

The Means of Grace



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THE MEANS OF GRACE.

A COMPLETE EXPOSITION OF THE

SEVEN SACRAMENTS,

THEIR INSTITUTION, MEANING, REQUIREMENTS, CEREMONIES, AND EFFICACY;

OF THE

SACRAMENTALS OF THE CHURCH,

HOLY WATER, OILS, EXORCISMS, BLESSINGS, CONSECRATIONS, ETC.;

AND OF

PRAYER,

WITH A COMPREHENSIVE EXPLANATION OF THE

OUR FATHER AND THE HAIL MARY.

ILLUSTRATED BY

NUMEROUS PARABLES, EXAMPLES, AND INTERESTING ANECDOTES,

DRAWN FROM

Holy Scripture, the Lives of the Saints, the Fathers of the Church,

AND OTHER SOURCES.

ADAPTED FROM THE GERMAN OF

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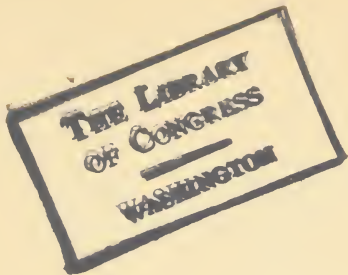


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Archbishop of New York.

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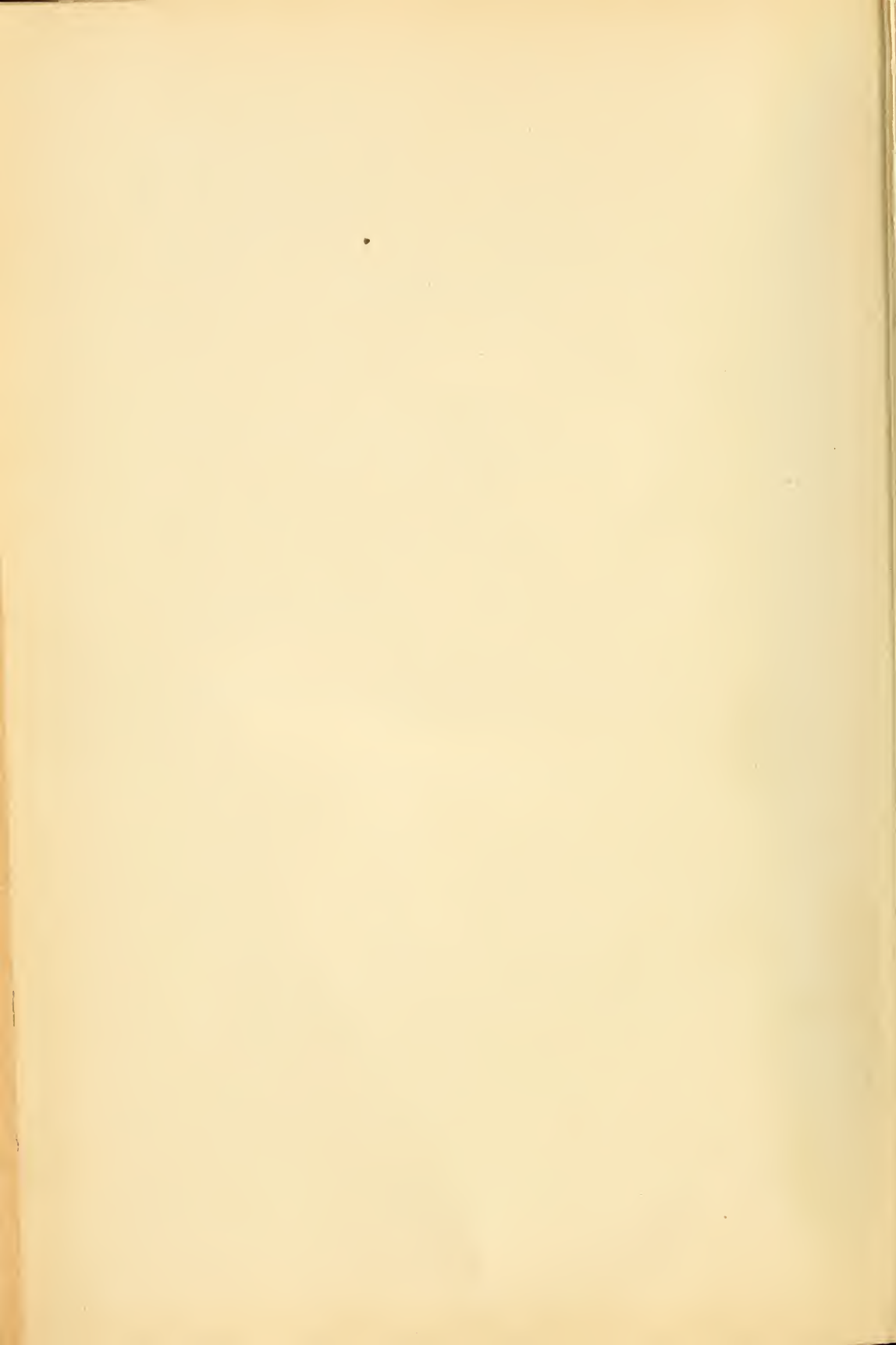
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CONTENTS.

Introduction.

THE END OF MAN.

	PAGE
Instruction,	17
Is the World with its Goods the only Aim and End of Man?	18
What is the only True End and Destiny of Man?	20
The Means of Attaining our Last End,	24

The Grace of God in General.

Instruction,	27
Meaning of Grace,	27
Divisions of Grace,	28
Reflection,	29
The Necessity of Divine Grace,	29
Passages from Scripture,	29
Selections from the Fathers,	29
Illustrations,	29
Examples,	29
From Scripture,	29
From the Lives of the Saints,	29

ACTUAL GRACE.

Instruction,	33
Meaning of Actual Grace,	33
Necessity of Actual Grace,	34
God gives His Grace to all Men,	34
How we must Co-operate with Grace,	34
Reflection,	35
Co-operation with Grace,	35
Passages from Scripture,	35
Selections from the Fathers,	35
Comparisons,	36
Examples,	36
Words of Scripture,	36
Withstanding Grace,	37
Impervious to Grace,	37

SANCTIFYING GRACE, OR THE GRACE OF JUSTIFICATION.

	PAGE
Instruction,	38
Meaning of Sanctifying Grace,	38
Nature of Justification,	39
Process of Justification,	39
Loss and Decrease of Sanctifying Grace,	39
Fruits of Sanctifying Grace,	40
Meritoriousness of Good Works,	40
Essential Requisites of Good Works,	41
Necessity of Good Works,	41
Kinds of Good Works,	42
Reflection,	42
Good Works,	42
Passages from Scripture,	42
Selections from the Fathers,	42
Comparisons,	43
Examples,	43
Spontaneous Good Works,	43
Preparations for a Journey,	43
Saturday Evening,	45
Application,	46

The Sacraments.

THE SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL.

Instruction,	47
Meaning of the Sacraments,	47
Requisites of a Sacrament,	47
Effect of the Sacraments,	49
Number of the Sacraments,	50
Difference and Division of the Sacraments,	52
Dispenser and Receiver of the Sacraments,	53
The Ceremonies,	54
Reflection,	55
Passages from Scripture,	55
The Signification and Operation of the Sacraments,	55
The Number and Division of the Sacraments,	55
The Dispenser of the Sacraments,	55
The Recipient of the Sacraments,	55
Selections from the Fathers,	56
Meaning and Effect of the Sacraments,	56
The Number and Division of the Sacraments,	56
The Minister of the Sacraments,	56
The Recipient of the Sacraments,	57
The Council of Trent on the Sacraments,	57
Comparisons,	59

	PAGE
The Parable of the Good Samaritan,	60
The Sacred Number Seven,	61
Testimony of a Non-Catholic in Favor of the Seven Sacraments,	63
Examples,	64
Fountains of Health,	64
The Diseased Janitor,	64
The Tepid Christian and the Pious Teacher,	65
Practical Application,	66

THE SACRAMENTS IN PARTICULAR.

Baptism.

Instruction,	66
Meaning and Nature of Baptism,	66
Baptismal Promises,	70
Necessity of Baptism,	71
Baptism of Desire and by Blood,	72
Sponsors,	72
Ceremonies of Baptism,	74
Reflection,	76
Passages from Scripture,	76
Selections from the Fathers,	76
The Ancient Rite of Baptism,	77
Comparisons,	80
Examples,	80
The Baptism, Conversion, and Martyrdom of Genesius,	80
Baptism by Blood,	81
The Gate of Heaven,	81
Esteem of Baptismal Graces,	84
Baptismal Promises,	84
Renewal of Baptismal Promises,	86
Practical Application,	86

Confirmation.

Instruction,	87
Meaning of Confirmation. Its Nature,	87
Importance of Confirmation. Its Ministers,	89
Reception of Confirmation,	90
Sponsors,	91
Ceremonies at Confirmation,	91
Reflection,	92
Passages from Scripture,	92
The Testimony of Antiquity,	93
Comparisons,	98
Examples of the Power of Confirmation,	98
Practical Application,	99

The Blessed Eucharist.

The Blessed Eucharist as a Sacrament.

	PAGE
Instruction,	100
Meaning and Names of the Blessed Sacrament,	100
The Doctrine of the Real Presence,	102
The Worship of Christ in the Holy Eucharist,	105
Reflection,	107
Paradise and the Church,	107
The Synagogue and the Church,	108
Christ's Promise,	110
The Moment of Institution,	112
A Comparison,	114
Testimony of the Fathers,	115
The Prayers of the Church,	123
Devout Servants of the Blessed Sacrament,	126
Corpus Christi,	127

The Holy Eucharist as a Sacrifice.

Instruction,	133
On Sacrifice in General,	133
The Mass in Particular,	137
Reflection,	143
Passages from Scripture,	143
Selections from the Fathers,	143
Antiquity of the Mass,	144
The Ceremonies of Mass,	149
The Vestments,	149
Church Colors,	153
Altar Articles,	154
The Celebration of Mass,	155
How to Hear Mass with Profit,	165
Examples,	166
The Vision of the Messiah,	166
Angels Accompany the Blessed Sacrament,	167

The Blessed Sacrament as Communion.

Instruction,	168
On Holy Communion in General,	168
Reception of Holy Communion,	169
Advantages of a Worthy Communion,	172
Unworthy Communion,	173
Spiritual Communion,	175
Reflection,	176
Communion in General. Its Reception,	176
Passages from Scripture,	176
Selections from the Fathers,	176

	PAGE
Bishop RATHERIUS to PATRICUS,	176
COMMUNION Under One Kind,	177
That Holy Communion is not Lightly to be Omitted,	178
Admonition of THOMAS à KEMPIS. Words of the Beloved,	178
Counsels of St. FRANCIS de SALES on Frequent Communion,	180
Examples of Frequent Communion,	182
Preparation for Communion,	183
Passages from Holy Scripture,	183
Selections from the Fathers,	183
Rules Laid Down by St. CHRYSOSTOM and St. CHARLES BORROMEO for	
Approaching the Table of the Lord,	184
A Beautiful Prayer before Communion,	185
A Good Old Custom,	185
Advantages of a Worthy Communion,	185
Passages from Scripture,	185
Selections from the Fathers,	186
The HEINOUSNESS of an Unworthy Communion,	188
Passages from Scripture,	188
Selections from the Fathers,	188
The BASENESS of an Unworthy Communion,	188
Penalties of an Unworthy Communion,	189
Examples,	189
From Holy Scripture,	189
Penalty of an Unworthy Communion,	189
Testimony of St. CYPRIAN,	191
The COMMUNION of an IMPENITENT MAN,	191
Trifle not with Holy Things,	193
SPIRITUAL COMMUNION,	193
Sayings of the Saints,	193
The Value of SPIRITUAL COMMUNION,	193
Mode of SPIRITUAL COMMUNION,	194
From St. LEONARD of PORT MAURICE,	194
St. JULIANA FALCONIERI,	194
Practical Application,	195
Hymn to the Blessed Sacrament,	196

The Sacrament of Penance.

The Sacrament of Penance in General.

INSTRUCTION,	197
The Nature of the Sacrament of Penance,	197
Necessity of the Sacrament of Penance,	198
Requirements of Sacramental Penance,	199
REFLECTION,	199
The Parable of the Prodigal Son,	199
The Parable,	199
The Application,	201

Examination of Conscience.

	PAGE
Instruction,	203
Reflection,	205
Passages from Scripture,	205
Selections from the Fathers,	205
Comparisons,	206
Examples,	206
The Young Hermit and his Preceptor,	206
The Sin Register,	206
St. Francis Borgia,	207
For Persons who have Nothing to Confess,	207

Contrition.

Instruction,	209
Reflection,	213
Passages from Scripture,	213
Selections from the Fathers,	213
A Comparison,	214
A Parable,	214
Examples,	217
Contrition for Venial Sins,	217
A Sinner's Contrition and Consolation,	218

Firm Purpose of Amendment.

Instruction,	219
Reflection,	222
Passages from Scripture,	222
Selections from the Fathers,	223
Comparisons,	223
Examples,	224
From Sacred Scripture,	224
The Darling Idol,	226

Confession.

Instruction,	227
How we should Behave Outside the Confessional and Within it,	233
To whom we should Confess, and when,	235
General Confession,	235
Reflection,	236
Comparisons,	236
The Old Testament on Confession,	236
Confession in the New Testament,	237
Historical Testimonies,	240
An Habitual Sin,	240
Absolution Denied,	241
Directions for Confessors,	241

	PAGE
Ancient Rules for Confessing,	242
Words of an Ancient Confessor,	242
Crowds to Confession.—Special Confessors,	243
Examples,	243
Louis the Pious at Attigny,	243
An Effect of Confession,	244
A Confessor True to his Calling,	246
Do not Defer Confession,	246
Confession-Day a Day of Joy,	247
Conversion begun by Confession,	247

Satisfaction.

Instruction,	248
Reflection,	252
Passages from Scripture,	252
Selections from the Fathers,	252
Comparisons,	253
Examples,	254
From Scripture,	254
Louis the Ninth,	255
Pontius of Lavaze,	255
Theodosius,	256
Sueno,	257
St. Francis Solano,	257
The Death Penalty made an Atonement for Sin,	258
Practical Application,	259

Indulgences.

Instruction,	260
What is Meant by an Indulgence,	260
The Catholic Church has a Right to Grant Indulgences,	261
Indulgences are Useful and Salutary,	261
Indulgences Save us from Purgatory,	262
Indulgences an Encouragement to the Performance of Good Works and the Practice of Virtue,	262
Whence the Power of Indulgences,	263
Division of Indulgences,	264
Conditions for Gaining an Indulgence,	264
Reflection,	265
Indulgence Granted by St. Paul,	265
Ancient Penitential Discipline,	266
The Jubilee,	268
The Indulgence of the Portiuncula,	272
Confraternity Indulgences.—Indulgences attached to Good Works,	277
Confraternities,	277
Plenary Indulgences attached to different Good Works, and which can be gained by any one,	279
Practical Application,	279

Extreme Unction.

	PAGE
Instruction,	282
Extreme Unction is a Sacrament.—Its Effects	282
Reception of Extreme Unction,	285
The Ceremonies of Extreme Unction,	287
Reflection,	289
Selections from the Fathers,	289
Ancient Manner of Administering Extreme Unction,	289
Comparisons,	291
Examples,	291
Effect of Extreme Unction,	291
Danger of Deferring Extreme Unction,	292
How to Prepare for Death,	292
Edifying Deaths,	293
Death of St. Louis, King of France,	293
St. Gebhard,	294
Fénelon,	297
St. Francis de Sales,	297
Practical Application,	298

Holy Orders.

Instruction,	299
Meaning of the Sacrament of Orders,	299
The Duties of the Laity towards their Priests,	302
The Duties of Priests,	303
Vocation to the Priesthood,	303
Reflection,	304
The Priesthood and its Prerogatives,	304
Passages from Scripture,	304
Selections from the Fathers,	305
The Priesthood in the Old and in the New Law,	305
Holy Orders.—Its Ceremonies,	308
Tonsure,	308
The Ostiariate,	308
The Lectorate,	309
Exorcist,	309
Acolyte,	309
Subdeaconship,	310
Deaconship,	310
Priesthood,	311
Reverence due to the Priestly State,	313
Passages from Scripture,	313
Selections from the Fathers,	313
The Roman Catechism on the Dignity of the Priesthood,	313
Examples,	314
Reverence of Pagans for Priests,	314
An Imperial Law,	315

	PAGE
Respect and Reverence,	315
Humble Acceptance of a Spiritual Rebuke,	315
The Duties of Priests,	315
Passages from Scripture,	315
Selections from the Fathers,	315
Examples,	316
The Wonderful Bottle,	316
The Priest as he should be,	316
A Priest's Charitable Self-sacrifice,	317
A Holy Priest, True till Death,	317
Practical Application,	318

Matrimony.

Instruction,	319
Matrimony a Sacrament,	319
The Reception of the Sacrament,	321
Impediments which Render Marriage Void before God,	322
Impediments which Render Marriage Illicit and Punishable, but not Void,	323
Mixed Marriages,	324
The Duties of Married People towards Each Other,	326
The Marriage Ceremonies,	327
Reflection,	328
Passages from Scripture,	328
Selections from the Fathers,	328
Comparisons,	329
Examples,	329
Proper Preparation for Marriage,	329
A Happy Wedding-day,	330
A Thoughtless Marriage Punished,	331
St. Monica's Married Life,	332
Conjugal Love in Adversity,	334
Conjugal Fidelity,	335
Practical Application,	335

The Sacramentals.

THE SACRAMENTALS IN GENERAL.

Instruction,	337
Meaning of Sacramentals,	337
Difference between the Sacraments and the Sacramentals,	337
Effects of the Sacramentals,	338
The Author of the Sacramentals,	338
Sacramentals in the Old Law,	339
Division of the Sacramentals,	339

THE SACRAMENTALS IN DETAIL.

	PAGE
Dedications,	340
Ecclesiastical Dedications,	340
Church Dedication,	340
The Blessing of Bells and of Church Articles,	343
The Dedication of Cemeteries,	344
For the Celebration of Divine Service,	345
Holy Water,	345
Blessed Candles,	346
Blessing of the Ashes,	347
The Blessing of the Palms,	348
The Blessing of the Paschal Candle,	348
The Blessing of the Holy Oils,	349
Incense,	349
Dedication of Persons,	350
Objects Used and Blessed by the Church,	351
Exorcisms,	353
Blessings,	354
Various Church Practices,	355
Processions,	355
Pilgrimages,	356
Confraternities and Missions,	360
Reflection,	361
Dedications,	361
The Dedication at Einsiedeln,	361
Bells in Joy and Sorrow,	363
Holy Water,	366
From the Fathers,	366
Miracles by Holy Water,	367
Blessed Oil—Blessed Bread—Blessed Salt,	367
Origin,	367
Miraculous Effects,	369
Exorcisms,	370
From the Fathers,	370
Examples,	371
A Devil Asserts his Right,	371
The Confession of a Devil,	371
Obsession as a Punishment for Despising the Advice of a Bishop,	372
Blessings,	372
Blessing in the Old and New Laws,	372
Examples of the Miraculous Power of Blessings,	373
Seek Blessings,	373
Practical Application,	374

Prayer.

PRAYER IN GENERAL.

	PAGE
Instruction,	375
Meaning of Prayer,	375
The Power of Prayer,	375
Necessity of Prayer,	376
Qualities of Prayer,	376
For What we should Pray,	380
For Whom we should Pray,	380
Time for Prayer,	381
The Place to Pray,	384
Faults at Prayer,	385
Mental Prayer,	386
Reflection,	389
The Power and Effect of Prayer,	389
Passages from Scripture,	389
Selections from the Fathers,	390
Comparisons,	391
Examples,	391
Prayer Affords us Help in Need and Trouble,	391
Prayer Procures Help in Dangers and Temptations,	394
Necessity of Prayer,	396
Passages from Scripture,	396
Selections from the Fathers,	396
Comparisons,	397
Examples,	397
Hillel and Maimon	397
Duty of Prayer,	398
Passages from Scripture,	398
Selections from the Fathers,	398
Examples,	398
The Early Christians,	398
The Old Fathers,	399
Qualities of Prayer,	399
Passages from Scripture,	399
Selections from the Fathers,	401
Two Comparisons,	402
Adage,	403
Examples,	403
Devout Prayer,	403
Humble Prayer,	404
Trusting Prayer,	404
Persistent Prayer,	405
Prayer of Resignation,	405
Zeal in Prayer,	405
For What we should Pray,	406
Passages from Scripture,	406

	PAGE
Selections from the Fathers,	406
Examples,	407
The Shepherd-boy at Prayer,	407
Solomon's Prayer,	407
The Mother's Prayer Rejected, yet Granted,	408
For Whom we should Pray,	408
Passages from Scripture,	408
Selections from the Fathers,	408
Examples,	409
St. Severinus,	409
St. Paschal Baylon,	410
The Devout Empress,	410
Grateful Prayer,	411
St. Ignatius and St. Francis,	411
Pray for Enemies,	412
Time for Prayer,	412
Passages from Scripture,	412
Selections from the Fathers,	412
Examples,	413
Pray without ceasing,	413
St. Ludger,	413
The Abbot and the Camel-drivers,	414
John Berchmans,	415
Pray before every Important Business,	415
The Place for Prayer,	415
Passages from Scripture,	415
Selections from the Fathers,	416
Examples,	416
We can Pray Everywhere,	416
Constant Prayer,	416
St. Ignatius.—St. Chrysostom,	417
Faulty Prayer,	417
Passages from Scripture,	417
Selections from the Fathers,	418
Examples,	418
The Dumb Woman and the Three Blind Men,	418
Antiochus Epiphanes,	419
The Sick Emperor and the Anchorite,	419
St. Bridget,	419
Mental Prayer,	420
Passages from Scripture,	420
St. Alphonsus on Meditation,	421
Examples,	424
The Correct Eye,	424
Prayer of Opportunity,	425

The Our Father.

Introduction. The Great Importance of the Our Father.

	PAGE
Instruction,	425
Reflection,	428
Various Comments on the Lord's Prayer,	428
Tertullian,	428
St. Cyprian,	428
Thomas à Kempis,	428
The Widow of Thecula,	428
Jordan, General of the Dominican Order,	429

The Prelude to the Our Father. "Our Father, Who art in Heaven."

Instruction,	429
Reflection,	430
Passages from Scripture,	430
Selections from the Fathers,	431
Comparisons,	433
Examples,	433
The Peasant in the Palace,	433
St. Louis, King of France,	434
St. Matilda,	434
The Negligent Monks,	435
We are all Brethren,	435
St. Aldan,	436
Changing Fathers,	436
Earthly and Heavenly Inheritance,	436
Exiled,	437
Consolation at the Grave,	437

The First Petition. "Hallowed be Thy Name."

Instruction,	437
Reflection,	439
Passages from Scripture,	439
Selections from the Fathers,	439
Examples,	440
St. Ignatius of Loyola,	441
To God the Lord be Praise and Honor,	441
God Praised at a Death-bed,	443
St. Polycarp,	443
A Peculiar Mode of Good Example,	443
St. Jerome and the Blasphemer,	444
A Brave Host,	444
Zeal for the Conversion of Sinners,	444
Edmund Campian,	445

The Second Petition. "Thy Kingdom Come."

	PAGE
Instruction,	445
Reflection,	446
Passages from Scripture,	446
Selections from the Fathers,	446
Examples,	447
Institutions for the Spread of the Gospel,	447
From the Life of St. Francis Xavier,	453
Alfonso of Aragon,	453
The Offering of a Poor Negro,	454
The Kingdom of God within us,	454
The Happy Beggar,	455
Missions,	455
Homesickness,	459
The Unequal Division,	459

The Third Petition. "Thy Will be Done on Earth as it is in Heaven."

Instruction,	460
Reflection,	461
Passages from Scripture,	461
Selections from the Fathers,	461
Examples,	463
Faithful Performers of God's Will,	463
A Wise Choice,	464
Prayer of Submission,	464
True Submission to God's Will,	466
St. Elizabeth of Thuringia,	466
St. Hedwigis,	466
St. Francis of Assisi,	466
St. Chrysostom,	467
Emperor Ferdinand,	467
Thomas More,	467
Contentment,	468

The Fourth Petition. "Give us this Day our Daily Bread."

Instruction,	469
Reflection,	471
Passages from Scripture,	471
Selections from the Fathers,	471
Examples,	472
Remarkable Instance of Prayer Heard,	472
Contentment,	473
Be not Solicitous for the Morrow,	473
God Rewards Charitable Gifts,	474
The Blessed Bread,	475
The Bleeding Bread,	475
Reverence for God's Word,	475

The Fifth Petition. "Forgive us our Trespases, as we Forgive them who Trespass against us."

	PAGE
Instruction,	476
Reflection,	478
Passages from Scripture,	478
Selections from the Fathers,	478
Examples,	478
Forgive us our Trespases,	478
Forgive and you will be Forgiven,	479
Magnanimity,	480
Reward for Forgiving our Enemies,	481

The Sixth Petition. "Lead us not into Temptation."

Instruction,	483
Reflection,	487
Passages from Scripture,	487
Selections from the Fathers,	487
Three Counsels against Temptation,	488
Sayings of the Ancient Fathers,	489
Examples,	490
From Holy Scripture,	490
God stands by us in Temptations,	490
St. Jerome's Struggles,	490
Heroic Resistance,	491

The Seventh Petition. "But deliver us from Evil. Amen."

Instruction,	492
Reflection,	494
Passages from Scripture,	494
Selections from the Fathers,	494
Processions and Litanies,	494
Examples,	496
Sufferings and Trials are not Evils,	496
Death not an Evil,	496
St. Louis and the Duke of Joinville,	497
But One Thing to Fear,	497
St. Clare,	497

The Angelical Salutation.

Instruction,	499
Reflection,	500
The Subject-matter of the Angelical Salutation,	500
The Angel's Salutation,	500
Mary and Elizabeth,	502
The Council of Ephesus,	502
High Antiquity of the Hail Mary,	503
Origin of the Angelus,	505

	PAGE
The Hail Mary an Excellent Prayer,	505
The Angelical Salutation contains Celestial Strength, and affords Help and Consolation in Spiritual and Bodily Necessities,	506
The Storm Stilled,	506
A Death-bed Conversion,	506
Blessed Father Salvator,	508
Persons devoted to the Hail Mary,	508
Brief Explanation of the Hail Mary,	509
Reflection,	516
Praises of the Blessed Virgin,	516
From the Fathers of the Church,	516
The Litany of Loreto,	519
The Rosary	524
The Festival of the Assumption,	528
The Holy Name of Mary,	529
The Lovableness of Mary's Name,	529
The Power of Mary's Name,	531
The Festival of the Holy Name of Mary,	531
Mary, Refuge of Sinners,	533
Mother of Mercy,	535
The Archconfraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, for the Con- version of Sinners,	535
The Protection of the Blessed Virgin,	537
From the Fathers,	537
Mary our Help in Life,	539
Mary is the Help of Christians,	539
Mary is the Health of the Sick,	542
Mary the Comfort of the Afflicted,	543
Mary our Helper in Death,	543
Mary Soothes the Last Moments of her Servants,	543
Mary Imparts Strength on the Death-bed of her Clients,	543
Mary Helps her Clients in the Final Assaults of the Devil,	544
Mary will not Permit her Servants to Die Without the Last Sacra- ments,	544





Introduction.

The End of Man.

INSTRUCTION.

WHY am I here in this world? What is my destiny? What is the chief, proper, and only aim or object for the attainment of which I should struggle and strive? This question is one that every rational being must propose to himself, and to the solution of which all his thoughts, words, and actions should be directed.

Every human being must have, here below, some special and fixed aim and purpose. It is contradictory to the very nature of man to even think otherwise. Moreover, we see in the visible world surrounding us that everything created has its own peculiar aim and purpose, and one which it must and does strive to attain and accomplish. Indeed, we measure the worth or worthlessness of every created thing in proportion

as it is fitted or unfitted for the end for which it is intended.

Now, as every created inanimate thing has its own duly appointed sphere, its proper place in nature, and its own peculiar destiny, it cannot be supposed for a moment that man, who is the masterpiece and crowning glory of creation, should be devoid of all aim and object.

But what is this end of man? What is his only true destiny?

If we would enjoy peace of soul, we must first of all have a clear and certain answer to this question.

Even in the earliest times the philosophers or wise men of the world labored hard to solve this question. But as they were guided solely by their reason and their errors, like the feather in the breeze, or the foam on the ocean wave, they were tossed hither and thither and never reached solid footing. Thus St. Augustine, a bishop of the Church in the early part of the fifth century, assures us that even in his time these wise philosophers had enunciated three hundred different and contradictory pretended explanations of the end for which man was created.

Is the World with its Goods the only Aim and End of Man?

It is but natural that we should in the first place institute an inquiry among the created things about us, in order to ascertain whether they can be the object for which we were created, whether they alone should constitute the object of our thoughts, sentiments, aspirations, desires, and actions. Very few words will suffice to prove the absurdity of such a supposition.

In the first place, the relation established between man and other created beings is such that the latter are subjected to man, while man is nowise subservient to them. This truth we are taught by our daily experience. It is true, indeed, that man, with his body formed from the slime of the earth, is closely allied with created matter, and is to a certain degree dependent on created things. But man's soul rises aloft above all these things and reigns supreme over them, though from a material point of view they may seem to be greater and stronger. Now if man, in view of his loftier and nobler nature, is conscious that he is lord of creation, it cannot be his duty to serve what is lower and less important than himself. He who would attempt to maintain such a theory would be compelled to find and to prove that it is natural for intelligence to be the servant of ignorance and irrationalism.

In the second place, man bears within his very being an irrepressible desire for happiness, to obtain which should be the true aim and object of his life. Now, the world even with all its goods can make no man happy. For true happiness is that state of being in which a man can have nothing further to wish for. Assuming a man to be in possession and enjoyment of all the

wealth, honors, and pleasures that this world can afford, he cannot conceal from himself that he must one day leave all these good things, namely, on the day of his death. Moreover, as man cannot find true happiness in these things of themselves, it is still less the case if we consider them in their relation to him.

All the good things of this world, call them by the happiest and pleasantest names you will, are utterly incapable of satisfying the longings of the human heart. The great King Solomon, whose success and wealth are proverbial, and who owned and enjoyed everything that can rejoice the heart of man, declared them all to be folly and vanity. Alexander the Great, after having at the head of his forces conquered all of the then known world, wept bitter tears on hearing that there were still other unknown countries that he could not reach even with fire and sword. And even if he could have laid them prostrate in subjection, his cravings for more would still be unallayed.

What countless cares attend the accumulation and even the keeping of worldly goods! Where is the honored man who has honors enough? Where the millionaire who has millions enough? As the thorns surround the roses, so do cares and anxieties encompass honors, pleasures, and wealth. Where do we most frequently hear the songs and shouts of joy and happiness, those expressions that spring from a contented and peaceful heart—in the cabins of the poor or in the palaces of the rich? Such being the case, how can any reasonable being entertain the absurd belief that the true destiny and proper end of man is to be found in the fleeting, troublesome things of this world? On the contrary, he must acknowledge the truth of what the wise king says: "What hath pride profited us? or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us? All those things are passed away like a shadow, and like a post that runneth on: and as a ship that passeth through the waves: whereof when it is gone by, the trace cannot be found, nor the path of its keel in the waters: or as when a bird flieth through the air, of the passage of which no mark can be found: or as when an arrow is shot at a mark, the divided air presently cometh together again, so that the passage thereof is not known" (Wisdom v. 8-12).

And when those days come of which the Holy Scripture says: They please us not, those days of old age, of feebleness, of sickness, and of death,—of what avail then are honors and wealth?

In the hour of death, what comfort or help can we derive from mountains of gold, from a bed of costly down, or from an army of servants? Pain will be pain in the presence of untold wealth. Anxiety and sadness will be anxiety and sadness, death will be the same death, whether its victim be a king or a beggar. When did gold or honors ever check a drop of death-sweat on the brow of a dying man? If then, amid all that the world can offer us, it is impossible to secure contentment, unalloyed happiness, real comfort and strength, it is plain that the world with its goods cannot be the end for which we were created, nor the object for which we should strive and labor with all our best energies. It is not the goal for which our soul should long and pray. It is not the object of our purest and noblest aspirations. Peace of heart and tranquillity of soul must dwell in the destiny of man.

What is the Only True End and Destiny of Man?

To this all-important question, St. Augustine in his *Confessions* gives us this answer: "Our heart, O Lord, will not know rest till it rest in Thee."

The truth of this statement is contained in what has been said above. Man has within him an irresistible craving for happiness. This craving can be satisfied only when the heart's possession of happiness is complete, unalloyed, and enduring. Now all these conditions the world with its happiness cannot fulfil. God alone can afford us such true and lasting happiness. He alone is eternal goodness, in the possession of which we need have no fear of losing it. He alone is the infinite good and the essence of all good such as can satisfy the human heart. He alone can fill its yawning chasms and thereby render it perfectly happy. In God alone, therefore, is man's true happiness to be found, in God alone, then, are we to find and secure the true end of our existence on this earth.

Again, man has within his nature an irrepressible desire for truth, and also the power of recognizing and accepting such truth. He seeks it with all the powers of his soul and will not rest contented till he discover it. First of all he desires most ardently to obtain a clear and decisive answer concerning himself, his whole being, and the aim and purpose of his existence. Where did I come from? Whither am I going? Can it be that the grave is the end of my existence, covering up forever all my hopes and aspirations, and rendering vain and profitless all the

efforts of my life? Rather is there not a brighter and a better life beyond the tomb? How is such life to be reached? What must I do to secure it? Such are a few of the many vital questions that we cannot stifle in our souls. They will not be turned aside. They demand an answer. But who can answer them?

Is man's own private reason able to give a satisfactory reply? Experience and his own innate consciousness teach him the contrary. If we ask any or all of those pagan though learned nations who, because they drifted far away from revelation, had to labor in search of truth with no other light or help than their own clouded understandings and imperfect knowledge, they will one and all assure us that, although they have striven after truth, they have not been able to find it. For four thousand years was the human intellect groping after the precious jewel of truth, and yet at the time of the Saviour, Pilate was compelled to ask Jesus, "What is truth?" Thus we see that human reason, when left to itself, was not in a condition to discover truth. On the contrary, it was led to doubt even the very existence of truth.

The efforts of modern times in the same direction have led to a similar result. How many worldly-wise scholars, the so-called philosophers, all during the long course of ages down to our own day, have stood up on their proud rostrums, and with loud voice and high-sounding words pretended that they had secured this treasure without the aid of God or His revelation! And what does all their teaching amount to? One system of philosophy followed on the heels of another, and after an ephemeral life died, was forgotten, and was succeeded by a newer and a stranger system. One philosopher charged the other with error and falsehood, and the latter placed the same brand on still another. What wonder then, if to-day, as in the days of Pilate, human teachers have come to doubt even the possibility of obtaining genuine truth!

But the human soul will not be satisfied with the vagaries and doubts of these would-be teachers. From them it cannot obtain any satisfactory answer to the grand questions that are continually pressing themselves on its attention. This fact alone the soul becomes assured of: namely, that in this material transitory life there is not to be found any satisfactory explanation to its inquiries, and that some other system of teaching must be brought into requisition, in order to make mankind happy and contented in the secure possession of genuine truth. When the world fails to afford light, man lifts his eyes aloft to the Super-

natural Being from Whom all good proceeds, including light and consolation, for otherwise perplexed and miserable mankind. There alone is truth, eternal, undying truth. There, too, in God alone will the human intellect find rest and happiness, for there it will find truth and secure its possession. There will man learn why he was created ; there he will find and reach his true aim and destiny.

Man is also led to this same object by his natural sentiments of morality and instincts of justice. Every man necessarily



"LIFT UP YOUR HEARTS."

desires, both for himself and his fellow-beings, a properly-earned measure of reward and punishment. Goodness has a right to recognition and compensation, while evil is justly liable to penalty. But here, too, as in the search for truth, a similar struggle ensues for man. First of all, he must ask of himself, What is really good and what is really evil? The fundamental principles of morality cannot vary with different nations or in different ages. They cannot be modelled after the opinions of individual

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men. They are everlasting, the same for all times and places, and are binding alike on nations and individuals. But who shall lay down for me these fundamental laws? Where is the authority to which all men will willingly submit? Here also we see that the man who is interested in true morality must seek his highest ideal, his noblest and last end, far above earthly things—in Infinity; that is to say, in an All-holy God.

As soon as man, instructed by the word of God, knows what is good and what is bad, he feels within himself an invincible, innate sense of justice, or a desire that virtue should be rewarded and vice punished. This sense or instinct of justice shows further that the world and merely material life cannot satisfy the wants of man; that they cannot constitute the chief end and destiny of a human being. Man's true destiny can be found only in God, Who is justice itself. For wherever man may look about among his fellowmen, he must confess that he can find perfect justice nowhere in this world. All about him he sees innocence suffering and weeping amid the iniquities of evil men. True virtue has to eat the hard bread of affliction, contempt, and poverty. At the same time pride, vice, and sin stalk proudly and triumphantly over the earth. On the man who turns away from his God the world lavishes its honors and riches, while the God-fearing Christian sighs and groans beneath the heavy hand of relentless persecution. Is this the kind of justice that the human heart craves and demands? Impossible! Where, then, is it to find that justice for which it sighs, and which, as it well knows, man must certainly obtain?—for the human heart has been created for it. Here it is that men respond to the invitation, "*sursum corda*," "lift up your hearts" to God, the All-just One: there is your goal; He is your last end, your everlasting peace. In Him is the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice. Yes, indeed, the heart of man knows no rest till it finds it in its God.

Then the tendency towards God and the struggle to reach Him is the highest aim for man here below. How sublime such a tendency! Where can be found a loftier, nobler, or more sacred destiny? Oh, how poverty-stricken is the blinded intellect of that man who cannot tear himself away from earthly things and lift himself above the useless trifles offered by this earth! His efforts meet no reward, his yearnings are never gratified. His hopes are never realized, and what he obtains to-day he loses to-morrow. With what a look of despair he must regard the gloomy

darkness of his grave ! Are all his aspirations to be buried forever within its dismal portals ? Are all his labors and cares, all his strivings and hopes, all his life-trials, to know no other reward than a tombstone, which will be the only means of preserving the memory of his name, and that but for a short time ? Impossible ! impossible ! says the reasonable being. My reason, my heart, the experience of all ages, proclaim to me that the ideal of man is loftier, holier, divine. Hence I will direct my life, my thoughts, my actions, my desires accordingly. Such is the grand and beneficent influence that Christianity exercises on the moral development of mankind. It raises man aloft to God, the just and Holy One, in order to make him holy and just, and consequently a child of eternal happiness. This truth is enunciated in words at once sublime and simple in Holy Scripture, when Our Saviour says : " This is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God " (John xvii. 3).

The Means of Attaining our Last End.

If we would reach and possess God we must first endeavor to know Him. For it is only when we know an object and know it intimately that we will tend towards that object, and learn to love it and be ready to serve it willingly and cheerfully. In such a knowledge, such a love, and such a service is to be found the best and surest means to finally reach God, and consequently our last end and only happiness.

But, if I am to know God, then it is necessary that I should believe all that God has revealed.

It is true that from outward visible nature I may learn the existence of an almighty, all-wise, and beneficent Creator. But a satisfactory knowledge of God and a proper appreciation of the purpose of my existence cannot be acquired from a mere study of nature. Such knowledge must be imparted to me by God Himself. It is necessary that He Himself should instruct mankind on the internal nature and essence of His Godhead, on His outward existence, and on His divine law. God must reveal Himself to man. The supernatural can never result from the natural, nor be contained within it, any more than the earth could be grasped by the hand of man.

As soon as God reveals Himself to man,—that is, when, in His infinite mercy, He condescends to teach man,—it becomes man's bounden duty to place implicit faith in God's word and teachings. This faith is in accordance with reason, for it is a belief in

eternal truth and wisdom. He who does not believe in God cannot have a correct knowledge of Him, and is thus deprived of the first and most necessary means of reaching everlasting happiness.

When by the aid of faith man learns to know God in His essence, in His attributes, and in His economy, he also at the same time learns that he himself is dependent on God, because God is the highest and most powerful Lord of heaven and earth, and the Father of all created things, including man himself. From such relation between God and man there grows up for man the duty of obedience to God. In other words, man ought to obey his Creator's law by keeping His commandments.

When we seek to discharge the high and holy duties of life, to do the divine will, we enter at once on the field of battle, and begin the unceasing warfare, and the series of strivings and longings which form the whole of every human life. With sin there came into the world that spirit of opposition which sets man at variance with God, with nature, and with himself. Even the apostle Paul complains that he does not do the good he wishes to do, and does the evil which he does not wish to do. Although Christ the Lord has redeemed us, there still lurks within us a strong inclination to evil, partly in punishment for the past, and partly for the purpose of trying our virtue and of acquiring merit. The strength in man of this tendency to evil and its powers to lead him far away from good are made evident in the countless and nameless vagaries to which men have drifted at all times. Hence Christ established, as one of the first requirements from His believers, that they shall deny themselves; that is to say, they shall fight and conquer their own inclinations. Man could never succeed in winning this difficult victory over himself if a merciful God did not assist and help him with His grace. Hence Christ established means of grace, especially the sacraments and prayer, by the use of which we may gain divine grace. These are, for this reason, called means or channels of grace; and it is these means of grace that are considered and explained in this volume of Christian teaching.





THE MEANS OF GRACE.

The Grace of God in General.

INSTRUCTION.

Meaning of Grace.



GVERY grace is a favor or a gift, to which we have no rightful claim. It is a benefit bestowed upon us, a privilege extended to us, purely out of love and mercy, which we could not demand, because we have not merited it.

Hence, by a divine grace we understand a gift or a favor which God imparts to a man, either in body or in soul, out of

friendship, goodness, and mercy, and independent of man's earning it; that is, to say without the man having a right to demand it from God.

Divisions of Grace.

There are natural and supernatural, outward and inward, immediate and indirect graces of God.

When the grace consists in any kind of a temporal good whatsoever, affording to our body or our temporal life some good or advantage, it is called natural grace.

When it consists of something calculated to help the salvation of our soul, giving us an increased power for the successful attainment of our last end, it is called supernatural grace.

When God, by this grace, influences the outward man, it is called outward grace. When He effects in man an inward influence for his sanctification and salvation, the movement is called inward grace. Thus, for example, the preaching of the word of God is an outward grace, because man is thereby acted upon outwardly by it. When the word of God penetrates to the inward man, when the eyes of his mind are opened and his will moved to follow the voice of Him Who calls, it becomes an inward grace, for the influence penetrates into man's interior being.

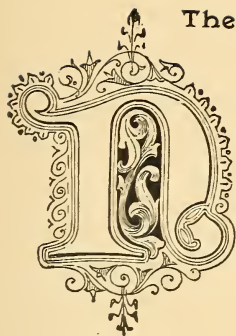
Sometimes a man receives a call to faith or to conversion from God Himself—as, for example, St. Paul. This is an immediate grace.

Most frequently God makes use of certain agents or means in imparting to us His graces—as, for example, the messenger of faith, when He sent Philip to the servant of Queen Candace, or He makes use of Christian parents, pious teachers, zealous preachers and pastors, devout confessors, good books, or edifying examples; also dreadful chastisements, general calamity, sufferings, sickness, and trouble, by all or any of which He exercises such an influence on us and in us that we believe, become converted, do penance, or enter upon a strict mode of life. This is a mediate or indirect grace.

Inward supernatural grace, of which we shall first treat, is divided:

1. Into grace of assistance, also called efficacious grace and preventing grace, because it works upon the soul.
2. Into the grace of holiness, also called permanent grace and sanctifying grace, because it remains in the soul and adorns and strengthens it,

REFLECTION.

The Necessity of Divine Grace.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

O man can come to Me, except the Father, Who hath sent Me, draw him" (John vi. 44).
 "No man can say, the Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost" (I. Corinthians xii. 3).
 "Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves: but our sufficiency is from God" (II. Corinthians iii. 5).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"As the arid earth, if it be not moistened, cannot bring forth fruit, so we, too, who of ourselves are nothing but dry twigs, can bear no fruit without the wholesome dew of grace" (St. Irenæus).
 "To divine grace is to be ascribed all that we succeed in doing in the order of salvation" (St. Gregory the Great). "The healthiest bodily eye cannot see anything without light: likewise man, even if perfectly justified, cannot make one step forward in the way of sanctification if divine grace do not assist him" (St. Augustine). "It is not at all possible to do anything right if one have not grace from above" (St. John Chrysostom). "As the body without the soul is dead and unable to do anything, so the soul without divine grace is dead for the kingdom of heaven: it cannot do anything towards pleasing God" (Macarius).

ILLUSTRATIONS.

What the rain is to the plants, the sun to the earth, what food is to the body, and salt to food, divine grace is the same to the life of the soul.

As the body cannot live without the soul, so the soul cannot live without grace. As soon as the grace of God departs, the soul is spiritually dead.

Grace is the root of spiritual life.

Grace is like a fire which imparts light, warmth, and life. Thus it is the grace of God that keeps up within us the light of faith, enkindles the warmth of divine charity, and creates a higher life in and with God: "I live, now not I: but Christ liveth in me" (Galatians ii. 20).

EXAMPLES.

From Holy Scripture.

A clear proof of the necessity of God's grace appears in the way and manner by which the apostles came to their blessed

Master. They were called. Thus Peter and Andrew, as they were casting their nets into the sea (Matthew iv. 19). Thus James and John, while they were occupied in mending their nets (Matt. iv. 21). It was thus that the Lord called Matthew while sitting at the custom-house. Although the latter had seen Jesus work many miracles, he was not induced to follow Him till the Saviour Himself said to him, "Follow Me" (Mark ii. 14). To the assembled apostles Our Lord said plainly and emphatically: "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (John xv. 16). This calling of the apostles is a figure of the calling of all men to eternal life.

Another example we have in the calling of Lydia, a seller of purple in Thyatira, who heard the apostle St. Paul preaching, and of whom it is written, the Lord opened her heart "to attend to those things which were said by Paul" (Acts xvi. 14). Cornelius, too, although on account of his piety and alms he deserved to receive the faith, did not receive it till the grace of God first sent Peter to him (Acts x. 5).

From the Lives of the Saints.

St. Augustine.—The great St. Augustine, whose youth was as full of errors as his mature life was of virtues, owed his conversion chiefly to the unceasing prayers of his devout mother, St. Monica, and to a special intervention of God. For a long time his heart yearned for a knowledge of divine truth. The sermons of St. Ambrose, many of which Augustine had listened to, had made a deep impression on his mind. With his soul filled with unrest, he would often withdraw from busy life, in company with a single companion, his friend Alypius, in the hope of finding truth and grace. It was on one of such occasions that grace did reach his soul and effect his conversion—an event which he thus describes in his "Confessions":

"When deep meditation lifted up my misery from a slough of despond, and placed it fairly before the eyes of my soul, there arose within my breast a violent struggle, which was accompanied by a copious flow of tears. To give fuller scope to my feelings, I arose and went away from Alypius; for solitude seemed to be better adapted to the free flow of my tears. Throwing myself on the ground under a fig-tree, I wept bitterly. Oh, what torrents of tears fell from my eyes, and became to Thee, O Lord, a pleasing sacrifice! And many were the things I said to Thee, if not in the following words, at least in the following sentiments: 'And Thou, O Lord, how long? Wilt Thou be angry forever? Be

not mindful of my past misdeeds.' For I felt the captivity in which they held me, and again cried out: 'How long, how long? To-morrow, always to-morrow? Why not now? Why shall not this hour be the last of my shame?'

"Thus I spoke and wept in the greatest bitterness of my heart, when, lo! I seemed to hear, from a neighboring house, the voice of a girl or young boy, who in sweet accents repeated the words: 'Take and read, take and read.' At once my expression of countenance changed, and I began seriously to inquire of myself whether it was the voice of children at play. Then reflecting

further, I suppressed my tears, arose, and felt convinced that I had received a divine command to open the sacred Scriptures and read the first passage I should meet. For I had learned from Antony that by reading the Scriptures he had learned to consider as applying to himself the passage which says: 'Go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and



"TAKE AND READ."

come, follow Me' (Matthew xix. 22), and that he was converted by the same words.

"I hastened back to Alypius, where I had left the Epistles of the Apostle, and, opening the book, I read greedily the first passage that met my eyes: 'Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and impurities, not in contention and envy: but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh in its concupiscences' (Romans xiii. 13, 14). I did not wish to read more. It was not necessary; for, as I finished the passage, a light of calm security was shed upon my heart, dispelling the dark vapors of uncertainty and indecision. Closing the book, I related to Alypius what had happened. He begged me to show him what I had read. He read further on than I had, as follows: 'Him that is weak in faith take unto you' (Romans xiv. 1). He was strengthened by this passage, and took resolutions similar to mine, though he had for some time been a far better man than I had been. Then we went to my mother and told her what had happened and how it came to pass. She was overpowered with joy, and praised Thee, O God, Who can do more than we can understand. Then she perceived that Thou hadst favored me far beyond her expectations. Then didst Thou so convert me that I craved no longer for anything worldly. I found myself in that justification by faith which Thou hadst long held out to me. Thou didst change her sorrow into a joy greater than she had asked for."

Watomica.—In the Society of Jesus, that gathers its members from every clime and race, and sends them into every quarter of the globe, there is at present a red-skinned son of the wilderness, named Watomica. Having completed his studies and finished his preparatory training, he is an ordained priest. God's grace it was that led him to his present high and honorable position. An American missionary writes thus about him: Watomica, or, as his name signifies, Fleet Foot, is the son of one of the most renowned Indian chieftains in the tribe of the Delawares, a tribe which at the time of the discovery of America was one of the most numerous and powerful. Watomica was brought up in a Protestant college, where in the simplicity of his heart he embraced the religion of his preceptors. Animated with a spirit of sincere piety, he devoted much time to prayer and the contemplation of heavenly subjects, and even practised some severe austerities. Such a mode of life not being in accordance with the notions of his fellow-collegians, he had to bear with much opposition and ridicule. Whilst preparing for the ministry and

studying the religious system of Calvinism, he suffered deeply in spirit from the constant recurring doubts that arose before his mind. Even prayer and fasting failed to overcome these doubts, or to bring more light to his troubled soul.

But the ways of Providence are wonderful, and no one seeks His assistance in vain. Watomica, having become a preacher in St. Louis, was one day taking a walk, when chance, or rather Providence, guided his steps to the street in which stands the church of the Jesuits. Numbers of children were gathering for catechism, and he watched them with a strange feeling of curiosity. Though he had been taught to despise even the name Catholic, his curiosity overcame early prejudice, and he entered the sacred edifice. At once he was seized with emotions that he could not explain even to himself. The altar with its cross, the images of the Blessed Virgin and the saints, the emblems of religion, and above all the light in the sanctuary, made upon him the most vivid impression. The Good Shepherd hidden in the tabernacle influenced mildly yet powerfully the poor wandering sheep. He listened with the utmost attention to the instruction imparted to the children, which happened to have a bearing on several points to which Watomica had devoted much study. Filled with wonder and happiness at his discovery of truths which he now mastered for the first time, he returned to his home. After a prayer of thanksgiving to God, he felt himself emboldened to call on a priest, to whom he laid open his hitherto troubled and doubting soul. Soon did this child of the wilderness renounce his errors. He made a profession of faith, and entered the Society of Jesus, there to find peace of heart and intellect forever.

Actual Grace.

INSTRUCTION.

Meaning of Actual Grace.



Y ACTUAL GRACE, or the grace of assistance, is meant that grace whereby God illumines the understanding and influences the will carefully to avoid evil, and to will and to accomplish good.

When we consider actual grace as operating on the understanding, it is called illuminating grace. When considered in its action on the will, it is called impelling grace. Moreover, as actual grace goes

before the influences to good works, and accompanies and accomplishes our acts, it is called preventive grace, habitual grace, and perfecting grace, respectively.

Necessity of Actual Grace.

Actual grace is indispensably necessary, since without it we cannot begin, continue, or complete the smallest action towards our salvation. Eternal happiness, the securing of which is our chief purpose in life, is evidently a good of the supernatural order. Hence it can be reached only through supernatural strength and aid, that is to say—by grace; and without such grace we are unable to work for our salvation.

God gives His Grace to all Men.

God gives sufficient grace to all men, to enable them to keep the commandments of obligation upon them, and to reach everlasting happiness. For God "will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth," as St. Paul writes to Timothy (I. Timothy ii. 4). Now if God wills all men to be saved, He certainly gives to all the grace to become so.

How we must Co-operate with Grace.

In order that the grace of God may be effective unto our salvation, we must co-operate with it faithfully, and by no means presume to resist it.

We must co-operate faithfully with the grace of God ; for, as St. Augustine says, God, Who created us without any consent of ours, does not wish to save us against our will, or even without it. He does not effect our salvation within us, as if we were sticks or stones, or some other objects to which by nature no reason or free-will had been given. Hence the Apostle Paul says to the Corinthians : "We helping do exhort you, that you receive not the grace of God in vain" (II. Cor. vi. 1).

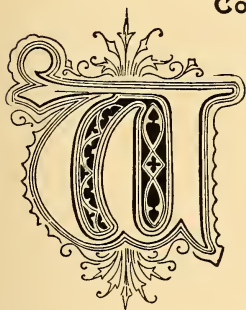
We dare not withstand the grace of God. Divine grace does not constrain the human will, but leaves to it perfect freedom of action. Hence, though we have it in our power to oppose grace, woe to us if we do ! We shall not again receive graces greater than those that God wishes to grant us now. He may deprive us of all grace. "For," says St. Augustine, "it is a most suitable penalty when God withdraws His grace from him who will not make use of it." Let us not, then, say to ourselves, "it is time enough." Now is the time to co-operate with grace, when Our Lord says : "Behold I stand at the gate, and knock : if any man

shall hear My voice, and open to Me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me" (Apocalypse iii. 20). But if you leave your Saviour standing unadmitted, He will go away, and you shall find Him no more. Let us heed the warning of the Psalmist: "To-day if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (Psalm xciv. 8).

REFLECTION.

Co-operation with Grace.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.



DE WOULD have cured Babylon, but she is not healed: let us forsake her, and let us go every man to his own land: because her judgment hath reached even to the heavens, and is lifted up to the clouds" (Jeremias li. 9). "Because I called and you refused: I stretched out My hand, and there was none that regarded.

You have despised all my counsel, and have neglected my rephensions. I also will laugh in your destruction, and will mock when that shall come to you which you feared" (Proverbs i. 24). "Wicked and slothful servant, thou oughtest to have committed my money to the bankers, and at my coming I should have received my own with usury" (Matt. xxv. 27). "Looking diligently lest any man be wanting to the grace of God" (Hebrews xii. 15). "You therefore, brethren, knowing these things before, take heed, lest being led aside by the error of the unwise, you fall from your own steadfastness" (II. Peter iii. 17).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"God enlightens, indeed, as far as in Him lies, all men that come into the world. But when a person, of his own choice, refuses to open his eyes to the light, the fault of his remaining in darkness is not on the part of the light, but his own perverseness renders him unworthy of such blessing" (St. Chrysostom). "Grace precedes the will, that we may will, and follows it, that we may will not in vain" (St. Augustine). "When our free-will obeys the impulse of the divine grace that prevents us to good, we can say: we make ourselves blessed, because we consent to the operation of God which saves us" (St. Gregory the Great). "We have need of a threefold blessing: the first must prevent us, the second

must help us, the third should bring the work of our salvation to a perfect state" (St. Bernard).

COMPARISONS.

Actual grace operates in the soul of man as the sun operates on the universe. The latter not only illumines the earth and other planets, but exercises a certain attractive power, so that they constantly move about the sun as their centre. Similar results are effected in the human soul by grace, which illumines the understanding and draws and regulates the will towards goodness.

As the eye, in order to see, needs light, so does God give His actual grace to the soul of man, in order that man may effect some good.

As the body is active by the power of the soul, so does man act for good through the power of actual grace.

EXAMPLES.

Words of Scripture.

A striking example of grace is to be found in the Jewish people, who may truly be called the nation of grace. God in His mercy cast His eye upon them, and chose them from among all other nations. In all their dangers He stood by them, and while they remained in the way of His commandments they were fortunate and conquered all their enemies. But as soon as they fell away from God and rejected grace, they became an easy prey to their adversaries and were led into captivity. But when, in their captivity, they returned to God, He led them back to their homes, permitted them to rebuild their city and temple, and sent to them the most precious of all their graces, by giving them His only-begotten Son. When they rejected Christ, the measure of divine justice was filled, and hence they were cast off by God, Whose malediction still follows them.

Thus the Jewish Synagogue is that vineyard of which the weeping Isaias complains :

"I will sing to my beloved the canticle of my cousin concerning his vineyard. My beloved had a vineyard on a hill in a fruitful place.

"And he fenced it in, and picked the stones out of it, and planted it with choicest vines, and built a tower in the midst thereof, and set up a wine-press therein: and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

"And now, O ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and ye men of Juda, judge between me and my vineyard.

"What is there that I ought to do more to my vineyard, that I have not done to it? Was it that I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it hath brought forth wild grapes?"

"And now I will show you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof: and it shall be wasted: I will break down the wall thereof: and it shall be trodden down.

"And I will make it desolate: it shall not be pruned, and it shall not be digged: but briars and thorns shall come up: and I will command the clouds to rain no rain upon it" (Isaias v. 1-6).

So shall the soul of that man who does not correspond with the grace of God be deprived of such grace, be laid waste and made desolate, and be plundered and trodden down by the enemy of its salvation.

Withstanding Grace.

Father Matthew Baschi, an eloquent preacher and zealous servant of God, was once approached by a vile, unbelieving man, who, pretending to be deeply affected at the Father's sermon, besought him to pray for him, that he might learn to lead a devout life. Then the hypocrite went off to his companions and regaled them with an account of his clever deception practised on the priest. Some days afterwards the pretended penitent again visited the man of God, and said to him: "I don't understand what is the reason; but ever since I asked your prayers every spark of faith and piety in my heart has been totally extinguished." "Perhaps I could explain the reason, but first I want you to help me in a little job." So, leading the man down to the bank of the river, Baschi said to him: "Help me to carry this heavy package to that boat yonder." The man seemed willing and took up one end of the package, while Baschi lifted the other. Hardly had they gone a step when the latter let his end drop. This was repeated several times, till at last the irritated man said fiercely: "You old gray-head, you must hold up your end of the burden; or, if you let it alone, I can almost carry it myself alone." Then the priest said: "Let the sack lie there and listen to me. You asked me to help you by my prayers. I did my part. Did you keep your promise? Join your prayers in all sincerity to mine, and you will soon experience God's mercy."

Impervious to Grace.

Cardinal Bellarmine relates: "I once went to visit an acquaintance of mine, a man of position and wealth, who in consequence of his sinful actions was then confined to a bed of

sickness. I suggested to him that, there being no hope of recovery, the best thing for him to do was to awaken feelings of sorrow for his sins, for God never despises a contrite heart. 'I know nothing of such things,' replied the dying man, coldly. Then I said, 'Well, out of your old friendship for me, do something for your soul. It would grieve me deeply to see you go before God without some preparation. Say to your Creator that you are sorry for the past, and willing if life were spared to make reparation.' Again the sick man replied coldly: 'I don't understand; such things never concerned me.' In such sentiments he died."



Sanctifying Grace, or the Grace of Justification.

INSTRUCTION.

Meaning of Sanctifying Grace.



ANCTIFYING grace is an unmerited, supernatural gift, which the Holy Ghost imparts to the soul, and by virtue of which sinners become just men, children of God, and heirs to heaven.

Sanctifying grace is a supernatural gift, because through it, as if through a spiritual generation, God imparts to man a new supernatural life, that is permanent within him as long as he does not destroy it by mortal sin.

Hence, sanctifying grace differs from actual grace by being permanent or continual.

Sanctifying grace is an unmerited grace, because it is a wholly free present from the merciful love of God, since we have not earned it by our natural powers, and are also unable to gain it by ourselves, even with the aid of actual grace. Hence, St. Paul writes in Romans (iii. 24): "Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;" and again in Titus (iii. 5-7): "Not by works of justice, which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the laver of regeneration of the Holy Ghost, Whom He hath poured forth upon us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour: that being justified by His grace, we may be heirs, according to hope, of life everlasting."

Sanctifying grace justifies man—that is to say, it takes him out of a state of sinfulness and places him in a state of justice and holiness. Hence it is called the grace of justification.

Nature of Justification.

The essence of justification consists in this : that we are freed from guilt and received into the favor of God. Justification takes guilt from us and gives us the good-will of God. Therefore justification embraces : first, cleansing from all, or at least mortal sins, together with the remission of the eternal punishment ; and, secondly, the healing or the renewal of the internal man, as explained by St. Paul in I. Corinthians (vi. 11): “ You are washed, you are sanctified, you are justified in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the spirit of our God.”

Process of Justification.

A man passes from the state of sin to the state of justice and holiness in the following manner : First, preventive grace enlightens the sinner, and so influences him that he turns towards God. Now the sinner must obey this impulse of divine grace—that is to say, he must, with the assistance of the grace, turn voluntarily towards God, believe all that God has revealed, and most especially the truth that we are justified through Jesus Christ. Then this faith so influences the sinner that he has a wholesome fear of the divine justice, and furthermore that he at the same time hopes to obtain pardon from divine mercy. Now he begins to love God, bewails his sins, makes a resolution to lead a new and God-pleasing life, and if he is not baptized receives the sacrament of baptism ; or, if he is baptized, has recourse to the sacrament of penance. In this way he receives sanctifying grace, and with it the remission of his sins and an internal healing, whereby he becomes really just, pleasing to the Lord, a child of God, and an heir to heaven. We find the clearest examples of this process of justification in the conversion of holy, penitent saints, such as St. Augustine, St. Ignatius, and others.

Loss and Decrease of Sanctifying Grace.

Even by venial sin sanctifying grace is weakened, if not in its essentials, at least in its accidentals. By mortal sin it is totally lost. For, as Ezechiel says, “ the soul that sinneth, the same shall die ” (Ezechiel xviii. 20).

As long as we are in this life we have not, without a special

revelation from God, any infallible certainty whether we are in the grace and friendship of God or not. Yet there are certain signs that afford us a kind of moral probability of the question. One of these signs is for a person always to have a desire to grow in virtue and perfection. Another sign it is, that a person is in a state of grace, if he finds all his enjoyment in God alone, or when he serves God with cheerfulness and pleasure; always glad to speak of God and heavenly things, and glad to hear them spoken of.

Fruits of Sanctifying Grace.

When a man is in a state of sanctifying grace, fruits are not wanting. These fruits are good works—namely, such good acts as we perform in and because of the love of God, and in reference to Him, and therefore in accordance with His divine commandments. Hence St. Isidore says: “The pious and just are fruit-bearing trees, and the fruit they produce are good works.” Our divine Saviour said the same thing: “Every tree bringeth forth good fruit” (Matt. vii. 17).

Meritoriousness of Good Works.

To the good works that we perform in the state of grace God awards a reward or compensation.

By such good works we merit :

a. The increase of sanctifying grace; for, as by a wise use and disposition of earthly treasures we increase and extend them and heighten their value, so by the practice of good works we augment sanctifying grace within us. Hence our blessed Lord says: “To every one that hath shall be given, and he shall abound” (Matt. xxv. 29).

b. Everlasting happiness is the second and most consolatory reward that is bestowed upon us for the good works we perform while in a state of grace. To this truth St. Paul gives expression as follows: “As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord, the just judge, will render to me in that day: and not only to me, but to them also that love His coming” (II. Tim. iv. 7, 8).

This meritoriousness accrues to the good works that we perform in a state of grace only from God; only from the merits of Jesus Christ, Whose living members we become by virtue of sanctifying grace. Hence Christ Himself says: “I am the vine, you

the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit : for without Me you can do nothing" (John xv. 5).

Essential Requisites of Good Works.

A good and meritorious work requires:

1. A state of grace ; 2, purity of intention.

Only those works that we perform in a state of sanctifying grace can have any value before God. Man in a state of sinfulness can do nothing meritorious of heaven. Nevertheless, the good deeds we perform in a state of mortal sin are not wholly worthless. Although we gain by them no merit for eternal happiness, yet God on account of them makes us more disposed for the reception of sanctifying grace. We gain by them from the divine mercy the grace of conversion, and sometimes escape temporal punishments.

What is most essential to all our good works is a purity of intention, which sanctifies the most insignificant work, and imparts to it value and merit in the eyes of God. It is true to say: "Good intention transforms lead into gold." Our divine Lord expresses the high value of a proper intention in these words: "Whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple: amen I say to you, he shall not lose his reward" (Matt. x. 42). In view of its vital importance, we should often awaken within us this purity of intention.

Necessity of Good Works.

Every Christian must practise good works. For,

1. Without them, our faith is of no avail. "Faith without works is dead," says St. James (ii. 26).

2. Without good works sanctifying grace cannot be in us, nor abide in us; for it is by good works that we manifest it outwardly, and at the same time maintain and cherish it within us.

3. It is by good works that we are to earn the reward of heaven, and merit our crown. Whosoever shall appear with empty hands before God shall not receive from Him the crown of life. Hence our divine Saviour says: "Every tree that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down and cast into the fire" (Matt. iii. 10).

Kinds of Good Works.

The good works that we ought to perform are chiefly those that are commanded by the law of God and His Church, and that are useful and necessary to the fulfilling of the duties of our state of life.

The Holy Scripture most especially commends the three following : prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Hence the angel said to Tobias : "Prayer is good with fasting and alms, more than to lay up treasures of gold."

By prayer is meant all exercises of devotion ; by fasting, all works of mortification ; and by almsgiving, all works of Christian charity.

REFLECTION.

Good Works.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.



LET your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Who is in heaven" (Matt. v. 16). "A good man out of a good treasure bringeth forth good things" (Matt. xii. 35). "Charge of the rich of this world . . . to do good, to be rich in good works" (I. Tim. vi. 17, 18). "So faith also, if it have not good works, is dead in itself. Show me thy faith without works, and I will show thee, by works, my faith" (James ii. 17, 18). "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors ; for their works follow them" (Apoc. xiv. 13).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"Whosoever say they love Christ are not esteemed for what they say, but for what they do. For the tree is known by its fruits. It is better to be a friend, and keep silent, than to prate and not be such. The kingdom of God consists not of words, but of works" (St. Ignatius of Antioch). "The intention maketh the work good ; faith guideth the intention" (St. Augustine). "Be not slothful in good works, that at the proper time you may reap what you have sowed" (The Same). "Our works do not perish as they seem to perish ; they become as it were seed sown in eternity. The unwise Christian will be astonished when, from

the small seed, he will see a large harvest gathered, either a good one or a bad one, according as the seed has been good or bad " (St. Bernard).

COMPARISONS.

As the glowing iron, while retaining the nature of iron, assumes to itself such qualities of fire as partially change it into fire, so does the soul, by virtue of sanctifying grace, share so deeply in the divine nature and perfection as if it were transformed into something divine. This change is effected by sanctifying grace; for it is an infusion of the divine nature, and causes in us such a transformation that not we live, but that the Spirit of God lives in us, Who pours out His love in our hearts—that divine fire which consumes all that is displeasing in us, so that we become a living temple of God and children of the Lord (Massl).

EXAMPLES.

Spontaneous Good Works.

Some years ago there lived in Steirmarck a distinguished Count, who had lived the life of an angel rather than that of a man. Indeed, his director, to whom he confessed regularly for many years, could testify that his penitent had never been guilty of a mortal sin. After his death, when examining his affairs, his friends discovered on his kneeling-bench a death's-head bearing on the forehead the inscription: "What in thy last hour thou wouldst wish to have done, do now whilst thou art well and strong." On the jaw were the words: "If thou hast done much good, conceal it; otherwise thou shalt lose all merit." Every day the Count had passed hours before this death's-head, in prayer and contemplation and studying the Scriptures and urging himself to good works. He would say to himself: "Count, do now what at the hour of thy death thou shalt wish to have done. Now thou hast strength, leisure, and opportunity. Wait not for thy death hour, when thou canst do nothing."

Preparations for a Journey.

A certain gentleman, who was fonder of this earth than of heaven, owned a handsome country-seat with a vineyard attached. Whenever he wished to pass a few days on his place, either for pleasure or to superintend the vine-dressing, he would send in advance a cargo of luxuries of all kinds, that he might want for nothing during his stay. All this was duly noted by a certain



PHILIP INSTRUCTING THE EUNUCH OF
QUEEN CANDACE.

fool belonging to him. It came to pass that the rich man fell sick, and, fearing death, was worried about disposing of his property by will. One day, when his clown came to his door to inquire after his master's health, the latter called him and said : "You see your master is going on a long journey." The fool asked where he was going. "Alas!" said the sick man, "far, far away, to a place I shall never reach." "How can that be?" inquired the clown. His master answered : "Your master is going to travel to heaven." "Oh!" said the fool, "there is nothing up there but clouds and thunder and lightning, and storms and winds and rain. Stay here, where you are well off; especially as you have not sent before you any provisions to live on when you get there. When about to go to your country-place you used to send plenty before you. I have not noticed that you have sent anything before you for this long journey."

The poor, senseless idiot, though wanting in intellect, was the means of doing good; for his master was aroused by his words, and, entering into himself, endeavored by a hearty contrition and other good works to lay up, even at that late hour, some treasure in heaven. After providing amply for the future support of his wife and family, he set apart a reasonable amount of money to be distributed among the poor, that they might pray for his departed soul.

Saturday Evening.

One warm summer evening, Gotthold, an honest farmer, strolled out in the fields with his son Philip. It was a Saturday in harvest-time. During the week the laborers had worked steadily under a hot sun. Just then the bells of the parish church tolled for the devotion of the angelus and the cessation of work for the week. The men threw down their scythes, took off their hats, and knelt down to say a prayer of thanksgiving to God, Who had given them health and strength to complete their labors. "You perceive, my son," said Gotthold, "how glad these men are to hear the sound of the blessed bells. For rest is doubly welcome after honest toil, to say nothing of the pleasure of carrying home well-earned wages to beloved wife and children. Do you think the idle, lazy man, in all his slothful hours, ever experiences a joy equal to that of his more industrious neighbor?"

"No," replied the boy, "for the idle man must grieve to think that he must go home without any wages to buy necessities for his little ones."

"Yes indeed," said the father, "he is to be pitied; his week is past and nothing done. All this is but a figure of human life, which is one long week of arduous toil. We are the workmen of Our Lord, and each one of us has his allotted task to do. One day the angels' trumpet will proclaim that the time for work is over, and all the workers will assemble around the judgment-seat of their Master to receive their reward.

"What happiness then for the industrious laborers of the Lord's vineyard! To them He will say: 'Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over few things, I will place thee over many. Enter into the joy of the Lord.' Those unhappy beings who have misspent their time will be filled with sadness, for they will hear the dreadful sentence: 'Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

The boy replied : " Dearest father, I will try to be useful and laborious, and grow to be a 'profitable servant.'" Then the father said : " God bless your good intentions, my son ; be faithful in keeping them, and then you shall not appear with empty hands before God."

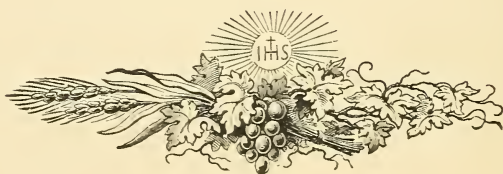
APPLICATION.

Pray for grace every day fervently ; for in possessing it lies all your peace. It converts the sinner, softens the obdurate, strengthens the good to perseverance ; it applies to us the merits of the precious blood of Jesus Christ shed for us on the cross. Where there is no grace there is no faith, no charity, no penance, no virtue, and hence no happiness. Whence comes the estrangement from God by so many Christians ? Whence the wickedness of life that people refuse to abandon ? Whence loss of faith, whence hatred for virtue ? All comes from absence of the grace of God.

Strive to obtain and retain God's grace by frequenting the sacraments. They are the fountains of grace. Be regular in attendance at Holy Mass. Suffer yourself to be drawn by Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar.

Do not say : Grace avails me nothing. Use diligently the means of grace, and you will have reason to say the contrary.

God is merciful. Trust in Him. He willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live.



The Sacraments.

The Sacraments in General.

INSTRUCTION.

Meaning of the Sacraments.



SACRAMENT is a visible sign of an invisible grace instituted by Jesus Christ for the sanctifying of our souls.

Even the Old Dispensation had, so to speak, its sacraments, or different outward signs ordained by God, such as circumcision, which was a symbol of Baptism ; the yearly paschal feast, a figure of the Eucharist ; the ordination or consecration of the Levitical priests, a figure of our Holy Orders ; and finally, many ablutions, cleansings, and atonements, all types or figures of the real inward and true cleansing from sin in the sacrament of Penance. But these so-called sacraments of the Old Law were vastly different from the sacraments in the New Testament ; for, whereas the sacraments of the New Dispensation operate of themselves, those of the Old Law operated through a belief in a coming Redeemer, which belief was united to them, and, as plainly appears, was vivified and strengthened by them.

Requisites of a Sacrament.

Three things are necessary to constitute a sacrament : 1, an outward sign of grace ; 2, an inward operation of grace ; 3, to have been instituted by Jesus Christ.

Since we are men composed of body and soul, and dependent on our external senses, God in His wisdom has been pleased to impart to us His graces, which are altogether spiritual, by means of outward, visible, and tangible signs. Thus man may know, through the aid of his bodily senses, when the grace of a sacrament is extended to him, whilst the special inward workings of

each sacrament are plainly symbolized and interpreted to him by these outward signs. Hence there is in every sacrament something that falls under the senses—namely, some object or some act that can be seen, or some word that can be heard. That which we see is called the matter, and what we hear is called the form of the sacrament. Thus, for example, in Baptism water is the matter; in Confirmation, the chrism; in the Eucharist, the species of the bread and wine; in Penance, the penitent's contrite confession and ample satisfaction; in Extreme Unction, the anointing of the five senses; in Ordination, the laying on of hands by the bishop; in Matrimony, the consent and joining of hands by the contracting parties, are the matter of each of the sacraments respectively. The words that are pronounced in administering the sacraments are the form. For example, in Baptism, the words, "I baptize thee," etc., constitute the form of the sacrament of Baptism. If one of these should be wanting the sacrament is invalid. If the person conferring a sacrament should separate the words from the form, there would be no sacrament. Thus if one should attempt to baptize without water, or if, when pouring the water on the person to be baptized, he should omit the words, "I baptize," etc., there would be no sacrament of Baptism, but only a meaningless, absurd act, without any effect. St. Augustine says truly: "When the word is joined to the element, then only is there a sacrament."

The sun in the firmament shows us when it is morning, noon, and evening, summer and winter, and it is at the same time the cause of its being morning, noon, evening, summer and winter. So with the sacraments: they are not mere fruitless signs, but powerful, efficacious signs; that is to say, they not only point out and symbolize the grace, but they cause it, and make it effective, if we do not on our part place a hindrance to it.

It is Jesus Christ only Who can unite an inward grace to an outward sign; for He alone, not a man nor an angel, is Lord of all grace. This grace He purchased for us by the infinite merits of His death on the cross, which merits He imparts to us by means of the sacraments. These sacraments are vessels out of which we drink from the inexhaustible fountain of His merits. They are channels through which the hidden graces of God are conveyed to our souls from that same saving fountain. Hence the sacraments, in order to be actual and active means of grace, must have been instituted by Jesus Christ Himself.

Effect of the Sacraments.

The sacraments effect our sanctification, either by imparting to us some sanctifying grace which we have not, or by strength-



THE SEVEN SOURCES OF GRACE.

ening and augmenting such measure of sanctifying grace as we already have.

Each sacrament conveys also a special and particular grace, which is called sacramental grace. This is a grace which corresponds to the aim and purpose of each sacrament, which is

specially and peculiarly its own, and given for the purpose of reaching and realizing the object and aim of that sacrament.

Thus Baptism bestows the right to a grace which enables the newly-regenerated heir of heaven to live according to the requirements of the Gospel. Confirmation grants a right to that grace which is needed to enable the Christian confirmed to confess and defend his faith. The Eucharist grants a right to that grace which is required to increase spiritual life. Penance grants a right to that grace which is necessary to purify the subject from the defilement of sin and to guard against relapse. Extreme Unction secures to us a right to that special grace necessary to help and protect us in the dread hour of death against the pains of sickness, the fear of death, and the assaults of Satan. Holy Orders gives a right to that grace which is necessary to enable the priest to correspond with his high calling, and to work with zeal and success in the saving of souls. Finally, matrimony gives a right to that grace which is so necessary in cementing and sanctifying matrimonial love, and in enabling the parties to fulfil the duties of their state; chiefly to bring up their children in the love and fear of God..

The Number of the Sacraments.

Jesus Christ instituted seven sacraments, no more nor no less. They are named: 1, Baptism; 2, Confirmation; 3, Eucharist; 4, Penance; 5, Extreme Unction; 6, Holy Orders; 7, Matrimony.

That the number is seven, and neither more nor less, we know: *a*, from Scripture; *b*, from the Fathers of the Church; *c*, from the traditions of the sects detached from the Catholic Church; *d*, from the teaching of the Catholic Church itself.

True, it is not expressly stated in Scripture that the number of the sacraments is seven. But neither is it stated that there are but two or three, as the heretics would wish to assert. Now, nowhere in the Sacred Scriptures can we find the word Trinity. Yet, who would pretend to say that belief in the doctrine of the Trinity is not based on Scripture, simply because the word Trinity does not occur there? It is enough that what we understand by the Trinity is easily and plainly to be found in the Bible. The same holds true with regard to the seven sacraments. The question here is not of the word or name, but of the fact itself; and that fact we find expressed in Scripture in the clearest language, as we shall see later on, when treating of each of the sacra-

ments separately. Moreover, in the Old Testament we find many allusions to the number seven in relation to the sacraments.

In the writings of the Fathers we find the seven sacraments clearly enumerated. The Russians and Greeks, and all the sectarians who fell away from the true Church in the early centuries of Christianity, retain the seven sacraments—a remarkable proof that the doctrine of the seven sacraments is as old as the Church itself. In the sixteenth century, soon after the great schism and apostasy of Luther, the Protestant theologians in Germany applied to the Greek patriarch in Constantinople, named Jeremias, informing him that they too had separated from Rome. But the patriarch rejected the proffered formula of Protestant belief, on the ground that it did not express the true teachings of the Church, and because it held to only two sacraments, whereas there are seven.

Finally the Catholic Church, that pillar and ground of truth, has always taught that there are seven sacraments, and maintained this doctrine every time against every heretic who in the course of ages attacked one or other of them. Such was the case at Constance in the fifteenth session, at Florence in the decree prepared for the Armenians, and at Trent in the seventh session.

Jesus Christ instituted seven sacraments, because just so many are required for the spiritual life of the soul, as in the natural life man requires seven means to uphold it and to make it useful to himself and his fellow-beings. He must be born, must grow up, must partake of food to strengthen him; must have medical remedies if he fall into sickness; after his recovery he requires to be strengthened and restored to perfect health; he must have leaders and teachers whose knowledge and instructions may guide him. Finally, society must replace its dead members by new men in order to keep up its existence. Now all these same things are required for spiritual or supernatural life. We must: 1. be born in a spiritual manner, and, by our initiation into Christianity, receive a new life. This is effected by Baptism. 2. As we must always grow and thrive in the spiritual life, Confirmation supplies strength and vitality for that purpose. 3. As we stand in need of heavenly food in order to support spiritual life within us, the sacrament of the Eucharist is provided for that purpose. 4. When by means of sin we lose our spiritual life of grace, we stand in need of some means of regaining it, and of healing the wounds inflicted on our soul. Penance heals our soul and restores us again to life. 5. After recovery we remain

exposed to certain weaknesses. These are remedied by Extreme Unction, which strengthens us and takes away the relics and remnants of sin. 6. The flock of Christ stands in need of rightful shepherds to guide them in the way of salvation. Holy Orders supplies the Church with servants of the altar to minister at the sacred functions. 7 The Church is to live until the end of the world. Hence, it must always train up new children in her bosom. To this holy reproduction the sacrament of matrimony supplies the method whereby the human family is perpetuated on earth and the number of the elect in heaven is increased.

Difference and Division of the Sacraments.

The sacraments differ among themselves in regard to necessity, dignity, and effects.

In point of necessity the first and most important of all is Baptism, without which we cannot be saved, nor admitted to any other sacrament. The next in importance is Penance, especially for those who have sinned grievously since their Baptism. Then comes the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, then Confirmation, and Extreme Unction for the sick. Holy Orders and Matrimony, though necessary, are the least so: for, although necessary to the Church in general and to mankind, they are not necessary to every individual.

In point of dignity the Blessed Eucharist ranks first and foremost among all the other sacraments, because it contains really and truly Jesus Christ, the Author of all the sacraments. The next in dignity is Holy Orders, because it imparts power and authority to administer the sacraments; then Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Extreme Unction, Matrimony, in proportion as each one is in closer proximity to the Holy Eucharist.

In regard to effectiveness, some sacraments convey sanctifying grace, others only increase it; some impress an indelible mark, others do not.

In regard to the spiritual condition of those to whom the sacraments are administered, they are divided into the sacraments of the dead and the sacraments of the living. In the matter of repetition or non-repetition, they are divided into such as the subject can receive once only during life and those that may be received oftener.

Baptism and Penance are called sacraments of the dead, because at their reception the subject has not spiritual life, and

therefore is spiritually dead, or may be so. On the other hand, the Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony are called sacraments of the living, because to be received properly and profitably we must first have supernatural life, that is, sanctifying grace; at the time of their reception we must be living spiritually.

Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders can be received but once in a lifetime. The other sacraments may be received oftener. The first three sacraments impress upon the soul a spiritual, indelible mark—that is, a sign, a dedication, a dignity, by which the recipient becomes different from other men. Baptism impresses upon us the character of a Christian, Confirmation the character of a soldier of Christ, and Holy Orders the character of a servant of Christ. These marks can never again be stamped out; for, once a person has become a Christian, a priest, or a soldier under the banner of Christ, he can never again cease to be such. This is also the reason why these sacraments can be received only once, because one cannot become again what he already is. Nevertheless, they can be dishonored and degraded.

Dispenser and Receiver of the Sacraments.

The power to administer the sacraments was received by the apostles from Christ Himself, for to them He intrusted the duty of preaching and dispensing His mysteries, as St. Paul writes: "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God" (I. Cor. iv. 1). Thus it is plain that not every Christian without distinction can administer the sacraments, but only the successors of the apostles, the bishops, and their helpers, the priests. Otherwise there would be a complete overturning of the order established by Christ in His Church. One sacrament only can be administered by a lay person—that is, Baptism, which is absolutely necessary for salvation; and this can be done only in case of necessity.

Since, in the administration of the sacraments, the man is but the servant or the agent of Christ, Who Himself really baptizes, confirms, and absolves, an unworthy minister cannot rob the sacrament of its power and effect. Though his life were soiled with crimes, though his heart were without piety or even belief,—aye, if he had just come from the commission of a sin,—the sacrament he administers has its value and effectiveness. "If the seed is

good," says St. Augustine, "it matters little whether it be sown by a clean or unclean hand of the farmer; it takes root just as well, sprouts and brings forth fruit." "A dollar from the hand of a peasant," says St. Gregory Nazianzen, "is worth as much as if received from the hand of a prince." The same saint says, furthermore: "To what shall I compare bad priests if not to baptismal water, which washes away the sins of the person baptized, and sends him to the kingdom of heaven, whilst it is itself cast away into the bowels of the earth."

For the validity of a sacrament it is required of the minister that he have the intention of doing what the Church does.

On the part of the recipient, if the sacrament is to bring to him holiness and grace, it is necessary that he should present himself for its reception with faith, confidence, and love, with humility and devotion; that he have previously put away all hindrances to the effectiveness of the sacrament, and apply all his intentions to the obtaining of sacramental grace. The sun shines brightly and healthfully in our dwellings; but if we cut off its ingress, either by walling up the windows or closing the shutters, it cannot exercise its wholesome influence. The room becomes dark and unhealthy, although the sun is shining brightly and warmly without. Such, too, is the condition of our heart when we have not made a good and careful preparation for receiving the sacraments, and thus culpably shut out the light and warmth of sacramental grace.

He who receives a sacrament unworthily commits a grievous sin, a sacrilege. What was intended to avail unto salvation works our perdition.

The Ceremonies.

The ceremonies usually employed in the administration of the sacraments—namely, the sensible signs and actions united to the matter and form—have been ordained by the Church assisted by the Holy Ghost, in order to increase our devotion and reverence for the sacraments, and also to signify to us both the effects that they operate in us and the duties that we take upon ourselves when receiving them.

REFLECTION.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

The Signification and Operation of the Sacraments.



THE holy sacraments are special fountains of grace, having their original source in Christ: "You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains" (Is. xii. 3). "Of His fulness we all received, and grace for grace; for grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John i. 16, 17).

The Number and Division of the Sacraments.

"Wisdom hath built herself a house, she hath hewed her out seven pillars" (Prov. ix. 1). These words refer to the seven sacraments. Concerning the indelible character imprinted, St. Paul says: "He that hath anointed us is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts" (II. Cor. i. 21).

The Dispenser of the Sacraments.

Bishops and priests are the ministers of the sacraments. "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and dispensers of the mysteries of God" (I. Cor. iv. 1). Christ "gave some apostles, and some prophets, and other some evangelists, and other some pastors and doctors, for the work of the ministry, for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 11).

The validity of a sacrament does not depend on the worthiness or unworthiness of the minister. "Neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (I. Cor. iii. 7).

The Recipients of the Sacraments.

"Let a man prove himself," when he is about to receive a sacrament, "and let all things be done decently and according to order" (I. Cor. xiv. 40). "Be zealous for the better gifts" (I. Cor. xii. 31). "When thou shalt sit to eat with a prince, consider diligently what is set before thy face" (Prov. xxiii. 1); that is to say, when you are about to receive a sacrament, consider diligently the graces that the Lord your God offers to you.

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

Meaning and Effect of the Sacraments.

Signification of the sacraments : "Who is the author of the sacraments if Christ is not? Have we not received them from Heaven?" (St. Ambrose.) "The sacraments of the Old Law foreshadowed the advent of the Saviour; those of the New Testament supply salvation" (St. Augustine). "When was Eve formed? Whilst Adam was asleep. When did the sacraments issue forth from the side of Christ? When He slept on the cross" (The Same).

Effect of the sacraments : "The sacraments raise up the fallen and satisfy the hungry and thirsty, satisfying them without disgust: nay more, while meeting the needs of the soul they generate a new longing" (St. Augustine). "The sacraments of God are a pleasant meadow. On one side you may pluck a fresh flower, which of itself emits a glorious fragrance of a happy resurrection. In another place you may pluck a lily, in which is pictured the brightness of eternity. Again, you may pluck a rose, which is the blood of the Lord; indeed, in this meadow the flock feeds on the Lord Himself" (St. Ambrose).

The Number and Division of the Sacraments.

"All our wants in the order of grace, as in the order of nature, are seven; and on that account Jesus Christ was pleased to institute seven sacraments, no more nor no less, because that many were required for the wants of the Church or of its individual members" (St. Thomas Aquinas). "Baptism is something great. It is the price of the ransom of those who were in slavery. It remits sin, gives to the soul new life, and clothes it with light; it is an ineffaceable seal of holiness. By this mark or seal we belong to the flock of Christ; and this seal we receive at the moment when the water cleanses our bodies—at which moment, too, the Holy Ghost sanctifies our souls and impresses upon them the sacred seal" (St. Cyril).

The Minister of the Sacraments.

The bishops and priests are the ministers of the sacraments. There is a great difference in the ecclesiastical and worldly state. The sacraments of the Old Law were far less significant than those of the New Testament, and could be administered only by certain persons. Only the priests of the tribe of Aaron durst exercise this function; and Ozias, because he attempted it, was struck by God" (St. Ambrose).

"The holy sacraments derive their effectiveness not from the ministers, but from Christ; hence, no account is to be taken of the worthiness or sinfulness of the minister. The sacraments are not any more true and holy because they are dispensed by a pious minister, for of themselves they are true and holy on account of the true and holy God Whose property they are" (St. Augustine). "Look not at the merit but at the office of the priest, especially in the administration of the sacraments, for God is accustomed to act through unworthy agents" (St. Ambrose). "Nothing is lessened in the grace of the sacrament by the manner of life of the priest" (St. Chrysostom). "Baptism is not like him by whose hands it is imparted, but like Him by Whose power it is given. In the Catholic Church nothing more is effected when the Eucharist is administered by a good priest and nothing less effected when administered by a bad one; for the mystery is accomplished, not through the merits of the consecrator but by the words of the Creator in the power of the Holy Ghost" (St. Augustine). "No work of human power is here transacted. He Who once operated at that last Supper operates now too. We have only the functions of the servants, but He is the One Who sanctifies and makes the transubstantiation" (St. Chrysostom).

The Recipient of the Sacraments.

"He who does not participate in the sacraments of the Lord is a deserter from the camp of God and His army" (St. Ambrose). "Only the one worthily prepared to receive receives the benefit of the sacrament. For the sacrament, if not accompanied by the receiver's fitness, is dead to the recipient" (St. Bernard). "I know that stone cannot bear fruit, no matter how much it be watered. Yet the water flows, it is true, through stone channels into the garden-beds. But the stone channel begets nothing in itself, while the garden produces abundant fruits. So it is with the spiritual power of a sacrament: it is received by the properly disposed and prepared subject, whilst through an unclean man it flows uselessly, though it is not itself defiled" (St. Augustine).

THE COUNCIL OF TRENT ON THE SACRAMENTS.

The General Council of Trent in its seventh session pronounced on the holy sacraments. It taught that through them all true righteousness is either begun, or if already begun is increased, or if lost is restored, and that without the sacraments

there is no righteousness. It also condemned all those erroneous teachings that tarnish the purity of the Catholic Church, and imperil the salvation of souls, by excommunicating from the Church their teachers and abettors. It says :

1. "If any man say the sacraments of the New Testament were not instituted by Our Lord Jesus Christ, or are less or more than seven : to wit, Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony, or that any of these seven is not a true and proper sacrament, let him be anathema."

2. "If any one say these seven sacraments are so equal one to another that no one of them is in any way higher than another, let him be anathema."

3. "If any man say that the sacraments of the New Testament are not necessary to salvation, but superfluous, and although not all of them are necessary for all men, nevertheless that without them, and without a desire for them, men can obtain from God the grace of justification through faith alone, let him be anathema."

4. "If any man say that the sacraments of the New Testament do not contain the graces which they signify, and do not impart these same graces to those who interpose no obstacle, as if they were only mere outward symbols of grace and justification, that one may receive through faith, and only mere outward marks of Christian profession, whereby the believers are distinguished among men from the unbelievers, let him be anathema."

5. "If any man say that through these sacraments, on the part of God, grace is not always imparted, and imparted to all who receive them worthily, but only sometimes to some few, let him be anathema."

6. "If any man say that in the three sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders there is not imprinted on the soul an indelible character,—that is to say, a spiritual and ineffaceable mark or sign,—let him be anathema."

7. "If any man say that all Christians have authority to preach and to administer the sacraments, let him be anathema."

8. "If any man say that to the dispensers of the sacraments, when they are administering the sacraments, at least the intention of doing what the Church does is not necessary, let him be anathema."

9. "If any man say that a minister of a sacrament who is in mortal sin does not administer or effectuate the sacrament, pro-

vided he observe all that is essential to the imparting and effectuating of such sacrament, let him be anathema."

10. "If any man say that the received and approved usages of the Catholic Church, that are usually observed in the solemn administration of the sacraments, may, without sin, be condemned or omitted at the option of the person administering, or be changed by every churchman into some new form, let him be anathema."

COMPARISONS.

