

among others, of the Inquisition and of "Jesuitism." Now, if Hildebrand tried to establish a theocracy in the world, he deserves praise rather than blame. A theocracy is a form of government in which God is recognized "as the supreme civil ruler of the State, and His laws are taken as the statute, book of the kingdom." Is not this the best form of government? Is not this the form which God Himself chose for the Jewish Commonwealth from Moses to King Saul? Is not Heaven a theocracy? And if a man believes in God, and says the Lord's Prayer, why should he blame Hildebrand for trying to have earth ruled as Heaven is, and to have the will of God done "on earth as it is in Heaven?"

But the fact is that Hildebrand never tried to establish a theocracy. He always respected and recognized civil authority as distinct and separate from spiritual authority. What he fought against was the usurpation of spiritual rights by the civil rulers, the usurpation of pontifical authority by princes, the robbery of the churches by laymen and the simoniacal traffic, luxury and licentiousness among the clergy, high and low, chiefly due to lay provision of benefices and the selling of eccle-

siastical offices. He fought against the condition of things in the Church which Dante reprobates when the great poet puts into the mouth of the Cardinal, St. Peter Damian (a contemporary of Cardinal Hildebrand), the terrible words of the 21st canto of the *Paradiso* and the words of St. Peter in the 24th canto. The times of Hildebrand were worse than those of Dante, when the prelate and his mule were "the two beasts under one skin, and when the vine had changed to a thornbush." Let us conclude with this eulogium of Hildebrand by the learned Protestant, Gregorovius: "In the history of the papacy two stars shine out most brilliantly, and represent the spiritual greatness of the Papacy: Leo, before whom the fearful destroyer Attila, turned back! and Gregory, before whom Henry IV knelt in the garments of a penitent at Canossa. But the feelings of the beholder of these world-renowned scenes will be differently moved by them; the first will fill him with reverence for a purely moral grandeur, the other will inspire him with admiration for an almost superhuman character. In fact, the weaponless victory of the monk, Hildebrand, has more right to the admiration of the world than all the victories of an

Alexander, of a Cæsar or of a Napoleon. ”

In conclusion, let us say that there are two great lessons to be learned from the story of St. Gregory's life. The first is that the Church preserves the purity of Christ's faith and moral code under all conditions. There is nothing that proves this more clearly than the study of her legislation through the dark ages. Take up the code of papal laws partly promulgated in periods of social decadence and of scandals in holy places ; take up the Decree of Gratian and the Five Books of the Decretals, and all the other Pontifical decrees, encyclicals and Pontifical judgments. Scrutinize them closely, and you will find no flaw. O no other code can this be said. Human codes show the heel of Achilles ; they betray the prejudice or the weakness of the legislator or of his times. They are tainted somewhere with injustice, with cruelty, partiality or tolerance of vice. Not so the legislation of the Church. Turn over every page of her code, read every line of it, and you will find that in periods of the gravest scandals and of the most unworthy rulers the laws were always just and impartial. Even when the simoniac or the unchaste was supposed to rule, God did not permit the head of the

Church to tolerate simony or unchastity. Christ was ever true to the Church which He founded and protected. Her laws pursue vice even into the inner forum of conscience and nullify the simoniacal contract at its very inception. The code of the Church is an open book which every one who wishes may read. It is a monument to the inner sanctity, justice and courage of the papacy, in the darkest periods of its history, and a striking proof that the Holy Ghost is always with His holy Church.

LESSONS FROM HILDEBRAND'S LIFE

The second lesson we can learn from Hildebrand's life is that no matter how dark and gloomy may be the prospect in the Church of God, His providence never deserts her. Helpless as she seemed to be (humanly speaking) during the great Schism of the West, four centuries after Hildebrand's time, when her unity and catholicity were threatened most seriously; wrecked as she appeared to be when the revolt of the sixteenth century broke out, and national Churches sprung up, like mushrooms, from the fields of error and of vice; crushed as was her independence in many nations in the eighteenth and in

the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, under the heel of republican and imperial despotism, yet her condition was more deplorable when Hildebrand took the helm of government after three centuries of darkness, of oppression and of lawlessness, and guided the bark of Peter through the storm-tossed seas of barbarism and vice safely into port. Human sagacity, human strength, human prudence, human courage, could not have accomplished the task or won this victory over the powers of earth and of hell. It was the Divine Founder's work. He stood by Hildebrand at the helm, in fulfilment of his never-forgotten promise, which inspires the faithful in every age with confidence that the storms of adversity can never destroy the Church, for they always see the rainbow of divine promise gleaming through the gloomy clouds and foretelling future sunshine and final victory.



DR. BRANN ON THE LIFE
OF THE PRIEST

THE Rev. James E. Kearney, who was ordained on Saturday, Sept. 19, by the Right Rev. Bishop Cusack, celebrated his first solemn high Mass on Sunday in St Agnes' church, East Forty-third street, in the presence of a congregation that completely filled the edifice. Father Kearney was a member of St. Agnes' parish and is known personally to most of the congregation. Among those present at the Mass were a number of non-Catholics, former professors and fellow students of Father Kearney when he attended the New-York Training School. At the close of the Mass these non-Catholics, together with the hundreds of Catholics, approached the chancel rail and received the coveted blessing at the hands of the newly ordained priest.

Father Kearney was assisted in the celebration of the Mass by the Rev. Thomas F. Duffy, of St. Agnes', as assistant priest. The Rev. Thomas Campbell, who was recently ordained in Rome, was deacon, and Father O'Connor, of St. Gabriel's, was sub-deacon.

The master of ceremonies was the Rev. Edward Loehner, of St. Joseph's Seminary. Besides the celebrant and his assistants there were a number of priests and seminarians within the sanctuary. The music was from Palestrina and Gounod, with the Proprium rendered in plain chant.

The pastor of the church, the Rev. Dr. Henry A. Brann, preached the sermon, taking for his text the words of the 109th psalm, "Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech." Developing the ideas implied in these words the preacher contended that the act of the young man who becomes a priest in the Catholic Church, especially in modern times, proves the existence of the supernatural and the divinity of the Church.

"A sermon to be worth anything," said he, "should be founded on a correct syllogism, for otherwise it will be disorderly in construction, defective in logic and often lacking in sense. Let me then build my sermon on a syllogism, and prove the thesis which I have laid down.

"A voluntary act which transcends nature, and is contrary to all natural impulses and passions, must have a supernatural source; but such an act is that which the young man

makes when he becomes a Catholic priest. His motive is the sacrifice of self for the service of God and the benefit of his fellow man. His ideal is the highest and the holiest, the adoration of the Invisible, the immolation of all the human faculties, intellect, will and imagination, on the altar of Christ the incarnate God. No human causes induce him to become a priest; all human causes stand in his way. The three great passions, pride, sensuality and avarice, call him back from the sacrifice.

“Pride calls him back. He is going to a life of service, not of command. He must be everyone’s servant at all times and under difficult circumstances. As a priest he must be humble ; for he must be patient and tolerant with the old and with the young, with the sinner as with the saint. He is the servant of the child whom he instructs ; as well as of the aged, whom he edifies. His life is one of arduous toil, of constant fasting, of labor of soul and of body. Whether it is the late Mass he has to say, or the visits which he must make to the distant mission, or the midnight sick call in the country in storm and cold, which he is bound under pain of eternal damnation to make ; or

the crowded confessional in the city in which he must swelter in summer, he must be always the patient, humble servant of the servants of God, the almoner of the poor and, for their benefit, the beggar from the rich. His pride must always go under his heel. But who can conquer pride by nature? Who is patient, self-sacrificing by nature? Who is there who is naturally disposed to undertake difficult things out of a spirit of self-sacrifice? The author of "The Following of Christ" gives a precept, "Love to be unknown and to be reputed as of no account." But is not this precept contrary to nature? Yet the young priest takes it as the rule of his life, for he is pledged to learn of Christ, "who is meek and humble of heart." Only the supernatural conquers pride, and only one dominated by supernatural motives conquers it.

"Sensuality stands like a mountain in front of the young man who wants to be a priest. The body, with all its animal instincts and natural passions, obstructs his path. Yet he conquers them. He sacrifices the ties of human love; he foreswears all pleasures of the flesh and vows to be continent. But no one can be continent unless the Lord giveth the power. Continence, purity, chas-

tity, are not natural virtues. The grace of God alone can give them. Well the world knows this, and conscious of its own incapacity to be chaste, it does not believe in the chastity of the priesthood and always exults when a sporadic case points out a clerical violator. Well the heresies know the supernatural character of chastity and conscious that they do not possess this supernatural virtue they do not exact it of their clergy. The Anglican, the Russian, the Greek schismatic, and all the sects have a married clergy and impose on the laity the obligation of supporting clergymen's wives and children, because they know that their clergy could not be chaste and thus tacitly admit that the supernatural virtue of chastity is incompatible with heresy and schism.