The seven sacraments are the seven pillars mentioned in Solomon's proverbs, and on which Wisdom built her house. There it is thus written: "Wisdom hath built herself a house, she hath hewed her out seven pillars. She hath slain her victims, mingled her wine, and set forth her table. She hath sent her maids to invite to the tower, and to the walls of the city: whosoever is a little one, let him come to me. And to the unwise she said: Come, eat my bread, and drink the wine which I have mingled for you. Forsake childishness, and live and walk by the ways of prudence." Is it possible to explain these passages of Scripture otherwise than as referring to the sacraments? The eternal Wisdom of God, the Word made flesh, builds the Church as His house and supports it by the seven sacraments as so many pillars. The most important and prominent among them is that one which is at once sacrament and sacrifice, a true victim of sacrifice that under the appearances of bread and wine is served as flesh and blood on the table of the Lord. To this banquet Jesus Christ, the divine Wisdom, invites us, through His servants the priests. He who comes to it receives grace, and is filled with joy and peace, and strength and courage. He is thus made secure against the power of the evil spirit, as if in a tower and behind strong walls. Whosoever is little should receive the holy sacraments, and he shall become big and strong in grace. The unwise shall become wise through heavenly light. But to accomplish all this we must lay aside all the childish and foolish notions of the world, which, in its treasures and pleasures, believes that it is alone possessed of the most precious, and strive to secure the heavenly treasure offered to us in the sacrament. And as we there receive the greatest of all graces, namely the Sonship of God, we should walk after the ways of good sons, and with child-like confidence throw ourselves in the arms of Him Who is pleased to reveal to us His fatherliness.

The seven sacraments are the seven lamps which the prophet

Zacharias saw on a golden candlestick, and into which the oil was constantly flowing from a funnel, keeping the lamp replenished with oil and bright with light. In a similar manner, from Jesus the Anointed, the oil of grace flows ever into the seven sacraments, by which we are nourished and fed with the oil of heavenly gifts and illuminated with the light of the Holy Ghost.

They are the seven washings in the Jordan by which Naaman (IV. Kings v.) was cleansed of his leprosy. So, too, do the holy sacraments cleanse us from leprosy of the soul,—namely, mortal sin, and even venial sin.

They are the seven stars which, in Revelation i. 16, St. John saw in the right hand of the Son of Man, and which symbolize not only the crown of His bride,—namely, the Church,—but also the sacraments which are the ornaments of the Catholic Church, and the bright burning stars in the night of our earthly pilgrimage, lighting up our path to heaven, and adorning our souls with superhuman brilliancy.

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan Our Saviour taught His disciples the great commandment of loving our neighbor, and intimated to them to go and do likewise. This parable has also been understood and explained by the Fathers of the Church in a spiritual sense.

The traveller is no other than Adam, our first parent, who dwelt in Jerusalem—that is, in the paradise of the love and peace of God. But he left Jerusalem and went down to Jericho; he left what was heavenly and turned towards the earthly, yielding to the vain lust of appetite. Thus he and his descendants fell among robbers—that is, his soul and the souls of his posterity were robbed of divine grace, and left to perish by the wayside. The priest and the levite represent the Mosaic law and the law of nature, which passed by without being able or even wishing to help the much-injured and deeply wounded traveller. Thus the victim lay half dead, as all men did for four thousand years, in the deepest moral and spiritual desolation. Then came Jesus Christ, the Good Samaritan, Who, hated and rejected by the Jews, cast the eyes of His mercy on the poor souls of men, and prepared a remedy formed out of His own blood. He thus became the heavenly physician, as He Himself said to the Pharisees: "They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are ill" (Matt. ix. 12). He bound up the wounds of the sinner;

but this did not satisfy His love. He also took the wounded victim and brought him to an inn, which is the Church, to be there guarded and fostered. He then commended him to the host of the inn, His own successors; and that they might have wherewith to care and cure him, He left with them the coins of His divine grace, of His enduring grace, which the wounded man needed, till, fully restored to spiritual health, he may resume his journey towards his heavenly fatherland under the guidance of the angels who now conduct his soul.

THE SACRED NUMBER SEVEN.

It lay altogether to the free-will of the Lord how many means He would establish for our sanctification. Yet divine wisdom required that He should establish neither too few nor too many. For example, if Baptism were the only sacrament, the impression made by such sacrament on the mind of man would disappear and leave not a trace behind; for he would see it conferred on others, but never on himself, and hence would not realize, even once in his life, the grace of regeneration. If the sacraments were so many that they would be thrust upon a man at every and each of his acts, not one of them would leave a lasting impression on his mind. Religion should not be miserly in its blessings; yet there should not be so many of them that a man should have a choice which he would receive.

Now the number of the sacraments, as fixed by Christ, corresponds to the figure seven. This figure represents a holy number, which is intimately associated with the days of Creation, and which appears again and again in the Mosaic history. Thus it was decreed that whoever killed Cain should be *seven* times punished (Gen. iv. 15). God foretold the deluge to Noe seven days before it came, and ordered him to take into the ark seven pairs of clean animals and birds. It was in the seventh month of the deluge that Noe's Ark grounded in the mountains of Armenia. When Abraham was forming a covenant with Abimelech, he placed between them seven lambs as a sign of the agreement (Gen. xxi. 28). For seven days the Israelites in Egypt were to eat unleavened bread (Exodus xii. 15). Seven lights were attached to the great candlestick that stood before the curtain which concealed the holy of holies (Ex. xxv. 37). Seven times was the altar sprinkled at its dedication (Levit. viii. 11). Aaron and his sons when appointed priests were not to go out of the tent for seven days, which was the duration of the ordina-

tion. From the Sabbath of the Passover seven full weeks were to be reckoned, and then on the following day another food-sacrifice was to be offered (Levit. xxiii. 15). This sacrifice consisted of seven lambs. Every seventh year was the Sabbath year among the Jews, during which no field was tilled, and no vine trimmed. After every seven weeks of years—that is, after 49 years—came the great year of Jubilee, in which each man regained the property that he had been compelled to sell (Levit. xxv. 4, 8). When the prophet Balaam wanted to curse the people of Israel, and was compelled against his will to bless them, he ordered seven altars to be built (Numbers xxiii.). The Lord ordered His people to march around the city of Jericho, once a day, for six days. On the seventh day, the priests were to take seven trumpets and walk seven times around the place, and at the blast of the trumpets the walls of Jericho fell down (Josue vi. 3, 4). The strength of Samson lay in his seven locks of hair, which had never been cut by a scissors (Judges xvi. 19). While Elias was on Mount Carmel praying for rain, he sent his servants toward the west to look seven different times (III. Kings xviii. 43). The prophet Zacharias saw the high-priest, before whom there was a stone, on which there were seven eyes (Zacharias iii. 9). According to the revelation of the archangel Raphael, there were seven spirits standing before the throne of God (Tobias xii. 15). To the new temple, which prefigured God's Church of the New Law, there was an ascent of seven steps, for Ezechiel saw them (Ezechiel xl. 26). For seven weeks the apostles remained in Jerusalem, after the Resurrection, after which seven weeks they received the Holy Ghost (Acts ii. 2).

From all these evidences we may conclude that there exists some mysterious relation between the acts of Divinity and the number seven. We discover it in many of His ordinances. Mankind has received enlightenment on this point from the revelations of God, and this number recurs again and again in the more important acts of man. Hence it is in perfect harmony with the economy of God that as, after devoting six days to the creation of the material world, He appointed the seventh to be a day of rest, so also should the spiritual creation or regeneration of man, the begetting of a new spiritual race, be associated with six gifts of grace, all of which are to prepare for the seventh gift of Sabbath rest, which man enjoys here below in the reception of the Blessed Sacrament, and hereafter in the beatific vision of the Lamb without stain.

TESTIMONY OF A NON-CATHOLIC IN FAVOR OF THE SEVEN SACRAMENTS.

The renowned poet Goethe thus writes: "A young man and young woman clasp hands, not indeed as a passing greeting, nor for a dance; the priest pronounces his blessing over the pair, and the clasp is now inseparable. In due time the young couple bring an image of themselves to the foot of the altar. With consecrated water this image is purified, and so embodied in the Church that it is only through the most dreadful defection that this high privilege can be torn from it. Then the child is instructed in heavenly questions. When in course of time evidence is furnished that the young Christian is sufficiently strengthened he becomes a veritable citizen, a free-will member in the bosom of the Church, not without outward signs of the importance of this proceeding—namely, through Confirmation. Now has he been made truly a Christian, a strong and perfect Christian, and he recognizes for the first time the privileges as well as the duties of the strengthened Christian. But meanwhile there has occurred to him much that is human, there has been opened up to him how doubtful it is with his soul, and many transgressions will occur again and again. Just here in his discouraged state there is given to him a glorious means of salvation: namely, to confide his deeds, his omissions, his shortcomings, to a worthy man, specially appointed, who rouses him, warns him, comforts him, and by a complete extinction of his guilt revives and inspires him, and restores to him, once more cleansed, the tablet of his humanity. Thus prepared and tranquillized by sacramental acts, he kneels down to receive the consecrated host. To elevate and augment the mystery of this act, he sees the chalice in the distance. This is no common eating or drinking that comforts him. It is a celestial food, and one that makes him thirsty after celestial drink. Yet neither the youth nor the full-grown man believes that it ends here, for in heavenly things we never learn the end. Again and again we need counsel, comfort, and help. Now still another means of grace is instituted for such purpose. All through life there is awaiting us a man intelligent and pious, ready to reclaim the erring and to relieve the burdened. What through life has been tested shall prove its powers of healing in a tenfold degree at the gates of death. When every earthly guarantee disappears, a heavenly one secures for the weak a blessed existence forever. Finally, even the feet are anointed and blessed, in order that the whole man may be sanc-

tified. Even in case of recovery, the feet shall feel an unwillingness to touch hard, impenetrable soil. A wonderful elasticity shall be imparted to them, by which they may cast off the clod that hitherto held them down. Thus by a bright series of holy acts of equal value, cradle and grave are connected in an unbroken circle, no matter how wide apart they may happen to be. But all these supernatural wonders do not originate from the natural soil; they must be sought by prayer from above. Now here we encounter the highest mystery; we learn that one man can be favored, blessed and sanctified from above more than another. Lest this might appear to be a natural gift, this great privilege, burdened with a heavy duty, must be transferred from one chosen one to the other, and the greatest good that man can attain must be preserved and kept intact on earth by spiritual inheritance. And thus the priest by his ordination enters the line of his predecessors and successors, representing in the circle of his colleagues the Great Blessor on high. His position is the grander, because it is not he whom we revere but his office; it is not at his beckoning that we bend our knees, but at the blessing which he dispenses, and which seems to come to us all the holier and more directly, because the earthly tool could not weaken or spoil it by a sinful or even a vicious life."

How this truly spiritual connection has been shattered in Protestantism, by declaring one part of the sacraments to be uncanonical! And how are they going to prepare us for the high dignity of the remaining ones by the insignificance of the others?

EXAMPLES.

Fountains of Health.

A holy priest said, with a sigh: "How many sick persons frequent distant and expensive baths! How many inconveniences they undergo in expectation of being cured of this or that bodily ailment! Yet we have miraculous springs for all maladies of the soul—which are the sacraments. These fountains of grace heal all the afflicted who make proper use of them. How comes it, then, that so many sinners neglect to have recourse to these healing waters? And why, of those who do come, are so many indifferent and unprepared?"

The Diseased Janitor.

St. Bridget advised and taught a soul who feared to receive absolution and communion from the hands of an unworthy priest, and who thought that the power of the sacrament would be un-

favorably affected. The saint said : " Do not be uneasy on that point ; for, although the porter have the leprosy, yet if he have the key he can open the door as well as a sound person. The case is the same with the priest and the administration of the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist."

The Tepid Christian and the Pious Teacher.

A lukewarm Christian, who went often enough to the sacraments, but failed to experience any of their beneficial workings, for the reason that he acted more out of custom than devotion, complained with much disappointment that he could discover in himself no improvement of conduct, nor perceive any of the grand effects always ascribed to the sacraments, which they should necessarily produce in men, since they derive their power and value from God.

In order to correct this erroneous state of mind, and to awaken the complainant from his tepidity, a pious teacher stood up and spoke thus : " A health fountain or medicinal spring, that flows constantly for the benefit of all, derives its forces from the Creator of nature Himself, and not from the person who applies to the sick, nor from the sick who drink the waters. Now these springs will be of far more benefit to such persons as observe the directions of their physician by avoiding injurious eating, drinking, etc., than to others who indeed drink freely from them, but who do so with overloaded stomachs, or who after drinking the healthful waters do not refrain from forbidden pleasures, etc.

"Persons acting thus should not complain of the failure of the waters to benefit them. They should attribute such failure to their own want of prudence, if that precious gift of nature produce no improvement in their bodily condition, or even, perhaps, on account of their own imprudence, weaken still further their already shattered system.

"Hence it is easy to see that although the sacraments, from their institution by Christ, have within themselves and of themselves a special healing power independent of the minister or recipient, yet we must not falsely believe that we have not our part to perform, or indeed nothing to do but to partake of this or that sacrament. We should not blunder so foolishly concerning the doctrine that the sacraments operate through their own innate strength. Their reception must be preceded by a becoming preparation, or, in case such preparation be not possible, there must

be no hindrance present that would render null and void the grace-bringing power of the sacrament."

The tepid Christian was deeply affected by these words, and felt only too plainly that, if the sacraments did not manifest in him their salutary effects, the fault was altogether his own.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

As God in the creation and wonderful government of the world was concerned for our bodily necessities, so in instituting the sacraments He was equally concerned for the necessities of our souls. These sacraments are like seven channels, through which the merits of the atoning death of Christ are to be conveyed to our souls.

And in order that forgetfulness of them may not steal upon our souls, we see them flowing like sweet brooklets at every step of our own life. In them the child and the gray-haired sire, the youth and the man of mature age, the strong man and the dying man, the happy man and the mourner, all find strength, consolation and peace of mind. Remove one of the sacraments and you deprive thousands of such comfort and happiness and of support in the vicissitudes of life. How infinitely great are the riches, goodness, and wisdom of God!

The Sacraments in Particular.

Baptism.

INSTRUCTION.

Meaning and Nature of Baptism.



BAPTISM is a sacrament in which, by water and the word of God, the individual is cleansed from original sin and from all other actual sins that he may have committed before Baptism, and is born again to eternal life and sanctified in Christ as a new creature.

Baptism is a real sacrament, because in it are to be found all the qualities of a sacrament.

Christ the Lord instituted it when He permitted St. John to baptize Him in the river Jordan. "Christ was pleased to be baptized," says Gregory Nazianzen, "in order to drown the old

Adam in the water, and especially to sanctify the water that it might have the effect of sanctifying those who would be baptized in it."

The command to baptize was for the first time given to His apostles just before Christ's ascension into heaven, when He said: "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth; going, therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. xxviii. 19).

The outward sign of Baptism is the water and the word of God.

The water used in the administration of the sacrament of Baptism is the water which the Church blesses specially for that purpose on Holy Saturday and on Whitsuneve. It is called baptismal water. If such be not at hand, holy water may be used, and, in default of that, ordinary water will suffice. It must be incorrupt, natural water and not artificial, as rose-water, for example. There must be enough to flow from the head of the person baptized. Hence it is not sufficient to merely sprinkle the head with holy water.

Baptism is performed by pouring water three times on the head of the person to be baptized, each pouring to be done in the form of the cross, with the words clearly pronounced: "I baptize thee in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." If a child is to be baptized during birth and when there is danger of death, the water may be applied to any portion of the body that presents itself, if the head cannot be reached. If there is a doubt as to whether the child is alive, the words used at the pouring of the water are: "If thou art alive, I baptize," etc. If it is doubtful whether a child has been baptized or not, the conditional baptism is to be administered with the words: "If thou art not baptized, I baptize thee," etc.

Our blessed Lord had a purpose when He selected water as the matter of baptism, for it symbolizes in a remarkable manner the operations of that sacrament. As water cleanses the body from stains, so does Baptism free the soul from its stains, which are its sins. And as water is proper for refreshing the body and cooling it, so does Baptism cool our inordinate desires and refresh and strengthen our souls against temptation.

The grace operations of holy Baptism are twofold: 1, it delivers the baptized person from evils; 2, it supplies him with special benefits.

By Baptism man is purified from all sin; that is to say, original



CIRCUMCISION.

sin and all the actual sins he may have committed before Baptism are forgiven, and at the same time the temporal and eternal penalties due to those sins are remitted.

This doctrine God permitted to be foretold in ancient times by the mouth of the prophet Ezechiel (xxxvi. 25): "I will pour upon you clean water and you shall be cleansed from all your filthiness."

St. Peter said

to those persons who, on the occasion of his first preaching, asked him what they should do: "Do penance and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins" (Acts ii. 38). In regard to the remission of the temporal and eternal punishment due to sin, the apostle St. Paul says: "There is now, therefore, no condemnation to them that are [baptized] in Christ Jesus." Pope Eugene IV. teaches clearly: "The effect of this sacrament is the remission of all punishment due to sin. Hence to baptized persons no task of satisfaction is to be imposed for their former sins. If they die before they commit another sin, they at once obtain heaven

and enter on the beatific vision of God." This is perfectly natural and reasonable; for man being born again by Baptism is altogether a new being, and as such is under no obligation to suffer for the sins and carry the guilt of the former man. Besides all this, the person is by Baptism united with Christ, and thus acquires a share in the merits and all-sufficient satisfaction of Christ.

Again, holy Baptism bestows on the person baptized the three following benefits: 1, Man is born again and made holy; 2, he is made a child of God, an heir of heaven; 3, he is joined to Christ and incorporated with the Church.

Before Baptism we live in sin, and living in sin is the death of the soul. By Baptism we are freed from sin, and thus the soul is restored to life, for it is born again for God and heaven. Very properly, then, does Holy Writ describe this change as being "born over again;" and as this regeneration is accomplished by the spirit of



THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST.

God through sanctifying grace, it is further called being "born again of the Holy Ghost."

Baptism makes us children of God. Hence St. Paul writes : " You are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized in Christ Jesus have put on Christ" (Gal. iii. 26). " Now if we are children and sons of God, we are also heirs through God" (Gal. iv. 3). Whosoever then hath his name written in the baptismal register will have it also entered on the book of life. If a Christian be damned he has lost all his privileges and happiness, and his name that once stood written in the book of life is stricken from its pages.

By Baptism we are united to Christ and admitted to His Church, according to St. Paul, who writes that those who have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ. As such members of the body of Christ we are, at Baptism, received most formally and solemnly into that Church, outside of which there is no salvation; and thus we acquire the right to have a share in all the grace-treasures deposited in the Church by Christ, in all the prayers, sacrifices, and works of the Church and the faithful ; for all the prayers said in the Church, all the sacrifices, all the good works belong to the common treasury, from which every one of the faithful has a right to draw.

The human inclinations and weaknesses God leaves in us even after Baptism, that we may not be too confident of our own virtue, and be vigilant in guarding against our enemies.

Baptismal Promises.

These excellent and precious graces or effects of Baptism are not bestowed upon us without corresponding duties on our part.

At Baptism God makes with the baptized Christian, and the latter makes with God, a contract, which we call the baptismal covenant. God promises His grace and never-ending happiness to the baptized person ; and the latter promises to believe in the Triune God, to obey Christ and His Church, to renounce the devil with all his works and pomps and pride, and to walk worthily as a sanctified Christian, as a son and heir of God, as a brother of Christ, a member of the Holy Catholic Church, and an agent of the Holy Ghost.

These holy promises which we make in Baptism are called baptismal vows. They are inviolable vows, for, although all other vows can be dispensed with, no one, no power in heaven or on earth, can release us from our baptismal promises. They have not been made to men, but to God in the church, the

house of God, before heaven and earth, in hearing of the angels, who are witnesses of the word and of the fidelity plighted by the subject in Baptism.

Lest we become unfaithful to these promises, we ought to renew them often. We should do so especially: 1, on the day of our first Communion, for next in importance to the grace-laden day of our Baptism comes our First Communion day, also laden with graces, on which we should vow a new fidelity to God and again renounce the devil; 2, on every Sunday, for on that day, too, every Christian should renew himself spiritually; 3, on our patron saint's day, and on the anniversary of our Baptism, for those are days best calculated to remind us of the graces received in our Baptism, and of the duties that we then and there took upon ourselves.

But it is not enough to renew, even frequently, our baptismal promises. We must also sincerely endeavor to carry out in practical life what we promise in such renewals. Of what avail or use will it be to us to have been baptized, and to wear the seal of election on our souls, if at the same time we tread the paths of impiety and perdition?

Necessity of Baptism.

Baptism stands at the head and front of the seven sacraments, because it is the first and most necessary sacrament, without which we cannot be saved nor admitted to any other sacrament. "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven" (John iii. 5).

But not alone grown persons—even infants must be baptized; for these words of Christ apply to every member of the human family, to every sex and age—consequently, to children.

What loss is suffered by children who die without baptism remains a secret to us, for God has revealed nothing on the subject. Such children, being laden with original sin, can have no claim on heaven, for nothing defiled can enter heaven. Yet they will not be condemned to everlasting fire, for only personal sins are punished by the everlasting fire of hell. Many of the Fathers of the Church and other pious and learned souls hold that God created a special place for such children, where, although deprived of the happiness of heaven, they enjoy a natural happiness and love in the Lord.

Since Baptism is so indispensably necessary to salvation, the

Church has declared that, in case of necessity, any person can baptize, whether man or woman, cleric or lay ; a believer, or even a heretic, in certain circumstances. But the proper and regular ministers of Baptism are the bishops and the priests appointed for that purpose.

For the validity of such a private baptism it is required:

1. That the person who baptizes have the intention to really baptize—that is, to administer the sacrament which Christ instituted, and which the Church confers when her ministers give Baptism.

2. The water used must be natural water, or, if such cannot be had, holy water, or baptismal water; and this must be poured on the head of the person to be baptized, or, if this cannot be done, then on the body itself.

3. This action and the words must go together. That is, when pouring the water, the person must at that very moment pronounce the words, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

4. Two persons cannot join in the giving of baptism ; it must be all done by one and the same person. If one were to pour the water and a second pronounce the words, "I baptize thee," etc., the baptism would not be valid ; for the one pronouncing the words does not do what he says he does; and the other, who does it, does not say what he does.

Baptism of Desire and by Blood.

Besides Baptism by water, there is also a Baptism of desire and a Baptism in blood, which may take the place of the Baptism of water when it cannot be obtained.

Baptism of desire is an earnest longing and perfect will to obtain Baptism, joined to perfect contrition and love for God. In such cases those conditions are present that are necessary to a valid reception; for if the possibility do not exist, God regards the good will, and takes the will for the deed.

Baptism in blood is a voluntary martyr's death for the sake of Christ. The constancy which gives up life itself includes faith, charity, desire, and contrition.

Sponsors.

At a Baptism the Church requires the presence of sponsors, who are to act as securities that their god-children will remain true to the grace which they received in Baptism, and fulfil the promises which the sponsors made in their name.

The sponsors have the following obligations: 1. They are to bring the subject to Baptism, and if he is incapable of doing it, they pronounce in his stead and for him the vows of Baptism. 2. They are required, in case of abandonment on the part of parents, or their death, to look after the spiritual and bodily welfare of their god-child. In case the parents neglect to afford a proper training to the child, the sponsors must keep an observant eye on it from time to time, caution it against evil, and urge it to goodness.

Since sponsors have such important and sacred duties to perform, parents of children and pastors should not be indifferent in the choice of proper and capable persons for that office. Sponsors should possess the following qualifications:

1. They should be of a suitable age; the godfather should be at least fourteen and the godmother at least twelve years old. For how could the Church accept as sureties mere children, who do not understand what they are doing?

2. They should be Catholics. The Church cannot admit as sureties persons who do not belong to her fold.

3. They should be well instructed in the mysteries of religion and things of faith. He who himself knows nothing of religion or religious subjects cannot be a guarantee of religious training in others.

4. They should be correct in their moral life. How could a bad and unscrupulous man contribute to a good training for his god-child? Hence the Church excludes public and reckless sinners, such as drunkards and others.

To act the part of sponsor is at all times a work of neighborly charity. Hence no one should shun it without grave reason. On the other hand, it is injudicious for persons to stand sponsor for so many children that they are afterwards unable to look after them if such should become necessary.

Sponsors contract a spiritual affinity with their god-children and their parents. Hence, unless by dispensation, they cannot marry the baptized person nor his parents. In order to prevent the accumulation of affinities among too many persons, and thus augment the impediments to matrimony, the Church usually admits but one, or at most two, sponsors at a baptism. The others who may be present are only witnesses of the baptism, or sort of honorary sponsors, who contract no affinity with any one.

Ceremonies of Baptism.

The Church has surrounded the administration of Baptism with several ceremonies, which are intended to impress upon the hearts of the faithful the solemn importance of this holy function, that they may the better preserve its graces, or regain them again by penance.

The following are the ceremonies :

1. The sponsors are first to stand before the church-door with the child to be baptized; for the Church is a symbol of heaven, into which nothing defiled can enter. Previous to their baptism children are unclean and under the power of the devil.

2. The priest breathes three times in the form of a cross on the child, as a sign that the power of the evil enemy is broken by the breathing of the Holy Ghost.

3. The priest signs the forehead of the child to be baptized with the sign of the cross. The Christian should not be ashamed of the cross of Christ, and should openly profess the doctrines of the Crucified.

4. The priest also makes the same sign on the breast of the child, for it should ever cherish in its heart a love for the cross of Christ.

5. A few grains of salt are placed in the mouth of the child. Salt is a symbol of heavenly wisdom. The baptized person should seek such wisdom, and cultivate a taste for the things of God.

6. The priest places the stole on the child, and takes possession of it in the name of Christ, Who has freed it from the power of the devil. Henceforth it belongs to its Redeemer.

7. The priest touches the ears and nose of the child with spittle, at the same time saying, "Be thou opened to the fragrance of meekness." This is in commemoration of the action of Christ with regard to the deaf and dumb man in the Gospel to whom He restored the faculty of hearing and speaking. Until baptism we are in sin. Persons in sin are deaf to the word of God, and likewise dumb in speaking His praises. The baptized person is now cured, and henceforth he shall both hear and proclaim God's word.

8. The child is then anointed with holy oil on the breast and between the shoulders. This points again to the cross of Christ, which the Christian should love in his heart and bear willingly on his shoulders.

9. The head of the child is also anointed with chrism, as a sign that the Christian has a share in the royal and priestly dignity of Jesus Christ. It was to newly-baptized Christians that St. Peter said: "You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood."

10. A white cloth is laid upon the child, with the words: "Receive this white garment: carry it un-



ST. PHILIP BAPTIZING THE EUNUCH OF QUEEN CANDACE.

stained before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ, that thou mayest have life everlasting."

11. Then the sponsors place their right hands on a lighted candle, while the priest says: "Receive this burning light; keep thy baptism without stain; observe the commandments of God, that when the Lord shall come to the nuptial feast thou mayest go forth to meet Him together with all the saints, and have life everlasting."

These are reminders to the effect that those only reach heaven who are clothed with a wedding garment, and that a Christian should keep his light burning before men, that they

may see his good works, and render honor to their Father in heaven (Matt. v. 16).

12. The name of a saint is given to the person to be baptized: 1, To signify that by baptism he is numbered among Christians, whom St. Paul calls "saints." 2, That he may have a guardian, patron, and intercessor. 3, That the saint whose name he bears may be to him a model and example for the direction of his life. Hence, as far as it is possible, parents should choose for their children names appropriate to their condition in life.

REFLECTION.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.



WILL pour out waters upon the thirsty ground, and streams upon the dry land: I will pour out My spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thy stock. And they shall spring up among the herbs, as willows beside the running waters" (Is. xlv. 3, 4). "In that day there shall be a fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for the washing of the sinner" (Zach. xiii. 1). "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark xvi. 16). "Know you not that all we, who are baptized in Christ Jesus, are baptized in His death?" (Rom. vi. 3.)

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"Man, before he receives the name of God, is doomed to death. But when he has received that seal, he is freed from death and restored to life. That seal is the water. When men descend into this water they are as yet doomed to death, but when they come out they are elected unto life" (Hermas). "As from dry flour without water neither dough nor bread can be made, neither can we without the water which is from heaven be joined in Christ. And as the arid earth when deprived of moisture bears no fruit, so we, who are originally but dry wood, would never make our life fruitful without the spontaneous and freely-given blessing from above. For by the bath set up for incorruption have our bodies received union, and by the spirit our souls also received union. Hence both are necessary, for they are conducive to life in God" (St. Irenæus). "Baptism is called a bath, because our sins are washed away in it; grace, because by it the well-deserved penalties of sin are remitted; illu-

mination, because through it we see God, that sacred and saving light; and, finally, completion, because after it man needs nothing more. God's grace supplies us with perfection" (St. Clement of Alexandria). "Whosoever descends with faith into this bath of regeneration renounces evil, pledges himself to Christ. He renounces the enemy and acknowledges that Christ is God. He puts off slavery and puts on the dignity of a son. He emerges from baptism shining like the sun, beaming with the lightning of justice" (Hippolytus). "Baptism washes away all sins, both original sin and actual sin; sins of thought, word, and work; the sins that we forget and those that we remember. He Who created man regenerates him. He pardons sins and demands no reparation. When one departs from this life immediately after baptism, there is nothing left for him to atone. All is remitted him" (St. Augustine).

THE ANCIENT RITE OF BAPTISM.

In early Christian times, when the many enemies of Christianity rendered caution necessary, lest one of them should gain admittance to the fold, and while acting the hypocrite should betray the mysteries of the Church, the obtaining of Baptism was attended with some difficulty. The manner in which it was conferred shows what solicitous preparation was required, and how highly valued were its graces. We also discover that the ceremonies of Baptism, as now practised, are only a summing up in one act, which in early times extended over the space of months.

When a person desired Baptism, he had to mention it to the bishop or priest, and then came—

1. The Reception. The postulant was signed with the sign of the cross; the chief points of the Christian belief and morals were made known to him, and he was asked whether he accepted them. If he answered affirmatively, he was enrolled and admitted among the catechumens.

After several days of trial came—

2. The laying on of hands, a ceremony of dedication, and one to which a great power was ascribed.

On seven different days during Lent—

3. The conjurations or exorcisms on the catechumens took place. These in their essential points were then about the same as they are now, and had the same triple breathing. Then passages were read from Holy Scripture, as follows: "Shall the prey be taken from the strong? or can that which was taken by

the mighty be delivered? For thus saith the Lord: Yea, verily, even the captivity shall be taken away from the strong: and that which was taken by the mighty shall be delivered" (Is. xlix. 24, 25). "You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood" (I. Pet. ii. 9). Then followed the history of the deaf and dumb man, from St. Mark's account (vii). After this came:

4. The opening of the ears of the catechumens, who then received—



BAPTISM.

5. The mystery of the salt. At the same time they made—

6. Their renunciation of Satan, during which act ashes were strewn on their heads.

On the eve of the fourth Sunday of Lent the candidates were taught—

7. The Apostles' Creed, and eight days afterwards—

8. The Our Father was explained.

Now came:

9. The act of Baptism, which took place only at Easter and Whitsuntide,

and later on at the Epiphany. The Baptism was done by immersion, as it is still the practice in the Greek Church, in large

cisterns built in the floor of the church, which were reached by several steps downwards.

10. After the immersion the new Christian was anointed on the crown of his head with chrism by the bishop and attending priests.

In order that the chrism might not be desecrated, the neophyte's head was covered with a white cap, through which ran a red band, which symbolized the sufferings of Christ. This bandage was to be worn for eight days, and only the priest could finally take it off. It was then either burned or preserved in the Church to serve at the baptism of some poor person. Any person who lost his cap before the expiration of eight days was visited by the Church authorities with a very severe penance. After the anointing the neophyte received—

11. The kiss of peace, and the psalm was sung, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered" (Psalm xxxi. 1). Then he was arrayed in—

12. The white garment, and a small wreath of flowers, and in his hand was put—

13. The burning candle. Thus arrayed, he was led up on a high place and confirmed. After Confirmation came the celebration of Mass, at which first Communion was given.

The white garment was worn seven days. These seven days represented the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. The day for the laying aside of the white garment was Low Sunday; hence its Latin name, Sunday in white. This ceremony was performed by the priests at the baptismal font. During the seven days the neophyte was expected to be present and to receive Communion at the daily sacrifice. In Rome the newly-baptized person was presented with a wax figure, blessed, and representing the Lamb of God, called an *Agnus Dei*, as a type of future meekness of life, and also as a memorial. After the laying off of the white garment, the baptized person received for the first time full instruction. The anniversary of the baptismal day was kept a holiday, and the promises were renewed. From all this it is plain that those who find fault with our ceremonies of to-day have no ground for saying that they are of modern invention. Original Christianity, with its living and fervent traditions, the earliest Christian times show us that in the administration of Baptism everything was carried out as it is now, only with more solemnity—not, however, in one hurried act, but through a series of ritual observances. Here, as well as in all things done by the Church,

we see the sense and spirit of the sacrament admirably expressed in the ceremonies.

COMPARISONS.

As the sick man comes out of the bath newly strengthened, so does the soul come forth from Baptism not only purified from sin, but strengthened in grace and endowed with the sonship of God.

Every one who is born again in holy Baptism is, as it were, cut off from Adam, the sinful vine-stock, and grafted as a new branch to the living tree, who is Christ Jesus, that he may bloom and bear fruit for eternal life.

It is for the soldier a most sacred duty to observe faithfully and bravely the oath of allegiance. Remember! thou, too, in Baptism hast registered a vow to God, the just and eternal. How will it fare with thee, if thou become a perjurer before God the Lord, and desert thy colors?

EXAMPLES.

The Baptism, Conversion, and Martyrdom of Genesius.

Genesius suffered martyrdom at Rome, during the joint reign of Diocletian and Maximian. He was a teacher of the drama, and one day offered to show the emperor Diocletian the manner in which the Christians celebrated their religious mysteries. The emperor came with a multitude of people to witness the performance. Then Genesius lay himself down in the middle of the theatre, played the part of a sick man, and begged and implored to be baptized; at the same time gesticulating wildly and crying out, "Alas! my friends, I feel myself heavily burdened and wish to find relief." One of the actors replied, "How can we lighten your load? Are we carpenters, who should lay you on the planing bench and plane you down?" At these words the large audience were convulsed with laughter. But Genesius, whom the Lord was now punishing, cried out to the spectators: "You deluded people! I am a Christian, and long for death." They asked him, "Why so?" He rejoined, "That I may not be found to be a cowardly deserter." At this even the emperor was compelled to laugh aloud. Then the priest and exorcist came on the stage, as previously arranged, and drawing near to Genesius asked him: "Son, why didst thou send for us?" Genesius replied: "Because I wish to participate in the saving grace won for us by Christ, and thereby to be born again and made free from the misery of my sinfulness." He then received the sacrament, was clothed in a white garment, dragged through the

sand of the arena by the soldiers, as was usually done to the saints who were to suffer for the faith, and was presented before the emperor to render an account of his religious belief. But though apparently acting the part of a martyr, he was one in reality. Ascending a pedestal, on which stood the statue of Venus, he thus spoke: "Hear me, O Emperor and people! I have always abhorred the very name of Christian. I have ever ridiculed those who were true to such belief, and have excited against them the anger of the people. I have even cursed my parents and other friends because they were Christians. So intense was my dislike for the name of Christ that I studied their most hidden mysteries, not indeed with a view of embracing them, but in order to act them out before you in the most ridiculous comedy, and thus to make them an object of contempt.

"But just now, as the water was poured on my head and I pronounced the words, 'I believe,' I saw a hand descending from heaven, and near me an angel standing, and reading from a book the long list of my sins, who then said to me: 'This water washes away all these many grievous sins of thine.' And when the Baptism was concluded, I saw the leaves of the book made whiter than snow. Thus, while I was striving to please an earthly master, I pleased the Lord of heaven and earth, and while trying to make you laugh, I brought joy to the angels in heaven. And now, O Emperor and all ye people assembled here, cease to mock these holy mysteries which you and I have opposed in our ignorance. Believe that Jesus Christ is true God, the true light, the way and the life, and the only One Who can take away our sins." The astonished Emperor in a rage ordered all who had taken part in the performance to be scourged with rods, for he thought they were all of the same belief as Genesius. But these persons protested vehemently: "We do not believe the same as this crazy man, who has fallen into the ways and notions of the Christians. He alone is responsible and he alone deserves punishment, not we." Genesius was then subjected to the most cruel torments, yet ceased not to repeat to his cruel executioners, "You may torture and destroy my body, but you cannot banish Christ from my heart." At last he won the martyr's crown, on the 8th day of September.

Baptism by Blood.

The heroic constancy of the Christian martyrs could not fail to make a deep impression on those who, whether as mere

spectators or as sufferers themselves, were present at their martyrdom. Hence, we find that not only did Christians by their meekness and patience while in prison convert their jailers, baptizing them and their families, so that when the soldiers came to conduct the prisoners to death the jailers went along with them and fearlessly confessed the same faith and sought the same fate, but even the very executioners threw away their instruments of torture during the martyrdom, and professed themselves fellow-believers of those whom they tortured but could not conquer. Such was the action of the executioner of St. Alban; of another, also in England, named Antony; of Sts. Sôstenes and Wicklar, once executioners under the Emperor Diocletian; of Apollinaris, a hangman in Rheims; of St. Cyriacus, another hangman; and of eight executioners who were converted at the martyrdom of St. Martina. These and countless others to whom God showed mercy were martyrs baptized in their own blood. Such was the case, too, with St. Ardalion, who, like Genesius and Porphyrius, was a public actor and derided the Christians, but who was converted by the constancy of his subjects of derision, and being burnt to death entered into life.

The Gate of Heaven.

Clovis I., King of the Franks, was baptized in the year 496, at Rheims, by St. Remigius. When he was conducted into the church, which was magnificently decorated and brilliantly illuminated with thousands of lights and sweetly fragrant with the odors of rich incense, he was so overpowered at the effect, as well as at the sight of the ceremonies, that he turned to St. Remigius and inquired: "Father, is this the kingdom of heaven that you promised to me?" "My prince," replied the Bishop, "this is only a shadow of it," and then, pointing to the baptismal font, he added: "See, that is the gate leading to the true kingdom." During the ceremony Remigius exhorted the king, saying: "Lay aside all pride, practise humility and mildness; adore what thou hast hitherto burned, and burn the idols which thou hast hitherto adored." This king was baptized on Christmas-day, and out of regard for this important conversion of royalty many bishops in subsequent ages permitted public baptisms to be performed on that feast, as well as on those regularly appointed for the administration of that sacrament.



BAPTISM IN THE CATACOMBS.

Esteem of Baptismal Graces.

St. Louis, King of France, always cherished great respect and affection for the place of his baptism. Often and often he would kneel down before the sacred baptismal font in the Castle Chapel at Poissy, where he had been baptized, and pass hours in acts of thanksgiving to God for the favors bestowed upon him in that holy sacrament. Often, too, he used to sign his name to the most important documents simply as "Louis of Poissy," and without any symbol of his royal dignity. When asked by his courtiers why he went so often to the chapel at Poissy, why he preferred that unseemly, insignificant little chapel to the grand and stately cathedral at Rheims, in which he had been crowned king, he used to reply: "Have I not good reason for being more fond of the spot where I obtained the dignity of Christian than of the place where I received only the empty, fleeting honors of an earthly king? At Rheims I was decorated with the crown of my father, and anointed as an earthly ruler. But at Poissy I was adorned with the precious crown of Jesus Christ, and anointed as a child of God. By my coronation at Rheims I received the right only to rule over my subjects, and to sit upon an earthly throne, whose power and splendor must leave me at my death. But at my baptism in Poissy, on the contrary, I received the right to sit upon a throne of everlasting glory in heaven."

Baptismal Promises.

Necessary as the grace of Baptism is for securing the kingdom of heaven, equally necessary is it to keep the promises made at the time of its reception—namely, carefully to avoid every sin as a work of the devil, to believe in the Triune God, and to follow the teachings of Christ faithfully. This truth is forcibly shown and proven by the following history related by Pope Benedict XIV., in his famous work on the "Beatification of the Servants of God." This wonderful history was communicated to the Holy See by the Bishop of Esseste, in the province of Kenxi in Asia.

In a village of that country there lived a man named Lunhie, with the surname Ly. Although his parents had become Christians and urged him often to be baptized and live in accordance with the teachings of Christ, he did not do so, because he did not want to leave the path of sin—a path which even baptized Christians too often tread, and, forgetting that they are soon to die, become liable to meet increased suffering in the next world for having neglected to correspond with the grace of Baptism in

this life. At last, falling sick with a malignant affection of the throat, the man died on the 21st of December, 1734, without receiving Baptism; for, although he asked for it in the last moment, he was unwilling to express repentance for his sins.

On the following day, December 22d, a niece of this man's, aged three years, died, having received Baptism and the name Lucy just before death, at the hands of a pious Christian.

Lunhie was placed in his coffin, and on the 23d of December mourned according to the custom of the country by his surviving parents. But on that very day the dead man came to life, left his coffin, and said: "Baptize me at once, for I wish to obey God's commandments." The spectators were not more astonished at his return to life than they were at his change of conduct, for previously it had been impossible to induce him to lead a life conformable with the teachings of Christ. When questioned about this change in his sentiments, he answered: "When I was dead, I came to a place where I could not enter. Driven back by some unseen and unknown power, I soon found myself on the road to hell. Then I was met by a youth, who said to me: 'Why do you refuse to live according to God's holy commandments?' All of a tremble, I uttered these words: 'Because it is impossible for me to live in conformity with those laws.' Then the youth rejoined: 'It is not so hard, if you have an earnest will, and seek the necessary graces from Jesus through the intercession of His Mother. You will then be able to live without sinning grievously. God grants you permission to return to your body, in order that after the reception of Baptism you may give undoubted evidence to the people that no one can enter the kingdom of heaven without that sacrament, and without having led a life in keeping with the baptismal promises.'" Crowds of people came to see him, and put many questions to him. To mere queries of curiosity he made no reply; but to questions concerning religion he answered with wonderful wisdom. To the question how it had fared with his recently deceased niece, he replied: "She is in heaven and near God." He warned all repeatedly that they should serve God by obeying His commandments and receiving Baptism, if they hoped after this life to have happiness in the next. About a month after his restoration to life he was again called away by God, on the 21st of January, 1735. The Christians of the town testified to the truth of these facts on oath.

RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only-begotten Son, Who for us was born and died.

I believe in the Holy Ghost.

I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

I renounce Satan and all his works and pomps.

To Thee, O Jesus, I unite myself! To Thee I cling. Thee alone will I follow, for Thee alone do I desire to live, and for Thee to die. In the name of God the Father ✠, and of the Son ✠, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

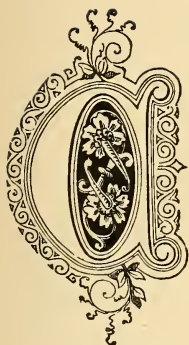
Often call to mind the great mercy of God which, without any merit of your own, made you in the first days of your life a child of God and heir to eternal happiness. What would become of you, whether in time or eternity, without this holy baptism? For nothing defiled can enter heaven. Bear in mind also the duties that were imposed upon you in Baptism, and discharge them with strict conscientiousness. In the presence of God you renounced the evil spirit, with all his works and pomps. Equally solemn was your profession of firm belief in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as well as in the Catholic Church, and it now behooves you to make good these professions every day of your life. Every morning renew your resolution to that effect. Every time you visit the Church let the sacred font of Baptism remind you that there, when a mere infant, you received the first blessing from the "motherly hand of the Church."

If God sends you children, delay not to secure for them, through a speedy baptism, the same favors and graces, that their souls may not have to hunger too long after justice. If a mother imparts the natural nourishment to her child in the first hours of its existence, how can the father hold back from it its supernatural food?

Confirmation.

INSTRUCTION.

Meaning of Confirmation. Its Nature.



CONFIRMATION is a sacrament in which, by the laying on of the bishop's hands, joined with anointing and prayer, the baptized Christian is strengthened by the Holy Ghost, in order that he may profess his faith bravely, and live in accordance with its maxims.

Confirmation is truly a sacrament; for it contains all the necessary elements of a sacrament.

The outward signs of the sacrament of Confirmation are to be found in the laying on of hands, in the anointing with chrism by the bishop, together with his words, "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and strengthen thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

Confirmation bestows : 1. An increase of sanctifying grace; for through it we receive the Holy Ghost and with Him the fulness of grace. 2. It imparts to us a special power and strength for our struggle against vice, and for the bold profession of our faith. 3. It impresses upon us an indelible character as soldiers of Jesus Christ. By Baptism we became Christians and children of Christ, but by Confirmation we become soldiers of Christ and defenders of God's truth. Thus Confirmation is, in a certain sense, a perfection or complement of Baptism.

The effects of Confirmation are expressed by St. Paul in these words : "He that confirmeth us with you in Christ, and that hath anointed us, is God : Who also hath sealed us, and given the pledge of the Spirit in our hearts" (II. Cor. i. 21, 22).

Lastly, Confirmation was instituted by Jesus Christ. This we know from Holy Scripture, and from the constant teaching of the Church.

According to Scripture, the apostles administered Confirmation. In chapter eighth of the Acts the following statement occurs: "Philip going down to the city of Samaria, preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord were at-



THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION.

tentive to those things which were said by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. Now, when the apostles who were in Jerusalem had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John, who, when they were come, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost: for He was not as yet come upon any of them: but they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands

upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost." Here is plainly described an outward sign,—namely, the laying on of hands,—by which was conveyed to the subject an inward grace,—namely, the infusion of the Holy Spirit; hence the elements necessary to a sacrament are present. Yet this function was something altogether different from Baptism, for it is stated "they were" already "baptized: then they received the Holy Ghost;" thus showing that even the grace was clearly a different one from that already received in Baptism. If it was but one and the same rite, why did not the deacon Philip himself lay his hands on the converted Samaritans? Why should two apostles be summoned

to Samaria merely to perform a ceremony? They certainly did not go there for the sake of a mere rite. Now, then, whence did the apostles learn that they were under an obligation of performing this function, and that by their prayers and laying on of hands the Holy Ghost would come down on Christians already baptized? This commission they must necessarily have received from Christ. Thus, by implication, we see from the Scriptures that Christ instituted the sacrament of Confirmation.

During all ages the Catholic Church has held that Confirmation is a sacrament, and consequently ordained by Christ.

This doctrine of the Church we find proclaimed through all the centuries in the testimonies of the fathers, who declare explicitly that Confirmation was at all times regarded in the Church as a sacrament, and as such was always administered. Hence the Council of Trent pronounced anathema on all those who say: "Confirmation of baptized persons is a useless ceremony, and not a true and real sacrament."

Like the apostles at Samaria and Ephesus, their successors, the bishops of the Church, administered Confirmation from the beginning down to the present day. Church history testifies that in the earliest ages the bishops went about from place to place, laying hands, and calling down the Holy Spirit, on persons previously baptized by the priests. "This is a custom in the Church," writes St. Jerome, "for bishops to go out to the distant towns and villages in order to lay hands, and call down the Holy Ghost, on such persons as had received Baptism from the priests or deacons."

Importance of Confirmation. Its Ministers.

Unlike Baptism, Confirmation is not absolutely necessary for salvation. Yet it facilitates salvation very much, and to omit it through neglect and indifference would be a grievous sin. Those who have been baptized are but weak and new-born children; they are soldiers without arms. Hence they are poorly equipped for sustaining a contest with the world, the devil, and the flesh. Confirmation is needed to make the Christian strong and perfect. Now, as God requires us to be perfect, it follows that all are in that sense obliged to receive this perfecting sacrament. To omit it wilfully would be a punishable offence. In the earlier ages of Christianity, the Church inflicted on parents who neglected to have their children confirmed a penance of three years' duration—the same that was ordinarily given for mortal sins.

On account of its signification and importance, Confirmation is called, as has been already noticed, the Sacrament of Completion, or Perfection; and as such it can be administered by bishops only, as the lawful successors of the apostles. It is only by exception that priests on the mission, exercising their ministry far from a bishop, may, by special permission of the Pope, confirm their recently baptized subjects, who, dwelling as they are in the midst of heathens, might, if deprived of Confirmation's graces, become weak in their faith and relapse into paganism.

Reception of Confirmation.

Only a baptized Christian can receive Confirmation. It is advisable to defer the reception of this sacrament till the child's seventh year, or after First Communion, unless some pressing necessity should intervene.

1. The candidate has more respect for the sacrament if he receive it only after a conscious self-preparation.

2. Its effects are better when the candidate has prepared himself carefully.

3. If the candidate be confirmed at a reasonably intelligent age, he has the advantage of being able to pronounce himself, and intelligently, the profession of faith that was made for him by others at the time of his baptism.

In order to receive Confirmation worthily, it is necessary for the candidate to be in a state of grace; for Confirmation is a sacrament of the living, and hence the soul must be in the enjoyment of spiritual health if the candidate would receive it profitably—that is, to the augmentation of sanctifying grace or supernatural life. Hence, preparation is quite necessary. 1. The candidate must purify his conscience, at least from all grievous sins, by the sacrament of Penance. 2. The candidate must be instructed in the fundamental truths of faith, and especially in those bearing on Confirmation.

During the act of Confirmation the postulant should pray fervently for the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and promise God to live henceforth a good Christian, till the hour of death. He should not depart till after the bishop's blessing.

After Confirmation the person confirmed should humbly thank God for the graces conferred, and pass the remainder of the day in quiet recollection.

Sponsors.

Confirmation-sponsors have a twofold duty: 1. They conduct the candidates to Confirmation, and during the ceremony each one stands behind his god-child with his right hand placed on the right shoulder of the candidate, as a sign that he takes him under his care and protection during the struggles of life.

2. The Confirmation-sponsor has another special duty for the life of the god-child. He must be his assistant, and infuse courage into him at every struggle: his witness to remind him of his duties; his teacher and master to give him instructions how, when storms come up, to handle the rudder, and when enemies attack to use his weapons of defence.

The Church requires of the Confirmation-sponsor the following qualifications: He must be another besides the baptismal sponsor, should be of the same sex as the god-child, a Catholic, confirmed, of blameless life, and of such an age as to be capable of understanding and fulfilling his duties as sponsor.

Sponsors are, too, the spiritual parents of the god-child; hence here the same spiritual affinity is contracted as at Baptism, and the same matrimonial impediments arise.

Ceremonies at Confirmation.

Confirmation is administered in the following manner:

The bishop lays his hands on the candidate, or, if there be several, he spreads his hands out over them all at one time, and prays that the gifts of the Holy Spirit may come down on them. Then he anoints the forehead of each one individually, in the form of a cross, with chrism, which consists of olive oil and balsam, saying at the same time: "I sign thee with the sign of the cross, I confirm"—that is, strengthen—"thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

After this, he gives the person a slight blow on the cheek, with the words: "Peace be to you."

These significant signs express the whole meaning of this sacred function.

1. The oil is a symbol of strength. The ancient gladiators always anointed their bodies with it, to make themselves more active and powerful in the combat in the circus. Taken in a spiritual sense, it here signifies the inward power which we receive in Confirmation, in order the more actively and successfully to contend against the enemies of our salvation.

2. Balsam is used to preserve the bodies of deceased persons from corruption. In a spiritual sense, too, it represents that grace which is to save us from the contamination of the world, and enable us by an exemplary life to diffuse about us the fragrance of many virtues.

3. The forehead is the seat of shame. Now no Christian should be ashamed of his cross, nor afraid to profess freely and publicly his belief in Christ crucified, according to the example of St. Paul, who says of himself: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel. For it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16).

The blow on the cheek is a pain and a humiliation. To-day the true Christian cannot expect to fare any better than did his Lord and Master. But he must not seek revenge. He must suffer in silence, and to him who strikes him on the right cheek he must humbly turn the left. Of this the bishop reminds him by the slight blow. The sacrament enables him to do it. Thus there is contained in every rite and ceremony a profound meaning, that when examined speaks to all hearts.

REFLECTION.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.



AND it came to pass that Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples.

"And he said to them: Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? But they said to him: We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost.

"And he said: In what then were you baptized? Who said: In John's Baptism.

"Then Paul said: John baptized the people with the baptism of penance, saying: That they should believe in Him Who was to come after him—that is to say, in Jesus.

"Having heard these things, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

"And when Paul had imposed his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied" (Acts xix. 1-6).

The meaning of this passage is plain.

St. Paul on arriving at Ephesus found there remaining some of the former disciples of St. John, to whom he had given his

figurative Baptism, and who believed in Christ, because their master, St. John, had declared him to be the veritable Messias. When they told St. Paul they had been baptized, he had some doubts about the nature of their Baptism, and asked them whether they had been confirmed, when it turned out that they had received only the typical Baptism as mentioned above.

Therefore, St. Paul baptized them and then confirmed them. Now if Baptism and Confirmation were not two distinct sacraments, how could St. Paul have inquired, Were you confirmed after having become Christians? "In Christ you also are after you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation, in whom also believing you were signed with the holy spirit of promise" (Eph. i. 13).



SS. PETER AND JOHN AT SAMARIA.

THE TESTIMONY OF ANTIQUITY.

As there are some persons, even among those who are not wholly strangers to sacred knowledge, who pretend that in Christian antiquity there are not proofs sufficiently clear and

certain concerning Confirmation, we will here quote at some length the testimony of the fathers, popes, and councils ; taking them word for word from the equally sound and learned work on theology written by His Eminence Cardinal Gousset, Bishop of the ancient see of Rheims in France. This celebrated theologian, in his treatise on the Sacraments, says :

“Confirmation has been administered in the Church from the days of the apostles down to our own without a break ; not merely as a ceremony of Baptism, but as a sacrament having within itself the power of imparting to us a special grace. As witnesses of this practice, we have the fathers, the popes, the councils, and even the first centuries themselves.

“First, the fathers. Notwithstanding the cautious reserve they had to maintain when speaking of the doctrines and practices of the Church, in order not to betray their sacred mysteries to the hostile pagans, yet the fathers of antiquity have expressed themselves in a sense more or less defined on the sacrament of Confirmation.

“St. Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch, in the middle of the second century, says that the Christians were so called because they were anointed with the oil of God. St. Irenæus, who died in the year 202, relates that the Gnostics, after having in their own way baptized their new adherents, gave to them an anointing of balsam. This was nothing more or less than an awkward imitation of what was done in the true Church. Tertullian, who belonged to the second and third centuries, expresses himself thus: ‘After we leave the baptismal font, we receive anointing with a certain oil. This anointing affects not only the flesh ; it has a special spiritual effectiveness, not unlike Baptism, which washes the body and cleanses the soul from sin. Then hands are imposed on us, and amid a blessing the Holy Ghost is invoked.’ Now this anointing, which, like Baptism, has an effect in our soul, this laying on of hands, during which the Holy Spirit is invoked, were not regarded as mere ceremonies of the sacrament of Baptism. ‘The flesh’—that is, the body—‘is washed,’ adds Tertullian, ‘that the soul may be cleansed ; the flesh receives the anointing, that the soul may be healed ; the flesh is covered by the imposition of the hands, that the soul may be illuminated with the light of the Holy Ghost. The flesh nourishes itself with the body and blood of Christ, that the soul may be fed by God.’ Here we recognize three sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Eucharist. The same writer says that the demon permitted

the idolaters to simulate the holy sacraments by baptizing, impressing a mark on the forehead, and celebrating the oblation of bread. Again in his first book against Marcion, he distinguishes Baptism, the holy oil, and the Blessed Eucharist, as three distinct things which he designates as sacraments.

“Let us hear St. Cyprian : ‘It is our custom to present those who have been baptized in our churches to the bishops, that by their prayers and imposition of hands they may receive the Holy Ghost, and be signed with the seal of the Lord.’ Here we see that Christians in the third century had to present themselves to the bishops after baptism—not, indeed, to render an account of their faith, but rather to receive the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands. According to the same father, it is necessary that the baptized person receive the anointing, ‘that by the reception of the chrism he may become the anointed of God, and be enabled to have within him the grace of Jesus Christ.’ He says also that, in order to be perfectly sanctified, one must receive Baptism and Confirmation, which are, one and the other, sacraments.

“St. Cyril of Jerusalem says that a person can only then be properly termed a Christian when he has received the gifts of the sacred chrism; that this chrism was given to those who had been baptized, and that while they received such anointing on their bodies their souls were sanctified by the Holy Ghost. According to St. Pacian, Bishop of Barcelona, ‘When our sins have been forgiven by Baptism, the Holy Ghost is imparted to us through the anointing.’ St. Ambrose says: ‘Thou hast received the spiritual seal, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and of piety, the spirit of the fear of God; preserve what thou hast received. God the Father has signed thee with a seal; Our Lord Jesus Christ has fortified thee, and given to thee the Holy Ghost as a pledge, as the Apostle teaches us.’ St. Jerome is no less definite. In his dialogue against the Luciferians, he makes his opponent say: ‘Dost thou not know that it is the custom of the Church to impose hands on the baptized, in order to call down the Holy Ghost? Thou askest where it is written? In the Acts of the apostles. Even if we had not the authority of Holy Scripture, the unanimous voice of all the world would serve us instead of a law.’ Then he answers him: ‘I grant that it is the custom of the Church; that the bishops repair to small towns to those persons who have been baptized by deacons and priests, to im-

pose hands upon them, and to invoke the Holy Spirit on them.' In this passage the question is about that laying on of hands which imparts the Holy Ghost—an imposition belonging to the bishops, hence Confirmation.

"St. Augustine, too, speaks of Confirmation as being a sacrament. 'The spiritual anointing,' he says, 'is the Holy Ghost;' hence the sacrament is in the visible anointing. He terms it the Sacrament of the Chrism, adding that it is a visible sign, and, like Baptism, a very holy thing. St. Chrysostom, St. Cyril of Alexandria, Theodorus, St. Isidore of Seville, the venerable Bede, Alcuin, Amalarius, Rhabanus Maurus, Malafried, Strabo, Paschasius Rathbertus, Theodulph, and Jonas of Orleans—in a word all the ancient Church historians who have spoken of Confirmation represent it to us as a sacrament which confirms us in the faith and imparts to us the Holy Ghost.

"Secondly, the popes. St. Cornelius in his letter to Fabius in Antioch, handed down to us by Eusebius, reproaches the Novatian that he had not had himself marked with a sign by the bishop; adding that, because he had not obtained that sign, he could not receive the Holy Ghost. Innocent I. in his letter to Decentius refers to the Acts of the Apostles and the usage of the Church, and says: That it is reserved to the bishops to mark the children with a sign and to impart to them the Holy Ghost—a function not at all allowed to simple priests. Then he distinguishes the baptismal anointing, which may be given by a priest, from the anointing that must be performed by a bishop; 'for he alone,' says Innocent, 'can infuse the spirit of consolation.' As may be easily seen, he was far from believing that Confirmation was a mere ceremony of Baptism. St. Leo exhorts the faithful to remain steadfast in the faith, because they have received the chrism of salvation and the seal of eternal life. According to St. Gregory the Great, it belongs not to the priests, but to the bishops, to sign with the chrism the foreheads of the children.

"Thirdly, the councils, or ecclesiastical assemblages. The Council of Elvira, which was held in the year 305, directs that baptized persons be brought before the bishop, that by the imposition of the high-priest's hands they may become perfect. That of Laodicea, in the years 366 and 367, commands the faithful, after their baptism, to receive the chrism given by the Church, that they may have a share in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Here, as well as in the Council of Elvira, we observe two distinct sacra-



ADMINISTERING THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION IN THE CATACOMBS.

ments, Baptism and Confirmation. The Council of Nice, in the year 325, forbids that heretics who return to the Church be again baptized, but directs that they undergo the imposition of hands, if they have not been confirmed. By this imposition of hands we are to understand Confirmation, as appears plainly from the Council of Constantinople in the year 381, which, treating the same question, orders heretics, when they have abjured their heresy, to receive the anointing with holy oil. Among many other ancient councils we might refer to those of Orange in 441, Seville in 619, Chalons in 813, and that of Paris in the year 829. All recognize Confirmation as a sacrament distinct from Baptism, and whose administration belongs to the bishop.

"To these witnesses may be added the belief in the Universal Church, both Latin and Greek, and even the belief of schismatics and the ancient heretics who have been separated from the Roman communion for many centuries. In presence of such overwhelming unanimity all the objections of our adversaries count as nothing."

COMPARISONS.

Without Confirmation a Christian is like to a boy who has not reached his full strength; like a plant which, being confined in a room and deprived of fresh air and sunlight, does not acquire vigor; like a knife without an edge; a sick man who is deprived of a physician and nourishing food.

What bathing in pure water is to the body, that Confirmation is to the soul. It penetrates and fortifies and revives the depths of the human soul, and makes it strong and steadfast and persevering in the battle for virtue and for holy faith.

"Remember always that in Confirmation you were stamped with a spiritual seal—the spirit of truth, of understanding, of counsel, and of fortitude" (St. Ambrose).

EXAMPLES OF THE POWER OF CONFIRMATION.

Lactantius Firmianus, who has been styled the Christian Cicero, writes that many Christians were martyred by the tyrants because in the presence of such as were anointed the demons were unable to make any responses through the idols.

It is known of Novatus, the heretic, that he was converted by the Catholic exorcists to the true faith. He was baptized, but out of fear of martyrdom fell away again. His biographers give as the principal reason that he had not received the sacrament of Confirmation when he could have done so.

Since in Confirmation we are made partakers of such heavenly gifts, it is easy to understand how miracles are so often wrought by virtue of this sacrament. Such a miracle is related to us by St. Bernard in his life of St. Malachy, an Irish bishop. Malachy went to Bishop Malchus, in order to receive more perfect instruction in the manner of serving God. Malchus was a gray-haired man, of venerable age, abounding in virtue and wisdom. He went to give Confirmation, and among the candidates was an afflicted person—one of those persons called somnambulists. Malchus confirmed him, and healed him by the power of the blessed anointing.

It is also related that when Faro, Bishop of Meaux, was administering Confirmation to some of his diocesans at Easter-time, a boy who was led up to him totally blind walked away with his sight restored.

One day as St. Bontus, Bishop of Clermont in Auvergne in the seventh century, was on a journey, he accidentally met two men who were possessed by the devil, and who asked him to lay his hands upon them and confirm them. The holy man was totally ignorant of their affliction,—that they were tormented and exhausted by the evil spirits,—yet wishing to grant their request, he betook himself to prayer, laid his hands upon them, confirmed them, and then continued his journey. He had not advanced many yards when he heard loud cries behind him, for the two men were shouting aloud: "The devils have been driven out of us! Our torments have ceased! We are happy and free!" The case was examined and the truth proven. It was ascertained that they had been possessed by the devil, and were instantly set free when they were confirmed. All wondered, looking upon the occurrence as a miracle wrought by the Holy Ghost in the sacrament of Confirmation, and they thanked God that He had opened such a fountain of grace.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

As you have already received the sacrament of Confirmation, ponder often in your soul the words of Holy Writ: "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God: whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Eph. iv. 30). You would grieve the Holy Spirit if you were not to turn His grace to a good account for yourself by not corresponding with it. Therefore use to your sanctification the graces that you have received in Confirmation. Be assiduous in acquiring a spirit of religion and in learning to

understand and practise the teachings of faith and morals. Attend sermons and religious instructions regularly; read good books, which may instruct you still more fully in religion. This is the more necessary nowadays, when our Church is so often attacked by the impious, and when we ourselves are in danger of being weakened in our faith by constantly hearing false principles taught and talked on all sides. But if we are steadfast in cherishing our faith in our hearts, we become true and brave soldiers of Christ, who are not ashamed of our religion. If the impious are so bold and persistent in proclaiming their unbelief, why should not we openly profess our faith in God and His Church, and be ready at all times to defend it? Do we fear the ridicule of unbelievers? Should we not fear far more the judgments of God on those who deny Christ? Show frequently and boldly that you are brave and strong in the grace of the Holy Spirit—that grace which you received in the sacrament of Confirmation. This will bring its own reward. It is only in battle that victory is won. Happy will you be if, at the close of your life, you can say with St. Paul: “I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice” (II. Tim. iv. 7).

The Blessed Eucharist.

The Blessed Eucharist as a Sacrament.

INSTRUCTION.

Meaning and Names of the Blessed Sacrament.



THE BLESSED EUCHARIST, or Sacrament of the Altar, is the true body and true blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which, under the appearances of bread and wine, are really and truly present for the nourishment of our souls.

This sacrament is known by several names. It is called the Sacrament of the Altar, because it is accomplished and preserved on the altar. It is named Eucharist,—a word meaning excellent gift,—because it is the most precious gift of God. It is called the Blessed Sacrament,

because it contains Jesus Christ, the most Blessed and All-holy One. It is called the Body of Christ, because it contains the lioly body of Our Redeemer. It is also called the Bread of Life, the Bread of Angels, the heavenly bread, because it nourishes the life of the soul, and contributes to everlasting life, and because it comes from heaven and leads to heaven. It is also termed the Lord's Supper, because it was instituted by Our Lord at His last supper. It is also called the Table of the Lord, because the Lord invites us all to the banquet and draws us to His feast. Communion, also, because in receiving it as a sacrament we are united to and commune with Christ. It is called the Viaticum, because it is a spiritual food, that strengthens us on our passage from earth to the other world. It is called the Precious Good, because there is on earth no other good so deserving of our love and devotion. Again, we call it the Sacrament of Love, for in it our divine Saviour gives Himself to us, and indeed in a most wonderful manner, to nourish our souls, while in all the other sacraments He gives us only special graces.

In the Blessed Eucharist are to be found all the elements necessary to constitute a sacrament.

In it are present :

1. The visible sign, namely, the unleavened bread, the wine from the grape, and the words, "This is My body, this is My blood."

2. Invisible grace, Jesus Christ Himself, Who is the author and dispenser of all grace.

3. Institution by Jesus Christ. For our blessed Lord ordained this sacrament at His last supper, on the eve of His passion and death. The holy Evangelists narrate the event in about the following words: While they were at supper Jesus took bread, and He gave thanks, and He blessed it, and He broke it, and gave it to His disciples, and said: Take ye and eat. This is My body, which is given for you : do this for a commemoration of Me. In like manner, taking the chalice after He had supped, He gave thanks and gave it to them, saying: Drink ye all of this, for this is My blood of the new testament, which shall be shed for many to the remission of sins. St. Paul's account is: "The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and giving thanks, broke and said: Take ye and eat: this is My body, which shall be delivered for you : this do for the commemoration of Me. In like manner also the chalice after He had supped, saying: This chalice is the new testament in My blood : this do ye as

often as you shall drink, for the commemoration of Me. For as often as you shall eat this bread and drink the chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until He come." Thus Christ instituted this Blessed Sacrament, in which, under the appearances of bread and wine, He gives Himself for the nourishment of our souls, that they, as He Himself says, may obtain forgiveness of sin and everlasting life.

The Doctrine of the Real Presence.

When Jesus pronounced over the bread and wine the words: "This is My body, this is My blood," the bread was changed into the body of Christ, and the wine into His blood. Of the bread and wine nothing remained but the appearances; that is, what appears to our senses as the form, color, taste, and smell of bread and wine.

This we learn: 1, from the words of Jesus; 2, from the teaching of the apostles and of the Church; and 3, reason itself confirms this truth most clearly and positively.

Christ had already promised His disciples that He would give them really and truly His flesh to eat and His blood to drink. It was about Easter-time, one year previous to the Last Supper, when He fed 5000 men in the desert with five loaves and two fishes. On the following day there came to Him another multitude of people attracted by the news of this wonderful miracle, which was the subject of conversation among them. Jesus took occasion to speak to these people about a far more precious bread that He would give to those who believed in Him, saying: "The bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world." The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying: How can this Man give us His flesh to eat? Then Jesus said to them: "Amen, amen, I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed." Afterwards, at the Last Supper, Christ explained that what He reached to His disciples was really and truly His body and blood. For He said plainly, "This is My body, this is My blood."

That the apostles believed and taught that in the Blessed Eucharist the true body and true blood of Christ were present under the forms and appearances of bread and wine, appears plainly from the words of St. Paul: "The chalice of benediction, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?" (I. Cor. x. 16.)



THE LAST SUPPER.

Such, too, was the belief and doctrine of the Catholic Church at all times. This we learn from the ancient ritualistic prayers and church ceremonies, from all ecclesiastical history, from the decrees of the councils, as well as from the endless testimony of the fathers and other Church writers. Thus writes, for example, away back in the primitive ages of the Church, the holy bishop and martyr St. Ignatius to the congregation at Smyrna about the heretics: "They withdraw themselves from the Eucharist, the Holy Sacrament of the Altar, because they do not admit that it is the flesh of Our Redeemer Jesus Christ, the same which suffered for our sins, and which the Father in His goodness raised up again. Those who deny this gift die in their opposition and descend without hope to perdition."

Finally, reason itself in its bearing on this doctrine shows that the words of Christ, "This is My body, this is My blood," must necessarily be understood in a literal sense, and that therefore the true body and the true blood of Jesus Christ are present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar under the forms and appearances of bread and wine. Our divine Saviour wished to leave us in this sacrament a special proof of His divine love. Now what kind of a proof would it be if we had in that sacrament nothing more than bread and wine? How would the partaking of mere bread be profitable to the soul if it is not the flesh and blood of Christ for the nourishment of that soul? Mere bread would be to the soul what sawdust would be to the body.

In the Sacrament of the Blessed Eucharist Christ is present :

1. Truly and really, and not figuratively, as Zwinglius pretended.
2. Actually. and not by the belief, as Luther would have it.
3. Essentially and substantially, with His divinity, humanity, flesh and blood, body and soul, and not by simple grace, as Calvin taught.

Furthermore, Christ is present, not in, nor with, nor under, the bread and wine, but under the forms and appearances of bread and wine. In the Holy Eucharist, that which before the consecration was bread and wine, after the consecration is truly and essentially the body and blood of the Lord. For Jesus Christ did not say: "This bread, or in this, or by this, or under this, is My body;" but He said, "This is My body." That is, He declared that that which He held in His hands was no longer bread, but His body.

Lastly, Christ is present in the Blessed Eucharist permanently.

For He also gave to His apostles the power to change bread and wine into His sacred body and blood. This He did likewise at the Last Supper, when He said to them, "This do ye in memory of Me."

From the apostles this power was transmitted to the bishops and priests, who exercise it during Mass, when they pronounce over the bread and wine the words of Christ, "This is My body, this is My blood." Hence, after these words of consecration there are no longer bread or wine on the altar, but the true body and the true blood of Jesus Christ under the forms of bread and wine. Christ is present not merely by and in the partaking, as Luther held, but also as long after the consecration as the species of the bread and the wine are present. As soon as Christ the Lord had uttered the words, "This is My body, this is My blood," the body and blood of Christ were present at once, and before the apostles received it. For the verb *is* designates the present and not the past or future tense. Christ did not say, "This will be My body, this will be My blood," but "This is My body." Hence, it is so now and actually; and it remains present as long as the species remain unchanged.

Christ is also present, wholly and undivided, under each form or species, as well of the bread as of the wine, as He is wholly and undivided in heaven. So that, when the priest breaks the consecrated host and divides it, he breaks and divides the species only. In each part the body of Christ is whole and living. This is clear from Sacred Scripture; for Christ blessed, not each separate particle that He gave to the apostles, but He blessed the whole of the bread at once, and then distributed it among them. This is more clearly expressed when speaking of the chalice, when Christ, in reaching it to His apostles, said: "Take and divide it among you" (Luke xxii. 17). When the disciples doubted the possibility of this thing, Jesus asked them: "Do you not yet understand, neither do you remember the five loaves among five thousand men?" (Matt. xvi. 9.)

This is plain and reasonable. For, if that marvellous multiplication of the few loaves of bread was a thing possible to the Divine Saviour, why could He not be present in each consecrated host, and in every separate particle of each host?

The Worship of Christ in the Holy Eucharist.

The tabernacle on our altar is the dwelling-place of God among men, as described in Revelation: "He will dwell with

them, and they shall be His people : and God Himself with them shall be their God " (Apoc. xxi. 3). Now, as Jesus Christ is truly and essentially present in the Blessed Sacrament, we are bound to adore Him in that sacred mystery. For Christ is God, and to God belongs worship. It stands written : "The Lord thy God shalt thou adore" (Matt. iv. 10).

We ought, therefore, frequently to visit our blessed Lord in this sacrament, and offer to Him due adoration. We should appear at our visits filled with both outward and inward reverence, devoutly falling on our knees, and humbling ourselves with sentiments of our deep unworthiness before the unbounded majesty of God, at the same time offering to Jesus our holiest homage with heartfelt love and fervent piety.

Our own welfare and spiritual good, as well as a sense of gratitude and love for Jesus, the God of love, should urge and encourage us to such frequent visits and devout adoration of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Christ, by ordaining the Blessed Sacrament, gave to us the most unspeakable proof of His divine love. Should we not then reciprocate and show to Him our love by offering to Him in the Blessed Sacrament our hearts as victims seeking to be sacrificed for His sake?

Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is a copious fountain of graces. In that mystery of love the divine Saviour has erected His throne of favors, and in all our trials and tribulations we may with confidence draw near to the heavenly King. His ears are ever open to hearken to our prayers ; His hands are ever ready to shower upon us the fulness of His divine love and condescension. Near Him we find counsel and consolation in all our troubles, strength and assistance in all our dangers, whether of body or soul, courage and fortitude for a devout life, and more inward joy and happiness than the whole world can afford with all its pride and pleasures.

Hence the Church has always been solicitous to foster devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

In the first place, she constantly keeps the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle on the altar. Then, in order to notify the faithful of the place in which Christ, the Light of the world, is reposing in a mysterious manner, and to enkindle within them a burning devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, the Church directs that before the tabernacle there be kept burning the lamp of the sanctuary.

Moreover, the Church permits the Blessed Sacrament to be exposed for our adoration.

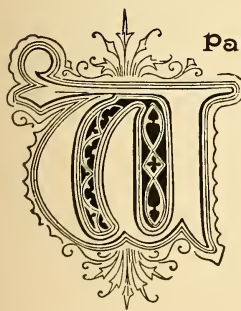
This is done in many churches principally on Thursdays, to commemorate the day on which the Blessed Sacrament was instituted. It is also done at the devotion of the Forty Hours' Adoration. This last mode of honoring the Blessed Sacrament was introduced, at first without the exposition, by a Milanese capuchin friar named St. Joseph, in the year 1556, in commemoration of the forty hours during which the body of the Saviour rested in the sepulchre. In the year 1560 Pope Pius IV. approved a proposition of a confraternity in Rome to hold a devotion of forty hours in remembrance of the forty days spent by Christ in the desert. Even here there was not a word about exposition. It was not till near the close of the sixteenth century that the Forty Hours' devotion with solemn exposition of the Blessed Sacrament came into practice.

The Church endeavors also to keep alive our devotion to the Blessed Sacrament by allowing it to be, from time to time, carried in solemn procession. More especially is this the case in the grand and solemn procession of Corpus-Christi Day.

In order to afford people an opportunity of manifesting their love for and belief in this sacrament, it is sometimes carried to the sick with much ceremony and solemnity.

REFLECTION.

Paradise and the Church.



CHEN God created Adam He placed him in paradise, in a state of the most perfect human happiness. In peace, contentment, and intercourse with God, he was to live a never-ending, happy, and blessed life—without sickness, without pain, without weakness, without death. That Adam might be able to do this, God gave to him the tree of life, the fruit of which was to keep him from all unsoundness of body. When his time would expire, he was to be translated from paradise to heaven, like Enoch. This blissful condition Adam trifled away by sinning. He plunged himself and the entire human race into God's disfavor, into punishment and temporal misery. But God's mercy rescued him and re-established the state in which he had stood towards God:

1. God blotted out sin. Adam had been created sinless.
2. God granted to man, through Baptism, supernatural grace. Adam, too, had had supernatural grace.
3. But Adam had also had the tree of life as a special grace. What has the Christian to correspond to that?

Answer. God was, in a certain sense, compelled to permit man to lose his bodily life, that he might understand God was not to be mocked, and also that he might be reminded that the devil, who had said, "Thou shalt not die," was a liar. But then, in order to favor the Christian far more than Adam, God gave a second tree of life, the fruit of eternal life, the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. If the Church were to be deprived of this sacrament, Adam would have had more grace and higher favor than the redeemed Christian. The work of Christ would not be complete and perfect.

But the Lord our God, instead of giving us less, has given us more. The Blessed Sacrament is that miraculous food which, in place of the tree of life, guarantees eternal life to the soul. In it is the wonderful intercourse with God revived. The Lord has given us a food far more excellent than the fruit of the tree of life. It is the fruit of that tree of which it is said in Revelation: "He showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. On both sides of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve fruits, yielding its fruits every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations" (Apoc. xxii. 1, 2). This tree is the Blessed Sacrament on our altars, whose graces never cease to flow.

The Synagogue and the Church.

The New Dispensation is the fulfilment of the Old. The graces and divine institutions of the former have a close and striking bearing and resemblance to those of the New Covenant.

The Lord spoke to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and formed a covenant with them. He set up His tent among the Israelites, went before them, and preferred them before all other peoples of the earth. He took up His abode in the Ark of the Covenant made by Moses, and there manifested His glory.

From it the Lord said to Moses: "Hence will I give orders, and will speak to thee over the propitiatory all things which I will command the children of Israel" (Ex. xxv. 22). Again, the Lord said: "I will dwell in the midst of the children of

Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the Lord their God" (Ex. xxix. 45, 46). It was from that place that God published His utterances. When Israel was in any difficulty, the high-priest would prostrate himself before the Holy of holies, and the Lord would tell him what was to be done



THE PASCHAL LAMB.

to relieve Israel. If the people of Israel lost courage, the Ark of the Covenant was carried before them, and it filled them with new vigor and joyousness, and incited them to new warfare. The rivers flowed backwards to their sources, the walls of the enemy's strongholds fell down in the presence of the ark, while

terror and feebleness came upon the enemy. And, when the Lord did permit the Israelites to be defeated and the ark to be carried away by their enemies, it was for the purpose of showing them that their strength depended on the presence of God among them; at the same time giving the Philistines—into whose hands the Ark of the Covenant had fallen—to understand that He was among them. For, when they placed the ark in their temple of Dagon, the figure of that false god was hurled twice to the ground (I. Kings v. 3). Whenever the ark was carried into any hostile country, sickness came at once, with plagues and painful death. Now, as the Lord said to the Israelites, so does He say to us: "I am with you, and remain with you." Where, then, is the fulfilment of the Old Law, if the Lord is not present in His Church in the Blessed Sacrament?

While the Jews, to the number of two millions, were wandering in the desert they were fed with manna. A portion of this manna the Lord directed to be kept in the Ark of the Covenant. This is the same manna which, in the Book of Wisdom, is called precious bread. David calls it the bread of angels, the wonderful bread. In another part of the Scripture it is described as the bread that comes down from heaven (Wisdom xvi. 20; Ps. lxxvii. 24, 25).

Christ's Promise.

As in the Old Testament the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar was prefigured by the tree of life and the manna, in order to show to those who were unwilling to believe anything so great the grace and glory of the Old Testament, so the disciples and the people were prepared for the institution of the same when Christ the Lord, at the beginning of His ministry, performed the miracle of transubstantiation, by changing the water into wine at the wedding in Cana. Again, about a year before His death, He promised a food which was to be more wonderful than the manna in the desert, at the same time performing a new miracle that had the closest resemblance to the food of the Blessed Sacrament.

The Saviour had retired into the desert, whither He was followed by such a multitude of people that they soon found themselves without anything to eat. Jesus, having compassion on them, fed the first time five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes, and a second time four thousand with seven loaves, and yet there remained after the first miracle twelve baskets of

food, and after the second seven baskets. Thus it is in the case of the Blessed Sacrament, to which thousands approach every day, each one receiving the body of Christ, whole and entire, and instead of being exhausted, there remains an abundance for those who are yet to come and partake.

This multiplication of food in the desert was a true figure of holy Communion. It was indeed a breaking of bread which merely preceded the Eucharist, or "Thanks to God." It was a veritable Table of the Lord, at which He fed those that were fatigued and hungry—a viaticum for those who followed Him.

With this miracle was joined the promise of the Saviour. For when the people wished to proclaim Him King, and He, eluding them, endeavored to escape over the Lake of Genesareth, finding Himself still pursued by many, He reproached them, saying that they followed Him merely for the earthly food, and advised them to seek the heavenly food.

Among other things He said to them:

"Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting, which the Son of man will give you."

"Moses gave you not bread from heaven, but My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven."

"The bread of God is that which cometh down from heaven and giveth life to the world."

"I am the bread of life."

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven."

"If any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever, and the bread that I will give is My flesh for the life of the world."

"Except you eat of the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up in the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me and I in him" (John vi.).

At this discourse many affected to be scandalized, and left Jesus, for they could not comprehend the eating and drinking of His body. Yet He did not undeceive them by saying, "I speak figuratively; you misunderstand Me." No, He let them go.

From all this the following propositions are plainly true:

1. The Saviour promised a food more wonderful even than the manna.
2. This food was to come from heaven,

3. This food was to be Himself.

4. This food, He Himself, was to be in His own flesh and blood.

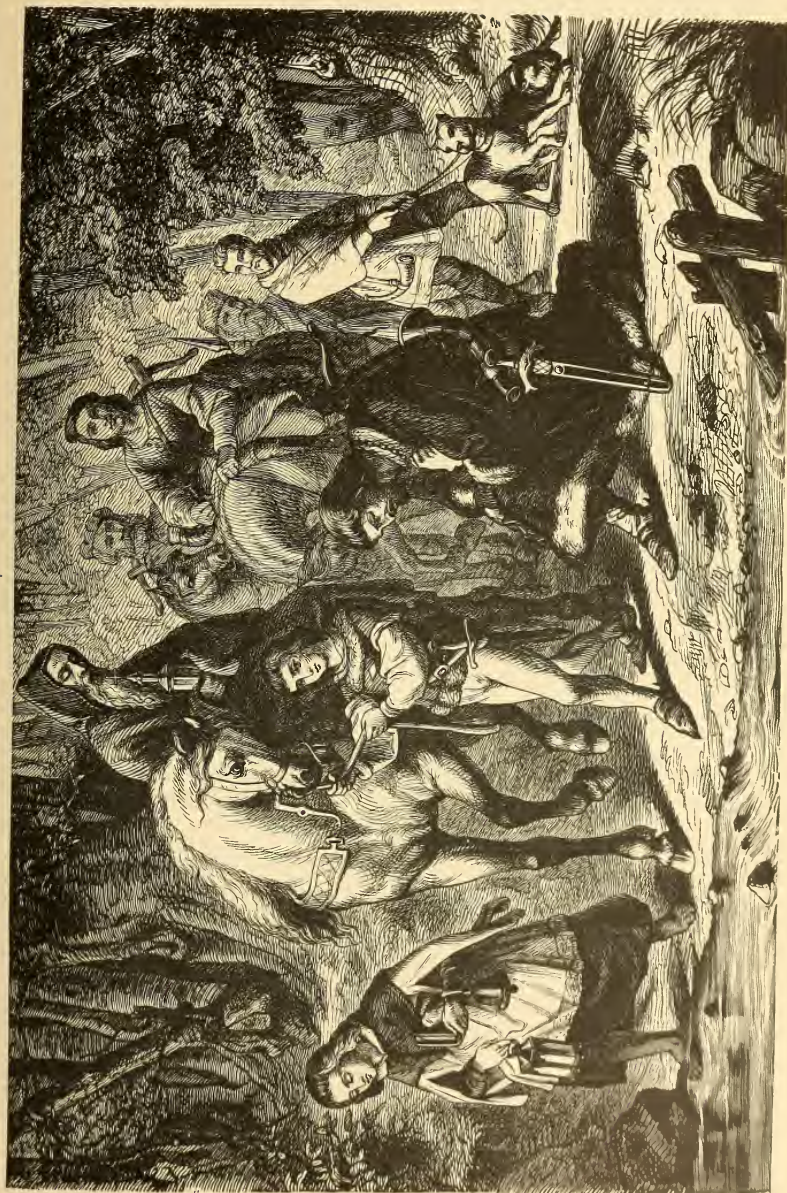
Like the manna which sustained bodily life, this food was to sustain spiritual life.

Therefore the doctrine of the Catholic Church is altogether in harmony with the Holy Scripture.

The Moment of Institution.

On this solemn moment the Lord has deigned to give to the saintly Catherine Emmerich information which enables us to put this holy act more clearly before our souls. The blessed woman describes this supreme moment as follows:

The building in which Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper was the property of Nicodemus and of Joseph of Arimathea. The cup which the apostles had borrowed from St. Veronica had been in the Ark of Noe; Melchisedech, too, had owned it. In it there was a smaller vessel, on which there stood a small plate, and over this there was a vaulted cover. It consisted of unknown material, which could not be smelted. The table on which Jesus, after the Feast of the Easter Lamb and the washing of feet, instituted the Sacrament of the Altar, was covered with tapestry, over which lay a white embroidered cloth. By the cup there stood an oval plate, with three thin white Easter particles, marked with regular indentations, to be broken easily. The position of Jesus was between Peter and John. The doors were closed; everything was done with great solemnity. When the cloth was removed from the cup, Jesus prayed. As one priest teaches the other Holy Mass, so Catherine saw Jesus explain the whole act. Jesus took a white cloth that was hanging over the cup, spread it, took the round plate from the cup, put it on the covered place, and on the plate placed the Easter loaves. Then Jesus blessed the Easter bread, lifted up the plate with the Easter loaves in both hands, looked up to heaven and prayed, offered sacrifice, and, put them down, covering them up. Then He took the cup, ordered Peter to pour some wine into it, and John to pass Him some water, which He blessed, and of which with a little spoon He added some to the wine. Then He had Peter and John pour water over His hands. Jesus was becoming more and more affectionate and earnest, and said to the apostles that He was now about to give them all He had—Himself. In this intense emotion



RUDOLPH OF HAPSBURG.
113

He, while praying, broke the bread at the indentations, placed the pieces one on the other on the plate, broke a small morsel of the first piece, and dropped it in the cup. At the same moment the Mother of Jesus received the sacrament spiritually in another hall of the same building. Now, when Jesus passed the sacrament with the words of the Gospel to the apostles, Judas included, there went out from Him a splendor, while the consecrated bread was like a luminous substance in the mouths of the apostles.

The apostles, two by two, stepped up to Jesus to receive the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, and while one was drinking the other held under his chin a small, stiff, bordered cloth which had lain over the cup. When Jesus pronounced the words of institution over the cup, He lifted it up a little toward His countenance. Peter and John He allowed to drink from the cup itself; then John ladled the Holy Blood with a small spoon into little cups, which Peter passed to the other apostles, who drank from them two by two. Judas left without prayer or thanksgiving. What little was left in the chalice of the precious blood Jesus poured into a small cup, which had stood in the chalice; then He held His fingers over the chalice, and Peter and John poured water and wine over them. Of this rinsing these two apostles drank again out of the chalice, and what they left was again ladled into the small cups and passed to the other apostles. Then Jesus wiped the chalice dry, placed the cup with the precious blood that was left in the chalice, put the plate with the remaining Easter bread on it, and on top of it all the cover, spreading the cloth over the chalice, which He then put back on the corporal between the little cups. After the resurrection of Jesus, Anne Catherine Emmerich saw used what was thus saved of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar. All the actions of Jesus during the institution of the Holy Sacrament were very formal and solemn, but at the same time doctrinal and instructive.

A Comparison.

Many persons pretend to be shocked at the doctrine that bread and wine are really and truly changed into the body and blood of Christ, and are unwilling to believe. Now in ordinary natural physical life we have a very similar phenomenon, which it would seem God keeps before us as a perpetual illustration of the supernatural change that occurs in transubstantiation. Man uses for his nourishment, among other articles of food, bread

and wine. Are not these two substances transformed into human flesh and blood, as well as bone and sinew? Who can deny this? And although it is a matter of daily and hourly experience, who can explain the process, or tell how and why it takes place? The man who would deny this natural process of assimilation would contradict the common sense of all men. So he who denies the Real Presence contradicts the almighty and ever-truthful God.

Testimony of the Fathers.

What the Scriptures, both of the Old and the New Testament, teach beyond contradiction, is confirmed by the testimony of the fathers of the Church in all centuries. Whole volumes might be made out of their teachings on this subject. The most intelligent Protestant controversialists have admitted that if the opinions of the fathers be accepted, the contest is forever at an end—it is decided and settled. We shall here quote a few of the most distinguished, in order to show the harmony of their teachings with those of the Church, and shall take them in their turn, adverting to the circumstances and times in which they lived, that their testimony may be the better established.

St. Ignatius was the disciple of two apostles, St. Peter and St. John, and had himself seen the Saviour after His resurrection from the dead. He succeeded Evagrius, who had been made bishop by St. Peter, and for forty years governed the flock of Christ in Antioch. This was the first congregation of Christians converted from paganism, and to them Judas and Barnabas had been sent by the apostles. Paul also preached there. Hence the Antiochians must have known what Christ taught, and their bishop, St. Ignatius, is an unquestionable and reliable witness to the truth. During the reign of the Emperor Trajan he was thrown to the wild beasts and strangled by lions. We have from his pen seven epistles addressed to the Christian congregations at Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Philadelphia, Rome, Smyrna, and one to the Bishop St. Polycarp, who was likewise a disciple of the apostles.

In his letter to the Smyrnians, St. Ignatius speaks of the errors of the Doceti, who held that Christ had not a real but only an imaginary body. Showing that this heresy would logically have a disastrous influence on the doctrine of the Eucharist, he says: "They abstain from Communion and prayer, because they do not believe that the Eucharist is the flesh of Our Lord Jesus Christ—the same flesh that suffered for our sins, and which the Father in

His mercy raised from the dead." The saint thus rejects their false theories about Communion, because he and his flock well knew and believed that they received actually the body of the Lord.

In his letter to the Romans, he writes: "I do not wish any perishable food: I wish the bread of God, the bread of heaven, the bread of life, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ; I desire the drink of God, His blood." In another place, speaking of the deacons, he says: "They are servants not for earthly food and drink, but for the sacred mysteries of the altar." Thus, then, to him the food was a supernatural and mysterious food, consequently the body and blood of Christ, or else it was to him the merest earthly food and drink.

In the second century St. Justin, the martyr and philosopher, defended the principles of Christianity. He was one of the brightest ornaments of the Church, which he took under his protection against Jews and heathens. Educated and accomplished in pagan science, nothing but full conviction could lead him to the Christian religion; for, as he said himself, the awful charges made against its adherents would have deterred him. But the steadfastness and courage with which they surrendered their lives for their faith filled him with admiration. After embracing Christianity he travelled in Asia, Greece, and Italy, and enjoying direct intercourse with the disciples of the apostles, he must have known well what was the correct Christian teaching. He lived at the same time as St. Polycarp, who was a disciple of St. John. Their deaths were but two years apart, Polycarp having been burnt in the year 165 A.D., and Justin beheaded in the year 167. In his "Apology for the Christians" he describes with much precision the way in which the Holy Sacrifice was offered up. He says: "At the end of prayer we greet each other with the kiss of peace. Then some bread and a vessel filled with wine and water are presented to the bishop, who, taking them in his hands, praises and glorifies the Father in the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and pronounces a lengthy prayer of thanksgiving for the gifts which we receive. At the conclusion of his prayer, the people answer aloud, Amen—the Hebrew for 'So be it done.' Then those whom we call deacons divide the bread, wine, and water that have been blessed by the thanksgiving prayer, among all present, and carry them to the absent. This food we call the Eucharist, and no one dare partake of it who does not believe the truth of our faith, who has not been

baptized unto the forgiveness of sins and eternal life, or who lives not according to the precepts of Christ. For we do not receive it as common bread, or as common drink, but in the same manner as Jesus Christ Our Saviour, being made flesh by the word of God, became man, and assumed both flesh and blood for our salvation; even so we are instructed that this food which nourishes our flesh and blood, through the prayer containing His word, is precisely the flesh and blood of this same Jesus become man. For the apostles have told us in their writings, which are called gospels, that Jesus commanded them to do what He did, and that after He had taken bread and given thanks He said to them: 'Do this in commemoration of Me: this is My body.' In like manner, after He had taken the chalice and given thanks, He said, 'This is My blood,' and presented it to them all."

In his book against the Jew Tryphon he writes: "The Lord commanded His disciples to offer to God the firstlings of His creatures, not that God needed them, but in order that the disciples might not appear unprofitable and ungrateful. This He did when taking bread, a created thing; He gave thanks and said, 'This is My body'; and in like manner declared the chalice, that is, the created wine, to be His blood, thus teaching a new sacrifice of the New Testament."

Contemporary with Justin and Polycarp was St. Irenæus, a native of Smyrna. As he says himself, he was a disciple of St. Polycarp. "By the grace of God, I had the happiness to hear Polycarp's instructions, which I also wrote down—not, indeed, on paper, but in my innermost heart." What Our Saviour did, and what the Church taught, that did Irenæus receive through Polycarp from the holy Evangelist St. John. Surely he ought to be a safe witness. He himself agrees perfectly with this belief. "This clean oblation," says he, "is offered only by the Church. Not by the Jews, for their hands are stained with blood; neither did they accept the word which is offered to God. Nor is it offered at the conventicles of the sects; for how can they prove that the bread over which the words of thanksgiving are pronounced is the body of their Lord, or that the chalice is His blood, since they do not admit that He is the Word, that is to say, the Son of the Creator of the world?" Here Irenæus distinguishes between the sacrifices of the Jews and of the heathens. Neither have the true sacrifice. The Jews do not accept the word that was made flesh, and yet this it is that is offered to the Lord; while the sects who

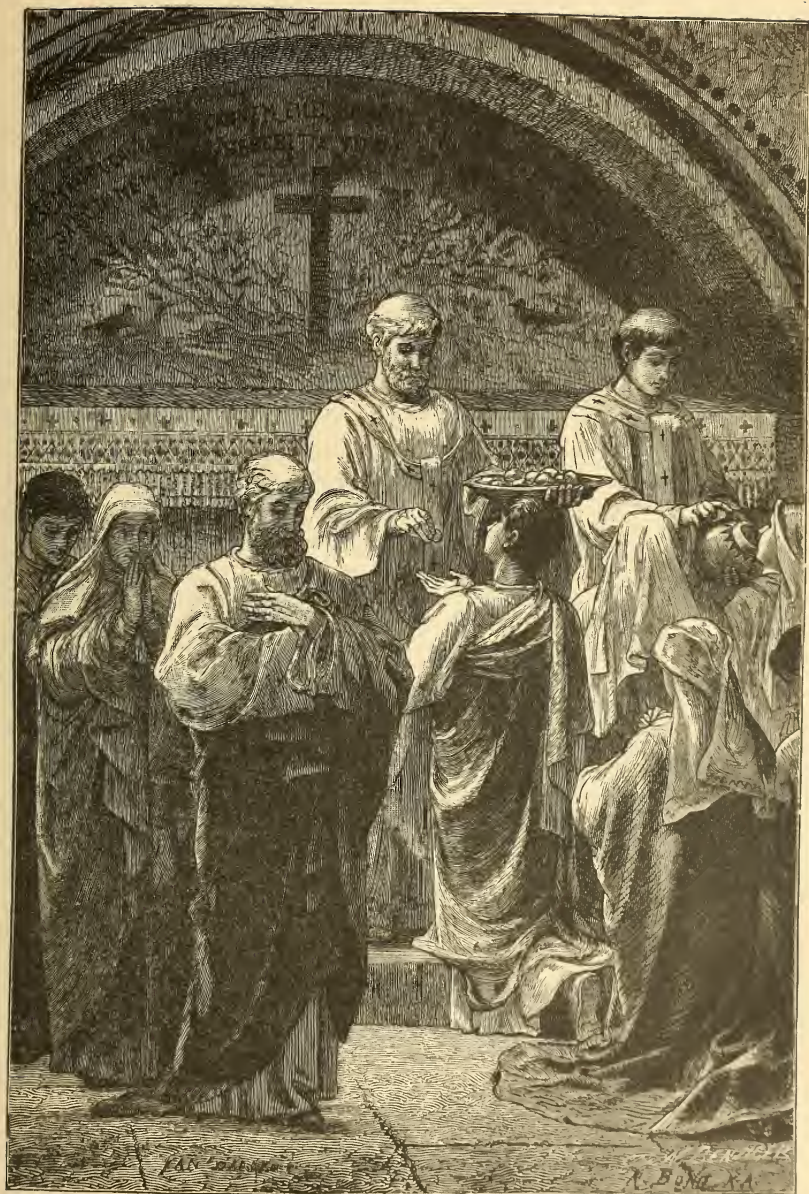
do not admit Christ to be the Son of the Almighty Creator of the world cannot believe in any miracle of omnipotence.

In another place he writes concerning the holy sacrifice: "We offer to God the blessed bread and the blessed chalice, and thank Him for having permitted these gifts to be brought forth from the earth for our nourishment. We invoke upon them the Holy Ghost, that He may make this offered bread to become the body of Christ, and the drink to become the blood of Christ, that whoever partakes of these gifts may obtain remission of sins and life everlasting."

The Gnostics denied the resurrection of the body. Irenæus proved to them that the human body cannot be perishable, since it receives the Holy Eucharist. "How can you assert," he writes, "that the flesh perisheth and will not participate in life, since it is vitalized by the body of the Lord and by His blood? You should change your opinion, or should no longer offer up the sacrifice of which we are speaking. Our belief agrees with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist confirms our belief. Just as the bread that is from the earth, when God is invoked upon it, is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two things, the earthly and the heavenly, so it is with our bodies. When they partake of the Eucharist they are no longer perishable, but have the hope of the resurrection to eternity." Against the Marcionites he writes: "Since the mingled chalice and the bread become, by the word of the Lord, the Eucharist of the body and blood of Christ, how do you deny that our flesh is susceptible of the gift of God, which is eternal life?"

In the third century there lived in the Church at Carthage, in Africa, the learned priest Septimius Tertullian, who in the most thorough manner vindicated the Christians against the charges made against them, exposed the absurdities of idolatry, combated against the sectarians with all the weapons of a keen intellect and forcible eloquence.

Thus he wrote against the Marcionites mentioned above. He says: "The Lord took the bread, divided it among the disciples, and made it His body by uttering the words, 'This is My body.'" In his writings on the resurrection of the flesh, he says: "Our bodies partake of the body and blood of the Lord, that the soul may be nourished with God." Also in the severest tones he complains that there are Christians who make it their business to manufacture idols with the same hands in which they afterwards take the body of their Lord. For in those ages it



EARLY CHRISTIANS RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION IN THE CATACOMBS.

was the custom for even the laity to receive the body of the Lord in their hands and then convey it to the mouth. "Those who are fervent in their faith," he writes, "are grieved that any Christian would hurry from his idolatrous figures into the church and receive the body of his Lord in hands that manufacture bodies of the devil."

In the middle of the third century lived St. Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, who was specially strict, and ordered that no one who had fallen away in the persecutions should be readmitted to the Church without having done ample penance. Of those who attempted to again approach the Blessed Sacrament without having done sufficient penance for their sin he writes: "They do violence to the body and blood of the Lord, and with hand and mouth sin more grievously before the Lord than at the time when they denied Him." Some among the laity were loath to receive Holy Communion lest they might be informed on as Christians. Of these he writes: "How can we shed our blood for Christ, since we are ashamed to drink His blood?"

During his time a sect was formed that at Communion took water instead of wine—which, of course, was invalid. Against these he writes: "If Christ writes, I am the true vine-tree, the blood of Christ cannot be water, but wine. It is also plain that the blood of Christ is not offered if wine be wanting." In this same letter St. Cyprian transcribes literally Our Lord's words of the institution, as we read them in St. Paul and the evangelists.

St. Cyprian finds, away back in the oblation of Melchisedech, a figure of the Blessed Sacrament, and expresses in the plainest and most emphatic terms the transubstantiation, or change of essence. "Christ," says he, "calls this sacrament His body, His flesh and His blood. The ordinary bread is changed into flesh and blood. That bread which the Lord reached to His disciples is not figurative, but real, and, by the omnipotence of the Word, made flesh.

"As in the person of Christ the humanity is visible, but the divinity invisible, so in the visible sacrament the divine essence infuses itself into the sacrament in an invisible manner."

Towards the close of the second century, probably at Athens, in Greece, was born Clement, who distinguished himself by his extraordinary knowledge, and threw lustre on the Church of the third century. Having been educated by five eminent professors, he made long journeys through Greece, Italy, Asia Minor, Assyria, and Palestine, and thus was enabled to see and study the most famous

Christian congregations. At Alexandria he embraced Christianity. His profound learning induced Demetrius, bishop of that diocese, to name him rector of the school in that city. It was what was called a catechetical school, where with admirable cleverness and industry the Christian doctrines were explained and proved and errors exposed and exploded. From its class-rooms went forth well-drilled scholars into the other Roman provinces to carry on the contest with Paganism and Judaism. Clement of Alexandria tells us himself that he lived with some immediate disciples of the apostles. "These," he writes, "sow in our hearts the divine seed which they received from their predecessors, the apostles." Therefore he must have been familiar with the religious belief held by the Christian congregations and the apostles. In his "Pedagogue," which contains a synopsis of Christian moral teachings, he teaches that the Lord gives us His flesh and blood, and that we should lodge the Lord within us and keep the Saviour in our breast. He expresses this same thought in the following admirable manner: "Miracle, rich in deep mystery! One is the Father of all things, one also the Word of all things, and one the Holy Ghost, the same now and forever. One alone is the mother and virgin, whom with joy we call the Church. Not this one mother alone had milk, for she was not the only woman; but she is at the same time virgin and mother—stainless as a virgin, loving as a mother. She calls her children to her and nourishes them with sacred milk. The Word becomes a child. This is why she has no milk, because her milk was this fair child of her heart, the body of Christ, feeding the new people with the word—a new people which the Lord Himself brought forth with bodily pain, which He Himself bound in swathing-clothes, with His precious blood.

"O sacred birth! O blessed swaddling-clothes! the Word is everything to the child, father and mother, teacher and guide. Eat, said He, My flesh and drink My blood. This very special nourishment the Lord Himself offers; this flesh He bestows, this blood He pours out. Nothing more than this is needed for the growth of children. O incomprehensible mystery! He orders us to put aside the old and carnal corruption, as well as also the old food, and become partakers of the new food of Christ, receiving Him, if possible, to place Him within ourselves, and to have the Saviour in our breasts, in order that we may reduce to their proper place the affections of our flesh." Thus writes St. Clement of Alexandria.

His most illustrious disciple was Origen, a man so distinguished for his learning that he was for eighteen years the chief rector of the Catechetical School. He explained the Holy Scriptures with such depth and unction that his disciples believed that he spoke not otherwise than in communion with the Holy Spirit, and that the Spirit itself, from which the prophets drew inspiration, bestowed upon him the eloquence of thoughts and language.

In his third homily on the second book of Moses, he compares the word of God with the body of the Lord, which is received in the Blessed Sacrament. He writes: "You who are accustomed to assist at the celebration of the sacred mysteries know, when you receive the body of the Lord, what care and solicitude you exercise that none of it may fall to the ground. You deem yourselves guilty of a grievous sin if out of carelessness any particle do fall. Now if you are accustomed to exercise so much care about the body of the Lord, and such a very commendable care, do you think it is a lesser sin to neglect His word than His body?"

In his seventh homily on the fourth book of Moses, he writes: "The manna was a figure of the food. But now the flesh of the Son of God is in reality the true food, as He Himself has said: 'My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.'"

In his homily on the sick servant of the centurion of Capernaum he says: "When you partake of the blessed and incorruptible food, when you taste the bread and the cup of life, you eat and drink the body and the blood of the Lord—the Lord going, as it were, under your roof. Like the centurion, therefore, you should humble yourself and say, 'Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof.'"

Among Origen's disciples was St. Dionysius, also a teacher in the Catechetical School, and afterwards bishop of the flock for seventeen years. He was a great and learned man, who with power and eloquence defended the doctrines of the divinity and humanity of Christ and the unity of the Church. Concerning the Blessed Sacrament he writes: "Through the unspeakable mystery of the Sacrament of the Altar, called by Christ the New Covenant, He gives Himself to us in the same holy sacrament. Formerly men placed on the altar the flesh of unreasoning animals, but it is not so now; but the Lord Himself, the Redeemer, the God of Israel, has said: 'Whosoever eateth Me shall live forever.'"

Thus we have listened to the voice of the Church in Asia,

Africa, and Europe during the first three centuries. All the authors quoted were either disciples of the apostles or their close successors, and all sealed their faith by a martyr's death. We shall rest satisfied with these witnesses, for they now continue to multiply beyond number.

The Prayers of the Church.

The great truth so clearly taught by the Fathers individually—namely, that in the consecration which priests and bishops perform by virtue of the divine power conferred on them at their ordination, a real and true change takes place of the substance of the bread and wine into the flesh and blood of Christ—is still further confirmed by the prayers of the Church. Although the exact date of their composition is not given, nevertheless they reach so far back in antiquity that they were commonly ascribed to the very apostles of Christ. To these prayers belong the liturgies or the regulations laid down for carrying on the public worship in the Church in general, but more especially in those churches that were founded by the apostles or their immediate disciples, such as those of Jerusalem, Alexandria, Rome, and Milan.

St. James the Apostle, a kinsman of the Saviour, celebrated the holy sacrifice of the Mass in Jerusalem for 29 years. The liturgy of Jerusalem, although somewhat changed in form at a later period, bears its name from him, namely, "St. James' Liturgy." In it we find the following passages: "Send down upon us and the gifts here present Thy Holy Spirit, that by His coming and by His good, holy, and glorious presence He may sanctify this bread and make it the sacred body of Thy Christ, and make this chalice the precious blood of Christ." At the breaking of the host, when the priest holds one portion of the sacred body in his right hand and the other in his left, and breaks from the latter a particle to be mingled with the sacred blood, the liturgy orders to be said: "This is the commingling of the all-holy body and the precious blood of our Lord and God and Saviour, Jesus Christ; it is united and sanctified and completed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, now and forevermore." Then it continues: "Behold the Lamb of God, the Son of the Father, Who beareth the sins of the world, slain for the life and for the salvation of the world." The following is the thanksgiving: "We thank Thee, Christ, our

God, that Thou hast made us worthy to participate in Thy body and blood to the forgiveness of sins and everlasting life."

Here we perceive how ancient many of the prayers are that the Church directs the priest to say at the holy sacrifice of the Mass at the present day.

According to the ritual of St. Clement of Rome, the body is administered to the communicants with the words, "The body of Christ," the communicant answering "Amen." The consecrated

wine is presented with the words, "The blood of Christ, the chalice of life," to which the communicant responds "Amen," to the strengthening of his faith. Here the thanksgiving prayer reads: "After the reception of the precious body and blood of Christ, let us return thanks to Him and beseech Him Who has made us worthy to participate in these mysteries that this reception may not be to our judgment and condemnation, but to our salvation, to the



HOLY COMMUNION.

well-being of our souls and bodies, to the preservation of the fear of God, to the remission of our sins, and to eternal life.

Let us then stand up and commend ourselves to God and His Christ."

The Roman liturgy is called also the liturgy of St. Leo, because this great Pope collected and arranged the present prayers, the same that had been in use from the earliest times in Rome at the solemnization of the sacred mysteries. This liturgy contains almost the exact prayers that our priests recite, and shows that most of the principal prayers in our present missals have sprung from a remote antiquity. In it we have the prayer for the mingling of the sacred body and blood: "May this sacred commingling and consecration of the body and blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ be to us that receive unto the sanctification of our body and our soul, and also a salutary preparation for the obtaining of everlasting life." At the Communion: "Let not the participation in Thy body, O Lord Jesus Christ, which I, though unworthy, presume to receive, be to my judgment and condemnation, but through Thy mercy may it be available unto me for the safeguard and cure of mind and body."

In the Ambrosian liturgy at Milan the priest utters the following words at the breaking of the host: "Thy body, O Christ, is broken, the chalice is blessed; may Thy blood, O our God, be ever unto us unto life, and unto the salvation of our souls." Before receiving the consecrated host, the priest says: "Holy Lord, Almighty Father, Eternal God, grant unto us so to receive the body of Jesus Christ, Thy Son and my Lord, that it may not turn to my judgment, but to the remission of my sins." When the Communion is given, the priest says: "The body of Christ," and the communicant answers "Amen."

It would, in truth, be a superfluous and unnecessary labor to cite further passages from other ancient liturgies. For the truth-loving and unprejudiced they are not needed, while the obdurate unbelievers who are prejudiced because of their stiff-neckedness would not be convinced by the most overwhelming evidence. We will here call attention to two circumstances only, namely—1. The words of the consecration have not been adopted by us from the different liturgies, for they absolutely coincide with the words of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Corinthians. 2. All the sects cut off in the lapse of ages from the Church, the Protestants alone excepted, are agreed among each other on the doctrines of the Holy Eucharist and the sacrifice of the Mass, and agree, too, with the Catholic Church. Witness: The Greeks, Russians, Nes-

torians, Monophysts, Armenians, Syrians, Chaldeans, and the Indian Christians.

Devout Servants of the Blessed Sacrament.

It is related in the life of St. Francis Xavier that after he had labored for the greater part of the day in the saving of souls, he would pass the greater part of the night on his knees before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. It sometimes happened, when overcome by fatigue and drowsiness, he would lie down on the altar-steps rest himself for a few minutes, and then resume his acts of adoration to his God in the Eucharist. St. Francis Regis, too, used to pass many hours of the night in contemplation before the same sacrament, after having been busy all the preceding day in preaching, hearing confessions, and other duties of his arduous ministry. Even after the churches would be closed he would kneel outside the doors, in order to pay homage to his beloved Lord, even at a distance. Alfred the Great, king of England in the beginning of the ninth century, spent some time every morning before the Blessed Sacrament whenever he would reach a church. The blessed Francis of the Infant Jesus, a brother of the Carmelite Order, would never pass a church without going and adoring Jesus in the tabernacle. "It is not becoming," he used to say, "for a servant to pass in front of his master's throne without showing him the deepest reverence."

Blessed Margaret of the Holy Sacrament, a sister of the Carmelite Order in a convent at Beaune, even when she was a child, would never go by a church without entering and adoring the Real Presence. And when she knew that she was alone and unobserved, it was the greatest delight of her heart to remain there as long as possible, absorbed in silent prayer. And when at last compelled to leave the church, either to accompany her mother or attend to some business, her heart remained shut up in the tabernacle with Jesus, and her every thought was directed to the contemplation of this adorable mystery.

The illustrious Cardinal Bellarmine, when a boy, had to pass two churches four times a day on his way to and from school, and he never failed each time to enter and salute Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Being asked why he never missed a visit, he replied: "It would be an act of unpardonable impoliteness if a friend or a brother passed by his friend's or his brother's house without going in to wish him at least good-day."

The venerable Father John of St. William, an Augustinian

friar, was so constant and regular in the same practice that when urged even by the most eminent people to tarry with them a little while longer, and then later go to his devotions in the church, he could not be prevailed upon to defer his visit to the Blessed Sacrament one minute, and he would answer his friends in the words of the Gospel: "Seek first the kingdom of God. Did not our Redeemer Himself, on arriving in the city of Jerusalem, repair at once to the temple, there to adore the Eternal Father?" The holy man would then hasten to the church, and, kneeling down before the altar, would remain motionless in one spot for two hours at a time. It sometimes happened that, overtaken on his way to the church by a rain-storm, he would be wet through and through; yet on leaving the church his clothing would be completely dry, so long was his stay.

St. Vincent de Paul never went out without first repairing to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, to ask His blessing. On his return home he would make his first visit to the sanctuary in order to return Him thanks for whatever benefits he had received, and to ask pardon for any faults he might have committed. Before undertaking any work he had recourse to Our Lord in the tabernacle. It might be said of him that his heart remained in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, even when in body he was far distant.

Corpus Christi.

The Blessed Sacrament of the Altar is, as St. Thomas Aquinas says, the Sacrament of sacraments; for through it, by the ever-present indwelling of the God-man, all redemption, all sanctification, and all graces are imparted to the believing soul; and from it do all the other sacraments derive their power and efficacy. The celebration of the Blessed Sacrament is the holy Mass. Hence, the feast of Corpus Christi—that is, the feast of the Body of Christ—is as old as the Church itself, since this sacred and sublime mystery has been commemorated within her bosom in all ages.

Hence we do not wonder that in the first ages of the Church no special festival day was dedicated to this holy mystery, since every day was sanctified by it. Still, Thursday in Holy Week, the day on which the Eucharist was established by Our Lord, was always observed by Christians as a festival; as St. Augustine plainly testifies, while the great canon of the synod of Laodicea, held in the middle of the fourth century, permits on that day a temporary interruption of the forty days' fast.



ST. CHARLES BORROMEO ADMINISTERING HOLY COMMUNION
DURING THE PLAGUE.

The institution of this festival, with its observance by the faithful, not only as a beacon-light in the time of distress, but also as a most brilliant day in the time of joy, was reserved for a period in which the Blessed Sacrament was most violently assailed and rudely desecrated; a period, too, in which the sects who were cut off from the Church disgraced and dishonored with sacrilegious hands the sanctuary of

the Lord. As an All-wise Providence, in order to humiliate the proud and grand ones of the earth, often selects the feeble and lowly to be vessels and instruments of His mercy, so on the present occasion the Church of God was to learn the divine will of heaven from the lips of a maiden unknown to the world.

In the city of Lüttich stood a convent of female hospitallers, among whom, in the year 1220, was one named Juliana, who was favored in her devotions by God with singular privileges and graces, for she lived in converse with heavenly spirits, and was permitted by the Lord to see into the hearts of men. For a long time she saw in spirit a moon all clear and bright, save one dark

spot on its surface. The Spirit of God informed her that the moon was the Church, and the dark spot the absence of the festival of the Blessed Sacrament; and that it was God's will that such a festival should be instituted in honor of that mystery. For twenty years Juliana kept her vision and revelation a profound secret, till in the year 1230, when, being chosen prioress of her convent, she revealed the secret of her heart to a canon of the Church of St. Martin, a man then distinguished for his holiness of life, and who at once communicated the matter to the Bishop of Lüttich and other learned theologians.

Two men especially interested themselves in the question, namely, the Dominican Hugo and Jacob of Troyes, then arch-deacon in Lüttich. The first of these became cardinal legate in the Netherlands; the other, after being Bishop of Verdun and Cardinal and Patriarch of Jerusalem, ascended the Papal throne as Pope Urban IV. In order to still more clearly point out the will of God, the same vision was vouchsafed to another nun named Isabella, and also to a recluse in the same place named Eva. But it was not till sixteen years afterwards that the Bishop of Lüttich gave orders at a synod for the celebration of the festival. A severe fit of sickness rendered him unable to officiate himself, but the canons of St. Martin's celebrated the feast, with great solemnity, in his presence. The following year, in deference to the objections raised by some individuals who thought themselves wise, the celebration was omitted. Juliana died, but as the affair was not of her will, but of the will of God, it did not die with her death. It was chiefly Eva, the recluse, who urged the new bishop, afterwards to become Pope Urban IV. This holy prelate intrusted the task of compiling the office and mass for the festival to the most able theologian and greatest saint of that day. It is to St. Thomas Aquinas that we stand indebted for that wonderful hymn of praise, the "Lauda Sion," into which he infused a glow of divine love while composing it in the depths of his truly angelic soul.

The day set apart for the festival was the Thursday following Trinity Sunday; for it is becoming that when all the mysteries of the Redemption have been presented in festal cycle to the souls of men the first Thursday should be devoted to the solemn commemoration of the seal and glory of that same Redemption.

In the year 1264 Pope Urban signed a bull, ordering all Christendom to observe this festival in the way in which it was celebrated in the diocese of Lüttich. But as he died that same

year, and before the bull could be properly published, the observance was kept in abeyance till the time of the Council of Vienne, in 1311, when the assembled Fathers solemnly instituted the feast in the presence of the kings of England, France, and Arragon. The most prominent feature of the festival is the public procession, in which the Lord of heaven and earth, under the sacramental species, is exposed to the adoration of the faithful, and by going about among them glorifies His Church.

In Pope Urban's bull, which he wrote with his own hand and sent to Eva, the pious recluse, the object of the festival is set forth in the following language: "It is true that Holy Thursday is the real festival of the Blessed Sacrament, but as on that day the Church is everywhere absorbed in bewailing the death of her Spouse, reconciling sinners, and consecrating the oils, it is proper to appoint another day, on which the Church can give full vent to her rejoicings, and supply what has to be omitted on Holy Thursday. Besides, every festival throughout the year is a festival of the Eucharist, and this special festival is appointed chiefly for the purpose of making reparation for the faults and negligences of which so many are guilty."

Thus, the feast of Corpus Christi bears the character of a feast of atonement, on which all the faithful, indeed the whole Church, should make to the Lord solemn acts of atonement for all the indignities offered to this sacred mystery of love through the unbelief of heretics and the indifference of Catholics. Before their Lord in the Blessed Sacrament all should prostrate themselves in humility, to adore Him and to atone for their own past shortcomings.

This feast is also a solemn public profession of Catholic faith. It is a declaration of our belief in the true and real presence of Our Saviour in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. On this day, not alone by individuals and by the ministers of the Church, but by all Christendom, are the words of St. Thomas solemnly and emphatically declared to be true—that there is no other people who have their God so near them as have the Christians. This truth they proclaim with joy and gladness, praising the Lord for His goodness and rejoicing in Him as their Helper and Friend.

Again, it is a feast of blessings. The curse inflicted by the Creator on the creature because of sin is removed, and all nature is blessed by that same Lord, Who made good all that He made. Even inanimate nature commemorates its redemption. For the flowers in their brightness, the fields in their



CORPUS CHRISTI.

verdure, the trees in their blossoms, the birds in their singing, the day in its freshness and beauty, all seem to unite with devout Christians in praising and giving thanks and homage to the Lord our God.

Corpus Christi is furthermore a festival of triumph for the Catholic Church. While division and strife are rampant among all other sects, she gathers her children about her in joyful harmony—a countless legion devoted to the honor and glory of God in His Church—and with them celebrates her triumph over false human opinions and principles.

In reference to what has been already said on this subject, the Council of Trent thus expresses itself on the reverence and adoration that all true Catholics ought to pay to this sacrament: "The Holy Council of Trent declares that out of a God-fearing and very pious motive the custom has been introduced into the Church of commemorating yearly this glorious and sublime sacrament in a special and solemn manner, with outward reverence and festivity, carrying it about becomingly and in a respectful way through the streets and other public places. For it is eminently proper that there should be some special days on which all Christians, with extraordinary and unusual manifestation, should testify their appreciative and grateful sentiments towards their common Lord and Master for so unspeakable and truly divine a benefit, that thereby the victory and triumph of His death may be duly set forth. And it is certainly becoming that truth should conquer and triumph over error, in order that its enemies, at the sight of such splendor and such great joy of the Church, should be rendered powerless and harmless, or else, overcome with shame and remorse, should do penance."

During the time that this council was being held, the festival of Corpus Christi was most solemnly celebrated. Besides the Papal legates, the cardinals, and the ambassadors of princes, there were two hundred bishops in the procession.

The Holy Eucharist as a Sacrifice.

INSTRUCTION.

On Sacrifice in General.



SACRIFICE is a visible gift which man offers to God in order to honor and adore Him as the Supreme Lord.

This gift is then changed or destroyed in order thereby to signify the unlimited power of God, and our nothingness and our dependence upon Him.

The sentiment of sacrifice is deeply seated in the reason of man—that is to say, it is altogether consonant with our natural reason for us to outwardly testify by gifts our gratitude to the Supreme Being, through Whom we exist and from Whom we have all things. Indeed, reason demands that the creature should render homage to the Creator.

The sacrifices which we meet in the different systems of religion have still another basis, founded on man's sense of sin and guilt in consequence of the fall of Adam. By this prevarication his original relations with God were radically changed. In place of that union with God which man should have strengthened and sealed with the sacrifice of voluntary obedience, separation and antagonism ensued after man, by seeking his own will, had placed it before and above the will of God. The realization of the death penalty, as previously threatened, must necessarily have followed us in this case, as in the case of the rebellious angels, if divine love had not intervened, and by decreeing a future redemption put a check on the severe consequences of the sinful fall. Man on his side felt himself in relation to God deserving of punishment and death, and fear had taken the place of child-like love. Instead of proving this love by further obedience, he was compelled rather to heal the separation, and to effect this he should seek to atone for sin. But as death had been decreed as the punishment for sin, it was necessary that a life should be sacrificed.

Sacrifice was offered to God at all times, and by all the nations of the world. "No people," says St. Augustine, "were so savage that they did not offer sacrifice to those whom they held to be their gods, and whom they had invented as such."

Thus, in earliest times, Abel offered to God in sacrifice the firstling of his flock, and Cain the fruits of his field (Gen. iv. 3). Noe, when he came out of the ark, offered to God a thank-offering. Abraham, at the command of God, offered not only animals, but he was ready to sacrifice even his only son, Isaac.

By the Mosaic law, sacrifice was not only prescribed to the people, but the manner of offering it was most exactly described.

Sacrifices were divided into bloody and unbloody. To the bloody sacrifices belonged : 1. The burnt-offering, which was looked upon as the first and most perfect of its kind. 2. The sacrifice of benefits or peace-offerings, rendered partly to thank God for benefits received, partly to seek for new ones; hence the thank-offering, or petition. In this sacrifice only a portion was burned, the other portion being partly consumed by the family of the one who gave the animals of sacrifice, and the rest was distributed among the poor. 3. The sacrifice of atonement, or sin-offering, in order to obtain pardon for sins. In this rite a portion of the animal sacrificed was burned on the altar; the other was burned outside the city. By the last ceremony it was signified that the sinner had merited to be shut out from the community.

To the unbloody sacrifices belonged : 1. The food-offerings, which consisted of the finest unleavened meal or of bread baked with oil and incense; 2. The liquid-oblation, consisting of wine which was poured about the altar; and 3. The smoke-offerings, which were offered daily, morning and evening, on the golden altar of incense.

The sacrifices of the heathens were often of a shocking nature; they sacrificed to their gods not only animals but men.

But these sacrifices, whether of Jews or Gentiles, could not attain their end. They could not avail to free men from sin or to reconcile them to God. Neither were they, as praise-offerings or thank-offerings, worthy of the Deity. God was pleased with them only till the time would come when that which had been decreed from all eternity in the council of the Trinity should be accomplished in the human race. These sacrifices were the merest types of the spotless sacrifice of the New Testament. This is clearly expressed in the 39th psalm, verses 7 and 8: "Sacrifice and oblation Thou didst not desire: but Thou hast pierced ears for Me"—that is, made Me ready to obedience. "Burnt-offering and sin-offering Thou didst not require. Then said I: Behold I come." In these words of the Psalmist, the divine Son says to the Father: "The slain-offerings and gifts of

men Thou wishest nevermore; they are too petty for Thy infinite greatness. To Me, Thy only-begotten Son, Thou hast given a human body, which body I will sacrifice in death to Thee, because Thou wilt accept no other sacrifice. Behold, I come in the form of a servant."



THE SACRIFICE OF MELCHISEDECH.

The sacrifice of the New Law was most clearly prefigured and foreshadowed in the Old Law.

The plainest figure of the sacrifice of the New Testament is the oblation of Melchisedech. Whilst Lot, the cousin of Abraham,

was dwelling in Sodom, strange kings came with a large army and assaulted that city. Abraham heard that these enemies were taking Lot and his family prisoners, and robbing him of all his substance. When this news reached him he armed all his servants and dependants to the number of three hundred and eighty. With these he attacked the enemy during the night, rescued Lot from their hands, and even recovered all they had stolen. When Abraham was returning home victorious he was met by Melchisedech, the king of Salem, who came to congratulate him and to offer a sacrifice to God in thanksgiving for the victory. The sacrifice was a clean oblation of bread and wine, for Melchisedech was a priest of the Most High God (Gen. xiv.).

Now this Melchisedech was a figure of Christ, Who offers Himself up under the forms and appearances of bread and wine. Hence David, inspired by the Holy Ghost, prophesied concerning the coming Messias: "The Lord hath sworn, and He will not repent: Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech" (Ps. cix. 4).

As Christ, then, was prefigured in Joseph as Saviour of His brethren, in Moses as a lawgiver, in Josue as a leader into the Promised Land, as a victorious king in David, so, too, was He prefigured to us in Melchisedech as a high-priest. Christ is truly Melchisedech—that is, a king of peace and of justice; for He came to vindicate divine justice and to bring peace to men, as Isaias foretold: "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him" (Is. liii. 5).

Again, the prophet Malachias foretold the sacrifice of the New Testament most lucidly. The temple had just been finished under Nehemias. But during their captivity the Jews had become habituated to pagan manners and customs. They still retained their heathen wives, paid no tithes, and the priests themselves had grown careless and often offered unclean sacrifices. Then God permitted the prophet Malachias to speak thus to the priests: "I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts: and I will not receive a gift of your hand. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean offering: for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts" (Mal. i. 10, 11).

This "sacrifice in every place" and "clean oblation" can be none other than the bloodless sacrifice of the New Testament; for

none but that is offered in every place, none but that is a clean and real food-oblation.

The Mass in Particular.

The only real victim of sacrifice in the New Testament is Jesus Christ Himself, the Son of God, Who for our sake offered Himself up to the Eternal Father in the sacrifice of the cross. He is at once the victim sacrificed and the priest sacrificing, Who sacrificed Himself on the altar of the cross as an unblemished victim to God (Heb. ix. 14).

Now as sacrifice is a requirement even of the natural law, and based on the very essence and nature of religion, and as, moreover, Christianity ought necessarily to be far more perfect than Judaism, the consequence is plain that in the New Law there must exist a sacrifice which surpasses in excellence all the sacrifices of the Old Law. Hence all sacrifice should not and could not cease at the death of Christ; there must also be in the covenant of grace an enduring sacrifice for the purpose of keeping at all times before our minds the one which was once consummated on the cross, and to apply its fruits to our souls.

Such a perpetual sacrifice was instituted by Jesus Christ when He offered Himself up to His Heavenly Father at the Last Supper, under the forms of bread and wine, and enjoined upon His apostles to continue the solemnization of His sacrifice. For at the Last Supper, after the paschal lamb had been consumed and all else had been done as required by the rules of the Passover, Jesus again took bread and the chalice into His sacred hands. Thus He did what is done at every sacrifice and must necessarily be done: He set these gifts apart from all the others for the sacred purpose of religion; for, whilst holding these gifts in His hands He turned towards His Heavenly Father and presented them to Him, as the yet outward symbols under which the most excellent of all sacrifices was to be offered up. Then, while blessing these gifts, Jesus pronounced over them a prayer of thanksgiving, thereby signifying that He dedicated them to the purposes of religious worship—to a use by which God would be honored, thanked, and besought for grace and assistance.

Therefore we have here all the necessary constituents of a sacrifice—the offering up of outward gifts in acknowledgment of the supremacy, omnipotence, and majesty of God. According to the definition which we have already given of a sacrifice, the

thing offered to God must be either entirely destroyed or changed in its substance. This, too, took place here; for Christ changed these gifts in their very essence when He changed bread and wine into His body and blood, so that thus there was no more bread and wine, but something altogether different, namely, His flesh and blood.

From all these facts it becomes clear that Christ really and truly offered a sacrifice to the Eternal Father, and that what He did was really a sacrifice.

In obedience to the command of their blessed Master, the apostles and their successors continue this sacrifice when celebrating Mass.

Therefore the holy sacrifice of the Mass is the enduring sacrifice of the New Law, in which Our Lord Jesus Christ offers Himself to His Heavenly Father under the forms of bread and wine, in a bloodless manner, by the hands of the priest.

The holy sacrifice of the Mass is no other sacrifice than the sacrifice of the cross; it is the same sacrifice, though the process of offering is different. In one and the other sacrifice it is the same Person Who offers and is offered, namely, Jesus Christ. The officiating priest is



AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MASS.

only the servant and visible representative of Christ. But on the cross Christ offers Himself in a bloody manner, whilst in the

Mass He offers Himself in an unbloody manner by renewing the same sacrifice consummated on the cross, without any suffering or death. This last He underwent once for all time.

That the holy sacrifice of the Mass is, by its very nature, one and the same sacrifice with the sacrifice of the cross is clear from the words of Christ used at the institution of the Mass. He said : " This is My body which is delivered up for you ; this is My blood which is shed for you and for many to the remission of sins." Jesus did not say, " This is My body that *will be* delivered up for you," but, " that *is* delivered up for you—that is delivered up now ; at this very moment My body is delivered up for you. As to-morrow I shall deliver it up in a bloody manner, so now do I in an unbloody manner deliver it up—offer it up and present it as a sacrifice to My Heavenly Father." Thus, too, did He speak of His precious blood, " which *is* shed," and not " which *will be* shed " ; that is, " My blood is at this moment being shed."

Besides the bloody sacrifice of the cross, the holy sacrifice of the Mass is also necessary ; not, indeed, to redeem us anew, for the sacrifice of the cross sufficed for the redemption of the whole world, but in order that we may have an ever-enduring commemoration and a living, although an unbloody, presentation of the bloody sacrifice of the cross—one by which God is perfectly worshipped, and from which the fruits of redemption may be most graciously imparted to ourselves.

The priest who celebrates the sacrifice of the Mass is only the agent made use of by the Lord to perform the function. He does what the Lord did. For, just as the Lord took bread and blessed it, and looked up towards heaven—that is, presented it to His Father—and changed it, and gave it to His apostles to eat, so does the priest at Mass take the gifts of bread and wine, offer them to God, change them into the body and blood of Christ, partake of them himself, and impart them to others as spiritual food.

Thus, the sacrifice of the Mass has three principal parts—the offertory, the transubstantiation or consecration, and the Communion.

It is offered up to the Lord our God only, for He alone is the Lord to Whom belong all honor and adoration. To Him, then, alone can this holiest and most sacred oblation be directed, for it is the most solemn act of supreme worship.

By this it is not to be understood that we are not permitted to mention the saints in the holy Mass, for they, above all others,

have derived the graces which we so much admire in them from this holy sacrifice, and they died giving testimony of their belief



AT THE INTROIT.

and invoke their intercession that we may obtain a portion of the same.

The holy sacrifice of the Mass is pre-eminently precious, and unbounded is the blessing that we can derive from it if we assist at it with warm hearts and pious feelings. For the holy sacrifice of the Mass is, as Christian reason plainly shows:

1. The sacrifice of adoration and thanksgiving most acceptable to God. Certainly we cannot worship God with any religious act more excellent or better proportioned to His divine majesty than when we offer Him Christ, our head, and with Christ ourselves. Nor is there any more powerful means of thanking God

in this sublime mystery. Far otherwise; for in the holy Mass from the earliest times the memory of the saintly martyrs has been honored by mentioning their names, as is proved from the most ancient liturgies of the Church, while equally ancient is the custom of erecting churches and altars over the places of their interment, from which again comes our practice of always depositing their relics in our altars.

Whilst we honor the memory of the saints in the holy Mass, let us thank God for the graces and blessings bestowed upon them,

the Lord for benefits received than by offering Him the source of all grace, Christ Himself, from Whose plenitude we have obtained all things.

2. The most effective form of prayer. Will not all our prayers and devotions ascend with Jesus to the Father? Will not the Father send us everything through Jesus? What favor could the Father refuse to His Son when He asks for it?

3. The most effective atoning sacrifice for the living. By virtue of this holy sacrifice the divine justice, justly angry at our sins, is calmed and appeased by an infinite power, and forgiveness is secured to us. How could a sacrifice fail to do this in which the victim offered is the Son of God, Who hath taken away the sins of the world? "For," as the apostle Paul says, "if the blood of goats and oxen," which were the ordinary victims in the Old Law, "sanctify such as," according to the Jewish law, "are defiled," how much more thoroughly shall the blood of Christ cleanse our conscience from dead works, and obliterate our sins, since it is a precious blood, of infinite value, and amply powerful and sufficient, ay, more than sufficient, to wash away the sins of ten thousand worlds!

4. A highly efficient sacrifice of atonement for the dead. Hence from very early times it was a practice in the Catholic Church to offer to God the holy sacrifice of the Mass for the dead. This is right, for when Christ was dying on the cross the very dead felt it in their graves, the earth trembled, the graves opened, and many bodies of the saints arose and, after the Resurrection, came into the city (Matt. xxvii. 52). When, in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, Christ renews His death, a grace from heaven forces its way down into the depths of purgatory to the souls suffering there, which shortens and alleviates their pain, and washes away a stain, so that they ascend so much the sooner to the regions of rest.

As it is a fault of tepidity not to assist at Mass frequently, it is also an injury for the soul, which is thereby deprived of graces which it would derive from the saving fountain for the benefit of the living and the dead.

Let us consider well how great is the benefit God has bestowed upon us. Israel had but one temple, to which the people had to repair three times a year, in Jerusalem. If we had but one temple, how we would long to approach it and be permitted to kiss the steps of the altar! And if some one were to tell us that a time would come when our children would have

a temple for every congregation, would we believe it if told at the same time that these favored ones would not assist daily, as did Simeon and Anna, at the holy sacrifice—that they would not devote one half-hour to the Lord's service, whilst they would squander days and weeks and longer in the service of selfishness, of the world, and even of the devil? Would not the words of the Saviour be suitable here: "Is thy eye evil because I am good?"

A true Catholic Christian considers it a great blessing to be able to assist every day at the holy sacrifice. He neglects

no Mass that he can possibly attend, and so directs the duties of his worldly life that he will have every day some spare time to satisfy his religious necessities. The time he spends at public worship he considers time gained, not time lost. During the divine service he follows with the closest union and attention; with his Saviour he offers himself up; he adores his Saviour in the consecrated Host; and if he cannot receive sacramental Communion, he communicates at least spiritually, and thus keeps alive within his heart an



AT THE KYRIE ELEISON.

ardent longing to be united with the Lord. Thus the holy sacrifice of the Mass becomes to him a very fountain of blessings and graces, and the Lord then speaks to him as He spoke to

the woman of Canaan : " Be it done to thee as thou believest ; receive the fruits of thy faith and charity."

REFLECTION.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.



HAVE no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts : and I will not receive a gift of your hand.

" For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, My name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean offering : for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts " (Mal. i. 10, 11).

" For if the blood of goats and of oxen, and the ashes of an heifer being sprinkled, sanctify such as are defiled to the cleansing of the flesh :

" How much more shall the blood of Christ, Who by the Holy Ghost offered Himself unspotted unto God, cleanse our conscience from dead works, to serve the living God ? " (Heb. ix. 13, 14.)

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

" The sacrifice of the Old Law was to give place to the sacrifice of the New Covenant. The manifold and varied sacrifices of the saints in the Old Law were simply figures of the present genuine sacrifice ; for many sacrifices were to express this one, as many words express the same idea. All typical sacrifices gave place to this highest and true sacrifice " (St. Augustine).

" The holy Mass is this sacrifice. Who other than Our Saviour alone has ever taught his disciples to offer up the unbloody sacrifice which is celebrated with mysterious prayers ? Hence throughout the whole world altars are erected, churches consecrated, and the high and holy mysteries of the supernatural sacrifice are offered to God alone, the Ruler of all things " (Eusebius).

" Jesus Himself it is Who here sacrifices and is sacrificed. Thus Jesus Christ is the priest Who performs the sacrifice, and He is also Himself the victim " (St. Augustine).

" The lamb of sacrifice which is slain to the remission of sins is the Saviour Himself, Whose flesh we eat daily, and Whose blood we drink. This banquet is served daily ; daily the Father

receives His Son. Christ is always being offered for the believers" (St. Jerome).



AT THE DOMINUS VOBISCUM.

ANTIQUITY OF THE MASS.

As the holy sacrifice of the Mass is the central point of our faith, we shall here again permit the Fathers and Doctors of the Church to speak at length. From the testimony of the early Fathers we shall proceed to positive facts which the history of early Christianity has handed down to us.

A schism had broken out in the congregation of Corinth. Some priests who had been ordained by the apostles revolted, and introduced a form of divine service of their own, whence

arose much disorder and scandal. The better portion of the congregation applied to Rome, where St. Clement, a disciple of St. Peter, presided. Clement, in virtue of his apostolic supremacy, sent to them a letter in which he refers to the order of performing the sacrifice in the Old Law, and from that teaches them that also in the sacrifice of the New Law any order permanently established by the Lord was to be observed, and that only such priests as observed this order were pleasing to God. He continues: "It is becoming that all things which the Lord has commanded to be done, be done in a well-defined order. He has commanded that the sacrifice, with the ceremonies of divine wor-

ship, be performed, not arbitrarily and with disorder, but at a fixed time and hour. Those, then, who offer their sacrifices at the prescribed times are blessed and pleasing to God, for they fail not in complying with the commands of God."

St. Ignatius of Antioch, in several of his letters, makes mention of the sacrifice and the altar of the New Law. In his epistle to the Magnesians he writes: "Gather all together, as in one temple of God, as around one altar, as to one Jesus Christ. Let no one deceive himself: he who is not within the altar—that is, not in communion with the bishop who sacrifices at the altar—is deprived of the bread of God." Again, he writes in his letter to the Philadelphians: "It is one flesh of Our Lord Jesus, and one blood of the same which was shed for us; it is one bread that is broken for all, and one chalice that is presented to all; one altar of each church as one bishop."

In the words of Malachias, "In every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to My name a clean oblation," St. Justin perceives a prophecy bearing on the holy mysteries, and says: "Concerning the sacrifices which we Gentiles everywhere offer up, namely, of the bread and chalice of the Eucharist, he prophesies, saying that 'His name,' that is, the Lord's, 'is by us glorified, and by you,' namely, the Jews, 'is profaned.' Those who offer up to Him the sacrifice prescribed by Jesus, namely, the oblation that in the Eucharist is offered up in all places—all such are pleasing to God, as He had previously affirmed. It is evident that the prophecy refers to the bread—that the Lord Jesus has commanded us to offer it in commemoration of the body delivered up for those who believe in Him; and to the cup—that He has commanded us to offer it up with thanksgiving and in commemoration of His blood. God receives sacrifices from no one, save through His priests."

St. Irenæus writes: "Whosoever has comprehended the last ordinances knows that the Lord established in the New Testament a new sacrifice, in accordance with the prophecy of Malachias. According to the Revelation of St. John, incense-smoke is the prayers of the saints; and St. Paul exhorts us to offer up our bodies to God as a sacrifice pleasing to Him, as our practice of service in the spirit." And again: "Let us offer a sacrifice of praise, that is, fruit of the lips. These oblations, indeed, are not according to the law, the handwriting of which the Lord, having blotted out, hath taken away from the midst; but they are offerings according to the spirit, for in spirit and truth we

ought to worship God. Wherefore, also, the oblation of the Eucharist is not fleshly, but spiritual, and in this pure. For we offer unto God the blessed bread and the cup of the blessing, giving thanks, that is, eucharistizing, to Him, because He hath commanded the earth to bring forth these fruits for our food. And then having ended the oblation we invoke the Holy Spirit that He would make this sacrifice, both the bread Christ's body, and the cup the blood of Christ, in order that they who partake of these antitypes may obtain the remission of sins and life eternal. They, therefore, who bring these oblations in commemoration of the Lord make no approach to the dogmas of the Jews,

but, liturgizing spiritually, shall be called the children of wisdom."

From what we have read from the pen of St. Irenæus we will recall only those words which he uttered concerning the sectarians: "Either let them change their opinion or let them decline to offer or sacrifice the things that have been named." Yet we will quote from his writings a passage that is the more remarkable because, not only in the sense alone, but also in the very language, it agrees with the teachings of St. Justin; so that it may be seen in the clearest pos-



AT THE EPISTLE.

sible manner that the first disciples of the apostles—no matter from which apostle, nor from what disciples of the apostles, they

were instructed—were most closely united in a common faith. The following is the passage : “ But Christ also giving instruction to His disciples to offer up to God the first-fruits of His creatures—not as though He needed, but that they themselves might be neither unfruitful nor ungrateful—He took that creature bread, and gave thanks, saying : ‘ This is My body.’ And in like manner He confessed the cup—which is, according to us, a thing created (by God)—to be His own blood, and taught the new oblation of the New Testament, which (oblation) the Church, receiving from the apostles, throughout the whole world offers to God, to Him Who grants unto us as sustenance the first-fruits of His own gifts in the New Testament, respecting which Malachias predicted.”

St. Hippolytus, in explaining the passage in the Book of Proverbs which reads : “ Wisdom hath built herself a house” (Prov. ix. 1), says : “ He has prepared to present us his own table (Rom. ix. 2), meaning the promised knowledge of the Holy Trinity, and his own venerable and pure body and blood, which, on the mystic and divine table, are daily celebrated (perfected), sacrificed for a memorial of the ever-to-be-remembered and first table of the mystical divine supper.”

St. Cyprian endeavored most zealously to impress upon the heretics who wished to make some alterations in the Mass that the Church practised what the Lord had ordered. He writes to Cecilius : “ Since Jesus Christ, Our Lord and God, Himself the high-priest of the Father and the first to offer Himself to the Father in sacrifice, has commanded us to do this in His remembrance, so does each priest evidently exercise his office in the place of Christ ; for he does again what Christ has done, and offers up in the Church the true and perfect sacrifice to God the Father, if he proceed in the oblation as he sees Christ Himself to have proceeded.”

Let us now glance at the testimony afforded by facts. Although the accounts are few and rare ; although the early Christian writers, in order not to expose themselves and their brethren to persecution, were obliged to observe a mysterious silence, yet we are not wholly deprived of indubitable proofs. Thus the most ancient traditions tell us, when describing the death of St. Matthew, that he was slain at the altar during the holy sacrifice of the Mass. We know that St. Justin celebrated Mass in Rome, near the house of a certain Martinus. From Holy Scripture, as well as from the reports of the Roman governor Pliny to the

Emperor Trajan, we learn that the holy Mass was celebrated usually every Sunday; in the second century Wednesday and Fri-

day were added, and in the fourth century Saturday. However, as Scripture tells us, other days were not excluded. The Apostolical Constitutions, which are a collection of ancient customs, give permission to a bishop to offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass in a diocese other than his own. Tertullian informs us that even in his time, on the memorial days of the martyrs, the sacrifice was offered, and that the faithful had it offered up for their departed friends. At the interment of the Emperor Constantine a solemn requiem Mass was



AT THE GOSPEL.

celebrated for his soul. Bishop Theodoret, of Cyrus, read Mass in the cell of a monk. St. Ambrose read Mass in the house of a noble lady. During the illness of St. Gregory Nazianzen Mass was several times celebrated in his room. In the life of St. Theodotus, who was a tavern-keeper, we read that he converted his saloon into a prayer-hall, in which the holy sacrifice of the Mass was offered up, and that he himself supplied as much bread and wine as the Christians needed for a pure and clean oblation; for the Roman governor had ordered to be mingled with the meal and wine sold in the public stores quantities of those same articles that had been offered to the

false gods. The holy martyr, St. Lucian, while in prison on the festival of the Epiphany, offered up the holy sacrifice, using his own breast for an altar, and then administered Communion to his fellow-prisoners. St. Saturninus, with forty-nine other Christians, was taken prisoner while he was celebrating the holy mysteries in the house of Octavius Felix. It would be superfluous to adduce other proofs in a matter the truth of which is so firmly established.

THE CEREMONIES OF MASS.

The Vestments.

By way of an introduction to the ceremonies of the Mass proper, we will say a few words about the garments of the priest and the furniture of the altar.

There are seven articles of vesture used by the priest when celebrating Mass:

1. The amice, or shoulder-cloth, which the priest places about his neck. This vestment, which in early times used to cover the head, signifies the recollection that should characterize the priest in speech and sight. Hence, even to-day, at the ordination of a subdeacon, this vestment is first placed, not on the neck, but on the head of the ordained, and the bishop pronounces the words, "Receive this garment, whereby carefulness in speech is signified." By this is shown forth how the priest should be inaccessible to and excluded from all worldly thoughts; how he should not be distracted by anything from his becoming attention and devotion, or from the holy and heavenly thoughts that ought to animate him during the celebration of the holy sacrifice. Hence, when the priest is putting it on before Mass, he prays: "Gird my head, O Lord, with the helmet of salvation, that I may be enabled to combat against and conquer all the assaults of the wicked enemy."

2. The alb, or long white gown, represents the humanity of Jesus Christ, in Whose place the priest approaches the altar. It was in such a garb that the Son of God appeared in Revelations to St. John (Apoc. i. 13): "In the midst of the seven golden candlesticks I saw one like to the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the feet, and girt about the loins with a golden girdle." This vestment also signifies the stainless internal justness that ought to adorn the priest, and the pure and holy life in

which he should walk before men. Hence the priest, while putting on the alb, prays to God for purity of soul.

3. The cincture, or girdle, is to remind the priest of purity of soul and body, that he may be enabled to offer the unblemished Lamb of God to the Heavenly Father with pure heart and clean hands. The priest obeys the words of Christ: "Let your loins be girt" (Luke xii. 35). "It is then that we gird our loins," says the holy Pope, Gregory the Great, "when by continence, reticence, and temperance we hold our sensual body in restraint."

4. The maniple, worn on the left arm, signifies the penitential, laborious, and indefatigably active life that the priest should lead; for originally this vestment was the handkerchief with which the ministers wiped the sweat from their faces during their laborious functions at the altar. Divine service often lasted several hours, and the priests perspired freely during the long sermons, their chantings, and while receiving the offerings of the people, which had to be divided among the poor and sick, and a portion prepared for the Communion of the priests and people.

5. The stole, a long band placed about the neck and hanging from the shoulders in two parts, is the emblem of priestly dignity and power. It also signifies the



AFTER THE CREDO.

spiritual vesture of justice and immortality, of which we were stripped by original sin, and which Our Saviour regained for us through His atonement. By crossing the arms of the stole on the breast is signified the yearning that the priest should have in his soul for the love of God that was lost by Adam's fall and regained by the death of Christ on the cross.

6. The chasuble, which was originally a full mantle, signifies the holy and ample charity with which the priest, like his divine Master, should embrace all men, and yet conceal it as under a mantle. This the bishop declares when placing this vestment on the newly ordained priest. When putting on the chasuble, the priest recalls to mind the obedience of Jesus Christ towards His heavenly Father, Who laid the sins of the world on the shoulders of the divine Son: "Surely He hath carried our sorrows" (Is. liii. 4). Hence the priest should be reminded of the ready obedience with which he himself should carry the light and easy yoke of God's commandments, and of the sacred office intrusted to him by Christ, while he repeats the words: "Thy yoke is sweet and Thy burden light, O God, therefore permit me so to wear this vestment," discharge my office, "that I may obtain Thy grace."

7. The biretta is a three- or sometimes four-cornered head-gear. According to common opinion, it came into use when the practice of wearing the amice on the head was discontinued. Its signification is akin to that of the amice.

Besides these vestments worn by the priest at Mass, there is the sanctuary garment, usually called the surplice, but also called the cotta. In the beginning it was a heavy garment worn in the sanctuary, and in winter had attached to it, about the shoulders, skins of animals. To-day it is little more than an ornament, though it also has its spiritual meaning. The cope, or choir-cloak, formerly known as a storm-cloak, as its Latin name *pluviale* indicates, was worn by the priest when going outside the church, in processions, and for other functions. It was provided with a hood to protect the head when necessary. Of this hood only the merest outline is now to be noticed on the cope of the present day, which, having become a mere adjunct to the beauty and solemnity of the sanctuary, is made up of rich and showy material that would hardly serve the ancient purpose of that vestment. By the large and ample cope we are reminded of the fulness of God's boundless mercy and love that encompass all men, as Our Saviour says: "How often would I have gath-

ered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings" (Matt. xxiii. 37).



AT THE OFFERTORY.

The minor clergy have vestments of their own order, worn during their functions at the altar. They are called dalmatics, because they resemble an outer garment once very much in vogue in Dalmatia. Their object is to heighten the solemnity of divine service, and to express the joy of Christians at the adorable sacrifice, as is clear from the words uttered by the bishop when placing for the first time the vestment on the shoulders of the subdeacon or deacon at ordination. These garments have also special significa-

tions. In the ample width of the sleeves is symbolized the generous charity for the poor that ought to mark the wearer, for in the days of the apostles the chief duty of the deacon was to look after the poor. The lesser ministers also wear the maniple, which is a relic of the linen formerly used in dusting and cleaning the sacred vessels. It now has the same meaning and use as the maniple of the priest. The deacon wears the stole on one shoulder only, to signify that he shares in the priestly authority without possessing it fully.

The vesture of a bishop is somewhat different. He wears:

1. Sandals of the same color as the vestments. These signify the preaching office of Jesus Christ, for which the bishop is sent

as an apostle, and which he should not discontinue, according to the teaching of St. Paul: "Have your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (Eph. vi. 15). Again, the same saint says: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, of them that bring glad tidings of good things" (Rom. x. 15).

2. The pectoral cross worn by the bishop on his breast signifies the love of Jesus Christ and His yearning for the death on the cross. "With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer," said the loving Redeemer to His disciples on the evening before His death (Luke xxii. 15). Now the love that the bishop should entertain for the cross of Christ, and for Christ Himself, is symbolized by the cross on his breast.

3. The bishop also wears under the chasuble the tunic and dalmatics, to show that he unites in himself the power and authority of all the ministers of the altar, as well as that of the priest.

4. The mitre which the bishop wears on his head betokens the lofty dignity and glory that he has received from God as the representative of Christ.

5. The crosier, or staff, represents the supreme power of Jesus Christ in heaven and on earth (Matt. xxviii. 18), and also the pastoral authority which the bishop possesses and exercises in the name of Christ.

6. The gloves symbolize the blessed and miraculous hands of Jesus Christ, which He imposed so mercifully on the sick and suffering (Mark vi.), and also the blessings that should flow from the bishop's hands to members of his flock.

7. The ring which the bishop wears on his finger is an emblem of the love and constant fidelity which Christ bore, even unto death, for His beloved spouse, the Church. "Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it, that He might sanctify it, cleansing it by the laver of water, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. v. 25). The ring also signifies the love and constancy which the bishop owes to the Church, and especially to the members of his own portion of the Church.

Church Colors.

The priestly vestments vary in color on different days and seasons. They are five. The white color denotes the spiritual joy of the festival of Christ and His saints, and also the innocence

that marked the lives of the saints on earth. Red signifies the love of God for man, and hence it is used on Pentecost. It betokens also the love for God as evinced by the apostles and other martyrs in the shedding of their blood for His name. The green color is emblematic of our hope in a share of eternal happiness, and of the happy resurrection of our bodies on the last day, when they shall come forth from their graves, like the green plants of spring-time after a long and dreary winter. The violet is the color of humility, penance, and sorrow, especially in Lent and Advent. Finally, black is the color of deep grief on the death-day of Our Saviour. It also denotes our sorrow and

compassion at commemoration for the faithful departed.



AFTER THE OFFERTORY.

Altar Articles.

The altar takes the place of the table round which our blessed Lord and His disciples gathered to celebrate their last supper. It also represents the altar of the cross on which Christ offered Himself up to His heavenly Father. The various articles used at the altar are such as are necessary to the sacred functions, yet spiritual meanings may be attached to them. The chalice used to hold the precious blood of Christ may remind us of His

sepulchre. Its being of gold, or at least gold-lined, ought to suggest to our minds the necessity of adorning our hearts with

the gold of charity, in order to receive Christ in holy Communion worthily into our souls. The palla covering the mouth of the chalice is suggestive of the stone rolled against the opening to the sepulchre. The altar linens remind us of the clean cloths in which the sacred remains were enshrouded. The burning tapers call to our minds Christ, the Light of the world, Who is present in the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and also teach us that we should be present at Mass with pure intention, living faith, and burning devotion.

The Celebration of Mass.

In olden times the sacrifice of the Mass was celebrated by bishop and priests together; the bishop being the actual celebrant, while the others were, as it were, concelebrants, and read the prayers at the same time with him. Of this mode of officiating in concert we have an example in the method followed at the Mass of ordination. In early days it was far more difficult to solemnize the sacred mysteries than it is now. The persecutors were on the watch. It was only in large cities that there were congregations. With the growth of Christianity it became necessary for every priest to celebrate alone.

The bishop did not ascend the altar till the offertory; all the preceding prayers and exercises being gone through at the chair or kneeling-bench. After Communion the bishop returned to his chair and read the prayers of thanksgiving. From an early date the priests began the Mass on the left side of the altar and finished at the same place. This, in a spiritual sense, was a reminder of the transition of the light of divine truth from the Jews to the Gentiles; and that finally it would in the end reach the Jews.

The following is the present order of the Mass:

The priest, clad in the necessary vestments, proceeds to the altar, accompanied by an acolyte, who represents the congregation, and in their name he prays and responds. As a sign of humility, the priest stands at the foot of the altar, and signs himself with the sign of the cross, for he is about to renew the sacrifice of the cross.

1. The priest recites the 42d psalm, in which he gives expression to his longing for God, and prays for enlightenment.

2. The Confiteor, which is an open acknowledgment of unworthiness, is then recited by the priest, and afterwards by the clerk in the name of the laity; for all should be sinless when

preparing to partake of the sacred banquet of love. After the public confession follows the absolution from venial sins only, for

grievous sins must be confessed in the tribunal of penance.

3. The priest, while saying a prayer for the remission of his sins, ascends the steps of the platform and kisses the altar. This is really an act of adoration to Christ; but, as there are relics of saints within the altar, the priest beseeches God to forgive him on account of the merits of the saints.

4. The Introit consists of a verse from the Psalms, having some reference to the festival or season, and expressive of the sentiments that ought to animate us.

Thus, in the Advent

Mass the Introit reads: "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the Just One: let the earth be opened, and bud forth a Saviour" (Is. xlv.). At the Introit the sign of the cross is made on himself by the priest, for we share the fruits of the festival. At Masses for the dead the sign of the cross is made over the book, for the fruits of the sacrifice are to be applied to the departed souls.

5. "Kyrie Eleison"—"Lord, have mercy;" "Christe Eleison"—"Christ have mercy," is a cry for the mercy and forbearance of God. No one Person of the Blessed Trinity, without the others, sends us grace; for the divine mercy is common to the three Persons.



AT THE ORATE FRATRES.

The Holy Ghost is also called Lord, for He is "the Lord and Sanctifier."

6. The "Gloria in excelsis"—"Glory be to God"—is the chant of the angels at the birth of Christ, united with the praises of the Church. It is suggestive of Christ's birth as renewed in the Consecration at the Mass. It is not heard in penitential or requiem Masses.

7. The priest frequently salutes the congregation with the words, "Dominus vobiscum"—"The Lord be with you." This is an ancient form of greeting expressive of everything good, for he is wanting in nothing who has the Lord with him. At prayer especially do we need divine assistance that our petitions may be offered for the best things and may find a ready hearing; also before instruction, that we may understand it and lay it well to heart. Hence this salutation is pronounced before the prayers and the Gospel. The congregation answers through its minister, the server, "Et cum spiritu tuo"—"And with thy spirit;" as if saying: "With thy spirit, O priest, may the Lord be, for thou prayest for us and teachest us; therefore does thy spirit need the Lord to be near it." A



AT THE PREFACE.

bishop salutes with the words, "Pax vobis"—"Peace be to you." This he does as an apostle and representative of Christ, Who,

when coming into the midst of His apostles, used the same words of greeting (John xx. 19).



AFTER THE SANCTUS.

8. With the word "Oremus" — "Let us pray" — begins the Collect, or union of prayers. The Collect is the common prayer for priests and laity, asking for all that is necessary for their spiritual and temporal welfare. Then all prayers terminate with the "Per Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum" — "Through Our Lord Jesus Christ," for whatever we seek in Jesus' name, that will be given to us.

9. The Epistle and Gospel come next. The first is a selection from the Old Testament or the writings of the apostles ; the latter

is a passage from the history of the life of Our Lord. As these are to be explained, the sermon usually comes in here, as it did, too, in earliest times. At the close of the Epistle the response is, "Deo gratias" — "Thanks be to God;" and at the close of the Gospel, "Laus tibi, Christe" — "To thee, O Christ, be praise;" for God sent the prophets and enlightened the apostles, whilst the Saviour Himself brought to us the glad tidings of God's kingdom.

10. The "Credo" — "I believe" — is the Nicene profession of faith, which is recited on Sundays and festivals, and omitted in requiem, votive, and other Masses. Here, formerly, was the line

drawn between the parts of the Mass, when the catechumens and some others were expected to retire.

11. The offering or offertory now succeeds, and consists of the presenting of the wine and bread, called the "Oblata." The priest, looking up to heaven, like Our Saviour, blesses the gifts of offering. A little water is mingled with the wine to signify that the divinity and humanity are united in Christ, Who as God and man made Himself an offering for our sake. The water alone is blessed, and not the wine.

12. The offertory made, the priest washes his fingers, reciting the words, "Lavabo"—"I will wash my hands among the innocent" (Ps. xxv.).

For the handling of the blessed offerings soon to follow the utmost cleanliness of body and purity of soul are becoming and required; for the state of the offerer should be in accordance with the stainlessness of the gifts to be offered.

13. With the invitation, "Orate fratres," the priest urges the congregation to prayer in common with him and with each other, that God may graciously accept their joint offerings. The priest himself then reads :

14. The "Secreta" or low-voiced prayers, asking for an acceptance of the gifts of offering.

15. The "Secreta" are merged by a "per omnia sæcula" into



BEFORE THE CONSECRATION.

the Preface, a hymn of praise, the burden of which varies with the various seasons and festivals. The priest says: "Sursum



AT THE CONSECRATION.

corda"— "Raise your hearts," and the people respond: "Habemus ad Dominum"—"We have raised them to the Lord." Again, the priest proposes: "Gratias agamus Domino Deo nostro"—"Let us give thanks to the Lord our God," and the people respond: "Dignum et justum est"—"It is right and proper." Then the priest continues the words of praise, thanking God for the benefit of the occasion, which always has some reference to the feast or the season.

16. The Preface concludes with the triple "Sanctus" or thrice "Holy."

The Church here joins her voice to that of the celestial chorus, praising the adorable Trinity, and saluting the Redeemer Who is soon to come down on the altar: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts: blessed is He Who cometh in the name of the Lord;" the same salutation received by Him on His solemn entry into Jerusalem.

17. The canon of the Mass is the unchanged and unchangeable, strictly prescribed portion of the Mass, read in low voice, partly preceding the Consecration and partly following it. Before the Consecration, the priest prays for the preservation of peace and unity among Christian peoples, for the success of the

Church, for the Pope, bishop, and all present, for the object for which the Mass is offered. He also begs God's saints to add their powerful intercession.

18. The priest holds his hands over the gifts of offering. This is to denote that the bread and wine are now detached and set apart from all other earthly gifts, and from earthly objects have been transformed into heavenly presents.

19. The Consecration is the true recital of the history of the institution of the Blessed Sacrament or Lord's Supper; the priest meanwhile blessing the bread and wine, with head and heart bowed down before God. Here is effected precisely the same thing or action that was done by Christ at the Last Supper, and in precisely the same way. Hence it is really and truly the continuation of the same mystery, the same action, with the same result and effect, consummated by the representative of Christ, by the authority of Christ, and commissioned and ordered by Christ.

As soon as the words of Christ have been pronounced over the gifts of offering, and transubstantiation has been effected, what was the bread and wine, but what is now the body and blood of the



AT THE AGNUS DEI.

Lord, is raised up and presented to the people for their adoration. This is the Elevation. The bell tolls, and the people

bow down, that true adoration may be given to God truly and really present on the altar.

20. After the Elevation, the priest continues the recital of other



AT THE COMMUNION.

prayers and portions of the Canon, beseeching God to send down His blessings on all those who are participating in the present sacrifice. He prays specially for the faithful departed, repeats the invocation of the saints, strikes his breast while acknowledging himself a sinner, and says the "Pater Noster" — "Our Father."

21. The consecrated Host is broken, and a part of it is mingled with the wine. This is done in commemoration of the example of Christ and His apostles, who broke bread and

thereby commemorated the painful death of the Saviour.

22. Three times the priest repeats the invocation, "Lamb of God, Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us," the third time, instead of "Have mercy on us," saying, "Give us peace." He hereby professes that, under the appearance of bread, He is truly present to Whom St. John the Baptist applied these words, when uttering them near the river Jordan.

23. After the recital of three prayers for peace with God and our neighbor, and for true Christian charity, the priest receives the body and blood of the Lord. This act of receiving is called

the Communion, and means the sacramental union between the Creator and His creature. Just before, the priest had struck his breast three times, and, in the language of the centurion of Capharnaum, had said each time: "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; say but the word, and my soul shall be healed." Away back in very early times, this form of words was used as a preparation for the reception of holy Communion.

24. After the Communion under both kinds, and of one kind to the laity, the priest rinses his fingers and the chalice, and repeats a passage from one of the psalms. In olden times, while Communion was being administered to the laity, the choir used to sing certain psalms. The passage now read by the priest, and called the "Communio," is a remnant of the psalms.

25. The Post-Communion is a prayer of thanksgiving to God for having deigned to admit priest and people to the celebration of the holy mysteries of the Mass just ended.

26. The "Ite, missa est" — "Depart, Mass is over" — proclaims the end of the service. In penitential times and at Masses for the dead it is omitted, because then, in olden times, the laity used to remain in the church in prayer, meditation, and other religious exercises.



AFTER THE COMMUNION.

27. The priest gives his blessing to the congregation. This is the summing up of all the blessings and benefits already received



AT THE LAST BLESSING.

during the celebration of the holy sacrifice of the Mass just concluded.

28. Lastly is read the beginning of the Gospel of St. John: "In the beginning was the Word," etc. Herein is promised to all Christians who believe the sonship of God and life everlasting. It is also a kindly admonition for us to preserve the graces just received.

Finally, it is to be remarked that, even in later times, the solemn Mass, with deacon and sub-deacon, was the proper and recognized method of conducting the sacrifice. Low Masses

could be read only for the sick or for anchorets. It was rare to have a whole congregation at a low or private Mass. However, we find instances of the celebration of low Masses among the most ancient Fathers of the Church.

Thus, for example, we read in St. Cyprian that low Masses were read for the Christian prisoners by priests who succeeded in gaining an entrance to their places of confinement. They were often celebrated in the dead of night in presence of only two or three persons. The Christian members of Constantine's staff had a special tent in the camp, where they had low Mass celebrated for themselves. The father of St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Ambrose,

and the bishop Cassius had domestic altars, and Gorgonia, the sister of St. Gregory, had one at which certain priests read low Masses. So that even in this unimportant respect there has been no change in the practice of the Church of God.

HOW TO HEAR MASS WITH PROFIT.

On your way to the church, effect a recollection of spirit, remembering where you are going and what is before you.

Choose a quiet place where you will not be disturbed and will meet the fewest distractions. Let it be one whence you can see the officiating priest and observe the different stages of the holy sacrifice.

Then awaken your faith, especially with reference to the truth of the great sacrifice, and renew confidence and hope for the obtaining of a rich participation in the blessings to come. During Mass you may make use of a good prayer-book containing special prayers and acts of devotion suitable to the different parts of the service. But here you must be careful to unite your thoughts and sentiments to the words that you read and utter, so that your prayers may be a genuine effusion of your heart. As there are so many methods of hearing Mass, you might now and then change one for another, adhering longest to the one that serves the best to warm and nourish your devotion. If they are too long, do not hurry to get over them all. Dwell leisurely on whatever portion most excites your piety and fervor. Pay particular attention to the three principal divisions of the Mass. Mark the time occupied by each part. At the Offertory, together with the offerings presented by the priest, offer up yourself and all that you have to the Lord, and be ready and willing to do His will in all things, and to submit to the same in all things. During the consecration and elevation, adore in deepest humility your divine Redeemer, strike your breast in heart-felt sorrow, and beg for grace and help, for the fulness of heavenly blessings, and especially for the gift of perseverance. At the Communion, reawaken sentiments of sincere contrition, and a fervent desire to receive the body of your Lord. Thus communicate spiritually, holding confiding converse with your loving Saviour, as if you had received Him sacramentally, and continue to pour your soul out to Him in ardent prayer.

Observe when the priest before the Consecration makes the memento for the living, and after the Consecration the memento for the dead, and unite your intentions and prayers with his.

In the first instance, pray, not for yourself alone, but also, while presenting your own necessities, pray for your parents, superiors, benefactors, and friends, and even for your enemies. Pray for the universal Church, for its authorities and members : for the just, that they may persevere in the grace of God; for sinners, that they may be converted. Commend also to the mercy of God the souls of the faithful departed in purgatory ; especially those to whom you are under obligations, and who are most deserving or most in need of your prayers.

At the end of Mass, thank the Lord for the graces received, beg His blessing, and resolve to dedicate to His service the remainder of the day.

EXAMPLES.

The Vision of the Messiah.

St. Thomas of Villanova, the holy Archbishop of Valencia, was once summoned on a sudden and urgent call to a sick man, who declared that he could not die until he had related to the saint a circumstance of his youth.

He said : " I was born of Jewish parents, was carefully brought up in their way. It happened that I went one day with another boy of my race to a village some distance off. On our way we conversed very earnestly about the coming of Christ or the Messiah, Whom the Jews were expecting, and Whom we had often heard spoken of by our parents and rabbis. The more we talked on the subject, the more ardent became our wish that He would come in our lifetime, that we might see Him with our own eyes. While we were thus giving expression to our childish wishes, we observed just above the horizon a most unusual dazzling brightness, and as I had often been told by my father that if I ever saw the heavens opened I should at once ask God for some special favor, we both fell on our knees and begged God to show us the long-desired Messiah ; when, lo ! in the midst of the illuminated space there appeared a golden chalice with a Host just above it, as we see it represented in Catholic pictures. Although breathless with astonishment at this apparition, we felt at the same time a profound sensation of calmness and consolation within our otherwise agitated breasts, together with a powerful conviction concerning the true Messiah Whom we had desired so ardently to know. With childlike timidity we concealed from our parents what we had experienced, yet in the

course of some time I had the happiness of becoming a Christian. I never heard what became of my companion."

The dying man closed his narration with a request that it be made known after his death. But St. Thomas rejoined, prudently, that such signs and wonders are of not as much use to the faithful as they are to unbelievers, for whom they are really intended. Indeed, we have no need of seeing a visionary chalice and host in an evening cloud, when we have them both in truth and reality in the church of God. In the chalice and in the host we discern with the eye of faith the blood and body of the Lord, therefore the Lord and Saviour Himself. But this real spiritual vision must necessarily be more than superficial and floating in an airy cloud; it must be based on the solid teachings of Catholic dogma, in order that we may be fortified against all ensnaring objections and harassing doubts. So that when the question is put to us: "Catholic Christian, what do you see in the Sacrament of the Altar?" we are able to answer: "With my bodily eye I see bread, for I see the appearances of bread; but with the eye of faith I see not bread, nor the substance of bread, but the body of Christ. For just up to the very moment when this sacrament was being consecrated or changed, Christ's body emerged into existence, by the power of God's word, from the substance of bread. Now that it is consecrated and completed, it subsists of the species or forms and appearances of bread and of the real body of Christ. For the substance of the bread is changed into the substance of this body, the highest has taken the place of the lowest, the heavenly bread has entered into the place of the earthly bread, and remains there as long as the species or forms and appearances remain. So thus in this sacrament we see the presence of Jesus in His divine-human nature; for, although His divinity is present everywhere, His humanity is present nowhere except in the Sacrament of the Altar: 'For the Lord our God is a hidden God.'"

Angels Accompany the Blessed Sacrament.

The holy abbot Nilus relates the following wonderful vision seen by his holy master, St. John Chrysostom, the most illustrious priest of the Church in Constantinople, indeed the bright ornament of the Church Universal. This clear-visioned saint saw nearly always, but more especially at the time of the celebration of the divine mysteries, the house of God crowded with angels. One day, when overpowered with wonder and

happiness, he revealed this vision in strict confidence to one of his most trusted friends.

"When the priest began the celebration of the holy sacrifice," he relates, "a throng of spirits from the choirs of heaven swept into the church, arrayed in garments as dazzling as the sun. With their eyes steadily fixed on the altar, these holy spirits remained motionless in a posture of most reverent adoration, till the adorable mysteries were consummated. Then they distributed themselves through different parts of the sacred edifice, accompanying the bishops, priests, and deacons who were administering the Blessed Sacrament to the people, and even helping the latter to receive properly. I relate this in order that the sublime dignity of the divine sacrifice may be the better appreciated, that the greatest care may be taken to guard against irreverence or carelessness on the part of those who approach the holy mysteries without sufficient recollection of thought. For the Lord said to Moses, and through him to all priests, 'Instruct the sons of Israel in piety and the fear of the Lord, and neglect them not.'"



The Blessed Sacrament as Communion.

INSTRUCTION.

On Holy Communion in General.



ESUS CHRIST is present in the Holy Eucharist not only to be adored: He is there also as a heavenly food for our souls, which we are to receive in holy Communion.

Holy Communion is a union or commingling with Jesus Christ, Whom we receive in the Holy Eucharist. It is in fact a real partaking of the body and blood of Jesus Christ for the nourishment of our souls.

That in holy Communion we receive the true body and the true blood of Jesus Christ is confirmed by the Saviour's own words: "My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him" (John vi. 56, 57).

As it is Jesus with flesh and blood, with divinity and humanity, with body and soul, and therefore the real and living body, that we receive, it follows that under the form of bread we receive not the body alone, but also the blood of Jesus Christ. For in the living body of Christ is also contained His blood; a living body without blood could not exist.

Hence, even in the earliest centuries of the Church, Communion was administered under one kind. In times of persecution the Christians took the consecrated bread home with them, carried it with them in their flight from persecution, and even in their ordinary travels, so that if any emergency came they could receive the Communion at once. Hermits, too, who dwelt far away in the deserts, and where there were no priests, received Communion, which, as St. Basil assures us, they preserved in their cells under the one kind of bread. The Church not only approved this manner of receiving under one kind, but also forbade by law any person to receive this sacrament under both kinds without the permission of the Church, except of course the priests who consecrate the body of the Lord at Mass.

The Church has several reasons for administering Communion to the laity under one kind only, and that the form of bread:

1. She wanted to guard against the danger of spilling the precious blood on the ground, of which there would be almost certain danger when it was to be presented to a great number of people.

2. The Blessed Sacrament had to be kept ready for administration to the sick, and if the species of the wine were kept too long, they would undergo chemical changes destroying their value.

3. There are some persons who cannot bear the taste or smell of wine.

4. In many countries wine is scarce, and procurable only at great expense.

Our blessed Lord wishes to impart Himself in holy Communion as food to all the faithful, and above all to give us a proof of His tender and inexhaustible love; furthermore, to unite Himself to us as intimately as possible, and also to unite us all together in the bonds of charity and unity.

Reception of Holy Communion.

Our divine Saviour commands us, under severe penalty, to receive holy Communion; for He says: "Except you eat the flesh

of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you" (John vi. 54).

Hence the reception of Communion is a strict duty, incumbent on every Catholic who has reached the use of reason.

Especially should we receive it at Easter-time and on our death-bed, but also at frequent intervals during our lifetime.

That we ought to receive Communion at Easter or thereabouts, we learn from the commandments of the Church. That we should receive it on our death-bed is plain from the awful solemnity of the moment. That we ought to receive it at intervals during life our own interests plainly teach. For the Eucharist is the bread of life for our immortal souls. Now if the body cannot live long if deprived of food, how can our soul keep itself in the state of grace, or persevere in holiness, if deprived of spiritual food?

Nor is it enough to merely receive Communion often; we must also receive it worthily.

Therefore we must prepare ourselves for it right carefully; for in holy Communion we receive the living God. If even in the Old Law it was necessary to make such elaborate preparations before approaching the mysteries, which were but mere figures and shadows, what preparation must be necessary to receive a God!

We must be prepared both in soul and body.

We prepare our soul, and render it worthy of Communion, by cleansing it of all the dross of sin, and adorning it with virtues.

How could we receive into a heart stained with sin the all-pure and all-holy One, Whose eye cannot rest on iniquity? When a very important person comes to visit us, we are not satisfied with cleaning out the room that we offer to him, but we are solicitous to furnish and adorn it as well as we can. So at the advent of Jesus we should endeavor to fit our hearts for a becoming reception of Him.

If, then, we would receive Our Lord worthily, we must: 1, purify ourselves of all mortal sins by a good confession; 2, we must remove from our hearts every venial sin, as well as every inordinate inclination, and all hankering after the world; 3, we must adorn our hearts with good works, by means of devout prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, adding every virtue, but chiefly a living faith, a deep humility, profound reverence, and fervent charity.

Our bodies should be prepared for holy Communion: 1, by fasting; 2, by cleanliness and outward reverence.

It is a requirement, having its origin in apostolic times, for the faithful who intend to approach the table of the Lord to be fasting from midnight, that is, not to have eaten or drunk anything from twelve o'clock of the preceding night. To this observance we are bound under pain of grievous sin. From this law, however, are exempted the sick, priests who are unexpectedly called to finish a Mass, in which on account of the sudden illness of the celebrant the sacrifice would be left unconsummated. One does not break this fast if he find in his teeth particles of food remaining from a previous meal, nor by a little water he might accidentally swallow when washing his teeth and mouth.

By outward bodily respect is meant a due attention to the decency and cleanliness of clothing and person. Poor clothing should not deter the poor from approaching the altar.

We should advance to Communion with great reverence, with hands joined, eyes modestly cast down, and then kneeling we should hold the Communion cloth properly, raise our head,



COMMUNION OF ST. BENEDICT.

place our tongue on our under lip, and then receive quietly and with perfect recollection.

After receiving, we should retire with great internal and external reverence to a quiet part of the church, and there spend some time in prayer and thanksgiving.

No time is so precious and abounding in graces as that immediately following holy Communion, hence we should use it to the best advantage. At that time Jesus is dwelling in our hearts as on a throne of mercy, ready to shower graces upon us. He seems to call to us and say : What will you that I do for you? Therefore no one should neglect and lose an opportunity for so much good to himself and others.

The Communion-day itself we should pass in a devout Christian manner. Especially should we make visits to Jesus in the tabernacle, for it would be an act of discourtesy not to return the visit of so good a friend. Furthermore, we should, as far as our other duties permit, occupy ourselves with prayer and meditation, avoiding all distracting pleasures and amusements, all useless and especially sinful occupations, and live only for Jesus and our soul.

Advantages of a Worthy Communion.

Unspeakable are the effects of holy Communion. It would be easier to count the stars in the firmament than to enumerate all the graces and benefits which a worthy Communion brings to the soul and even to the body of the receiver.

By a worthy Communion our soul is cleansed from venial sins and preserved from mortal sins. It is united with Christ, and ennobled to such a degree that it becomes in a certain sense divine and heavenly.

Jesus Christ by His presence transformed the stable in which He was born into a paradise of praising angels. Entering into the house of the sinful Zacheus, He washed away all his sins. He descended into limbo, and by His merits brought glory, joy, and salvation to that dark prison. So does He bring all blessings into our souls.

A worthy Communion fortifies our soul against the enemies of our salvation and gives it courage and strength in suffering and danger. Indeed it confers on a just soul a wonderful strength to tread firmly in the thorny path of virtue and suffering.

The world is a battle-field, and our life is an unceasing warfare.

Our adversaries in this contest are the evil spirits and corrupt inclinations that assail us daily and even hourly. Weary and tedious indeed is this warfare. That we may not be overthrown we need a food that will strengthen us, and this is the Blessed Sacrament so appropriately called the soul-strengthening food by the Church and the Fathers.

A worthy Communion fits our souls for a future resurrection and everlasting life, for it is a pledge of our future resurrection and happiness.

This Our Lord Himself tells us when He says: "He who eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up on the last day" (John vi.).

Even the human body is often strengthened and protected to a wonderful degree by the reception of the Blessed Sacrament.

If every kind of bodily ailment departed from those persons who had the happiness of touching the hem of the Saviour's garment, should not our infirmities be at least relieved who not only touch His clothes and flesh, but receive Him into our hearts and souls? How many among the sick have experienced a return of strength and of full health soon after receiving the holy Viaticum!

The most pre-eminent and wonderful effect produced on the human body by a worthy reception of holy Communion is the fitting of that body and the glorifying of it towards eternal life.

Unworthy Communion.

When approaching the holy table of the Lord we must especially guard against the misfortune of an unworthy Communion; for an unworthy Communion is—

1. An act of the blackest ingratitude towards our divine Redeemer;
2. An awful sacrilege, which,
3. Makes us unhappy for time and eternity.

An unworthy Communion is *the blackest ingratitude towards our divine Saviour.*

The love of God could give us nothing greater, the wisdom of God could give us nothing better, and the power of God could give us nothing holier than Himself. Now he who communicates unworthily perpetrates the worst indignity against his divine Redeemer in the very moment when he receives from Him the strongest proof of His love. What ingratitude! Such a miserable

Christian is guilty of a baser crime against his blessed Master than were the Jews who nailed Him to a cross. These crucified Him, not knowing what they did; but the unworthy communicant knows Jesus, receives Him, retains Him, and meanwhile dishonors Him.

An unworthy Communion is *an awful sacrilege*.

The unworthy communicant commits the sin of Judas; for he sins against the body and blood of Christ the Lord. As the Apostle says, he makes himself "guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord," and "eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord" (I. Corinthians xi. 27, 29). He touches with polluted lips and tongue Him Who is purity itself, thus bringing the thrice-holy God in contact with senses and faculties that are addicted to the most iniquitous practices.

But God *does not permit this awful sin to go unpunished*.

God avenged the desecration by Balthasar of the sacred vessels of Jerusalem, in which was contained only the blood of goats and rams. Will He not, then, punish those who receive into unclean hearts the body and blood of Christ?

And in fact He does so. He punishes such sinners in time and in eternity, in body and soul, in heart and intellect.

God punishes sacrilegious Communion in heart and intellect by stubbornness and blindness, and often even by despair.

With regard to the body, He punishes sacrilegious Communion by sickness and other afflictions, and sometimes even by sudden and unprovided death. On this point St. Paul wrote long ago: "Therefore," that is, because you have communicated unworthily, "are there many infirm and weak among you, and many sleep" (I. Corinthians xi. 30).

With regard to the soul, He punishes unworthy Communion by almost unavoidable perdition.

This dreadful penalty was proclaimed by St. Paul in these words: "Whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord. He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh judgment to himself" (I. Corinthians xi. 27-30).

Thus, that which to the worthy recipient gives life and blessings, brings upon the unworthy recipient death, malediction, judgment, and perdition. In the mode of receiving this holy sacrament are contained blessings and curses. Diverse are the results of the sacrament, according to the mode of receiving it, as held in the ancient Church hymn;

Unto the table of the Lord,
Upon the Bread of Life to feed,
Come saint and sinner both.

The one, God's praise ! to find Eternal Life.
Alas ! the other to himself doth bring
Punishment and mis'ry without end.

Those who approach the table of the Lord unworthily are : 1, those who do not distinguish the body of the Lord from any other ordinary food, that is, those who communicate without faith and reverence ; 2, those who do not prove themselves, that is, who have not properly examined their conscience to know whether they approach the table of the Lord in purity or in a state of sin, hence those who receive Communion without having confessed, although in a state of mortal sin ; again, those who have gone through the form of confession and absolution, but invalidly, because they have concealed their sins, or been deficient in contrition and a firm purpose of amendment, or in doing satisfaction.

Spiritual Communion.

According to the declaration of the Council of Trent, 13th session, 3d chapter, we can communicate in three ways.

1. Sacramentally only ; 2. spiritually only ; 3. sacramentally and spiritually at once.

Those persons receive sacramentally only whose souls are stained with mortal sin, and who consequently receive unworthily. These indeed receive the sacrament, and with it, instead of a blessing, a curse.

Those persons receive the Blessed Sacrament spiritually only who are animated with a burning desire to receive sacramentally, and who are filled with such a living faith that, according to the words of the Apostle, they feed in spirit on the heavenly bread, by virtue of their longings.

Those persons receive both sacramentally and spiritually who, in compliance with St. Paul's injunction, have proved themselves carefully and closely, and then, arrayed in a wedding garment of grace, approach the sacrament with the required conditions.

Thus spiritual Communion consists of a burning desire to receive Jesus in the sacrament, and of a loving union with Him, as if He had been actually received sacramentally.

This pious practice has been most emphatically commended by all spiritual teachers, and by the Council of Trent ; for it is a

means most conducive to the perfecting of the soul, and brings manifold blessings and consolations, inasmuch as it contains graces and benefits almost similar to those received in sacramental Communion.

Hence devout souls often communicate by this method. St. Agatha of the Cross did it two hundred times a day.

Let us make a spiritual Communion at least once a day, either during a visit to the Blessed Sacrament or during the hearing of Mass.

REFLECTION.

Communion in General. Its Reception.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.



N holy Communion we receive the flesh and blood of Jesus. "For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed" (John vi. 56). Therefore we should go to Communion often. "Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you" (John vi. 54).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"Holy Communion is a union with Jesus Christ. The reception of the divine mysteries in the Most Holy Sacrament is termed Communion, because it affords us a union with God, and makes us participants of His kingdom" (Isidore of Pelusium). "This sacrament unites us with Christ, makes us sharers of His flesh and His divinity, and reconciles, unites, and gathers us in Christ as in one body" (St. John Damascene). We must receive holy Communion often, for the spirit lacks strength and courage when the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar does not support it, strengthen and inflame it" (St. Cyprian). "To communicate every day and have a share in the sacred body and blood of Jesus Christ is good and profitable, as He Himself says in plain words: 'He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood has everlasting life.'"

BISHOP RATHERIUS TO PATRICUS.

Ratherius, Bishop of Verona, writing to a certain Patricus, says: "It pains me that you understand so imperfectly the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which you receive every day. If it is only through an error of your senses that you hold it to be

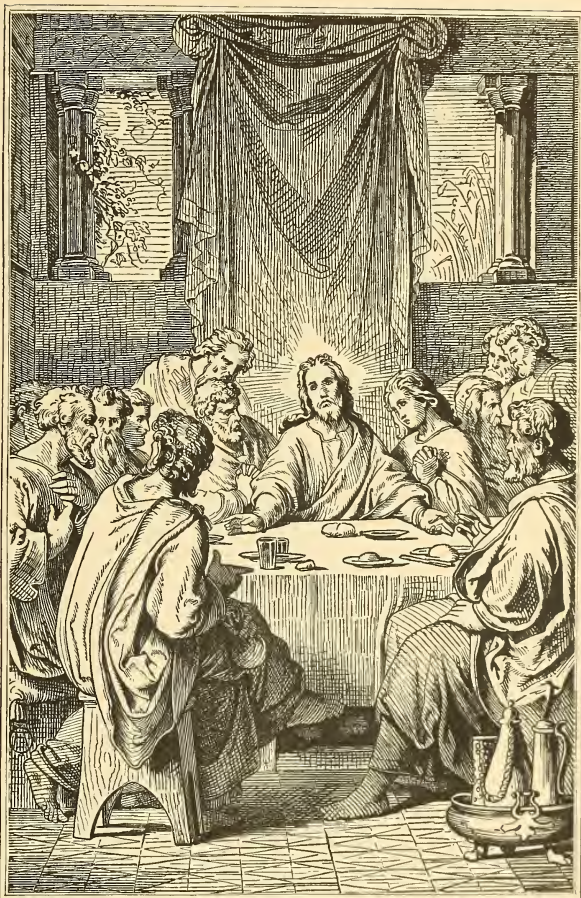
merely a symbol, it would be proper for us rather to pity your mistake than to blame it. Believe me, dear brother, just as at the wedding-feast in Cana of Galilee the water was changed into real and not figurative wine, so in the Holy Eucharist the wine is changed, not into figurative, but into the real blood of Christ, and the bread into His true flesh."

**COMMUNION
UNDER ONE KIND.**

That, in the first ages of the Church, Com-

munion was received under one kind only, and that this Communion was given and received validly, appears from the following evidence:

St. Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria, in a letter to Fabian, Bishop of Antioch, writes that at the time of the Christian persecutions an old man named Serapion, who had previously led a blameless life, fell away, and by denying the name of Christ escaped the persecution. He subsequently repented, and was admitted to the class of penitents. When on his death-bed he sent his nephew for a priest to come and give him Communion. But the priest, being himself sick, gave it to the messenger, telling him



THE INSTITUTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

to first moisten it in water, and then to place it on the sick man's tongue. After receiving the Communion in this way, Serapion breathed his last. Here was an instance of Communion received under one kind.