"Avarice opposes the young man who would be a priest. Avarice is a stronger force than sensuality. We are all born with hands made like claws and we naturally love to acquire, to accumulalte property, land or gold. Avarice is the "great enemy," as Dante calls it. The strongest impetus to action is derived from the desire to acquire wealth. To acquire it, ships cross the seas, trains fly through the plains and over the mountains; men pene-

trate the forests and the wildernesses and brave all hardships. They go down into the dark mines and dive deep into the sea ; not merely do they sweat in the cotton and wheat fields, but in the heat of the glowing furnaces and foundries. Whole nations go to war for wealth, and the desire to acquire wealth and territory has caused more wars than any other cause. Social disorder, the rising of the lower against the governing classes, is chiefly caused by the love of money. Human nature hates poverty, fights and struggles against it, and often violates all the moral laws in trying to get rid of it. Yet when our Lord sent his disciples out to convert the people, he prescribed poverty to them. "Take nothing for your journey," said He, "neither staff nor scrip, nor bread nor money, neither have two coats." — Luke ix, 3. Again, when our Lord recommended perfection to the young man, our Lord said to him, "Go, sell all that thou hast, and give it to the poor." But the young man found the advice too hard and would not follow it. The human race will not obey to the letter the law, "Thou shalt not steal," not to speak of following the counsel "to sell all they have and give it to the poor," so intensely attached to the things of this world is human nature.

The curse of original sin is on it, with all the weakness of intellect and of will that that curse entails ; and hence when Christ and His Church preach humility, chastity and poverty, the world laughs, the world rebels and will not obey. But where the grace of God has triumphed, the chosen one obeys and follows the voice. His intellect bends in obedience ; his will is strong in detachment from sense and wealth.

“ There, then, you have a young Catholic priest, the ideal of the Christian man. He has given up self and all the opportunities of pleasure and of wealth from love of Jesus Christ. The young priest is the conclusion of a syllogism of which the major premise is, belief in God, and the minor premise, the love of God. The result is a martyr in the service of God and men. Let us wish him to-day then a glorious career in the vineyard of the Lord ; and pray that he may follow in the footsteps of the zealous and devoted American Catholic priests of the past, of the missionaries that penetrated the forests, forded the rivers, and climbed the mountains of our land in quest of souls ; of the race of church and school builders that still flourishes in our free land and sets an example which the clergy of other lands would

do well to imitate ; fearless in defense of the faith, zealous in its works ; devoted to the people, and loyal to the Church for all eternity.

“ He goes forth this morning to fight the battle of the Lord. His enemies never were stronger since the days of early Christianity. Paganism has come to life again ; it is the same army of conflicting sects and systems ; the same scepticism ; the same immorality ; the same vile theatre and vile literature ; the same materialism and social unrest ; the same revolutionary volcanoes sometimes slumbering and sometimes in eruption ; the same hostility to and persecution of the Church by empire, kingdom and republic ; the same stupid ignorance of the masses ; and the same licentiousness of the masses ; and there is a further diabolic force which the first persecutors of Christ did not possess, the force of a corrupt, malicious, and venal infidel press which makes a living by the dissemination of immorality and falsehood. Into this maelstrom of ignorance, vice, falsehood, you are now launched ; and in the struggle remember always that you are a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech. A priest forever, forever ; and on some bright day in the future I hope to meet you at the foot of the golden

throne, when our black birettas will be turned into golden crowns, and we shall reign forever with Christ the Great High Priest. ”



ST. PAUL

FOR THE FEAST OF THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE

JANUARY 25TH, 1909.

« Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ,
called to be an apostle, separated,
unto the Gospel of God. »

ROM. I, v. I.

IN these simple words, St. Paul announces not only his own character but also the character of his office. He calls himself the servant of Jesus Christ ; and there never was a more faithful servant to a master. As Saul, the un-converted Hebrew, he had warred against Christ with misguided zeal, — yet always in good faith ; but when the miracle of grace on the road to Damascus had transformed him, he corresponded most faithfully with the call of the Master whom he served to the end with all the powers of his great mind, with all the love of his great heart, and with all the zeal of his heroic nature. His sublime and luminous writings tell the story of that service ; a service in which he expounded the great truths of Christianity to the world, removing the prejudice of Hebrews,

— the result of false interpretation,— and the ignorance of the Gentiles enveloped in the clouds of paganism. In the course of ages, he stands forth as the greatest of all the converts to Christianity. By his numerous and profound writings, by his incessant and universal missionary labors, — particularly outside of Judea, — he won for himself the specific title of “the Apostle of the Gentiles”. By these labors and by the sanctity and heroism of his life, and by his sufferings and death, he leads all the Apostles.