When St. Ambrose was in his last sickness, Honoratus, Bishop of Vercelli, was lodging in a room just over where the sick man lay. One night he heard a voice calling him, "Arise quickly and hasten to Ambrose: he is dying!" Honoratus hastened to administer the Holy Viaticum, immediately after receiving which the holy man died. In this instance, too, Communion was received under one kind only.

The holy acolyte Tharcitus was put to death by the heathens because he would not let them see the body of the Lord, which he carried in a casket.

Among the effects discovered by the pagan officials in the house of the holy martyrs Indos and Domna was a wooden box, in which had been kept the consecrated species of which they had partaken.

When the Oratory of St. Ambrose, on the grounds of the Vatican Cathedral, was excavated, several bodies of Christians were found, which had suspended about their necks gold boxes, in which had been kept during their lifetime the body of the Lord.

THAT HOLY COMMUNION IS NOT LIGHTLY TO BE OMITTED.

Admonition of Thomas à Kempis. Words of the Beloved.

1. Thou oughtest often to have recourse to the fountain of grace and of divine mercy, to the fountain of goodness and all purity, and thou mayest be healed of thy passions and vices, and mayest deserve to be made stronger and more vigilant against all the temptations and deceits of the devil.

The enemy, knowing the very great fruit and remedy contained in the holy Communion, striveth by every method and occasion, as far as he is able, to withdraw and hinder faithful and devout persons from it.

2. For when some are disposed to prepare themselves for the sacred Communion, they suffer the worst assaults and illusions of Satan.

This wicked spirit himself, as it is written in Job, cometh amongst the sons of God, to trouble them with his accustomed malice, or to make them over-fearful and perplexed; that so he may diminish their devotion, or by his assault take away their

faith, if haply they may altogether forbear Communion, or approach with tepidity.

But not the least regard must be had to his wiles and suggestions, be they ever so shameful and abominable ; but all such imaginations are to be turned back upon his own head.

The wretch must be contemned and scorned ; nor is holy Communion to be omitted on account of any assaults and commotions which he may awaken.

3. Oftentimes also a person is hindered by too great a solicitude for having devotion, and a certain anxiety about making confession.

Follow herein the counsel of the wise, and lay aside all anxiety and scruple ; for it impedeth the grace of God, and destroyeth the devotion of the mind.

Abandon not the holy Communion for every trifling perturbation and heaviness ; but go quickly to confession, and willingly forgive others all their offences.

And if thou hast offended any one, humbly crave pardon, and God will readily forgive thee.

4. What doth it avail thee to delay for a longer time thy confession, or to put off the holy Communion ?

Purge thyself as soon as possible, spit out the poison quickly, make haste to take the remedy, and thou wilt find it better for thee than if thou hadst deferred it for a longer time.

If to-day thou lettest it alone for this cause, to-morrow, perhaps, some greater will fall out ; and so thou mayest be hindered a long time from Communion, and become more unfit.

As quickly as thou canst, shake off present heaviness and sloth ; for it is to no purpose to continue long in uneasiness, to pass a long time in unquietness, and for these daily impediments to withdraw thyself from the divine mysteries.

Yea, rather, it is very hurtful to delay Communion long ; for this usually bringeth on a heavy slothfulness.

Alas, some tepid and lax persons readily take occasion to delay going to their confession, and desire that their sacred Communion should be therefore deferred, lest they be obliged to give themselves to greater watchfulness.

5. Ah, how little charity and what slender devotion have they who so easily put off holy Communion !

How happy is he, and how acceptable to God, who so liveth, and keepeth his conscience in such purity, as to be prepared and

well disposed to communicate every day, were it permitted to him, and he might pass without observation !

If sometimes a person abstaineth out of humility, or from some legitimate preventing cause, he is to be commended for reverence.

But if sloth creep in upon him, he must bestir himself and do what lieth in him, and the Lord will second his design according to his good will, which He chiefly regardeth.

6. And when indeed he is lawfully hindered, he should yet always have a good will and a pious intention of communicating, and so he will not be without the fruit of the Sacrament.

For every devout person may every day and every hour, without any prohibition, approach to a spiritual communion with Christ with much profit.

And yet on certain days and at appointed times he ought to receive sacramentally, with an affectionate reverence, the body of his Redeemer ; and rather aim at the praise and honor of God than seek his own consolation.

For as often as he communicateth mystically and is invisibly refreshed, so often doth he devoutly celebrate the Mystery of Christ's Incarnation and Passion, and is inflamed with His love.

7. But he who prepareth not himself otherwise than when a festival draweth near, or when custom compelleth, shall oftentimes be unprepared.

Blessed is he who offereth himself up as a holocaust to the Lord as often as he celebrateth or communicateth.

Be neither too slow nor too quick in celebrating ; but observe the good common medium of those with whom thou livest.

Thou oughtest not to beget weariness or tedium in others ; but keep the common way, according to the institution of superiors, and rather accommodate thyself to the utility of others than follow thine own devotion and affection.

COUNSELS OF ST. FRANCIS DE SALES ON FREQUENT COMMUNION.

It is said that Mithridates, king of Pontus, having invented the mithridate, so strengthened his body by the use of it, that afterwards endeavoring to poison himself to avoid falling under the servitude of the Romans, he could not effect his object. To the end that we should live forever, Our Saviour has instituted the most venerable Sacrament of the Eucharist, which contains really His flesh and His blood. Whoever, therefore, frequently eateth of this food, with devotion, so effectually confirmeth the

health of his soul, that it is almost impossible he should be poisoned by any kind of evil affection ; for we cannot be nourished with this flesh of life and at the same time live with the affections of death. Thus, as men dwelling in the terrestrial paradise might have avoided corporal death by feeding on the fruit of the tree of life which God had planted therein, so they may also avoid spiritual death by feeding on this sacrament of life. If the most tender fruits, and such as are most subject to corruption, as cherries, strawberries, and apricots, can be easily preserved the whole year with sugar or honey, why should not our hearts, however frail and weak, be preserved from the corruption of sin, when seasoned and sweetened with the incorruptible flesh and blood of the Son of God ? What reply shall reprobate Christians be able to make, when the just Judge shall upbraid them with their folly, or rather madness, in having involved themselves in eternal death, since it was so easy to have maintained themselves in spiritual life and health, by feeding on His body, which He has left them with that intention. Miserable wretches ! will He say, why did you die having the fruit and the food of life at your command ?

If worldlings ask you why you communicate so often, tell them it is to learn to love God, to purify yourself from your imperfections, to be delivered from your miseries, to be comforted in your afflictions, and supported in your weaknesses. Tell them that *two sorts of persons* ought to communicate frequently,—the *perfect*, because being well disposed they would be greatly to blame not to approach to the source and fountain of perfection ; and the *imperfect*, to the end that they may be able to aspire to perfection ; the *strong*, lest they should become weak ; the *sick*, that they may be restored to health ; and the *healthy*, lest they should fall into sickness: that for your part, being imperfect, weak, and sick, you have need to communicate frequently with Him Who is your perfection, your strength, and your physician. Tell them that those who have not many worldly affairs to look after ought to communicate often, because they have leisure ; that those who have much business on hand should also communicate often, for he who labors much and is loaded with pains ought to eat solid food, and that frequently. Tell them that you receive the Holy Sacrament to learn to receive it well, because one hardly performs an action well which he does not often practise.

Communicate frequently, then, and as frequently as you can, with the advice of your ghostly father ; and, believe me, as hares

in our mountains become white in winter because they neither see nor eat anything but snow, so by approaching to and eating beauty, purity, and goodness itself in this divine sacrament, you will become altogether fair, pure, and virtuous.

EXAMPLES OF FREQUENT COMMUNION.

Concerning the first Christians at Jerusalem, we read in the Acts of the Apostles ii. 46: "Continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they took their meat with gladness." Thus their Communion was of every day—a custom that endured for centuries. Every time that the holy sacrifice of the Mass was offered up all the laity who were present went to Communion.

In times of persecution the Christians used to carry the Blessed Sacrament to their homes, so that early in the morning, before entering on the duties of the day, they could strengthen themselves by receiving.

This is shown from the advice given by Tertullian to a Christian maiden to dissuade her from marrying a heathen. He says: "How will you be able to keep concealed from the eyes of your husband that which you receive early in the morning, before any other nourishment?"

In the Scythian deserts there lived many thousand hermits, who were at once in community and solitude, for they dwelt singly in their cells, without any intercourse with each other and on Sunday they assembled in common for divine worship and to receive each time the holy Communion.

The Order of St. Benedict, founded in the sixth century, embraced not only priests, but laymen also. According to the rule of the order, these latter were to receive Communion every day.

In Germany, the Capitularies of Charlemagne, which were the laws by which he regulated spiritual and temporal affairs, insisted strictly on frequent Communion. One of these laws says: "We have decreed that every one of the faithful shall communicate every Sunday if possible."

It was chiefly from holy Communion that the saints in all ages secured the graces and favors which they enjoyed. St. Matilda went almost every day to Communion. St. Catherine of Siena was sick the day she could not go to Communion. St. Teresa assures us that during the space of forty years she was never perfectly well except at the moment of Communion. St. Nicholas of Flue lived for many years on no other food but the sacramental species. One day the Bishop of Constance sent to

him some priests with a command that he should partake of some food. Nicholas in his humility and meekness tried to obey, but he was seized with such illness that he could not retain the food on his stomach, and the command had to be withdrawn.

In order to show that persons can go to Communion frequently, even in those circumstances which they allege prevent them, let us hear a few examples.

The Roman empress Anna Eleonora of Mantua, wife of Ferdinand II., used to go to Communion every Sunday during the lifetime of her husband, and three times a week afterwards.

The Duke of Burgundy, co-regent with Louis XIV., king of France, went to Communion at least every fortnight, and with so much humility and recollection of thought that all who saw him were deeply edified.

St. Francis Borgia, while yet living in the world, and viceroy of Catalonia, used to receive Communion every Sunday, for he believed that he could rule his viceroyalty the better by having for his friend the Ruler of rulers, the King of heaven and earth. No duty would ever keep him from his regular Communion.

Preparation for Communion.

PASSAGES FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE.

"Let a man prove himself : and so let him eat of that bread and drink of the chalice " (I. Corinthians xi. 29). "The work is great, for a house is prepared, not for man, but for God " (I. Paralipomenon xxix. 1). "They that fear the Lord will prepare their hearts, and in His sight will sanctify their souls " (Ecclesiasticus ii. 20). "I will that men pray, lifting up pure hands: in like manner women also in decent apparel, adorning themselves with modesty and sobriety " (I. Timothy ii. 8).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"Would anybody put away a costly garment in a closet filled with rubbish? Now if we would not put even our clothing in an unclean closet, how can we presume to receive the Blessed Sacrament in a heart soiled with the uncleanness of sin?" (St. Augustine.) "Purify your soul and cleanse your mind for the reception of these mysteries. For if you were intrusted to take care of a king's son clothed in linen and purple, with a precious crown on his head, you would forget everything else on earth. And here you receive the Son not of an earthly king, but the only begotten Son of God Himself. Are you not afraid? Why

do you not expel from you the love for all those things that belong to a worldly life?" (St. Chrysostom.) "In order to receive the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar worthily, the Christian should purify his conscience by ardent prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and other spiritual exercises" (St. Augustine).

RULES LAID DOWN BY ST. CHRYSOSTOM AND ST. CHARLES BORROMEO FOR APPROACHING THE TABLE OF THE LORD.

St. Chrysostom says to communicants: "When you are about to approach this solemn divine table, this adorable mystery, draw near with fear and trembling, with a clean conscience, with prayer and fasting, not with distraction, nor jostling one another. Consider well the sacredness of the Host you are about to meet, the table to which you come. Remember that although you are but dust and ashes, you receive the body and blood of Christ. If a king were to invite you to his table, you would go there in trepidation, and eat the viands in respectful silence. Now that God invites you to the grandest banquet and gives you His Son for food, that the angelic powers stand trembling and awe-stricken, that the cherubim veil their faces, and the seraphim cry out, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord,' how can you presume to approach the spiritual banquet with irreverent precipitation? When you are come up, try not to imagine that you receive the divine body from the hands of a man: it should seem to you as if a cherub were dealing out fire to you. It should seem to you as if you actually saw the precious blood issuing from the sacred side of God and flowing towards you, and as if you would lap it up with your lips. I do not say this as if I wished to deter you from approaching so holy and sublime a mystery, but that you may not come thoughtlessly and without preparation. For as it is fatal to approach without preparation, so would it be death to us if we would not go at all. I exhort you, therefore, and conjure you, let us go forward with fear and solicitude, our eyes modestly cast down, but our souls lifted up in faith."

With great exactness St. Charles Borromeo describes the proper external observances to be practised when one approaches the holy table of the Lord. He says: "The faithful should draw near to the body of the Lord with all reverence and humility, and so receive it. They should not have distractions of the eyes, nor stare in the face of the priest; but they should look reverently at the consecrated Host, holding the Communion-cloth under the chin, the head raised moderately, the tongue resting on the under

lip, not protruding the tongue, nor drawing it in till the priest has placed the Blessed Sacrament upon it. Then they should humbly bow the head, and not give way to audible sighing. The hands should be crossed on the breast, according to the ancient custom in the Church, or they may be joined together. Those who can afford it should appear in a mantle, but not in decorated bonnets trimmed with feathers. All warlike weapons should be laid aside, and the whole condition of the body should be humble, respectful, and cleanly. Women should not wear extravagant, showy clothing, nor have their hair fancifully dressed, nor have their faces painted. They should not presume to come with half-clothed necks, or wearing transparent veils ; they should so dress that all except their face be covered. All should receive the sacred Host on their knees, and not leaning clumsily on the altar-rail.

A BEAUTIFUL PRAYER BEFORE COMMUNION.

The venerable Rodriguez directs us to pray thus for purity of heart before holy Communion : " O Lord, if a mighty king were about to take up his abode in the cabin of a poor man he would not depend on the preparations of the latter, but would send in advance his own servants with necessary furniture to make the house habitable. Do the same, O Lord, with my poor soul, in which Thou art pleased to take up Thy abode. Send Thy angels before Thee, that they may make it a suitable dwelling-place for Thee, removing all the uncleanness with which it abounds, and furnishing it with every necessary virtue."

A GOOD OLD CUSTOM.

St. Gregory tells us of a custom that existed in the early days of Christianity. When the people were about to receive Communion, the deacon would address them as follows : " Those who are not prepared to participate in this grand and sublime mystery must withdraw and give place to the others." Then he said to those who were ready to receive, " Come forward with faith, reverence, and love." A revival of such practice might not be inappropriate in our day.

Advantages of a Worthy Communion.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

A worthy Communion purifies and ennobles the soul, and renders it capable of performing good works. " As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine ; so neither

can you, unless you abide in Me. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit" (John xv. 4, 5).

It unites man with God, and thereby makes him, as it were, divine, godly. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me, and I in him" (John vi. 57).

It fortifies us against the enemy of our salvation. "Thou hast prepared a table before me, against them that afflict me" (Psalm xxii. 5).

It imparts heavenly sweetness and joy. "Taste and see that the Lord is sweet" (Psalm xxxiii. 9).

It assures us of eternal life, and leads our bodies towards future resurrection and glorification. "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up in the last day" (John vi. 55).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

A worthy Communion purifies and ennobles the soul, and renders it capable of performing good works. "I must receive the blood of the Lord daily in order that I may receive forgiveness for my daily sins; for if I sin daily, I must have daily remedies for sin" (St. Ambrose). "The blood of Christ causes a divine blood to glow in our veins, gives beauty and nobleness to the soul, and by nourishing it prevents exhaustion. This blood is salvation itself to the soul, which it purifies, beautifies, inflames, and makes brighter than gold or fire. As he who thrusts his hand or his tongue into molten gold draws it out all gilded, so the soul which bathes in this blood becomes as bright and beautiful as gold" (St. Chrysostom).

It unites the creature to the Creator, and in a certain sense makes him godlike. "Thou, O Lord, desirest to change us into Thyself; Thou wilt incorporate us into Thyself, laying Thy heart on our heart, and fill it with Thy love, so that we may have but one soul with Thee and one life with Thine" (St. Bonaventure).

"O man, consider the honor that thou sharest when approaching the table of the Lord! We here below taste what the angels above only see with trembling; we unite ourselves to Him, become with Him one flesh and one body" (St. Chrysostom).

It fortifies us against the enemies of our salvation. "When Jesus Christ takes possession of us, He mollifies the hard law in our members, smothers the heat of our passions, and heals our wounds" (St. Cyril). "If you are swollen with the poison of

pride, receive this sacrament, and this humble bread will make you humble. If you are overpowered with avarice, taste the bread of heaven, and this generous bread will make you generous. If you are choking with the poisonous atmosphere of envy, take this angelic bread, and this kindly bread will make you feel kindly. If you are immoderate in eating and drinking, taste this flesh and blood of Jesus Christ, and this flesh, which underwent such self-denial, which fasted forty days and forty nights, and before its separation from the soul had no other refreshment than vinegar and gall, will make you temperate. If folly has overcome you, made you tepid, so that you do not meditate on eternal truths, nor even pray orally, strengthen yourself with the body of Christ, and you will be filled with fervor. Lastly, if you are prone to the sin of impurity, receive this sacrament, and the chaste flesh of Jesus Christ will make you pure and chaste" (The Same).

"It imparts heavenly joy

and sweetness. There is no tongue capable of properly declaring the pleasantness of this sacrament. And the reason of this is,



FIRST COMMUNION.

that in it we taste sweetness in its very fountain" (St. Thomas Aquinas).

"It secures to us eternal life, and draws our bodies towards future resurrection and glorification. Those who receive this food and this drink become immortal and incorruptible" (St. Augustine). "It is altogether impossible that this divine Word, which by its very nature is life itself, should not overcome corruption, and one day triumph over the death of this flesh of ours, which unites itself to the flesh that was assumed by Him. Death entered into the possession of our body only, for it was into that that sin entered. Nevertheless, the body must rise again, for Jesus entered into it. Just as we place a spark amid a heap of straw in order to kindle a fire, so does Jesus Christ impart His sacred flesh to ours, and incorporate it with ours, in order to furnish us with a principle of immortality, which neutralizes corruption" (St. Cyril).

The Heinousness of an Unworthy Communion.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

"Whosoever shall eat this bread or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord" (I. Corinthians xi. 27). The fate of the unworthy communicant will be similar to that of the guest who came to the wedding without a suitable garment (Matthew xxii. 1-15); or of Queen Vasthi, who, for having slighted the invitation of King Assuerus to the banquet, lost her crown and her position (Esther i. 9).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

The Baseness of an Unworthy Communion.

"The Jews who nailed Christ to the cross did not abuse His divinity, only His humanity. They put Him to death in great torture, but they slew only His mortal suffering body. The suffering and death in this case were the result, as it were, of His human nature, which He had assumed out of love for us. But you, my Christians, if you were guilty of the crime of receiving an unworthy Communion, would outrage His divinity itself. You would outrage Him Who sits in glory at the right hand of the eternal Father. You would drag Him down from His throne of glory and subject Him to new sufferings. At the time of His glorious resurrection from the dead He had ended His trials and sufferings. But you compel Him to undergo them anew, and to

permit Himself to be laden with ignominy and shame. That glorious flesh, which should never again know death, you nail it again to the cross, and in a more infamous manner. Alas, ye impious people, you are far worse in your desecration of the Holy of Holies than were the Jews and the Roman soldiers ; you are a thousand times more cruel and barbarous than they were ! ” (St. Augustine.)

Penalties of an Unworthy Communion.

“A great crime among Christians, a crime that draws down dreadful punishment on its perpetrator, is the unworthy reception of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, in the sacrament of His love. The desecrators of this adorable sacrament shall drink the cup of divine wrath all through eternity” (St. John Damascene). “Those who abuse this divine sacrament are capable of abusing anything. They commit grievous sins recklessly, and with more scandal ; they become more steadfast in evil, and more careless in bettering their lives” (St. Laurence Justinian).

EXAMPLES.

From Holy Scripture.

Holy Scripture itself offers us the first sad example of an unworthy Communion. It was made by Judas, of whom St. Chrysostom says : “Judas finds fault when Mary Magdalene anoints the Lord with precious ointment : Jesus bears it. Judas is an avaricious thief : Jesus bears it. Judas makes a bargain to betray his blessed Master, Jesus : Jesus knows it and bears it. But as soon as he communicates unworthily, he is driven from his position to the power of Satan ; as the Scripture says : ‘After the morsel, Satan entered into him’ ” (John xiii. 27).

In the congregation at Corinth there were some persons who had received unworthily, and hence St. Paul, in his first epistle to them, warns them of the dreadful punishments due to such sin, telling them that they are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, and adds that some among them had already met death in consequence. Experience teaches that premature death is very often the penalty for an unworthy Communion.

Penalty of an Unworthy Communion.

One day a poor man asked St. Paulinus for an alms. The bishop, observing that the poor beggar had a withered hand, asked him compassionately how it had happened.

The poor man, looking cautiously about to be sure there were

no listeners, began the following story: "Only to yourself as bishop would I dare to reveal my awful secret. In my earliest youth I was very disobedient to my good mother, who was a poor widow. When I grew up I soon squandered her little savings by an idle, useless life. One day, because she refused to let me have her last few shillings, which I knew to be secreted somewhere in the house, I got into an altercation with her, and in a fit of passion killed her with this hand, which you now see withered and helpless. The deed was done on the eve of Holy Thursday, when I was about to make my Easter Communion. And actually, after having concealed my mother's corpse and removed every trace of her murder, I dared to approach the holy table of the Lord. But lo! hardly had I received the sacred Host in this hand of mine* when it grew suddenly stiff, and, amid the most excruciating pain, began gradually to dry up and lose its power and feeling. I was compelled to scream with anguish, and all who were present gazed at me with astonishment and horror. I hurried out of the church, wandered far away from my home, carrying everywhere this useless member as a well-merited punishment. But oh, how easily I would suffer this affliction if I had not also to suffer hereafter the eternal punishment of my heaven-crying sin!"

These last words he uttered in a tone of despair. Then the bishop questioned him: "Are you sincerely sorry for your sin?" "Ah! yes," replied the beggar timidly; "but of what use is my sorrow?" "Do penance," replied the bishop, "and the sin will be forgiven." With a look of dawning hope the poor man inquired: "Can that be possible? What shall I do?" "Go, and every Sunday and holy-day stand with uncovered head and naked feet at the church-door till seven years are past. To those who pass in and out show your disabled hand, and confess to them the cause of your punishment, and beg their prayers."

The poor man at once began with a hopeful heart the penance imposed.

The faithful were deeply moved at the sight of the penitent and the recital of his humble confession. So when three years had elapsed of the time assigned for his penance, they besought the bishop to remit the remaining four years, for the poor penitent was certainly contrite.

Paulinus readily granted their request, led the penitent into

* In early Christian times the faithful received in their hands the consecrated species, which they then conveyed to the mouth.

the church, and, after having pronounced solemn absolution over him, administered to him the holy Communion.

But lo! hardly had he with the utmost fervor received the Blessed Eucharist when a warm thrill of life and strength ran through the hand and arm so long withered and helpless, restoring the member to health and strength.

Testimony of St. Cyprian.

At the time of the holy bishop St. Cyprian, who died a martyr in the year 258, God punished even in this life the sin of an unworthy Communion, as a forewarning of the everlasting penalty incurred. In those days it was customary to intrust the Blessed Sacrament to the laity, who preserved it in vessels at their homes, that they might fortify themselves with it when about to be dragged on account of their faith before the pagan judges, and also at the moment just preceding their cruel death, which they might expect at any time.

St. Cyprian tells us of a person who undertook to open one of these vessels with a sacrilegious hand, for she was in a state of mortal sin. At the same moment a flame burst forth, frightening her to such a degree that she dares not go near the vessel again.

Another, whose conscience was soiled with a mortal sin, presumed at the end of Mass to mingle among the others and secure and carry away the sacred species. But suddenly he felt a strange sensation, and, opening his hand, found nothing but ashes—a sign that the Lord and His graces and blessings depart from all who receive Him unworthily.

How many, because they have not done penance nor confessed their sins, are every day seized by evil spirits! How many become insane and otherwise diseased on account of bad Communions! I will not say how many meet with sudden deaths. Let no one who communicates unworthily expect to escape punishment because it does not come all at once. Let him fear the chastisement held in store for him by the angry judge. Thus writes St. Cyprian.

The Communion of an Impenitent Man.

Lothaire, a son of Lothaire I., at the distribution of the kingdom in the year 855, received the lands bounded by the rivers Rhine, Moselle, Maas, and Schelde for his portion; hence its name, Lorraine. Although lawfully married to Thietberg in the

year 856, he some time after had illicit intercourse with a young woman named Waldrada, and in order to continue in his wickedness he charged his lawful wife with a crime, and attempted to cast her aside. Pope Nicholas I., to whom he applied for a bill of divorce, sent him instead a letter of excommunication on account of his adultery. Under the next Pope, Adrian, the king made a journey to Rome, in order to be received back into the Church. To secure his restoration, he assured Pope Adrian that, at the advice of his predecessor, Nicholas I., he had broken off his sinful intercourse with Waldrada. He then besought the pontiff ardently to receive him back into the Church solemnly, by admitting him publicly to the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Adrian consented, and appointed Monte Casino as the place where he would celebrate Mass in presence of the king. Towards the end of the Mass, the Pope, holding the Blessed Sacrament in his hand, turned towards Lothaire and said: "Prince, if, since the admonition of Nicholas I., you have committed no act of adultery, and have come to the firm determination of no longer living in sin with Waldrada, then come forward with confidence and receive the sacrament of eternal life. But if your repentance is not sincere, do not presume to receive the body and blood of the Lord, and by desecration of this sacrament bring upon yourself condemnation." The king failed to be warned by these words, and thus became at once guilty of perjury and sacrilege. His example was followed by most of his courtiers, to all of whom the Pope had said: "If you have not had any culpable share in the sinful errors of your monarch, and have now the firm resolution to owe no further allegiance to him if he sin again, come forward and receive the body and blood of our divine Redeemer to your sanctification and salvation." Some few, terrified by the Pope's words, drew back. The greater part were guilty of the sacrilege. Punishment came swift and sure. On the very day of the sacrilegious Communion two of the king's attendants fell dead suddenly in the city of Rome. Others died on the road the next day. In Lucca, where the royal party halted for two days, the king saw himself surrounded with the dead bodies of several more attendants. He himself felt the first symptoms of a fever. He resumed his journey, however, but was unable to go further than Piacenza, where, on the night of his arrival, about two o'clock, he suddenly lost speech and consciousness, and at nine o'clock the next morning he died without any sign of repentance, because all through the eight days following

his unworthy Communion he had refused to recognize the hand of God in the sudden death of his adherents and companions in iniquity. All who had received Communion died suddenly, while those who had held back escaped death, that the punishment of God might be the more marked.

Trifle not with Holy Things.

Godwin, Duke of Kent, was charged by the king with having slain his brother. The duke attempted to defend himself, and, according to the custom then prevailing in England, wished to be judged before the Blessed Sacrament. The duke therefore took the consecrated particle in his hands, and turning towards the king said: "If ever I thought or did evil against you or your brother, may this consecrated bread choke me on the spot." Hardly had he said this when his throat closed, and death from suffocation ensued.

Spiritual Communion.

SAYINGS OF THE SAINTS.

"Spiritual Communion is very profitable; therefore do not omit it, for by it the Lord learns how much you love Him" (St. Teresa). "I advise every one who desires to grow in love for Jesus to communicate in this spiritual manner at least once a day, during a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, or at Mass. And it is better yet if it be done three times at Mass, first at the beginning, secondly at the middle, and lastly at the end of Mass. This devotion is far more salutary than many suppose, while at the same time it is very easy of practice" (St. Alphonsus). "In order to receive Christ in the sacramental Communion profitably and properly, it is very useful that we often make a spiritual Communion" (Peter Faber). "O my Lord, what a delightful way this is to communicate, without giving my father-confessor any trouble, or depending on any one save Thyself, Who dost draw near to the solitude of my soul and speakest to my heart" (Angela of the Cross).

THE VALUE OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

Jesus once appeared to the venerable Paula Maresca and showed her two precious vases, one of gold, the other of silver; and He said to her: "In the golden vessel I keep sacramental Communion, and in the silver vessel spiritual Communion."

To the blessed Jane of the Cross our divine Saviour once said:

"As often as you make a spiritual Communion I send you a grace which is in a measure similar to the grace which I grant you in sacramental Communion."

MODE OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

From St. Leonard of Port Maurice.

In order to make a good spiritual Communion, be recollected, make an act of true contrition, and then awaken within you those sentiments of love and confidence which you are accustomed to have at your sacramental Communion. Join to all that a heartfelt longing to receive Jesus Christ, Who is hidden under the sacramental forms and appearances. To heighten still further your devotion, imagine that the Blessed Virgin or your guardian angel is presenting to you the sacred Host. Repeat the words: "Come, my Jesus, Thou love and life of my soul, come into my poor heart: come and quiet my longings, come and sanctify me; yes, come, O sweet Jesus, come and abide with me forever."

Then be silent, and see within yourself your merciful God, the same as if you had actually received Him in the Blessed Sacrament; adore Him, thank Him, awaken within you all those sacred aspirations which you are in the habit of awaking at your regular Communion.

ST. JULIANA FALCONIERI.

This saint had reached the age of seventy years; virtuous as she had ever been, she was tried by deep afflictions. She was prostrated with an incurable weakness of the stomach. At last she could not retain a particle of food—was totally deprived of the consolation of receiving the ever-blessed body of her Lord, which she could not receive even as Holy Viaticum. This privation caused her inexpressible grief, and so great was her mourning and weeping that it seemed as if she must die of sorrow. At last she begged her father-confessor in the most humble terms to bring the Blessed Sacrament near her. He promised to comply with her request. When he appeared carrying the Blessed Sacrament, she prostrated herself in the form of a cross before her Lord, and adored Him. Her countenance became bright like an angel's. Then she begged for permission to touch the Blessed Sacrament with her lips, but this could not be permitted. Then she begged the priest to lay a veil on her longing, burning breast, and to place the Blessed Sacrament on it, that she might at least

receive her Jesus in a spiritual Communion. This wish was complied with, when, lo! hardly had the sacred Host touched her fervent breast than it disappeared suddenly, and could be found no more. A moment afterwards St. Juliana departed this life, with a smile on her features.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

If there is anything for which man should be thankful to God, it is certainly for the institution of the Blessed Sacrament; but we are thankful only when we make right use of this sacred mystery, as was the intention of Christ that we should do.

It exists for the purpose of being to us a sacrament, a food, and a sacrifice.

As a sacrament we should regularly visit it and adore it on the feasts established in its honor, at Benediction, on Holy Thursday, during the Forty Hours' Devotion, on Corpus Christi. Although with our bodily eyes we see but the forms and appearances, faith and the words of Eternal Truth teach us that Jesus Christ Himself, both as man and God, is concealed under those forms and appearances. Though human reason may pretend to be ashamed of this mystery, our heart revels in holy joy and pure love, because it feels the presence of God.

As a sacrifice you should be present at it often, if possible daily, and there contribute to the sacrifice all that you have. It is, indeed, the same sacrifice that was once offered on the cross of Calvary to the eternal Father, with this difference: that there it was a blood-sacrifice, while here it is offered in an unbloody manner. Place yourself in spirit for a moment under the cross of the dying Saviour. What solemn feelings pervade your soul as you see your Lord and God bleeding and dying for your sake! The same sentiments should animate you when at holy Mass; for there too is Christ, Who every day offers Himself up to the eternal Father for our sins.

As celestial food you should receive the Blessed Sacrament often, and with due preparation; for it is, in truth, the nourishment of your soul and your safest pledge for eternal happiness. How much labor, effort, and care a man will undergo for his temporal success! How he longs for money, property, and honors! Oh, that you had a similar longing, a similar fondness, for your Saviour in the Blessed Sacrament! What more could God do to show you how tenderly He loves you, how earnestly He desires your happiness? How then will you excuse yourself, if you

slight the love of your God by neglecting frequent Communion, and thus fail to secure grace—fail to secure your eternal salvation? Oh, do not slight Jesus Christ in your lifetime, that He may strengthen you in your death-hour, and deal gently with you on your judgment-day.

HYMN TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

Jesus, my Lord, my God, my All !
 How can I love Thee as I ought,
 And how revere this wondrous gift,
 So far surpassing hope or thought ?
 Sweet Sacrament, we Thee adore ;
 O make us love Thee more and more !

Had I but Mary's sinless heart
 To love Thee with, my dearest King ·
 Oh, with what bursts of fervent praise
 Thy goodness, Jesus, would I sing !
 Sweet Sacrament, we Thee adore ;
 O make us love Thee more and more !

O see ! within a creature's hand
 The vast Creator deigns to be,
 Reposing infant-like, as though
 On Joseph's arm or Mary's knee.
 Sweet Sacrament, we Thee adore ;
 O make us love Thee more and more !

Thy Body, Soul, and Godhead, all,—
 O mystery of love divine !—
 I cannot compass all I have,
 For all Thou hast and art are mine.
 Sweet Sacrament, we Thee adore ;
 O make us love Thee more and more !


Sound, sound His praises higher still,
 And come, ye angels, to our aid ;
 'Tis God, 'tis God, the Very God,
 Whose power both man and angels made.
 Sweet Sacrament, we Thee adore ;
 O make us love Thee more and more !

The Sacrament of Penance.

The Sacrament of Penance in General.

INSTRUCTION.

Nature of the Sacrament of Penance.

 HE holy Sacrament of Penance is that sacrament in which the duly authorized priest, taking the place of God, remits to the sinner the sins he has committed after Baptism, when he contritely and fully confesses them, and has the firm determination to amend his life and do penance. That the Sacrament of Penance is a true sacrament is clear from the fact that it has all the marks necessary to make it such ; namely, 1. Institution by Christ ; 2. Outward signs of grace ; 3. The inward working of grace.

Christ really ordained the Sacrament of Penance ; for the wholly peculiar thing in the Sacrament of Penance is the loosing and binding. Now this Christ ordained on the evening of the day on which He rose from the dead. St. John relates : "When it was late that same day, the first of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them : Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. When He had said this, He breathed on them : and He said to them : Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them ; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained" (John xx. 19-24).

This power of binding and loosing sin extends to all those who succeed the apostles in the priestly office ; for Christ has established His means of salvation for all ages, and for all men who stand in need of them.

If any one object that it is unfitting for a priest, a man who may be himself a sinner, to have the power of remitting the sins of others in the tribunal of penance, let him remember that in Baptism too sins are remitted, and the power is exercised there too by a sinful man. Besides, are not the rulers who in the place of God govern nations, and to whom the weal or the woe of whole peoples is intrusted, also men similar to those over whom they

are placed? Do not doctors themselves get sick and die? And yet we call them to us when we are sick.

The outward signs in the Sacrament of Penance are : 1. The actions of the penitent ; namely, the act of contrition, the confession, and the satisfaction. 2. The words of absolution : " I absolve thee."

With these outward signs of the Sacrament of Penance are joined the inward workings of grace.

The chief effects of the Sacrament of Penance are : 1. All for-



ST. JOHN PREACHING IN THE DESERT.

giveness of the sins committed after Baptism, however great their number or their enormity. 2. Remission of the eternal punishment due to sin. 3. The meritoriousness of good works performed in a state of grace.

4. Recovery of God's friendship, and of our lost peace of conscience. 5. Bestowal of many special graces, as each soul needs them.

Necessity of the Sacrament of Penance.

The Sacrament of Penance is necessary to salvation for all those who have sinned grievously since their Baptism.

As original sin can be extinguished by Baptism, and as also all the actual sins committed before Baptism are remitted by that first sacrament, so the mortal sins committed after Baptism are remitted by the Sacrament of Penance only. An exception may arise, when it is naturally or morally impossible to have recourse to the sacrament, in which case the penitent may save his soul by perfect contrition joined with an earnest purpose of amend-

ment, a sincere desire for confession, and the will to do satisfaction.

On account of the necessity of the Sacrament of Penance to reconciliation between God and the man who sinned after Baptism, the holy Fathers call it the only plank of safety after one has had the misfortune to suffer moral shipwreck.

Requirements of Sacramental Penance.

In order that a sinner may be reconciled to God through the Sacrament of Penance, the following conditions are necessary on his part : 1. A careful examination of conscience ; 2. Inward and upright contrition joined with a firm purpose of amendment ; 3. A full confession ; 4. Satisfaction.

Without these four points Sacramental Penance has no value or utility : no one of these points can be wanting. Those people fall into a deplorable error who imagine that this sacrament is received worthily when they confess their sins merely with their lips. More than that is required : the whole man must do penance—the understanding through the examination of conscience, the heart through contrition, the will through earnest determination, the mouth through self-accusation, and the whole being through satisfaction.

REFLECTION.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son.

THE PARABLE.

HIS parable is found in the Gospel of St. Luke,

xv. 11-32 :

“ A certain man had two sons ;

“ And the younger of them said to his father :

Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his substance.

“ And not many days after, the younger son gathering all together, went abroad into a far country, and there wasted his substance living riotously.

“ And after he had spent all, there came a mighty famine in that country, and he began to be in want.



“And he went, and cleaved to one of the citizens of that country. And he sent him into his farm to feed swine.

“And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks the swine did eat : and no man gave unto him.

“And returning to himself, he said : How many hired servants in my father’s house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger ?

“I will arise, and will go to my father, and say to him : Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee :

“I am not now worthy to be called thy son : make me as one of thy hired servants.

“And rising up he came to his father. And when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and running to him fell upon his neck and kissed him.

“And the son said to him : Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee : I am not now worthy to be called thy son.

“And the father said to his servants : Bring forth quickly the first robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet :

“And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and make merry :

“Because this my son was dead, and is come to life again : was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

“Now his elder son was in the field, and when he came and drew nigh to the house he heard music and dancing :

“And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

“And he said to him : Thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe.

“And he was angry, and would not go in. His father therefore coming out began to entreat him.

“And he answering, said to his father : Behold, for so many years do I serve thee, and I have never transgressed thy commandment, and yet thou hast never given me a kid to make merry with my friends :

“But as soon as this thy son is come, who hath devoured his substance with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

“But he said to him : Son, thou art always with me, and all I have is thine :

"But it was fit that we should make merry and be glad, for this thy brother was dead, and is come to life again : he was lost, and is found."

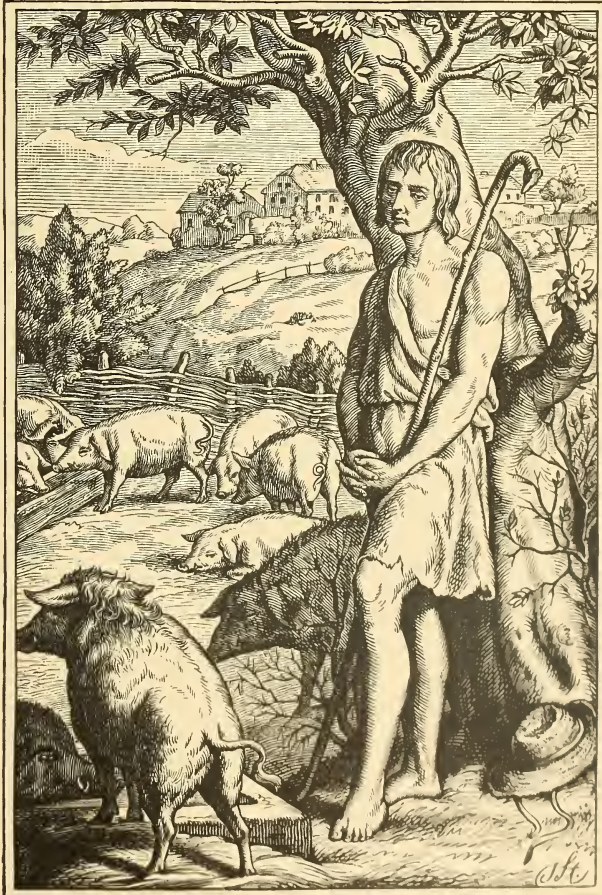
THE APPLICATION.

In the conduct of this kind and forgiving father, Our Saviour wished to portray the methods of love employed by God towards the sinner. We are all prodigal sons as soon as we commit sin. As the father received cordially and forgivingly his returning repentant son, so does the Heavenly Father accept graciously the erring sinner, when he returns with a contrite heart. Now what steps did the prodigal son take towards his conversion ?

He entered into himself. This was the first step. He recognized, 1, the enormity of his crime : here we have the examination of conscience.

He de- tests, 2, his folly : "How

many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger ?" He was deeply sorry for having



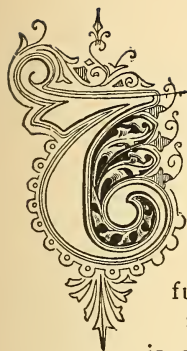
THE PRODIGAL SON.

deserted his good and kind father. Here we have contrition. He resolved, 3, to return to his father and seek his pardon. "I will arise, and will go to my father." Here we have the firm purpose of amendment. So he really goes back, and meets his father on the way hastening to receive and embrace him. The son acknowledges his transgressions, saying: "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee: I am not now worthy to be called thy son." Here we have, 4, a species of confession. He was ready to do penance for his faults, not asking to be treated as a son, but as a servant. He continued to dwell with his father in obedience. Here we have, 5, satisfaction.

In return for his sincere penance and his contrite confession, the prodigal son receives full forgiveness from his father, who commanded that a ring be put on his finger, shoes on his feet, the fatted calf to be killed, and a banquet to be prepared. The ring is a symbol of the sacred spiritual covenant which the repentant sinner makes with Christ the Lord. According to St. Augustine, it is the seal of the Holy Spirit. The shoes placed upon the feet of the prodigal son are, according to the holy Fathers, a symbol of the grace that enables us to "walk not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit" (Rom. viii. 4). It is this same grace that the royal Psalmist alludes to, when he says of those who are under the protection of the Most High: "Thou shalt walk upon the asp and the basilisk: thou shalt trample under foot the lion and the dragon" (Psalm xc. 13). Complete reconciliation was celebrated at the feast of gladness. How like the relations between the sinner and Christ! Not only does the sinner receive from divine mercy forgiveness of his guilt and the grace of strength against evils, but Christ even invites him to that truly celestial banquet at which he bestows even Himself on the returning sinner as a food, and thus infuses new life into him. Here indeed have the words their meaning: "Let us eat and make merry: for my son that was dead has come to life; he was lost, and is found."

Examination of Conscience.

INSTRUCTION.



O examine our conscience means to try earnestly to recall our sins, that we may know them well.

This examination of conscience is the first and most necessary condition in the Sacrament of Penance. Without it there can be no contrition, no purpose of amendment, no sincere and full confession, no satisfaction.

Since, as St. Francis Xavier says, self-knowledge is a special gift from God, to be prayed for by him who seeks it, we must begin the examination of conscience by invoking the Holy Spirit.

Then we proceed with our examination :

1. In quiet retirement and holy recollection of spirit. When free from the business and cares of life, and far from the tumult of the world, we are best enabled to look within ourselves.

2. With zeal and exactness. We should search every corner of our hearts, recall every place where we have been, the persons with whom we have associated, the thoughts that have been in our mind, the words we have spoken, the evil works we have done and the evil occasions we have used. We must not confine ourselves to the evil we have done ; we must remember the good we have omitted. Furthermore, we must recall the nature of our sins, whether they were grievous or slight, mortal or venial ; whether we committed them with forethought and deliberation, or rather through ignorance, weakness, and precipitation. Finally, we must calculate the number of our sins, the frequency of our relapses, and find out their sources and causes ; for if we would stem the tide of our sins, we must shut off the fountains.

3. With strictness and impartiality. In examining our consciences, we must proceed with the same severity that one would use when about to investigate the life of his worst enemy. Such a person proceeds with all exactness and closeness, overlooking nothing, scrutinizing everything, defending no weakness, excusing no fault. Thus must we do when examining our own lives. We must prove ourselves as if we were standing before God's judgment-seat, and as if this confession were to be the last of our life. Nay, we should use against ourselves the same rigor and

impartiality with which one day the divine Judge will demand an accounting from us—a rendering an account of every idle word.

4. According to certain rules. Of these rules, the following are the most important :

a. Recall to mind the time when you were at your last confession, and a confession that was valid. For if one confessed invalidly the last time, or several times previous, he must overhaul every confession he has made since he made a valid one.

We must also examine carefully whether, previous to our last confession, we had searched our conscience thoroughly and not superficially and hurriedly ; whether in our confession we told everything, and did not, either through carelessness, or designedly and to spare our shame, conceal any mortal sin ; whether we had true contrition, with a firm purpose of amendment and a determination to make satisfaction, so that all the requirements for a good confession were fulfilled. If this were not done, and we do not repeat every confession all the way back to our last valid confession, then the confession we are about to make will be also null and void.

b. We must recall whether we have discharged faithfully the penances imposed upon us by our confessors. If we had not at least the good will to do our penance, then that confession was useless. If we had the intention to do it, and then afterwards through culpable negligence failed to do it, then although the confession was not invalid, yet we committed a grave sin, and thereby deprived ourselves of many previous graces.

c. If we were not absolved in our last confession, the priest having either denied us absolution or deferred it to a given time, that fact must be told in the very beginning of the confession, adding whether we returned to confession at the time appointed, or whether we failed to come, and the reason for not coming. Furthermore, we must tell whether we did what our confessor prescribed, and what means we employed to amend our life. This sin from which we were not absolved must be treated separately from other sins.

d. Then we examine our conscience : 1. On the ten commandments of God ; 2. On the six precepts of the Church ; 3. On the different kinds of sin ; 4. On the duties of our state of life.

e. We may, and it is recommended to do so, make use of a table of sins ; but we must not forget that hardly any one such table contains all on which each individual should examine himself according to his particular circumstances. We must not suppose

something to be not a sin because it is not laid down in the table, although our conscience suspects it. Such we must reveal to our confessor, and abide by his decision.

This examination of conscience before confession can be specially lightened by the following methods: 1, by a daily examination; 2, by frequent confession.

Whosoever examines his conscience every night before retiring, reviewing his thoughts, words, works, and omissions, will certainly have little trouble in examining his conscience for confession.

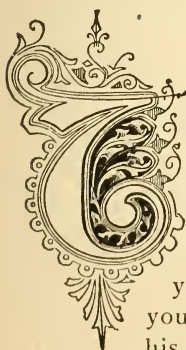
On the other hand, the Christian who contents himself with examining his conscience for confession only will find his soul a vineyard run wild. A heart that is searched and purified every day gradually becomes unable to tolerate any uncleanness. As in a garden which the gardener attends to regularly every day no weeds can thrive, so no anger, envy, impatience, or other evil habit can strike deep root in our heart if it is examined every day.

By frequent confession too, we can lighten our examinations of conscience; for he who confesses often will examine his conscience often, and what one does often soon becomes easy.

A diligent examination of conscience is a source of much consolation; for it makes us easy about previous confessions. A careless examination brings in later years unrest and qualms of conscience; and even though a general confession has settled all doubts about previous confessions, there still lingers much spiritual uneasiness.

REFLECTION.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.



THOU lightest my lamp, O Lord. O my God, enlighten my darkness" (Psalm xvii. 29). "I meditated in the night with my own heart, and I was exercised, and I swept my spirit" (Psalm lxxvi. 7). "The wisdom of a discreet man is to understand his way" (Proverbs xiv. 8). "Try your own selves if you be in the faith: prove ye yourselves" (II. Cor. xiii. 5). "Let every one prove his own work" (Gal. vi. 4).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"The judgment-seat is in thy own soul. God is the judge, thy conscience is the complainant, and internal anguish thy penalty"

(St. Augustine). "Ascend the judgment-seat of thy own heart against thyself, and declare thyself guilty" (The Same). "Let no man plead ignorance. We have a director—conscience" (St. Chrysostom). "The grace of repentance does not enter a soul before the latter has sketched out and vividly painted before its vision a true picture of its gross uncleanness" (St. Gregory). "The whole perfection of men consists in knowing how imperfect they are" (St. Jerome). "Without a sound self-knowledge we cannot be just or happy" (St. Bernard). "Conscience reproaches us for the past, accuses the present, and trembles for the future" (St. Bonaventure).

COMPARISONS.

St. Ephrem compares the Christian to a good business man, who, while carrying on his business, wishes at the same time to be certain whether he has gained or lost. He says: "The industrious business man bestows no little care on his account-book, seeking always to be well informed about the condition of his affairs. When he perceives that he has suffered a loss and is in danger of further detriment, he hastens to repair the defect. Should not you, O Christian, imitate this cautious man of business, since the business of your soul is so much more important, and the question is about eternal loss or eternal gain?" Thus the account-book of the Christian is his conscience, as St. Chrysostom aptly says: "Conscience is a book in which one's sins are daily written down." Examine this book every day, and when you find a debt liquidate it by the second Baptism; for we have two baptisms—a baptism of water and a baptism of tears, the Holy Sacrament of Penance.

EXAMPLES.

The Young Hermit and His Preceptor.

A young hermit said to his tutor: "It seems to me, father, that I am virtuous and pleasing in the eyes of God." "Ah," replied the venerable man, "he who does not know his sins imagines that he is good; but he who remembers the sins he has committed is always of a far different opinion."

The Sin Register.

St. Climachus tells us that the ancient monks of the desert used to examine their consciences with the closest scrutiny and strictest impartiality. They wore a penance girdle, on which

each one wrote, as if in a day-book of sin, every thought, every fault, even the smallest imperfection, in order to be thus able to accuse himself in confession without any palliation or self-love.

St. Francis Borgia.

St. Francis Borgia spent two hours every day in studying his disposition and seeking to know himself. By means of this salutary practice, he came to have such a poor opinion of himself that he was astonished not to find himself despised, ridiculed, and abused by everybody. He thus became a model of humility.

For Persons who have Nothing to Confess.

There was once a distinguished lady who went often to confession, and consequently was very much at her ease, as if she had no sin on her soul. St. Margaret of Cortona, who used to pray most fervently for this lady, received from the Lord a commission to communicate the following suggestions to her confessor, that he might place them before his penitent, and thus guide her to a heartfelt and penitential confession. The suggestions were: that prior to her marriage she had been frivolous and not altogether modest; that at the time of her marriage she adorned herself extravagantly, taking little or no pleasure in the things of God; that during her married life many things took place that were unbecoming her state of life, and this even on festivals of the Church; that in a certain lawsuit with one of her acquaintances, she would have gladly brought about an unfair decision; that when she went out she wished to appear more beautiful than other women; that she pretended to be friendly to the members of her household, while she found fault with them behind their backs; that she loved no one but her husband and her sons, and these to an excess; that she never had a true solid contrition for all her sins, and even in the holiest season performed her devotions tepidly; that her fasts were devoid of meritorious intention; that she was too fond of good food and gave luxurious and ostentatious banquets; that she was not free-handed in her almsgiving, and looked for worldly reward for what she did give; that she arrayed herself in costly attire, and had no concern for those who had to toil in nakedness and cold; that she was imperative and overbearing towards her household; that she spoke ill of others behind their back, disparaging their good qualities, and censuring their every motion, and rejoicing at their discomfiture; that, instead of regretting the evil

ways of others, she found satisfaction in retailing them among neighbors ; that she was agreeable and flattering to persons whom she afterward ridiculed in their absence ; that she was covetous and greedy for good things ; that in church she did not fix her heart on God, but permitted her thoughts to dwell on earthly things ; that she censured the service and sermon ; that she did not serve God with pure motives ; that she took pleasure in looking at herself in the glass, and envied the good appearance of other women ; that she exaggerated her own slight trials, and belittled the heavy afflictions of others, and had no compassion for them ; that she was proud and shunned the simple and lowly.

Christian reader, among all these offences have you found any that are yours, and that you have neglected in confession ? Be more careful in future to discover everything evil that may lie hidden away in some remote corner of your soul ; for if we judge ourselves, we shall not be judged by God. Inquire of your friends and acquaintances what they see reprehensible in your life. Ask yourself if there be not foundation for the fault people find with you, and which you attribute to their want of charity. What thoughts distract you in prayer and at church ? What is your darling wish ? What do you fear the most ?

It may be that while you have committed no grievous sin, your conscience is laden down with petty offences, faults, and imperfections, such as the self-deceived widow lady described above carried about with her under an appearance of great goodness. Think seriously about them, and confess them without unnecessary delay. A cargo of millstones may not sink the ship, but an overload of grains of corn may easily and most unexpectedly take her to the bottom of the sea.

Contrition.

INSTRUCTION.



THE second quality indispensably necessary to the Sacrament of Penance is contrition.

Contrition consists in an inward sorrow that we experience in our hearts because we have offended God, joined with a hatred for our past sins.

There are several kinds of sorrow. But not every sorrow is effective before God, nor calculated to obtain grace and pardon.

Hence it is very necessary to know the qualities of the true sorrow that is effective in the eyes of God. They are the following :

1. Contrition must be internal ; that is to say, we must not only regret our sins with our lips, but also with our hearts, as the greatest evils, and wish we had never committed them.

To merely say, I am sorry, is not contrition. Nor is it always a true sign of contrition when we shed tears. Striking the breast is not contrition. These are merely externals. Internal sorrow is required.

To such internal sorrow we are exhorted by the prophet Joel (xi. 13), who cries out, "Rend your hearts, and not your garments." David assures us that internal sorrow is available in the eyes of God : "A sacrifice to God is an afflicted spirit ; a contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise" (Psalm l. 19).

2. Contrition must be universal ; that is to say, we must be sorry for all the sins we have committed. Were a sinner to be sorry for all his other grievous sins and not renounce one,—for instance, if he failed to abhor some pet passion,—his confession would be invalid because of defective contrition. For we read in Ezechiel xviii. 21, "If the wicked do penance for all his sins, and keep all My commandments, he shall live, and shall not die."

Even if we have only venial sins to confess, we must have true contrition for at least one of them, otherwise our confession is invalid.

3. Contrition must be sovereign ; that is to say, nothing should give us more sorrow than to have offended God and forfeited His grace and love. We must have for our sins such an

abhorrence as to hate them more than any other evil, and be ready to suffer everything and to lose everything rather than commit one sin. If this be not the case, our renunciation of the world and our return to God would be incomplete. We would be hankering after some creature that we prefer to God.



THE CONTRITION OF PETER.

4. Finally, contrition must be supernatural ; that is to say, we must be sorry for our sins, not on account of their natural results, but from supernatural reasons, because we have offended God, lost His grace, and deserved hell. If we bewail our sins only

because they bring us trouble, or involve us in temporal losses and disgrace, such would be mere natural sorrow.

For example, a young woman who would be sorry for having yielded to the allurements of impurity, simply because her sin was about to become publicly known, and she herself was to be disgraced, or because her father was about to drive her from the house, or because she lost her chances of a good marriage, would not have true supernatural contrition. A servant who would be sorry for his infidelity to his employer because he was going to lose a good place with good wages would not have supernatural contrition. A drunkard who is sorry for his excesses because he has spent his money, a victim of lust because he has injured his health, would not have supernatural contrition. It is simply natural to be sorry for temporal misfortunes.

Holy Scripture teaches plainly that mere natural sorrow avails nothing before God. Antiochus Epiphanus, king of Syria, cruelly persecuted the Jews who were true to their belief. He stole the treasures of the temple at Jerusalem, and even ordered an idol to be set up in the sanctuary of the living God to be adored by the people. One day he was put to flight by his enemies. Deeply enraged, he sought to wreak vengeance on the Jews, and declared, "I will lay Jerusalem in ruins, and leave its inhabitants a heap of dead bodies." Hardly were the words out of his mouth when God struck him with illness. A burning pain raged in his bowels, worms gnawed at his vitals, his flesh fell from his bones, and an intolerable stench was emitted from his whole person. Then he began to be sorry for all the afflictions he had brought upon the Jews. In his grief he even promised to become a Jew, and to preach everywhere the power of the true God. But all this sorrow was merely a worldly one. It arose from his bodily sufferings and temporal losses, and availed him naught before God. The Holy Scripture says, "Then this wicked man prayed to the Lord, of Whom he was not to obtain mercy" (II. Mach. ix. 13).

Supernatural sorrow is either perfect or imperfect.

Supernatural sorrow is perfect when it arises from perfect love for God: when we lament and abhor our sins, because by them we have offended God, the eternal love, the source of all goodness, the only beauty, the only supreme good—even if there were no heaven or hell, reward or punishment.

Supernatural sorrow is imperfect when, although arising from supernatural motives—such, for example, as a desire for

eternal happiness, fear of the punishment of hell, hatred and horror of sin—yet is not from perfect love for God as the supreme and most amiable good.

According to the teaching of the Church, we must labor to have always perfect contrition; because the more perfect it is, the more meritorious it is and pleasing to God, and the more certain it is to secure our pardon. However, in our human imperfection, supernatural imperfect contrition is sufficient to the validity of our confession and the forgiveness of our sins.

On the other hand, the Fathers of the Church teach that an imperfect supernatural contrition, without the reception of the holy Sacrament of Penance, is not sufficient for the remission of sins.

Thus when a Christian is about to die in some sudden and unexpected calamity, without being able to get the attendance of a priest, he could still obtain pardon for his sins through perfect supernatural contrition; but with imperfect he could not.

We all know how difficult and rare it is to get up a perfect supernatural contrition, even when we are in circumstances the most favorable for that purpose. How, then, at the very moment of death, when the sinner's soul is beset with anxieties and his mind with perplexities, can he hope to arouse within him such perfect contrition? It is therefore unpardonable for a sick person or his attendants to neglect sending in time for a priest, because they foolishly suppose that the good-will of the patient to confess and his perfect contrition will secure his salvation.

In order to awaken a true supernatural contrition we need the divine assistance. Hence we must often pray earnestly for it. At the same time we must stimulate our hearts to contrition by salutary meditation on such subjects as the Passion, the ineffable love of Jesus towards us, as well as our own wickedness and ingratitude towards Him.

In conclusion we may remark that in the Sacrament of Penance the penitent must stir up his contrition before confession, or at the latest before the absolution of the priest. Without contrition the absolution would be null and void. When away from the sacrament, we should awaken contrition: 1, whenever there is danger of death; 2, whenever any great misfortune befalls us, or when we commit sin and cannot go to confession, for while we are in mortal sin we are deprived of God's grace and friendship.

REFLECTION.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.



AND when thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him: yet so, if thou seek Him with all thy heart, and all the affliction of thy soul" (Deut. iv. 29). "O Lord, be Thou merciful to me: heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee" (Psalm xl. 5). "I have acknowledged my sin to Thee, and my injustice I have not concealed" (Psalm xxxi. 5). "There is no peace for my bones, because of my sins" (xxxvii. 4). "I am turned in my anguish, while the thorn is fastened" (Psalm xxxi. 4). "Be converted to Me with all your heart, and rend your hearts and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God" (Joel ii. 12, 13). "I will recount to Thee all my years in the bitterness of my soul" (Isaias xxxviii. 15). "The sorrow that is according to God worketh penance steadfast unto salvation; but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (II. Cor. vii. 10).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"It is only hatred for sin and love for God that produces a safe contrition. When thou art so sorry for thy sins that what formerly gave thee joy and pleasure now causes bitterness in thy soul, and that which formerly delighted thee now martyrs thee beyond expression, then thy sighs before God are genuine, then thou canst say with truth: 'Against thee only have I sinned, O Lord'" (St. Augustine). "No one chooses a new life if he do not regret the old one" (The Same). "It is not enough to change one's life, and to lead a pious one and to keep one's self away from evil, if one render no satisfaction to God for past sins by the sorrows of penance, the groans of a humiliated soul, the sacrifice of a crushed heart and almsgiving" (The Same). "Contrition must be a good movement of the heart: now there is no such good movement that does not arise from the love infused into our hearts by the Holy Ghost" (St. Prosper). "We must not suppose that God has forgiven our sins as soon as we stop committing them, if we do not purify ourselves more and more by our tears: just as he who ceases to write does not erase what he has already written, although he may write nothing new" (St. Gregory). "Genuine contrition is altogether a special gift

of God, and exceeds our own resources and strength. Therefore should we implore the heavenly Samaritan for help, that He would come down in His mercy, pour first into the wounds of our heart the smarting but wholesome wine of grief, and then the soothing oil of confidence, and afterwards lead us into the inn for the wanderers, namely, the confessional, and give us up to be healed and cured by His representative, the father confessor" (St. Ambrose). "Penitential tears are the wine of angels. As wine gladdens the heart of men, so penitential tears rejoice the angels" (St. Bernard). "The tears of a penitent are powerful words; for while it is true that penitential prayers move God to forgiveness, penitential tears force Him" (St. Jerome).

A COMPARISON.

When the fertilizer is spread on the proper place, it makes fruitfulness. When it is gathered into one spot, it makes it unwholesome. For example, wherever I find a sorrowing person, I perceive a fertilizer. I inquire about the place. Tell me, friend, why are you sorrowing? He replies: I have lost money. Then the place is unsuitable, and consequently unwholesome. No fruitfulness is effected. Let him hear the Apostle: "Worldly sorrow produceth death." I see another who is sighing and praying. Here I discover a fertilizer, and inquire about the place, listen to his prayer, and hear him say: Lord, have pity on me, make whole my soul; for I have sinned against Thee. He groans for his sins. Here I discover a field and expect fruitfulness. Thanks be to God. The fertilizer has been spread in a fitting place. It lies there not in vain; it will bring forth fruit. A sorrow that is pleasing to God produces penance unto certain salvation. What is more unpleasant than a manured field! Formerly it was more beautiful. It was made unpleasant that it might become fruitful.

A PARABLE.

A good father had five children. It was the fondest wish of his heart to bring them up properly and make them happy. For this purpose he omitted nothing, and no sacrifice was too great for him. But these children were of different tempers and dispositions. One of them was quite degenerate, rude, and vicious, without either love or fear towards his father. The latter might caution, advise, threaten, punish; whether he commanded or forbade, or granted the child favors, the child paid not the

slightest attention, but did as he pleased, even if it displeased his father. A second child, too, was without any love for his parent, and he would do nothing to please him. But he feared punishment, and this compelled submission, though only when there was danger of punishment. When from under the eyes of his father, and there was nothing to fear, he paid no regard to precept or prohibition, but did as he liked. The third child had not quite so evil a disposition. He had some affection for his father, and complied with his wishes, but only in matters where obedience cost him but little self-denial. If the father ordered anything that interfered with the child's passions, love softened their violence somewhat. But he would sacrifice duty to follow his ruling tendency. The fourth child had a far better heart. He loved his father dearly and sincerely. Indeed his filial love was such that he placed his father's wishes before and above all things else. But yet his love was wanting in one respect. True, he did the will of his father; but sometimes a spirit of opposition was perceptible, which made obedience so difficult that fear of his father's anger became necessary to compel compliance. The thought, "This will displease and offend a fond father," would not have been sufficient to make him do his duty, if he did not fear to vex his father and bring punishment on himself. For love for his father had not reached that high degree which is ordinarily sufficient to overcome all hindrances and temptations. Fear underlay his love, and so he was always obedient. The fifth child had a perfect love for his father. He loved him more than anything else, and loved him alone. Everything else was indifferent to him. He thought of nothing else than to please and gratify his father and make him happy by ever giving him new proofs of his obedience.

What I relate here of the father and his children is no fiction, but a true story that is recognized by us all. As our divine Saviour has so often said to us: God is our Father and the Father of all men. But we shall speak only of such children as He has made His own, and who are to be found in the Church, which is the Father's house. There are, sad to say, many evil-disposed children who neither love nor fear God. Others, by reason of the fear of hell which faith gives them, are influenced by motives of fear, and desist from evil deeds. These have the minds of slaves and not the hearts of children. With others this fear forms the basis of a love of justice and of a tendency toward God. But this love is usually so feeble that it seldom produces

more than fruitless intentions, and leaves the heart still under the dominion of passion. Then, again, there are others who are devoted to God with a more perfect love. Their love for God is stronger than their love for creatures, but it is as yet imperfect. For when called upon to prefer God's will to everything else, and to walk strictly in the paths of His commandments, it costs them a great effort and struggle ; while to save them from yielding to temptation it is necessary to frequently warn and arouse



THE HOLY PENITENT MARY MAGDALENE.

them through the fear of hell fire. In a word, love for God has a prominent place in their hearts, yet it is not perfect. For it is surrounded by so many worldly inclinations, and although it may hold them in subjection, it has not the power over them sufficient to crush them or drive them from the heart and soul. The last are those who possess a perfect love, as far as it is possible in this world.

The difference between those persons who have only an imperfect love, or one tainted with fear, and those who have a perfect love,

is this: the former love God above all things, the latter love God only in this sense, namely, that whatever they do love beside Him, they love in Him and for Him only; that is, they love Him in everything. The former go forward on the right path, but with effort and difficulty; while the latter run forward with energy and enthusiasm. The former bear evils and misfortunes patiently and in a spirit of penance, the latter find in these their joy and happiness. The former have a desire for the other life, though they are not wearied with this one. They are ready to leave it whenever God pleases to call them, for they are submissive to His will. But the natural sentiments that live in them prevent them from being in a hurry to give up this life for the next. The last, filled with longing to be united to God for all eternity, and feeling that their sojourn here below is a painful separation from Him, pray and sigh for the moment when their souls shall be set free. While bearing earthly life with patience, they accept death with satisfaction and even pleasure. It was thus that the apostles loved their heavenly Father; the martyrs, too, and the saints—all were perfect in such love. This love has no taint of slavish fear, but shows the salutary fear of a child to be separated from its father.

EXAMPLES.

Contrition for Venial Sins.

St. Paula, an illustrious widow lady of Rome, always wept bitterly over even the slightest venial sin. Her tears flowed so unceasingly as to give rise to fears that she would lose her eyesight, as St. Jerome tells us. She used to spread her penitential garb on the earth and sleep on it, although she had first passed nearly the whole night in prayer. When told that she should cease weeping and take care of her looks, she replied: "It is right that I should disfigure my face now, for formerly I used to paint it; it is proper that I should now chastise my body, for formerly I indulged it too much. It is but right that I should strive to make good with tears all the sin I occasioned by my frivolous behavior and conversation, and that coarse penitential garments should replace my fine silks and linens. Formerly I loved the world, now I must endeavor to please my Saviour."

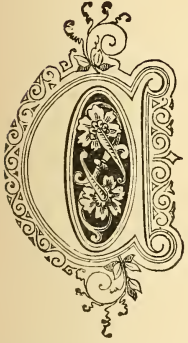
A Sinner's Contrition and Consolation.

St. Gregory, in his explanation of the parable of the ten drachmas, relates the following history: There lived in our country one Victorinus, a man of some standing and of considerable wealth. Now, as sin usually finds its way to where riches abound, Victorinus yielded to temptation and contracted a vicious habit. He soon realized the evil he was doing, became exceedingly contrite, arose from his unhappy state of sinfulness, gave away all his treasures, and entered a monastery. At once he became to all his brethren such a model of humility and resignation that, although they had already made great progress in the love of God, their virtues seemed insignificant when they witnessed Victorinus' penitential life. For he labored with all the powers of his soul to crucify his flesh, to break his own will, to seclude himself in prayer and meditation, to offer himself up daily in tears of sorrow, to think but little of himself, and to shun all the honors that his fellow-religious would confer upon him. Every night, before the latter would assemble for their devotions, he would anticipate and perform his alone first, and then join the others. The mountain on which the monastery stood rose on one side to a great height, where the solitude became intense. Up this lonely height the penitent would repair every day to say his prayers alone, and there, away from the gaze of all, offer himself to God amid copious tears of repentance. When he thought of the severity of future judgment, he would anticipate its terrors by lashing himself severely. One night the abbot watched him, and seeing him quietly leave the convent, followed him at a short distance unperceived. Soon he saw the penitent throw himself on his knees and begin to pray. After a few minutes a ray of light seemed to come down suddenly from heaven, and sitting upon the prayerful monk, lit up the whole vicinity. The abbot, deeply affected, hurried back to the monastery, and when, about an hour later, just in time for the regular exercise of devotions, Victorinus returned, the abbot, anxious to know whether he had been conscious of the strange light, asked the monk where he had been. The latter said quietly that he had been strolling in the woods. Then the abbot ordered him to tell what had happened. When Victorinus saw that he was discovered, he related his whole life to the abbot, adding: "When you saw the light shining upon me I heard a voice saying, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee.'" It is true that Almighty God could have forgiven him his sins without letting him know it. But he chose to do it in this extraordinary

manner, in order to give a proof of His great mercy, and thereby move the hearts of men to repentance.

Firm Purpose of Amendment.

INSTRUCTION.



CONTRITION, to be true and genuine, must necessarily contain a firm purpose of amendment, that is to say, an earnest and upright intention to better our lives, and to avoid all sin and every occasion of it.

Without a sincere intention of amendment there is no true contrition. For although we may even curse a sin, yet if we have at the same time a willingness to commit that same sin at the next opportunity, our abhorrence of the sin is only pretence and hypocrisy.

A purpose of amendment is firm and true only when it is (1) inward and earnest, (2) general and actual.

A purpose of amendment is inward and earnest when we not only promise amendment, but also are firmly resolved in our hearts to hate sin and flee from it for evermore, preferring to sacrifice all that is near and dear to us on earth, to suffer all things, even death itself, rather than offend God willingly by the commission of one single sin. Neither the enticements of the world, nor the lusts of the flesh, nor the assaults of the devil should move us to unfaithfulness to God. We should be able to say with St. Paul: "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus Our Lord" (Romans viii. 38, 39).

Our firm purpose of amendment is general when we are fully resolved to avoid all sins without any exception, and every occasion of sin; that is, to shun everything and every place that had often led to our fall, and which could still easily lead us into a repetition of our sin.

If we would have our purpose to be general, we must be resolved to avoid all sins, but most certainly mortal sins; for here are applicable the words of the apostle St. James: "Whosoever

shall keep the whole law, but offend in *one point*, is become guilty of all " (St. James ii. 10).

Regarding the occasion of sin, it is necessary first of all to know what is an occasion dangerous unto evil.

Everything constitutes a dangerous occasion for a man which generally, or according to his personal weakness, induces him to sin, and exercises over him so powerful an influence that it can lead to his fall. To such occasions belong the reading of bad books, the frequenting of immodest spectacles, intercourse with wicked persons, familiarity with persons of the opposite sex, visits in doubtful society, and plays that excite the passions. Such occasions must be avoided by the Christian. His duty to his soul's salvation demands it, for he cannot in conscience expose it to danger. He that loveth danger shall perish therein.

On the other hand, there are circumstances which are dangerous occasions of sin for some, but not for others. Thus, for example, the military life, the medical profession, the duties of a confessor, the business of a lawyer, are in themselves good and laudable, yet for some they offer very dangerous temptations. He who is indifferent to the service of God will be indifferent as a soldier. He who is subject to temptations against purity will but increase such temptations in pursuing the duties of a physician. He who is influenced by the fear of men will by too much lenience in the confessional lead others and himself astray. He who is subject to avarice runs great risk of temptation when he undertakes wicked causes for the sake of the pay. Each one then must be sure to prove his powers of resistance, and take counsel with his father confessor as to whether he can live in certain conditions without danger of sin, or whether he must refrain from such circumstances, because they would become to him a dangerous occasion.

The dangerous occasion becomes a proximate occasion when it can be shown and is evident that a person cannot withstand its influence and has already too often yielded. These proximate occasions are to be at once shunned or driven away, if our purpose of amendment is to be a firm purpose. If the penitent do not do this, he must not expect absolution from his confessor.

In regard to proximate occasions, the following rules are important:

a. In order to constitute a proximate occasion of sin, it is not necessary that the person should have already been led astray by it every time he got into it. It is enough if he have fallen once or

twice. This is proof sufficient that it is a severe temptation for him, and that he must not expect to escape if he meet it again.

b. If one can avoid a proximate occasion of sin, he must resolve to do so, and promise it at confession, in order to be absolved. For instance, if a man knows from experience that when he visits a public-house he is in danger of getting drunk, or that as often as he joins in certain company he is in danger of giving his assent to impious, irreligious, or unchaste conversation, or if he take part in a certain play, he is in danger of becoming angry and of cursing and swearing. A young man and a young woman are acquainted, and know that they experience temptation, or that one of them does, when in each other's company. These are proximate occasions of sin, yet they can be, and indeed must be, avoided. These persons are bound to shun the public-house, the dangerous company, the lascivious theatres. They must promise this to themselves and to their father confessor. If they make the promise required by their confessor, and yet have the intention of again going to such places and company, their absolution is worthless.

c. On the other hand, there are proximate occasions of sin which one can not only avoid, but must remove altogether. For instance, if a person were so blind as to keep in his house another for whom he has an illicit love. This occasion the sinner cannot avoid; hence it is not sufficient to promise that he will not commit the sin again, for he has found by sad experience that the power of temptation will overcome his good resolutions. Such a proximate occasion must be removed altogether, and the penitent should not wonder if his confessor withhold absolution till the other party be removed from the house and put out of harm's way. If he did otherwise, he would commit a grievous sin, and imperil both his own soul and that of his penitent. A confessor must not be found fault with for his solicitude as well for the safety of his penitent's soul and for the sacredness of the sacrament.

d. Again, there are some proximate occasions that can neither be avoided nor removed. Thus it often happens that a husband is a cause of temptation for his wife. Now the wife cannot shun her husband, nor break off her relations with him. In such cases the confessing parties must abide by the directions of their confessor.

A purpose of amendment is realized when an improvement takes place in the Christian's life. "A man is a mocker and no

penitent," says St. Isidore, Archbishop of Seville, "when he continues to do evil for which he has shown sorrow."

In order that our firm purpose of amendment be efficient, we must use all necessary means. These means are threefold, namely :

a. The means that remedy our weakness. To these belong the frequent reception of the sacraments, and the exercises of penance.

b. The means that maintain within us a hatred for sin. To these belong the consideration of sin, of the four last things, of the method of awakening contrition, a solemn review of the past sins of our lives, the remembrance of the misery they entail upon our souls.

c. The means that encourage within us a love of justice. To these belong the contemplation of the infinite beauty, loveliness, and goodness of God, the thoughts on the beauty of the different virtues and of the happiness they produce, on the crown in store for us, on the happiness of the saints, and many more.

By using these means the sinner will be saved from relapse, and will gather the fruits of the Sacrament of Penance, instead of confessing uselessly.

REFLECTION.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.



HAVE sworn and am determined to keep the judgments of Thy justice" (Ps. cxviii. 106). "The sluggard willeth and willeth not" (Prov. xiii. 4). "No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke ix. 62). "Go, and now sin no more" (John viii. 11). "Behold thou art made whole: sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee" (John v. 14). "If thy hand scandalize thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into unquenchable fire" (Mark ix. 42). "Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. xxvi. 41). "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, do manfully, and be strengthened" (1. Cor. xvi. 13).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"When your penance is of such a nature that what was formerly sweet to you is now bitter, and what once pleased your body is now hateful to your soul, then are thy mournings sincere before God" (St. Ambrose). "I was disgusted at my absurd repugnance to yield myself to Thy will and Thy law, O God; for all my common-sense urged me to do so,—the more so as no ship, no wagon, nor even my feet, were necessary to travel that road. To go to Thee and to obtain Thee, nothing was required but good will, strong will of the heart, and not a half-way will or a sick one, wavering now one way, now another, standing with one part and falling with another" (St. Augustine). "If thou would conquer sin, flee the occasion" (The Same). "That penitent is a mocker who again does what he was sorry for" (The Same). "He is perfectly converted who weeps once for what he has done, and never does it again to be compelled to weep again for it" (St. Gregory). "The thoughts of God shut out all vice" (St. Jerome). "He who will remain on the ice after his fall is not sorry for his fall, neither is he who will not be guided after he has gone astray. The truest sign of repentance is flight from danger, the removal of occasions" (St. Bernard). "Nothing is more disastrous to a good resolution than delay: for delay not only fails to gather new graces, but loses those already gained" (St. Lawrence Justinian). "Our perseverance in virtue is regulated by our resolution. He who will increase in true goodness must make many efforts. If even he falls often who has made a firm resolution, how will it fare with the man who resolves only seldom to mend his life, or resolves feebly?" (Following of Christ.)

COMPARISONS.

A firm purpose of amendment is like a stake that the farmer ties by a tree to make it grow straight. If the stake is stronger than the young tree, it will hold the tree; but if it is weaker, then it will bend towards the tree and allow it to grow crooked. If your purpose of amendment is stronger than your inclination to sin, the latter will be overpowered; if weaker, then the resolution comes to naught.

To heal but four out of five mortal wounds means to seek death. So will the soul of that Christian die who does not extend his firm purpose of amendment to all and every one of his sins.

David not only wounded Goliath the giant, but also cut off his head. So we in our confession should not only cast the devil to the ground, but should also cut off his head; that is, we should not allow our sins to revive and regain their strength.

A firm purpose of amendment flows from true contrition, as light comes from the sun or water from the fountain.

EXAMPLES.

From Sacred Scripture.

The Holy Scripture by countless examples shows how inconstant and unreliable the human heart is, and how imperatively necessary it is to fly from occasions of sin.

The descendents of Seth continued to love and fear God till they began to mingle with the descendents of Cain and marry their daughters (Gen. vi. 2). In order to serve his God faithfully Abraham was compelled to abandon his native land and his kinsfolk (Gen. xii. 1). In order that Isaac might be saved God commanded Abraham to drive Agar and her child from the house (Gen. xxi. 10). Dina, the daughter of Jacob, lost her innocence because she went out thoughtlessly to look at the daughters of the land (Gen. xxxiv. 1). When the Hebrews adored the golden calf twenty-three thousand of them were slain. Yet this punishment did not restrain that people from idolatry; therefore Moses was compelled to overturn all the altars of the idols in the land of the enemy, to destroy their images and cut down their forests, and to forbid the Israelites to make friends among the inhabitants (Exod. xxxiv. 12). Nay more; the Lord gave orders to slay the inhabitants of the promised land, lest they should be the occasion of still further temptation (Deut. xxxiii. 52). We read in the Gospel that St. Matthew when called by Our Lord abandoned his desk at the custom-house, where he used to receive money, and gave up his occupation: "and leaving all things, he rose up and followed Him" (Luke v. 28). On the other hand, St. Peter, who was a fisherman, continued, in accordance with his avocation, to ply his trade, and for this reason: he found in it no temptation that would lead to transgression of Christ's commandments, while St. Matthew saw that his occupation was fraught with danger to his soul.

The restoration of Lazarus to life is still another striking image, which, if considered in a spiritual sense, shows what the relapsing sinner has to do in order to test the genuineness of his penitential dispositions.



THE RAISING OF LAZARUS TO LIFE.

When Our Lord wished to raise Lazarus to life, He first cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." Then He ordered the bystanders to take off his grave-clothes, saying to them, "Let Lazarus come forth from the grave." On this the learned Cardinal Hugo remarks: "If Lazarus had retired immediately and laid himself down in the grave, it would have been alleged that he had not risen from death really and truly. But to go away from the grave was unmistakably a sign of life. So should it be with the repentant sinner. Once he has come forth from the death of sin to new life through the gates of penance, he should never again go back to the tomb of sinfulness, but always amend his life to the best of his power; for if he really do fall back into his former sins, it is a sign that his firm purpose of amendment was wanting."

The Darling Idol.

What St. Sebastian relates of Chromatius, a governor of Rome, is applicable to sinners in view of grievous sins. This governor was ill with an incurable disease. Hearing of the miracles wrought by St. Sebastian, he sent for him, and asked him by what power he accomplished such strange things. Sebastian answered, "I effect them by the power of Jesus Christ for the conversion of sinners," and then began to instruct the sick man in the religion of Christ. Chromatius then said, "If Jesus Christ would make me well, I would believe in Him." "It shall be done," said Sebastian; "but first you must destroy all your idols."

Chromatius promised, but he became more sick than ever. So, sending again for St. Sebastian, he said querulously, "Is this the health you promised me if I would do away with my idols?" "Have you done away with them all?" inquired Sebastian. "Ah," replied the governor, "I retained only one golden image, that I am very fond of, for it has been a long time in my family." "If," said St. Sebastian, "that image were worth the whole world, you must send it away, and then you will get well." The governor obeyed, and recovered his health. So should we do. Our habitual sin, that darling idol of ours, must be at once dismissed by contrition if we would regain the health of our soul. If the worst sinner do penance for all his sins, he shall live.

Confession.

INSTRUCTION.



THE fourth requisite for the Sacrament of Penance is confession. Confession is the open and contrite acknowledgment of all our sins to a regularly authorized priest in order to obtain absolution.

Among all the doctrines of the Catholic Church none has been so persistently assailed as the doctrine of auricular confession. Hence it is necessary to treat the subject at some length.

Confession is no human invention : it was ordained by Jesus Christ.

That Christ established auricular confession is clear from His own words addressed to the apostles : " Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them ; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." By the utterance of these words Christ appointed the apostles and their successors judges in His stead over men. But they were to exercise their authority rightly and according to justice, absolving the penitent only, and retaining the sins of the impenitent. Now as the apostles and their successors are not omniscient, so as to know by intuition how they ought to decide, whom they ought to absolve and whom they should not, it follows necessarily that the penitent must in all humility and sorrow reveal his internal life to a priest,—that is, he must confess.

It is simply absurd for any one to assert that confession is an invention of man. Usually men discover and put forth something that yields them worldly advantage, such as steamboats, railroads, telegraphs, telephones, and other machines of various kinds ; but men do not invent systems to humiliate themselves, in order to lift themselves up to heaven.

But how could men introduce confession ? Would not the priests have objected most strenuously to assume such a heavy burden as to sit for hours listening to things that would harass and disgust their very hearts and souls ? What would the laity have said when first told that they were to reveal their sins to a man ?

But who invented confession? Some say Pope Innocent III., in the year 1215. Not at all. This pope, on account of the ever-increasing lukewarmness of Christians, issued a command that "every Catholic should confess at least once a year." But this was not inventing the confessional: it already existed.

Men have confessed ever since the Church came into existence.

This is testified to by the Fathers of the Church, from the first century down through all ages.

In the first century of the Church St. Clement, a disciple and a successor of St. Peter, expressed himself thus: "Whosoever has a care for his soul, let him not blush to acknowledge his sins to a superior, that he may obtain relief from them and have them healed." Then he adds: "St. Peter taught that we should reveal even our thoughts to the priests. As long as we are in this world we wish with our whole heart to be converted, for when we have departed from it we cannot confess any more nor do penance." In the second century Tertullian writes: "Several shirk the declaration of their sins, because they are more solicitous about their honor than their salvation. They are like sick persons, who, when they have a secret infirmity, conceal it from the physician, and so destroy themselves. Which is the most important? To be damned by hiding their sins, or to be saved by declaring them?" In the third century Origen, that great light of the Eastern Church, wrote thus: "If we are sorry for our sins, and confess them not only to God, but also to those who can apply a healing remedy, these sins will be forgiven us." In the fourth century St. Basil, who died in the year 378, repeated almost the same language. "We must thoroughly," he says, "reveal our sins to those who have received the dispensation of the mysteries of God." St. Athanasius, who died in the year 373, thus expresses himself: "As the man who is baptized by a priest is enlightened by the Holy Ghost, so he who confesses his sins in penance obtains forgiveness through the priests." In the fifth century St. Paulinus, in his *Life of St. Ambrose*, relates that when any one confessed his faults to the saint, he wept so copiously that he made the penitent weep. It seemed as if he himself had committed the sin, and not the penitent. "However," he adds, "the saint spoke of the sin confessed to him only to God, to whom he interceded for the sinner." In the same century St. Augustine, who died in the year 430, said: "Let no one say, 'I confess privately to God; it is sufficient that he who is to

forgive me should know the sorrow of my heart.' If such were true, then Jesus Christ has said without purpose or meaning, 'Whatsoever you loose on earth shall be loosed also in heaven.' And for what purpose would He have entrusted the keys to His Church? It is then not sufficient to confess to God: one must confess to those who have received from Him the power to bind and to loose." In the sixth century St. John Climachus expresses himself thus: "It is unheard that the sins revealed in the confessional have ever been revealed. God has so ordained in order that sinners may not be deterred from confessing, and thus be deprived of their only hope of salvation." In the seventh century St. Ansbert, Archbishop of Rouen, was confessor to King Dietrich I. The first council held in Germany, in the year 742, ordered every military commander to provide a chaplain, that the soldiers might be enabled to go to confession.

In the eighth century St. Martin, a monk of Corbei, discharged the office of confessor to Charles Martel. In the ninth century Charlemagne had for his confessor Hildebrand, Archbishop of Cologne. In the tenth century St. Ulrich, Bishop of Augsburg, heard the confession of the Emperor Otho. In the eleventh century we see that a priest named Stephen, of the diocese of Orleans, was confessor to Queen Constantia, the devout wife of the pious King Robert. St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died in the year 1109, in his homily on the ten lepers thus expresses himself: "Lay open plainly to the priests by an humble confession all the stains of your internal life, that you may be cleansed from them." In another of his works the same doctor says: "As original sin is remitted in baptism, so are personal sins remitted in confession: it is a veritable tribunal. For there are two tribunals of God: one is held here below in the confessional; the other will be held on the last day, at the trial where God will be the judge, the devil the accuser, and man the accused. In the tribunal of confession the priest, as representative of Jesus Christ, is the judge, the penitent is at once the accuser and the criminal, the penance imposed constitutes the penalty." St. Bernard, who died in the year 1153, said to some persons who were tempted to conceal their sins in confession: "Of what avail is it to recount one half of our sins and to suppress the other half? to cleanse one half of one's self and to soil the other half? Is not everything manifest to the all-seeing eye of God? What! you dare to conceal something from him who in this great sacrament takes the place of God?" And so the proofs and testimonies go down



THE RETURN OF THE PRODIGAL SON.

through the ages.

Except in case of physical or moral impossibility, auricular confession is absolutely necessary to reconciliation with God in the Sacrament of Penance.

For what purpose has Christ the Lord given power to His disciples and their successors to forgive and retain sins, if it were not His will that the sinner should confess his sins? Of what avail was it for the

apostles and their successors to have the keys of heaven, if people can enter there without requiring the services of the servants to open the gates?

Auricular confession is productive of the greatest advantage both to individuals and to the community at large, and is on that account very necessary.

Experience teaches us that confession is an admirable restraint on our desires and passions. The mere thought, "I must confess this sin," has saved many a soul from the destruction to which its natural inclinations were impelling it.

If everybody in the world would practise confession according to the teachings of the Catholic Church, that is, with contrition and sincerity, certainly there would be no cause left for uneasiness or insecurity in society. For by such confession the unjust would be made just, the passions would be softened, hatred would be discontinued, strife and enmity would be allayed, disobedience would cease, every vice would be eliminated, and every virtue would be fostered and practised.

But if confession is to obtain for the sinner remission of his sins, release from eternal punishment, restoration of grace and a tranquil conscience, and for society the advantages above named, then it must have the following qualifications :

It must be, 1, complete ; 2, sincere ; 3, clear.

Confession is complete when the penitent confesses at least all the mortal sins he remembers, together with their number and aggravating circumstances.

Thus three things are necessary to make a confession full or complete. 1st. One must not omit knowingly any grievous sin. It is also good and salutary to confess venial sins. 2d. The number should be told—how often one has committed such and such a sin. If the penitent do not know the exact number, he should approximate as closely as he can, and say, “This sin I have committed about so many times, once, twice, thrice, etc.,” as the case may be ; every day, every week, or every month, as the case may be. 3d. The penitent must make known such circumstances as change the species of the sin, as, for instance, making a venial sin a mortal sin ; and above all, he must declare every detail that may be necessary to enable the spiritual director to form a correct judgment of the state of his penitent’s conscience, and so save him from relapse ; hence the confession is incomplete if the penitent merely says, “I have sinned against the ten commandments, against the precepts of the Church,” or “against the second commandment, or the eighth,” etc. He must be more definite, and say how, and how often, and against what special commandment he has transgressed. It is not enough to say, “I have omitted Mass on Sunday,” and then stop. We must add the number of times, and give the reason—whether through sloth, negligence, for a trivial cause, etc. Moreover, we must express ourselves as decently as the nature of the sin will permit. We must never mention the name of another, nor make long stories, etc.

Our confession is sincere when we accuse ourselves just as

we would acknowledge ourselves to be guilty before God; concealing nothing, making no excuses, nor justifying ourselves.

"In order that our confession may be simple and sincere," says St. Bernard, "we must take heed not to justify the evil intention with which we committed the sin: for this cannot be called confessing; it would be concealing and defending our guilt. Further, we must not lessen the guilt and make it appear in a false light, ascribing the fault to others, as if they had tempted us, and pleading the occasions that were presented to us. One never sins if he do not consent with his own will."

Our confession is clear when we so express ourselves that our father confessor is able to understand everything, and form a correct judgment of the state of our soul. We should speak in an intelligible voice and use plain language.

It would be a violation of clearness in our confession if we were not to speak openly, or to use obscure terms; or if we were to speak in too general terms, saying, for example, "I have not loved God, I have spoken bad language;" or, "I have had evil thoughts," etc. The sins must be mentioned by their names, and their species and nature must be described.

At confession we should specially guard against false shame and human respect.

It is false shame to fail to make known our sins sincerely because they are great or disgraceful.

Let us never be influenced by this false shame when stating our sins. It is a favorite artifice of the evil spirit. When we are tempted to offend God the evil spirit renders us bold and shameless. But when we are about to confess them he makes us timid and hesitating. He deprives us of our shame while we are sinning, and brings it back to us when we are about to take steps to repair the evil by confession.

It would be giving way to human respect at confession if we should fail to avow our sins sincerely because we feared the priest might have a bad opinion of us.

Let us be guarded against this human respect when making our confession. We must not think: "What opinion will my father confessor have of me when I reveal such grievous sins?" It was not without a wise purpose that God appointed sinful men to hear confessions, and not angels; for the former know how easy it is for a fellow-man to fall and how hard to rise, and will therefore exercise gentleness and compassion toward the penitent, mingle their tears with his, and, like the angels in heaven, rejoice

at the conversion of the sinner. Moreover, the penitent has nothing to fear from the priest, knowing that he cannot reveal what he hears in confession. For every confessor is bound before God to suffer death itself rather than to violate the duty of absolute secrecy.

Those who fear to confess sincerely because of human respect should remember, 1st, that an insincere confession effects no remission of sin, brings no peace of mind, but, on the contrary, becomes, as does the Communion following it, a new sin and a sacrilege; 2d, that it is better to make known our sins to a priest bound to silence than to live unhappily, to die miserably, and on the last day to be shamed and disgraced before the whole world.

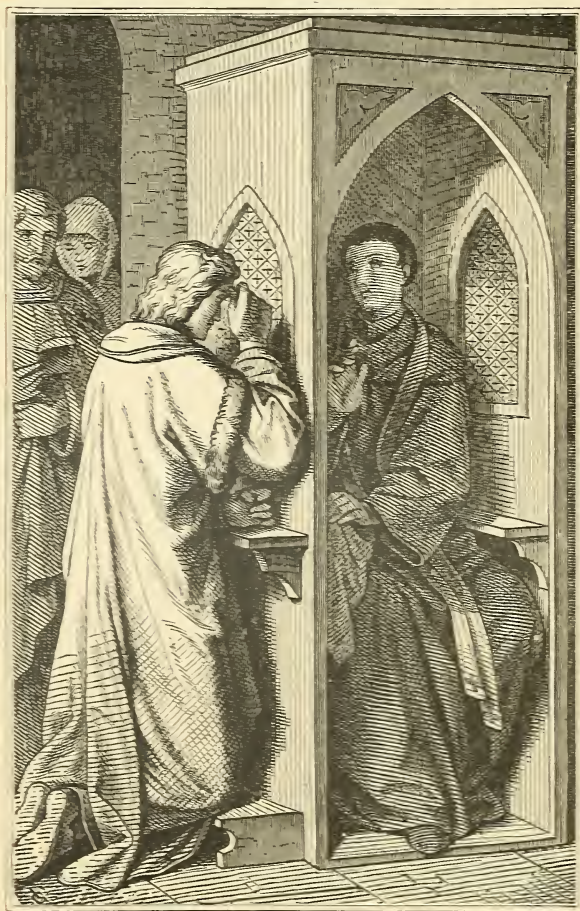
How we should behave outside the Confessional and within it.

When we approach the confessional we should not press forward ahead of others. While waiting for our turn to come, we should not talk or look around, but pray to God in the anguish of our hearts, yet with confidence, for forgiveness of our sins. We should not go too near the box, lest we might hear some sin. If we do hear any, we are strictly bound to silence. It would be a shocking crime to try to hear.

On entering the confessional we should at once kneel down, bearing well in mind that we appear there as a poor sinner before God's representative, the priest. Then we say, "Bless me, father, for I have sinned." While the priest is saying the words, "May the Lord be in thy heart and on thy lips, that thou mayest confess thy sins aright and with fidelity, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," we sign ourselves with the sign of the cross, and begin the Confiteor, which we continue as far as the last "through my most grievous fault." Then we say: "Since my last confession, which was at such a time, and when I received absolution, I have been guilty of the following sins." Then we relate our sins, and close with the words, "For these and all the sins I cannot now remember, I humbly ask pardon of God, and absolution from you, my father."

The priest then delivers the necessary warnings and exhortations, prescribes the means adapted to prevent a relapse into sin, and imposes the proper penance. Then, before pronouncing the words of absolution, he prays: "May the Almighty God have mercy on thee, and thy sins being dismissed, may He lead thee into life everlasting. Amen. May the almighty and merciful

God grant thee indulgence, absolution, and remission of all thy sins. Amen. May Our Lord Jesus Christ absolve thee, and I, by His authority, absolve thee from all bands of excommunication, in as far as I am able and thou needest." Then follows the absolution proper: "Therefore I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." Then he adds the prayer: "May the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the merits of the Blessed Virgin and of all the saints, what-



AT CONFESSION.

ever good thou hast done or evil thou hast borne, be to thee for the remission of thy sins, the increase of grace, and the reward of life everlasting. Amen."

Whenever the confessor puts a question to the penitent, he must answer decidedly and in strict accordance with truth. For whosoever in the confessional deliberately and knowingly utters an untruth concerning the state of his conscience, lies not to man, but to God, as did Ananias and Sapphira.

The penitent must also give particular attention to the advice of his confessor, and to the penance he imposes, and not depart

from the box till he is sure of having received the dismissal in the words: "Go in peace, and the Lord be with you," said by the priest in Latin.

If the penitent do not obtain absolution, let him receive the sentence of his director and judge with all humility, resolve by an amendment of life to make himself worthy of absolution the next time, and not run off to another priest in the hope of obtaining it with less difficulty.

To whom we should confess, and when.

We are to confess our sins to the bishop, or to a priest duly authorized by him, that is, to a priest regularly ordained, and having from the bishop the right and jurisdiction to hear confessions and pronounce sentence; for it is to such only that Christ gives power and authority.

We should go to confession: 1. After every mortal sin, without delay and as soon as possible; for we know not the day nor the hour when the Lord may call us away, and so might unhappily die in a state of sin if we put off our confession from day to day. 2. We ought also confess frequently during our lives, in order to maintain and strengthen ourselves in the practice of virtue.

General Confession.

A general confession is one in which we repeat several or all of our previous confessions.

When we confess all the sins of our past life, that is, from the time we came to the use of reason till the present time, we make what is called a life-confession, or a general confession in the strict sense of the term. If we repeat only several confessions for one or more years, that may be called a year-confession, or a general confession in the wider sense of the word.

Such general confessions are necessary to some Christians and useful to all.

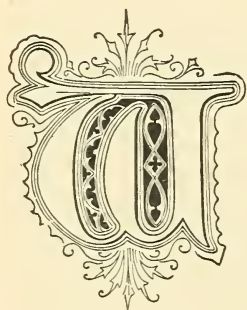
A general confession is necessary for all those who have been living for many years in a state of habitual sin, or whose former confessions were invalid, whether from a want of sincerity, or of contrition, or of a firm purpose of amendment, or from a culpable negligence in the examination of conscience; for such persons have not had their sins forgiven them. They must, therefore, confess all over again in order to obtain remission of their sins,

and it is only then that they will find peace of heart and return to the practice of virtue.

A general confession is particularly advisable and useful at the time of preparation for First Communion, of a jubilee, a mission, or during a dangerous sickness ; also on entering a new state of life, such as the religious state, or holy matrimony.

REFLECTION.

COMPARISONS.



WE may here give a quotation from Origen which will serve at once as an illustration and also as an important historical proof of public and private confession. Origen, who was born only one hundred and eighty-five years after Christ, wrote as follows in his second homily on the 37th Psalm : " When the sinner accuses himself and confesses, he spits out his sin and purges himself of the cause of his crime. Now consider well to whom you confess. Test the physician before whom you lay the causes of your sickness, that he be weak with the weak, and weep with the weeping ; that he know what compassion and sympathy are, that thus you may act according to the directions and follow the advice of one whom you have found to be an experienced and merciful physician. And when he perceives that your illness is of such a nature that it must be laid before the whole church in order to be properly treated and cured, and to thereby edify others, let this be done in compliance with the decision of that wise judge and skilful physician."

THE OLD TESTAMENT ON CONFESSION.

It is remarkable what importance the Scriptures of the Old Testament attached to the practice of confessing a sin that had been committed. It was regarded as the beginning of conversion.

When Adam and Eve sinned, the Lord, though knowing all things, instituted an inquiry into their action, and asked them whether they had eaten of the tree of knowledge. They were compelled to confess, although the Lord knew it. They confessed and were punished, and because they confessed God did not inflict the curse on Adam and Eve, but on the serpent and the earth (Gen. iii.). Cain, too, was questioned concerning his

criminal act: "Where is thy brother Abel?" said the Lord. But Cain, instead of confessing, answered insolently, "I know not: am I my brother's keeper?" Therefore God inflicted the curse on Cain, "Cursed shalt thou be upon the earth" (Gen. iv. 11). When Pharaoh, after giving the Israelites permission to depart, recalled the permission and thereby brought about a renewal of the plagues, he confessed and said: "I have sinned this time also" (Exod. ix. 27). When the Israelites were bitten by the fiery serpent, they came to Moses and said: "We have sinned, because we have spoken against the Lord and thee" (Num. xxi. 7). Achan, in opposition to a command, took from the spoils of the enemy a scarlet mantle and some gold and silver. Josue instituted an inquiry by lottery, and said to Achan: "My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel, and confess, and tell me what thou hast done, and hide it not" (Josue vii. 19). Saul confessed (I. Kings xxvi. 12); David, Esdras, and Nehemias. Countless are the examples in the Old Testament to show that confession or avowal was always a part of repentance.

But there was also a legal confession in the Old Dispensation. For a great number of sins offerings were prescribed that were to be used in sacrifice. When such an offering was brought to the priest, who alone was authorized to offer sacrifice, he at once knew, from the character of the gift, the nature of the sin to be atoned for, even if the party bringing the gift did not mention it. Thus we find that confession and repentance went hand in hand in the Old Law. These offerings were styled guilt-offerings, or sin-offerings, according as the person had transgressed knowingly or unknowingly. Thus it is plain that the almighty God set great value on an acknowledgment of wrongdoing, since the penitent was expected to confess not only certain positive sins, but also those committed through ignorance; and not only the gross sins, but also all kinds. It is written plainly: "When a man, or woman, shall have committed any of all the sins that men are wont to commit, and by negligence shall have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, they shall confess their sin" (Num. v. 6, 7).

CONFESSION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

We read that when St. John was baptizing in the Jordan the Jews went to him confessing their sins (Matt. iii. 6). Did they confess? Many deny this, yet they must have said something,

and it is inconceivable that something special was not mentioned.

Some object as follows: We do not read in the Sacred Scriptures that the apostles heard confessions. Well, there is not much use in stubborn controversy. But we certainly do read that the apostles administered Confirmation, and yet our objecting brethren reject Confirmation, because they do not wish to believe in it. It is about the same with confession.

True, hearing confessions was not the ordinary occupation of the apostles, as it is to-day of the priests. And why? The apostles went among Jews and pagans, whom they converted to Christianity. These they baptized without confession, for Baptism washed away their personal sins as well as original sin. The case is the same to-day: Jews, Turks, and heathens who receive Baptism are admitted into the Church without going to confession, while heretics who have been baptized and return to the Church are obliged to confess. Indeed at the time of the apostles there were few to go to confession.

After the neophytes of the apostles were baptized, they were careful to keep from sin. They were enthusiastically faithful to their belief, while the grand example of the lives of the apostles sustained and encouraged them. The never-ceasing persecutions in which they lived made them extremely vigilant, and their daily Communion fortified them. It was therefore natural that no very grievous sins would be committed. Moreover, as soon as the apostles had formed a congregation, they went elsewhere to form new ones, leaving the first to the care of the local bishops, who would be the persons to attend to the Sacrament of Penance. It is no wonder, then, that we read so little in the Acts of the Apostles concerning confessions.

Yet the Acts mention a remarkable case:

A Christian congregation had been organized at Ephesus. Many among the recent believers still hankered after the follies and sinful practices of the heathens. These people the Jewish magicians endeavored to perplex and blind. But the evil spirit himself gave testimony of Jesus Christ in a most extraordinary manner, and fear fell upon all. Many of the believers (not all had been led astray) came and confessed, telling what they had done. Thus they did precisely what the Church requires in confession. The party confessing needs only to tell what he has done: the Church seeks no further. Then those who had superstitious books not only confessed, but brought the books together



THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AMONG THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.

and burned them in presence of all. They, too, did just what they would be required to do at the present day: any one having bad books should bring them to the father confessor for destruction.

Furthermore, we read in the Epistle of St. James the apostle: "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess therefore your sins one to another: and pray one for another, that you may be saved" (James v. 14-16).

In this passage it is plainly asserted that we should acknowledge our sins.

But to whom should we acknowledge them? The adversaries of confession say that priests are not here mentioned nor meant; but as these objectors confess to nobody at all, they are far from complying with the command in the Scriptures.

When it is said, "Confess your sins one to another, and pray one for another," we should confess to those who pray for us. But it is also said that the sick man is to send for the priests, who are to pray over him. It is natural that the confession here spoken of is a confession in a dangerous sickness. In such emergency the sick person is to call for the priests, confess to them, and the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, united with the prayers of the priests, is to be of benefit to the sick person in soul and body; for "the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him." It is plain, therefore, that the Scriptures themselves, in this case at least, if nowhere else, mention confession.

We read in the First Epistle of St. John: "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all iniquity" (I. John i. 9). It is clear that here, too, confession is meant, for it is not said that we shall confess our sinfulness, but shall "confess our *sins*."

HISTORICAL TESTIMONIES.

An Habitual Sin.

During the pontificate of Pope Hyginus, who died in the year 142, a man named Cerdo came to Rome. Although professing to be a Christian, he entertained some erroneous opinions which he endeavored to instil into the minds of other people. St. Irenæus tells of this Cerdo that he passed himself off as a

true believer, and when detected in his heresy he would go to confession. After several confessions followed by relapses, he was about to be excommunicated, when he left of his own accord. The passage reads: "Cerdo came often to the church and made his confession, but he was fickle, for he would teach error secretly, then run to confession, and then fall again." He was a relapsing sinner like too many of the present day.

Absolution Denied.

In a book ascribed to Dionysius the Areopagite, who died about ninety-five years after Christ, a priest named Demophil receives a sharp rebuke for having denied absolution to a penitent sinner who confessed to him. It appears that the penitent was really sincere and in earnest, and applied to another priest, who absolved him. When Demophil learned that his judgment was reversed, he went so far as to abuse the other priest. The passage reads: "The Lord takes upon His shoulders him who returns from his wanderings. He causes the angels to rejoice at the return. He is gentle towards those who have been ungrateful towards Him. He permits His sun to shine upon the good and the bad, and gives life to those who flee to Him. But you, as appears from your letter, have, by your sentence, driven from you a sinner who threw himself at the feet of a priest. He sought healing remedies for his sins; but you find fault with a well-meaning priest who took pity on this penitent and absolved him from his sins."

Here we see plainly that it was not a general confession in public that was alluded to, but a confession of particular and specified sins.

Directions for Confessors.

We have a book called "The Apostolic Principles," which is ascribed to St. Clement, the successor of St. Peter, and in any case is extremely ancient. In this work the following directions are laid down for confessors: "Do not pronounce the same sentence on every sin, but judge each one in particular, the great and the small, with careful prudence. I say, treat a sinful word one way, a sinful intention another way, an abusive word another way, and a suspicious word still another way. Some you should bring back through threats and harsh words only. On others you should impose an alms as penance. Others you should subdue by fasting. Others, again, you should expel from the church for the enormity of their sins. The law itself does not

visit every transgression with the same punishment. If one sins against God, or against the priest, or against the church edifice, or against the sacrifice, the law inflicts a corresponding punishment. So, also, whether a person sins against a king, a general, a soldier, an equal, an inferior, a servant, or attacks another's property, the penalty varies. The law punishes deliberate sins more severely than precipitate sins. Sometimes it punishes with death, and orders the criminal to be crucified or stoned. Others it punishes by fines, and others by flogging. Therefore do you inflict different penances on different transgressions, that injustice may not be done, nor God's displeasure be incurred."

From these instructions it is again clear that the confession alluded to was the confession of specified and particular sins. The confessors of those early days were required to do exactly the same as is done by the confessors in our own times.

Ancient Rules for Confessing.

John the Faster, Patriarch of Constantinople towards the end of the sixth century, composed a ritual to be used in the Greek Church. In this work he prescribed the method in which the penitent was to begin his confession, even giving the words, as follows: "I confess to Thee, Heavenly Father, Creator and Lord of heaven and earth, all the hidden things in my heart." "Then," says the ritual, "the confessor shall question the penitent about all the species of sins of which he has been guilty, paying attention to his age and condition."

Fifty years previous, St. Fulgentius had composed a table of sins for confession, according to which the penitent is to begin with the words: "I confess to Thee, O Lord, Creator of heaven and earth, and before this Thy priest." In this table of sins we find, among other things, the following: "Have I had evil thoughts, and are my heart and body stained? Have I received the body and blood of the Lord unworthily because I did not properly prepare myself by confession and penance?"

Words of an Ancient Confessor.

In the above-mentioned ritual of the Patriarch John the Faster we find given an exhortation of a father confessor to his penitent who is ashamed to confess his sins. It reads thus: "Spiritual child, in a certain sense it is not I that receives your confession and gives you absolution, but God it is Who through me receives the confession of your sins, and through my mouth grants you forgiveness of them, as He has Himself declared

with His own lips, 'Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven.' Therefore reveal all before the holy angels, and do not conceal from me anything that you have done secretly. Do the same as if you were confessing to God, Who knows the most hidden things of your heart; for if you find it hard to reveal shameful sins now, be assured that that very delicacy will prevent a repetition of the sin, and if you obey this regulation you will receive not only forgiveness but a crown."

Crowds to Confession.—Special Confessors.

In early times, before the bishops were burdened with other duties, they used to hear confessions in cases where canonical punishments were assigned, or else they appointed special penitentiaries from among the priests. Sins to which no penalties were attached could be heard by all priests. The Greek historian Nicephorus relates that about the year 650 the bishops, on account of their own accumulated duties and the throng of penitents, commissioned the priests generally to hear all confessions. About that time arose the custom for kings and others to have special confessors. In general, however, after that period we find special priests authorized to hear confessions. They were often known by the designation of penitentiaries, and had for their direction books called penitential books.

EXAMPLES.

Louis the Pious at Attigny.

Louis the Pious, son of the Emperor Charlemagne, having taken as prisoner of war one of his nephews who had taken up arms against him, had him arraigned before a court that condemned him to death. The same prince also confined his own three younger brothers in a monastery because he feared they would incite a rebellion against his government.

Soon after this, great calamities befell the kingdom—failure in the crops, scarcity, pestilence among men and cattle, and also floods that threatened to destroy all hope of the following year's harvest. To these were added disturbances in nature, such as earthquakes, sinking of the ground, an intolerable and parching heat in summer, excessive cold in winter, freezing the rivers to the bottom of their beds. This multiplicity of misfortunes filled the pious heart of Louis with anxiety and terror, for he looked upon them as so many judgments sent by God on himself and his people in punishment for his sins. Filled with remorse, and

in the hope of easing his conscience, he assembled a general parliament at Attigny, on the river Aisne. When all the distinguished members were met together Louis appeared before them clad in penitential garb, and in a loud voice made a public confession of his sins. He accused himself of the murder of his nephew, King Bernard, for, though he could have prevented it, he did not do so; of his cruelty towards his own brothers, Hugh, Drogo, and Theodorich, whom, for interested motives, he had imprisoned in a monastery; and of some other acts of injustice which he had perpetrated against others of his fellow-men. Then, in a flood of tears, he asked forgiveness of those whom he had wronged, and of the whole assembly. He declared that his sins of commission and omission were the sole causes of the calamities befalling the country. He promised to amend his life and make full reparation, and begged the bishops who were present to impose a public penance on him. The whole proceeding, so rare in the history of princes, filled the assembly with astonishment. It was really a touching spectacle to see the greatest and most powerful monarch in the world, whose authority knew no limits save those placed upon it by God and nature, now humbling himself before his subjects, becoming his own accuser, confessing publicly his sins and weaknesses, and beseeching the nation, whose ruler he was, for mercy, pardon, and forbearance.

After the adjournment of the meeting, Louis published to all classes of his people throughout the empire an edict in which the following passage occurred: "As we admit that we have sinned more grievously than any one else, although we should have been a model to all, having a care for all, and preventing the evil deeds of the wicked, we now declare that with God's help we will seek pardon by making sufficient reparation, and shall endeavor, by a wholesome amendment and most strenuous efforts, following the counsel of our faithful advisers, to do all we can to make good all the wrongs that have resulted from our sins of omission and commission."

An Effect of Confession.

"It is now some twenty years," relates Cæsarius, "and about the time that I entered the Order, in 1198, that I heard from several learned and holy men what I am now going to tell you.

"There lived in the renowned city of Paris a young student who, tormented with evil desires and sorely tempted by the devil,



THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. JOHN NEPOMUCENE.

committed such grievous sins that he could not so far overcome his shame as to confess them. But as he had been piously brought up and feared the judgments of God, he was torn inwardly with remorse of conscience that showed itself in his exterior and destroyed his peace of mind day and night. After a long struggle with himself he was at last moved by divine grace, burst into tears, overcame his shame, and hastened to the monastery of St. Victor, and begged the

prior to hear his confession. The latter led his penitent to a confessional and spoke to him words of encouragement. At that moment our blessed Lord infused such a hearty sorrow into the young man's heart that his sighs and tears fairly choked his words, and he could not speak. This state of things lasted so long that the prior finally said to him: 'My son, go and write down your confession and bring me the paper.'

"Next day the youth returned and endeavored again to confess orally, but could not speak. He therefore handed to the prior a sheet of paper containing the confession; on reading

which the prior, although a man of large experience and learning, was shocked. 'My son,' he said, 'these matters are so awful that I must take counsel. Will you permit me to show them, under promise of strict silence, to the abbot?' The youth consented. What then followed is well calculated to comfort the most despondent sinner. When the abbot opened the paper to read, the prophecy of Isaias was fulfilled to the letter: 'I have washed away thy iniquities like a cloud, and thy sins like a mist.' The whole page was a blank. The abbot said to the prior: 'What do you wish me to read? There is not a letter on this paper.' The wondering prior looked at the page and found it a perfect blank, and said: 'I can call God to witness that the sins of the penitent were written there, and I wished to submit the case to you and have your advice how to proceed. Now I perceive that an all-merciful God, on account of the young person's excessive contrition, has blotted out even a remembrance of them.' Calling the student, they handed him the blank paper, which he received with mingled feelings of awe, gratitude, and joy. The good priests warned him never to forget this miraculous act of mercy by again giving way to sin. He praised God from the bottom of his heart, and ever afterwards led a strictly Christian life."

A Confessor True to his Calling.

Bishop Porcellot was one day ready to celebrate Mass, when he sent his servant for a priest to hear his confession. Father Peter Fourriere, the pious pastor, came, but begged to be excused, saying he was not worthy to be the judge of his lord. The bishop insisted, and said all could be done with a few words. But the case was not settled in a few words, for Peter insisted with much severity on three points: "First, the yearly visitation of the diocese was omitted; secondly, in violation of the Council of Trent, the bishop held possession of several benefices; and thirdly, he had neglected to put aside a long-standing enmity with a certain nobleman." On these three points the priest was so particular that he kept the bishop nearly two hours in the confessional, and would not absolve him till he had promised to mend these matters. The bishop afterwards told all this to another prelate, expressing his happiness at having found in his diocese so faithful and consistent a priest.

Do not defer Confession.

The Venerable Bede, in his history of ancient England, tells of a nobleman who was exhorted by the king himself to make his

confession. He answered: "If I were well, I would do it, but not now when I am sick, for my friends would say that I had done it through fear of death." But he never grew well, and died without confession.

Confession Day a Day of Joy.

A Spanish sea-captain, who had not been to confession for six years, was one day led into a church by his pious sister, and, finding his heart touched by the sermon, he resolved to make a general confession. The priest, having no time, bade him come in the morning. During the night the captain changed his mind. He imagined that his friends would laugh at him, and he resolved not to go to confession. But being a man of honor, as the world goes, he wished to keep his word, and went to the church, intending to tell the priest that he would not confess. The latter was grieved, and regretted that he had not heard him the day before. Then he asked him what it was in yesterday's sermon that affected him. The captain replied, "I only remember the opening words: 'Come to Me, all ye that are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you.'" "Yes, indeed," said the priest; "God's goodness and mercy are powerful to the forgiveness of our sins, and He calls to us: 'Come, and I will refresh you.'" The captain's heart was again moved, so, kneeling down, he made his confession with true contrition, and having received absolution he arose and wept. Then he went home and told his gratified sister what had happened, saying: "I have had more of the enjoyment of life than is granted to most men, but in my whole existence I have never tasted joy such as I feel at the present moment, when I am once more a friend of God. This is the happiest day of my life."

Conversion begun by Confession.

A certain general once imparted to a favorite and highly esteemed under-officer some doubts that he had on certain points in religion. The officer begged him to seek instruction, and introduced him to two learned priests who very cheerfully layed before him all the proofs of the doubted points. The general remained unconvinced. Then the officer begged his doubting superior to apply to a very virtuous priest, who was his confessor. The general called on the priest, explained the reason of his visit, and told him of the failure of the two learned theologians to remove his doubts. "Sir," said the worthy priest, "what can I say to you that has not been far better said by those two learned men? Suppose you make your confession." "Confession for

me," replied the general, "who do not believe in God?" "Kneel down and bless yourself," said the priest. "I will help you to remember your sins." After many expressions of astonishment, many declarations of his unbelief, and much hesitation, the general obeyed, and answered frankly the questions put to him by the priest. The latter pointed out the first causes of his going astray, then led him on to their subsequent consequences, namely, doubt and perplexity of mind, with a wish to disbelieve in a hereafter. Tears now flowed abundantly from the penitent's eyes, and he tried in vain to hide them. Then the priest discontinued his questions and addressed to him words of consolation and encouragement. "O my father!" said the penitent general, amid his sighs and tears, "you have found out the only way that leads to my heart. I am a poor, unhappy wretch, made blind by my passions. In the deepest recesses of my soul I felt the actual presence of a judge and monitor, but I repressed His warnings, and preferred to disbelieve rather than to lead a virtuous life. To-morrow morning I will return and finish my confession more thoroughly." He was true to his promise, and from that time forward led a life of penance based on an unshaken belief in all the truths of religion.

Satisfaction.

INSTRUCTION.



It is not sufficient to bewail our sins, to confess them, and to discontinue them: we must do something to make reparation for the past, we must be punished, and God's justice, which has been violated, must be vindicated. By sin God is offended. He has the right to require observance of His commandments. The sinner violates that right. Then he is bound to satisfy that infringed right, and to reëstablish it. For the violation itself he must atone for the sin, and satisfy the penalty thereof.

This punishment should be suffered by every man. But Christ in His love has taken upon Himself the sins of all men and suffered the punishment due to them. He has made infinite satisfaction to divine justice, and ordained sacraments to enable us to apply His merits to ourselves. Hence we obtain forgiveness of our sins and remission of their temporal punishment in

the sacraments of Penance and Baptism, through the merits of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, it is by no means true that, together with remission of the sin and its eternal punishment, all and every punishment is obviated without any remains whatever. On the contrary, it is proved from Scripture that even after forgiveness of the sin God can impose a penalty. Let us consider the example of David.

David sinned with Urias's wife, who bore him a son. Then the Lord sent to David His prophet Nathan to rebuke him for his sin. David entered into himself, and then heard from Nathan these comforting words: "The Lord hath taken away thy sin." Nevertheless David was punished by the death of his child, whom he loved tenderly (II. Kings xii. 1-14). Thus God forgave the sin, remitted the eternal punishment it deserved, but sent a temporal punishment in the privation of what was dearest to David's heart. Hence the Council of Trent teaches plainly "that it is altogether false and contrary to the word of God to hold that no sin is remitted by God without a remission of all the guilt attached thereto; for in Holy Scripture there are found clear and evident examples by which, according to divine tradition, this error is plainly and openly exposed and refuted." It is therefore proper for the father confessor to impose a temporal punishment on the repenting sinner, that by bearing it patiently the sinner may turn away from himself the temporal punishments of God, such as sickness, affliction, poverty, etc., which he must bear in this world, or else suffer in the next, and suffer in order to resemble Christ and to join himself with His sufferings and thus be made better.

These penalties imposed by the confessor on the penitent are termed penances, and there is no doubt that the priest of God has this power, for it is given to the Church not only to loose but also to bind (Matt. xviii. 18). These penances are given by the priest: 1. For the remission of temporal punishment; 2. For the bettering of our lives. They consist generally in the recital of certain prayers, the performance of good works, the suffering of privations, by all of which the spirit of piety and self-control is encouraged.

These penances we ought to perform punctiliously, holding ourselves bound to the time, mode, and manner prescribed. If we do not intend to do this, our confession becomes invalid. If we intend to do it and yet fail to do it, we deprive ourselves of many graces and merit the punishment of purgatory.

But when a father confessor, who surely has an unquestioned right to pay due regard to the condition of his penitent's soul, imposes a perfectly appropriate penance, it is not to be supposed that the work of penance is complete. On the contrary, the imposing of the penance is merely for the purpose of awakening and cultivating a spirit of penance, in order that we may punish ourselves voluntarily and thus escape the future punishments of God. The life of man is a way of penance. David did penance all his life, also St. Peter and St. Mary Magdalene. Now there are many who have sinned more grievously than David or Peter. Can such sinners expect to appease the wrath of God by a few short prayers? Let us not deceive ourselves; for, although we may imagine ourselves safe after confession and absolution, if the spirit of penance is not alive within us we shall soon again fall into sin. False and unfounded security is the first step downward to sin. On the other hand, there are many souls upon whom the Lord Himself imposes penances, sending them such severe temporal penalties, and visiting them with so many trials and afflictions, that they are likely to become discouraged. For these penalties the Christian ought to be ready and willing; for the Lord chastises those whom He loves. He whom the Lord punishes is not abandoned by Him. The Lord punishes here that He may not punish hereafter. He preserves those whom He strikes. Such visitations from God are the best penitential exercises, for He Who sends them knows best what man needs. It is, then, a fruitful penitential practice to be ever patient in bearing afflictions, and, by offering them all up to God for our sins, thereby to do satisfaction. If we are too feeble and cowardly to freely choose a cross for ourselves, let us at least bear with patience and resignation whatever a loving God chooses to send upon us.

Temporal punishment, however, is only a part of the satisfaction that the sinner ought to make. Equally important is it that we repair, as far as it is possible, all the temporal consequences of our sin.

1. Whatever the sinner may have unlawfully appropriated to himself is to be returned in the same condition.
2. If the object itself cannot be returned, its equivalent must be; the proper value to be decided by the father confessor.
3. Not only must the object or its equivalent be returned, but also the interest or *usufruct* that it would have rendered to its right owner,

4. Every additional loss is to be made good.
5. Suspicions, rash judgments, detractions, and calumnies are to be all taken back.
6. Scandals given are to be discontinued, and repaired by good example.



THE CALLING OF ZACCHAEUS.

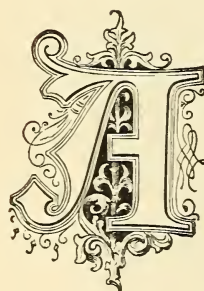
7. Offences are to be apologized for; enmities are to be eradicated.

It is to be observed here that when the penitent is uncertain how to proceed he should take counsel with his spiritual director.

The gaze of the repentant sinner must not be always backward and towards the past. He must also look towards the future; for satisfaction is to be done in that direction also, by using earnestly every means to better his life. Let him receive regularly the sacraments, avoiding whatever could lead him into temptation, and cherishing ever in his heart a hatred for sin and an undying love for God. This was explained in the instruction on the firm purpose of amendment. Thus the chief object of his solicitude will be the salvation of his immortal soul. God's grace will not be wanting if the penitent have good will.

REFLECTION.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.



ALMS deliver from all sin, and from death, and will not suffer the soul to go into darkness" (Tob. iv. 11). "By mercy and truth, iniquity is redeemed" (Prov. xvi. 6). "They that fear the Lord say: If we do not penance, we shall fall into the hands of the Lord" (Eccles. ii. 22). "Redeem thou thy sins with alms, and thy iniquities with works of mercy to the poor: perhaps He will forgive thy offences" (Dan. iv. 24). "If that wicked man restore the pledge, and render what he had robbed, and walk in the commandments of life, and do no unjust thing: he shall surely live, and shall not die" (Ezech. xxxiii. 15). "Bring forth therefore fruit worthy of penance" (Matt. iii. 8). "I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing" (Matt. v. 26). "I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh for His body, which is the Church" (Coloss. i. 24).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"If any one is conscious that he has a mortal sin in his interior, and has not expelled it from himself by the penitential exercises of a complete satisfaction, let him not hope that Christ will come to him" (Origen). "How foolish, how unfair it is not to fulfil one's penance, and yet expect to obtain pardon of our offences! It is about the same as taking a man's goods and refusing payment; for at this price is the Lord willing to grant us pardon—for reparation through penance He offers us release from punish-

ment" (Tertullian). "Considerate and kind as God ever is in His fatherly love, He is equally awful in His majesty as judge. The greater our wounds are, the more do we bemoan them. Deep wounds require a careful and tedious healing process. The penance should not be less than the crime. We must pray assiduously, pass the day in grieving, the night in watching and weeping, and, clad in penitential garments, spend much time in lamentations on the ground, strewn with ashes. After the loss of Christ's presence we should no longer care for our clothing, should rather fast from the devil's food, and thirst after the works of justice by which sin is obliterated, and give alms, by which souls are delivered from death. He who renders to God such satisfaction, he who, out of shame for his crimes and out of sorrow for his misdeeds, laments more on account of virtue and faith than on account of his own fall, will be heard and sustained by the Lord, will rejoice the Church that he has grieved, and will gain not only pardon but also a crown" (St. Cyprian). "Although the sin was the cause of making man liable to punishment, yet, even when the sin is remitted, the penalty remains; for the punishment endures longer than the guilt, in order that the guilt may not be considered too slight, as it would if the penalty were removed with it" (St. Augustine). "Those who after confession do not wish to make satisfaction resemble those who show their wounds to their physician, and, as long as he sits by them, promise to use the prescribed remedies, but then tear off the bandages and afterwards find fault with the physician" (Pacian).

COMPARISONS.

The debtor has in no way discharged his obligations when he simply ceases to contract more debts. He is required to cancel the old ones and render satisfaction. So it is with the sinner. He, too, has debts before God, and it is not enough for him to promise the Lord to commit no further sins. He must cancel his old debts in the confessional, and then make satisfaction for them to a just God.

It is not sufficient to withdraw the dagger from a wound; it must be bound up and subjected to the usual healing remedies, else it will not heal. So for the sinner: it is not enough to remove his sins from himself in confession; he must, by a sufficient reparation, make good all the unhealthiness that the sin has produced in his soul.

As the sick man follows all the directions of his doctor, so, too, must the penitent conscientiously perform all penitential exercises assigned to him by his confessor.

EXAMPLES.

From Scripture.

Adam and Eve afford us the best example of the necessity of punishment following the forgiveness of sin. God, wishing to restore them to favor, forgave them, but He punished them, and in them all their descendants, to such an extent that even after the redemption by Jesus Christ those sanctified by holy Baptism are compelled to suffer temporal penalties, misery, sickness, and death.

God wished to destroy the Jews in the desert because they had offended Him grievously by their idolatry. Then Moses besought the Lord for His people, "and the Lord was appeased from doing the evil which He had spoken against His people" (Exod. xxxii. 14). Again, they murmured when their messengers returned from the Promised Land, and again the Lord was about to destroy them. But Moses prayed once more.

"And the Lord said : I have forgiven according to thy word.

"As I live : and the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.

"But yet all the men that have seen My majesty, and the signs that I have done in Egypt, and in the wilderness, and have tempted Me now ten times, and have not obeyed My voice,

"Shall not see the land for which I swore to their fathers, neither shall any one of them that hath detracted Me behold it" (Num. xiv. 20-23).

Here, although the Lord forgave, He inflicted temporal punishment. Even Moses and Aaron, on account of their little faith, were subjected to the temporal punishment of being denied the privilege of entering the Promised Land. Yet God had forgiven them, for, as the Scripture says, they were gathered to their people (Num. xx. 26 ; Deut. xxxii. 50).

The devout Judith, who for three years and six months wore a garb of penance, and fasted nearly every day, reproached the chief men of her city, Bethulia, because in their timidity and want of faith they were ready to surrender their city to Holofernes if help did not arrive within five days. She said :

"And who are you that tempt the Lord ?

"This is not a word that may draw down mercy, but rather that may stir up wrath, and enkindle indignation,

"You have set a time for the mercy of the Lord, and you have appointed Him a day, according to your pleasure.

"But for as much as the Lord is patient, let us be penitent for this same thing, and with many tears let us beg His pardon :

"For God will not threaten like man, nor be inflamed to anger like the son of man.

"And therefore let us humble our souls before Him, and continuing in an humble spirit in His service,

"Let us ask the Lord with tears, that according to His will so He would show His mercy to us : that as our heart is troubled by their pride, so also we may glory in our humility" (Judith viii. 13-18).

St. Mary Magdalene was forgiven many sins because of her great love for God (Luke vii. 47). Zacheus, although a pagan, could say to the Saviour : "Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor : and if I have wronged any man of any thing, I restore him four-fold" (Luke xix. 8).

Louis the Ninth.

Louis the Ninth, King of France, before setting out for the Crusades, wished to make reparation to every person whom he might have thoughtlessly wronged. Accordingly he gave orders all through his kingdom for all claims against him to be sent in, that he might satisfy them. The chiefs who were to accompany the king followed his example, as Poinville relates even of himself, who, before departing, gathered his tenants about him and said : "I am going far away, and know not whether I shall ever return. If I have done any wrong to any one among you, let him tell me freely, and I will make ample reparation." He satisfied the claims of all.

Pontius of Lavaze.

Pontius of Lavaze, who for some time had been the terror of his neighbors and the scourge of all Aragonia, was, in the year 1134, suddenly seized with such a dread of divine punishment that he resolved to do public penance, changed his manner of life at once, and persuaded six of his friends, who had shared his errors, to do the same. On Palm Sunday he repaired to Lodore, and waited there till the solemn religious procession arrived at the public square, where had been erected a platform, from which a sermon was to be delivered to the people. Then Pontius, with a rope about his neck and his shoulders bared, had

himself led by some neighbors, who, in obedience to his orders, scourged him on his naked shoulders. He ascended the platform, where the clergy were assembled, threw himself at the feet of the bishop, handed him a paper on which were written all his past sins, and in the hearing of all present begged for absolution. The bishop wished to spare the penitent's feelings, but the latter insisted that the list of his sins should be publicly read. During the reading, which was slow and tedious, he had himself scourged again continually, while he kept acknowledging all the sins read, and begged for mercy and pardon. So deeply were the spectators edified that they shed tears copiously. Some who through a false shame had never confessed properly were so affected at the spectacle that they, too, did public penance. The following day was appointed for reparation, when Pontius fell at the feet of those whom he had wronged, besought their forgiveness, made restitution as far as his money went, and then sold all his property to make up the deficiency. Then, with his companions, all clothed in penitential garments, he went on a pilgrimage to several holy places, and finally settled down in a desert place, pointed out to him by the bishop, in the diocese of Lavaux. There the seven penitents labored constantly in the field, and by their holy lives became the benefactors of the country.

Theodosius.

Under the Emperor Theodosius an insurrection took place in Thessalonica, in which many of the imperial officials were slain. The indignant emperor resolved on immediate revenge. At the earnest entreaty of St. Ambrose, bishop of the place, he relented. But his counsellors again worked on his feelings, and extorted from him an order to chastise the inhabitants of Thessalonica. Again he relented, and sent messengers countermanding the order; but the previous order had been carried out, and seven thousand men were put to death. St. Ambrose wrote to him, and reproached him with his cruelty and injustice. Theodosius did not reply, but the next Sunday he and his whole court were on their way to the church to receive Communion, when St. Ambrose met them at the door, refused them admittance, and said: "Do not add a new sin to your past ones by presuming to approach Holy Communion unworthily." The emperor alluding to the case of King David, the bishop replied: "Imitate him in his penance, as you have imitated him in his sin." The emperor, entering into himself, laid aside his imperial robes, did penance

for eight months, and then publicly, before the people, threw himself on the ground, crying out : " My soul clings to the earth : grant me life, according to Thy promise." Ambrose then declared the emperor reconciled to the Church, after the latter had re-enacted the law that thirty days should elapse between the pronouncing of the death penalty and its execution, that thus calmness and deliberation, instead of passionate revenge, could be exercised towards the condemned person.

Sueno.

Another example of penitential reparation occurs in the history of Sueno, King of Denmark, who, in his anger, had put to death in a church all among the nobility who had spoken of him disparagingly. One day soon after the king came to assist at divine service in the church, but the bishop, contrary to custom, did not advance to meet him. The king was approaching the door of the church when he was met by the bishop, who held his crosier as a barrier to his entrance, reproached him with being a murderer and a defiler of the house of God, and declared him excommunicated. In a moment the royal guard surrounded the bishop with drawn swords, and awaited only the signal to put him to death. But the Spirit of God, that inspired the bishop, also moved the heart of the king. He acknowledged his crime, hastened back to his palace, and exchanged his royal robes for a garb of penance. Meanwhile the bishop began to celebrate Mass with great solemnity, as if nothing had happened. He had not reached the Gloria when a messenger informed him that the king was again at the door, clad in the garb of a penitent. Leaving the altar, he went through the church, and as he approached the door Sueno met him with a flood of tears and every sign of contrition, and promising satisfaction. The prelate, in his moderation, released him from the excommunication, imposed a suitable penance on him, and led him up to the altar. In due time the king made ample reparation.

St. Francis Solano.

St. Francis Solano, priest of the Order of St. Francis, had long been a laborious missionary in South America when the Lord was pleased to send him a severe sickness as a last trial before death. The saint bore it patiently, and said : " Since, for want of strength, I am now not able to chastise my body, the Lord, in His mercy, takes my place, and chastises me according

to my deserts." St. Francis spoke truly; for, as St. Gregory says, "it is a great favor to be permitted to atone in the body for the sins of the body."

The Death Penalty made an Atonement for Sin.

It is an awful crime to take the life of a fellow-being. It is also a frightful penalty to be compelled by the stern hand of the law to yield one's own life in penalty for such a crime. Perhaps



ST. FRANCIS SOLANO.

the fear of death, while the culprit is awaiting the day of execution, is worse than the death itself. Yet God is merciful and forgiving towards the murderer who is ready to do penance and willing to atone for the life which he took by suffering the loss of his own.

Let us listen to what St. Catherine relates of a certain murderer who was condemned to death. This man, whose name was Nicholas Tal-

do, was so benefited by a visit from the saint that he confessed his sins and with sentiments of deep contrition pre-

pared for death. "I was obliged to promise him," says St. Catherine, "that I would be present with him, for sake of the love of God, at the moment of his execution. Early on the morning of the fatal day, before the ringing of the Angelus, I hastened to the prison, and was with him when he received Communion—the first in his whole life. He was perfectly resigned to God's will, but had some slight fears that his strength might fail him in the last hour. 'Stay near me,' he said, 'and I shall be all right and shall die happy.' As I noticed some little trepidation in his manner, I said to him: 'Have courage, dear brother; you will soon be at the nuptials of the Lamb. You go forth washed with the precious blood of the Son of God, and cleansed in His holy name. Do not cease to utter that sacred name. I will meet you at the place of execution.' Then his heart was relieved of all dread, his face brightened, and he felt consoled. 'Whence,' he asked, 'comes to me this great favor? I will go forth to meet death joyfully and bravely.'

"Then I betook myself," says St. Catherine, "to the fatal place, and praying fervently laid my head on the block. While lying in that position I begged God to send the culprit light and internal peace at the moment of his awful execution. Feeling that my prayer was heard, I was so overcome with joy that I did not see one person about the scaffold, though there were hundreds assembled. Then the poor sinner was seen approaching, gentle as a lamb. He smiled when he saw me, and asked me to give him my blessing, which I did, adding: 'We are going to the nuptials of the Lamb, dear brother. Soon you will be in life eternal.' With deep recollection he laid his head on the block. I bared his neck, calling his attention to the saving blood of the Lamb. His only words were: 'Catherine! Jesus!' Whilst I was soaking up his blood I saw Jesus, brighter than the sun. I saw Him receiving into the wound in His side the soul just departed, and I was given to understand that He received it solely out of mercy and grace, without any reference to what had been done before. Oh, how delightful it was for me to see the love and friendship with which God accepted that soul! My mind was consoled when I saw that soul at rest. I have never permitted his blood-stains to be washed from the garment I wore that day."

PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

Every time you go to confession remember that you are performing a duty on which depends the salvation or the loss of

your soul. This thought will animate you with a wholesome earnestness, and have the effect of making you comply with all the requirements necessary to a good confession.

When you examine your conscience and wish to excite contrition, imagine that this confession is to be your last, that you will die and must appear before the judgment-seat of God before you can make another confession. And may not this really come to pass? Such a thought is the best guide in directing you to examine your conscience, make a good confession, and renew in your heart a firm purpose of amendment.

When you enter the confessional remember that you are not alone, that two beings accompany you, your angel on your right hand and Satan on your left. The angel is there to encourage you to make a good confession, the devil to turn you away from it. Learn to whom you should listen.

Whilst you are confessing, imagine that you are speaking to Jesus Christ, the omniscient God-man. With such a thought, it is inconceivable that you would yield to the temptation of concealing or mitigating your past transgressions; on the contrary, your confession will be sincere, contrite, and full.

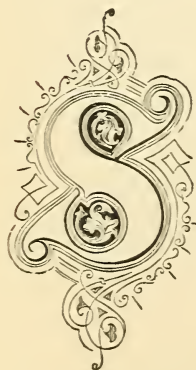
When you are about to perform your penance, descend in spirit into purgatory and there contemplate the torments that await your soul, to purge it from the temporal punishment due to its sins. Such thoughts will lead to such a perfect discharge of your penance that it will be worthy and pleasing in the eyes of God.

Finally, select rather a severe than a gentle confessor.

Indulgences.

INSTRUCTION.

What is Meant by an Indulgence.



SACRED history teaches us that although God forgives the repenting sinner's offences, He does not always remit the punishment due to them. It tells us that although He received our first parents back into His favor by the promise of a Redeemer, yet He punished them with afflictions, pains, and death. It tells how Moses was excluded from the Promised Land for want of confidence in God, though he had been forgiven for that want; how Nathan came to an-

nounce to King David the Lord's forgiveness of his double crime : "The Lord hath taken away thy sin. Yet thy son shall die the death."

This method of dealing with penitent sinners is in perfect harmony with God's mercy and justice; for although it is consistent with His mercy to relieve the repenting sinner of his guilt and the eternal punishment, yet, on the other hand, divine justice demands that sin, which as an offence against God cannot be undone, should be atoned for by a punishment, even if it be a light one, inflicted on the sinner.

In the Sacrament of Penance the Church, as God's representative, can remit the sin and eternal punishment of the penitent, but she cannot remit the temporal punishment; for in administering that sacrament she must deal with the penitent as God deals with him. Hence the temporal punishments are to be borne by the sinner either in this world by performing works of satisfaction, or in the other by undergoing the pains of purgatory.

But they can be remitted by the indulgences of the Church.

An indulgence is a remission or a lessening, granted by the Church outside of the Sacrament of Penance, of those temporal punishments which the sinner still owes to divine justice for the sins which have been remitted as to their guilt and eternal punishment in the Sacrament of Penance. Hence an indulgence is never a remission of the sin itself nor of its eternal punishment. This is to be secured through the sacraments of Baptism and Penance only.

The Catholic Church has a Right to Grant Indulgences.

From the words of our divine Saviour, "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven : whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth shall be loosed also in heaven," it is plain that Christ promised and gave to His Church the most unlimited power to close heaven, and also to take away anything that might impede our entrance thereto. Now temporal penalties unsatisfied certainly impede our entrance into heaven; therefore the Catholic Church has the power to relieve us of these impediments by granting us indulgences.

Indulgences are Useful and Salutary.

The Church, speaking through the sacred Council of Trent, says that the practice of indulgences is very salutary to the Chris-

tian people. She speaks truly; for indulgences save us from the dreadful fires of purgatory, and encourage us to the practice of good works and Christian virtues.

INDULGENCES SAVE US FROM PURGATORY.

As often as we confess our sins in order to obtain their remission, the priest imposes on us a penance, the performance of which is necessary and sufficient for the integrity of the sacrament. But in most cases this penance is not sufficient to the full discharge of the satisfaction yet owing to God. If we content ourselves with the penance laid on us in the confessional, or with some other additional reparation made according to our own choice and fancy, we must have good cause to dread a very severe punishment in the next life. Then the Church, as our always mild and loving mother, comes to the relief of our weakness with the precious treasure of her indulgences, by means of which she makes amends for our poor works of penance, so carelessly and imperfectly performed. By this proceeding she makes us truly free of our debts to God, so that the fires of purgatory may not await us after death.

INDULGENCES AN ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE PERFORMANCE OF GOOD WORKS AND THE PRACTICE OF VIRTUE.

The adversaries of truth say that the granting of indulgences is nothing more than a permission to sin with impunity, and that the Catholic Church by her system of indulgences only opens the door to a relaxation of morals. This is certainly a false assertion. An indulgence forgives neither the sin nor its eternal penalty, but only the temporal punishment that still remains unsatisfied of the sin already forgiven. Now even this punishment can be removed only from such penitents as have been reconciled to God. There is no indulgence for a sinner as long as he remains unreconciled to his God; for the Lord never remits the punishment due to any sin as long as the sin itself is unrepented and its stain or guilt remains uncleansed. According to the Catholic doctrine, as clearly defined in the apostolic Bulls, an indulgence can be gained only by a truly contrite and humiliated soul which already possesses the friendship of God and sanctifying grace. How, then, can it open the dike to relaxation of morals? How can it be a permission to offend God with impunity, since He first requires the annihilation of the sin and demands a complete conversion? No, the Catholic Church does not encourage sinfulness by granting indulgences to her penitent

children; she encourages the practice of good works and all Christian virtues. For in order to gain an indulgence, and especially a plenary one, not only a sincere conversion is demanded, but also a faithful performance of some works of piety, charity, self-denial, and nearly always confession and Communion.

Whence the Power of Indulgences.

The power of indulgences is derived from the so-called treasury of the Church, that is, from the accumulated merits and satisfactions of Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the saints, or rather from the value of our divine Redeemer's atonement, which was infinite and inexhaustible; and then from the satisfaction done by the Blessed Virgin, the martyrs, and other saints, inasmuch as their merits were not all required for the atonement of their indebtedness.

On most proper and solid grounds do the most learned and holiest Doctors of the Church base the doctrine that many of the saints of God performed greater works of penance than were needed to obliterate their own personal sin-penalties. Some had nothing to do penance for. The Mother of God, for example, being stainless of all sin, even original sin, had no punishment to undergo, yet how great and how many were her sufferings through life! St. John the Baptist, who was sanctified in his mother's womb—how many and severe were his penances, ending in a cruel death! So were there countless other penitents, martyrs, virgins, and confessors who went through pains and sufferings far beyond the amount and intensity required to blot out their penalties for sin. Now, then, this superabundant satisfaction of the merits of Jesus Christ, these overflowing merits of the Blessed Virgin and the other saints, all gained through His grace, form the unbounded treasury of the Church, from which she draws the indulgences which she grants to her children.

Hence indulgences are called "heavenly treasures" by the Council of Trent. At an earlier date, Pope Clement VI. taught: "Jesus Christ, by His superabundant sufferings, left to the Church militant on earth an inexhaustible treasury, which He has not folded in a napkin nor buried in a field, but has intrusted it to St. Peter and his successors, who, as His own representatives on earth, have the power of the keys of heaven, that they may judiciously divide it among the faithful. To which same treasury were also added the merits of the Mother of God and all the other elect from the first just person to the last."

Division of Indulgences.

An indulgence is either plenary or partial. By a plenary indulgence all temporal punishments are remitted. Whosoever has the good fortune to gain a plenary indulgence in the moment of death will go at once to heaven without being obliged to feel the least pain of purgatory. By a partial indulgence only a portion of the temporal punishment is remitted. Thus, through an indulgence of from forty to one hundred days, or from one to two or even to ten years, as much of the temporal punishment is remitted as would be satisfied and remitted if we had done penance during an equivalent period of time under the ancient canonical discipline. How long the period thus escaped from purgatory the Church has never pretended to teach.

Furthermore, indulgences are either for the living or the dead, or for both.

To the dead, who are no longer under her guidance, the Church can grant the benefit of indulgences only in the form of intercession, by offering to God the satisfying merits of her treasury of graces in aid of her departed members, and beseeching Him earnestly that He would be pleased to accept them for the remission of their sufferings, and call them to the enjoyment of heavenly happiness.

Finally, an indulgence is either local, real, or personal. It may be attached to a place, as to a church or oratory or altar, so that a person desiring to gain it must visit the locality and there comply with the required conditions. It is real when attached to an article, such as a rosary or medal or crucifix. It is personal when granted to individuals, as, for example, members of a confraternity.

Conditions for Gaining an Indulgence.

To the gaining of every indulgence it is required :

1. That we be in a state of grace. If the conscience be burdened with even one mortal sin, the smallest indulgence cannot be acquired.
2. That we perform the prescribed works really and fully, at the time appointed, in the prescribed place, and with a spirit of piety and penance.
3. That at the time of performing the prescribed works we have the intention of gaining the indulgence.

Here it is to be observed :

a. At the granting of a plenary indulgence it is usually prescribed that we pray according to the intention of the Church or the Pope, without stating any definite prayers. In such cases it is sufficient to say with devotion five Our Fathers and five Hail Marys, or the litany of Jesus or of the Blessed Virgin.

b. Receiving Communion is required for the gaining of a plenary indulgence, except the indulgence at the hour of death, in case of inability to receive, and the indulgence of the stations.

REFLECTION.

INDULGENCE GRANTED BY ST. PAUL.



HERE was a young man at Corinth living in sinful relations with his stepmother. This was a crime even in the eyes of the pagans. Though warned to discontinue the scandal, he would not obey, and the chief people of Corinth hardly knew how to proceed in the matter, for such a crime had never occurred there before. Meanwhile St. Paul heard of it and wrote to the Corinthians pronouncing sentence on the man, in these words: "I indeed absent in body, but present in spirit, have already judged, as though I were present, him that hath so done, in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ, you being gathered together and my spirit, with the power of Our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of Our Lord Jesus Christ" (I. Cor. v. 3-5).

Thus St. Paul as chief pastor inflicted the sentence of excommunication on this incestuous man. He expelled him from the communion of the faithful and placed him beyond the pale of the Church. This sentence was to be read in a public church assembly, in which St. Paul was present in spirit. The sinner's body was to be given to Satan, that his soul might be saved; that is to say, he was to be deprived of that means of grace afforded him by the Church to strengthen him against temptation, that thus, at the sight of his isolation and helplessness, he might be brought to his senses and a feeling of repentance.

The object of the excommunication was really attained. The man performed such severe penances that it was feared he would fall into despair. So the people applied to St. Paul, who, as representative of Christ, forgave the man and restored him to the

Church, saying to the people of Corinth : " To whom you have pardoned any thing, I also : for, what I have pardoned, if I have pardoned any thing, for your sakes have I done it in the person of Christ " (II. Cor. ii. 10). Concerning this absolution by St. Paul, St. Chrysostom remarks : " The sinner was not deserving of it, nor was his penance in proportion to his crime. But because he was weak the Apostle pardoned him, lest he should sink into despondency." This was a true and perfect indulgence, a remission of merited temporal punishment.

ANCIENT PENITENTIAL DISCIPLINE.

Penance was a long, tedious, painful method of cleansing one's self from the sins committed after Baptism. One could not go to confession as often as he sinned. In the early Church many penances were for life, and seldom was an indulgence granted. Indeed, there were holy bishops who held that a Christian who fell into sin after Baptism, though he might do penance, ought not to be received into the Church again, not even on his death-bed, but to be left to the mercy of God. But the Church disapproved of such severity, and always reconciled penitent sinners when on their death-bed. But if a man, during the days of his health and strength, neglected to do penance, putting off his conversion till the time of death, penance and forgiveness were denied him ; for the Church believed that such a person was influenced not by contrition and hatred of sin, but by fear of death.

Penitents had to go through four stages of penance—the stage of the Weepers, the Hearers, the Kneelers, and the Standers. This practice was in vogue as early as the third century.

The penitents began their long, tedious process of penance by weeping. They lay prostrate outside the church door, and, begging amid their tears for the prayers of those passing into the church, confessed their sins aloud. They had to lay aside their ordinary dress and put on sackcloth and ashes, in order, by these signs of penance, to move the Church to pity. All were subjected to this process—rich and poor, lowly and powerful. No one could lay aside his penitential garb till he had served out his time, and he wore it while being absolved and reconciled.

When a sinner sought penance the priest imposed hands on him and drew the garb of penance over his head. The men had their hair shaved off ; the women had to veil their faces. They durst not indulge in any pleasure, were forbidden to attend

banquets, to make or receive calls, or to wash their bodies. As they could not live as husband and wife, the sinner could not enter on a course of penance without the consent of the wife or husband, as the case might be. They could not taste wine, nor bear arms, nor ride, nor marry, nor be seen in public save at the church door. Sometimes it became a part of their penance to bury the dead.

Sometimes the Weepers were imprisoned from the beginning of Lent till Holy Thursday, wearing iron rings on their necks, arms, and other parts of the body. Again, they were sent to make long pilgrimages, carrying with them a document describing their sin and the penalty imposed. When they came to a cathedral church they were expected to demand disciplining from its clergy, and even to confess their sins. For



APPEARANCE OF OUR LORD TO BLESSED MARGARET MARY
ALACQUE.

some sins penitents were kept several years in this stage. An incestuous person had to remain three full years among the Weepers.

The penitents of the second class, called the Hearers, were allowed to enter the church, but were assigned to a certain place. It was permitted to them to assist at the readings and sermons, that they might the better understand the enormity of their sins; but when Mass proper began they had to leave the church, being deemed unworthy.

This stage lasted, especially for incestuous sins, three full years. Sometimes the bishop shortened or lengthened the period of penance in proportion to the greater or less grade of crime.

The kneeling or prostrate penitents came to the church on festivals and fasting days, and prostrated themselves, with their faces to the ground, in a certain part of the sacred edifice. While the bishop, attended by the priests, laid his hands upon them, they recited certain prayers for reconciliation. They were not allowed to remain during the sacrifice of the Mass. With this stage began the real time of penance, for the two previous stages were merely ones of preparation for penance.

The standing penitents were those who were permitted to stand with the faithful near the altar at the time of Mass. Their offerings were not accepted, their names were not inscribed on the lists of the faithful, nor could they partake of Communion—a punishment that was very much dreaded by zealous Christians.

The bishop could sometimes permit the penitent to pass a grade if his penances were very sincerely and strictly performed. Every time this was done an indulgence was granted.

Penances were imposed to last for days or quarantines or years. When the penance was thirty days or less, the penitent had to fast during the whole time on bread and water. If it was a quarantine, or forty days, the penitent not only fasted on bread and water, but was compelled to eat alone, was forbidden to wear linen, to ride in a wagon or on horseback, or to carry arms. If the penance lasted a year, some modifications were made in the fasting, and the recital of psalms was substituted.

This system of penance lasted several hundred years in the Church.

THE JUBILEE.

Among the many indulgences granted by the Church to the faithful the jubilee indulgence is the most remarkable, being the most comprehensive.

The Christian jubilee was plainly prefigured in the Old Law, as the shadow to the light, as the figure to the thing itself.

Among the Jews every fiftieth year was called the year of jubilee, because it was announced by the priests with the aid of trumpets. During this year all debts were forgiven to such as were unable to pay, and all property bought under pressure of law was returned. The fields and vineyards were left uncultivated, and people lived on what they had stored, or plucked whatever grew spontaneously.

Now the Christian jubilee year resembles the Jewish inasmuch as it is a year of release, not, indeed, of worldly debts, but of the debts due to God. In the Jewish jubilee slaves were set free; in the Christian jubilee we are freed from the slavery of Satan.

The jubilee indulgence is the fullest of all releases from temporal punishments due to sin, even though we be unable to comply strictly with all the conditions. The Pope, in this case, wishes to use all his power and authority to remove all sin-penalties in the most effective manner. All can gain this indulgence, even those who are unable to perform the works; for the confessors have authority to change the exercises for the sick, blind, lame, cloistered religious, prisoners, soldiers, travellers, sailors, and others.

The origin of the jubilee year is thus described. In the year 1299, about Christmas-time, there came to Rome an immense throng of pilgrims, eager to gain the centenary indulgence granted in that city every hundred years. Among these was a Savoyard 109 years old, who told Pope Boniface VIII. that his father, who had attended the jubilee one hundred years previous, had enjoined him, if he would live to see the year 1300, to go to Rome to gain the great indulgence. Two aged Frenchmen and one Italian corroborated the story.

Pope Boniface had all the old records searched, but found no trace of the jubilee mentioned. In order to gratify the piety of the people, and to honor St. Peter and St. Paul, Pope Boniface issued a bull, in which he granted a plenary indulgence to all such inhabitants of Rome as would make thirty visits on separate days to the churches dedicated to those apostles. Strangers from other parts could gain the same indulgence by making the visits in fifteen days. This indulgence could be gained only once in a hundred years.

In the year 1300 two hundred thousand strangers visited Rome to gain this indulgence.

In the year 1342 Pope Clement VI., at the request of the Romans, reduced the period from one hundred to fifty years, as many persons were born, lived long, and died without an opportunity to gain the indulgence. In the year 1389 Urban VI. ordered the jubilee every thirty-three years, in honor of the years passed by Christ on earth. Finally Pope Paul II. fixed the time at twenty-five years, so as to place the indulgence within the span of an ordinary lifetime.

Like the Jewish jubilee, the Christian jubilee is proclaimed amid the sound of trumpets from the principal churches of Rome, on the doors of which the Pope's brief authorizing it is attached. This is done first on the Ascension Day of the preceding year, and on the fourth Sunday of Advent the announcement is again made. The jubilee proper begins on Christmas Eve. After first vespers the Pope intones the hymn "Come, Holy Ghost," and then proceeds in state to St. Peter's Church, through the holy door, which is kept constantly walled up except on the occasion of a jubilee. While the Pope is officiating in St. Peter's three cardinal legates are similarly engaged in the three other principal churches of Rome—St. John Lateran, St. Mary Major, and St. Paul. Thus is opened the year of jubilee, which lasts till the vespers of Christmas in the succeeding year, when the Pope leaves St. Peter's through the holy door, which is then walled up again.

Besides this there are held at different times other extraordinary jubilees; for instance, at the election of a Pope, in time of war or some other great event.

We have, then, two kinds of jubilee:

1. The ordinary jubilee or the sacred year, which occurs every twenty-fifth year; and, 2. The extraordinary jubilee, held on occasion of some special event.

1. The jubilee of the holy year is celebrated only in Rome, and during the time all the other indulgences are suspended, leaving in force only the following:

- a.* Indulgence at the hour of death.
- b.* Indulgences attached to privileged altars.
- c.* Indulgences granted exclusively to the faithful departed.
- d.* Indulgence of the Angelus.
- e.* Indulgence for attending the Communion to the sick.
- f.* Indulgence of seven years and seven times forty days at the devotion of the Forty Hours' Adoration.
- g.* Finally, Pope Benedict XIII. granted what Benedict XIV.

confirmed, that all the indulgences suspended for the living might be gained for the departed souls.

h. The indulgences granted on special occasions during the year by the Pope's authorized representatives.

For the benefit of those who cannot visit Rome, the Pope grants this indulgence to all Catholics throughout the world, under certain conditions, in order that they may not be deprived of the graces offered. Although the time of jubilee is twelve months, yet the time for gaining the indulgence is often shorter, possibly with a view to promoting ardor and fervor in the piety of the faithful. It is necessary for the gaining of the indulgence that the jubilee be proclaimed by the local bishop of the diocese. Without this no one could gain the indulgence in such diocese, although it might be known to all that the publication had been made in Rome.

2. The extraordinary jubilee is of short duration, usually fifteen days. It is to be remarked that during this jubilee the indulgences for the living remain in force.

The conditions for gaining the jubilee indulgence, with other directions, are mentioned in the papal letters. In general we can say that all confessors have permission to absolve from cases reserved to the bishops and even to the Pope, as well as from Church penalties. They also have, among other privileges, that of commuting the works prescribed, in cases where persons are unable to perform them.

The conditions for gaining the indulgence must be strictly observed, and with the intention of gaining it. They are always stated in the letters, and usually are : 1. A good confession ; 2. A worthy Communion ; 3. Visiting some churches ; 4. Fasting ; 5. Almsgiving ; 6. Some prayers. The last three are defined by the Church authorities.

In general, the following is to be observed :

1. The confession must be a valid one, and is required even of those who have only venial sins to confess. Any one who cannot confess cannot gain the indulgence. We may confess within the prescribed time or out of it, but we must be in the state of grace when we perform the last work.

2. The Communion must be a worthy one, and it is advisable that it be the last condition we fulfil.

3. The Easter Communion will not do for the jubilee, but the Easter confession will.

4. Children old enough to confess, but not prepared for First

Communion, can gain the indulgence, but their confessor must substitute some other good work in place of Communion.

5. In Rome the appointed churches, usually four, are all to be visited the same day. Outside of Rome the visits are arranged according to circumstances.

6. The prayer is usually the prayer of indulgence, unless some other is prescribed.

7. All are required to fast who are able, between the ages of twenty-one and sixty. When fasting is impossible the confessor must substitute some other pious work.

8. By almsgiving is understood some corporal work of mercy. All who have means must give alms ; wives and children of their own means, servants from their wages. When the person has absolutely nothing, the confessor commutes to something else.

In case of any doubt or uncertainty, the confessor is to be consulted.

THE INDULGENCE OF THE PORTIUNCULA.

This indulgence derives its name from the little church of Portiuncula, in the valley of Spoleto, near the town of Assisi, the mother-house of the sons of St. Francis.

The church was built in the year 513, by four pilgrims who came from the Holy Land. It was afterwards attended by the Benedictines from Mount Subas. On account of its smallness, and the two small fields adjoining that belonged to the Benedictines, it was called Portiuncula, or small portion. It was also known as St. Mary of the Angels, on account of a picture of the Assumption that was painted within.

Because it was small and poor it was the favorite church of St. Francis, the apostle of poverty. Having associated with himself two companions, he asked the Benedictines for the use of the church, which they then offered to give to him. But he declined the ownership, and to show his dependence as a mere tenant, he used to bring every year some few fishes to the neighboring abbot. The Benedictines would give him in return bountiful alms. The place was favored by the Almighty God with miracles, and, like Solomon's temple of old, even with His visible presence.

The history of this indulgence we will give in the words of Michael Bernardi, an Italian historian, who lived at the time of St. Francis, and was a citizen of Assisi.

He gives the following testimony:

"In the name of the undivided Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and of the ever-blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the saints, I, Michael Bernardi, formerly of Pollio, but now dwelling in the town of Assisi, as a venerator and spiritual friend of the blessed Francis and his order, went one day to 'Mary of the Angels,' or Portiuncula, where I met Brother Leo,



ST. DOMINIC AND ST. CATHARINE OF SIENA.

Brother Peter of Cataneo, Brother Angelus of Reate, Brother Philip Chipi of Casta, Brother Massæus of Marignano, and Brother Sylvester. They were all talking together, and as they lowered their voices at my approach I was about to retrace my steps. But they called me to join them; and there, in the garden containing the cell of St. Francis, we had the following conversation. Brother Peter of Cataneo began by saying: Listen, Michael, to the wonderful things that happened here in days gone by. One night last January, while Francis was absorbed in devout prayer, Satan came to him, and urged him to abandon his life of austerity, and to go and enjoy himself in the world.

But at the same time Francis felt within himself such an extraordinary strength that, rising up, he went into the woods, and laying off his garments, rolled himself amid the dense undergrowth of thorns, thistles, and sharp briars, till his blood flowed in streams from his torn flesh. The evil spirit fled in dismay. This signal victory was at once crowned by Heaven. For the woods were suddenly lighted up with a warm and brilliant light, and although it was midwinter, the shrubbery was seen all laden down with a profusion of red and white roses. Then a sweet soft voice was heard floating through the woods, saying: 'Let us hasten to the church, where Our Saviour and His Mother are present.' Francis plucked twelve white roses and the same number of the red, and going into the church, laid them on the altar, and then prostrated himself on the ground. Then Christ said to him: 'Francis, ask whatsoever you desire for the salvation of men and the good of souls.' When the saint had somewhat recovered his presence of mind, he prayed: 'Holy Father, though I am a poor sinful man, I humbly beg that Thou wouldst grant this grace to all who come to this church, namely, that after they have confessed their sins to a priest they may obtain pardon and absolution, and a remission of the temporal penalties due to such sins.' The Lord answered: 'You ask much. But I deem you worthy of still greater things, and your petition is granted. But you must first apply to My Vicar, Pope Honorius III., and in My name ask for the indulgence which I have already granted.' Then the vision was over. Next morning Francis was up bright and early, and set out for Rome to see the Pope. On hearing the message the Pope wanted to delay the matter for six years. But as Francis adhered to his original request, nothing was done at that time. In another similar vision Jesus Christ Himself then appointed the day, in these words: 'From the evening of the first of August till the close of the following day, whosoever cometh here, and with sincere contrition will confess his sins, shall have forgiveness of them from the day of his birth till the hour of his entrance into this sacred place.' Francis, prostrate on the ground, said: 'Holy Father and Redeemer, how can this be made known to an unbelieving world?' Christ answered: 'It shall be done through My grace. But do thou go to My Vicar at Rome, and he will proclaim the indulgence as seems best to his knowledge and experience.' Francis inquired: 'Will Your Vicar believe a poor sinner like me?' Christ replied: 'Take

with you some of your brethren who are now listening. Carry also with you some of the white and red roses that bloomed at the time you were chastising your body in the woods.' This dialogue was heard by the following brothers: Peter Cataneo, Rufinus Chipi, Bernard Quintavalle, and Massæus of Marignano, who were keeping vigils in their cells close to the church.

"At break of day Francis and these brothers set out for Rome, where, in the Lateran Church, they related to Pope Honorius all as above described. In proof of the truth Francis presented to the Pontiff three white and three red roses. Honorius was astonished to see such fresh and fragrant flowers in the month of January, and accepted then as true the story of Francis. But not wishing to proclaim the benefits of the indulgence without first taking counsel, he summoned all his cardinals. So next day Francis and his brethren had to appear before the conclave and make a statement of the whole affair. As there could be no pretext for any further delay, the Pope wrote to all the bishops in the neighborhood of Assisi, ordering them to publish the indulgence under the direction of Francis. Then the latter called on all the people to assemble on the day appointed. He had a platform erected and a place prepared for the bishops, the remains of which are to be seen to this day in the same church. The bishops being now all arrived, commissioned Francis to make the announcement in their presence. He consented, saying: 'Though I am not worthy, I will with your consent preach a sermon and proclaim the indulgence which has been established by the command of God and the intercession of His ever-blessed Mother.' Then he began, and spoke so effectively that he seemed more like an angel from heaven than a man of the earth. At the close of his discourse he announced the indulgence: 'Whosoever will visit this church, called St. Mary of the Angels, at any time from the evening of the first of August till the close of the following day, shall have his sins forgiven him,' etc. The bishops were not satisfied at these words; for in those days the granting of a plenary indulgence for all eternity was quite out of the usual discipline of the Church. They therefore agreed together to limit the indulgence to ten years. The Bishop of Assisi was the first to speak. When he came to designate the time, he could not say a word but just what Francis had said. Each bishop, one after the other, stood up to speak, and endeavored to proclaim the indulgence for ten years only. But not one of them could get out a word different from what had been

said by Francis. They were perplexed ; yet, feeling that it was a miracle, they recognized the will of God, and with St. Francis proclaimed unanimously the indulgence as the holy Francis wanted it.

“At this meeting were present, besides the above-named bishops, many other distinguished persons from Perus and the adjacent towns and castles, as well as from the rural districts. Of the brethren themselves were Angelus, the Provincial of the Province of St. Francis, Boniface, Guido, and many others from the Monastery of Portiuncula itself.”

From the above narrative it is clear that this “Portiuncula Indulgence” is a providential and preferred one, inasmuch as Christ Himself gave it, and His visible Head and Vicar so recognized it. In order to make this indulgence accessible to as many persons as possible the sovereign pontiffs have since extended it far and wide. Concerning this indulgence it is to be observed :

1. Whoever wishes to gain this indulgence must on the appointed day visit the Church of the Portiuncula, or some other church similarly privileged. It is not necessary that the prescribed confession and Communion be made in one of such churches.

2. Confession must be made either on the eve of the festival or on the day itself.

3. According to subsequent papal grants this indulgence may be gained for the benefit of the souls in purgatory.

4. It may be gained on the 2d of August by a visit to any church of the Franciscans, whether of the first, second, or third Order ; hence to any church of the Capuchins, Franciscans, Conventuals, Clares, and Tertiaries.

5. This indulgence can be gained as often as (*toties, quoties*) a visit is made to the church on the appointed day. Hence, if one has confessed and communicated worthily, he can gain the indulgence several times, and turn them over to different souls in purgatory. A decision to this effect was rendered by the Roman Congregation of Indulgences on the 8th of July, 1850.

6. The members of the Third Order of St. Francis, of both sexes, can gain this indulgence in all churches. The sick can gain it at home, prisoners in their cells, and travellers everywhere.

7. By virtue of a papal indult this indulgence can be gained in some lands on the first Sunday in August, in all Franciscan

churches, as well as in parish churches and such other churches as are affiliated, in which ordinary public services are held.

From all that has been described it is evident that this indulgence is of immense advantage to myriads of souls, and contributes vastly to the zeal and piety of the faithful.

CONFRATERNITY INDULGENCES.—INDULGENCES ATTACHED TO GOOD WORKS.

For the honor and glory of God and the edification of the faithful, we will here make mention of some other indulgences that may be easily gained by all persons.

Confraternities.

The Confraternity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.—The members say daily one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and the Apostles' Creed, adding: "Divine Heart of Jesus, grant that I may ever love Thee more and more." Such persons receive a plenary indulgence on the day of their reception into the society, on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, on the festival of the Holy Name, or on the following Sunday; on the first Friday of the month or the Sunday after; on one day of the month, according to selection; on the feast of the Immaculate Conception; on the 8th of September; on the Annunciation, Candlemas Day, the Assumption, All Saints', All Souls', St. Joseph's Day; the feasts of Sts. Peter and Paul, St. John the Evangelist; and also at the hour of death, on condition that the dying person invoke the name of Jesus with the lips, or at least with the heart.

The Confraternity of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary.—The members wear the medal of the Immaculate Conception, and say daily a Hail Mary, with the prayer of St. Bernard, "Remember, O most compassionate Virgin Mary, that," etc.; adding the words, "O Mary, refuge of sinners, pray for us." They gain a plenary indulgence on the day of their reception into the arch-confraternity, on the anniversary of their baptism, at the hour of death, on the feast of the Sacred Heart of Mary as celebrated on the Sunday before Septuagesima, on New Year's Day, Candlemas Day, the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, the Assumption, the Immaculate Conception, the conversion of St. Paul, on the 25th of January, on the festival of St. Mary Magdalene; also on any two selected days of the month, which may also be applied to the departed souls.

The Rosary Society.—The members are to have a rosary properly blessed, and recite the fifteen mysteries once during the week, meditating on each mystery. They can gain plenary in-

dulgences as follows : On the third Sunday in April, Easter Day, Ascension Thursday, Whitsunday, Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi, Christmas, the patronal feast of their church, on Good Friday, and on the Sundays succeeding the Assumption and Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, as well as on Rosary Sunday and all festivals of Mary; likewise every monthly Sunday, if they join in the procession.

The Scapular Society.—The members wear a scapular properly blessed, and are duly invested, and say some prayers daily to the



ST. SIMON STOCK RECEIVING THE SCAPULAR.

Blessed Virgin—usually seven Our Fathers and as many Hail Marys. If they lose their scapular they can put one on themselves, nor is it necessary to have it blessed. They may gain plenary indulgences on the day of their enrolment, any day during the Octave of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, at the hour of death, and on the monthly Sundays by joining the procession. All indulgences

may be applied to the souls of the faithful departed.

The Confraternity of the Precious Blood.—The members repeat

daily seven Glory be to the Fathers, etc., in honor of the seven sheddings of Our Saviour's blood. They are directed to recite the little rosary of the Precious Blood, and to wear some mark, blessed, as a girdle, scapular, etc.; and when they hear of the death of a member they are to perform some good work for the benefit of the departed soul. They can gain plenary indulgences on the day of their enrolment, at the hour of death, at Christmas, Easter, Ascension, on the five principal festivals of the Mother of God, on the feast of her Seven Sorrows, and on the first Sunday of September.

Plenary Indulgences attached to different Good Works, and which can be gained by any one.

1. A plenary indulgence can be gained once a month by all those who, being contrite of heart, say daily, in honor of the adorable Trinity, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts; the heavens and the earth are full of Thy glory. Glory be to the Father," etc.

2. A plenary indulgence is granted once a month to all those who, in honor of the Blessed Sacrament, say daily :

"Praise and thanks without end to the ever-blessed Sacrament."

3. There is a plenary indulgence granted at the hour of death to all those who have practised the Christian salutation, "Praised be Christ Jesus" "forever and ever. Amen."

These three pious practices alone afford the faithful sufficient opportunities to obtain rich and abundant graces for themselves, and their departed friends.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

Whosoever keeps in mind human sinfulness in all its enormity, as well as the punishment it entails, cannot fail to appreciate the advantages which are offered to him in the indulgences of the Catholic Church. When we recall the long and severe penances undergone by the early Christians in order to obtain remission of the penances due their sins, we ought to be ashamed at our indifference towards the easy means offered to us for the same purpose. Others have surrendered all their possessions, even their freedom and their very life, in order to obtain a plenary indulgence. Why should we be slow in sacrificing some little time and convenience?—a small sacrifice, that will bring us peace of conscience, and soothe the last moments of our life. Strive, then, to gain as many indulgences as you can. Apply

some of them to the souls in purgatory. You have dear departed ones. Help them in their sufferings, and your own reward will be great.

In a circular issued in the year 1865 the Cardinal Archbishop of Vienna wrote: "Throughout all the warnings given by the Church, and throughout all the mysteries she celebrates, there ever resounds that appeal to the human heart: 'Now is the time to rise from sleep.' With more especial stress does this cry go forth when the faithful are solemnly exhorted to strive for some plenary indulgence. You know, dearly beloved, that an indulgence affects only the temporal punishment which remains to be undergone by the penitent after he has received remission of the guilt and of the eternal punishment. Hence a plenary indulgence can be offered only to those who have worthily received the Sacrament of Penance, and thereby made themselves worthy to partake of the bread which is life and brings life unto salvation. Every one who desires to throw off the burdens imposed upon him by sin, and to stand regenerated in the midst of the just, will be brought to confession in his effort to gain the indulgence. If his soul is defaced with the stain of heavy guilt, he will be carried that way in order to turn away the threatening danger of eternal perdition; and then he obtains a benefit, and indeed a great benefit. There are indeed some persons who, because they go to confession once a year, think they do all that is required, and would have nothing to tell to the priest. These are the very persons who stand most in need of the Sacrament of Penance. It fares with them as it does with a man who suddenly leaves the bright, noisy streets and enters a dark room. At first he can see nothing. But if he wait awhile he will begin to discover the outlines of many an object, and soon see them all in their true shape, size, and color. Amid their business, cares, and pleasures they are strangers to their own dark interior. When they begin to examine their conscience they can see nothing. But if they persevere they soon discover the outlines of many a sin, and if they permit the grace of God to enter they will see their sins in their true light.

"Then the Sacrament of Penance is the door that opens into the Holy of Holies and leads us to Our Lord and Saviour. After we have cleansed ourselves from sin by contrition and confession, we may receive the Word made flesh, concealed under the appearance of bread. Nor does the Lord come to us with empty hands; for He will and can give us all that is worth wish-

ing for. For our sake He lay in the manger, a tender child; for our sake He bore the privations of poverty and the fatigue of labor in the humble home at Nazareth. For our sake He suffered the crown of thorns and the nailing to the cross; for our sake He effected the most tender and sacred miracle of love in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, making Himself the invigorating food of our souls. To His chosen ones He becomes food, in order to vitalize their faith, inflame their love, forgive their sins, turning their weakness into strength, giving them consolation in trouble, power in temptation, and victory in battle. He is the pledge of everlasting glory.

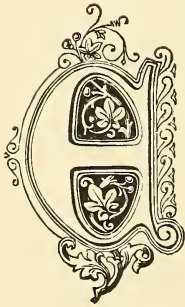
"To Our Saviour is all power given in heaven and on earth. Yet He can do nothing greater for us than to give Himself to us. During His abiding with us He brings us benefits that no thief can steal, if we avail ourselves properly of His presence with us. The admonition to begin a new life, and to consecrate all our acts and omissions to the Lord by a right intention, never comes to us with greater force than when we are, as it were, one with Our Lord and Saviour. If there be no change within us for the better, the fault lies with ourselves, and not with the heavenly Guest Who visits us. At the north-pole the same sun shines as with us, and as brightly; the ice-fields glisten with its light, yet remain solid and cold. It is somewhat similar with those persons who approach holy Communion only half recollected, and devoid of any serious desire to be renewed in spirit. But if we find not assistance with the Lamb of God, where shall we look for strength and safety? Therefore we must return to Him again and again. There is nothing left for us but to invoke the assistance of the Holy Ghost, to commend ourselves to Mary the Mother of Mercy, to pray to our guardian angel not to abandon us, and then to urge ourselves to receive the Sacrament of Penance with profound contrition, and the holy Communion with greater love and devotion than ever before. If we feel a vivid shame and smarting sorrow at the imperfection with which we have hitherto approached the table of the Lord, that is a very good sign. For the more penetrated we become with a sense of our own weakness and sinfulness, the more assuredly may we count on helping grace, without which we can do nothing."

It is to such an earnest spirit of penance, and thence to the sublime happiness of a valid confession and a profitable Communion, that the indulgences of the Catholic Church impel and guide us.

Extreme Unction.

INSTRUCTION.

**Extreme Unction is a Sacrament.—
Its Effects.**



EXTREME UNCTION is a sacrament in which, by the anointing with oil and the prayers of the priest, the grace of God is imparted to the sick, for the welfare of their souls and often of their bodies.

This sacrament is called Extreme Unction, because it is the last anointing with oil that a Christian can receive. The other anointings are at Baptism, Confirmation, and Ordination.

Extreme Unction is really a sacrament, since it has all the necessary qualities for such; namely: 1. The institution by Christ; 2. The outward sign of grace; 3. The inward operation of grace.

That Jesus Christ instituted Extreme Unction and raised it to the dignity of a sacrament we know both from Holy Scripture and the early teaching and practice of the Church.

In the Gospel according to St. Mark we read that even during the lifetime of Christ the apostles anointed the sick with oil. The passage reads: "Going forth they preached that men should do penance: and they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them" (St. Mark vi. 12, 13).

This passage of Scripture is now generally admitted. It shows clearly that Christ must have taught His apostles the using of oil in dealing with the sick.

That Christ also elevated this anointing to the dignity of a sacrament is clearly shown by the words of St. James the apostle: "Is any man sick among you? Let him bring in the priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he be in sins, they shall be forgiven him" (St. James v. 14, 15).

Here St. James plainly states that the grace of fortitude, of consolation, and of pardon of sin is joined to the anointing with oil and the prayers of the priest. It is evident that so saving a power could not be ascribed by the apostle to these mere out-

ward signs and acts if he were not sure that they came from Christ and were ordained by Him.

Unbelievers have raised many objections, striving to weaken the proving powers of this passage of Scripture, but their objections are altogether groundless.



THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

They say that the apostle does not write : "The priests of the Church," but "the elders" ; that is, the chief persons of the congregation. Admitting this reading or translation, what follows? In those days the Christian congregations had no lay officers, for the heads or chief men of the congregation were the

bishops and the priests; hence St. James, when saying "the elders," if he did say it, meant the bishops or the priests over the congregations.

That such is the truth is shown by the following facts :

When the primitive Christians sold their property they laid their money at the feet of the apostles only. And as these were then unable to attend to the temporal affairs of the Christian communities, they did not appoint secular officers, but committed such business to the deacons.

Furthermore, when St. Paul called the ancients of the Church from Ephesus to Miletus, he said to them, "Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops to rule the Church of God" (Acts xx. 28).

Others, again, pretend that St. James directed the anointing with oil as a mere natural or medicinal remedy. If this were so, then the ordinary attendants of the sick could have done it, neither priest nor elder nor other ecclesiastic being required for this.

Finally, we learn from the most ancient teachings of the Church that she always reckoned Extreme Unction among the seven sacraments. This is further proved from the constant practice of all the ancient Eastern churches, every one of which considered it a sacrament. If it is a sacrament, then it must owe its institution to Jesus Christ.

And why should it not have been ordained by Him? It is precisely in the time of sickness and at the article of death that the Christian is most in need of help. Just then he is discouraged, impatient, disposed to murmur against God, unable to detach his heart from the world, and exposed to the final assaults of Satan. Is it not, then, eminently becoming that our High Priest, Who so often has had compassion on us poor sinners, should complete and crown His mercy, and through the visible sign of anointing with oil, which heals our wounds, strengthens our bodies, rejoices our hearts, and enkindles within us the fires of charity, should show us that He infuses into our souls forgiveness, strength, and enlightenment?

The outward signs of Extreme Unction are :

1. The blessed oil with which the priest anoints the five senses of the sick Christian ; and,
2. The words uttered as a prayer by the priest at each anointing, and which are as follows : "By this holy anointing, and through His own good mercy, may the Lord be pleased to for-

give thee whatsoever thou hast sinned by the sense of thy sight, smell, hearing, taste, speech, touch, motion, and also by thy thoughts and the lusts of thy heart."

The Sacrament of Extreme Unction produces beneficial effects in soul and body.

In the soul it produces the following effects :

1. Like all the sacraments for the living, it augments sanctifying grace.

2. It remits venial sins, and such mortal sins as we may have done unknowingly, as well as those grievous sins which the sick person is no longer able to confess, and it destroys the relics of sins already forgiven, especially the temporal punishments due to them, as well also as the evil tendencies of the heart, the weakness of the will,—all of which are effects of past sins. Extreme Unction is a complement of the Sacrament of Penance.

3. It strengthens the sick person in his sufferings and temptations, especially in the death agony. The Council of Trent teaches this in the following words : " The Sacrament of Extreme Unction quiets our fears, illumines the gloom in which the soul is enveloped, fills it with pious and holy joy, and enables us to wait with cheerfulness the coming of the Lord, prepared to yield up all that we have received from His bounty whenever He is pleased to summon us from this world of woe. Another, and the most important, advantage derived from Extreme Unction is that it fortifies us against the violent assaults of Satan. It arms and strengthens the faithful against the violence of such assaults, and enables them to fight resolutely and successfully against them."

On the body also Extreme Unction produces frequently favorable effects. It often lightens the pains of sickness, and if it is for the patient's spiritual good, it sometimes restores him to full health and strength.

Reception of Extreme Unction.

Extreme Unction may be received by every Catholic Christian who is dangerously sick and has reached the use of reason.

Only a Catholic Christian can receive the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, for it is administered only by the priests of the Church to the children of the Church. " Let him "—that is, the sick man—" bring in the priests of the Church." It should not, therefore, be administered to such Catholics who while they were in health did not participate in the other saving remedies

of the Church, if they have not asked for the sacrament and are lying senseless in the struggles of death. Yet it may be granted to them if they have previously shown sorrow for their neglect, and desired to die well.

Furthermore, the subject of this sacrament must be sick, and dangerously sick; for St. James says: "Is any one sick among you?" Hence persons in health, although in danger of death, and even when death is certain, cannot receive Extreme Unction; hence soldiers about to enter battle, sailors in shipwreck, women about to be confined, criminals about to be put to death, should not be anointed. Old people can, however; for old age, with its feebleness, is really a sickness.

Nor should it be extended to persons who are seized by the struggles of death in the act of committing mortal sin, unless they can show some signs of contrition.

Finally, the subject must have come to the age of reason. Hence children cannot be anointed, since being incapable of sin there would be no spiritual ailments to be healed by the sacramental curative powers of the sacrament. Insane persons are incapable of receiving this sacrament, unless they be favored with lucid intervals. Persons insane or idiotic from birth should not be anointed.

Extreme Unction can be administered only once in the same sickness. If the danger of death has passed away, and the sickness return again with renewed danger of death, the anointing may be repeated.

Extreme Unction should be received—

1. In the state of grace; for it is a sacrament of the living. Hence we must have life in our soul when we receive it. Confession should go before, or at least an act of perfect contrition.

2. It should be received with faith, hope, charity, and with resignation to God's will.

3. It should be received while the patient is in fair enjoyment of his faculties. Very much depends on the subject being anointed while he can notice what is being done, and join with devotion in the prayers of the priest. The more devoutly the patient corresponds with the sacrament the more powerful will be its effects.

Those persons who willingly and knowingly neglect the reception of Extreme Unction are guilty of a grievous sin; for

they deprive their souls of those highly necessary graces that are obtained through this sacrament.

The Ceremonies of Extreme Unction.

In the sick room, where Extreme Unction is to be administered, the following preparations should be made :

Let the room be clean and tidy, and, if possible, clean clothing on the bed. Let there be a small table, covered with a clean cloth, bearing a crucifix, two candlesticks with candles burning, a vessel with holy water, and a plate with some cotton. On another table let there be a plate with some salt, a piece of the soft part of the bread for cleansing the priest's fingers, and some water and a towel.

The ceremonies are as follows :

1. The priest on entering the room says : "Peace be to this house and to all who dwell therein."

2. Then the priest sets down the oil on the table, and, having put on his surplice and violet stole, takes the crucifix and presents it to the lips of the sick person.

3. Then the priest sprinkles holy water on the sick person and others present, saying, in the name of the patient, the prayer of the penitent David : "Sprinkle me, O Lord, with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed ; wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow."

4. The priest, turning towards the sick person, implores the Lord to remove from him the spirit of darkness, and to send His good angel to help him. He asks grace and mercy for him after he, or the surrounding friends in his name, have acknowledged his sins by repeating the general confession, "I confess to Almighty God," etc. Here may be said the psalm Miserere and the litany of the saints for the sick, in order to obtain for him through the intercession of the saints a spirit of true penance for his sins.

5. The priest, having again said a short prayer for pardon for the sick man and for his spiritual and temporal welfare, approaches the bed, makes the sign of the cross over it three times, stretches out his hand, and says : "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, may all the power of Satan in thee be destroyed by the laying on of our hands, and by the invocation of all the holy angels, archangels, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, virgins, and all the saints."



THE SACRAMENT OF EXTREME UNCTION.

6. Then the priest begins the anointings, on both eyes, both ears, both nostrils, beginning with the right one in each case; on the lips, the right and left hand, the right and left foot—in a word, on all the organs of sense. At each anointing he says, in reference to each sense: "By this holy anointing, and through His own mercy, may Our Lord forgive thee whatsoever sin thou hast committed by the sense of thy sight, thy hearing, thy smell,

thy taste, thy touch," etc. On each organ of sense he makes the sign of the cross with the holy oil.

7. After the anointing he cleanses his fingers with a crumb of bread, washes them, and directs that the water as well as the cotton that has been used in anointing be put in the fire.

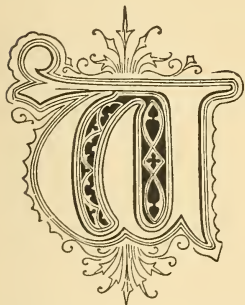
8. Again, the priest recites three prayers for the spiritual and bodily welfare of the sick person, and makes with the crucifix three signs of the cross over the sick person, asking for such welfare through the merits of the crucified Redeemer, and saying: "May Our Lord Jesus Christ be with thee to protect thee, in thee to enliven thee, near thee to uphold thee, before thee to

guide and lead thee, behind thee to strengthen thee, over thee to protect and bless thee everywhere. May the Holy Ghost come down upon thee and remain with thee."

9. Finally, after some short petitions for remission of all sins, for deliverance from weakness, for preservation from perdition, for the granting of the sick man's desires and longings, the priest lays his right hand on the head of the patient, and says: "May God the Father heal thee, Who created thee in the flesh. May God the Son heal thee, who for thy sake died on the cross. May the Holy Ghost heal thee, Who came to thee in Baptism. May the holy and adorable Trinity, one God, be pleased to increase in thee His grace to thy spiritual and bodily welfare, preserve thee from all evil, and strengthen thee in all good."

REFLECTION.

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.



WHEN you are about to discharge the duty of charity by imparting anointing to a sick person, be careful to regulate your eyes, hands, and tongue, that you may in no manner pass the bounds of moderation" (St. Ephrem). "When they"—the priests—"anoint the sick with oil, they fortify the weak with the power of faith. But they fortify them through the prayer of faith, which a merciful God will hear, Whose sacrament the blessed oil is" (St. Jerome). "When sickness comes on, you should not seek a magician, a soothsayer, or any superstitious writing; you should not perform magic at any well, tree, or cross-roads; but the sick person should confide in God's mercy only, receive with faith and devotion the Sacrament of the Altar, and ask earnestly from the Church the blessed oil, with which your body may be anointed. And, as the apostle says, the prayer of faith will save the sick person" (St. Augustine).

ANCIENT MANNER OF ADMINISTERING EXTREME UNCTION.

The Church always exercised the utmost care that no one should die without Extreme Unction, or that the sick person should be so far gone in weakness as to be half dead, and not know what was being done to him. In early times the sacrament was administered as soon as the sickness set in, for the early Christians were firmly convinced of its favorable effect on

the body. It was administered before the Viaticum, for all the relics of sin should be killed before the reception of the Blessed Eucharist. In the Latin Church, too, the custom prevailed for several priests to take part in making the holy anointings, though this did not belong to the essence of the sacrament, otherwise their number would have been defined.

Extreme Unction was administered in the church, where there was a room for the purpose, a kind of prayer hall, called the Catechumenate, in which were instructed persons preparing for Baptism. There the sick person remained till death came, or recovery.