The learning, the work and the character of St. Paul are best studied in his epistles. They have made him an oracle of the Church, and, in many respects, the greatest witness to the truths of Christianity. In the first of these epistles he gives us the fundamental argument for the existence of the Supreme Being ; the argument from cause to effect :— “For, the invisible things of God, from the Creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made : His eternal power, also, and His divinity”. (Rom. I, 20.) The five arguments of Thomas Aquinas are only developments of this Pauline argument. The nature of grace and of predestination ; the Real Presence of Christ

in the Blessed Sacrament; the Divinity of Christ, proved by His resurrection; the immortality of the soul; the resurrection of the body; the sacramental character of marriage; the eternal priesthood of Christ; sacrifice as a necessary part of the homage due to God; the hierarchy,—the duties of bishops and of priests, and of all classes of society, even the duties of servants and of their masters;—all are taught in the fourteen Pauline epistles from the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans to the end of the sublime Epistle to the Hebrews. St. Jerome tells us that he changed his name after he had converted the Roman pro-consul Paul, as Scipio took the name of Africanus after he had conquered Africa. Paul certainly deserved the name of conqueror; he conquered all his passions and prejudices to become a disciple of Christ. Paul is like Moses in his miracles, his visions and his revelations. He is the great ambassador of God; full of eloquence, full of zeal and the love of Christ crucified and glorified, Who manifested His eternal glory to His servant even while he lived on earth. Yet all his talents, graces, services and conquests did not make him vain, for he is always the humble, self-sacrificing

missionary who considers it his greatest honor to be known as "the servant of Christ, called to be an apostle."

In this service of Christ, my brethren, in his work and character, he manifests three qualities especially useful,—some of them necessary, — for every one who is called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ: the first is learning, the second is zeal, the third the spirit of self-sacrifice. Let us briefly consider these qualities of the Apostle of the Gentiles, and then in conclusion show how these qualities are necessary for the welfare of the Church.

Firstly, consider his learning. In the other Apostles, the learning required for the proper discharge of their office as teachers of the world, was chiefly the result of inspiration, or of the infusion of knowledge by the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. The simple fishermen became learned from listening to the lessons of the Incarnate God or from the direct illumination of their intelligence by the Holy Spirit. But St. Paul was learned even when he was a persecutor. He knew all the learning of the Hebrews, and was a master in interpreting the old Testament. He had studied at the feet of Gamaliel, one

of the most learned of the rabbis, and in the City of Tarsus, a centre of Greek culture. He had heard Gamaliel expound the words of the prophet: "The lips of the priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth; because he is the angel of the Lord of Hosts (Mal. II," 7.); and no doubt he had heard St. Peter, the head of the Church, say to the other Apostles what he afterwards, for the good of all, wrote in his first epistle: (I Peter, III, v. 15, "Being always ready to satisfy every one that asketh you a reason of that hope which is in you", and he took those lessons to heart, and grace added to his intellectual acquirements. The whole science of religion and philosophy appears to have been familiar to Paul's acute intellect; and hence, whether in his writings we look for philosophy, or dogmatic theology, or law, or mystical and ascetical theology, — the words which Dante says of Aristotile, that he is "the master of those who know," are emphatically applicable to the Apostle of the Gentiles.

The Holy Ghost, my brethren, chooses for supernatural work those most fitted for it by natural qualities and attainments. Grace frequently follows the line

of nature. The great learning of St. Paul was probably then one of the reasons why he was specially selected to preach the Gospel to the nations outside of Judea ; for the Holy Ghost said : "Separate Saul and Barnabas for the work to which I have taken them." No sooner was the selection made than he set out on his travels, first visiting the people near Judea whose false systems of religion he exposed, and then turning to Greece where at Athens he refuted the pagan philosophers, and finally to Rome where he sealed his faith with his life. He saw the truth ; he knew how to explain it ; he answered all the objections, and vindicated the divinity of Jesus Christ and the divine origin of the Christian religion. He was always "ready to satisfy every one that asked for a reason of the hope that was in him."