When a person fell sick his body was washed, clad in a white garment, and carried to the church, where it was laid on a sack, on which ashes had been strewn in the form of a cross. Then came the priests, with cross and holy water carried before them. Pouring blessed oil into the holy water, they sprinkled the sick person. Ashes were strewn in the form of a cross on his head and breast, and the seven penitential psalms were recited. In the Greek Church there were usually seven priests administering, who, one after the other, read seven epistles from the New Testament, seven gospels, and said seven prayers for bodily recovery. As each priest finished his reading and his prayer he anointed the sick person. Finally, the book of the gospels was presented to the sick man to be kissed, and he gave thanks for the graces received.

Then he had to repeat the Our Father and the Apostles' Creed, commend his soul to the hands of God, sign himself with the sign of the cross, and take leave of the living. The priest gave him the kiss of peace and the Holy Viaticum. The sick person was now dead to the world, but if he lived seven days the priests visited him again and continued the anointing.

In the beginning a Mass for the sick person had been read. If he died, the Mass for the Dead was celebrated in the church, the body being present. Offerings in behalf of the deceased were made. If he recovered, a Mass of thanksgiving was celebrated. How vastly different this from the sad way in which the sick are now treated! In order not to frighten them, they are kept in ignorance of the near approach of death. During all the time of their illness not a Mass is offered up. When the final moment draws near the whole neighborhood flock around, and distract and distress the departing Christian. He himself sometimes permits his mind to be distracted by worldly cares till his last breath. Thus he is not released unto Christ, but busied with a world he does not wish to leave or give up.

COMPARISONS.

As in olden times, before a contest, the gladiators anointed their bodies to strengthen their muscles and render the attack of their adversaries more difficult, so the Christian, prior to his last decisive struggle, has his body anointed with holy oil to strengthen his soul, and thus to nullify the assaults of his evil enemy.

Oil soothes the pain and helps the healing of a wound. Hence the good Samaritan pours oil into the wounds of the traveller who had fallen into the hands of robbers. Many a Christian lies suffering on a bed of pain, with a deeply wounded soul, until the Lord sends the priest as a good Samaritan with the miraculous oil, by which the pain is alleviated, and the healing of the soul, as well as of the body, is furthered.

EXAMPLES.

Effect of Extreme Unction.

The saintly penitent Mary of Ogniak was often present at the administration of Extreme Unction, on which occasion she often saw Christ present with His angels, comforting and strengthening the sick person. She also noticed that when the holy oil was applied to the patient the parts shone with a bright light. When she herself was receiving the same sacrament she was gladdened by the sight of the apostles. St. Peter showed her the keys as a sign that the door of eternity stood open before her. The other apostles consoled the dying penitent.

St. Eleazer, a member of the Third Order of St. Francis, who lived more like an angel than a man, preserving his virginity even in his married life with his holy spouse Delphina, once fell mortally sick. His countenance, which had always worn an air of cheerfulness, became suddenly haggard, like that of a terrified man, and he was heard to exclaim: "My God! how frightful is the power of the devil!" He received the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, and, lo! at once his face brightened again. He consoled the frightened bystanders, and said, "By the grace of my Lord I have conquered."

A woman in Bangor, Ireland, being in danger of death, sent for St. Malachy, Archbishop of Armagh. He came, consoled her with pious and salutary sentiments, and wished to administer to her the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. But her relatives persuaded him that it would be better to defer it till the next day, when she would be better prepared to receive it. The holy

bishop yielded, though reluctantly, to their suggestion, and went back to his monastery. That same evening the sick woman's house was all in an uproar. The relatives were weeping and running hither and thither, not knowing what to do or say. A servant ran off to the bishop to announce that the woman was dead. St. Malachy hastened to her apartment, and was shocked to find her really dead. With his hands raised to heaven he accused himself of being accessory to this misfortune, and poured himself out in prayer, in which he ordered all present to unite fervently. Thus they passed the whole night. At daybreak the dead woman gave signs of returning life, and opening her eyes recognized the bishop. The astonished spectators found their grief turned into joy, for the bishop immediately administered Extreme Unction. The woman recovered her health completely, passed the remainder of her days in penance, and died the death of the just.

Danger of Deferring Extreme Unction.

A soldier was sick—a pious man, who feared his God. After receiving the sacraments of Penance and Holy Eucharist he asked also for the Sacrament of Extreme Unction. But his wife, with a view of calming his apprehension of death, failed to call the priest in time, and it was only after he lost consciousness that the poor man received the sacrament. He lay senseless for six full hours, and then, regaining consciousness, he said to his wife: “Unhappy woman, you have done me great harm by not permitting me to receive Extreme Unction at the proper time. If I had received that sacrament in my senses, by virtue of the prayers which I would have said I would have to remain but thirty days in purgatory. But now I have to stay there seven long years. And you, for your carelessness, will be an invalid for the rest of your life.” The man died, and his wife remained a sufferer till the day of her death.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR DEATH.

A Christian who was very solicitous about his salvation once asked a holy and learned doctor how a person should prepare himself for death, and received for answer: “A man prepares himself properly for death if he receive devoutly and in good time the sacraments of the dying, namely, Penance, Holy Viaticum, and Extreme Unction.” This answer did not satisfy the good man. All this he was ready to do, but it seemed to him insufficient. He therefore asked further how the reverend

doctor would proceed to prepare a sick man for a happy death. As the clergyman was willing in every way to benefit his inquirer he replied : "After the sick man had duly received the last sacraments I would first advise him to settle his worldly affairs most conscientiously, if he had not done so already. Secondly, I would suggest that he bequeath to his heirs the performance of some good work for the benefit of his soul. In the third place, I would counsel him to repair any wrong he had ever done a neighbor. Fourthly, he should forgive all his enemies. Fifthly, I would have him counsel all his friends and relatives to live in the love and fear of God. Then I would advise him to practise holy indifference as to whether he should live or die. Seventhly, I would prompt him to heartfelt acts of contrition, and of faith, hope, and charity, and of thanksgiving. Eighthly, I would place within his view a crucifix, a picture of the Blessed Virgin, and a vessel of holy water, that he might frequently be encouraged by gazing at the sacred images, and now and then sprinkle himself with the holy water, to guard against his enemies. Ninthly, I would take care to have him now and then visited by a clergyman, who would make to him pious suggestions. I would keep from him people of the world, for the sick man's soul needs recollection. In the tenth place, if his life should be prolonged, I would invent other pious means to keep up his fervor. I would say litanies with him, read psalms for him, and the lives of the martyrs or the sufferings of Christ, and suggest short ejaculatory prayers. In the eleventh place, I would encourage him to gain indulgences. I would have him prayed for in the churches and religious communities. I would have him renew his baptismal vows, and make still further acts of resignation. I would urge him to place himself wholly in the hands of God. I would read for him the prayers in the Ritual, and commend his soul to the hands of his Creator."

Thus spoke the holy man, and it were to be wished that the sick could be always thus prepared. Many a dying Christian might become sanctified on his death-bed, and reach a very high degree of glory in heaven.

EDIFYING DEATHS.

Death of St. Louis, King of France.

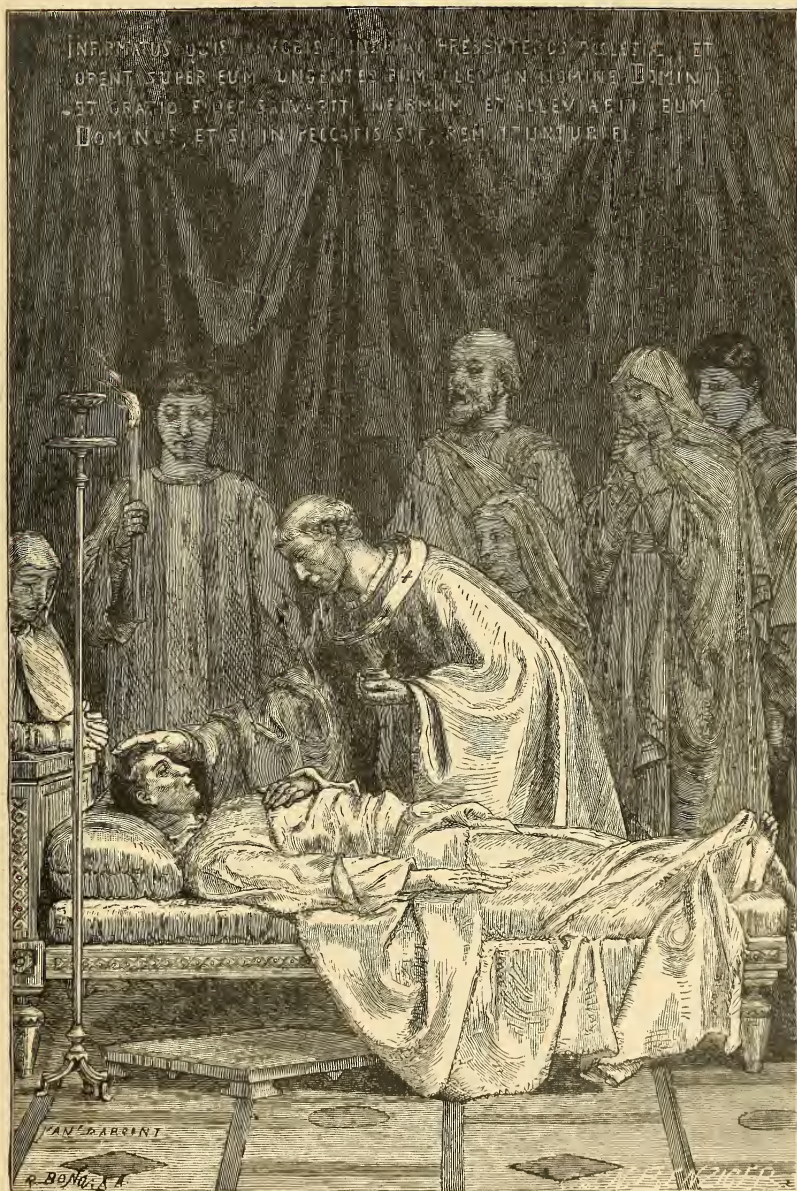
St. Louis was crowned King of France at the age of twelve years. During his minority, Blanche, his mother, guided the reins of government with great wisdom and success. At the age

of twenty Louis himself took his sceptre in hand, and unlike the other princes of those days, instead of seeking enlargement of territory and personal fame, he showed himself a true servant of God and a lover and father of his people. When he had been king about fifteen years he was attacked by a malignant fever, that brought him to the edge of the grave. He was already in his agony, when the Almighty, touched by the prayers and deep grief of his subjects, restored him to health. Louis, to show his gratitude to God, made a vow to put on the cross of a crusader, and to set out for the East with a large army, to rescue the tomb of Christ from the hands of the infidels. He carried out his promise in 1248, but the expedition proved most unfortunate. After an absence of seven years he was compelled to return to France on account of his mother's death. He was busily engaged in managing the affairs of his kingdom when renewed lamentations on the state of the Christians in Palestine reached his ears. He again mustered a large army, and set forth to chastise the enemies of the cross of Christ in the East. Wishing to deal a chastising blow at Tunis, he entered the harbor of Carthage, when a pestilence broke out in his army, carrying off his son John, and finally seizing on the king himself. Before dying he called to his bedside his son and successor, Philip, to whom he imparted lessons of wisdom and virtue. Then he asked for the sacraments of the dying, which he received with the utmost fervor. After lying quiet for half an hour, with his hands joined in prayer, he uttered his last words: "I will go into Thy house, O Lord; I will worship in Thy temples and confess Thy name." He died peacefully on the 25th of August, 1270.

St. Gebhard.

St. Gebhard, Bishop of Constance and Count of Bregenz, while returning from Rome met with an accident that resulted in his death.

As his case grew worse, and there were no further hopes of recovery, this saintly bishop remarked: "My pilgrimage is now at an end. I shall soon be called home. I am satisfied. May God's will be done in my regard. He is the Master of My life, and can do with it as seems best to Him. Whatever He does is the best for me. I am not afraid of death; it is but a passage to a better life; a brief sleep, after which even the body will awake to eternal life. In this faith and hope I am ready to leave this perishable body at any moment. But as I know that



THE SACRAMENT OF EXTREME UNCTION AMONG THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.

nothing defiled can enter heaven, and as I know, too, that I have not trod this earth without making many faulty and wrong steps, and am now very imperfect, I beg God's mercy. My faith furnishes me with the consoling assurance that God does not reject the penitent sinner, but looks on him with a father's compassion. The goodness of my heavenly Father, and the death of my beloved and divine Redeemer, Jesus Christ, and the grace of the Holy Ghost, are to me an assurance of certain forgiveness of all my sins."

Then he settled all the affairs of his diocese, saying : "Everything should be set in order before so long a journey. It is essential to a peaceful and happy death that all our affairs be settled in time. He who neglects this point often leaves behind him unlimited sources of strife, contention, and sin."

Then, although there was no immediate danger of death, he asked to have the last sacraments administered to him. "For," said he, "we should not defer what is most important, nor wait for that hour in which the soul is rendered almost powerless, and totally unable to appreciate the strength and consolation to be obtained in the reception of the sacraments. A sick man has need of fortitude and consolation, even if he is not going to die. Where are such strength and comfort to be found if not in the holy sacraments?" Then the sacraments were administered to the dying bishop in the most public and solemn manner possible, for such were his orders. He said : "I must be a model to my people, even in my death." When all his affairs, temporal and spiritual, were settled, and he had received the Holy Viaticum, he said : "Now I am equipped for the journey. Call me, O Lord, whenever Thou wilt ; I am ready to come." Suffering all his pains with truly Christian fortitude, he awaited, in perfect resignation to the will of God, whatever should befall him, and experienced a veritable Christian happiness in the prospect of his speedy dissolution.

His gaze now alternated from his crucifix towards heaven and back again, while his heart was fixed on Jesus Christ, and his prayer was for the safety of his soul and the welfare of the Church of God. In his last moments he was heard to utter the words : "Jesus, Jesus, do not abandon my flock." Then he closed with the words : "Jesus, I am coming." He died on the 27th of August, 996, in the city of Constance, where for sixteen years he had guided and governed the church with all the virtues of a holy and zealous bishop.

Fénelon.

This great and venerable man was only a short time sick—between six and seven days. During that time he would listen to nothing but the reading of the Sacred Scriptures. His friends read for him the whole Book of Tobias twice over, and also portions of the New Testament, especially from St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians. He was consoled and happy, and even made comments on the sacred words.

During the last two days and nights he begged his attendants to read for him passages best adapted to his present condition. Sometimes he would repeat the words of St. Martin: "Lord, if I can be still of any use to Thy people, I do not decline the burden of life; Thy will be done." When asked kindly: "Why will you leave us? Into whose hands shall we fall in our loneliness? Perhaps we shall become the prey of ravening wolves," he answered with a sigh only. On the second day of his illness he made his confession. On the third he received the Viaticum. When told that he was not in imminent danger, he replied: "I know from my feelings that I am near death." Although all about him were in tears, he was calm and peaceful, and breathed his last uttering a prayer.

St. Francis de Sales.

One day St. Francis de Sales, after a long and laborious visitation through his diocese, returned home very much exhausted, and sank fainting into an arm-chair. This weakness was but the premonitory symptom of an attack of apoplexy which followed immediately, leaving the saint unconscious, save now and then a momentary lucid interval. In one of these he was asked if he wished to die in the Catholic Church. "Certainly," he replied; "administer the sacraments to me; do not delay Extreme Unction." This sacrament he received with perceptible clearness of understanding and remarkable piety and fervor. Then with feeble voice he responded to the prayers recited by his attending priests. Though evidently communing with his God, he asked to have read for him some passages from the Psalms as contained invocations for mercy and forgiveness. He emitted frequently such ejaculations as: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, according to Thy great mercy;" "Wash me, O Lord, yet more and more;" "Mercy, O Lord; have mercy!"

Though his strength diminished rapidly, he asked to have the *Miserere* repeated, and at the words, "Cleanse me, O Lord," he

cried aloud, "Jesus, my Jesus," and fell into his death agony. He lay in a very weak condition till towards midnight on the festival of the Holy Innocents. His attendants began the recital of the Litany of the Saints, and when they came to the words, "All ye Holy Innocents, pray for us," he surrendered his pure soul into the hands of his Creator.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

The Catholic Church is the truest mother and guide on our pilgrimage through life. Hardly have we seen the light of the world when she takes us in her arms and brings us to God as His newly born children. In the sacraments of Confirmation, Penance, and Blessed Eucharist she pours into our hearts the whole bliss of heaven, consoling us when we are sad, lifting us up when we fall, healing us when we are wounded. In the midst of our sinfulness her teachings and means of grace preserve us from despondency before the rigorous justice of God. And when we lie down to die, when the last hour of our earthly troubles and disappointments draws nigh, when all human aid is useless, she sends her holy ministers to pray over us and anoint us with sacred oil. And the prayers of the priest and the holy anointing clear away what remains of our former wickedness. Thus comforted and strengthened, we are enabled to look with confidence towards that tribunal of justice before which our soul is soon to take its stand. What mother could do more for her child than the Church does for her own offspring? With your whole heart thank the Lord your God that He has given you the grace, altogether unmerited on your part, to be a member of this Church, so rich in consolations. Pray often and earnestly for those who in the blindness of their hearts oppose this Church, her teachings, her blessings, her means of grace. Pray for them; pray that God in His mercy may guide them to a clearer understanding, and grant them and you a happy death.



Holy Orders.

INSTRUCTION.

Meaning of the Sacrament of Orders.



HOLY ORDERS is a sacrament by which the priestly authority and power are conferred upon the recipient, together with a special grace enabling him to exercise his office properly.

Holy Orders is a true sacrament, for it bears all the signs of such : 1. Institution by Jesus Christ ; 2. An outward sign of grace ; 3. An inward working of grace.

Under the ancient dispensation God appointed the tribe of Levi to serve in the Ark of the Covenant, and the family of Aaron to attend to the sacred sacrifices. But that priesthood of the Old Law was only a shadow and figure of the priesthood under the new dispensation. As there was to be a new sacrifice, so there should be a new priesthood established. This new priesthood Christ really did set up, conferring it directly upon His apostles, and indirectly upon their successors in the ministry, through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. He established this sacrament when, at the celebration of the Last Supper, He commanded His apostles, saying : " Do this for a commemoration of Me " (Luke xxii. 19). In these words He bestowed on them and their successors the right and power to do what He Himself did, namely, to convert bread into His body and wine into His blood, thus founding an ever-enduring priestly office. After His resurrection He completed the institution of the sacrament, by saying : " As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you. Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them," etc.; and again just before His ascension, when He said : " Going, therefore, teach ye all nations," etc. (Matt. xxviii. 19). In these words Christ gave to the apostles and their successors authority over the religious and moral body of the Church, thereby delivering to them all the other powers which appertain to the priestly office, and also supplying them with the graces necessary for a worthy discharge of their office. Hence St. Paul says repeatedly, that with the outward and visible laying on of

hands there is joined an effectiveness of grace for the exercise of the sacerdotal duties, which cannot be accomplished by an apostle, but only by Christ, the dispenser of graces. "Neglect not," says St. Paul, "the grace that is in thee, which was given thee with the imposition of hands of the priesthood" (I. Tim. iv. 14).

Therefore the priestly authority is not derived from the congregation; it is bestowed upon the priest by God. The priest is not a hireling; he is selected by God. Hence St. Paul writes:

"Neither doth any man take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God, as Aaron was" (Heb. v. 4).

The outward signs of Holy Orders are:

1. The matter; consisting of the imposition of the bishop's hands, the anointing with blessed oil, and the delivering of the sacred vessels.

2. The form; consisting of the words uttered by the bishop while imposing hands, anointing, and delivering the symbols.



THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY ORDERS.

The apostles administered Holy Orders by the imposition of hands and by prayer only. But in very early times the Church

added the anointing and the passing of the priestly symbols, and appointed set forms of words to be uttered by the ordaining bishop at each act.

Bishops only are authorized to administer the Sacrament of Holy Orders, for they are the only successors of the apostles, and receive this right through their episcopal consecration.

With Holy Orders many effects of grace go hand in hand.

1. Holy Orders increases in its recipient sanctifying grace. His soul, now clothed with this sanctifying grace, the sacrament adorns with clearer light, deeper charity, and higher sanctity. It confers upon him the grace to properly exercise the functions of the priesthood and to discharge faithfully its onerous duties, to undergo cheerfully all its struggles and privations, and, if need be, to lay down his life in the sacred service.

2. Holy Orders imprints upon its recipient an enduring mark as a consecrated servant of the Lord. It distinguishes him from the rest of the faithful, and can be received only once.

Once a man has received Holy Orders he can never lose such consecration. If he have the misfortune to fall away even from the faith he does not lose the priestly power, and may exercise all the priestly functions as soon as he becomes properly reconciled to the Church. Even though he be not reconciled to the Church, he may, when there is danger of death, and no other priest can be had, hear the confession of the dying person, and administer valid absolution.

3. Holy Orders confers upon the recipient a sublime power and authority, such as not even angels possess. It gives him (*a*) power over the real body of Jesus Christ, Who was born of the Virgin Mary, and is now enthroned in heaven at the right hand of the Father. At the word of the priest Jesus descends upon the altar and veils His body and blood within the forms and appearances of bread and wine. It grants to him, also, (*b*) power over the mystic, mysterious body of Christ; that is, the mystic body of the faithful. To these he dispenses the holy sacraments from their cradle to the grave. As God's messenger, he proclaims to them the word of God. He brings down upon them the benediction of Heaven through his prayers and the blessing of his consecrated hands. For them he offers up the great sacrifice of the New Law, and stands as a mediator between earth and heaven.

The Duties of the Laity towards their Priests.

In the first place, we owe esteem and reverence to our priests. "Render honor to whom honor is due," says St. Paul (Rom. xiii. 7). Honor is due to one man more than to another on various grounds: first, on account of the dignity and elevation to which he has been raised—thus we owe greater honor to a prince or king than to a common man, even though he be a rich gentleman; secondly, on account of the excellence of the office intrusted to him—for instance, a true poet is deserving of more honor than a servant, or even an ordinary writer; thirdly, because of the person who is represented—thus to an ambassador or representative of a king the same honor is due that we would show to the monarch himself, though the representative be of low origin. For all these same reasons the highest honor and respect are due to the priests. "Touch ye not My anointed," saith the Lord in the 104th Psalm, verse 15.

If we notice some human weaknesses or faults in a priest we should not take scandal therefrom, but rather look at his good qualities, and do what he says rather than imitate his doings. "A priest," says St. Isidore, "even if he lead a faulty life and have his deficiencies, is nevertheless an angel of the Almighty; for he performs the act of Divine Sacrifice and cares for the welfare of men's souls."

Furthermore, we should render to our priests obedience and profound respect. They are our spiritual fathers, our guides on the road to God, and our mediators. They are messengers to us from Jesus Christ, sent to strengthen us with the holy sacraments, to labor for the salvation of our souls, to preach the Gospel to the poor, to comfort the hearts of such as are in affliction, and to announce to the oppressed the gracious coming of a Saviour and the speedy arrival of the day of compensation. The words of Christ on this point are formidable indeed: "He that heareth you heareth Me, and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me" (Luke x. 16).

Finally, we should pray for the priests, that they may be enabled to discharge their duties faithfully. We should pray also that God would send many pastors to His flock. A very suitable time for such prayers are the Ember Days, when those who have chosen the portion of the Lord are promoted to Orders.

The Duties of Priests.

Sacerdotal dignity requires in the priest, above all, a pure and pious mode of life. Sublime mysteries are placed in his hands; to him is intrusted the keeping and dispensing of the sacraments. Through his hands Jesus Christ offers Himself daily to the eternal Father. From his lips proceed the word of God to the laity. What purity of body and soul are required for such sublime duties!

A priest should avoid every sin and every scandal with the greatest solicitude. St. Chrysostom writes: "If some unimportant portion of the body be injured, no great detriment results to the whole frame; but if the eye or head be injured, the whole human system is sadly affected. So it is with a man who, like a light on the housetop, is set up on high for the purpose of enlightening others. If such a one fall, he inflicts a great and wide-spread injury; for he not only ruins himself, but he gives scandal to all those who have looked up to him."

Again, a priest is required to have an untiring zeal, tempered with prudence and charity.

The priest must be unceasing in prayer, for he needs force and courage from above to be true to his arduous calling; and indefatigable in his office, with an ever-watchful eye over the good and the bad: for the good, that they may not stumble; and for the bad, that they may be saved. At all hours he should be ready to give counsel to the healthy and comfort to the sick. But in his zeal he must be prudent and charitable. Like a father among his children, he must have kindness for the good and a paternal firmness and severity for the wayward. Let him seek to better, not to embitter. Let him always manifest a true Christian spirit, with a leaning to forgiveness and love.

Vocation to the Priesthood.

Great is the dignity of the priest, and heavy is the burden of his sacred office. Hence the Church demands many important qualifications in those who seek to become priests. She requires, first, the age of manhood. Only men of strictly masculine gender are competent for the sublime duties of the priestly state; for, since God has made woman subject to man, it would be unbecoming for a woman, in the important matter of salvation, to have power over men, or even to share their power and authority. Moreover, the Church has established for subdea-

conship the age of twenty-two years ; for the diaconate, twenty-three years ; and for priesthood, twenty-four years.

She requires, in the second place, a high degree of piety for the furtherance of salvation of souls, and for the prevention of personal degeneration. Thirdly, a well-grounded knowledge, without which no man could discharge the obligations properly. Fourthly, prudence and modest discretion. Giddy, impulsive, and thoughtless persons are altogether unfitted for the priestly state. Fifthly, a divine vocation ; since it belongs to God to choose His servants, as the king has a right to appoint his officials. The signs of such a vocation are a supernatural and persevering leaning to the priesthood, purity of life, piety, a liking for holy things and practices that contribute to the glory of God, zeal for souls, chastity, contempt for the world, capability, and tact for the duties of the sublime state. Sixthly, perfectly pure intention, by which the candidate is influenced solely through a motive to increase God's glory and insure his own salvation, as well as to contribute to the salvation of others.

REFLECTION.

The Priesthood and its Prerogatives.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.



WILL sanctify also the tabernacle of the testimony with the altar, and Aaron with his sons, to do the office of priesthood unto Me" (Ex. xxix. 44). "I will take of them [the heathens] to be priests and Levites, saith the Lord. For as the new heavens and the new earth which I make to stand before Me: so shall your seed stand and your name" (Is. lxvi. 22). "And when they had ordained to them priests in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in Whom they believed" (Acts xiv. 22). "The Holy Ghost said to them : Separate me Saul and Barnabas, for the work whereunto I have taken them. Then they, fasting and praying and imposing their hands upon them, sent them away" (Acts xiii. 2, 3). "Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given to thee by prophecy, with the imposition of the hands of the priesthood" (I. Tim. iv. 14). "Impose not hands lightly upon any man" (I. Tim. v. 22). "For which cause I admonish thee, that thou stir up the grace of God, which is in thee by the imposition of my hands" (II. Tim. i. 6).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"How can a man of himself assume the priesthood if he have not received this dignity from a higher power? Or, how can he undertake what is becoming to a priest only?" (St. Clement of Rome.) "Everything that you do must be done in Christ, according to due order. The laity should submit to the deacons, these to the priests, these to the bishops, these to Christ, as Christ was subject to the Father" (St. Ignatius). "Who confers episcopal grace? God or man? Without doubt you answer, God gives it. Well, but God gives it through man. Man imposes hands, God imparts the grace. The priest prays, imposes his hands, and God imparts the blessing with an almighty hand. The bishop imparts the ordination, and God confers the dignity" (St. Ambrose). "The Apostle shows that by the words and imposition of hands of the ordainer grace is given. It is by the words that he is called a worthy doctor and teacher. The imposition of hands is the secret words by which the chosen one is established, and receives such power that he may presume to offer sacrifice in the place of God" (The Same).

THE PRIESTHOOD IN THE OLD AND IN THE NEW LAW.

How sacred is the service in the house of God may be easily learned from the priesthood under the Old Dispensation—a dispensation whose ritual cannot certainly be compared to the sublime worship of the New Law. In Israel the first-born male of every family belonged to the Lord as His own. He was in a certain sense sacred to Him, and was to be offered up to Him. But as God did not wish to man His service with such first-born sons, but wished rather to segregate for His service one special family, which should be, as it were, a chosen race in a chosen nation, He selected the descendants of the tribe of Levi to be His special servants, and every first-born child had to be redeemed with the consent of that tribe. This tribe of Levi received this direction in reward for the zeal which its members displayed at the time when the Israelites permitted themselves to worship the golden calf. For they remained faithful to Moses, and slew twenty-three thousand of the idolaters (Ex. xxxii. 28). Yet not all the members of the tribe of Levi were permitted to perform the divine functions; only such as were perfectly free from bodily blemish.

Nor were all its members admitted to equal honors. The family of Aaron was called to the priesthood. The others were

to assist them in the priestly functions. Hence there were in Israel two ecclesiastical orders, the priests and the Levites.

The Levites were the teachers of the Hebrew people, and had to care for the conducting of the ceremonies in divine worship. While the people were in the desert, and before the temple was built in the Promised Land, they had to see to the transportation of the Ark of the Covenant and its equipments, to erect and take down the temporary tabernacle. When the Ark of the Covenant was deposited in the temple, these Levites had the guardianship of the sacred edifice and its treasures, and the direction of the music and sacred chant.

They had also to help the priests at the sacrifices and the slaughtering of the animals, to provide the wood and water, and to clean the sacred utensils.

Only the priests were permitted to preside at the sacrifices, and offer incense to the Lord with blessed fire. They were also the judges in Israel. Strict laws were laid down prohibiting from the exercise of the priestly office any member of the family of Aaron who was not perfectly blameless. They were divided into twenty-four classes, and took their turns regularly at duty.

When the Israelites had gained the Promised Land, it was so partitioned off that each tribe got a special portion. The Levites, however, had no share allotted to them. The Lord said: "They shall have no inheritance, I am their inheritance: neither shall you give them any possession in Israel, for I am their possession" (Ezech. xliv. 28). The Levites received, however, the tenth part of the cattle and fruits of the earth, and they had to surrender a tenth part of that tenth to the priests. The Levites lived in thirty-five towns throughout the country; while for the priests thirteen towns were set apart in the neighborhood of Jerusalem.

To-day their temple is in ruins, and their sacrifices have ceased. No Israelite now knows to what tribe he belongs, and it is impossible to distinguish the priestly race. The Jews themselves admit that if they returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt their temple they could offer no sacrifice through lack of priests. But long ago their own prophets foretold that another sacrifice would replace the old one, and that Levites would be chosen by the Lord from among the Gentiles.

All this has been fulfilled to the letter. We have the sacrifice, priests, and Levites of the New Dispensation. Everywhere we have temples of the true God. The priesthood among the Jews



CONFERRING HOLY ORDERS IN THE CATACOMBS.

was only an outward office of honor ; for every Israelite might have slaughtered victims and offered incense. The priests of the New Law are clothed with more than an honorary office ; they require an infinitely high power and a supernatural grace, for in the consecration they must work miracles, and in their other functions dispense divine grace. Who, then, can be so foolish as to believe that Christ instituted no special sacrament for the conferring of this great power, and that any one may presume to dispense the holy mysteries, or that the congregation may, if it choose, perform divine service as they would transact any other business? Away with such nonsense ! Without the Sacrament of Holy Orders the altar of the New Testament would not rank as high as the altar of sacrifice in the Old Law, while the mysteries of the Jewish ritual would be more sublime than the worship of the Christian Church, and the work of the Lord, instead of being completed, would have lost its power.

HOLY ORDERS.—ITS CEREMONIES.

There is no sacrament which the recipient approaches by so many steps as the Sacrament of Holy Orders. Hence we should learn to know and appreciate the grandeur and excellence of that sacrament. The different steps are : 1. Tonsure ; 2. The four minor orders ; 3. The three sacred orders.

Tonsure.

Tonsure, or the shaving of the candidate's head, is not a dedication, but only a preparation thereto. It is, as it were, the introduction into the clerical state. The bishop cuts some locks of hair from the head of the candidate, who thereby renounces all worldly pride. He belongs no more to the world, but to God.

While cutting the hair, the bishop impresses this truth on the candidate, saying : " The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and of my cup : it is Thou that wilt restore my inheritance to me " (Ps. xv. 5). The tonsured one is now of God's portion, and is called a cleric, as all belonging to the ecclesiastical state are called clergy.

The new cleric henceforth wears his tonsure, shaved in the form of a circle, if he belongs to the Latin rite, and if to the Greek rite, he wears it all over the top of his head. The bishop also recites a psalm and a prayer over the tonsured, and puts on him the surplice, which is an emblem of the priestly dignity.

The Ostiariate.

This, the first of the minor orders, was in the time of Christian persecution a very important office. It combined the au-

thority and obligation to summon the congregations to divine worship, to preserve outward decorum and order, and to exclude from the assembly all who were forbidden by the Church to enter. Hence to-day, at the conferring of this order, the keys of the church are handed to the candidate.

The Lectorate.

This forms the second step in minor orders. It gives the right to read, in the church, the Sacred Scriptures of the New and Old Testaments—a privilege to be granted by the bishop only. The origin of its ceremonies is lost in the remotest ages of the Church. It is mentioned by such early writers as St. Justin, Tertullian, and St. Cyprian. In the year 398 the Council of Carthage arranged the ceremonies in the same order as we have them to-day. The book of the gospels is handed to the candidate, and a code of doctrines is placed in his hands, that he impart them precisely as did the apostles.

Exorcist.

In the conferring of this order we are reminded of the words addressed by Christ to His disciples, when He imparted to them power over spirits. The bishop says: "By the power of the cross and name of Jesus shall be broken all power interposed by hell to the salvation of the faithful." Then a book containing the appropriate prayers is handed to the candidate.

Acolyte.

Though this office existed in the Church in early times, it was more clearly defined and prescribed in the Council of Carthage, in the year 398. It appertains more especially to the serving at Mass. The bishop, just before handing a lighted taper to the candidate for this order, says, in the language of St. Paul: "In the midst of a perverse and depraved people, do thou shine in the world like a beacon-light, keeping the word of God." What was required in apostolic times is to-day expected by the Church from those in whose hands she places a burning light. This order is the last of the preparatory stages through which the candidate advances towards the priesthood.

In these four minor orders the clerics are inducted to the lesser services of the Church, such as ringing the bells, opening and closing the doors, reading in the church, lighting the candles, carrying the offerings, serving the priest, and rendering other services that are now usually performed by the altar-boys.

In ancient days so great was the reverence for such duties, that no one was allowed to do them unless he had received one or more of the minor orders.

The sacred orders are subdeaconship, deaconship, and priesthood.

Subdeaconship.

Whosoever embraces this order must renounce matrimony, and live only for God and His Church.

From all earthly cares, and from what is called the pleasures of life, the Catholic priest must be exempt, that he may live solely for God and His Church.

He who has a wife, says St. Paul, lives for the world, and is divided.

The subdeacon serves the priest at High Mass, reads or chants the epistle, and hands the offerings to the celebrant. It was not until the number of the faithful had increased that ecclesiastical attendants were set apart.

Deaconship.

The manner of conferring deaconship is not unlike that of subdeaconship. Deacons have authority to preach, bap-

tize, and administer Communion in the absence of the priest. They are also permitted to take care of the church utensils, the offerings of the laity, and to admonish the latter to be pious and



ORDINATION OF A DEACON.

attentive. In ancient times they had charge of the poor.

Before conferring this order, the bishop inquires of the people if they have any objection to interpose against the persons to be ordained. The bishop then reminds the candidates that the

apostles raised St. Stephen to the dignity of deacon because of his purity of heart, and that now the Church demands a pure conscience, and the world a complete devotedness to duty, on the part of every deacon.

Priesthood.

(Presbyterate.)

The priesthood was instituted by Jesus Christ. "As the Father hath sent Me, I also send you" (John xx. 21).

Only a deacon is eligible to priesthood. Before this takes place, the bishop inquires whether the candidate is qualified by good life and learning for the sublime office. The latter then passes some days in spiritual retreat and fasting, and receives the Sacrament of Penance.

Priesthood is administered during Mass by the bishop. After the epistle, he seats himself in a chair on the platform of the altar, and summons the candidates, inquires about their fitness for the dignity, and addresses them on the responsibilities and duties to be assumed.

Then the bishop kneels, and the deacons prostrate themselves on the floor to signify their utter unfitness for the priestly dignity, if not assisted by divine grace. The bishop and attendants recite the Litany of the Saints to obtain such grace from God.

Then the bishop and all the other priests present impose hands on the candidates, to signify that through this imposition the priestly power and the grace of the Holy Ghost are imparted, and that all the priests present pray to Heaven for them, that they may obtain the grace of God to a worthy exercise of the holy office into which they are now being admitted.

The bishop places a stole crosswise on the breast of the ordained, thereby signifying that they are to dedicate themselves to the cross of Christ, namely, His doctrine and ministry, and to be provided therefor with strength and grace.

Then the chasuble is rolled up from the back and drawn over the head, to signify their acceptance of the sweet yoke and easy burden of the divine law, though the fulness of priestly power is not yet conferred.

The bishop then anoints the hands of the candidates with oil, for Christ is called the Anointed; and by anointing, the strength, efficiency, and grace of the priestly functions are imparted to the young priests.

The bishop holds the chalice and patena for the young priest

to touch, to show that he receives power to offer up the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and the bishop says: "Receive the power to offer the holy sacrifice to God, and to celebrate Masses for the living and the dead."

The bishop now goes on with his Mass, and one of the newly ordained, after receiving his benediction, reads or sings the gospel.

The bishop being once more seated, the newly ordained men approach, kiss his hand, and on their knees present to him lighted tapers, as a symbol of the enlightenment of their minds through faith, and the warming of their hearts through gratitude and hope, and of love for God and men, whose priests they are to be forever. Returning to their places, they read from missals prepared for the purpose, and in concert with the bishop the prayers appropriate for the offering of the bread and wine, and the other portions of the Mass as far as the *Agnus Dei*.

Then one of the new priests approaches the bishop and receives from him the kiss of peace as a sign of the peace, love, and unity that should prevail among Christians. The words are: "Peace be to you," with the response, "And with thy spirit."

After the bishop's Communion the new priests all receive from his hands. The bishop, again addressing them, says, in the words of Christ to the apostles: "I will not now call you servants. I have called you friends, because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father I have made known to you. Receive the Paraclete, Whom I will send you from the Father. He it is Whom the Father sendeth to you. You are My friends if you do the things that I command you."

The bishop being again seated, the new priests read the Apostles' Creed, which they are to preach and explain.

Now the bishop again lays his hands on their heads, saying: "Receive the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins you shall retain they are retained" (John xx. 22). Thus they receive the grace and power to forgive sins, as did the apostles from Jesus. The bishop now unrolls and lets down the chasuble to its full length, to signify that the newly ordained is fully a priest. Placing his hands within those of the bishop, the priest answers "I promise" to the former's question: "Dost thou promise to me and my successors obedience and reverence?" The bishop, embracing him, says, "Peace be to thee for all time."

In conclusion, the bishop exhorts the newly ordained priests

to be zealous and edifying in the discharge of their official duties, and to lead a life worthy of their calling.

Reverence due to the Priestly State.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

"He that will be proud and refuse to obey the commandment of the priest, who ministereth at the same time to the Lord thy God, and the decree of the judge, that man shall die, and thou shalt take away the evil from Israel" (Deut. xvii. 12). "Honor God with all thy soul, and give honor to the priests" (Ecclus. vii. 33). "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God" (I. Cor. iv. 1). "Let the priests that rule well be esteemed worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine" (I. Tim. v. 17). "For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us" (II. Cor. v. 20).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"The priesthood is the greatest of all honors that can be found among men" (St. Ignatius of Antioch). "It is true the priesthood is exercised on earth, but we must class it in the number of heavenly things. And that is proper, for this ordinance was brought and introduced by no mortal, nor angel, nor archangel, nor any created power, but by the Comforter Himself, that is, the Holy Ghost. Hence it is very easy to conceive what honor, what dignity, what great grace the Holy Ghost has conferred on the priests" (St. Chrysostom). "The grandeur and sublimity of the priestly dignity surpasseth all understanding, all language, all thoughts; and I am of opinion that it is of this St. Paul speaks when, in the full admiration of his soul, he exclaims in the words, 'Oh, the greatness and the depths of the riches and of the goodness of God'" (St. Ephrem). "The priesthood is the grandest and most excellent of all honors" (St. Gregory Nazianzen). "The priests are the gates of the eternal city, through which all believers in Christ come to Christ" (St. Prosper).

THE ROMAN CATECHISM ON THE DIGNITY OF THE PRIESTHOOD.

"The faithful are to be made acquainted with the exalted dignity and excellence of this sacrament in its highest degree, which is the priesthood. Priests and bishops are, as it were, the interpreters and heralds of God, commissioned in His name to

teach mankind the law of God and the precepts of a Christian life—they are the representatives of God upon earth. It is impossible, therefore, to conceive a more exalted dignity or a function more sacred. Justly, therefore, are they called not only angels, but gods, holding as they do the place and power and authority of God on earth. But the priesthood, at all times an elevated office, transcends in the New Law all others in dignity. The power of consecrating and offering the body and blood of Our Lord, and of remitting sin, with which the priesthood of the New Law is invested, is such as cannot be comprehended by the human mind, still less is it equalled by or assimilated to anything on earth. Again, as Christ was sent by the Father, the apostles and disciples by Christ, even so are priests invested with the same power, and sent 'for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and the edification of the body of Christ.'"

EXAMPLES.

Reverence of Pagans for Priests.

The heathens entertained such a reverence for their idolatrous priests, that the Lacedemonians, Abyssinians, and Egyptians would acknowledge no king who was not also a priest. Many kings, even Roman emperors, considered themselves highly honored and favored to have the priestly dignity united to their kingly and imperial grandeur. All the chief senators of the famous city of Athens bore the title of priest. Indeed, all nations held priests in such high esteem, that a heathen writer says: "Although morality reached its lowest ebb, yet reverence for the priests was cherished in the hearts of the depraved people."

When Alexander the Great, before whom the whole world was struck dumb, according to I. Mach. i. 3, came with his army to destroy Jerusalem, Jaddus, the high-priest, came forth to meet him. As soon as the general perceived the priest, he alighted from his chariot, prostrated himself on the ground, and granted all that the priest asked. Alexander's attendants, who had always seen him treated as a very god, were offended at his humility in this instance, and asked why he acted thus? "Ah!" replied the general, "not Jaddus have I honored, but the true God, Whose priest he is. I acknowledge and reverence the eternal God in the person of His servant, and also honor the servant because of his God."

An Imperial Law.

The great Emperor Charlemagne issued the following order :
 "It is our earnest wish and command that all our subjects obey strictly their priests as God's representatives : for we cannot understand how those persons can be true and obedient to us who are untrue and disobedient to God and His priests. All who disobey the priests shall meet their deserts, even if my sons be among the number. We will not tolerate such wicked people in our vicinity ; we declare them unfaithful, dishonorable, and impious, and banish them from the land : for our country shall be a Christian land, and not a pagan one."

Respect and Reverence.

When the Emperor Constantine visited the first Council of Nice he wished to take the last place, and refused to be seated in presence of the priests.

St. Antony used to prostrate himself before every priest he met, and would not rise till he had received his blessing.

St. Francis Assisi used to say that if he met a priest and an angel, he would first salute the priest and kiss his hand, for those hands with which he consecrated would place the priest before the angel.

Humble Acceptance of a Spiritual Rebuke.

Once a zealous preacher denounced a certain vice in such plain and direct language, that all who were present knew it was meant for Francis Sforza, Duke of Milan, who was also in the church. The courtiers endeavored to incite the duke to have the preacher punished for his audacity. But he replied : "The priest did nothing more than his duty. It would be well for all of us if we did ours with the same fearlessness. I am deeply indebted to the preacher for making known to me my failings. I now know their hatefulness, and shall try to avoid them in future."

The Duties of Priests.**PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.**

"Priests shall be holy to their God" (Lev. xxi. 6). "Because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will reject thee, that thou shalt not do the office of priesthood to Me" (Osee iv. 6).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"Purer and brighter than the sun must we priests be" (St. Chrysostom). "Consider what it is to stand before a holy

people, and bear in mind how important it is to have to deal with God's sacraments. He who lives by the altar, must also do honor to the altar" (St. Augustine). "Bear with all things, as the Lord bears with you. Bear with the weakness of others with the strength of a combatant" (St. Ignatius). "You have put your hands to a powerful work, and need power; you are a watchman in Israel, and need vigilance; you are judge of the wise and the unwise, and need justice; lastly, you need chiefly temperance, that while preaching to others you may not be yourself a castaway" (St. Bernard). "Yes, my brethren, this office is so important, that no one, even if he were the greatest saint, should presume to seek it if he be not called by God and directed by the wisdom of prelates and the counsels of reliable persons. Even then one should tremble before the burden he is about to take upon his shoulders, for it is sufficient to bear down the shoulders of an angel" (St. John of Matha).

EXAMPLES.

The Wonderful Bottle.

Whenever St. Francis Assisi thought of the sanctity and purity required to discharge the functions of the priesthood, he would shudder throughout his whole system. Hence he would never accept priest's orders. One day an angel appeared to him, holding up a clear bottle containing a still clearer fluid, and said: "Francis, the soul of a priest should be as clear as this liquid." When the saint compared the clearness of the fluid with the state of his soul, he became more firmly determined than ever never to think of becoming a priest and celebrating holy Mass.

The Priest as he should be.

One of the most malicious actors in the French Revolution, who among other crimes had bathed his hand in priestly blood, fell very sick. He had often vowed that if a priest ever put his foot into his house he would never leave it alive. A neighboring pastor, well acquainted with the sentiments of the unhappy man, hearing of his illness and knowing the duties of every good shepherd, resolved to go in search of this erring soul, and if necessary to lay down his life in the pursuit. When he entered the sick-room the dying sinner seemed to regain a new lease of life and strength, and raising himself up, called for his pistol. The priest said calmly: "Brother, what do you want your pistol for? My love for you, and my fearlessness too, are stronger than

your misguided feelings." The other, not getting his pistol, stretched out his bare arm and shrieked : "See that arm ! it has strangled dozens stronger than you." The priest replied : "You are mistaken ; there was one whom you did not strangle, though you tried to do so, and thought you had : I am that one. Through God's mercy I escaped the death you planned for me, and was saved that I might this day save you." The sinner was overcome, and, yielding to God's grace and the gentle tact of the priest, prepared to atone for his wicked life.

A Priest's Charitable Self-sacrifice.

As soon as it is announced to the brethren in the Franciscan monastery at Jerusalem that an epidemic has appeared in any part of the city, one of them, well fortified with the sacraments, goes forth from the monastery. He then goes about among the sick, administering the sacraments to the Catholics, bringing comfort and aid to all persons irrespective of religion, taking care not to mingle among his brethren lest he should affect them with the contagion. Every day he comes to the convent gate, and gives a signal, previously agreed upon, by his manner of ringing the bell, to indicate that he is still on his feet and able to do duty. If the bell is not rung, then it is a sign that he has fallen a victim to the disease, and another friar prepares to go forth to take his place, and probably to follow him to the grave.

A Holy Priest, True till Death.

There once lived a priest in a very poor parish. He was simple in his habits, humble and zealous in the service of God, charitable and earnest towards his fellow-men. All the members of his parish, which covered a large mountain district, were like children in their love and obedience towards him. After many years of hard service, the good priest began to fail in health and strength. One day, when he was weaker than usual, there came a summons to bring the last sacraments to a person dying away up in the mountains, several miles distant. With tears in his eyes he informed the messenger that he was unable to leave the house, and begged him to apply to the priest of a neighboring parish. The messenger went away. Some six hours afterwards there came a second messenger, bearing the sick person's most urgent request that the priest himself, who had been his confessor and father for many years, would come up in the mountains and comfort him in the last moments of his life. The aged priest, who was now in bed, both weak and sick, urged his inability

to travel over the snow-covered mountain roads. But the patient would not be comforted, and dispatched a third messenger to the priest, saying that he could not die easy without seeing his venerable form once more. Then the poor old man seemed to forget his pains and feebleness, and raising himself up in the bed, said: "I feel that I am dying, yet I cannot refuse to discharge this duty, which will be the last of my life. God grant me strength to do it." He dressed himself, took his place in a kind of bier borne by strong men, and was carried amid the most inclement weather up the mountain. During the journey the devoted servant of God never ceased to pray and to adore the Blessed Sacrament, which he had taken with him. At length the party reached the door of the mountain cabin, and the priest uttered the words, "Peace be to this house," when the sick man, opening his languid eyes, uttered a cry of joy and gratitude, and raised his feeble hands to heaven. When the dying priest was laid beside the bed of his dying parishioner, the latter took the end of the stole and kissed it several times. During the administration of the last sacraments, under such touching circumstances, the attendants were bathed in tears. The voice of the priest grew weaker, the breathing of the parishioner grew fainter. The priest presented to his parishioner the cross to kiss, then kissed it himself, and died. The parishioner breathed his last a moment later.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

Honor and esteem your priests. They are the Lord's anointed, and cannot be touched with impunity. Observe the lives and deaths of the enemies of the clergy, and you will see that God does not allow His servants to be mocked. As long as there is evil on the earth priests will be hated and persecuted. Christ foretold this, and indeed it is the sign of a genuine priesthood.

How much mankind owes to the priests! They it is who at all times fostered knowledge, civilized nations, and guarded truth and justice. They it is who have rendered still more valuable services to the souls of men, and still do so. Daily they offer up to God in holy Mass the divine Victim of our sins and iniquities. Daily and hourly do they pray for us when our worldly cares and duties prevent us from praying for ourselves. The true priest prays for his friends and his enemies, for old and young, for the sick and the well, for the living and the dead. In fact, what would life be worth without our priests—without the blessings they bring us through the holy sacraments? Remember all

these things, and you will see how cruelly ungrateful it is to persecute the clergy.

Ah, but the faults of the priests ! Alas ! there are some who have them. But where is the man who is faultless ? Pray for such priests, that they may correct their failings. And if they have their faults their state is not responsible, only they individually. Their calling is ever holy. St. Chrysostom tells us that even faulty priests have a power such as is not granted to angels nor archangels, for it was not to these latter that Christ said : " Whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Whatsoever the priests do on earth in the discharge of their office is ratified by God in heaven. The Lord confirms the sentence of His servants. Therefore listen to the priests, esteem them as the Lord's servants, the dispensers of His holy mysteries. Pray for them, and beg of God that you may not be deprived of their sacred ministrations at the hour of your death.

Matrimony.

INSTRUCTION.

Matrimony a Sacrament.



MATRIMONY is a sacrament by which two Christian persons, male and female, if free from all impediment, are united in wedlock, and are strengthened by the grace of God to fulfil the duties of their state faithfully till death.

Matrimony is a sacrament, and not a mere worldly contract, as Luther and Calvin and their followers would have it to be. It contains the three requisites of a sacrament : 1. Divine institution ; 2. The outward sign ; 3. The inward grace.

God established matrimony in the Garden of Eden, and Christ afterwards raised it to the dignity of a sacrament.

After the Lord had created Adam He cast a deep sleep upon him, during which He took one of his ribs and built it up into a woman, whom he named Eve. For the Lord had said, " It is not good for man to be alone : let us make him a help like unto himself." Then He brought her to Adam to be his companion. And Adam said : " This is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh :



THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY.

wherefore a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be two in one flesh." And God blessed them, saying, "Increase and multiply and fill the earth, and subdue it" (Gen. i. and ii.).

Such was the first marriage, established by the Lord Himself. But matrimony did not remain always in its primitive condition or form. After mankind had fallen away by sin from God

the matrimonial union was not looked upon as so sacred a state till the Saviour came and rehabilitated it, and restored it to the condition in which God had made it, and ordered that matrimony should be a union of one man with one woman till death took one of them.

This was done when the Pharisees asked our divine Saviour the question, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?" He answered, "What did Moses command you?" They replied, "Moses permitted to write a bill of divorce, and to put her away." To this Jesus replied: "Because Moses by reason of the hardness of your heart permitted you to put away your wives;

but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery." Then to His disciples He said further: "Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another committeth adultery, and he that shall marry her that is put away committeth adultery" (Matt. xix.; Luke x.).

That Christ elevated matrimony to the dignity of a sacrament is clearly seen from the words of St. Paul the apostle to the Ephesians (v. 25), who, because it is an image of the union between Christ and His Church, calls it "a great sacrament." In all this there could be no meaning if the union between a married couple be not like to that existing between Christ and His Church, which is a supernatural union, and one sanctified by divine grace.

The same doctrine has ever been held and taught by the Church. The sacred writers all speak of matrimony not only as a holy and religious act, but they teach expressly that Christ sanctified it and attached a special grace to it; they even name it a sacrament. In the ancient rituals, both of the Eastern and Western churches, matrimony always takes its place among the seven sacraments.

The outward sign of matrimony and its matter is the expressed consent by which the bridal pair declare in the face of the Church, before their lawful pastor and two witnesses, their mutual consent to be married. The form of the sacrament consists of the words by which this consent to inseparable union is expressed, and the blessing by which the priest sanctifies the union.

Matrimony imparts the following graces: 1. It augments sanctifying grace. 2. It confers on the married couple the special grace to live together in truth and love and mutual happiness, and with God's blessing to bring up their children in a Christian manner, and to bear with patience the burdens always associated with the married state.

The Reception of the Sacrament.

The Christian, before entering the married state, should first ask God for light, and calmly consider whether he is called to this state, and is able to discharge the onerous duties connected with it; for all men are not called to the married state. Sickly persons, those unable to support a family, to conduct a house-

hold, and to train children, are evidently not called to matrimony, and if they enter upon it they act ignorantly, and render themselves and others unhappy.

Matrimony must be entered upon with upright and holy intentions. The candidate must above all have no intention but such as becomes a true Christian, namely, to avail himself of the state to further his hopes of salvation for himself and his companion. He should also resolve to bring up his offspring, if Heaven should be pleased to send him any, in the love and fear of the Lord, that they in their turn may do honor to God and save their souls and the souls of their children. Another good intention to have is that of joining to one's self a helpmate in resisting temptations and in practising virtues through the journey of life. Those who enter this holy state for the base purpose of gratifying passion are like the beasts of the field.

When making a choice of husband or wife one should not be influenced solely by worldly attractions, but rather by honest excellence and virtue. If the married state would be a happy one, both parties should profess the same religion, and as far as possible be of the same condition of life.

In making a selection, the counsel of parents and virtuous friends should not be altogether despised.

The engagement should not be made in a hurry, for it is binding in conscience, and it would be sinful not to fulfil it.

The bridal parties should prepare themselves carefully for the reception of the sacrament. *a.* The consent and blessing of father and mother should be obtained. *b.* During courtship, the parties should live carefully in the love and fear of God, praying earnestly, and approaching the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist. *c.* They should revive their knowledge of Christian truth, and endeavor to fit themselves for imparting instruction to their children.

IMPEDIMENTS WHICH RENDER MARRIAGE VOID BEFORE GOD.

a. Error. That is, when one has by mistake married one person instead of another, as when Laban gave Lea to Jacob instead of Rachel, whom he demanded.

b. Condition. When a person who is free contracts marriage with one who is a slave, not knowing at the time that the latter is a slave. This impediment no longer exists in this country, as slavery is abolished everywhere with us.

c. A solemn vow. A monk, a nun, a priest, cannot marry, be-

cause they have made a solemn vow ; their marriage is void and sacrilegious.

d. Relationship. Marriage between brother and sister would be incestuous and void, nor can marriage take place between cousins down to the fourth degree.

e. Crime. If a husband should kill his wife, or a wife her husband, with the intention of marrying another person, such a marriage would be void. If a man and a woman committed adultery with one another under the promise of marriage, such a marriage, if afterward ratified, is also void.

f. Violence and fear. If a person is forced to enter upon marriage by an unjust threat of a real evil or suffering, such a marriage is void.

g. Abduction. If a man abducts a girl from her parents, he cannot marry her until he has, according to the will of her parents or guardians, given her back her entire liberty.

h. Sacred orders. A subdeacon, a deacon, a priest, cannot marry.

i. An existing marriage. People already married cannot enter upon another marriage until the bond of marriage in which they stand is broken by death. If they do so nevertheless, this later union is not marriage, but adultery.

k. Secrecy. If a marriage is not ratified according to laws demanding publicity, it is void.

l. Public propriety. When a promise or engagement has taken place between two persons, they cannot marry the brother or sister of each other, without having received dispensation.

IMPEDIMENTS WHICH RENDER MARRIAGE ILLICIT AND PUNISHABLE, BUT NOT VOID.

a. Prohibition by the Church. The Church forbids her children to marry on fast-days, during Advent, and during Lent, because the joys of the wedding interfere with the holy mourning of penance. She forbids marriages in chapels outside of the parish church, to avoid all semblance of secrecy. She forbids marriage with persons of another religion, to prevent the dangers of alienation among the married themselves and their children.

b. Promise of marriage. One who is engaged to a person owes to that person a perfect arrangement and understanding before entering upon other obligations.

c. The simple vow of chastity, either not to marry or to go into a monastery. It would be a mortal sin to marry after hav-

ing entered upon such obligations towards God. Dispensation from such vows must be previously obtained from the spiritual superiors.

As marriage is a sacrament of the living, those who wish to receive it must be in the state of grace ; therefore it is necessary to confess and communicate before receiving the holy Sacrament of Marriage. Those who receive the holy sacrament when not in the state of grace are guilty of a mortal sin and unworthy of the divine blessings.

Therefore, if two persons wish to receive the holy Sacrament of Marriage they must declare before their pastor, or, by his permission or that of the bishop, before another pastor, and before at least two witnesses, that they take each other for husband and wife, whereupon the priest blesses their union.

Mixed Marriages.

By a mixed marriage is understood a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic.

At all times the Church, for the most important reasons, has looked unfavorably on mixed marriages, and disapproved them. From long experience she knows too well that the Catholic party is in great danger of losing the faith, or at least of becoming indifferent to it : that the religious training of the children is defective, and sometimes altogether neglected ; that the non-Catholic party not considering matrimony a sacrament nor an indissoluble bond, the union is not really what it ought to be, namely, an image of the intimate, sacred, and inseparable union of Christ with His Church ; finally, that the happiness of the lives of both parties depends much on community of belief.

When the Church does give assent to a mixed marriage she requires the following conditions : 1. That the Catholic party be allowed to practise his or her religion unmolested ; 2. That there be a hope of bringing about the conversion of the non-Catholic party through good example and honest conviction.

It is never allowed to contract a marriage if the religious training of the children is not guaranteed to be Catholic. Such a marriage would be an injury to the Catholic Church and a spiritual wrong to the children. Careless parents who seek such alliances for their children incur a grave responsibility before God.



A MARRIAGE AMONG THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.

The Duties of Married People towards Each Other.

1. Married people should dwell together in harmony, love, and honorable fidelity till death separate them. When devoid of love and fidelity the state of matrimony is a state of misery, an insupportable yoke, attended with hatred, strife, and contention. They must cultivate a heartfelt love, not merely a fleshly eagerness for each other, that thus their mutual attachment may be not a passing passion, but an enduring affection.

It is a most important duty to preserve between themselves a strict fidelity. This fidelity in marriage is of so tender a nature that each one is bound to avoid what would wear even the semblance of infidelity. By infidelity the vow made at the altar is violated; the bonds are strained, if not broken, that were riveted by the hands of the priest. Jealousy gnaws the mind of one or both of the married couple; and when the family peace is disturbed, the parents living in strife and contention, there can be no hope for a proper training of children, who will not love nor obey parents who do not respect themselves. The adulterer is condemned by God, and like David he draws down the wrath of God, and will be cast out if he give not himself up to discipline. Even in the Old Dispensation the Holy Spirit said: "He that is an adulterer, for the folly of his heart shall destroy his own soul: he gathereth to himself shame and dishonor, and his reproach shall not be blotted out" (Prov. vi. 32, 33).

The married couple should be patient towards each other, remembering to bear with one another's failings and shortcomings, avoiding strife and contention to gain the upper hand, and never having a secret one from the other.

2. The married couple should edify each other by the correctness of their conduct, bearing ever in mind that marriage is not only for this life, but also for the life to come; and that as they stood at the foot of the altar blameless, so are they expected to stand before the judgment-seat of the sinless Judge. They must endeavor to sanctify each other, and with mild and gentle words seek to remedy each other's faults, and to encourage each other in the practice of pious exercises. A wise man has said of married couples that it is a rare occurrence for one to go to heaven and the other to hell; that, as a rule, both are either lost or saved.

Above all things, they should do nothing to shock modesty, never transgress the rules of decency, and even in their lawful

relations practise continency in penitential times, like Sara and Tobias, who said to each other : "Have mercy on us, O Lord, and let us grow old both together in health" (Tob. viii. 10).

3. The married couple should help each other. The husband is in duty bound to support his wife, and cherish her in health and sickness. He should give her not only the necessities of life, but all else suited to her condition and station in life. The wife should obey her husband, unless he demand what is unlawful, when she should not obey at all. She must not desert him if misfortune overtake him, but must accompany him to a foreign land if he require her to do so. On the other hand, the husband must not make unreasonable demands, but order all things wisely, and even consult his wife before undertaking anything of importance, and pay due regard to her counsels. The wife's obedience should be cheerfully granted ; as the Church is subject to Christ, her founder, so should the wife be to her husband. The husband's ruling should be pleasant and loving, for St. Paul says : "As the Church is subject to Christ, so also let the wives be to their husbands in all things" (Eph. v. 24).

The Marriage Ceremonies.

The bridal pair, having complied with the preliminary requirements, present themselves before the altar, and in presence of their pastor and two witnesses declare that they take one another as husband and wife.

A priest other than the pastor can officiate at this sacrament only when he has the permission of the pastor or bishop.

The bridal pair emphasize their consent by giving each other their right hand.

The priest, while sprinkling them with holy water, confirms their union in these words : "I join you in matrimony in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." The priest then blesses the wedding-ring, which is a symbol of their indissoluble union and the love and fidelity of the married pair.

The married couple then receive the special and solemn matrimonial benediction, which is given during the nuptial Mass, immediately after the Pater Noster.



REFLECTION.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

HOUSE and riches are given by parents : but a prudent wife is properly from the Lord" (Prov. xix. 14). "Marry thy daughter well, and thou shalt do a great work, and give her to a wise man" (Ecclus. vii. 27). "Then the angel Raphael said to Tobias : Hear me, and I will show thee who they are over whom the devil can prevail. For they who in such manner receive matrimony as to shut out God from themselves and from their mind, and to give themselves to their lust, as the horse and mule, which have not understanding, over them the devil hath power" (Tob. vi. 16). "And when all had said, Amen, they went to the feast : but the marriage-feast they celebrated also with the fear of the Lord" (Tob. ix. 12). Let marriage be "honorable in all, and the bed undefiled. For fornicators and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. xiii. 4). "To them that are married, not I, but the Lord commandeth, that the wife depart not from her husband. And if she depart, that she remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband. And let not the husband put away his wife" (I. Cor. vii. 10, 11). "Let every one of you in particular love his wife as himself" (Eph. v. 33). "Be not jealous over the wife of thy bosom, lest she show in thy regard the malice of a wicked lesson" (Ecclus. ix. 1). "Take heed to keep thyself, my son, from all fornication, and beside thy wife never endure to know a crime" (Tob. iv. 13). "From all appearance of evil refrain yourselves" (I. Thess. v. 22). "If a man have not care of his own, and especially of those of his house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I. Tim. v. 8). "Let women be subject to their husbands as to the Lord" (Eph. v. 22).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"It is proper and becoming that bride and bridegroom, by the decision and consent of the bishop, contract marriage, that the marriage may be performed according to the will of the Lord, and not according to the lust of the senses" (St. Ignatius of Antioch). "It is becoming that we make serious reflections on the mystery of matrimony" (St. Irenæus). "Like everything else, Christ restored matrimony to its original perfection, making that which was fleshly, spiritual, so that Christian marriage is a

figure that represents His union with the Church" (Tertullian). "He who has a wife shall seek nothing beyond her, but be content with her alone, to tame his flesh and preserve the sacrament of indissoluble matrimony" (Lactantius). "To believing married people matrimony should commend not only fruitfulness in the generation of children, or chastity whose bond is fidelity, but rather the dignity of a sacrament. Hence the Apostle says, 'Love your wives as Christ loveth the Church.' All persons and nations find their advantage therein by means of generation and truly chaste fidelity; the people of God have, moreover, the holiness of the sacrament, which is of more worth than maternal fruitfulness" (St. Augustine). "The undoing of the blessing which the priest imparts to the believers on entering matrimony is nothing less than sacrilege" (Pope Sergius).

COMPARISONS.

Matrimony is a tree in God's garden, on which, according to the decree of the Creator, good children should grow like fruit.

If human society in a well-ordered condition resembles a building, matrimony is the foundation of the building, which has its strength in morality, order, and purity.

As a tree draws its nourishment from the root, so does human society derive its strength from marriage. If the root is tainted, the tree is tainted; if the root absorbs poisoned sap, poisoned fruits are produced. Just so will the state be destroyed if it taint the sanctity and moral character of matrimony.

EXAMPLES.

Proper Preparation for Marriage.

The following history shows us the manner of making preparation for the worthy reception of the Sacrament of Matrimony. Some few years ago a young physician of Paris was introduced by a friend to a family where there was a very virtuous daughter. Soon this amiable young woman was betrothed to the young doctor, whose good qualities were everywhere recognized. Some ten days before the marriage ceremony the young man called alone on the mother of his betrothed, and begged leave to hold some conversation with her daughter Emily. "That is impossible," replied the mother kindly, "for my daughter has been unwell for a couple of days, and needs rest." He said: "It is rather hard that I cannot see Emily for a moment; indeed I have not had the pleasure of her company except three or four times

in society; to this very hour I have not had a chance to express to her my feelings or to know hers."—"Your importunity touches me; but my daughter cannot be seen."—"I have something very important to tell her."—"Well, I will call her if you insist, and you may speak to her in my presence; my daughter has never spoken to a man alone."—"But I am her future husband."—"After marriage my daughter will be no longer under my care; until then I must fulfil all the duties of a Christian and prudent mother in regard to her."—"Oh," exclaimed the physician, "I suppose I must confide my intention to you. Educated by religious parents, I have always remained faithful to the holy religion that prescribes your present action to you. The indifference which unfortunately is found among men of my avocation might cause you distrust, but I count it a glory and an honor to live up to the practices of our faith in every point; the better I know them, the greater and the more venerable they appear to me. When I insisted so strongly upon an interview with your daughter, I did so only that I might test her sentiments in this regard, and to ask her, by a general confession, to prepare herself, that with the marriage blessing she might receive also all the gifts of grace connected with it." At these words the mother could not keep back her tears; she fell on the neck of the virtuous physician, and, pressing him to her heart, said: "Well, my son, we will all communicate together; go to your betrothed and tell her that I have called you my son. Your sentiments vouch to me your own happiness and that of my daughter."

The virtuous physician did more. During a whole week holy Mass was celebrated, in order to bring down the entire fulness of the heavenly blessings. But the most beautiful, the most touching, scene on the wedding-day was to see the two betrothed come to the holy table, he accompanied by his venerable parents weeping, she with her mother and grandmother, all of whom, with their worthy children, received Communion out of the hands of the officiating priest. Oh, if all marriage unions resembled this one, how happy would married life be, and how happy all human society!

A Happy Wedding-day.

There was once a grand marriage in a certain country village, the son of the local judge having wedded the daughter of a neighboring wealthy farmer. On their return from the church the bride, who had a tender and generous heart, saw a young

peasant-girl coming out of a poor cabin carrying a pot and a small shovel, and on inquiry it appeared that she lived with her poor, aged mother, and both subsisted on alms. When the bride reached her new home, saw the splendid wedding-breakfast prepared by her husband, she said to him : "How happy we ought to be amid the abundance given to us by the Almighty God. Let us show our gratitude by assisting the poor widow and her daughter, whose desolate home we have just passed." "Well said, my dearest wife ; I now love you more than ever," said the delighted husband. Then they went forth together, laden with the best on the table for the poor widow and her daughter, for whom they ever afterwards provided.

How touching it was for these young people to think of performing a work of mercy at a time when such is usually the last thing thought of ! They remembered the words of the Apostle : "Give every one as he hath determined in his heart, not with sadness, or of necessity : for God loveth a cheerful giver."

A Thoughtless Marriage Punished.

A young couple, after keeping forbidden company, got married against the will of their parents. Although before the ceremony they had been inseparable, and seemed unable to live apart, yet their affection was shallow and short-lived. Quarrels became an every-day affair, till at last the unhappy woman was about to die from the cruel treatment she had been subjected to by her heartless husband. Before she died she said to her daughter : "My child, you see in what condition I am ; you know how inhumanly your father has treated me. I have endured everything in a spirit of penance, considering it all a well-deserved punishment for my disobedience and the vexation I caused my parents when I married against their will. Let this be a warning to you to use more sense than I did. I leave you to the care of your loving aunt, who will watch over your education. Undertake nothing without her counsel, and take care not to be guided by your vanity. Keep God before your eyes in fear. Be humble and chaste. Avoid intimacy with young men, for this was the rock on which my happiness was wrecked. I am sorry for you, my daughter. Soon you will have no mother ; but I commend you into the hands of the ever-blessed Virgin ; she will be your mother, and protect you. Never forget the reverence which you owe to your father. He is not able to instruct you, to be sure, but you must obey him and pray to the

Lord for his conversion. For his harsh conduct towards me I forgive him for Jesus' sake."

She died with a perfect acceptance of the Lord's ordinances, and her daughter profited so well by the wholesome exhortations of her dying mother, that she lived very retired, following the advice of her aunt, and was very happily married.

Her father grieved so violently over the death of his wife, the result of his own cruel treatment, that he fell ill, and within a few days died in despair.

St. Monica's Married Life.

St. Augustine thus confesses before God about his mother Monica: "Having grown up pious and gentle, and made subject to her parents by Thee more than they made her subject to Thee, she was given in marriage to a man whom she served as her master. She labored to win him to Thee by her good example, and by the admirable qualities with which Thou didst enrich her, and make her worthy of the esteem and admiration of her husband. His infidelities she bore without a word of reproach; for she awaited Thy mercy in his behalf, that through faith in Thee he might become chaste. Although a kind man, he was violent in his passion. She knew enough not to oppose an angry man either by word or deed. But when his anger abated and he was calm, she would avail herself of such opportunity to gently reprove him for his misconduct.

"When other women, who had gentler husbands, sometimes showed in their persons traces of hard abuse, and would indulge in denunciation of their husbands' cruelty, she would stop their tongues and kindly admonish them to bear the trials of their married life. When they would express their wonder that she had no contention with her husband Patricius, and would ask for an explanation, she would teach them in words of wisdom, which I still remember. Such women as hearkened to her advice would soon learn to live in peace, while those who disregarded her counsels were always cruelly treated by their husbands. Even her mother-in-law, who at first was violently opposed to my mother, was gradually won over so far to her side as to live in the most perfect peace and happiness with her.

"This other great blessing, my God and my Mercy, didst Thou bestow on Thy servant who bore me, namely, to conduct herself so agreeably amid strife and contention as never to utter an expression that was not calculated to bring about peace and lasting



reconciliation. Perhaps I would not sufficiently appreciate this great gift of my mother's did I not know from sad experience that there are many persons who, instead of quelling disturbances, multiply and intensify them by carrying the sayings of enemies to one another, and often adding bitter words that were never uttered.

"Finally, she converted to Thee her husband, my father, and had nothing to complain of him, when he believed, of those things which she had to bear when he was an unbeliever. She was, moreover, a servant to Thy servants. Who among them knew her and did not praise, love, and respect her in Thee? Every one discovered Thy presence in her heart, for the fruits of her holy life showed it forth. She was a faithful wife to her husband, dutifully she revered her parents, she managed her household devotedly, and everywhere gave testimony of good works. She trained up her sons, and suffered again the pains of maternity when she saw them straying from Thy paths. Finally, O Lord, Thou Who permittest me to speak of Thy handmaid, when before her death we were again united to her, and had received the grace of Baptism, she renewed her cares as if she had borne us over again, or as if she were herself our child."

Conjugal Love in Adversity.

John Wasa, Duke of Finland, for refusing to recognize the authority of his brother Erich, King of Sweden, was cast into prison, and even condemned to death. The king commuted the sentence to imprisonment for life in the castle at Gripsholm. The prisoner's wife Catharine hastened to the king and begged to share her husband's confinement. "Are you aware, madam," said the king, "that your husband is in total darkness, and shall never again see the light of day?" "I know that," she replied. Then the king added, "Do you know that he is no longer a prince, but a degraded traitor?" "I know that too," said the brave woman. "But be he prince or traitor, he is my husband, and will remain so till death take one of us." Her request was granted, and daily she visited her imprisoned husband during eleven years. When Erich was dying he was taken from his dungeon and placed on the throne.

This certainly was heroic self-sacrifice, such as is possible to love alone.

In a village twenty miles from Altona there lived a poor cobbler whose wife lost her sight during a severe illness. Poor

people, especially in the country, generally hesitate a long time before calling in a regular physician, as they dread the expense. But this poor man spent everything to restore his wife's sight. At the expiration of two or three years, having in the mean time tried everything in vain, he heard of an able oculist at Altona. Without delay and in spite of the severe weather he started out to try this last resource, leading his blind wife over twenty miles of road. The physician promised to heal her, but demanded twenty-five dollars for the treatment. This was a large sum for the cobbler ; but, nothing daunted, he returned home alone, and sold his only cow, his sole property and hitherto the support of the family, took the money to the physician, and in a few weeks had the happiness of seeing his wife completely cured.

Conjugal Fidelity.

The Goths, under the leadership of Alaric, besieged and captured the city of Rome in the year 410. A young Christian wife fell into the hands of a ruthless barbarian, who, holding his sword above her head, threatened to take her life if she did not submit to his wicked caresses. Fearless of the death of the body, she bowed her head and bade him strike. At once the wicked heart of the soldier underwent a change, and he became her protector against the assaults of other soldiers. Conducting her into the church of St. Peter, he sent for her husband and placed her safely in his hands.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION.

One of the most solemn and important events in human life is the entering of the holy bonds of matrimony. The step often decides the temporal and eternal fate of the married persons. Nor is it confined to them alone, for it influences the destinies of their children, and their children's children, unto all ages. Hence it belongs solely to the Church to solemnize and bless the marriage ceremony, and bring down the grace of Heaven on the married couple, who thus are enabled to meet bravely those difficulties in married life which often render their condition one of disappointment and hardship. Those who would make marriage a mere civil contract strike a deadly blow at the very life-spring of society. Matrimony is a sacrament ; but only in Christ, says St. Paul. Whoever would separate matrimony from Christ deprives it of every blessing, because depriving it of God's grace. It is only in the ring blessed by the prayers of the Church that is found the symbol of enduring Christian love. It is only in the

covenant authorized by the stole of the priest that strength and perseverance in virtue are to be found. It is only such persons as

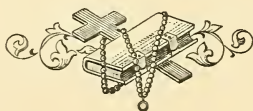


THE HOLY FAMILY.

are thus married in the Church that can transmit to their children the precious legacy of the true faith, and a life according to God's own heart. Such married persons shall receive an everlasting reward for all the souls who through them shall come into the world.

If, Christian reader, you are about to enter the holy state of matrimony, seek counsel from God, and frequently consult your spiritual director. Test your own heart, whether you possess the necessary qualities of spirit and body to do your share in founding a happy state of matrimony. In choosing your

companion for life, do not principally or exclusively look at the worldly things, such as riches, beauty, etc.; they pass away. Rather look for a heart acceptable to God. Enter upon the union in the innocence of your heart and with God. Sin and vice which you take with you into matrimony are the poisoned wells from which springs death to happiness in married life. A beginning with God brings a living with God, followed in due time by a death and a resurrection in and with God. The anniversary of your union you should celebrate every year by Holy Communion, which will support you and strengthen you in your visitations.



The Sacramentals.

The Sacramentals in General.

INSTRUCTION.

Meaning of Sacramentals.



BESIDES those means of grace ordained by God Himself, namely, the sacraments, the Church has established other lesser blessings, dedications, and ceremonies for the sanctification of the faithful.

These means of grace are called sacramentals, because they resemble the sacraments in having, or being in themselves, outward signs and words, and they also confer internal supernatural power or grace.

Difference between the Sacraments and the Sacramentals.

The seven sacraments and the sacramentals differ from each other essentially, as well with regard to institution or ordinance as with regard to the effects of grace.

1. The sacraments were ordained by God Himself, and produce their effects through the power that God has infused into them. The sacramentals, on the other hand, were established by the Church, and produce their effects through the prayers and blessings of the Church.

2. The sacraments operate infallibly, if we do not interpose some hindrance. In the case of the sacramentals the effect is produced chiefly through the good dispositions of him who makes use of them.

3. The sacraments produce their sanctifying effects directly. The sacramentals only contribute thereto by imparting secondary graces, and they protect us from evils.

4. The sacraments are generally necessary and commanded by God. The sacramentals are merely commended by the Church as useful and salutary.

Effects of the Sacramentals.

The effects of the sacramentals are as follows : They free us from spiritual, bodily, and temporal evils, and bring us spiritual, bodily, and temporal advantages. They heal suffering and wrong, dispel trouble of mind, moderate the passions, temper temptations, save us from barrenness, drought, storms, and devilish plagues, and send us growth, fruitfulness, and bodily strength.

The Author of the Sacramentals.

It is self-evident that no one but God can bestow these favors on our souls and bodies. God grants them through Our Lord Jesus Christ, and on His account.

The Saviour told His apostles plainly that if they had faith they could perform still greater miracles. Before His Ascension into heaven He said : " These signs shall follow them that believe : In My name they shall cast out devils : they shall speak with new tongues : they shall take up serpents : and if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them : they shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall recover " (Mark xvi. 17, 18).

Now, in order to strengthen the confidence of Christians, the Church of God has directed that these graces be conferred under certain symbols or signs. She has attached certain fixed signs to the graces promised by God, and unites her prayers with these signs, so that the sacramentals have been really established by Christ through His holy Church.

The Church, then, has only appointed the outward signs and ceremonies that are to accompany the prayers which she offers up for the purpose of obtaining the graces which Christ has promised. This she has done because she has the authority to bless, to dedicate, and to exorcise. And we should not doubt but that such graces are imparted to us ; for the prayer of the Church has a special power, since it is united to the prayer of Christ and His saints.

Sacramentals in the Old Law.

Such effective outward signs were found in the Old Testament. Thus God imparted to Aaron's staff the force of working miracles, to the confusion of Pharaoh and his magicians (Ex. vii. 9). Then, God did not Himself, at the prayer of Moses, heal those who were bitten by the fiery serpents, but He ordered a brazen serpent to be set up, and those who were bitten were cured merely by

looking at it (Num. xxi. 9). God imparted curative powers to the ashes of the red cow (Num. xix. 9). When Saul, on account of his sins, was rejected by the Lord, Samuel, at God's request, anointed David,



SAMUEL ANOINTING DAVID.

“and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward” (I. Kings xvi. 13).

The New Dispensation, with its sacramentals, is, then, nothing else than the completion of the Old Covenant.

Division of the Sacramentals.

They are divided as follows :

- a.* The Dedications.
- b.* The Exorcisms.
- c.* The Blessings.
- d.* Usages in the Church.

The Sacramentals in Detail.

Dedications.

Ecclesiastical Dedications.



Y dedications are understood those prayers and ceremonies of the Church by which persons or things are especially set apart for God's service.

The chief of these are :

- a.* The dedication of the church itself and of all that belongs to its internal furnishing.
- b.* The blessing of objects used in God's service.
- c.* The blessing or dedication of ecclesiastical persons.

CHURCH DEDICATION.

By church dedication is understood that solemn proceeding by which an edifice is transformed into a temple of God.

This dedication is effected either by a simple blessing, which may be given even by a priest with the permission of the bishop, or by consecration proper, which can be performed by a bishop only.

The custom of dedicating churches can be traced back to the first ages of Christianity, and it has its precedent in the dedication of Solomon's Temple under the Old Law.

Holy Scripture relates to us with what pomp and magnificence King Solomon and the whole people of Israel dedicated their Temple at Jerusalem : "And the king, and all Israel with him, offered victims before the Lord. And Solomon slew victims of peace-offerings, which he sacrificed to the Lord, two and twenty thousand oxen, and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep : so the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the Temple of the Lord" (III. Kings viii. 62, 63). Every year afterwards the Hebrews observed a solemn festival in commemoration of this important event.

Far holier than the Jewish Temple are the Catholic churches ; for in them dwelleth God, not as a symbol, but truly, really, and substantially in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Mainly on this account, the Christians began to dedicate their places of worship with great reverence and solemnity as soon as they were permitted to erect their own temples, after the cessation of the

great persecutions. The rejoicings of the Christians were great on such occasions. The neighboring bishops assembled to take part in the festivities, and contributed to the magnificence of the occasion, either by the learned and eloquent sermons they preached to the assembled people, or by the grandeur amid which they celebrated the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

The consecration of a church proceeds as follows :

a. The day before the ceremony, the bishop and the clergy and congregation belonging to the church observe a strict fast, in order to fit themselves for a most holy work. Into the temple of the Lord we should not enter unless animated by a true spirit of penance.

b. In the altars are placed relics of saints and grains of incense. These, on the evening previous, are deposited in a sealed casket and

placed in a tent before the church, where they remain for the night, with lights burning near them. By this is signified the manner in which the Holy of Holies in the Old Law was kept in a tabernacle prior to the erection of the Temple.



CONSECRATING THE ALTAR.

c. On the morning of the consecration, the bishop goes in procession three times around the exterior of the empty church, sprinkling the walls with holy water. Every time that he approaches the main door, he strikes it with his crosier, and recites the words of the Psalmist : " Lift up your gates, O ye princes : and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates : and the King of Glory shall enter in " (Ps. xxiii. 7).

The deacon, who is now inside, answers, in words of the same psalm, "Who is this King of Glory?" and the bishop continues: "The Lord Who is strong and mighty: the Lord mighty in battle" (verse 8).

At the end of the third circuit, the bishop makes the sign of the cross, with the foot of his crosier, on the threshold, and says: "Behold the sign of the cross! Let all evil spirits depart." Then the door is opened, and the bishop, with his attendants, enters, saying, "Peace be to this house."

d. Then the Holy Ghost and the intercession of the saints are invoked, that the favor of God may come down on this sacred work.

e. The bishop, with the foot of his crosier, inscribes the Greek and Latin alphabets in the two shafts of a cross that has been made with ashes on the floor. The Church of God, of which the church edifice is a figure and an epitome, is a union of all languages and nations.

f. Then the Gregorian water is blessed; that is, water mingled with salt, ashes, and wine. The water symbolizes human nature, the wine divine nature, the ashes mortality, and the salt incorruptible immortality. With this water the walls and floor are sprinkled in the form of a cross; some of it is scattered towards the four points of the compass, and the remainder is spilled at the foot of the altar. Mortal man is united by the sacraments with his Redeemer unto immortality.

g. With his crosier the bishop signs the main door, on top and bottom, with the sign of the cross. The whole building is to be placed under the protection of Christ crucified.

h. The relics are borne in solemn procession about the church outside, then into it, and to the altar, where they are deposited in an opening emblematic of a tomb, which is then closed by the bishop with cement moistened with Gregorian water. This signifies the solemn procession of saints after the Lamb, to Whom they are joined, making one body in Christ.

i. On the altar there are three chiselled crosses which the bishop then anoints. These represent the five wounds of Christ, Who was once offered on the altar of the cross.

k. On the walls there are twelve figures of the cross inscribed. These are anointed by the bishop, and a candle is left burning before each one. The Church is founded on the twelve apostles, who received the unction of the Holy Spirit and carried the light of faith to all parts of the world.

l. The altar is now incensed. It represents Christ, while incense is the symbol of prayer. Jesus Christ deserves praise and worship, which the faithful should bring to Him.

m. Now five crosses of incense and five of wax are burned. Fervent prayer and burning charity are the gifts of sacrifice due to the Lord from all the faithful.

Thus a church dedication is a reminder that we ourselves are living temples of God and destined one day to enter into the eternal temple of heaven.

THE BLESSING OF BELLS AND OF CHURCH ARTICLES.

Bells have a deep significance in the Church. The first duty of a bell is to proclaim the praises of God. Hence at the elevation of the host in Mass, at the passing of the Viaticum to the sick, and on like occasions, the bell rings to notify the people that they may adore Our Lord in the Blessed Eucharist. Secondly, bells serve to summon the clergy and the laity to the celebration of Mass and other devotions. Thirdly, when they are rung during a calamity, at a funeral, or on commemorative anniversaries, they warn us to pray for the dead. Fourthly, by their influence all unhealthiness, storms, and bad weather are averted from Christians. Fifthly and finally, they serve to announce, and also to add to the solemnity of, the feasts and fasts of God's Church.

The object of bells being so sacred and noble, they are solemnly blessed by the Church before they are used.

In some places the ceremony of blessing a bell is called a baptism, for the reason that there are ablutions in it, that a name is given to the bell, and that sponsors are sometimes appointed, though they are only witnesses. The blessing of a bell proceeds as follows :

a. Salt and water are blessed, and a prayer is offered to God that when the bell rings the power of the evil spirit, all thunder, lightning, storms, and foul weather may vanish, while, on the other hand, devotion may be increased in the hearts of the faithful.

b. The bell is then washed inside and outside with holy water, and marked with blessed oil in the form of a cross, by which ceremonies it is besought that all unwholesomeness, whether natural or diabolical, may vanish before these signs.

c. The bell is signed with four crosses of chrism on the inside and seven crosses of holy oil on the outside. The bell is

intended to proclaim everywhere the glory of Christ crucified, and to indicate to the faithful the dispensing of the seven sacraments. The faithful themselves should be living bells, with God's praises on their tongues.

d. The censer is placed under the bell, which is in this way incensed. Our prayers should ascend to God like the fragrant fumes of incense.

e. Finally is read the gospel narrating the visit of Our Lord to the house of Lazarus, where Mary sat at His feet while Martha was busy with much serving. Like Mary, we should assist at God's service with all fervor and zeal, and hearken eagerly to His sacred word.

Church articles, vestments, and draperies, that is, the utensils devoted to divine service, such as chalices, remonstrances, and others, also altar-cloths and the like, are blessed by the Church, because they are to be used on and about the altar, and often come in contact with the Blessed Sacrament.

THE DEDICATION OF CEMETERIES.

Even the heathens considered the resting-place of the dead sacred and inviolable, and with them it was a heinous offence to disturb the repose of the dead or to dishonor a place of burial. How much more, then, should the Church of God consider it necessary to solemnly bless the resting-place of her departed members, believing as she does that there the unsouled bodies of men, which were once the temples of the Holy Ghost, are reposing under the shadow of the cross, and like the sowed seed of the wheat are buried in God's acre, whence they are one day to come forth to a glorious resurrection.

The dedication of a cemetery proceeds thus :

In the middle of the graveyard a cross is erected, on which three wax candles are set, though not lighted in the beginning, in order to show that eternal light is to come to us only through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. The gospel about the tares among the wheat is read, for the cemetery is the veritable field from which all of us will be one day gathered up, either to be cast into never-ending fire or to be placed in the granary of heaven. Then the Litany of the Saints is recited or chanted, to obtain the powerful intercession of these friends of God in behalf of all. Finally the cemetery is sprinkled in every part with holy water.

FOR THE CELEBRATION OF DIVINE SERVICE

the following articles are blessed :

1. Holy water. 2. Candles. 3. Ashes. 4. Palms. 5. The paschal candle. 6. The holy oils. 7. Incense.

Holy Water.

Among the sacramentals of the Church holy water occupies a prominent place, for it is used by the Church herself in nearly all her blessings, and is recommended for use among the laity both in the Church and out of it. Hence she blesses holy water every Sunday. This blessing is very ancient, for St. Jerome makes mention of it. Indeed, it was foreshadowed under the Old Dispensation. Once when the water in and around the city of Jericho had become very unwholesome, some of the citizens came to the prophet Eliseus and asked him for help in their trouble. He answered : “ ‘Bring me a new vessel, and put salt into it.’

And when they had brought it, he went out to the spring of the waters, and cast the salt into it, and said : ‘Thus saith the Lord : I have healed these waters, and there shall



BLESSING WATER.

be no more in them death or barrenness.’ And the waters were healed unto this day ” (IV. Kings ii. 20-22).

The chief blessings and effects of holy water when used piously and with faith, as indicated in the prayers of the blessing, are chiefly the following :

1. The cleansing of venial sins. Hence the people are sprinkled with it before Mass, to signify that they should appear pure

and holy in the presence of God, and when about to pray to Him. We also sprinkle ourselves and the graves of our friends for the same purpose, namely, the cleansing of venial sins.

2. Holy water serves to expel evil spirits and diseases of the body.

Blessed Candles.

Of this blessing, too, we have indications in the Old Testament. God Himself ordered a golden candlestick with seven lights to be set up in the tabernacle; and Solomon placed several, made of the finest gold, in the Temple. How much more, then, it behooves us to honor by the use of lights the presence of Our Lord in the Eucharist, at Mass, and in other solemnities of the Church!

Besides all this, blessed candles when burning have a special significance for ourselves. In the first place, they remind us that we ought to acquire the three divine virtues: faith which illuminates, hope which warms, and charity which inflames; for the candle gives light, warmth, and comfort. Furthermore, they suggest to us Christian love of neighbor; for as the burning taper, while warming us to charity, wastes itself, so too should we enlighten our fellow-men by our good works, and at the same time spend ourselves by our deeds of charity and works of neighborly love for others. As the flame of the candle, no matter how we hold it, always burns upward, so too should all our wishes and efforts be directed from the lower to the higher. Our thoughts should be in heaven. Finally, a burning taper reminds us of the uncertainty and fleetness of human life; for when a candle is lighted it begins to waste, and steadily consumes itself, bearing a lively resemblance to human life: at the moment of our birth we began to die, and our life is gradually wasting away amid the din and struggle of life's battle.

Candles are blessed mostly on the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin, or Candlemas Day, that we may be reminded that Christ is the Light for the enlightenment of the Gentiles, and that we should be children of light.

On that day there is a procession with lighted candles, to place more vividly before our memories the procession of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, together with holy Simeon and devout Anna, to the altar in the Temple, and to honor Mary who gave to us the Light of the world.

Blessed candles are used at Baptism and at the death-bed.

At Baptism the priest places a blessed candle in the hand of the person baptized, to signify to him that he has been called from darkness to light ; which Light, Who is Jesus Christ, he should now follow, and become himself a light kindled at the Sun of justice, Jesus Christ, and allow his light to shine in a faith enlivened by good works.

A lighted candle is placed in the hand of a dying Christian, that Jesus Christ, the Light of the world, may enlighten the departing Christian on his journey through the dark night of death, and lead him to the joyous light of everlasting life.

Candles are also blessed on the festival of St. Blase, bishop and martyr.

Blessing of the Ashes.

Ashes represent the outward destruction of the material world, and show the endless decomposition of all bodies when detached from the source of organization and life. They are, therefore, the symbol of earthly decay and death, and remind us forcibly of the disorganization of bodily life ; in other words, of death itself. But death is the wages of sin, and at the same time the symbol of sin's penalties, and as such is calculated to warn us sternly that we should endeavor to regain true life by a return to God over the path of sincere repentance.

In the Old Testament, too, ashes served the purpose of a sign of penance, grief, humility, and self-denial. Thus, for example, the Ninivites did penance in sack-cloth and ashes. At the preaching of the prophet Jonas, the king of Ninive came down from his throne, put on a penitential garment, and covered his head with ashes (Jonas iii. 6). Judith put on a similar garb, covered herself with ashes, threw herself before God, and besought His blessing on her undertaking (Jud. ix. 1). When Mardochai heard of the attempt on the lives of all the Jews in Persia, he rent his garments, put on sack-cloth, and strewed ashes on his head. And many used sack-cloth and ashes for their bed (Esth. iv. 1-3).

The Church blesses ashes and distributes them on the heads of the faithful on Ash Wednesday. Thus she is pleased, by this reminder of approaching and certain death, to incite us to penance, and to awake within us a spirit of humility and self-abasement, without which no penance can be real and pleasing to God. Hence the priest says, while giving the ashes, "Remember, man, thou art but dust, and into dust thou shalt return."

The ashes used on Ash Wednesday have been made by burning the palm branches blessed on the Palm Sunday of the foregoing year, and are blessed immediately before the Mass of Ash Wednesday.

The Blessing of the Palms.

On Palm Sunday the Church blesses branches of palm, to remind us of the solemn entry of our divine Saviour into Jerusalem, when the people strewed His way with green boughs. Then, as palm is the emblem of victory, the Church makes use



BLESSING PALMS.

of it to direct our attention to the victory won by Christ over sin, death, and hell. She prays, too, that all those who carry this blessed palm with pious intention may be blessed in body and soul, grow

green in the service of God, and bloom with good works, like the branches of a fruitful tree; and that after we have won the final victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil, we may enter with Christ into the heavenly Jerusalem. Another end for which she prays is that these branches may afford to her children protection against the assaults of the devil, and shelter their homes and fields against storms and unfavorable weather.

The Blessing of the Paschal Candle.

The paschal or Easter candle represents the risen Christ, and also the pillar of fire in the desert. For as in olden time this fiery pillar led the children of Israel out of Egyptian bondage,

so did Christ, the Risen One, rescue us from the slavery of Satan.

The paschal candle is blessed on Holy Saturday with solemn and impressive ceremonies. It should be made of bleached wax, in order to symbolize properly the pure and holy body of Christ, which proceeded from the immaculate bosom of the Blessed Virgin. To the candle are attached in five separate openings, in the form of a cross, five grains of incense, which have been blessed that same morning. These five openings represent the five wound-marks of Christ which He retained after His resurrection, and which we shall all look upon on the day of judgment, either to our joy or to our sorrow. The incense grains represent the spices and ointments with which Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea embalmed the body of Jesus.

As this Easter candle is an emblem of the risen Saviour, it stands burning on the gospel side of the altar all through Eastertide. After the gospel at High Mass on Ascension Thursday it is extinguished and carried away, in memory of Christ's departure from the earth, when He ascended from Mount Olivet.

The Blessing of the Holy Oils.

By the holy oils we mean the three oils blessed by the bishop on Holy Thursday—the chrism, the oil of catechumens, and the oil for the sick.

The blessing takes place during the pontifical Mass, with many prayers and ceremonies. The bishop is attended by twelve priests, all in white vestments, to represent the twelve apostles who were with Our Saviour on the eve of His passion and death. Then there are seven deacons and seven sub-deacons in white dalmatics and tunics, some of whom carry the holy oils.

Incense.

The Church blesses incense, and makes use of it, because it is a sign of adoration and of prayer, which should ascend to God in heaven like a sweet odor.

Incense is a sign of adoration ; hence even the pagans burnt it in honor of their false gods. God Himself, in the Old Law, ordered incense to be used in the public service, and in the Temple at Jerusalem there was an altar known as the altar of incense.

It is also a sign of prayer. Hence David prayed : " Let my prayer be directed as incense in Thy sight " (Ps. cxl. 2).

DEDICATION OF PERSONS.

In treating the Sacrament of Holy Orders we have seen how solemnly the Church blesses those who dedicate themselves to her divine service. We will allude to only three kinds of dedication—1. The inauguration of the Pope ; 2. The consecration of abbots and abbesses, and the blessing of the different members of the Church Orders of both sexes ; 3. The coronation of kings and emperors.

For a new Pope there is a special ceremony of inauguration, intended to sanctify and bless his important station, and to obtain for him special graces, enabling him to exercise his sublime office and duties in governing and guiding God's kingdom on earth.

The dedication, or, what is the same, the inauguration and coronation of the Pope, is done as follows : The newly elected pontiff is borne in solemn procession to the place called the Confession of St. Peter, where in early days thousands of Christians were martyred, and where at the present day repose the relics of the twin apostles St. Peter and St. Paul. Here several prayers are pronounced by bishops over the newly-elected Pope, imploring for him the fulness of heavenly benediction and strength. The pallium is placed upon his shoulders, with the words : "Receive the pallium, the plenitude of the papal office, to the honor of the Almighty God, of the ever-blessed Virgin Mary, of the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and of the holy Roman Church." During the solemn Mass celebrated by the new Pope the epistle and gospel are chanted in the Latin and Greek languages, to signify that the Pope is the chief pastor of all Christendom. At the coronation he is crowned with the triple crown called the tiara, with the words : "Receive the tiara adorned with three crowns, and know that thou art the father of princes and kings, the ruler of the universe, and the vicar of Jesus Christ our Saviour."

To abbots and abbesses also, as well as to members of religious Orders of both sexes, the Church imparts a special benediction, inasmuch as their calling and office are in close union with the service of God.

The blessing or consecration of abbots is merely a solemn induction into office, by virtue of which they in no way cease to belong to the order of priests. Their using a crosier, ring, and mitre is but an honorary privilege, granted because of their personal merits or because of the good done by their community.

Abbesses receive their own peculiar blessing, and in some convents they carry crosiers as a sign of honorable distinction.

Lastly, kings and emperors are solemnly inducted by the Church into their office and its duties ; for, as rulers of the people, they exercise a power the right use of which should bring blessings on the Church of God.

Even among God's chosen people, the Jews of the Old Law, it was the custom to anoint the kings. The same practice prevailed in the Catholic Church, when the royal family were Catholics. The first Christian emperor thus anointed was Theodosius the Younger, who was blessed by the Patriarch Proclus. The emperor had the crown placed on his head, amid many anointings, by the patriarch. The assembled people wished him a long life. He then ascended his throne, blessed himself with the sign of the cross, and addressed the assembled multitude.

Objects Used and Blessed by the Church.

The Church blesses many articles for the use of her children. This she does, first, after the example of Christ, Who blessed the loaves and fishes. "Taking the five loaves and two fishes, He looked up to heaven, and blessed them" (Luke ix. 16). Secondly, because she wishes to call down blessings on the faithful, in order that, "to them that love God, all things work together unto good" (Rom. viii. 28), and that thus God's blessing may descend on all, as the curse brought by Adam's sin was spread over all creatures (Gen. iii. 17, and Rom. viii. 20-28).

The principal articles blessed by the Church for our pious usage are :

1. Bread, which is blessed at Easter, on the festivals of St. Blase, St. Agatha, and St. Gebhard. In the blessing of bread, the Church refers to Christ's blessing of the five loaves in the desert, as well as to Himself personally, Who is really "the living bread" and "the bread of angels." This practice prevailed as early as the fourth century.

2. She blesses wine on the festival of St. John the Evangelist, in commemoration of the miracle which that saint wrought, when, by the sign of the cross, he shattered the cup offered to him containing poison. It is the wish of the Church that when we drink the St. John's wine we should also imbibe St. John's charity and love for God.

3. She blesses new fruits and other eatables.

Here the Church beseeches God to grant health of body and soul to all those who in His name partake of these blessings.

4. The blessing of vegetables on Lady Day in harvest. On this day the Blessed Virgin celebrates her reunion with her beloved Son. This bridal festival of Mary the Church glorifies on earth by the blessing of fragrant herbs and green things, and thus commemorates the tender and beautiful symbols by which the heavenly bride is so often represented in Holy Scripture, such as the lily-of-the-valley, the flower of the field, and others. In this blessing the Church prays that her children may be spared all evils of soul and body.

5. The "Agnus Dei," which consists of wax bearing the impress



BLESSING BREAD.

of the Lamb of God, for such is the English meaning of the word "Agnus Dei." These are held in high esteem, because they have been blessed by the Pope on Easter Tuesday, once only in every seven years. The sight of the image

should remind the person wearing it of the innocence, meekness, and patience by which we should be distinguished as followers of the Lamb, Who is Christ Our Saviour.

In early times these images were handed to the faithful during High Mass, to be kissed. For formerly the kiss of peace was passed, just before Communion, to all present at the High Mass. Later on the kiss of peace was not passed beyond the clergy, and in its place the Agnus Dei was handed around.

6. Finally, the Church blesses also crosses, scapulars, rosaries, pictures, and medals, to the end that by the pious use of them we may be frequently reminded of Christ, His blessed Mother, and all the saints,

The following is the prayer the Church pronounces when blessing a cross: "May this image of the cross be sanctified in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that those who, for the sake of the Lord, kneel and pray before it may obtain health of body and soul. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen."

Exorcisms.

An exorcism is the exercise of the power left by Christ to His Church to drive out evil spirits and to break their influence over men.

It is certain that the devil has power over men. True, Christ destroyed his dominion, so that he cannot any longer be a hindrance to their happiness. Yet He permits the devil to tempt men, as He Himself was tempted by him, in order to try men and to give them an opportunity to imitate His example, and to drive him away as Christ drove him away from Himself in the desert. But then God permits the evil spirit to afflict man in his body, either to punish him for his sins, or to try him. This we learn from the history of Job and of the possessed man in the gospel. Our Saviour says, "I saw Satan falling from heaven." By this Our Saviour wished to say that Satan indeed had been hurled by the power of the Blessed Trinity from heaven into hell, yet not that he was totally deprived of his power: else He would not have given to His disciples the power to drive out devils. We read that St. Paul actually did expel evil spirits (Acts xix. 12), and he himself says: "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood: but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness" (Eph. v. 12). St. James the apostle says: "Resist the devil, and he will fly from you" (James iv. 7). St. Peter writes: "Be sober and watch: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist ye, strong in faith" (I. Pet. v. 9).

In these struggles the Church comes to our assistance, and in her exorcisms supplies us with a weapon against the devil. A Christian may command the devil, in the name of Jesus Christ, to desist from evil. He need but sign himself with the sign of the cross and sprinkle holy water.

Blessings.

By these blessings of the Church are meant the various prayers of blessing and protection which she pronounces over persons or things.

These she usually pronounces over the following persons :

1. Bride and bridegroom, especially at the nuptial Mass.
2. Women who seek to be churched. This ceremony is not of obligation. But it is a pious and useful practice for a mother to imitate the Mother of God by going to the church to offer up her child, bringing a small offering, and asking the blessing of the priest.

3. In some places it is the custom on the 3d of February, the festival of St. Blase, to obtain a blessing under his invocation. The priest invokes the saint that God would preserve the person blessed from all throat troubles, in memory of the miracle by which this holy Bishop of Sebaste rescued from death the only son of a widow.

4. There are the blessings of priests, and especially of bishops, imparted to persons. The priest's blessing is twofold : during Mass and outside of Mass. The blessing of the priest towards the end of Mass is the summing up of all that has been granted during the sacrifice just closed. Outside of Mass, blessing or benediction is given with the Blessed Sacrament, with a piece of the true cross, with a crucifix, or even with the hand, according to the occasion. It is also the custom to ask the blessing of a priest and bishop outside the church. Newly ordained priests when imparting their blessing lay both hands open on the head of each person blessed.

A very special blessing is the one given by a priest at the moment of death. It has ever been considered a great happiness to have a priest present at that solemn time, even after all the sacraments have been administered. Hence St. Ephrem says : "Honor the priests, that at your last breath you may receive their blessing. Whosoever dishonors the priests will not be worthy to receive their blessing on his death-bed."

Another blessing is that given, by permission of the Pope, to the dying who have received the last sacraments, and which confers a plenary indulgence.

The Church also blesses a variety of objects, in order to communicate to them a spiritual strength and efficacy. That such

efficacy proceeds from the blessing of the Church, we learn from the words of St. Paul : " Every creature of God is sanctified by the word of God and prayer " (I. Tim. iv. 4, 5).

Indeed all created things were good, having come from the hand of God ; but when man, for whom God had made all things, fell by sinning, the curse of God fell upon the earth. Hence it is becoming to bless fields and homes and the food of men. The Church does this in public ceremony sometimes.

The use of such blessings is very ancient. St. Basil, among others, assures us that they are based on apostolic usages. St. Chrysostom says the same thing.

Various Church Practices.

By solemn Church usages we understand those general practices of devotion permitted and sanctioned by our holy Church for the purpose of edifying and sanctifying her children. They are chiefly the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the various devotions to Mary and the saints, and more especially processions, pilgrimages, confraternities, and missions.

Processions.

By processions we mean the solemn marches of the faithful accompanied with prayer and chant : 1. In order to praise God, to thank Him, to implore His protection and blessing on city and country, and to avert His chastisements ; 2. To celebrate the victory and triumph of Christianity ; 3. To remind ourselves that we are but mere passing pilgrims here on earth, and should constantly walk before God.

The practice of religious processions is very ancient, mention being made of them in the Old Testament. Thus Josue, with his people, marched seven times around Jericho, whose walls fell down at the end of the last circuit. David accompanied the Ark and brought it home in procession. The triumphal entrance of Christ into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday was also a kind of solemn religious procession. The custom passed from the Old Law to the New Dispensation. Of course in the first ages of the Church the Christians could not think of holding public processions, for the persecution was too violent ; but as soon as pagan opposition ceased, processions were revived.

Tertullian, who lived about two hundred years after the birth of Christ, speaks of them as a practice in use. St. Chrysostom

likewise speaks of prayer-marches that were held in his time to implore God for the cessation of excessive and unseasonable rains.

The processions held on the three Rogation Days, just before Ascension Thursday, are also of very ancient origin. When St. Mammertus became Bishop of Vienne in France, the practice of religious processions was old enough to have become partially neglected. But when, in the year 469, the city was visited by earthquakes, famine, conflagrations, and other calamities, this holy bishop gave orders that the three days preceding the Ascension of Our Lord should be observed as days of prayer and penance, so that by those means, as well as by religious processions, God's anger might be averted and His mercy propitiated. The custom was soon taken up by the other bishops of France, and in a council held at Orleans, about the year 511, the universal observance of these rogations was commanded. Soon the practice spread over all Christendom.

The procession on St. Mark's Day was established in the year 590, by Pope Gregory the Great, whilst a pestilence was raging in the city of Rome and over all Italy. The air then was so poisonous that if a person only gaped or sneezed he fell down dead. Hence arose the custom of saying, "God bless us," after sneezing, and of making the sign of the cross when yawning. For the cessation of this plague, Pope Gregory ordered a solemn religious procession, as we learn from a sermon which he preached on the occasion, and which is still extant.

Extraordinary and special processions were practised from remote times, on occasion of unusual events, in special dangers to health and life, for daily bread, and in great afflictions. Nearly always the purpose sought for was granted by Heaven.

Pilgrimages.

God, being a pure Spirit, is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth (John iv. 24). This is the only condition on which prayer can become pleasing to God. When we pray we must offer up our minds in sacrifice to God. Our prayer must be internal, not a mere lip-service, and our demeanor should not be a contradiction to such prayer. Prayer should be the purest expression of the voice of our soul. Yet, in the above admonition or instruction, not a word is said about a place for prayer; neither appointing any nor forbidding any, nor preferring one place to another. It is merely implied that we can pray in any and

every place. Yet it is easier for us to be more devout in one place than another, and God may be pleased to dispense graces more abundantly in one place than in another.

There is no doubt but that places in which extraordinary things have been done, and where even yet, to some extent, there remain visible signs of the magnanimity of God, make a deep impression on the human mind. In such places we realize more vividly the ways of Providence, and recall at one glance the whole long line of God's mercies and benefits conferred there.

This is the reason why the first Christians cherished in their hearts such ardent longings to visit the Holy Land. Even when the apostles John and James were yet in Jerusalem, many persons came to visit the places where the Son of God had passed His holy life and where He had suffered in His atoning Passion. As there were then living many eye-witnesses of the events, a tradition was firmly established and handed down which preserved for later generations a certainty concerning every spot consecrated by the Saviour's presence.

It is plain, too, that none but Christians attached any value to such memories, and they certainly would not deceive nor be deceived in so sacred a matter. Hence we ought not to wonder that so much positive certainty has been transmitted to us concerning the holy places connected with the Redeemer's life and presence.

As, in the time of persecution, thousands of martyrs bled and died, and after their death their graves were glorified by miracles, the surviving Christians began to pray at their graves, and God was pleased to reward such prayers by remarkable concessions of His favors. Hence these graves became places of pilgrimage, the one most in favor, after the Holy Land, being the city of Rome, where the apostles Sts. Peter and Paul and countless other martyrs of Christ were entombed.

Thus did St. Lucy and her mother Eutychia visit the grave of St. Agatha, where Eutychia was miraculously cured. Who had a more perfect knowledge of the right and the true than St. John Chrysostom? Yet he always had an ardent desire to visit and venerate the chains of St. Peter. St. Augustine resolved to make a pilgrimage to the bones of St. Jerome at Bethlehem. In Rome itself it early became the custom for the people to go in solemn procession to St. Peter's, on the Vatican Hill, and St. Paul's, on the Ostian Road. Alternately religious services were held at the different tombs of the saints, as we may see to-day in

the Mass-books the designations : Station at St. Mary Major, at St. Mary's beyond the Tiber, St. Peter's, St. Paul's, the Holy Cross, and others. No one ever thought such pious practices superstitious.

But God's love and mercy are not confined to a few localities.



DECORATING AN ALTAR OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

In heathen lands the missionaries of Christ wrought many prodigies, and many saints were honored with the gift of miracles. In many places most wonderful events occurred, by which the confidence of fervent prayer was rewarded. In such places the

faithful erected churches or oratories, for which the pious sentiments of the faithful experienced a special attraction. Thus arose what are called shrines of grace, that is to say, places in which the faithful hoped to obtain graces and the object of their prayers through the intercession of some saint, more especially the Blessed Virgin, basing such expectations on the fact that such graces and favors had been already obtained at those shrines.

No one can deny that it is quite consistent with the wisdom of God to manifest His power and goodness more plainly in one place than in another, and to favor one special place more than another, if it were for no other purpose than to impress the faithful with the extent of His love and goodness. He Who ordered Naaman, the Syrian general, to wash in the Jordan in order to be cured of his leprosy, Who vouchsafed an answer to the high priest when praying before the Ark, Who imparted healing qualities to the waters of Bethesda, Who selected the site for the building of the Temple, and Who, in the New Law, established visible signs and forms for the sacraments, can certainly, if He choose, perform more miracles in one place than in another. If we were inclined to disbelieve that God has so acted, the fact itself is proved by the unshaken belief of thousands who for centuries have ever cherished faith in these holy places.

Hence there can be no valid objection raised against the time-honored practice of making religious pilgrimages. It is the abuse of them that is to be deplored. Pilgrimages, though not necessary, are useful, and have the approval of the Church. Through their means thousands have been benefited in soul and body. Countless numbers of hardened sinners have been moved to repentance by a simple prayer pronounced at some favored shrine, and, led by the grace of God, have sought for renewal of spiritual life at the knees of some devoted confessor. But recourse to this particular devotion must be had in the best Christian spirit. The following rules should be observed :

1. When one is about to perform a pilgrimage he must be sure that he will neglect no duty ; for the slightest duty takes precedence of every pilgrimage, since the compliance with a duty is necessary for the soul's salvation. A pilgrimage, on the other hand, is purely voluntary. Let each one ask himself, then, whether during his absence on a pilgrimage any home duty is to be neglected.

2. The pilgrimage should be made in good company. It makes great difference by whom we are surrounded at a time

when we need to be devoutly impressed. We should edify each other on the journey. When the company consists of persons who are influenced by unworthy motives, such as escape from work, curiosity, and so forth, there will be much idle conversation, much distraction, and perhaps dissipation. Recollection of spirit and true devotion will be lost. The journey to the shrine should be a preparation, and the pilgrims should be animated with an ardent desire to be properly disposed for the reception of the graces expected.

3. A pilgrimage should be a penitential journey, and therefore should be made on foot, as far as circumstances permit, and amid some privation and fatigue. It is thus that the pilgrim manifests a spirit of sacrifice in atonement for his sins, and obtains the favor of God.

4. While tarrying at the place of pilgrimage the time should be wisely and judiciously utilized. The pilgrim should freely open his heart for the admission of the graces of the pilgrimage. He should avoid as much as possible the noise and confusion of the crowd, and maintain a spirit of recollection. He should study the state of his soul, examine his conscience, and, if possible, approach the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist.

5. The homeward journey should be a continuation of the pilgrimage, and be so made as not to risk the loss of the benefits received.

6. After returning home the pilgrim should carry out his good resolutions, and by his amended life show that he has received new faith, hope, and charity, and become another man.

Thomas à Kempis says: "Those who go much abroad seldom become saints." He alludes to those persons who go on pilgrimages as a mere matter of custom, and without the proper motives, and who consequently derive very little benefit. While such pilgrimages are better omitted, a pilgrimage undertaken in the spirit of the Church bears in itself the fruitful seed of abundant fruit.

Confraternities and Missions.

By confraternities are understood those associations, usually approved by the Pope, the members of which pray for one another, and encourage one another to the frequent reception of the sacraments and the performance of other good works. The utility of such confraternities is evident from their very nature. Moreover, most of them have been enriched with many indulgences.

By a mission is understood a special renewal of spiritual life in a congregation or parish, by means of sermons, instructions, and other acts of devotion. The object is amendment and sanctification of life among the individual Christians.

In fact, missions are as old as the preaching of the Gospel itself. For the form in which they are now held we are indebted chiefly to the Jesuits, who follow the rules and regulations laid down for such spiritual exercises by St. Ignatius himself. Many other religious orders devote themselves to the giving of missions.

We know of few means that are better adapted for the sanctification of the people than the holding of missions. Experience has proved that not only individuals but whole congregations have been converted from the ways of sin to the love and service of God. Of course whatever advantage we derive from a mission must be attained through our own coöperation with the graces always sent by God in such blessed times.

REFLECTION.

Dedications.

The Dedication at Einsiedeln.



THE following is the origin of the festival of Dedication at this renowned place of pilgrimage in Switzerland: In the year 936, whilst Eberhard I. was abbot at Einsiedeln, the monastery was rebuilt and made ready for dedication. The ceremony, which was to be performed by the Bishop of Constance, was appointed for a day in September in the year 948. An immense concourse of prelates, priests, and people had assembled from far and near. Towards midnight, on the eve of the ceremony, the bishop, accompanied by some monks, repaired to the new church to say some prayers. As he approached he heard delightful strains of sacred melody resounding through the building. On entering he was astonished to perceive that a choir of angels were chanting the psalms proper for a dedication. In the miraculous chapel he saw Jesus clothed in violet vestments, standing at the altar and celebrating Mass, assisted by Sts. Peter, Gregory, Augustine, Stephen, and Lawrence. To one side knelt the Blessed Virgin, absorbed in silent prayer and adoration. St.

Michael conducted the choir. St. Stephen was subdeacon, and St. Lawrence was deacon. The Sanctus was chanted as follows: "Holy God, in the dwelling-place of the glorious Blessed Virgin, have mercy on us. Glory, honor, and praise to Mary's Son, Who has come to reign for all eternity." The Agnus Dei was sung thus: "Lamb of God, have mercy on the living who believe in Thee: have mercy on us. Lamb of God, have mercy on the faithful

departed, who believed and hoped in Thee: have mercy on us. Lamb of God, give peace to the living and the dead." To the "Dominus Vobiscum" the angels responded: "Who sittest above the cherubim and lookest down into the depths"

Meanwhile day-break came. It was the morning of the 14th of September, the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. The people filled the church in every part, and everything was ready for the ceremony of the dedication. The bishop continued to pray, and showed no signs of beginning. At last some one reminded him that it was almost



DEDICATION OF THE CHAPEL AT EINSIEDELN.

noontime, and begged him to go on with the ceremony. He hesitated, saying that he awaited some sign, and communicated to some few friends the vision of the previous night. These considered the thing a mere vision, or perhaps a heavenly ecstasy on the part of the holy bishop, and urged him to begin. But hardly had the bishop begun to vest when a voice was heard: "Desist, desist, brother; the chapel has been dedicated." These words were repeated three times, filling all present with awe and

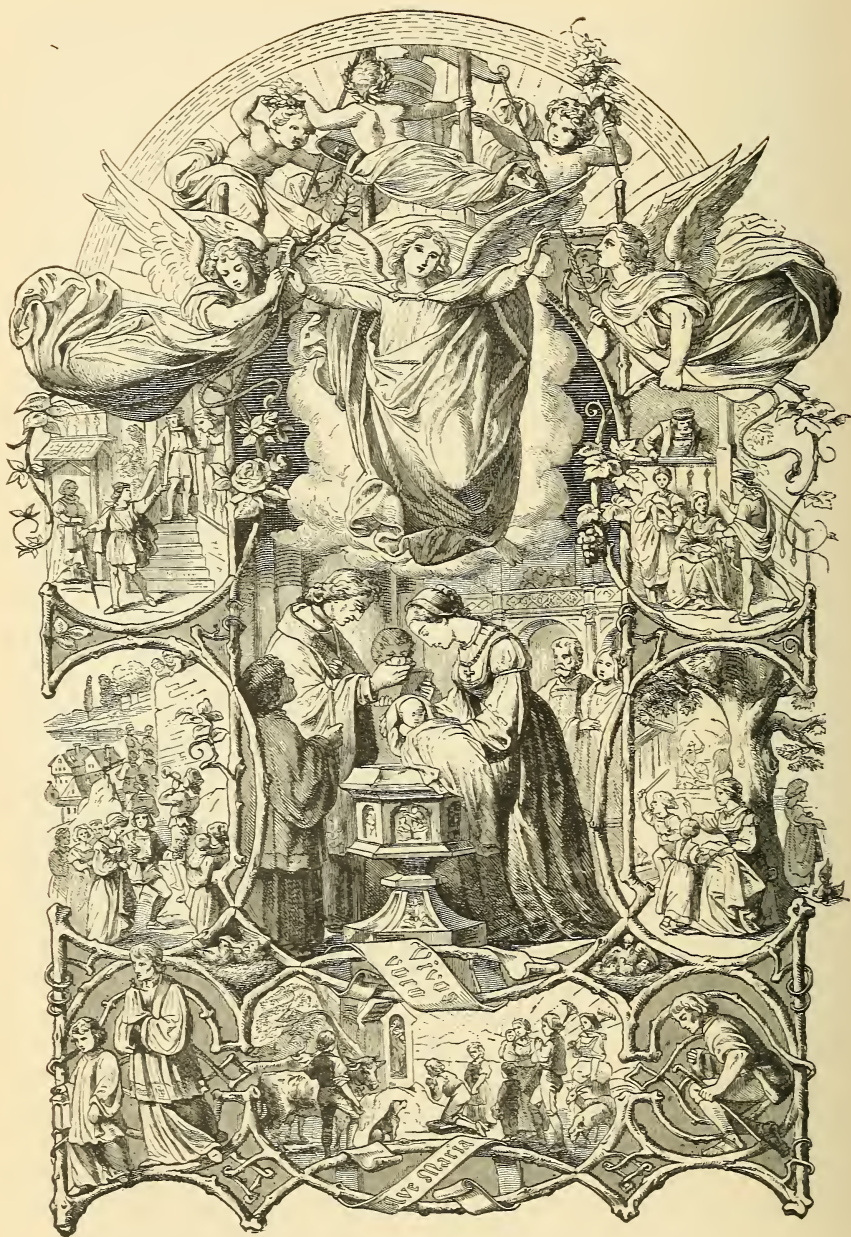
wonder. All then admitted that the bishop was right in fearing to begin the ceremonies.

Such is the origin of the grand yearly festival at Einsiedeln, known as the "Angels' Dedication." Every returning pilgrim told in his home of the miraculous dedication, and the subsequent miraculous cures wrought at the shrine seemed to set the seal of truth on the story.

Bells in Joy and Sorrow.

When the bells ring in the lofty tower our very hearts are deeply moved. There is something in the sound of a bell that seems to resound in our very being, rejoicing in our joys and sorrowing in our sorrows. Hardly has man entered the world when he is transformed by Baptism into a child of God, and the bell in the tower peals forth as if it would proclaim the birth of an heir for heaven's kingdom. The child grows up amid the sounds of his parish bells, which, like the guardian angels of his home and parish, call him to prayer and other good works; and when, grown to man's estate, he leaves his native town, the last voices he hears are those of his village bells. When he returns they are the first to greet him and bid him welcome as he rushes into the embrace of father and mother, and tells them that he has been true and faithful to their early teachings. Again, when the young married couple are about to found a new Christian home, the joyous wedding-bells seem to sprinkle, in their sweet sounds, blessings on the undertaking. And if toil and struggle be the lot of the Christian family, if the head of the house have to support his children by the sweat of his brow, the Angelus bell three times a day reminds him that his labor may be made available unto the salvation of his immortal soul, and thus consoles him in his frugal life of toil; and when his day's work is over and the setting sun casts a parting glance on the fruit of his toil, the Christian man kneels down at the sound of the vesper-bell to return thanks to Him Who gave him health and strength to complete his honest task. And when at last life's struggle is over, again the bell announces the coming of the priest bearing the God of hosts and words of pardon and benediction. Then do the bells seem to unite their voices to that of the departing Christian, saying, "Now, O Lord, Thou dost dismiss Thy servant in peace, for my eyes have seen Thy salvation."

Bells are not always rung by good angels, however; evil spirits, too, ring them, when distress, misery, and trouble overwhelm



JOY BELLS.



FUNERAL BELLS.

whole nations or families, or even a single man. When the fury of civil war unbinds all human passions, rendering children orphans and the country a desert ; or when fire consumes whole cities, leaving nothing but ruins ; or when the still more dreadful waters rise above their banks, devastating whole countries—then it is the bell that calls from its height, not as a comfort and joy, but with a sound that pierces bones and marrow. And when the destroying angel of death, the plague, rages through the country like a wild, invisible rider, whose breath kills everything that lives—then again it is the bell which does not deny the dead the last service of love. And again, it tolls so sadly, so plaintively, when it admonishes a poor sinner on his last way to the scaffold to repent, when it announces to him the approaching judgment and the just but merciful judge, God.

Thus the bell enters into the joys and sorrows of human life. Hardly an important moment is there in which the bell does not partake, be it of joy or of pain. But the bell brings consolation, too. When you stood at the newly-made grave of your father or sister or friend, crying as if your heart would break, was it not the sound of the bell that comforted and roused you ? And why ? Because it reminded you that there is a resurrection and a reunion in heaven. It came to you like an angel's voice across the dark grave, and you thanked God that He gave you an immortal soul, that lives beyond the grave and is to dwell together with all the blessed ones in heaven, and with God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Holy Water.

FROM THE FATHERS.

On this subject Pope Alexander I. thus wrote : "We bless water mingled with salt for the people, that all of them who shall be sprinkled with it may be cleansed and sanctified ; and we direct all priests to do this. For as, of old, the ashes of the sacrificed victims, sprinkled with blood, purified and sanctified the people, how much more will they be sanctified by water mingled with salt and blessed with prayer ! And if the unfruitfulness of the water was so healed by prayer when the prophet Eliseus sprinkled salt over it, how much more likely is this water sanctified by prayer to remove the unfruitfulness of earthly things, to sanctify the unholy, to increase all good things, to turn away the assaults of the devil, and to protect men against

treacherous deceits. For if we believe that the sick were healed by the mere touching of the Saviour's garment, how much more will the elements be sanctified by God through the power of His sacred words, whereby feeble man seeks health of body and soul ! Now, since we have received these and other ancient teachings and practices, pay attention, ye priests of the Lord, to the wishes of each one, and be careful, by the power of the Holy Spirit and prayer, to fulfil, by virtue of your office, all these wishes. Bless the elements—those of which I have just spoken as well as others that are used in God's service and are necessary to human weakness."

MIRACLES BY HOLY WATER.

We might give countless examples in which the power of holy water is made plainly visible, but we shall confine ourselves to a few related by approved writers.

The holy Bishop Marcellus threw down an idolatrous temple by sprinkling on it a few drops of holy water. Sts. Chrysostom, Fortunatus, Theodore, Luthbert, Hegesippus, Anno, Anselm, Bernard, Malachy, Columba, and Edmond healed many afflicted persons from evils both of soul and body. The holy Archbishop Lawrence healed instantly, by holy water, a formidable wound inflicted on him by a crazy man. The holy Deacon Eugene raised a dead person to life by holy water. The holy Pope Stephen VI. and St. Aphraates, by sprinkling holy water over the fields, drove off swarms of locusts that were destroying the crops.

The water flowing from the rock at the touch of Moses' rod, and so grateful to the Israelites, could not equal the holy water of the New Law in blessings for Christians.

Blessed Oil—Blessed Bread—Blessed Salt.

ORIGIN.

The practice of blessing each of these three articles dates back to apostolic times.

The blessed bread, anciently called *eulogia*, consisted of such offerings at Mass as were not used for the consecration or Communion. It was blessed by the priests and distributed among the faithful, who carried it to their homes. When in the act of receiving it, they kissed the priest's hand ; for they believed that blessings must flow from the hand that touches the body of the Lord. Hence arose the practice of kissing a priest's hand,

Both priests and people used to exchange this blessed bread with one another, as a sign of Catholic unity and charity. Many families used to have their ordinary bread blessed by the priests.



EUSTACHE LORSAY D.

BDMANELLI F.

J. GUILLAUME S.

MOSES BRINGING WATER FROM THE ROCK.

Salt was blessed in order to be kept as well as to be used in the ceremony of blessing holy water. St. Chrysostom tells us that there prevailed among the faithful a firm belief that salt

blessed on Epiphany or Trinity Sunday would retain its strength and savor undiminished for a full year. Blessed salt used to be given at Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost to such penitents and catechumens as could not receive Communion. To this day it is placed on the tongue of persons being baptized.

The practice of blessing oil is equally ancient. There is no doubt but that it was used by the apostles. St. Jerome, in writing about St. Hilarion, tells us that, from city and country, crowds of the faithful came to him to have him bless their bread and oil.

MIRACULOUS EFFECTS.

St. Germanus restored to health a whole village by giving them blessed bread to eat. By the same means he restored a woman who was already in her agony. St. Arnulf cured an insane person ; St. Eutychius restored speech to a dumb person ; St. Maxentius restored sight to a blind man—all by the same means. The bread that St. Bernard blessed would last, fresh and eatable, from seven to eleven years, and effected many cures. In time of a cattle plague he would administer blessed salt to the infected cattle and save them from perishing. St. Monagunda gave blessed salt to some people, who were cured by its use long after the saint had died. The holy abbot St. Columban blessed some rock-salt and by applying it restored eyesight to several persons, though it is well known that salt is naturally detrimental to the eyes. The holy Genevieve healed with blessed salt a child which from birth had been deaf, hunchbacked, and blind. The holy Bishop Parthemnis blessed some salt and had it cast over a vineyard which for lack of rain had withered : in the harvest-time a very large crop of grapes was gathered. A simple Christian of the name of Proculus healed Emperor Severus with blessed oil. As a remedy for the bites of scorpions, the plague of the Orient, the first Christians employed nothing but blessed oil and the sign of the cross. The Queen of Persia came with her courtiers to Simeon Stylites and asked him for some blessed oil. St. Augustine narrates the following: "I know a virgin in Hippo who was delivered from the devil by an anointment with holy oil." The monk Benjamin could heal every disease with oil over which he had prayed. Innumerable instances more could be given.

Exorcisms.

FROM THE FATHERS.

"The so-called demons or evil spirits seek nothing more than to decoy men from God, the Creator of all things, and from Christ, His only begotten Son. Such persons as are not capable of lifting themselves above the earth are held fast to earthly things, and to things made by the hands of men, by these evil spirits. Such as are competent of rising to the contemplation of heavenly things, if they are not strong in mind, and if they do not live pure and free from passion, these the evil spirits will seek to make godless" (St. Justin Martyr). "Many Christians in the whole world, as well as in your city, were relieved from evil spirits by exorcisms in the name of Jesus Christ Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, though they had failed to find relief from other helpers, potions, and diabolical conjurations. They are cured by having the devils that possess them driven out and rendered powerless" (The Same). "The demons which assail men destroy their ill-disposed souls by many false pretences, in order that they may not be able to regain their way to heaven. Sometimes, too, by the tempest of their malice, they agitate our bodies, but by the power of the word of God they are weakened, and the afflicted person is restored to health" (Tatian). "It is known to most of you that the demons confess themselves whenever, by the power of the word and the fervor of prayer, they are driven out of their victims' bodies. As soon as they are conjured in the name of the one living God, they tremble involuntarily, and in the consciousness of suffering they either spring forth from the bodies at once or they vanish gradually, according as the faith of the victim or the grace of the exorcist has power and effect" (Minucius Felix). "Many Christians drive devils out of possessed persons by ordinary prayers and simple means, just as any simple person can" (Origen). "Will the Christian hold vigils before the temples of the idols that he has renounced, or participate in eating where it was so displeasing to the Apostle? And will he take under his protection at night those whom he has exorcised during the day?" (Tertullian.)

EXAMPLES.

A Devil Asserts His Right.

The church historian Tertullian relates a remarkable case of a woman possessed by the devil, which we will repeat in his own words, and without any comment, leaving the reader to make the moral application. Tertullian says: "We have an instance of a woman who went to an improper public spectacle and came back possessed by a devil. When the unclean spirit was forced by exorcisms to explain how he dared to attack a believer, he answered, 'I acted with authority and right, for I found her in a place that belongs to me.'"

The Confession of a Devil.

In the Life of St. Bernard we read: "A man brought his possessed wife to the saint. The devil continued to speak in a tone of mockery through the woman: 'This vegetarian and root-eater cannot drive me from my slut,' as he termed the woman. He uttered also other derisive language in order to insult the man of God and degrade him before the people. But the saint knew the wily ways of the devil, and mocked the mocker. He ordered the evil spirit to bring the possessed woman into the church at Pavia, dedicated to Syrus, in order to give the glory of her restoration to that martyr. The saint said to the evil one, 'Neither St. Syrus nor St. Bernard will expel you, but the Lord Jesus Christ.' Then he began to pray, and besought God for help to overcome the devil. The evil spirit cried out, changing his tone and language: 'Oh, how gladly would I flee from this slut! How gladly I would escape the pains I am suffering on account of these prayers! But I cannot!' When questioned why he could not get away, he replied, 'Because it is not pleasing to the most high God.' When St. Bernard inquired who this most high God might be, the spirit answered, 'Jesus of Nazareth.' St. Bernard continued: 'Then you know the Lord Jesus? Where have you seen Him?' The devil answered, 'I have seen Him in His glory.' 'Then you were in glory?' said the saint. 'How did you come to leave it?' The evil spirit said, 'Many of us fell with Lucifer.' These words he uttered in a doleful, lachrymose tone through the mouth of the woman, in the hearing of all who were present. 'Would you be willing to return to that glory?' inquired St. Bernard. To this question the devil replied, in an

unusually loud tone of voice, 'It is too late.' These were his last words, and he would not answer any further questions. Then St. Bernard prayed once more, the evil spirit fled away, and the woman returned home perfectly restored."

Obsession as a Punishment for Despising the Advice of a Bishop.

Dancing-parties were always looked upon as leading to the commission of sin. About the year 600 the holy Bishop Eligius, like every other true pastor of souls, preached vehemently against this abuse. But his wise words were neglected, just as the advice of preachers and confessors to-day is often ignored by thoughtless Christians. One day, such a dancing festival being held near his own house, the holy man went out and besought the dancers to stop the scandal. But they laughed and went on with their amusement. Punishment soon came, for some thirty of their number became possessed of the devil, and acted so violently that they had to be put in irons. Their obsession had lasted a year when the holy bishop had them led into the church, and then, throwing himself on his knees before God, he begged that the afflicted sinners might be relieved. His prayers were heard, and the possessed persons went away entirely cured. Do not many persons in our day return from dancing-parties fully possessed by the devil, if not in body, at least in soul?

Blessings.

Blessing in the Old and New Laws.

God Himself gave us the first instance of a blessing when He blessed our first parents and blessed the Sabbath day; after the Deluge He blessed Noe and his sons (Gen. i. 28; ii. 3; ix. 1).

Even in the Old Testament we meet with the priest's blessing. Thus God commanded Moses and Aaron to bless the people of Israel, and even told them what to say: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee. The Lord show His face to thee, and have mercy on thee. The Lord turn His countenance to thee, and give thee peace" (Num. vi. 24-26). This blessing was imparted with outstretched hands (Levit. ix. 22). The high-priest Heli blessed the devout Elcana and his wife Anna (I. Kings ii. 20). Whilst Ezechias was offering the paschal lamb, the priests and Levites arose and blessed the people (II. Paral. xxx. 27).

In the New Testament we read that Christ called little children to come to Him, and placed His hands upon them (Matt. xix. 15). At His Ascension into heaven He spread out His arms in the form of a cross and blessed His apostles. There is no doubt that the practice of blessing ourselves with the sign of the cross comes down from apostolic times.

Examples of the Miraculous Power of Blessings.

The history of God's saints furnishes us with many instances of miracles performed through their blessings.

St. Benedict, by imparting his blessing to a certain person, enabled him to lift and place in a wall a heavy stone that previously no one could even move. By prayer and blessing the holy Bishop John healed a person who had been poisoned by the bite of a venomous reptile. By the same means he also saved a dying boy from the grasp of death. St. Martin cured a leper by blessing him and kissing his sores. St. Theodore, by his blessing, rendered a barren woman fruitful. St. Cuthbert, by imparting his blessing, released a young man from a protracted illness, a child from the plague, and even turned water into wine. St. Sabbas banished disorders from diseased cattle. St. Columba, by bestowing a blessing, stopped a dangerous flow of blood. He changed water into wine, brought water out of a rock, and made unripe fruit ripe and wholesome. The holy Bishop Ulrich cured the falling sickness. By virtue of his holy blessing, St. Patrick banished all reptiles from Ireland.

Seek Blessings.

A blessing was at all times most highly prized. St. Antony, the holy hermit, used to bow down and seek a blessing from the humblest clerics. The Venerable Bede followed the same practice. Persons of every sex, age, and condition knelt down and implored the blessing of St. Epiphanius at Jerusalem. The Empress Eudoxia brought her child to St. Porphyry, bowed low, and asked a blessing. When she was with child she would seek blessings from bishops. When St. Chrysostom returned from exile she hastened to receive his blessing. St. Sabbas blessed the Emperor Justinian when he called to visit him. Devout persons brought the prince, the son of King Aido, to St. Columba, to receive that saint's blessing. Many persons have obtained benefits from the blessings of saints already dead.

Practical Application.

Although the sacraments afford us sufficient means to attain the salvation of our souls, yet we should not, for that reason, look upon the sacramentals as of no account and superfluous. When the traveller knows where he is going, and is sure of his way, and has all requisites for his journey, he has indeed what is of necessity. Nevertheless, he will not reject anything that may help him on his way, but rather avail himself of it to lighten the fatigue of his travels. Now you, Christian reader, are also a pilgrim on the wearisome journey of life, striving for the goal of eternal happiness. For this journey the sacraments furnish the necessaries, and the sacramentals make your journey easier. Why, then, should you not avail yourself of these holy sacramentals of the Church?



Prayer.

Prayer in General.

INSTRUCTION.

Meaning of Prayer.



IN prayer we raise our hearts to God and hold intercourse with Him through pious thoughts and affections. Every thought of God, every look towards Him is a prayer if it be only accompanied with pious sentiments. Hence we pray whenever we think of God or His infinite perfections, and feel ourselves penetrated with joy, reverence, love, admiration, and other good affections. We pray whenever we call to our minds the benefits we have received from our Creator, Sustainer, and Father, and are thereby moved to sentiments of gratitude ; that too is prayer. Whenever, in the hour of danger, our virtue and innocence being at stake, conscious of our own helplessness we beg for help, that is prayer. Finally, when, in sorrow for our sins, we turn to God and weep because we have offended a kind father, angered a stern judge, and strayed away from our chief and only good, our last end ; when we implore forgiveness of our sins and promise future rectitude of life—that is prayer.

The Power of Prayer.

There is nothing more admirable, more effectual, more useful to man than a prayer which ascends to God like incense from the altar of a simple and contrite heart. It lifts us up to God, lessens our troubles, strengthens our weaknesses, intensifies our virtues, opens heaven's gates, overcomes the power of hell—in a word, it is all-powerful. Strong and mighty is a king, and all must obey his signal. Strong and mighty among the animals is the lion, who exceeds them all in power, and by his very voice sends terror to the hearts of both man and beast. Strong and mighty among

the elements are fire and water. The force of the latter nothing can withstand. The former, in one brief hour, can lay a city in ashes. Yet stronger far than any of these is prayer, especially the prayer of the just man ; for him not even the Almighty God can withstand, for His divine heart is overcome. Hence for the acquisition of virtue and the repression of sin there is no means more effectual than prayer. On this point St. Ephrem says, very aptly : " Prayer restrains pride, soothes revenge, expels envy, and leads to piety. Prayer blesses the individual with fortitude, the family with prosperity. Prayer is the seal of the virgin, the safeguard of married life, the defence of the traveller, the guardian of the sleeping, the refuge of the waking, the fruitfulness of the soil, the safety of the tempest-tossed mariner. Prayer defends the condemned, ransoms the captive, comforts the mourner. Prayer is the crown of the living, and relieves the dead in purgatory. Prayer is the fountain of untold goodness. It is mightier than a king. Nothing so effectually dispels sloth and tepidity as prayer. Whosoever prays in his hour of trial shall receive many consolations in his soul. To sinners prayer is a mother, a mother who heals with the tears she sheds."

Necessity of Prayer.

Prayer is as essential to spiritual life as food and air are to natural existence. Hence Our Saviour impresses upon us, both by His word and example, the necessity of prayer. He says: " We ought always to pray, and not to faint " (Luke xviii. 1) ; " Ask, and it shall be given you " (Matt. vii. 7). He set us the example by passing whole nights in prayer (Luke vi. 12). Besides, He has made prayer necessary for the obtaining of many favors ; for, without prayer we secure not even the necessary grace of persevering from beginning to end : Your Father from heaven giveth the good Spirit *to them that ask Him* (Luke xi. 13). Not to pray and yet to remain free from sin, not to pray and yet to desire eternal felicity, is like trying to see without eyes, talk without a tongue, hear without ears, walk without feet.

From its very necessity it follows that prayer is a sacred duty incumbent upon us, to be discharged willingly and industriously, for he who does not pray will receive nothing.

Qualities of Prayer.

1. We should prepare ourselves to pray. If we were going to talk with a prince or some great lord we would first collect



ST. AMBROSE FORBIDDING THE EMPEROR THEODOSIUS TO ENTER
THE CHURCH.

our thoughts, reflect upon what we were going to say, how we could present our petition, and even how we could make the best personal appearance. How much more cautious should we be when we are going to pray ! For then we do not talk with a man, nor with a prince, nor yet a great one of this earth, but with God, the supreme Ruler of heaven and earth, before Whom all knees bend.' Hence the Holy Ghost says : "Before prayer prepare thy soul : and be not as a man that tempteth God " (Ecclus. xviii. 23). The harper tunes his instrument before he begins to play in presence of his patron. So should we dispose the chords of our hearts, that they may sound sweetly in the ear of the Most High. Therefore, before beginning your prayer, compose your thoughts, and keep in mind that you are in the presence of God, Who sees you and knows all that you do, think, and speak.

2. We should pray with devotion. When we pray our heart should feel what our lips utter ; for God regards the heart of the petitioner, and not his lips. "In prayer," says St. Bonaventure, "the voice of the heart should be heard rather than that of the mouth." Nothing displeases God more than a distracted and inattentive prayer. Hence He has complained of those who pray only with their lips, while their minds are filled with wandering thoughts. He says : "This people honoreth Me with their lips : but their heart is far from Me" (Matt. xv. 8). Away, then, with all distractions ; for if we admit them freely, they become sinful. We should struggle against them by keeping out of our minds, as much as possible, when at prayer, all thoughts of worldly matters, and place ourselves in the presence of God.

3. We should pray with humility. When we have recourse to prayer we should humble ourselves and acknowledge first of all our own weakness and necessity of help. "When we pray," says St. Augustine, "we are beggars who ask alms from God. Now if a beggar filled with pride should ask for a favor, what would he get in return ? Instead of the gentle gift, certainly a severe rebuke of his proud and unbecoming conduct. So it fares with him who prays without humility." David, that great and mighty king, in the humility of his heart acknowledged his poverty and nothingness. Hence when kneeling in prayer before God he exclaimed : "Lord, I am needy and poor : O God, help me " (Ps. lxi. 6). When we pray we should humble ourselves by acknowledging our sinfulness and unworthiness. Let us call to mind the prayers of the Pharisee and the publican (Luke xviii.).

The former prays with pride, praising his fasting and prayers ; the other prays with humility, acknowledging himself a sinner, striking his breast, and not daring to look up to heaven. Every one knows the result of these two very different prayers. The prayer of the Pharisee was rejected, that of the publican was heard. The former by his pride invited rejection of himself and his prayer ; the other was justified before God on account of his humility. Therefore the prayer that is effective for eternal life must be based on humility and rest on the mercy of God, as is becoming.

4. We should pray with faith and confidence, without which there is no true and efficient prayer. Hence St. Augustine says : "If your faith sinks, the ardor of your prayer sinks ; for how can he pray who does not believe ?" And St. Bernard writes : "Our confidence decides the measure of grace that we receive from God : if our confidence is great, we shall receive great graces. For divine mercy is an inexhaustible fountain ; he who carries to it the largest vessel of confidence will draw from it the largest quantity of good. The oil of Thy mercy, O Lord, Thou pourest out into the largest vessels of confidence." Hence St. James says (i. 6) : "Ask in faith, nothing wavering." And why should we not ask with faith and confidence ? Are we not applying to a God Who is all-powerful and full of charity, Who is able to give us all good, and Who, for the sake of Jesus, is willing to give, as the same Saviour plainly promises when He says : "Amen, amen I say to you : if you ask the Father anything in My name, He will give it you" ? (John xvi. 23.)

5. We should pray with resignation to God's will. "We should not," says St. Francis of Sales, "ask of God to receive any gift at this or that place, in this or that manner, for this or that time. Our prayer and wish should be general. We should prescribe limits for God no more than a sick and ignorant patient should dictate to his physician what treatment to follow. We should, then, ask only for those things that correspond to the will of God and are useful to our souls." It was thus that the leper in the gospel prayed. He did not say, "Lord, make me whole," but, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean" (Luke v. 12). It was thus, too, that Christ Himself prayed in the garden of Olives : "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice" of affliction "pass from Me ; nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt" (Matt. xxvi. 39).

6. We should pray with perseverance. St. Gregory says :

"God wishes to be implored, importuned, ay, to be as it were compelled; hence He does not let us wait long. But some delay is not a refusal by any means, but rather a right salutary test. He wishes thus to increase within us the ardor of our longing, to try our fidelity, and to teach us to appreciate the value of His gifts." Therefore do not weary in your praying.

For What we should Pray.

"Seek first the kingdom of God, and His justice," says Christ to us. Hence first of all we should pray for faith, hope, and charity; for victory over our passions, for grace and strength to do good, for perseverance in virtue—in short, for all good that contributes to the glory of God and our own salvation. We are permitted to pray for temporal goods, for the necessities of life and health, for prosperous times, for success in our lawful undertakings, for deliverance from evil, and the like. Yet we should ever be animated with sentiments of complete resignation to God's will. More especially should we pray for the grace to live and die in the love of God.

For Whom we should Pray.

The believing Christian will pray not only for himself, but also for his fellow-men. To this we are plainly advised by St. Paul, when he says: "I desire therefore first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men: for kings and for all that are in high station, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all piety and chastity" (I. Tim. ii. 1-3). We should also pray for all without exception, without regard to religion or race—for friends and enemies, for just men and sinners, for heretics and infidels, for the living and the dead. Especially should we pray for rulers, for spiritual and temporal authorities, that both civil and ecclesiastical order be preserved and strengthened. Still more particularly should children pray for their parents, and parents for their children.

And we should pray thus earnestly for one another: 1. Because it is good and salutary for ourselves as well as for those for whom we pray; 2. Because it is highly pleasing to God to do so.

Mutual prayer is good and salutary for ourselves, for never does a person pray as ardently for himself as when he is praying for another. You offer your prayer for all other Christians, and all other Christians offer their prayer for you. You may

now and then, perhaps, make a careless or tepid prayer while thousands are repeating a fervent and acceptable prayer for you.

Mutual prayer profits those whom we pray for, for very often God grants to them, on account of our prayers, the graces which we ask for them, as, for example, the grace of conversion, or the grace of the true faith, and the like.

Finally, mutual prayer is very pleasing to God, for He is a God of charity. Hence St. Chrysostom writes: "When we pray for ourselves we are in a manner forced by nature, but to pray for others is a work of love and grace. It is natural to pray for ourselves,—our misery forces us to do it,—but to pray for others is a work of the purest charity."

Time for Prayer.

Christ says we should pray without ceasing. St. Paul adds, "Pray always." As God is at all times with us, offering us His favors, so should our souls be always with Him. Notwithstanding our business and work, it is possible for us to pray always. For, if we perform all our actions out of love for God, if by pious intention we dedicate all our thoughts, words, and works to Him, and offer to Him all our joys and sorrows—in a word, if we follow the counsel of the Apostle when he says, "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do: do all to the glory of God" (I. Cor. x. 31),—when we so live and work, when we do all for God, as He did everything for us, then we pray without ceasing. And how easy it is for us to offer to God all our deeds and omissions!—a hasty look towards heaven, a short prayer, such as: "All for Thee, O Lord," "To Thy greater glory," and so forth, in order to unite ourselves to God, and thus make all our life one continued prayer.

We should especially pray:

1. Morning and night.
2. Before and after meals.
3. At the striking of the clock, before all important undertakings, in temptation, in care and trouble, in personal and public afflictions.

Morning prayer is particularly necessary and useful. As the body, when emerging from sleep in the morning, needs food to strengthen it for the day, so too does our soul, in the morning, need spiritual nourishment in order to discharge its duties of the day to the honor of God, to persist in its struggles, and to bear

its disappointments with Christian patience. This kind of spiritual morning food consists in morning prayer.

Another motive for morning prayer is the fact that we owe to God the first-fruits of the young day. These are the most pleasing in His sight, and through them we sanctify all the

others. By them we draw down a blessing from heaven early. They are the morning dew that freshens and strengthens us for the rest of the day. Hence Our Lord Himself urges us to morning prayer when He says, through His prophet Amos, "Bring in the morning your victims," or offerings (Amos iv. 4); and also in Eccclus. xxxii. 18, where He



PRAYING FOR THE LOVED ONES WHO ARE GONE BEFORE.

speaks plainly of the blessing that rests on morning prayer: "They that will seek Him"—that is, the Lord—"early, shall find a blessing."

Since morning prayer is so useful, bringing us so many blessings, it should never be omitted, and all hindrances to it should

be removed. Our great arch-enemy knows well what graces and blessings are brought upon us by morning prayer, and hence he leaves no means untried to keep us from the performance of this salutary practice, or at least to render it imperfect. Either he detains us in bed so long that there is no time left for prayer, or else he holds up before our vision, the moment we rise, the many and pressing worldly duties to be performed, and so, grudging the time necessary for prayer, we hurry off to our work or business. Let us not begin the day by falling into his snares. No matter how pressing our duties, let us first hold converse with God. The more urgent and necessary those duties, the more need have we of God's grace and presence. The few moments devoted to our morning devotion will be amply supplied during the day by increased help from heaven.

Our morning devotions should consist : 1. Of heartfelt thanks for a good night's rest and for the privilege of seeing another new day ; 2. In making good resolutions for the coming day ; 3. In praying for help and guidance in passing the day.

As every day, in the Temple of Jerusalem, morning and evening sacrifices were offered up, so should our devotions ascend before the throne of God, like sweet offerings of incense, morning and evening. Common gratitude to God demands this. Would we not be guilty of the basest ingratitude to God, were we to lie down at night without remembering the many benefits He had bestowed upon us during the day ? But not gratitude alone, our own self-interest should induce us to say our night prayers, for during the darkness and uncertainty of the long night we need God's protection and guardianship ; hence we should pray for that blessing.

Then our night devotions should consist : 1. In thanking God for the benefits of the day just closed ; 2. In recalling to mind how we have made use of these benefits, and then bewailing our faults and resolving on an amendment of our lives ; 3. In commending ourselves to the protecting hand of God during the coming night.

Examination of conscience at night is very salutary. Alas, how many souls are in eternal damnation because they omitted this holy practice ! A sudden death seized them in the midst of their sleep, and, being in mortal sin, they were hurled into hell. Had they, before retiring, examined their consciences and made an act of contrition, they might have obtained pardon for their sins and secured the salvation of their immortal souls.

Every good gift comes from above and needs the blessing of God. Even the food we eat comes from God, and is distributed among us by God. Hence it is highly proper that we should send up to Him, before and after our meals, acts of petition and of thanks. Of this duty of prayer before and after meals we are reminded by St. Paul, who writes: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do: do all to the glory of God" (I. Cor. x. 31).

It is a sad state of affairs among Christians when so many are ashamed of their prayers and are beginning to omit them altogether. We cannot wonder that the blessing of God is taking leave of so many families, and want and misery are entering in instead; for, as St. Chrysostom says, nothing goes wrong in that family where the members begin and end with God, while want and destitution creep in where He is forgotten.

Whether we eat at home or abroad, we should pray, before doing so, that God may bless the viands, and after eating return thanks for His benefits.

The Catholic Church, by the sound of the Angelus bell, reminds us three times a day of that unspeakably grand benefit, the Incarnation of the Divine Son, and bids us reflect upon it with grateful hearts, and also not to forget the ever-blessed Virgin who brought into the world its loving Saviour. The words of the Angelus devotion are as old as the Scriptures, from whence they are taken. The order to ring the Angelus bell three times a day, morning, noon, and evening, and to repeat the Hail Marys, was issued by Pope Urban II. at the Council of Clermont, in the year 1095.

Even the Turks turn three times in the day their faces towards the city of Mecca, in order to thank their Prophet for the gift of their belief. Would it not then be a disgrace for a Catholic to be ashamed, when he hears the Angelus bell, to uncover his head, to do honor to the grandest mystery of his faith, and to commend himself to the powerful protection of Mary?

In all our important undertakings, in temptation, in sorrow and affliction, in persecution—in a word, in all our affairs, we should have recourse to prayer.

The Place to Pray.

We should, for we can, pray in all places—in open nature or in our quiet rooms, in the field or at home, in the office and in the workshop.

But we should pray especially in the church, for: 1. The church is really a house of prayer, as Christ Himself tells us in Matt. xxi. 13. Here dwelleth our God, living in the Blessed Sacrament, more disposed than anywhere else to bestow graces upon us. 2. Besides, in the church we have not only facility and opportunity for prayer, but also mutual example and edification. 3. Then the common prayer recited in the church by all together brings us greater advantages, as Christ told us when He said: "If two of you shall consent upon earth, concerning anything whatsoever they shall ask, it shall be done to them by My Father Who is in heaven" (Matt. xviii. 19). If the prayer in common between two petitioners is so powerful, what can be effected by the united prayer of a whole congregation?

Faults at Prayer.

Why is it that our prayers are not always heard? Because they are often defective. Sometimes we do not pray for the right thing, at other times we do not pray in the right way.

Often we do not pray for the right thing. Many pray for the things of this world and for temporal prosperity, not bestowing a thought on their sins nor on heaven. Solomon understood what to pray for, and therefore found a ready hearing on the part of God. Not so King Jeroboam. This man raised his hand against God's prophet, and it withered instantly. Then he said to the prophet, "Pray for me that my hand be restored." Instead of seeking pardon for his sin in attempting to assault the prophet, he prayed for the recovery of his hand, thinking only of it, and not at all of his soul. So it happens often. When man suffers worldly losses, he laments and grieves, deplores the bad times, rebels at loss of health, and running to God's prophet of the New Law, the priest, he cries: "Pray for me that my losses may be made good, that I may recover my health," and so on. But the affairs of the soul give the least concern.

Often we do not pray in the right manner. Many pray with distractions, many with false hearts, many without the slightest amendment in their way of living. Many, again, when praying, look only for sweetness and internal consolation, which if they do not feel at once, they fall from their zeal in prayer. Many pray with slothfulness, dryness, and coldness. Finally, many are wanting in confidence and perseverance.

Mental Prayer.

It is not necessary that prayer should always be in the form of words from the lips. We can pray inwardly and without uttering a word. This mode of prayer is called mental prayer or meditation.

Although oral prayer is most excellent, yet mental prayer rates higher and is of more value, for it furnishes the material for oral prayer; then it can be practised at times when we would be unable to pray orally. Meditation is thus a more exact and intimate intercourse with God. The Christian who meditates retires within himself, dwells in the vision of God, in the remembrance of His greatness, goodness, glory, majesty, and justice. He places before himself the subject of some sublime mystery, of some admirable deed of divine mercy, and draws forth nourishment for his soul. Thus meditation supplies food to the soul, preserving it from dryness, aridity of sentiment, pusillanimity, and despondency. On this account every Christian should devote some time, be it ever so short, to daily mental prayer.

The most suitable time, undoubtedly, for meditation is the morning, immediately after our rising. Then the heart is not yet disturbed by passion, nor the mind by distracting thoughts. A good meditation in the morning closes the door against sin, and as its object is to make good resolutions, it bears them in abundance like a fruitful mother. Nor is any great cleverness required for a profitable meditation. It is precisely to the poor in spirit that the Holy Ghost reveals all the depth and grandeur of the Gospel.

Meditation may be made according to the following simple suggestions:

Let the Christian select his subject from the Ten Commandments, the seven petitions of the Our Father, the Hail Mary, the mysteries of the rosary, or a passage from the Bible, a verse from a hymn, a paragraph from a catechism, or whatever will engage his attention. Then let him collect and compose his thoughts, that peace and repose may dwell in his soul. Then let him reflect according to the following rules:

1. Place yourself in the presence of God, and invoke the Holy Ghost that He would infuse light, understanding, and consolation into your soul.

2. Then take the mystery on which you are to meditate, whether it be a dogma of faith, a moral precept, or an incident

from Sacred Scripture, and say to yourself: "What does this say to me? what does the Lord wish? what lesson am I to draw from this?" etc. This is the first part of the meditation, called the consideration or prelude.



MEDITATION.

3. When you have considered the matter of the subject make the application to your circumstances and calling in life, and ask yourself what God requires from you at your time of life, in

your state of life, and what you should do. For example, in meditating on the precept, "Be ye merciful," it is plain that the father of a family, the servant, the priest, the doctor, the judge, the soldier, must all obey it alike, though their modes of doing so must necessarily be very varied.

4. Then resolve to do whatever the Lord requires you to do. To this end make a firm resolution as to what you are to do to-day. Before this, consider here what works you will have to do during the day, how you will do them, in what danger you may be placed with regard to sin, in what places you will be, whom you will meet; and then form your resolve.

Thus meditation consists of three divisions—the consideration, the application, and the resolution. In conclusion, ask God for grace to carry out your resolution, commend yourself to your guardian angel and patron saint, say an Our Father for the souls in purgatory, and often during the day recall and renew your good resolutions. Thus your meditation will be like unto a fire that illuminates your spirit, warms your heart, and inspires your whole being with sentiments of praise, prayer, and thanksgiving.

There is also another very profitable mode of mental prayer, sometimes called accidental prayer, or the prayer of opportunity.

We can take any object that we meet, and consider it in its supernatural relation to God, the great and beneficent Creator. Thus the fire on the hearth may remind us of the torments of hell. The fair spring season, recalling all nature to life, may suggest the resurrection of the body on the last day. The fruit-laden tree is a figure of the good Christian. The leafless, fruitless tree in winter suggests the poverty of soul in a slothful Christian. A street-crossing may remind us of the necessity of choosing the right path in our spiritual journey to the next world. A pious thought may arise out of every incident in our daily life.

Meditation of this kind on God's works in nature fills our heart with faith in God's wisdom and providence. Thus David was first a shepherd-boy in the field, then an inspired composer, and afterwards an instrument in the hand of God, and the favorite of heaven.

REFLECTION.

The Power and Effect of Prayer.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.



HEAR the word of the Lord. The Lord waiteth that He may have mercy on you. At the voice of thy cry, as soon as He shall hear, He will answer thee. And rain shall be given to thy seed, wheresoever thou shalt sow in the land : and the bread of the corn of the land shall be most plentiful, and fat ; the lamb in that day shall feed at large in thy possession : and thy oxen, and the ass-colts that till the ground, shall eat mingled provender" (Is. xxx.)

"If heaven shall be shut up, and there shall be no rain, . . .

"If a famine arise in the land, or a pestilence, or corrupt air, or blasting, or locust, or mildew, if their enemy afflict them besieging the gates, whatsoever plague, whatsoever infirmity,

"Whatsoever curse or imprecation shall happen to any man of Thy people Israel : when a man shall know the wound of his own heart, and shall spread forth his hands in this house,

"Then hear Thou in heaven, in the place of Thy dwelling, and forgive, and do so as to give to every one according to his ways, as Thou shalt see his heart (for Thou only knowest the heart of all the children of men):

"That they may fear Thee all the days, that they may live upon the face of the land, which Thou hast given to our fathers.

"Moreover also the stranger, who is not of Thy people Israel, when he shall come out of a far country for Thy name's sake (for they shall hear everywhere of Thy great name and Thy mighty hand,

"And Thy stretched out arm), so when he shall come, and shall pray in this place,

"Then hear Thou in heaven, in the firmament of Thy dwelling-place, and do all those things, for which that stranger shall call upon Thee : that all the people of the earth may learn to fear Thy name, as do Thy people Israel, and may prove that Thy name is called upon on this house, which I have built.

"If Thy people go out to war against their enemies, by what way soever Thou shalt send them, they shall pray to Thee towards the way of the city, which Thou hast chosen, and towards the house which I have built to Thy name,

"And then hear Thou in heaven their prayers, and their supplications, and do judgment for them" (III. Kings viii. 35-45).

"Cry to Me, and I will hear thee" (Jer. xxxiii. 3).

"Thou shalt cry, and He shall say : Here I am" (Is. lviii. 9).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"Through prayer we can effect everything ; by prayer we shall obtain from the Lord that strength which is wanting to us" (St. Chrysostom). "Nothing is more powerful than a man who prays ; for the praying man participates in the might of God" (The Same). "Prayer is a key that opens heaven unto our salvation. At the same moment that our prayer ascends to God the grace for which we pray descends into our heart" (St. Augustine). "Prayer is a saving anchor for those who are in danger of suffering shipwreck ; it is an unlimited treasure for the poor, a powerful means of sanctification for those who wish to remain good" (St. Chrysostom). "What power there is in prayer ! It soothes God, it obtains what we ask for, it conquers our enemies, it transforms men. Prayer calms the wrath of God, Who at once forgives the sinner who prays humbly. It triumphs over all the power of the enemy. In a word, it transforms men, for it makes the blind see, the weak strong, the wicked holy" (St. Lawrence Justinian). "Whosoever avails himself of the great weapon of prayer shall not fall into sin, will free himself from the earth, will lift himself up to dwell in heaven, and even here on earth will hold converse with God" (St. Chrysostom). "Truly prayer is all-powerful, for by it miracles are performed" (Theodoret). "Prayer is the well-spring of all virtues, the channel through which all the graces of Jesus Christ, all divine gifts flow, and the best means to grow in virtue. It is the food of the soul, the light of the intellect, an antidote against the temptation of despair, a secure bond of love between the soul and its God, a sign of the soul's election" (St. John Climachus). "Prayer is a powerful weapon to ward off the attacks of the devil, a means of protection that preserves us amid all dangers, a safe harbor that shelters us during storms, and at the same time a treasure that provides us with good things" (St. Chrysostom). "The power of hell is, indeed, great, but prayer is greater than all the devils, and the reason is because by prayer the soul obtains the assistance of God, which far surpasses all created power" (St. Bernard).

COMPARISONS.

To the Christian, prayer is a shield with which he averts the attack of the enemy ; a sword with which he battles for good ; an army with which he puts evil to flight.

If from our intercourse with wise and virtuous men we derive much benefit, how infinitely useful and salutary must be our frequent intercourse with God !

EXAMPLES.

Prayer Affords us Help in Need and Trouble.

From Holy Scripture.—Ismael, the son of Agar, when almost exhausted in the desert, prayed to God, Who pointed out to him a well, from which he was revived and refreshed (Gen. xxi. 17). Jacob prayed, and forthwith the Lord turned the heart of his brother Esau (Gen. xxxii. 9). As long as Moses held up his hands in prayer, the enemy lost in battle, wherefore Aaron and Hur supported his hands till evening (Exod. xvii. 12). Often did Moses by his prayer turn aside the anger of God from Israel. By her prayers, Anna the wife of Elcana obtained fruitfulness (I. Kings i. 10). Elias prayed, and God, Who for three years had afflicted the land with a drought, sent refreshing rain (III. Kings xviii. 37). The same prophet by praying raised a dead child to life (III. Kings xvii. 20). Eliseus did the same (IV. Kings iv. 33). Manasses prayed, and the Lord brought him back to Jerusalem and restored to him his kingdom (II. Paral. xxxiii. 12). By their prayers, Judith and Esther rescued their people from destruction (Jud. x. 11 ; Esth. xiv. 3). By prayer, Jonas was saved by a whale (Jonas ii. 2). These are but a few of the countless examples of the efficacy of prayer to be found in Holy Scripture.

The Refreshing Rain.—The Emperor Marcus Aurelius was waging war against the Quades and Marcomans. Sorely pressed by a powerful enemy, he found himself and his army, after long and severe marches under a burning sun, enclosed in a valley in which not a drop of water was to be found. It looked as if they would have to die of thirst. Those among them who were pagans called on their gods in vain. Then the Christians of a certain legion turned to the one true God, and begged His assistance in the hour of trial and want. Soon a small black cloud was seen gathering, which grew in dimensions, and, floating over the valley, deluged the place with a copious rain, which the soldiers caught in their shields and helmets. All were saved,

men and horses ; while the enemy were at the same time visited by a violent shower of hail that destroyed many and unfitted the rest for further hostilities.

A Battle Won.—In the year 313, Maximinus, with sixty thousand men, marched against his rival Licinius, who had hardly time to get together thirty thousand men to meet him. In order to make his expected victory more secure, Maximinus made a solemn vow to Jupiter to eradicate the very name of the Christians, if that deity would help him in battle. Before entering the engagement, the soldiers of Licinius prayed as follows : "Great God, we invoke Thee. Holy God, we implore Thy almighty assistance. To Thee we commend our just cause, to Thy hands we intrust our safety and our country. In Thee we live, in Thee we conquer, in Thee we hope to win the victory. Great and holy God, hear our prayer. To Thee do we lift up our hands and our hearts. Almighty and all-holy God, deign to hear us." After their prayer the soldiers of Licinius threw themselves into the conflict with hope and confidence. The enemy, who were double their number, becoming panic-stricken, were unable to use their weapons, and, finding themselves fiercely assailed, turned and ran. Maximinus succeeded in reaching the town of Tarsus, where, shut in by land and sea, he saw no means of escape from his pursuers, save by poison. He died, racked with disappointment and pain.

An Enemy Overcome.—In the year 350 the city of Nisibis was besieged by the Persian king Sapor II. St. James, the holy bishop of the place, mounted the walls and begged God for strength to resist the enemy. Then the Lord sent an immense swarm of flies, which, entering the ears, nostrils, and eyes of the elephants, made them so furious that they created great disorder in the camp and crushed many of the Persians to death. Sapor recognized that God Himself was protecting the city, and raised the siege.

The Conflagration in Constantinople.—In the year 433 a great conflagration occurred in Constantinople. The large northern portion of the city was reduced to a mass of ruins. Public granaries and business places of all kinds, as well as many private houses, were consumed by the flames. Many inhabitants had sought refuge in a church, which, however, was soon surrounded by the fire. Sparks and smoke entered through the windows, the heat from the burning buildings became unbearable, and the walls of the church took fire. Flight was impos-

sible, help seemed out of question. Then the refugees, with the archbishop, threw themselves on their knees and prayed aloud to God to stifle the fire and to spare their lives. Their prayer was heard, the flames by a miracle were driven back, and the church, with all those who had sought refuge in it, was saved by the Almighty.

The Prayer of the Just is Powerful.—During the time when Simeon stood on his column in prayer and meditation there raged in Antioch an unwonted mortality. Many houses stood empty, whole families had died out, the earth shook repeatedly, and so violently that even the pillar of St. Simeon came near falling. The people of Antioch were beside themselves with terror and fright, and almost the entire population fled for help to the holy hermit. Simeon wept with them and prayed with them, but suddenly he changed to harsh words, reproached them for their infamy, and declared that the Lord had turned His countenance away from them on account of their avarice, their luxurious living, and their shameful vices. They should not dare again to raise their unclean, blasphemous hands up to Heaven. He, however, would intercede for them. While he was still praying, another violent earthquake was felt. Terrified, the people fell down, and then Simeon permitted them again to lift up their cries to Heaven. He joined with increased fervor in their prayers. After a time he rose and announced that God had accepted their prayer, and that He would take compassion on the city. But, said he, among the great multitude assembled there was only one man whose prayer had reached God and had been accepted. He pointed with his hand at a simple peasant, commanding him to come nearer. "My son," he continued, addressing him, "tell me what pious thing you have done, that God has shown you such great favor." "I, reverend father," replied the peasant, "am no better than the others; I am a miserable sinner like them." This humble answer corroborated what Simeon already knew. When he urged the peasant to confess the truth, the latter told with great modesty that he was in the habit of dividing his earnings into three parts, of which he gave one to the poor, paid his taxes with another, and supported himself and his family with the third.

Help at the Right Moment.—St. Columban built a monastery in the Vosges Mountains, on the ruins of the deserted and dilapidated castle Anegrai. The country was utterly wild, stony, and uninhabited, so that, in spite of their frugality, St. Columban and

his companions, though satisfied with a few wild, edible herbs, were frequently in danger of starvation. But Providence always cared for them in a miraculous manner. Once one of them was very ill. All were afflicted and troubled because they could give their sick brother nothing but some bark of the trees and wild herbs for his sustenance and refreshment. As always in times of need, they resorted to prayer, and before long there came to their gate a peasant, who lived some hours' walk from the cloister, bringing bread and all sorts of refreshments. The good man said that for three days and nights he had been haunted by the notion that the pious monks of Anegrai were in deepest distress, until at last he could no longer resist the impulse to take them provisions. When the monks thanked him, he requested them to intercede with God for his sick wife. St. Columban at once went into the chapel with his companions, and even before the anxious husband reached home his wife was in perfect health.

Prayer procures Help in Dangers and Temptations.

The Missionary of the Wild Namaquas.—Placidus, a pious man, went to Africa, into the country of the wild Namaquas, to preach to them the word of God. One day while he was in the fields, in the midst of the wild tribe, preaching the name of God, our heavenly Father, lo ! there came out of the sand a black, poisonous snake, which wound itself around his feet. When the Namaquas saw this they were very much frightened, for they believed the snake would kill Placidus, and they dared not attack the animal lest they might rouse its anger. But Placidus stood there very quiet, and folding his hands looked up to heaven. Then the snake wound its coils around the knees, the loins, and the body of the man. The multitude, still more frightened, held their breath in terror. Then the monster coiled its black body around the neck and throat of the pious man, stretched its head over his head, while its eyes glittered like two rubies and its tongue in its mouth like a flame. But he stood there quiet, looking up to heaven. Then the people thought : "Now his hour has come and nothing can save him." But the snake did him no harm ; it unwound itself gently from his body down to the ground and slipped into its hole. The astonished multitude would have worshipped Placidus, but he did not permit it, saying : "Worship Him in Whom I trust and Whose work I do. Has He not called me and created the snake ? Is it such a great thing to preserve me ?"

The Light in the Lantern.—In the seventh century, when Sigibert, the son of King Dagobert, was on the French throne, there lived in a very strong castle near Brussels a count named Witger. He had three children, who were educated together in the fear of God. The youngest one was Gerdila, a girl



A MONK AT PRAYER.

of angelic purity, of great virtue, and a model for her playmates. To do good and make others happy was a characteristic of her pious soul even in her earliest years. She loved nothing

better than a lonely, retired life ; she sought after nothing more than God and His pleasure. As soon as the bell from the Church of St. Salvator at Morzelle, half an hour's walk from the castle, gave the first signal for morning service, she rose from her couch, put on a long white veil, and with her trusty maiden, who carried a lamp in a lantern, she set out on her pilgrimage to the old church. No accident, no complaint, no pleasure ever interfered with this daily accustomed errand. Once, when she was on her way in the early morning hour, a man in a black cloak suddenly confronted her and, to frighten her, extinguished the light in the lantern. Trembling with fear and horror, this holy virgin knelt down and, praying aloud, cried to God for help ; and lo ! immediately a gust of wind passed by her, fanning into a flame the spark still gleaming in the wick. When the black tempter saw this, he fled, as fast as he could, into the darkness, cursing.

Necessity of Prayer.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

"He is the Lord thy God, and Him they shall adore" (Ps. xliv. 12). "Jesus spoke also a parable, that we ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke xviii. 1). "Ask, and it shall be given you : seek, and you shall find : knock, and it shall be opened to you" (Matt. vii. 7). "Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation" (John xxvi. 41).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"After Baptism, continual prayer is necessary for man, that he may attain to heavenly joys ; for although by Baptism sins are remitted, yet there always remains in us an inclination to sin that rages inwardly, and the world and the devil that assail us from without. So to be happy we must struggle and conquer. Now without assistance from God no man can become master over so many powerful opponents. Such divine assistance is secured only by prayer ; consequently there can be no salvation without prayer" (St. Thomas Aquinas). "As the plants require moisture in order to remain fresh and not to dry up, so do we need prayer in order to be saved" (St. Chrysostom). "As the body receives vitality from the soul, so does the soul receive life from prayer" (The Same). "Prayer is the food of the soul ; for as the body cannot live without nourishment, neither can the soul maintain its life without prayer" (St. Augustine). "Never

will the person attain piety of life who does not know how to pray well" (The Same).

COMPARISONS.

As a tree standing in a place where there is no sunshine does not thrive nor bring forth fruit, so is it with a soul that does not pray, and does not receive the warmth of divine grace obtained by prayer. It will never reach perfection in virtue.

The fish cannot live out of water, but dies very soon. Neither can the soul of man live without prayer : it gradually dies.

EXAMPLE.

Hillel and Maimon.

The wise Hillel had a disciple named Maimon, and was proud of the latter's abilities and good disposition. But Hillel began to notice that Maimon depended too much on his own cleverness, and neglected the aid of prayer. The youth had said in his own heart : "What is the use of prayer? Does an all-knowing God need our advice to induce Him to help and give? He would be a child of man. Can man's importunities change the mind of God? If He is all-good, will He not of His own accord grant us what is good and useful?" Such were the young man's thoughts.

Hillel was troubled in soul that Maimon should think himself wiser than the Divine Word, and he resolved to correct him.

One day Maimon found Hillel seated in his garden under a shady palm-tree, with his head resting on his hand. Then Maimon spoke, and inquired : "Master, what are you meditating on?" Hillel, raising his head, replied : "I have a friend who lives on his farm, which he once cultivated carefully ; but lately he has thrown away the plough and the harrow, and leaves the soil to itself. Hence he will soon be poor and needy, notwithstanding the natural wealth of his farm." "Is the man a fool?" inquired the disciple. "No," replied Hillel. "He is well trained and skilled in divine and human knowledge. But he says : 'The Lord is almighty, and can afford me a living without my toiling for it. He is good, and will supply my wants.'" "But," said Maimon, "is not that a tempting of God? Did you not tell him so, my rabboni?"

Then Hillel smiled, and said : "I will tell him so. My dear Maimon, you are the friend I am speaking of." "I?" exclaimed

the disciple. The old man replied : "Yes, it is you ; for are you not tempting God ? Is prayer of less importance than labor, or divine gifts less valuable than the fruits of the field ? O my son, be humble, believing, and prayerful." The latter resumed his prayers, and became a better man.

Duty of Prayer.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

"We ought always to pray and not to faint" (Luke xviii. 1). "Let nothing hinder thee from praying always" (Ecclus. xviii. 22). "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God" (Philipp. iv. 6).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"Every day and at every moment we ought to pray" (Tertullian). "Who among just men has fought without praying ? Moses prayed and conquered. He ceased to pray and was conquered. Therefore let the Christian learn what a stern duty prayer is ; let him learn whence come his victories and defeats in his spiritual warfare. Yes, let him learn that he must be more instant in prayer than Moses, partly because the enemy with whom he has to contend is far more dangerous, and partly because he has to combat for himself and not for others" (St. Chrysostom). "What the weapon is to the soldier, that is prayer to the Christian ; as the soldier dare not enter battle without his weapons, so the Christian should not go anywhere without praying" (Eligius). "As the young bird lying helpless and unfledged in the nest must cry to the old one for help, so the man who has become deprived of God's grace, and therefore is in need of help, must call on God" (Louis of Granada).

EXAMPLES.

The Early Christians.

The early Christians practised the holy duty of prayer in a manner highly reproaching to us. Day and night they assembled to praise the Lord, to pour out their hearts in prayer before Him, to make known their wants, and to implore Him for protection against their enemies, and for peace and happiness amid the believing flock just beginning to thrive and flourish.

When the pagans were buried in sleep these Christians kept vigils with closed doors in obscure rooms and subterranean vaults, where they passed many hours in prayer.

The Old Fathers.

The ancient Christian Fathers once held counsel to see what was the most necessary and most useful exercise to obtain everlasting happiness, and they decided that it was the frequent repetition of David's short prayer, "Lord, make haste to help me."

Qualities of Prayer.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

"Before prayer prepare thy soul : and be not as a man that tempteth God " (Ecclus. xviii. 23).

"When you stretch forth your hands I will turn away My eyes from you ; and when you multiply prayer, I will not hear, for your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, be clean, take away the evil of your devices from My eyes : cease to do perversely " (Is. i. 15, 16).

"Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners : and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep : let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into sorrow. Be humbled in the sight of the Lord, and He will exalt you " (James iv. 8-10).

"A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise " (Ps. l. 19). "The prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds : and he will not depart till the Most High behold " (Ecclus. xxxv. 21).

"God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble " (James iv. 6). "He hath regard to the prayer of the humble : and He hath not despised their petition " (Ps. ci. 18). "But if any of you want wisdom, let him ask God, Who giveth to all men abundantly, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering, for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, which is moved and carried about by the wind. Therefore let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord " (James i. 5-7). "Whatsoever you ask when ye pray, believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you " (Mark xi. 24). "Amen, amen, I say to you : if you ask the Father anything in My name He will give it you " (John xvi. 23). "Cursed be he

that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully" (Jer. xlviii. 10). "Speak not anything rashly, and let not thy heart be hasty to utter a word before God. For God is in heaven, and thou upon



PRAYER OUR HELP IN DANGER.

earth: therefore let thy words be few" (Eccles. v. 1). "Be instant in prayer, watching in it" (Col. iv. 2). "Let nothing hinder thee from praying always" (Ecclus. xviii. 22). Be "re-

joicing in hope : patient in tribulation : instant in prayer " (Rom. xii. 12).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"When a suppliant throws himself at your feet after he has dipped his hands in defilement, and with such stained hands prays to you, he would not only find no hearing, but rather your displeasure. It is just the same with the prayer of him who appeareth before God with an insincere, stained heart" (St. Chrysostom). "Never did any one contritely implore the Lord for benefits who did not receive what he sought" (The Same). "Humility and charity are the spiritual wings of prayer, on which man soars to the heights of divinity" (St. Lawrence Justinian). "He brings to God the Lord a true prayer who in his humility acknowledges that he is only dust" (St. Gregory the Great). "The suppliant must fix his look on two things : first, on himself and his own misery, at the contemplation of which he should humble himself, be inwardly ashamed, and consider himself undeserving of any good ; secondly, he must direct his gaze on the goodness, mercy, and promises of God, and then his heart should expand and form the resolution to attain every good. These two virtues, humility and confidence, are the two pinions on which prayer ascends to God, and the two weapons with which one wrests every grace from His hands" (Scaramelli). "When we petition an earthly man for an earthly object we bow down almost to the ground in our humility ; and when we beseech God for pardon for our offences and for everlasting rest we do not condescend to bow down our heads" (Cæsar of Arles). "Divine mercy is an inexhaustible fountain : whoever brings to it the largest measure of confidence will carry away the largest amount of good things. The oil of Thy mercy Thou pourest into vessels of confidence" (St. Bernard). "He who doubts will receive nothing ; for the unjust wavering that disquiets him will hinder divine mercy to hear his prayers. You have not prayed aright, because you prayed doubting" (St. Basil). "Pray in the name and through the merits of Jesus Christ. But we do not pray in the name of Our Saviour when we pray for something that is unfavorable to our salvation" (St. Augustine). "Whosoever at the time of prayer has not his attention fixed on something useful for his soul is a trifler and a babbler" (St. Gregory of Nyssa). "Suppliant ! you offer God a great insult when you ask Him to hear your prayer, to which you yourself give no atten-

tion when uttering it. What! You ask Him that He be mindful of you, and you are mindful neither of Him nor yourself?" (St. Bernard.) "The farmer waits a whole year for the seed to come up from the earth, form into a plant, and bring forth timely fruit. How many years must he wait before he can taste the fruit of a tree he has planted? Yet we wish to taste the fruit of our prayers on the instant" (St. Francis of Sales). "The farmer should not hesitate to till his field just because heaven does not send the rain and dew at his bidding. Nor should the sinner, just because the heavenly Physician is not at hand to heal his wounds at once, cease his supplications for forgiveness; for if the farmer sow no seed the rain will be of no use to him, and if the sinner do not pray, God, though merciful, will not give health to his soul" (St. Ephrem). "Persevere in prayer. If God sometimes gives slowly, He thereby teaches us the better to appreciate the value of His gifts, but He does not refuse them. Graces that have been long sought after are held in honor, and when obtained we retain them more faithfully. What comes easily goes quickly" (St. Augustine). "Only continue to pray. The grace that God does not concede to you in this hour He may grant to you at another time. What He does not give you in one day, or in one week, or in one month, or in one year, He can give you some other day, or week, or month, or year. Persevere in your work and zeal in prayer, and God will reward it with His grace when it shall please Him. The smith when making a knife gives the iron many blows before the knife is finished, but at last one final stroke finishes it" (Ægidius). "Jesus does not only say, 'Ask and you shall receive,' but also, 'Seek and you shall find.' God wishes not only to be asked, but also to be sought. One must knock repeatedly at the door of this great Lord till it be opened" (St. Augustine). "Our will should be submitted to the divine will to the degree that as far as we know His will we wish to will the same, and on the other hand will nothing which we know He does not will" (St. Bernard). "In everything that our heart desires we should say, 'Lord, if it be Thy will, let it be so done'" (Thomas à Kempis).

TWO COMPARISONS.

We read that God required Abraham to sacrifice his son. On coming to the foot of the hill of sacrifice the patriarch said to the servants: "Stay you here with the ass: I and the boy will go with speed as far as yonder, and after we have worshipped

will return to you." Abraham going to the mountain to offer sacrifice is a figure of a man who wishes to worship God by a sacrifice of praise or prayer, as the Psalmist says: "Offer to God a sacrifice of praise." By the ass is to be understood our body; by the servants, our outward senses. As Abraham ordered the servants to stay with the ass at the foot of the mountain, so also must he who prays before the church command his outward senses with the body, with all cares and irrelevant business, to wait, and he must be present as if without his body.

St. Augustine explains this by another simile. When Jacob was travelling to Mesopotamia, and was overtaken by night, he went to sleep after sunset, and in his sleep saw a ladder that reached from the earth to heaven, and God standing on it, and angels ascending and descending. According to the explanation of St. Augustine, this ladder represents true prayer, which likewise reaches from the earth to heaven, as the wise man says: "The prayer of him who humbleth himself pierces the clouds." But in order that the spirit may thus be enabled to rise, and the prayer to ascend to God, Jacob must go to sleep under the ladder; that is, the body must so act as if it were asleep, feeling nothing and without life, as the Church also says: "I sleep, but my heart watcheth."

Adage.

The farther back a man stretches his bow, the higher does the arrow ascend. The more lowly a man humbles himself, the more powerfully does his prayer rise towards heaven.

EXAMPLES.

Devout Prayer.

St. Aloysius Gonzaga was favored by Heaven with such a true spirit of fervent prayer, that when engaged in that holy exercise he not only wept copiously himself, but even moved all who happened to see him to the shedding of tears. One day the confessor of this angelic youth asked him whether he ever had any distraction in prayer. After some reflection, Aloysius, with much modest embarrassment, replied: "When I count up all my distractions at prayer for the last half year, I find they would not cover the space of one Hail Mary." The making of this acknowledgment by Aloysius was harder for him than would be the confession of many wilful distractions.

Humble Prayer.

The Princess Ann of Saxony, when lying on her death-bed, feeling that she would need the help of prayer in her last agony, sent a request to all her subjects that they would be good enough to offer up their prayers to God, not indeed for a princess, since she had already laid aside every worldly vanity, but, to use her own words, "for a poor sinner, whose life is drawing to a close, and who in the name of Our Saviour begs the prayers of her people that God would grant her the grace of a happy death."

Trusting Prayer.

An aged pastor who had always found it difficult enough to meet the many demands on his charity, and yet never lost confidence in the goodness of God, Who always helps in the moment of need those who love Him, one day found himself so utterly destitute that there was nothing left for his dinner. His distressed housekeeper begged his permission to go and borrow something from one of the neighbors, thinking that such a proceeding would awaken the generosity of other parishioners, and that some means might be supplied to the good pastor. But the latter, fully confident that God, Who had never allowed him to be hungry, would not fail to send him that day's bread, refused the permission to the housekeeper, offered up a fervent prayer to God, and then bade her set the table for dinner. She obeyed, and covered the table with empty dishes. The good Father took his place, and began to say the prayer before meals. Before he finished there was a knock at the door, and a servant of a wealthy parishioner entered, bearing a basket filled with provisions. He said his master, having expected to dinner a large party of friends who were suddenly prevented from coming, had sent all the materials to the pastor, thinking he might need them for distribution among the poor.

The good priest then quietly partook of what was necessary for himself, and ordered the remainder to be given to the poor, though none there were poorer than he. Before the hour came for the next meal some other parishioners had provided for the wants of their pastor, who till the day of his death never lost his trust in that God Who cares for those who love Him and confide in His goodness and mercy.

Persistent Prayer.

Often in the lives of God's saints are seen instances of persistency which in the eyes of worldlings wear the appearance of presumption. But God judges differently from the world.

In the life of St. Catharine of Siena we read that her mother died suddenly and without the last sacraments. Whereupon the saint cried out to God: "O Lord! where is Thy promise, that none of my family should die unhappily? Hear me, O Lord! I shall not depart from this place till Thou restore my mother to life." The mother returned to life and lived many years.

Prayer of Resignation.

We read the following in the lives of the early Fathers. The fields and vineyards of a certain farmer were more thriving and productive than those of his neighbors. When these asked him how that was, he replied: "There is nothing to be wondered at in this, for I always have the weather just as I want it." Then they wondered the more, and said: "How is that?" He explained: "I never ask God to send any weather but such as pleases Himself; and as I will what He wills, I always have my own way, and plentiful crops besides."

Zeal in Prayer.

Christ, the model of all Christians, arose early in the morning to pray, as St. Mark tells us in his gospel (i. 35). St. Clement tells us of St. Peter, too, that he used to assemble the faithful at an early hour every morning to pass some time in prayer and praise. From the writings of the pagan Pliny we learn that the primitive Christians continued this pious practice. He says: "After a close examination, I can find nothing to be blamed in the lives of the Christians. Every morning before sunrise they meet together and sing the praises of Christ, Who is their God." Sidonius Apollinaris writes concerning Theodoric, King of the Goths: "Every morning regularly he appeared with a small retinue at the assembly of the priests, and followed the exercises with close attention." In the life of St. Pulcheria we read that she, her three sisters, her brother the emperor, with his wife Eudoxia, used to assemble in her chapel every morning before sunrise to pray and to assist at holy Mass. Count Eleazer, who died in France in the year 1285, ordered all his servants and farm-hands to spend a certain time every morning in prayer, and

in commending their day's work to God. What was done once could be done again.

For What we should Pray.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

"Two things I have asked of Thee, deny them not to me before I die.

"Remove far from me vanity and lying words. Give me neither beggary, nor riches: give me only the necessities of life.