The second dominant quality in St. Paul's apostolate was zeal. Zeal is the product of a living faith and of the love of God. His zeal was pure because it was disinterested. "I seek not the things that are yours but you," are his forcible words to the Corinthians (III, v. 14). He had no ambition. He loved not money, nor power, nor self. He preached Christ Crucified ; consequently he was not

led away by vanity to prefer his own opinions to the teachings of Christ. There was nothing eccentric, there was no self-seeking, in his preaching. When a faction among the Christians of Corinth professed especial devotion and affection for him in preference to the other Apostles, he reproved his adherents, and said to them: "Was it Paul that was crucified for you? Was it Paul in whose name you were baptized? What is Paul, but a weak instrument of Him in Whom you believe?" Thus he set forever an example to all preachers who run the risk of being infatuated by their own eloquence, or of worshipping the idols of their own minds instead of the orthodox creed of Christ. He warned them to shun novelties, admiration and applause. "We do not preach ourselves", says St. Paul, but Jesus Christ; (II Cor., IV.) Let us remember, it is St. Paul, — the most eloquent of the Apostles, — who gives the warning. Neither inflated by pride, nor cast down by envy, he rejoiced in the good works done by others more than in the good done by himself. His humility was so great that he called himself the "chief of sinners."

The third great quality of his apostolate

was his self-sacrifice. His own words attest this. He has told us of his persecutions, of his privations, of his imprisonment, of his travels by sea and land, of his sufferings from calumny, from false friends and bitter enemies. His virtue was even endangered by the direct attacks of Satan, for he has told us of his temptations and of the necessity of chastising his body and reducing it into subjection. All is told with the frankness of a sincere and humble soul. From the day he left Jerusalem as a missionary until the day he was beheaded at Rome, his life was full of toil and privation. True to the apostolic spirit of Christ's injunction, he went forth to conquer without money in his purse, earning his own living as a tent-maker, or else depending on the charity of the faithful for his support. He took poverty for his bride ; and although he suffered from many privations, like Christ he clung to poverty until death. Hence his sanctity was attested even during his life by visions and ecstasies which he shared with the angels.

Thus have I briefly stated the three great qualities that made St. Paul, the great priest, bishop, missionary and Apostle, successful in his work. If we now turn over the leaves of

experience, the pages of history, we shall find that wherever these qualities of St. Paul were lacking in the ministry of the Church, the people grew cold in their faith or lost it altogether. When the watch-dog grows too indolent to bark, the wolf enters the fold. When the bee returns at eve, laden with honey and wax, his hum has become a drone, his flight is slow, and he falls an easy prey to the bird watching for him on the tree-branch, like Satan lying in wait for a slothful soul.

A few well-known facts will prove my contention, and end my discourse. Before calling your attention to these facts, my brethren, it is well to note, in passing, that there have been few heresies in the Church, or revolutions in the State, for which there have not been provoking causes in the Church or in the State. For instance, the chapters on reformation in the Council of Trent show the provoking causes of Protestantism, just as the selfishness of the rich shows the provoking cause of the French Revolution, and of modern socialism. I say provoking causes ; not efficient causes, nor do they excuse the revolt.

When in the eleventh century, the greatest of the popes, whose sublime epitaph is best

written in his own words : “ I have loved justice and hated iniquity, therefore do I die in a strange land ”, — when St. Gregory the Seventh undertook to reform the Church, — what did he find to be the chief cause of the prevailing scandals ? Ignorance, self-interest and sloth. He found the Church dominated by the civil power, and those who should have been the strongest champions of ecclesiastical liberty, become cowards and renegades, tied to the feet of the imperial throne by chains of gold, by greed and the love of wordly honors and titles ; they were willing to obey man rather than God. When in the thirteenth century, filled with the spirit of St. Paul, the two great reformers arose, — Dominic and Francis, — they found a similar condition. The clock had again run down, for those who should have kept it wound up, had fallen asleep. The custodians of the Light in the lighthouses of Christ had failed to keep the lamps burning, and shipwrecks followed. The disciples of Jesus of the Crib had become worshippers of the Golden Calf, and fawning courtiers of German emperors and French kings. What caused the great “ Schism of the West ” which demoralized Christendom and prepared the

way for the heresies of the sixteenth century, but self-interest, the love of honors and the love of riches? What caused the shameful apostacy of the Anglican Church but the fact that there were degenerate apostles in England who, from fear of losing their property, obeyed the wicked king who trampled on the laws of Christ? Had there been in that once noble Catholic land a store of men of the standing and authority of Fisher and of Moore to imitate their courageous spirit of self-sacrifice, the Christian Nero would never have accomplished his work. What caused Gallicanism and the schism that for a time existed between France and the Holy See in the seventeenth century? The cowardice of the men who preferred the interests of the aristocracy to which their families belonged and the favor of the king, to the interests of the faith and the rights of the Church. When a zealous Vicar-General in those days was condemned to death by a French Parliament, — the parliament of Toulouse, — for appealing from the king's decision to the tribunal of the Holy See, not even the Eagle of Meaux raised his voice in protest; Gallican self-interest and cowardice failed to defend the rights of the Church.

Decadence of faith and morals followed and brought about the revolution that destroyed for a time both Church and State in France. What rendered it possible in Germany in the eighteenth century for the emperor to become the meddling sacristan of Europe, and to dictate to the clergy of his empire both theology and rubrics? and who were his aiders and abettors? Who was Febronius, the renegade bishop of Hontheim? Ignorance, self-interest and the lack of zeal on the part of the apostles rendered the Teutonic nations a prey to political ambition, to heresy and to vice in the eighteenth, as similar causes had done in the sixteenth century.

Thus you see, it is the spirit of St. Paul, the spirit of Christ, which is always necessary to preserve and to propagate Christianity.

Have we not the proof in our beloved land, in the lives and the examples of our first missionaries, and in the lives and examples of our poor emigrants? Let it never be forgotten that it was the poorest people in Europe, coming from the very St. Francis of the nations, marked with the stigmata of three centuries of persecution, and robbed of home, land and property, — who were among the

first to propagate the faith among us, and are the most faithful observers of its precepts. Zeal, my brethren, will always burn brightest where poverty feeds the flame.

Wherever the spirit of St. Paul, the virtues of St. Paul, are found, there you will find the true missionaries of Christ. Of that spirit we have had in this place illustrious examples. The group of men who founded the Paulist Congregation of Missionary Priests had the spirit of St. Paul. Like him, they were all converts to the faith. Because they had his spirit, they took his name and gave it to this church. The first head of this Congregation was a man who, like St. Paul, was original in his manner of presenting the truth. Father Hecker was constantly building new roads through the dreary waste of routine. He saw that the press was a help in the Apostleship, and he used the press. He made the tract, the magazine and the book as useful as the sermon. Father Hecker imitated St. Paul in his zeal and in his originality ! Father Hewit, was like St. Paul in his learning ; Father Deshon, a gallant soldier, had the courage, the self-sacrifice and the simplicity of St. Paul ; and Father Baker imitated him in his gentleness and eloquence : the mysticism

and eloquence of St. Paul breathe through his sermons. Thank God, the virtues of those noble founders still characterize the missionary priests of St. Paul. May those virtues never fail to characterize all our missionaries ! To those virtues we owe the flourishing state of the Church in America. Let us pray that they may never die in the minds and hearts of our priests and people. Great Apostle of the Gentiles, who by the fire of zeal didst burn a path for Christ through the pagan wilderness, who didst prove thy devotion to Him by countless sufferings, and lastly by offering thy neck to the sword of the persecutor, — obtain from Him by thy powerful intercession that true apostles may ever flourish in the American Church to preserve it pure in faith, and make it renowned for learning, zeal and self-sacrifice. May every cleric and layman in our noble land so live, that he may merit to have written on his tombstone the title which St. Paul considered his greatest honor : “ The servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle. ”

NOTE. The sermon was to have been preached in the Paulists' church in New-York, but the preacher was prevented by illness from preaching it.

DEVOTION TO MARY

[T is easy to understand devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and difficult to limit its intensity or extent when one thoroughly apprehends and feels the meaning of "Mother of God." "O only begotten Son and Word of God who, immortal as Thou art, didst for our salvation take flesh in the womb of the Holy Mother of God and ever Virgin Mary," is the forcible way in which the Greek Catholic liturgy expresses the mystery of the Incarnation from which Mary derives her almost infinite dignity and power. But perhaps the incomparable genius of Dante, inspired by faith, has in his immortal verse better and more briefly set forth the dignity of Mary than any uninspired writer. In the last canto of his Paradise, he calls her, "the fixed limit of the eternal purpose." What a forcible compendium of all God's wonderful works, natural and supernatural, is expressed in these few words!

When God decreed to create the universe, visible and invisible, natural and supernatural, from mineral, plant and animal, from

planet and star up to the nine choirs of angels; from the soul of Adam to the soul of Christ, from all the gifts of genius to all the endowments of grace and sanctity, He determined to stop at a limit; the limit was to be a creature containing all the perfections of inferior creatures and special perfections exclusively her own; a limit beyond which he would not go and could not go, limit in which His omnipotence would, so to speak, exhaust itself. This fixed limit was Mary. In accidentals a greater being God could create, but in dignity He has not made her equal. She is the Mother of His Eternal Son; the Mother of God; and beyond that honor we can conceive no higher. She is therefore "Theotokos," as the Council of Nicea called her, "Mother of God;" and this title is the source and fountain of all the glorious titles in the Litany and the primary cause of all the devotion to her in the Christian World.

Devotion is love, or rather, the product of love, and devotion to Mary is the consequence of the love of her divine Son for her and of her love for Him, and of her personal graces and virtues. She is inseparable from her Son. In the concrete one has to do violence to himself to think of her as separate from Him.

At Nazareth we think of her as an immaculate soul enveloped in the light and inflamed by the love of God, when Gabriel said to her: "Hail, full of grace." From that instant she becomes physically and intellectually united to Jesus. Thenceforward we adore Jesus living in Mary, and cannot separate them in our prayers. She rules the world from that instant, for the Maker of it is subject to her. She has given Him flesh and blood. His heart and hers are like two clocks set in unison. The blood from her heart flows into His. To her He belongs, body, soul and divinity. She calls Him "my Son"; and He calls and honors her as His mother. What love for Mary is inspired in us by the contemplation of her solitary life during the first nine months after Gabriel's message! Her virgin soul is aflame with love of the Three in One that have operated the miracle; her virgin body is luminous with the light of grace and fragrant with the odor of all the virtues. They radiate from her and exhale from her sweet perfume. Modesty, humility, faith and charity, grace and beauty — are all hers. In the long hours of the evening, through the labors of the day, she thinks of her Son and of God's goodness to fallen man. At night when she

looks at stars, she sees the angels that move them looking down on her as the palace of their King, and she can hear what is to others inaudible, the heavenly choirs singing the eternal *Sanctus* and the eternal *Gloria* to her unborn Infant, the King of the Jews, the Emperor of the world, the Lord, Creator and Redeemer of heaven and of earth. What must have been the sublime thoughts and the awful sanctity of Mary as she felt the divine infant throb in her bosom and remembered who He was !

And when she heard His first cry on earth, when she saw Him resting on her knees, looked into His eyes with a love made divine by the Holy Ghost, and met the flash of divine love radiating from the eyes of her Son when she felt His heart beat against her own immaculate heart, and felt the clasp of love divine around her neck, how higher than the seraphim her soul must have soared in divine contemplation ! What a picture, and how it fills us with joy, with love, and yet with grief, when we remember how it was all to end. How the Christian mind travels from Bethlehem with a shiver to Calvary as from the sunny south to the frozen north. Yet it is the same divine love that produced Bethlehem

and Calvary. The Heart of Jesus was the Sun of His whole life. That Sun rose at Bethlehem and set at Calvary. The heart of Mary was the moon, which received and reflected the divine light.

The two were inseparable in spirit from beginning to end, though often separated in body. They lived at Nazareth in the same house, dined at the same table, conversed together morning and evening; they prayed together. Behold Mary and the Child Jesus on their knees at prayer, sometimes when Joseph was in the shop working at his trade. It was then that Jesus told her all things and consoled her for the grief she would have to suffer. How they talked together of holy things on the road to Jerusalem, how she loved to listen to Him and how He loved to listen to her! The greater the mind the greater the capacity for love; His mind was infinite and hers was the next to the infinite; hence the intensity of their mutual love. All the theologians and fathers of the Church combined did not know as much of the science of God as Mary learned from conversation with her Son at Nazareth and at Jerusalem. When He was away from her on His three years' mission, how she followed His career,

every pulsation of her heart responsive to every event in His public life. She heard of His miracles and saw many of them. But they did not surprise her. She knew Him. When people praised Him as the greatest prophet and preacher that had ever spoken in Judea, she smiled with pleasure, for she knew as many of them did not. When she heard of the hate of Scribe and of Pharisee; of the insults of the mobs that would stone Him; of the intrigues of the high priests, of the politicians, of the Sadducees, and of the Herodians, how she trembled with fear, how she dreaded the hour when the dawn of His cruel passion would break over a sinful world and her sorrowful soul should be pierced by the seven swords!

In what a horrible tragedy this love of Mother and of Son ended at Calvary! She that had sung the *Magnificat* in tones of joy when His birth was announced; she that had united her sweet voice to the joyous song of the angels on the first Christmas morn, now followed Him in anguish from Gethsemane, from Pilate's mocking court to Herod's and to Calvary. O loving Mother, how can thy heart bear it all and not break as His did on the Cross! They drag Him along like

a malefactor, thy adorable Son ; they insult Him, beat Him, scourge Him. Eternal Trinity, where was Thy lightning when the wretches spat on Him, disrobed Him, drove the crown of thorns into His brain, the nails into His hands, and stabbed Him to the heart ! O the infinite patience of God that could withhold vengeance for these sacrileges ; and O the infinite torture of the noble Mother who witnessed all ! That sacred body now exposed to the multitude she had wrapped in swaddling clothes in the manger, that divine head had lain in her bosom, those hands had been entwined around her neck in love, and that heart had been made to beat by the infusion of her own blood. With Him from beginning to end, in mind if not in body, she had seen His triumphs and His humiliations, and every one of them was hers as well as His ; for she was His Mother, and such a mother as the world has never seen since nor had ever seen before. And this is why we love her and why we are devoted to her. His Mother is our Mother, for He is our Brother.

How can any believer in the mystery of the Incarnation fail to love Mary, the chosen secondary cause of it all ? Do those believe in the Incarnation, in the divinity of Jesus

incarnate, who find fault with Catholic devotion to His Mother? To Catholics, devotion to Mary is an elementary consequence of belief in the divinity and in the humanity of Jesus Christ. He was a Divine Person and Mary was His Mother.

Then love her, all ye to whom heaven has been opened by her Son. Let the little child kneel at her shrine and say "Hail, Mary," for she is the mother supreme, the mother most perfect. In her all the tenderness, all the gentleness of the ordinary mother are enhanced by the dignity of the queen. She showers her gifts and gives her love to all. Let the young maiden bring the tribute of flowers to her shrine, for she is the Virgin of Virgins, the only Immaculate Virgin, "our tainted nature's solitary boast." Let the matron bow to her, for she is the model matron, the model spouse. St. Joseph will testify to that. Let the architect build her temple, the painter try to make her picture, and the sculptor to carve from marble her statue, for her marvellous perfection and her virtues inspire his mind to draw the lines of beauty and guide his pencil or his chisel. Where there is no devotion to Mary his art will fail; for art fails where divine beauty is not the source of ins-

piration. The repentant sinner, too, can come to her in confidence. Magdalen knows that she will find sympathy and comfort at the feet of her, from whose flesh and blood were formed the divine feet that Magdalen washed with her tears.

How well even infidel genius understands this attraction of the Mother of Sorrows for the fallen woman. The most beautiful passage in the whole of Goethe's great poem is that in which his heroine Marguerite, after her fall, comes with a heart filled with shame and degradation to the statue of the Mother of Sorrows in the niche in the prison wall, and pours out her sobbing heart in bursts of repentant passion: "Thou, thou alone, O heart-broken Mother, canst pity my cruel woe." Let every sinner come to her. She will help, for she knows what He suffered for sin. Her Son wills not the death of the sinner but his repentance. The sinner may hang his head in shame, ashamed to look at her pure face; but she will hear him: "Holy Mary, pray for us sinners, now, and at the hour of our death." She will hear him; and therefore, O unbeliever! take not away from us our sweet Mother, the holy maiden Mother who gave us Christ. Without her we are

unhappy creatures, weeping and mourning in this valley of tears. She is our life, our sweetness and our hope ; devoted to her heart, we hope to find a place in the Heart of Jesus. Devoted to her, we believe that she will send Gabriel down when we leave this world to bring us up to the glory and happiness of the eternal court which she holds in heaven next to the throne of her Son, the Emperor of the universe.

Do you want to see the effects of this devotion ? Then compare the purity of the children of Mary ; the devout, religious men and women who by vow have consecrated themselves to God ; compare the married women who honor Mary and therefore never think of divorce, to those who have gone astray from the path of faith, and refuse to honor the Mother of God. Find a nation where shrines to Mary abound and the people praise her name, and you will find purity and piety always flourishing, in spite of Satanic efforts to destroy them by attacking the worship of the Mother of God.

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