"Lest perhaps being filled, I should be tempted to deny, and say: Who is the Lord? or being compelled by poverty, I should steal, and forswear the name of my God" (Prov. xxx. 7-9).

"Seek not you what you shall eat, or what you shall drink: and be not lifted up on high" with anxious, worldly cares: "for all these things do the nations of the world seek. But your Father knoweth that you have need of these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His justice: and all these things shall be added unto you" (Luke xii. 29-31).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"Pray for the kingdom of heaven, and for such things as will help you to reach it. Whosoever asks for anything else asks for nothing; not, indeed, as if what he asks for were nothing, but because all earthly goods, in comparison with celestial and eternal things, are to be counted as nothing" (St. Augustine). "When you pray, look for worthy things; not fleeting, but everlasting" (St. Ambrose). "As no one would dare to ask an emperor for a ragged garment or a few pennies, so be careful not to ask the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth for frivolous and unworthy things" (St. Chrysostom). "It happens from time to time that we ask God for temporal gifts, and that He does not hear us favorably, but it is because He loves us, and seeks to exercise mercy in our behalf. Whosoever, with full confidence, petitions the Lord for the necessities of life, is heard out of mercy, and is not heard out of mercy, for the physician knows better than the patient what is useful to the latter. A physician who loves his patient does not allow him what would injure him. Oh, how many, if they were poor and sick, would escape falling into those sins which they commit because they are wealthy and healthy" (St. Augustine).

EXAMPLES.

The Shepherd-boy at Prayer.

Simeon Stylites, when a youthful shepherd-boy, went one day to a remote and solitary chapel that stood over the grave of a martyr. Here, throwing himself on his knees, he prayed from his inmost heart to high Heaven. What was the import of his petition? Answer: "The substance of his prayer was that God would save his soul, guide him in the path of sanctity, make known to him the divine will, and enable him to follow it." In this prayer he persisted for seven whole days without taking any nourishment.

Solomon's Prayer.

"The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, saying: Ask what thou wilt that I should give thee.

"And Solomon said: Thou hast showed great mercy to Thy servant David my father, even as he walked before Thee in truth, and justice, and an upright heart with Thee: and Thou hast kept Thy great mercy for him, and hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day.

"And now, O Lord God, Thou hast made Thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a child, and know not how to go out and come in.

"And Thy servant is in the midst of the people which Thou hast chosen, an immense people, which cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

"Give therefore to Thy servant an understanding heart, to judge Thy people, and discern between good and evil. For who shall be able to judge this people, Thy people which is so numerous?

"And the word was pleasing to the Lord, that Solomon had asked such a thing.

"And the Lord said to Solomon: Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life nor riches, nor the lives of thy enemies, but hast asked for thyself wisdom to discern judgment:

"Behold I have done for thee according to thy words, and have given thee a wise and understanding heart, in so much that there hath been no one like thee, before thee, nor shall arise after thee.

"Yea, and the things also which thou didst not ask I have given thee: to wit, riches and glory, so that no one hath been

like thee among the kings in all days heretofore" (III. Kings iii. 5-13).

The Mother's Prayer Rejected, yet Granted.

St. Monica, the mother of St. Augustine, besought divine providence to hinder her son's journey into Italy, knowing, as she did, that he would there encounter many temptations. Notwithstanding his mother's prayers, Augustine arrived in Italy, where, for the first time, his thoughts were directed to God, and he received the first impulses to conversion.

For Whom we should Pray.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

"Pray for one another, that you may be saved" (James v. 16). "I desire therefore first of all that supplications and thanksgivings be made for all men: for kings and for all that are in high station, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all piety and chastity" (I. Tim. ii. 1, 2). "Peter therefore was kept in prison. But prayer was made without ceasing by the Church unto God for him" (Acts xii. 5). "I give thanks to my God in every remembrance of you, always in all my prayers making supplication for you all with joy" (Philipp. i. 3, 4). "Love your enemies; pray for them that persecute and calumniate you" (Matt. v. 44). "It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins" (II. Mach. xii. 46).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"The prayer which we say for others increases our own merits as well to the regaining of graces in this life as to glory in the next life" (St. Francis of Sales). "Let us, then, pray for each other. For it is but merely natural to ask for one's self, whilst it is always a labor of the purest charity to pray for others" (St. Chrysostom). "From the bottom of our hearts we pray for all emperors, that they may have long life, uninterrupted reigns, domestic safety, brave armies, a senate to do them honor, a people who obey them, peace throughout their dominions, in fact, for all that they may desire whether as emperors or as private individuals" (Tertullian). "We pray to God for the dead when we offer up to Him in sacrifice Jesus Christ Himself as victim, Who died for our sins, that He, Who is so merciful, might deal graciously with the dead and with ourselves" (St. Cyril).

EXAMPLES.

St. Severinus.

Every one who observes the ways of God even in regard to himself must have felt the value and power of mutual prayer, whilst in the lives of the saints we find countless striking instances. We select only one, St. Severinus, the apostle of Austria, whose example shows forth the power of faith. In the strictest sense of the word, he was the good angel of the place he dwelt in. He supplied the people not only with the light of the Gospel, but he averted from them by his prayers innumerable calamities of every kind, and during the unsettled times of the barbarian invasions he was the means of alleviating much suffering.

A famine came upon one of the cities on the banks of the Danube. All provisions were exhausted, and the inhabitants were anxiously awaiting the arrival of some boats laden with provisions from Bavaria. But the boats were all frozen fast in the ice, for the season was intensely cold.

When their case became desperate, the inhabitants sent for St. Severinus to come and help them. He responded to their call, exhorted them to do penance, and while praying with them, behold, the ice in the river broke up, and the provisioned boats reached the starving city!

Another time the country was infested with swarms of locusts, that seemed inclined to remain. Again St. Severinus was called. He came, urged the people to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, and forbade them to make any attempt to drive away the locusts, for all human efforts would be useless. One poor man, who had only one acre, thought he would be able to clear it of the destructive insects, and disobeyed the saint. When, a day or two later, the locusts left the country, all the crops in every field were safe, except those of the disobedient man. He began to utter loud lamentations, when the saint reproved him sharply, and then applied to his neighbors to lend him aid till such time as he could raise another crop.

So many were the cures wrought by St. Severinus, that people crowded the roads carrying their sick and disabled to his monastery. He multiplied loaves of bread, like his blessed Master in the desert, and even raised the dead to life.

But many will say: "Oh, these were saints!" But how did they become saints? By the power of faith. Not only did they pray with faith and confidence, but they resisted their evil incli-

nations. This same faith has been given to us as a weapon for defence and a shield for protection.

St. Paschal Baylon.

In the life of St. Paschal Baylon we read : A gentleman who was very fond of the Order of St. Francis, and a special friend of St. Paschal, allowed himself to be entrapped in the snares of Satan by the wiles of a wicked married woman. One evening, while on the way to visit her, he heard the ringing of a bell, which, distant at first, came nearer and nearer, and at last so near as to make him believe it was fastened to his heel. He was ashamed of every one he met. This shame led him to think of his evil ways, and, taking his beads, he began to say the Rosary and turned homeward. Next day the woman met him, and said it was lucky that he had not called on her the preceding evening, for her husband, having become suspicious, had hired two assassins to kill him. She added that she was miserable and conscience-stricken, and was then on her way to confession, and that he must never again call on her. The man entering seriously into himself, repaired to the Franciscans, resolved to go to confession. St. Paschal opened the door, and called out joyfully : "Thank God you are come. I am so glad to see you." "Why so?" asked the man. "Because all day yesterday I felt great anxiety about you, and prayed for you incessantly." "If I am to believe that all that came from God," replied the man, "tell me what happened last evening." Then St. Paschal told him about the bell, and the assassins, and the woman, and the rosary, and both joined in giving praise to God.

The Devout Empress.

Matilda, the empress of Henry the Fowler, after she became a widow followed a regular rule of life, which shows forth her sincere piety and genuine fear of God. When all would be buried in sleep, she would arise quietly, and, calling her maid, would repair to the castle chapel. Here she would pray with uplifted hands for mercy and pardon for all sinners, for peace for all souls, especially for such as were nearest and dearest to her. When she would perceive that the hour was approaching for the nocturnal devotions of the priests, she would return quietly to her room and go to bed. As soon as the morning bell rang she was the first to arise and hasten to the church, just as if she had slept the whole night.

Grateful Prayer.

In his younger days St. Augustine had caused his good, pious mother many a sigh and many a bitter tear. But later in life, when he re-entered the path of virtue, he endeavored to repair his unkindness by devout, fervent, and frequent prayer for her. He begged God to bless and reward his holy mother for all the grief and anxiety she had sustained on his account. When death deprived him of her he was inconsolable, and ever afterwards he would shed tears when he recalled her many kind and gentle acts. He ever remembered her at the altar, and commended her soul to the prayers of the faithful, as we learn from his book known as the "Confessions."



ST. ALOYSIUS GONZAGA.

St. Ignatius and St. Francis.

It was the daily custom of St. Ignatius Loyola to pray for all rulers of nations, that God would bless their undertakings for

the good of the people and for the spread of the Catholic faith. Most fervently did he pray for the Head of the Church, and when he heard that Pope Julius III. was sick he redoubled his prayers that he might be spared to govern and guide the Bark of Peter.

St. Francis Xavier prayed incessantly for the conversion of the heathens. His prayers and preaching brought thousands of souls to the light of the true faith.

Pray for Enemies.

An ill-minded man annoyed St. Francis of Sales most grievously, and would not be deterred even by the kindest words of the saint. The latter, more grieved at the offence given to God than at his own troubles, said to this man: "Would you believe that if in your anger you put out one of my eyes, I would look out of the other at you as if you were my best friend? I cannot deny that my human feelings are outraged at your insults, yet the Word of God forbidding me to sin, teaches me to suppress my feelings; while the example of Our Lord on the cross praying for those who put Him to death must always be kept before my mind."

Time for Prayer.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

"We ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke xviii. 1). "Pray without ceasing" (I. Thess. v. 17). "Whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do: do all to the glory of God" (I. Cor. x. 31). "He will give his heart to resort early to the Lord that made him, and he will pray in the sight of the Most High. He will open his mouth in prayer, and will make supplication for his sins" (Ecclus. xxxix. 6, 7). "I have cried to God: and the Lord will save me. Evening and morning and at noon I will speak and declare: and He shall hear my voice" (Ps. liv. 17, 18). "It is good to give praise to the Lord: and to sing to Thy name, O Most High. To show forth Thy mercy in the morning: and Thy truth in the night" (Ps. xci. 2, 3). "And thou shalt have eaten and be full: take heed diligently lest thou forget the Lord" (Deut. vi. 12, 13). "Bless God at all times: and desire of Him to direct thy ways, and that all thy counsels may abide in Him" (Tobias iv. 20).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"Whosoever begins a discourse or any other affair, can follow no better plan than to begin with God and end with God" (St.

Gregory Nazianzen). "What, then, can be more benefiting than for man to imitate the holy angels in heaven, and in the morning to assemble his family for prayer, praise, and blessing his Creator in hymns of adoration" (St. Basil). "We ought not to partake of food till we have prayed; and at our awaking we should return thanks to our Creator. When we go out, we should arm ourselves with prayer: when we return, we should pray before we sit down. We should not rest our bodies till we have first composed our souls" (St. Jerome).

EXAMPLES.

Pray without ceasing.

All pious souls, eager for their sanctification and salvation, have endeavored to follow this admonition of praying always. By offering up to God their smallest and their greatest actions, they acquired merit for time and eternity. -

St. Baldomere, a blacksmith, used to repeat at every blow of his hammer, "In the name of God."

St. Climachus, a monastery cook, had every day to prepare meals for two hundred and thirty persons, without counting visitors. As he was always merry and laughing, people would express their wonder that he would not sometimes grow weary and ill-humored over his excessive and disagreeable work in the kitchen. "Not at all," he would say cheerfully, "I simply keep in mind that I am cooking for God, for Our Saviour assures us that whatsoever is done for the least among the brethren, is done for Him."

When St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi was superioress over a convent of religious, it was her practice to come suddenly upon them while at their work, and ask them unexpectedly: "Why do you sew, why do you knit, why do you cook, why are you in such a hurry," etc.? The good sisters, remembering their admirable training in their novitiate, would say: "For the love of God; for the honor of God; for the good of God's souls."

St. Ignatius, the founder of the Society of Jesus, used to accompany his every action with the words: "For the greater glory of God."

St. Ludger.

We should never allow anything to keep us from saying our morning and evening prayers regularly. Of fidelity to this duty we have a touching instance in the life of St. Ludger, first bishop

of Münster. He had been called to court by Charlemagne, who wished to profit by his wisdom and learning. Being called one morning very early, while at his devotions, to meet the emperor, he said he would go as soon as he had finished his morning prayers. The emperor sent a second and third time, but St. Ludger, knowing well that duty to God must go before duty to man, replied each time that he would come as soon as he had finished the portion of the office he had already begun. At length when he appeared before the emperor and was questioned about the delay, he said firmly: "Emperor, I have always believed that your commands are to be obeyed, but that God's commandments take the precedence. Such, too, was the counsel you gave me when I was made bishop: that I was first of all to serve God, and then obey your laws. Obedient to the authority of this your command, and, surely, judging correctly and justly, I do not doubt that God is to be preferred to you and to all mortals; nor did I believe you desired anything contrary to this command and right reason. I have not, therefore, dishonored or despised your imperial majesty, as wicked men have calumniated me, but have attended to that which I owe God, for my salvation's sake; and I have now come better qualified to your service." The good emperor received the answer graciously, saying: "I thank you, bishop, that you have proved yourself such a man as I have always thought you to be. Continue, as in the past, to do God's will always; and, faithful and true to us, to remember our kingdom in your prayers."

The Abbot and the Camel-drivers.

Some camel-drivers who had lost their way in the passage across the desert arrived with their tired beasts at the door of Abbot Saba's cell. He supplied his guests with the best provisions he could set before them, expressing his regret at not being able to give them anything better than some roots and vegetables which he himself raised in his own small garden. On their next journey through the desert the camel-drivers stopped at the abbot's cell, and to show their gratitude for his kind hospitality presented him with a good supply of cheese and a basket of fresh dates. When the abbot showed his presents to the brethren of the monastery, and praised the gratitude of the strangers, he became very earnest, and said: "Wo to us! these rude people are heathens; yet they, instead of forgetting a slight favor, manifest their gratefulness by giving rich presents. How repre-

hensible, aye, how unpardonable, it is in us Christians, who pretend to recognize God as our greatest benefactor, to enjoy His daily benefits to us, and yet make so little effort to show Him our gratitude by pious, childlike prayer." All took to heart the timely words of the abbot, and with sincere thanks to God partook of the gifts given to them by the abbot.

John Berchmans.

This servant of God never began any duty without previously invoking God in prayer for guidance and help. It was his firmest conviction that prayer is a most salutary remedy for all imperfections. Hence he used to say often: "If I do not love prayer, I cannot live in peace." When he prayed, he would kneel down, close his eyes, cross his hands on his breast, and become penetrated with devout fervor, that those who were praying near him would become animated with a special glow of devotion, and be drawn into increased prayerfulness.

Pray before every Important Business.

As often as Josue in his wars called on God, he was successful. Once he failed to call on God, and met with disaster. Achab called on God to help him against the Syrians with the mighty army and their three-and twenty allied kings, and he was victorious. King David, with only four hundred men, was contending against the numerous and cruel Amalecites. Although he was discouraged, yet the Scripture tells us he strengthened himself in the Lord his God. Asking for divine guidance and help, he was told to give them chase and he would conquer them and capture their booty. He struck them successfully, and captured all except four hundred young men who fled on camels. When the devout Judith was about to destroy Holofernes, she called fervently on God for light and strength, and effected her purpose. When Mardochai and the whole Jewish people were in danger of being exterminated, the pious Esther, through her humble prayers to God, softened the heart of King Assuerus, and saved her people.

The Place for Prayer.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

"Am I, think ye, a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off?

"Shall a man be hid in secret places, and I not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?" (Jer. xxiii. 23, 24.)

"And when ye pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites, that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men: Amen I say to you, they have received their reward.

"But thou when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret: And thy Father Who seeth in secret will repay thee" (Matt. vi. 5, 6).

"My house shall be called the house of prayer" (Matt. xxi. 13).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"No place is without God, and every place is in God. He is in heaven, He is in the depths, He is over the seas" (St. Hilarius). "God despises no place; He merely requires a devout heart and an upright soul. Paul prayed while lying in bondage and irons, even in prison, and moved the foundations of the jail" (St. Chrysostom). "You can, of course, pray all alone in the house. But it cannot be that you pray so well and profitably when alone, as in the church, where so many pray with you, where you are stimulated by the example of so many, and where the supplications of all rise to the throne of God" (St. Chrysostom).

EXAMPLES.

We can Pray Everywhere.

We can pray everywhere and find a hearing with God. Daniel prayed in the lions' den and was heard. Manasses prayed in the darkness of a prison and loaded with chains, yet his prayer ascended to the throne of God, and was made acceptable. Ezechias prayed in his camp, Jonas in the whale's belly, Job on a dunghill, and all were heard. The Babylonian youths and many Christian martyrs praised and glorified God in the midst of the flames that consumed them.

Constant Prayer.

St. Francis of Sales, no matter where he was, raised himself by pious contemplation of even earthly things to the throne of God. When enjoying the beauty of the fields, he would say: "We, too, are fields, laid out and prepared by God, that we may produce good fruit." When looking at a rich and stately church, he would remark: "We, too, are temples of the living

God. Why are not our souls adorned with virtues?" When he saw beautiful flowers, he would ask: "Why are not our flowers of virtue followed by good fruit?" When he looked at fine and costly pictures, he would remark: "Nothing is fairer than a human soul made after God's own likeness." Passing through a garden, he would sigh, and say: "When shall the gardens of our souls be so well kept and cultivated as to yield fair flowers and sweet fruits?" At the sight of a fountain he would yearn for the happy day when he could drink without interruption the living waters from the fountain of his divine Saviour. When crossing a river, he used to ask: "When shall we be merged into our God as this river flows into the great ocean?"

St. Ignatius.—St. Chrysostom.

Even the early Christians used to assemble for common prayer, for they were convinced that such mutual devotions produced salutary results in their souls, and moved their heavenly Father to listen favorably. Hence Tertullian writes: "We meet together in large numbers, that, like a mighty army, we may with one voice and united strength find a hearing before God for our prayer, and obtain our requests. In that way we force, as it were, the Almighty, Who is, however, beyond force, and do Him violence that He may hear us. And, lo! this pressure is even pleasing to Him." St. Ignatius, the holy martyr, exhorts the faithful at Magnesia, saying: "Come all together to pray in the house of God. Let there be one prayer, one sentiment, one hope in undisguised love and joy. For Christ is but one, and there is nothing more precious than He." St. Chrysostom testified to the people of Antioch: "True, we can pray in solitude; but not as in the church, where the invocation ascends to God in many voices united. You will not be heard in the same way when you pray for yourself alone as when you pray with your brethren; for here is something more, namely, unity, harmony, and the bonds of peace."

Faulty Prayer.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

"You ask, and receive not: because you ask amiss" (James iv. 3). "We know that God doth not hear sinners" (John ix. 31). "Then shall they call upon Me, and I will not hear" (Prov. i. 28). "And when ye pray, you shall not be as the hypocrites,

that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men : amen I say to you, they have received their reward " (Matt. vi. 5).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"Many invoke God in prayer, but not as God. They ask of God such things as show they do not seek the honor of God, but something which they can consume in their passions. They degrade God to be their subject and their servant, the servant of their desires, their pride, their avarice, their lustful lives. How then could God hear them or grant their prayer?" (St. Augustine.) "He who would turn to an evil purpose whatever he would ask of God receives nothing, because God really has pity on him" (The Same). "How can you ask God to care for you when you do not take care of yourself?" (St. Cyprian.) "If there is any one who prays in a mere hypocritical way, and not from his heart, he may strive and struggle; it is all in vain. And I am not sorry if he suffer punishment for his treachery" (St. Gregory Nazianzen). "The Almighty God will not hear the prayer of that man in trouble who does not fulfil his commandments in practice; for it is becoming that he should be shut out from God's benefits who, instead of submitting to God's laws, chooses to continue to wilfully live in sin and vice" (St. Lawrence Justinian). "Whosoever prays with words only, heaps upon himself sin where he should increase his merits" (Cæsar of Arles). "Where is the faith among you Christians, who pray with your lips and in your mind turn your back on God?" (St. Jerome.) "He is a fool who, when he has the choice, chooses lead instead of precious gold; who despises pearls, and with industry gathers mussels; who, when he might partake of choice fruit, is content with sour grapes and wild acorns. In a word, he is a fool who neither seeks nor desires the most useful and necessary when he might have them both" (St. Chrysostom).

EXAMPLES.

The Dumb Woman and the Three Blind Men.

St. Vincent Ferrer was one day accosted by a dumb woman, who made signs to him that she would like to have an alms, and also that he would have the kindness to beg of God to give her the use of her tongue. Willingly the holy and compassionate servant of God gave an alms, but informed her that he would

not ask God to give her the use of her speech, for he knew that it would do her soul more harm than good.

Something similar is related in the life of St. Ubaldus. Three blind men came to him and besought him to obtain for them the use of their eyes. Ubaldus prayed fervently to God, and cured two of them, whilst he exhorted the third to have patience, saying: "It would be of no service to you to receive your sight; without it you will serve the Lord better, and in the glory of heaven you will see Him clearer than many to whom God has given eyesight here below." With these words the saint left the blind man with his request refused.

It is thus that God often deals with us. He leaves our prayers unheard because He knows that we pray for something that would lead to our detriment, and perhaps our eternal loss.

Antiochus Epiphanes.

The wicked King Antiochus Epiphanes, of whose pride and cruelty the Holy Scripture gives us such dismal account, was visited by God with a horrible disease. As he lay helpless in his pain and misery he began to pray, making to the Lord the fairest promises. But it was all a matter of self-interest, and even of hypocrisy, for his heart was buried in sin, and he prayed merely in the hope to escape the swift-coming penalties of God. Therefore the Lord, instead of hearing his prayer, permitted him to be consumed by worms till he drew his last breath.

The Sick Emperor and the Anchoret.

Theodore Siceota, the holy anchoret, was summoned to Constantinople, to cure the emperor by means of prayer. Laying his holy hands on the sick monarch, the pains ceased at once. But as Theodore wished rather to give to the emperor a proof of the power of faith and prayer, the relief was only temporary, and the pains returned in a few days. In obedience to a second call, Theodore left his cell again and came to Constantinople. But he quietly told the emperor that no prayer could bring him relief as long as he continued to oppress his subjects, shed their blood in streams, as he was then doing; nor until he strove with all earnestness and sincerity to amend his wicked life.

St. Bridget.

St. Bridget having suffered for a long time from many severe and malignant bodily diseases, begged God to lessen her pains

and trials. But all was useless. The more she prayed the worse she became. In a moment of weakness, when her pains were almost beyond endurance, she exclaimed: "For years, O Lord, I have prayed, and Thou hast not heard me; of what use are all my prayers? I see and know that my petitions have no value in Thy eyes. Therefore I will not trouble Thee any more with my importunities."

With such thoughts in her mind she fell into a slumber, in which she seemed to hear the Blessed Virgin say: "What is this, Bridget, my daughter? Are you going to cease praying? Do you mean to obey the evil suggestions of your enemy, and thus lose the double crown intended to reward your zeal and constancy in prayer? Do you really intend to stray from the path of holiness, and wander into the road of perdition? O my daughter, do you not know that your divine Spouse merely wished to try whether you were deserving of His love. Are you unwilling to stand the test?" Thus spoke the Queen of heaven. St. Bridget was ashamed of her weakness in faith, and from that time forward continued to pray with greater fervor and persistence and fond hope and confidence than she had ever done during the whole of her previous life.

Mental Prayer.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

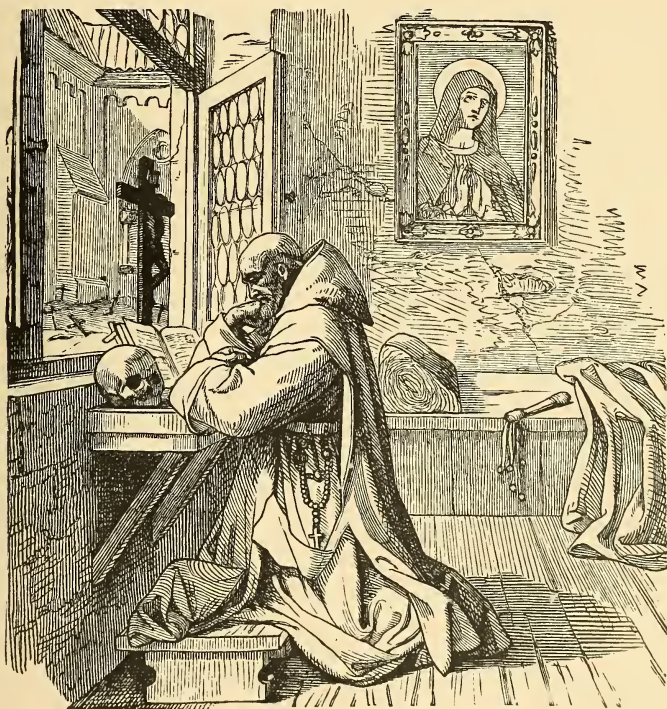
"If I have remembered Thee upon my bed, I will meditate Thee on the morning" (Ps. lxii. 7). "I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me" (Ps. lxxxiv. 9). "O how I have loved Thy law, O Lord! it is my meditation all the day" (Ps. cxviii. 97). "I meditated on all Thy works: I mused upon the works of Thy hands" (Ps. cxlii. 5).

"Blessed is the man that shall continue in wisdom, and that shall meditate in His justice, and in his mind shall think of the all-seeing eye of God. He that considereth her ways in his heart, and hath understanding in her secrets, who goeth after her as one that traceth, and strayeth in her ways. He who looketh in at her windows and hearkeneth at her doors" (Ecclus. xiv. 22-24). "Thou that seest many things, wilt thou not observe them? Thou that hast ears open, wilt thou not hear?" (Isaias xlii. 20.)

ST. ALPHONSUS ON MEDITATION.

(From the "Spouse of Christ.")

He who neglects meditation, and is distracted with worldly affairs, shall not know his spiritual wants, the danger to which his salvation is exposed, the means which he must adopt in order to conquer temptations, or even the necessity of the prayer of petition for all men ; thus he shall give up the practice of prayer, and by neglecting to ask God's graces he will certainly be lost.



MEDITATION AND PRAYER.

The great Bishop Palafox, in his "Annotations to the Letters of St. Teresa," says (lib. viii. n. 10) : "How can charity last unless God gives perseverance ? How will the Lord give us perseverance if we neglect to ask Him for it ? And how shall we ask Him without mental prayer ? Without mental prayer there is not the communication with God which is necessary for the preservation of virtue." And Cardinal Bellarmine says that for him who neglects meditation it is morally impossible to live without sin.

Some one may say: I do not make mental prayer, but I say many vocal prayers. But it is necessary to know, as St. Augustine remarks, that to obtain the divine grace it is not enough to pray with the tongue, it is necessary also to pray with the heart. On the words of David: "I cried to the Lord with my voice" (Ps. cxli.), the holy doctor says: "Many cry, not with their own voice (that is, not with the interior voice of the soul), but with that of the body. Your thoughts are a cry to the Lord. Cry within, where God hears" (Ps. v. 30). This is what the Apostle inculcates. "Praying at all times in the spirit" (Eph. vi. 18). In general, vocal prayers are said distractedly with the voice of the body, but not of the heart, especially when they are long, and still more especially when they are said by a person who does not make mental prayer; and therefore God seldom hears them, and seldom grants the graces asked. Many say the rosary, the office of the Blessed Virgin, and perform other works of devotion; but they still continue in sin. But it is impossible for him who perseveres in mental prayer to continue in sin; he will either give up meditation or renounce sin. A great servant of God used to say that mental prayer and sin cannot exist together. And this we see by experience: they who make mental prayer rarely incur the enmity of God; and should they ever have the misfortune of falling into sin, by persevering in mental prayer they see their misery and return to God. Let a soul, says St. Teresa, be ever so negligent, if she persevere in meditation the Lord will bring her back to the haven of salvation.

In a word, all the saints have become saints by mental prayer. Mental prayer is the blessed furnace in which souls are inflamed with the divine love. "In my meditations," says David, "a fire shall flame out" (Ps. xxxviii. 4). St. Vincent de Paul used to say that it would be a miracle if a sinner who attends at the sermons in the mission, or in the spiritual exercises, were not converted. Now he who preaches and speaks in the exercises is only a man; but it is God Himself that speaks to the soul in meditation. "I will lead her into the wilderness; and I will speak to her heart" (Osee ii. 14). St. Catharine of Bologna used to say: "He who does not practise mental prayer deprives himself of the bond that unites the soul with God; hence, finding her alone, the devil will easily make her his own." "How," she would say, "can I conceive that the love of God is found in the soul that cares but little to treat with God in prayer?" And

where but in meditation have the saints been inflamed with divine love? By means of mental prayer St. Peter of Alcantara was inflamed to such a degree that, in order to cool himself, he ran into a frozen pool, and the frozen water began to boil like water in a caldron placed on the fire. In mental prayer St. Philip Neri became inflamed, and trembled so that he shook the entire room. In mental prayer St. Aloysius Gonzaga was so inflamed with divine ardor that his very face appeared to be on fire, and his heart beat as strongly as if it wished to fly from the body. "Ex oratione," says St. Lawrence Justinian, "fugatur tentatio, absedit tristitia, virtus reparatur, excitatur fervor, et divina amoris flamma succrescit" (De cast. Con. c. 22, n. 4): By the efficacy of mental prayer, temptation is banished, sadness is driven away, lost virtue is restored, fervor which has grown cold is excited, and the lovely flame of divine love is augmented. Hence St. Aloysius Gonzaga has justly said that he who does not make much mental prayer shall never attain a high degree of perfection.

A man of prayer (says David) is like a tree planted near the current of waters, which brings forth fruit in due time; all his actions prosper before God. "Blessed is the man . . . who shall meditate on His law day and night! And he shall be like a tree planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season, and his leaf shall not fall off, and all whatsoever he shall do shall prosper" (Ps. i. 3). Mark the words "in due season," that is, at the time when he ought to bear such a pain, such an affront, etc. St. John Chrysostom compared mental prayer to a fountain in the middle of a garden. Oh, what an abundance of flowers and verdant plants do we see in the garden which is always refreshed with water from the fountain! Such precisely is the soul that practises mental prayer: you will see that she always advances in good desires, and that she always brings forth more abundant fruits of virtue. Whence does she receive so many blessings? From meditation, by which she is continually irrigated. "Thy plants are a paradise of pomegranates with the fruits of the orchard, . . . the fountain of gardens, the well of living waters, which run with a strong stream from Libanus" (Cant. iv. 13, etc.). But let the fountains cease to water the garden, and, behold! the flowers, plants, and all instantly wither away; and why? Because the water has failed. You will see that as long as such a religious makes mental prayer she is modest, humble, devout, and mortified in all things. But let her omit

meditation, and you shall instantly find her wanting in modesty of the eyes, proud, resenting every word, indevout, no longer frequenting the sacraments and the church; you shall find her attached to vanity, to useless conversations, to pastimes, and to earthly pleasures, and why? The water has failed, and therefore fervor has ceased. "My soul is as earth without water unto Thee. . . . My spirit has fainted away" (Ps. cxlii. 6, etc.). She has neglected mental prayer; the garden is therefore dried up, and the miserable soul goes from bad to worse. When a soul abandons meditation St. Chrysostom regards her not only as sick, but as dead. "He," says the holy doctor, "who prays not to God, nor desires to enjoy assiduously His divine conversation, is dead. . . . The death of the soul is not to be prostrated before God" (lib. i., de Orando Deo).

EXAMPLES.

The Correct Eye.

St. Felix of Cantalicio, born of poor but pious parents, when a boy was hired to tend cattle, and when older entered the service of an estated gentleman to take care of his flocks and herds. Knowing how to utilize his worldly employments for the good of his soul, he offered up all his duties as a prayer to God. He would arise early so as to hear Mass every morning, and during the day would pray at every opportunity under a tree, in the bark of which he had carved a simple cross.

While his hands were busy at work his soul was raised to God. Nature itself became his teacher and preacher, exhorting him to love, honor, and praise the great Creator. Although devoid of learning, he became a great proficient in heavenly contemplation, and advanced in every virtue. He was never known to utter a complaint, nor evince any sign of impatience or discontent. When any one annoyed him he would say, "May our blessed Lord make you a saint." Becoming a lay-brother in the Capuchin Order, he spent many years begging through the streets of Rome. Distracting as was his occupation, he always remained absorbed in thoughts on his soul and his Creator. When asked how he managed to keep his mind always fixed on spiritual things, he would answer, "All created things lift us up to God, if we look at them in the proper light and with a correct eye."

Prayer of Opportunity.

Gotthold, a devout farmer, had accustomed himself to contemplate everything in a religious sense, and to compare the doings of nature with the doings of men, in order to draw wholesome lessons from everything that fell under his notice. This becoming known, he was often sought out by persons who wished to profit by his study and meditation.

Thus a friend one day told him that he had seen a hawk descend from the air for the purpose of stealing a fowl, and asked whether such an incident could suggest any good or useful thought. "Why not?" rejoined Gotthold. "That bird is a figure of a worldly-minded man, who, while wearing an appearance of godliness, denies the power thereof" (II. Tim. iii. 5). That bird soars aloft, and would seem to aim at heaven, while its sharp eyes are constantly turned towards the earth, watching for prey. Such are all hypocrites. Their conversation is on sublime topics; they go to church, and even approach the sacraments; they pray, read, and sing, but their hearts are on the earth.

The Our Father.

Introduction.

The Great Importance of the Our Father.

INSTRUCTION.



THE greatest and sublimest prayer is the "Our Father," or the "Lord's Prayer," and this (1) on account of its origin, (2) on account of its contents, (3) on account of its beauty and power. The "Our Father" originated with Jesus Christ Himself. He it was Who taught it to us; therefore it is called the "Lord's Prayer."

One of the disciples once found the divine Redeemer engaged in prayer. He saw with what ardor, with what fervor, Christ prayed. He saw that his Lord and Master was in truth also the master of prayer. The sight filled him with reverent wonder; and, carried away with the desire to pray as ardently and devoutly, with as much fervor and unction,

as his divine Master, he confidently approached and besought Him, "Lord, teach us to pray." Teach us to pray from our inmost hearts, as Thou dost, and as Thou alone canst. Then Jesus, turning lovingly to His disciples, said : "When you are praying, speak not much, as the heathens ; for they think that in their much speaking they may be heard. Be not you therefore like to them ; for your Father knoweth what is needful for you before you ask Him. Thus therefore shall you pray :

"Our Father Who art in heaven,

"Hallowed be Thy name.

"Thy kingdom come,

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

"Give us this day our daily bread,

"And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us.

"And lead us not into temptation,

"But deliver us from evil. Amen."

In regard to its import, the Our Father is the most excellent and most sublime prayer, for it contains all that we can expect from God, and tells how to pray to God, and what to ask for. If we examine all the prayers contained in the Bible we shall not find anything that is not already contained in the Lord's Prayer.

Rightly does St. Cyprian style the Lord's Prayer "the gospel abridged."

The Our Father, finally, is the most excellent of all prayers, because it has greater power and value before God than any other prayer.

This is a certain truth, for Christ tells us to ask in His name and we shall infallibly receive what we ask. Now, never do we pray so truthfully in His name as when we pray in His own words. Hence there can be no more powerful prayer than that which Jesus taught us.

The Our Father consists of a preface and seven petitions, of which the first three relate to the promoting of God's glory, and the other four to the welfare of body and soul for ourselves and fellow-men, for time and eternity.



THE OUR FATHER.

REFLECTION.

Various Comments on the Lord's Prayer.

TERTULLIAN.



TERTULLIAN, that ancient priest of the church in Carthage, a distinguished teacher and writer, writes thus concerning the Lord's Prayer: "How brief in words, yet how rich in matter, is the Lord's Prayer! It not only contains a prayer as it should be, not only the correct method of honoring God, and the things for which men should pray, but also all that the Lord taught and ordained; so that, in fact, the whole Gospel condensed is to be found in it. On this prayer are to be founded all other prayers, and all others are to be sealed and stamped with it."

ST. CYPRIAN.

This holy Church Father says of the Lord's Prayer: "How full of mystery, beloved brethren, is the Our Father! How many and what great things are contained within it! How manifold its spiritual meaning! So much so, that nothing is left out. Everything for which we could ask is contained within this short epitome of heavenly teachings."

THOMAS À KEMPIS.

The devout and venerable Thomas à Kempis speaks of the sublimity and excellence of the Our Father in words bordering on inspiration. He says: "Amid all that is noble there is nothing nobler than virtue; amid all that is fair there is nothing fairer than chastity; amid all knowledge there is none higher than wisdom; amid all books of devotion there is none more salutary than the Life of Christ; amid all prayer and praise there is none better or holier than the Our Father. The Lord's Prayer surpasses all the prayers of the saints, it exceeds all the love affections of inspired and ardent souls. It contains in itself all the sayings of the prophets and the honeyed words of the psalms and canticles. It asks for all that is necessary. It praises God becomingly, penetrates the clouds, ascends above the angels, carries the mind to heaven, and unites the soul with God. Happy is he who ponders well all the words of the Lord, the golden words of the Our Father."

THE WIDOW OF THECUA.

In the fourteenth chapter of the Second Book of Kings we read that Joab employed a simple widow woman to reconcile

David with his son Absalom, who had fallen into disfavor. Having learned from Joab the words to be used, the good widow repaired to the presence of the king, and falling on her knees made known the object of her coming. David, very much moved, inquired of the woman who had instructed her. She answered, "My king and my master, the words that I have spoken to thee have been put into my mouth by thy faithful servant Joab." At once the king granted the widow's prayer.

What may we not obtain from God if we approach Him with a prayer containing the words of His own beloved Son? May we not say to Him, in the words of the woman of Thecua: "My Lord and my King, the words that I address to Thee have been put into my mouth, not, indeed, by Thy faithful servant Joab, but by Thy own divine Son." Will not such language move the Lord to give us what we ask and need?

JORDAN, GENERAL OF THE DOMINICAN ORDER.

A priest of his monastery once asked the blessed Jordan, general of the Dominican Order, how they would ever be able to thank God suitably and sufficiently for all the abundant alms bestowed on their monastery by kind and generous benefactors. The holy man replied: "One single Our Father, if said with true inward devotion, is a rich compensation for all benefits received. This short prayer will bring down blessings from heaven on all who bestow alms in true Christian charity on the poor and destitute."

The Prelude to the Our Father.

"Our Father Who art in Heaven."

INSTRUCTION.



AS is becoming, the Lord's Prayer opens with a prelude. Whenever we ask some great personage for a favor we do not begin by abruptly saying, "Give me this, or give me that." We make some kind of an introduction. Is it not, then, becoming that we should first honor with His appropriate title our loving God and Lord of heaven and earth before we presume to ask

for a favor? Hence we address God here with the words, "Our Father Who art in heaven."

Our divine Saviour Himself directed us, whenever we pray to God, to address Him, not as "Creator," "Lord," or "Majesty,"

but simply as "Father," for He wished to encourage us to draw near to the eternal Father with love and confidence.

The title Creator, Lord, Majesty, contains the idea of grandeur and severity, and is apt to beget fear within our hearts. The word Father, on the contrary, reminds us of all the good that God has bestowed upon us, and this remembrance awakes within us a happy confidence that He Who gave without being asked, gave us so much unspeakable good, will also grant us the gifts for which we do ask if they be for our spiritual benefit.

Christ is really the only begotten Son of God. As far as we are concerned, who are children of God only by grace of adoption, God is our common Father. Hence we are all brothers and sisters, and as such are obliged to love one another, and also to pray that our brethren may receive the good things which we ask for ourselves.

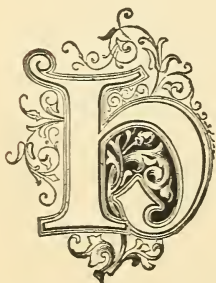
Hence Christ teaches us to say *our* Father, and not *my* Father.

The words "Who art in heaven" were added by Christ in order to distinguish the one true God Who dwells chiefly in heaven from the false gods which the heathens believe to dwell in the woods, mountains, lakes, and rivers. By this our divine Saviour wished to strengthen us in the true faith, and to guard us against the worship of all false gods. Also, by these words we acknowledge that we are here below but pilgrims, and that our true home is in heaven ; for where the Father is, there too should the children be.

Lastly, these words remind us that when we pray we should divest ourselves of all earthly thoughts, and fix our attention on heaven.

REFLECTION.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.



HAVE we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?" (Mal. ii. 10.) "For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father)" (Rom. viii. 15). "You are all the children of God by faith, in Christ Jesus. There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither bond nor free: there is neither male nor female. For

you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26, etc.). "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be, the sons of God" (I. John iii. 1). "But be not you called Rabbi; for one is your Master, and all you are brethren. And call none your Father upon earth: for one is your Father, Who is in heaven" (Matt. xxiii. 8, 9).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"In order to enkindle and encourage within us men child-like confidence, Jesus Christ attributed to the Lord no other name but the loving one of Father. He could have styled Him Creator, Lord, or His Majesty; but He did not, for such terms imply sternness and severity, and might beget in us a certain fear. But the name Father suggests love and generates confidence, and hence it is prefixed as the first word to the Lord's Prayer" (St. Francis of Sales). "Great, indeed, dearly beloved, is this mystery of grace, and admirable the favor above all other favors, that God calls man, child, and man calls God, Father" (Leo the Great). "O what a royal word, so full of sweetness and loving consolation: with fervent devotion should man utter it. What mortal would have ever dared to call Thee Father, Who art the almighty Ruler, if Thy only begotten Son had not permitted it?" (Louis of Granada.) "If God is my Father, it belongs to His nature that He love me and grant me all things necessary, that He guide me, protect me, defend me, advise me, instruct me, and when necessary, punish me: that He consider me His child and make me His heir" (The Same). "In order that we may pray to God with confidence, Our Saviour taught us that when we pray to God in the Lord's Prayer for the graces necessary to our salvation, all of which are contained in that prayer, we should call Him Father, and not Lord. Our Father: for He wishes that when we ask God for graces, we should do it with the same confidence as a poor sick son would ask his earthly father for help and medicine. If, for example, a son were dying of hunger, it would certainly be enough for him to inform his father, and the latter would furnish him with food. Or if the son had been bitten by a poisonous serpent, it would be enough to show the wound to his father, and the latter would apply a remedy" (St. Alphonsus Liguori).

"You are all children of God, therefore you should be of one heart and one mind, that you may be able to say worthily 'Our

Father'” (St. Chrysostom). “Christ did not teach us to say ‘my Father,’ but ‘our Father,’ that we may pray in common and for one another. The Lord’s Prayer is then also the public

and common prayer of Christians” (St. Cyprian). “We must exert ourselves to be in truth children of God. For God is only then our Father when we work for good. On the contrary, He becomes our judge when we commit sin” (St. Ambrose). “The Lord’s Prayer is universal, including all the faithful in as-



“OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME.” much as they are all at once our brothers in Christ and children of the same heavenly Father. Hence Our Saviour did not wish that we should say ‘give me,’ but ‘give us’; not ‘forgive me,’ but ‘forgive us’; not ‘my Father,’ but ‘our Father’; that we might thereby infer that the welfare of our fellow-men should be as near our hearts as our own welfare. Under this Father the master and his servants are brothers. Under this Father the general and the soldier are brothers. Under this Father the rich and poor are the brethren. On the earth Christians have divers fathers, some

noble, some plebeian, but they all invoke one Father Who is in heaven" (St. Augustine). "In the name Father there is contained a sure and favorable reception; for before we pray, we have already received the great favor of being permitted to say 'Our Father.' What, then, will be refused to His suppliant children by a God Who has already permitted them to be His children" (The Same).

COMPARISON.

Every one when writing to his parents or friends, and more especially to an unknown person, will preface his letter with some mode of address suitable to the person's dignity and calling. Higher than all earthly dignitaries is God, Whom we should address with His proper title, when about to offer Him a prayer. If, in ordinary life, we endeavor to give terms of respect to our fellow-men, should we not endeavor to pronounce with the utmost reverence the salutation "Our Father, Who art in heaven"?

EXAMPLES.

The Peasant in the Palace.

A poor countryman, having met with a succession of misfortunes which reduced himself and his helpless family to hopeless destitution, was sorely perplexed to know where to apply for any relief. One day it occurred to him to call on a rich prince in a neighboring town, who was well known for his generosity. The poor man, leaving his wife and children weeping with cold and hunger, set off on his journey. As he travelled along the road he grew uneasy as to the manner in which he should approach and address the prince. "What shall I say to this great man?" was the question ever presenting itself to the poor man's mind. At last he reached the palace, and went in; but the profuse magnificence of the grand halls, as he went on from one to another, completely dazed him, till at length he perceived a pretty little chapel to one side. Then he said to himself, "I will go no further: instead of appealing to an earthly prince I will call on the Blessed Lord, Who once, like me, had not whereon to lay His aching head. I have only to say His own plain words, as I learned them in the 'Our Father,' and He will be pleased with my petition." So, falling on his knees, he made known his woes to the Prince of all princes, and then arose and went home with renewed feelings of confidence. When drawing near his

poor cabin he was met by his children, who joyfully told him that a great prince from the city had sent them an abundance of provisions, clothing, fuel, and other necessities. The truth was, the prince had heard of the poor countryman's misfortunes and subsequent destitution; had recognized him timidly approaching the palace, and seen him kneeling in the chapel, and had anticipated his wishes by sending relief to the family.

St. Louis, King of France.

St. Louis, King of France, always cherished great respect and affection for the place of his baptism. Often and often he would kneel down before the sacred baptismal font in the Castle Chapel at Poissy, where he had been baptized, and pass hours in thanksgiving to God for the favors bestowed upon him in that holy sacrament. Often, too, he used to sign his name to the most important documents simply as "Louis of Poissy," and without any symbol of his royal dignity. When asked by his courtiers why he went so often to the chapel at Poissy—why he preferred that unseemly, insignificant little chapel to the grand and stately cathedral at Rheims, in which he had been crowned king, he used to reply: "Have I not good reason for being more fond of the spot where I obtained the dignity of Christian than of the place where I received only the empty, fleeting honors of an earthly king? At Rheims I was decorated with the crown of my father, and anointed as an earthly ruler; but at Poissy I was adorned with the precious crown of Jesus Christ, and anointed as a child of God. By my coronation at Rheims I received the right only to rule over my subjects and to sit upon an earthly throne, whose power and splendor must leave me at my death; but at my baptism in Poissy, on the contrary, I received the right to sit upon a throne of everlasting glory in heaven."

St. Matilda.

This devout servant of God once asked Him what she should believe the most firmly concerning His unspeakable goodness. The Lord answered her: "My daughter! believe with confidence that I shall always receive you, as the loving father receives his favorite child. For surely, no father has ever given so bountifully and willingly his best gifts to a child as I do give My gifts, including even Myself, to you, and as I will continue to give. Whosoever hopes and believes thus in My goodness, and

yields himself to Me with childlike love, shall be saved." And He further added: "I am pleased when I hear Myself called Father, and see men putting confidence in My fatherly goodness. In life I will stand by these like a Father, and after their death will reward them far beyond their merits."

The Negligent Monks.

The monks of a convent in Siena departed from the strict observance of the rules of their founder, by allowing themselves some few ordinary comforts. One day, while singing, at solemn service in the church, the versicle, "Pray for us, O holy father St. Dominic!" they heard a voice saying: "I am not your father, nor are you my children." There could be no mistake; for every one heard the voice. Then, acknowledging that they had incurred the just displeasure of St. Dominic, by changing his rule of life for their convenience, they at once revived it and observed it strictly ever afterwards. Now if those brethren so displeased God, not by committing any grievous sin, but simply by imagining themselves to be unable to keep the strict rule of their Order, how will it be with us, who fear not to offend God mortally, and still call Him "Our Father, Who art in heaven," and say "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive others." How terrible it would be for us to hear Him say: "I am not your Father, nor are you My children"!

We are All Brethren.

St. Rupert was born at Bingen on the Rhine, during the reign of Louis I. His father, Robolaus, was a heathen general, and bitterly opposed to the Christians. When Rupert was three years old, his Christian mother, Bertha, entered on a retired and strict method of life, with a view of devoting herself wholly to the careful bringing up of her only son. She placed over him the best tutors that the times could afford, while she herself strove in every way to form his heart and soul according to the rules and requirements of religion. The youth responded nobly to the efforts of his mother; and when a mere boy, if he met on the street a child who was in want, he would take him by the hand, and, leading him to his mother, say to her: "See mother, here is your son." Bertha, gratified at her son's spirit of charity, would reply: "Yes, indeed, he is one of your brothers," and would then provide for the destitute child.

St. Aidan.

King Alwin made a present to this holy bishop of a very fine horse, with a costly bridle and saddle ; for that zealous missionary in preaching the Gospel had often to make long journeys, in which he had to wade or swim across dangerous rivers, where a safe and true horse was often a matter of life or death to the rider. Not many days later, while the bishop was riding along a country-road, he was met by a poor man, who had lost everything he had in the world, and was in a sad state of destitution. St. Aidan, deeply moved at the poor man's piteous tale of woe, dismounted from his horse and gave it to him. When the king heard this he reproached the charitable bishop for his prodigality. The saint replied meekly, "I had nothing else to give. Do not reproach me for doing what everybody knows your Majesty would do, in the goodness of your own heart ; for you understand as well as anybody that an animal is not to be compared to a poor human being, who is a child of God our Father."

Changing Fathers.

When St. Francis, directed by the light of divine grace, began to distribute his substance among the poor, he was summoned before the bishop, who ordered him to sign a paper renouncing his right to his father's estate, lest he should also give that away after the latter's death. Francis complied willingly, and then taking off his garments he laid them at his father's feet, saying : "Hitherto I have always during life called thee father. Henceforth I can say, with much more truth and satisfaction of mind, 'Our Father, Who art in heaven : ' for in His hands I have deposited all my treasure ; in Him are now placed all my hopes and expectations." Ever afterwards, his father continued to curse him. So Francis took a poor, despised old man, adopted him as his father in Christ ; fed, clothed, and sheltered him—on the one condition that he would bless St. Francis each time that he was cursed by his own unkind father.

Earthly and Heavenly Inheritance.

When St. Theodore was but fourteen years of age, he was one day shown, gathered together in his father's house, the grand treasures to which he was the heir, and of which he would one day be the sole and undisputed owner. Lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said : "What would it avail me, if all the world were mine, and God was not mine ? My Father, and my treasures, are in the heavens above."

Exiled.

St. Chrysostom, the great patriarch and doctor of the Church, for his firm fidelity to principle, was sent into exile by the Empress Theodosia. When he heard his sentence, he remarked calmly: "I accept my sentence gladly; for wherever I go, heaven is ever above me, where dwelleth my Father, Who created me out of nothing, and Who will surely continue to be my Father, leading, guiding, feeding, clothing, and comforting me."

Consolation at the Grave.

Jane of Orvietto lost her loving father while she was still quite young. Her afflicted mother used to take her every Sunday and holy-day to her father's grave, where they would unite their prayers for the repose of the departed soul. One day her mother grieved more than usual, and complained that Providence had dealt harshly with her in taking away so soon the protector of her orphan girl. Jane, taking her mother's hand, said: "Mother, do you not know that we have still a Father above—the heavenly Father, Who is loving and good? You know you taught me to say: 'Our Father Who art in heaven.'" These simple words of an innocent child made such a powerful impression on the mother's heart, that the poor woman dried her tears, looked up to heaven with joy, then upon her child, and at once resolved never again to murmur against the decrees of her heavenly Father. The future proved that Jane also had a Father in heaven, for under His care and blessing she grew to be a fair and fragrant flower in the garden of the Father's Church.

The First Petition in the Our Father.

"Hallowed be Thy Name."

INSTRUCTION.



FROM the prelude to the Lord's Prayer we have seen that God is our Father and we are His children. From this it most naturally and necessarily follows that we should desire nothing more ardently than that our Father should be loved, praised, and honored by ourselves and by all men. Hence the first petition of the Our Father: "Hallowed be Thy name."

If what we pray for in this first petition is to be truly realized,

we should not be satisfied with mere words, but should rather endeavor by our whole manner of life to labor for the glory of the divine name, through the knowledge, love, and worship of God.

We can make God's name holy in ourselves :

1. If we render unceasing honor to God. If we have received favors from God, if He has endowed us with good talents, we should not take the credit to ourselves. If God has blessed us with prosperity, and we can do good, much good, for our neighbor, we should not be proud on that account. Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us be praise and glory given, but to Thy own name.

2. When we glorify God's name by word and deed. This we do when we praise His holy name, and give it glory in our prayers, whether we be in adversity or prosperity, and when we do everything for that same honor and glory.

We can make God's name holy in others :

1. By edifying them through the example of a good life on our part. If the early Christians had not led such holy lives, there would be to-day few to say, "Hallowed be Thy name." The heroic virtues of those primitive Christians led many to embrace Christianity, and thus to sanctify and glorify God's name. If all Catholics were what their faith requires them to be, it would long ago have been evident to the world that the Catholic Church alone has the saving means of salvation and the power to apply them, and that without her pale are error and sin. Those who separated from her would long ago have returned to her motherly bosom, and the great chasm of Christianity would have been closed.

2. By refraining from all sinfulness. Sin is a contempt for God ; through it the Son of God is crucified over again.

3. By praying to God for the salvation of our fellow-men. Millions are even yet living in ignorance of God's name, and walking in the shadows of darkness. They too should be brought to sanctify God's name, by making them acquainted with the love of the heavenly Father. Hence every time we repeat the words, "Hallowed be Thy name," we should pray that they too may soon join us in the same prayer, and be one with us in proclaiming God's glory.

REFLECTION.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.



OLY and terrible is His name" (Ps. cx. 9). "Kings of the earth, and all peoples: princes and all judges of the earth, young men and maidens: let the old with the younger praise the name of the Lord" (Ps. cxlviii. 11, 12). "Be without offence to the Jews and to the Gentiles, and to the Church of God" (I. Cor. x. 32). "Giving no offence to any man, that our ministry be not blamed" (II. Cor. vi. 3). "We entreat you that you walk honestly towards them that are without" (I. Thess. iv. 11). "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Who is in heaven" (Matt. v. 16). "It is He Who giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts xvii. 25). "In Him were all things created, all things were created by Him and in Him: and He is before all, and by Him all things consist" (Colos. i. 16). "The servant of the Lord must be mild towards all men, with modesty admonishing them that resist the truth, if peradventure God may give them repentance to know the truth, and they may recover themselves from the snares of the devil" (II. Tim. ii. 25, 26). "We beseech you, brethren, rebuke the unquiet, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men" (I. Thess. v. 14).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"When we say 'Hallowed be Thy name,' we do not mean to pray as if God's name were not already holy, but that it may become so among men, and that God may make it so known among them, they may believe there is nothing more holy among men, and which they ought to be afraid to offend, for it is just to sanctify God's name, to fear Him of Whom it is said, His name is Lord" (St. Augustine). "'Hallowed be Thy name.' What means hallowed? It is as if we wished Him to be glorified Who said: 'Be holy, because I am holy;' as if from our praising and honoring Him there came sanctification. 'The name of God is holy by its very nature, whether we call it so or not. But as it is desecrated by those who sin, according to the saying of Isaias the prophet' (lii. 5), 'My name is continually blasphemed all day long' among the heathens, we therefore pray

that the same name of God may be hallowed or sanctified in us, not indeed as being previously unhallowed, but that it be hallowed in us, by ourselves" (St. Cyril).

"Generally we should not pray for anything, till we have prayed for the glory of God, for God is unquestionably a greater good than all other creatures combined. Hence we should first be most zealous for His honor, after the example of Christ, Who in all His doings sought only the glory of His Father. 'Father,' prayed He, 'I have revealed Thy name to men'" (St. Chrysostom).

EXAMPLES.

St. Ignatius of Loyola.

Among the many saints in the Church who made the glorifying of God's name the labor of their lives St. Ignatius takes a foremost place. His well-known motto was: "To the honor and glory of God." In the early part of his life he was more or less devoted to the ways of the world, but being prostrated on a bed of pain, his soul was enlightened by divine grace, and he resolved, if he lived, to devote himself to the honor and glory of his heavenly Father. He made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady at Montserrat, prayed and fasted much, and went to Jerusalem, there to do honor to the name of the Father Who gave us His only Son to suffer and die for our sake. On his way out and home he lost no opportunity to deter the sailors and others from dishonoring the holy names of God and Jesus. When he was derided and persecuted, he would say softly to himself: "For the honor and glory of God." All aglow with zeal for the promotion of God's honor and glory, he would gather the children from the streets and teach them the Christian doctrine, and especially to love and venerate the name of God.

In his zeal and piety he gathered about him in Paris nine other young men, in union with whom he laid the foundation, so to speak, of the great Society of Jesus, the chief purpose of which always has been to contribute to the glorifying of God's Holy Name. And how many souls have been gained to Christ through this company of St. Ignatius! How many in the remotest corners of the earth first learned to utter the Holy Name of Jesus through the zealous efforts of his self-sacrificing sons! Millions were converted to the knowledge of the one true God, and taught to say, from their simple hearts: "Hallowed be Thy name."

So enthusiastic was St. Ignatius for the honor of the Holy Name, that he often used to say : " If the choice were given me, either to dwell longer on earth, and labor and suffer for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, or to go at once into the kingdom of heaven, I would choose the first."

To God the Lord be Praise and Honor.

When Mary was greeted with words of high praise by the angel, she styled herself simply, " the handmaid of the Lord." When saluted by St. Elizabeth, the same virgin only sang the praises of the Lord in the inspired Magnificat.

When Peter and John cured the lame man at the gate of the Temple, and drew upon themselves the admiring praises of the multitude, Peter took good care to explain that the miracle had been effected, not by virtue of their power, but by faith in the name of Jesus, Who was crucified and rose from the dead, the same Messias foretold by the prophets.

Notwithstanding his brilliant talents, St. Augustine was never proud, but attributed all his advantages to the grace of God. Indeed, he would consider it an injustice to God to think otherwise. Hence he used to say : " All things bright and fair are Thine, O Lord. Thine is the glory. Whosoever, therefore, seeks his own honor in Thy works is a robber and a thief, for he robs Thee of the glory, Who art his Lord and Master."

One day when King Canute was walking near the sea-shore one of his attendants said to him : " Who, O king, is greater than thou? Millions of men obey thee. Thou canst command the very ocean, and it will obey thee." The king, amused rather than indignant at the silly flatterer, had his chair placed on the beach, and with mock solemnity said : " I order thee, thou ocean, not to approach thy master." Just then a large wave broke at the king's feet, and he said, laughing : " Behold ! what great authority I have over the sea ! How it disregards my orders ! The only Lord and Master of heaven and earth is the God Who made them. To Him be all honor and glory."

The same King Canute placed his royal crown on the head of the figure of Our Lord in the cathedral at Winchester, and repeated in touching tones the words of the 88th Psalm :

" O Lord God of Hosts, who is like to Thee? Thou art mighty, O Lord, and Thy truth is round about Thee. Thou rulest the power of the sea, and appeasest the motion of the waves thereof."

St. Francis at one time dwelt in the same convent at Portiuncula with Brother Massaeus, a man of great sanctity, profound



BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD.

not of noble birth. Why do they crowd around to hear you and follow your directions?" The saint was glad in his heart when he heard these remarks, and raising his eyes to heaven remained absorbed in thoughts on God. Then, kneeling down and thanking God aloud, he turned and said to Brother Massaeus: "You wish to know why people flock about me? I owe it all to God, Who sees good and bad people in all places, and as His eyes light on no sinner greater than I am myself, He selects me to effect a purpose, and to make the purpose miraculous chooses a sinner. He wishes to shame the nobility, beauty, skill, learning, and eloquence of the world. He wishes also that people should

wisdom, and great ability to discourse about God. The saint was very much attached to him. One day Brother Massaeus met Francis returning from the woods, where he had been praying, and, wishing to try the saint's humility, said to him curtly and sharply: "Why do people make so much ado about you? You have no personal presence, you don't know much, you are

know that all virtues belong to God, and not to the creature ; that in His presence no creature should take credit to himself, but give all credit to the Lord." After listening to these words, Massaeus really felt that Francis was well grounded in humility.

When the famous musical composition of "The Creation" was performed for the first time in public the whole world resounded with the praises of Haydn, its author. But he simply pointed heavenwards and said, "Nothing comes from me ; all is from above."

God Praised at a Death-bed.

St. Joseph Oriolo, a Spanish priest, who all through a long life had toiled assiduously for the salvation of souls, feeling his end approaching, entered the house of a poor acquaintance and said, "My friend, let me have a place to lie down, for I shall soon die." Then, lying down on a bed, he became much worse. The inmates of the house and many neighbors wept to see their beloved friend so sick. But he said : "My good friends, be cheerful ; have courage. God will soon take me to Himself, and then I shall sing hymns in His honor and praise His holy name for all eternity." Then he sent for four choir singers, who began to sing to the accompaniment of a harp. St. Joseph joined in the chant of praise with a feeble but pleasant voice, his eyes fastened on his crucifix, and his heart fixed on God. While singing he breathed forth his soul to God.

St. Polycarp.

When the holy Bishop Polycarp, amid the threats of his persecutors, was urged to blaspheme the name of God, he said, calmly : "I have served the one true God for six-and-eighty years, and have received endless blessings from His hands. How can you ask me to blaspheme Him Who redeemed me ? I will praise His name and proclaim His glory. I cannot offend my Lord and Master." Willingly he surrendered his aged body into the hands of his executioners. God glorified His venerable servant even in death, for the flames refused even to singe him. The sword had to be used to effect his death.

A Peculiar Mode of Good Example.

St. Francis once said to a brother, "Come, let us go out and preach to the people." After traversing several streets in silence they returned to the monastery. The wondering brother remarked, "Father Francis, what about the sermon you were to preach ?" The saint replied, "The sermon is over."

Thus the saint believed that a pious and recollected demeanor, a good example, an appearance of true humility, contribute as much to the glory of God and the salvation of souls as an eloquent sermon.

St. Jerome and the Blasphemer.

A miserable, abandoned man had the boldness to blaspheme God's name in the presence of St. Jerome. The latter, deeply indignant, rebuked him sternly, saying: "The very dogs bark for their master, and you do not wish me to speak the truth of Christ. Why should I be silent when God's name is dishonored? God forbid I should. I can die, but I cannot be silent."

A Brave Host.

Once when a number of persons in a tavern were using profane language, each one trying to outdo the other in dishonoring the name of God, the landlord took down the crucifix from its place on the wall, and was about to carry it from the room. The guests halted in their conversation, while one asked the landlord why he was taking away the crucifix. He answered sternly and curtly, "It is not becoming for the sacred image to hear your talk." The guests were touched to the heart, and quietly emptying their glasses departed.

Zeal for the Conversion of Sinners.

An acquaintance of St. Ignatius Loyola kept up an improper intercourse with a woman who lived in the country outside of Paris. The saint, after much fruitless advice to the young man, walked out one evening on the same road, and stood near the edge of a half-frozen pond. When he saw his acquaintance coming he plunged up to his neck in the water, and said: "Go and satisfy your lust. Meanwhile I will suffer here for your sin, in order to hold back from you the avenging hand of God, that is ready to strike you." The sinful man became ashamed of his conduct, and returned home penitent.

St. Francis Assisi once met a young man who was leading an irregular life. Spreading his mantel on the road, he bowed profoundly before the young man. When asked why he did that, Francis replied, "This man whom I took for a sinner will one day be a great saint." The young man, touched by the saint's words and humility, entered seriously into himself, and began to lead a devout, penitential life.

Edmund Campian.

Among the many servants of God who sacrificed their all to glorify the name of God among heretics and unbelievers, Edmund Campian, an Englishman, stands pre-eminent. When unjustly condemned to death for alleged treason, he returned thanks to God by repeating the *Te Deum*, a hymn in which the name of the Lord is praised over and over again. When standing on the scaffold, before the eyes of assembled London, he said: "We are here to-day, a spectacle to men and angels. Here I am to die as a traitor. But Thou, O Lord, knowest my innocence. Thou knowest that I had no other wish but Thy glory and England's welfare. The day will come when all shall be made manifest, even the most hidden things." Then he prayed for his persecutors, and said: "I have always prayed to God, and do now pray, that my death, which I accept willingly, may be an atoning sacrifice for your sins, to bring you faith and eternal happiness, that you may hereafter sanctify and glorify the name of God, as I even now wish to sanctify and glorify it, even by the last drop of my blood."

The Second Petition in the Our Father.**"Thy Kingdom Come."****INSTRUCTION.**

THE kingdom of God may be described as three-fold ; namely, His kingdom in its outward and visible form, which is the Church ; secondly, His kingdom among men, in which He rules their souls ; and, finally, His kingdom full and complete in heaven.

Hence when we say, "Thy kingdom come," we pray :

1. For the growth of the holy Catholic Church, and the destruction of the devil's dominion on earth ; begging at the same time that the unbelievers and Jews may be brought to faith in Christ and a knowledge of the one true God, and that heretics and schismatics may also return to the one fold and the one shepherd.

2. For the establishment of God within us, asking that God would destroy the reign of sin in our hearts, expel all unholy desires, all sinful words, and all works of darkness, and that by virtue of His grace He would reign in our hearts in piety and all good works, so that we could say with the apostle Paul, "I

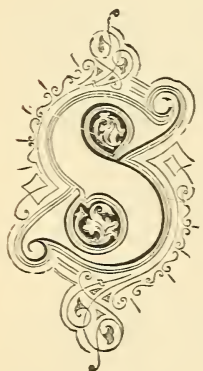
live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20). It is not I who govern my heart, but Christ. He rules with His divine grace in my interior life. "For the kingdom of God is justice, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xiv. 17).

3. For the securing of God's heavenly kingdom, our own true home, since we are here below but pilgrims journeying towards our fatherland.

As children of God, we rightly pray first of all for the sanctifying of God's name. But as this can be best accomplished in the Church through pious hearts penetrated with His grace, and by the saints and elect, we pray at the same time, "Thy kingdom come." In truth, the second petition of the Our Father is inseparably associated with the first.

REFLECTION.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.



SEEK ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and His justice : and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. vi. 33). "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away" (Matt. xi. 12). "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation yielding the fruits thereof" (Matt. xxi. 43). "No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke ix. 62). "The unjust shall not possess the kingdom of God" (I. Cor. vi. 9). "Flesh and blood cannot possess the kingdom of God" (I. Cor. xv. 50).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"When we say, 'Thy kingdom come,' we pray that our kingdom may come, which was promised to us by Christ and purchased by His suffering and death, that thus we, who have heretofore ruled in the world may afterwards rule under the dominion of Christ" (St. Cyprian). "The whole earth is a house of God, founded through faith, erected through confidence and completed through charity. Let then the living stones be drawn together and joined together in the temple structure for God" (St. Augustine). "The kingdom of God comes to you when you have sought its graces" (St. Ambrose). "The second petition of a pure mind is the wish that the kingdom of his

Father may come, that, namely, in which Christ the Lord reigns with His saints forever and ever. This takes place when the dominion of the devil is broken in our hearts by the extermination of vice, when God secures the upper hand within us because we are more zealous for virtue, when tepidity is overcome, unrest removed, pride cast down, and chastity, humility, and peace prevail in our souls" (Cassian). "It is an act of boldness to pray for the coming of the kingdom of God, and not to fear its coming" (St. Jerome).

EXAMPLES.

Institutions for the Spread of the Gospel.

The Church not only teaches her children to say the Our Father, but she also encourages them to employ their means in having it reduced to practice, giving them opportunities to assist in extending the kingdom of God.

After the death of their blessed Master the apostles went forth into all the world to preach the lessons of the cross, and wherever they founded churches they also encouraged devout and God-fearing persons, who in their turn went forth to teach, to make their heathen brethren sharers in their blessings. Thus were our ancestors taught Christianity, for every land had its apostles.

The popes especially have in all ages effected much, often with their own private means. They have sent messengers of the Faith into all parts of the world, and sustained them by every means in their power. The different orders established by the Church, such as the Franciscans, Jesuits, Lazarists, Dominicans, and other associations, have sent out many of their brethren. These noble champions of Christ have not only endured untold sufferings, battling against the elements, hunger, thirst, heat, cold, the violent opposition of people, but they have suffered dreadful tortures, and sacrificed their lives, like the first Christians.

In the year 1622 Pope Gregory XV. gave firm basis to the system of foreign missions. In order to establish unity of action he founded the Society for the Propagation of the Faith (*Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*) at Rome. Pope Urban VIII. bestowed upon it a seminary for the training and educating of missionaries of all nationalities. This College of Propaganda he placed under the direction of the same congregation, began a library and a printing department in all languages, and gave out

of his own means enough to maintain all. At the same time he established free scholarships for pupils of all countries, who were afterwards to return as missionaries to their fatherland. Every year, on the feast of the Epiphany, this college holds what is called the Language Festival, at which students from different



"THY KINGDOM COME."

countries make addresses in their respective tongues; thus showing forth the universality or catholicity of God's Church.

Under the loving care of the Church devoted missionaries travel to all parts of the world, where they are to give themselves up to the propagation of our holy faith and its salutary teachings. As they must consecrate themselves entirely to their vocation, they depend for their support

on the benevolence of their brethren at home. Nor are the necessities of life alone sufficient for them: they have to build schools and churches, furnish teachers for the instruction of the young, and often deny themselves every comfort in order to help others. There is a vast field for apostolic work, for the vineyard is large and the laborers are few, and the missionary

who does not meet a martyr's death generally succumbs to the burden of work and privations.

There are still five hundred millions of pagans to be converted. In a country as large as Germany there are frequently only two or three missionaries, and their districts cover from a hundred and fifty to two hundred miles. It is heartrending to read of the misery of these men, who have left their families, homes, and positions to preach the Gospel to the heathens, and who are frequently prevented from doing the good they might do through want of means to carry on their work. A missionary of the Society of Jesus, who with three brethren went to the Lebanon in the hope of strengthening and sustaining in their faith the Catholics there, whom the Mohammedans are constantly trying by threats and violence to force into their faith, in a letter in which he asks for help, writes :

"We are now four missionaries on the highway, without a roof, almost without clothes and food. We live like the vagrant Arabs. A stick scooped out at one end serves as a spoon ; I drink from a piece of skin ; one earthen vessel is my sole cooking utensil ; and a little rice and bread is my food day in and day out, except at such times when the bread and rice are wanting. As to wine, I believe a glass of wine would affect me now, I am so used to water. From this you can imagine the rest.

"My brother, P. Planchet, does much good in the desert plains at Balbek ; the reports of the caravans coming from there sometimes border on the marvellous. The poor man, however, is frequently destitute of the necessities of life, in spite of all his exertions. He is building himself a house now, helping in the work himself, and cheering the others by his example ; and he is all alone in this forlorn, impoverished country, living with the Bedouins, like one of them. In the enormous district between Al Maalaka and Bkaa he is the only physician ; all come to him for help—Christians, Bedouins, infidels and wandering Arabs. But in order to help these people medicine is indispensable, and of this there is seldom any on hand.

"I beg you to render us some assistance. I only ask that you send us out of your sacristy and wardrobe what you can no longer use. What is waste and cast-off with you will be a treasure here. A ball of yarn, a card of buttons, and a few needles will prove very acceptable, as we have to go for months sometimes in torn garments, for want of thread and needle with which to repair them."

This is the tone of most of the reports of these messengers of the Lord. Now we can all share in the fruits of the holy mission by assisting the noble men who are devoted to this work. This is not only a work full of blessings, yielding ample fruit, but it is also our duty; we give only a trifle of what we have received, and return thanks to God for the light of truth, which in His mercy He sheds upon us. It would be a shame for any Christian so situated that he can help, to allow the missionaries to starve for want of the little he can contribute. It will be of little avail to pray if we are not willing to make some sacrifice.

To receive the contributions of Christians for their poor brethren, the heathens, several associations have been instituted, of which we will mention only three.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith.—This organization was founded in 1726 by the French bishops, and, thanks to the Lord, has spread to all Christian countries. Its purpose is to collect contributions for the missionaries, and to distribute them where most needed. The society has two executive branches—one located at Paris and the other at Lyons. Members pay an annual fee of about fifty cents, which money is collected from each ten members by one of them, who delivers it to another, and he collects from ten such groups of ten. They help the missionaries further by saying the Lord's Prayer once a day in honor of St. Francis Xavier, the patron-saint of missionaries. This association works a great deal of good, and through it the unity of the Church and active Christian charity bring forth the best fruit. But there are several hundred mission-stations to support, with their priests, teachers, nurses, catechists, churches, seminaries, etc.; and there remains much to be wished for, although all that is required could be easily furnished if all who are able would share in the work. It is sad to note that only about one in a hundred helps in this work.

The Association of the Holy Childhood.—Among the many horrors of paganism one of the most infamous is that, among many nations, a father is free to choose whether the children that are born to him shall live or not. Thus every year many thousands of children are killed, because they are weak or deformed, or because the parents are unable or unwilling to support them. Especially is this the case in China, where thousands of children are either drowned or thrown into the streets, where they are devoured by dogs and hogs, crushed to death under horses' hoofs, or thrown into a cart and buried. In the city of Peking

alone three thousand children are thus disposed of annually. Large children are sold by their own parents, and carried into strange lands as slaves. No one takes pity on them ; they perish miserably, and are lost to heaven for want of Baptism.

But for these children too God has provided, if only men will lend their aid.

This crying evil touched the tender heart of the noble Bishop Forbin-Janson of Nancy, and he did everything in his power to put a stop to it, by buying these children from their unnatural parents, baptizing them, nursing them till they died, or, if they survived, by educating them. Thus the Association of the Holy Childhood was established. The good bishop addressed him-



HOLY CHILDHOOD.

self especially to the hearts of children, appealing to them to give part of their little savings for their poor brothers and sisters.

This association is in no way connected with the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. It is intended primarily for children, and the annual contribution is about fifty cents. Of course grown persons may also share in this work, but the founder of the association has made it an express condition that no adult may contribute who is not a member of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, in order that the latter institution may not suffer any loss.

The Association of the Holy Childhood saves thousands of souls for heaven, for a child may be bought for a few dollars.

We can understand, however, that the nursing and education of the children entail considerable expense. Christian parents thus have a grand opportunity of planting in the hearts of their children the seeds of compassion and sympathy, by encouraging them to take part in this good work.

St. Boniface Society.—It may seem incredible, but it is none the less true, that in happy Germany there are Catholics who are being lost to the Church for want of instruction, and others are longing for the holy sacraments, but are unable to obtain them, because of their great distance from church and priest. In Northern Germany there are many Catholics living among Protestants, and there is often no priest within miles of them, and this in districts where Catholic churches still exist erected by Catholic piety for the service of the most holy sacrifice. It often happens, too, that one Catholic must teach the Faith to others, and they see a priest only once or twice a year when he comes on his visit, and many a time he is not even allowed to celebrate holy Mass.

In 1851 a noble-minded man, Count Joseph of Stolberg, from Westphalia, moved by the sad condition of the Church in Northern Prussia, Hanover, Brunswick, Mecklenburg, the free cities, Schleswig, Holstein, Lauenburg, etc., formed a society to support the Church where there is a priest, and to found new stations and schools. He put the society under the patronage of St. Boniface, the apostle of the Germans, in whose honor the members daily say the Lord's Prayer. The annual contribution is voluntary. With the blessing of God and the help of this society the light of the faith will again shine on these people.

The members of these societies can earn many indulgences. The zeal of Catholics can always find an opportunity to work for the extension of God's kingdom on earth, and should seek one if it does not offer itself. If no other channel can be found, offerings may be given to one's pastor. Greater efforts must be made if we would prove ourselves worthy of favors and graces received. It is calculated that the Catholics of Europe apply two million dollars annually to the propagation of the faith. But in England alone four million dollars annually go to the Protestant missions, and a million Bibles and a couple of millions of tracts are distributed. Notwithstanding this the Protestant missions have no success, for the well-paid married missionaries remain at the coast, under the protection of the war-ships of their nation, and go into trade instead of preaching, and return home

rich, while the poor Catholic missionary who sacrifices health and life wins thousands of souls. Catholics should blush at this when they consider what the Church might do for the kingdom of God if the zeal of the members were more active.

The Apostle says : "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, of them that bring glad tidings of good things" (Rom. x. 15). How pleasing then must be the hands of those who support these evangelists and messengers of peace.

From the Life of St. Francis Xavier.

Among the countless missionaries of God's Church we shall mention

but one — the devoted St. Francis Xavier. He was born in Spain in the year 1506. Soon after joining St. Ignatius he was sent to preach the Gospel in the East Indies. Even on ship-



ST. FRANCIS XAVIER PREACHING THE GOSPEL.

board he instructed the sailors daily in their duty to God, and preached twice every Sunday. On reaching Goa he revived a religious spirit among the European settlers, and then entered on his work among the pagans, of whom he baptized over 200,000 with his own hand. After ten years of the most disinterested missionary labors, he died at his work, in the year 1552.

Alfonso of Aragon.

The pious and wise Alfonso of Aragon was accustomed to offer his special thanks to God for the following benefits : First, because He had created him a reasonable being ; secondly, because He had allowed him to grow up in the bosom of the Catholic Church ; and, thirdly, because He had given him such great power on earth, and thereby an opportunity to contribute by word and deed to the extension of the heavenly kingdom on

earth. And under this pious king the Catholic Church reached its richest development throughout his wide kingdom.

The Offering of a Poor Negro.

Years ago, among those whom a missionary in Berbice called up in order to learn how much each was willing to give toward the erection of a new house of God, was a poor negro. "Here I am," he exclaimed; and full of zeal he limped on his wooden leg to the table. Putting his hand in his pocket he took out some silver, and with amiable impetuosity he said: "Here is my contribution, sir." When the missionary told him to keep his money and he would call for it later, the negro replied: "Why, my dear sir, God's work must be done; why, I might die." And with this he brought out some more silver, and said: "This is for my wife, sir;" and from another pocket he brought a third package, saying: "And this is for my child, sir." Altogether he gave about twenty dollars.

The Kingdom of God within us.

Thomas of Jesu used to pray with great fervor that the kingdom of God might enter his heart. This prayer was as follows: "Enter our hearts, kindest Father! rule therein, O supreme Master, and dwell therein. If my soul may be so happy as to become Thy kingdom here on earth, then am I willing that Thou shouldst postpone for me the possession of the heavenly kingdom as long as it may please Thee; for neither in heaven nor on earth do I wish for aught but Thee, and if Thou wilt only rule within me with perfect power, all my desires are granted."

In similar manner Louis of Granada used to pray. "Behold, O Lord," he cried, "how many kings or rather tyrants wish to rule us! The devil with his malice, the world with its splendor, the flesh with its lusts, and selfishness with its greed. Tyrants they are, doing violence to Thy kingdom, endeavoring to destroy Thy power, and importuning us to do their will. Rise then, O heavenly King! attack this pernicious tyranny, restore order, and no longer permit such iniquity in Thy kingdom. Drive out the tyrants, destroy Thine enemies, that those who hate Thee shall flee! Command me, my Sovereign! Thou alone shalt reign, and to Thy throne only let us bow! Thou alone shalt dwell in my heart. with Thy kingdom alone be my soul occupied. Grant, O God, that in future I may think of nothing and seek nothing but Thy kingdom alone."

The Happy Beggar.

Blessed are we when God has entered our heart and dwells therein ! We shall want nothing on earth.

On one occasion a gentleman while out hunting heard some one singing at a distance, and following the sound he came upon a poor leper. To the question whether it was he who had sung so merrily and cheerfully, he replied that it was, and when the gentleman asked how he could be contented and sing while in such pain and suffering so many privations, he answered : " Well, you see, my dear sir, with all my physical distress and with all my outward sufferings I can still be of good cheer, because I carry God in my heart. The more, therefore, my body, this miserable wall of clay, crumbles to pieces, the nearer I am brought to Him, and for joy of this I sing so merrily."

Missions.

The Church sends preachers of the faith even to those of her children who have their own pastor and from their youth are brought up in the true faith. Among these, too, she wishes to spread the kingdom of God, that is to say, she wishes to impress the faith deeper on their hearts, to give new life to their faith, to destroy vice and all bad habits. These preachers of the faith work together with the pastor in the so-called *popular missions* for the great work of conversion and salvation of souls.

These popular missions have existed in the Church at all times. As often as necessary, God awakens as His chosen knights those who, like the prophets of old, go forth and with powerful voice announce punishment and judgment to hardened sinners. mercy and peace to those who are converted. Around these the multitude crowd to profit by their doctrines and example. They preach nothing new or different, but they speak like one who has power from on high. Frequently these men lived in deserts and waste places, without ever leaving them ; but the people flocked there from far and near, asking them to preach to them and to teach them. Such men, like St. Antony the hermit, Simeon Stylites, etc., were the pillars of the Catholic Church in times when she was in great danger from heresies.

In the middle ages God awakened *itinerant preachers*, who travelled over whole countries, and shook up continents, strengthening the faith and freeing thousands from the bonds of sin. Such men were St. Bernard, St. Dominic, St. Antony of Padua, St. Vincent Ferrer, John Capistran, Berthold of Ratisbon, etc.

These always attracted great multitudes, preaching as a rule under the open sky, because no church was large enough to hold their followers.

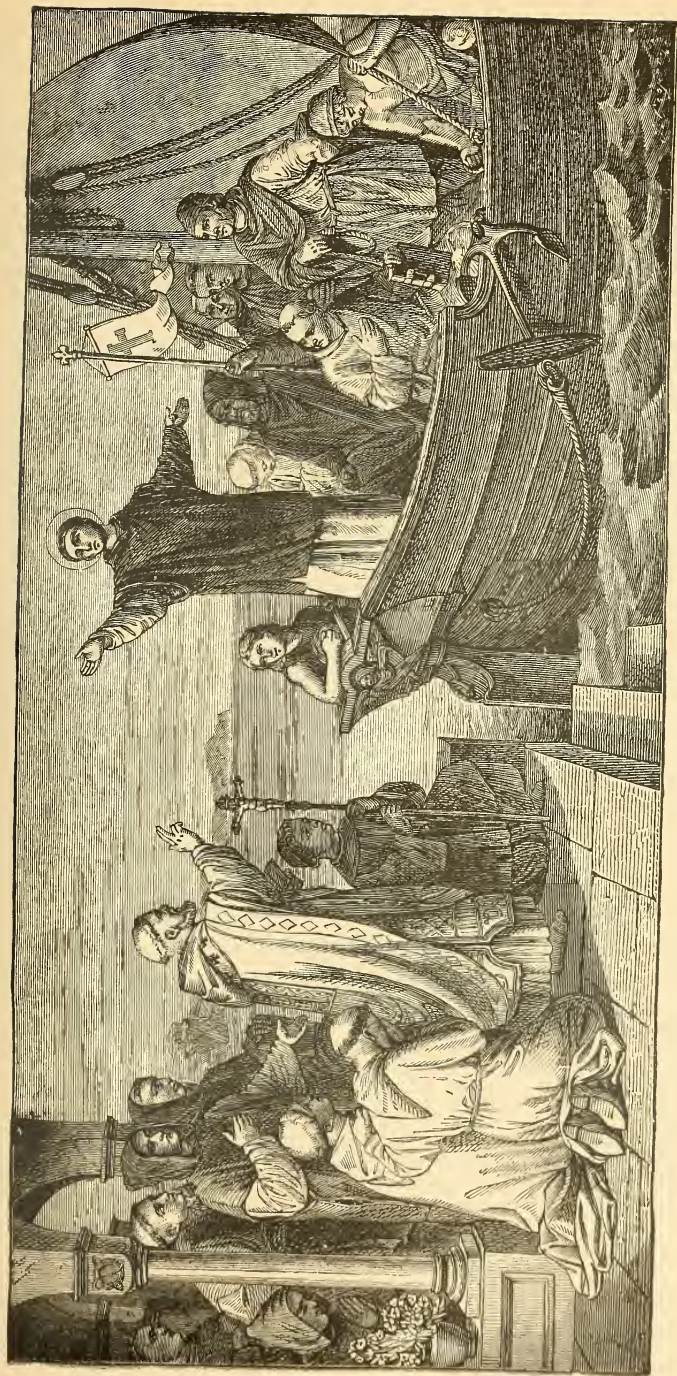
The Fathers of St. Francis and St. Dominic had great influence over the people by their sermons, and lent powerful assistance to the pastors. Other religious communities were erected to lighten the burden of the secular priests. Thus, St. Cajetan founded the Order of the Theatines, about 1524; St. Philip Neri the Oratorians, about 1564; the Blessed John Leonardi the Marianites, 1574; St. Francis Caracciolo the Minor Clerics, 1588; Charles Caraffa the Pious Laborers, 1620. All these join with the secular priests in furthering the kingdom of God among Christians, that the baptized may be Christians in deed as well as in name.

St. Vincent of Paul, the founder of the Lazarists, about 1624; St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, about 1540; and St. Alphonsus Maria de Liguori, the founder of the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer (the Redemptorists), about 1732, more than others learned from painful experience how sin and ignorance had grown among the people, and they and their brethren spared no pains to influence the people through sermons and instruction. They introduced spiritual exercises, which to this day are carried on under the name of Popular Missions, principally by their spiritual sons, and work an extraordinary amount of blessings. But for this very reason they are attacked by many. They are accused of many things which we shall not speak of here, because we wish to state only their usefulness.

1. The popular missions are spiritual exercises. Exercise in spiritual things (meditation, the word of God, sacraments, etc.) is necessary for every Christian. It must be of great advantage, therefore, to practise it for a few days continuously under the guidance of an experienced guide of souls.

2. A large part of mankind is in the sleep of sin, and must be frightened out of it. But this cannot be done by impressions to which they are accustomed. To be brought to their senses they must be shaken up in an extraordinary way.

3. Good example is a powerful factor in conversion. A sinner who, touched by the mercy of God, has recognized his misery and is willing to reform, frequently has no one to understand his changed condition, and every one seems to take pains to turn him from his good resolutions. In a mission the zeal of many is



MISSIONARIES TAKING THEIR DEPARTURE.

aroused, and the good example of one is a support to the others.

4. Many sins are confessed that for years were concealed, and many unworthy confessions are made good ones. False pride is more easily put aside in the confessional, for the excitement is greater, and it is easier to confess to a strange priest, well known for his zeal and piety. It not infrequently occurs that parishioners hide sins from their own pastors because they are ashamed before them, and fear to lose their respect.

5. Ignorance in matters of salvation is greater than one thinks, and not only among the lowly, but also among the educated. Of course we know what the catechism teaches, but we do not comply with these teachings, because the will is wanting. In a holy mission instruction is given more fully, and the shortcomings of the soul are shown as in a mirror; we see our faults in the family, in the education of our children, in our relations to our neighbors, as we never saw them before.

1. Some may think that the holding of a mission is a reproach to a congregation and a reflection on its piety. They should bear in mind, however, that in the best congregation, as in others, there are young people. All young people, without exception, stand in need of earnest exhortation, and are apt to be careless in confession, not by concealing anything, but in a superficial examination of conscience, by being wanting in a firm purpose of amendment and in contrition, by which their confessions are as unworthy as if they had concealed their sins. Therefore, for the sake of the young people alone, if for no other reason, a mission is needed even in the best congregation.

2. A mission is a renewal of spirit useful to every one; for the soul, too, requires to refresh itself. Every one should devote a few days each year to the salvation of his soul, undisturbed by human affairs.

3. Even the most God-fearing man is not perfect. Most people are guilty of carelessness and want of attention at divine service, in prayer, etc. It is well, therefore, that they should do a little more a few days in the year, and thereby make some amendment.

4. Much praying is done during a mission. This brings down upon us the blessing of God, and for this we pray.

5. Seed sown on good soil bears rich fruit; sown on rock, it perishes. A good congregation is the best soil for a holy mission. We all are sinners, weak and full of faults; but all have not good-

will. Now, why should a congregation that can truthfully say, "The soil is here," object to having the seed sown?

Whoever, then, earnestly wishes that the kingdom of God be implanted in the hearts of the faithful will find a mighty helper in popular missions.

Homesickness.

A distinguishing characteristic of the saints of God is their extraordinary longing for heaven. All their entreaties and prayers are one continuous petition for possession of heavenly bliss.

Louis of Granada exclaims: "Happy mansion of glory, the desires of my heart are directed to thee; thy infinite beauties constitute the delight of my soul; the more I consider thee, the more I languish with love for thee. Sole object of my ardent desires, I am charmed with the sweet remembrance of thee. How happy my soul, and eternally happy, O heavenly city, should it merit to contemplate thy glory, thy beauty, thy happiness; to see thy gates, thy walls, thy streets, thy numerous buildings, thy illustrious inhabitants, and thy Almighty Sovereign enthroned in splendor and majesty in the midst of thee! For thy walls are of precious stones, thy gates are of beauteous pearl, and thy streets are of the purest gold, ever resounding with joyful *Alleluias*. Thy many mansions are founded upon hewn, square, sapphire stone, and covered in with plates of gold. There are the harmonious choirs of angels; there the assemblage of the heavenly citizens; there the joyful procession of all those blessed souls who from the melancholy pilgrimage of this life return to the never-ending joys of their heavenly country." And the pious author of the *Following of Christ* sighs: "O thou most blessed dwelling of the celestial city! O shining day of eternity, darkened by no night! O would that day had come, and the end of all that is temporal! O when are these evils to cease? When am I, O Lord, to think of Thee alone, in perfect joy? Lord, comfort me in my misery, soften my pain! All that this world can offer for consolation is only a burden to me. Ah! when am I to stand before Thee and gaze upon Thee? when look upon the glories of Thy kingdom? When wilt Thou be all in all to me? When am I to come to Thee into Thy kingdom, which Thou hast prepared for Thy beloved ones from eternity?"

The Unequal Division.

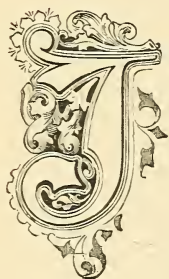
When St. Bernard, that great servant of God, was going into solitude, he met his little brother, Nivard by name, who was play-

ing with his comrades. In passing he called to him : " Farewell, Nivard ! I leave to you all my paternal treasures and possessions, as I am about to enter an Order, to seek there the kingdom of God, which is heaven." " What ? " replied the little boy, " what ? The treasures of heaven are to be for you and those of the earth for me ? This division is unequal : I prefer to share heaven with you." And he followed him at once.

The Third Petition in the Our Father.

" Thy Will be Done on Earth as it is in Heaven."

INSTRUCTION.



N the second petition of the Our Father we pray to God that His kingdom may come. It will come to us in reality and truth if we at all times do God's will cheerfully and exactly. The Lord Himself says : " Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven : but he that doth the will of My Father " (Matt. vii. 21). Hence in the third petition of the

Lord's Prayer we say, " Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Now we do God's will—

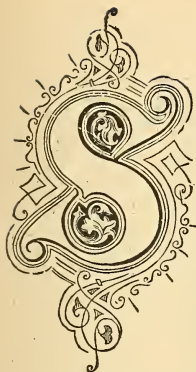
1. When with loyal fidelity and a holy promptness, such as we see among the inhabitants of heaven, we comply with God's precepts and counsels.

2. When we submit patiently and quietly to all the trials sent to us by God, and are content with the condition of life in which He has placed us : not murmuring when God sends us sickness, disappointment, or losses of temporal goods ; not petulantly asking why God has done this to us.

Thus we ask in this third petition of the Lord's Prayer—

1. The grace to be enabled to keep God's commandments and those of His holy Church, and to comply with all other duties temporal and spiritual. This we do because our will from our very youth up is inclined to evil and prone to yield to temptation.

2. The grace to say in all our troubles of life, " Not my will, but Thine be done, O Lord," and to do violence to our own will, as Christ did in the garden of Olives.



REFLECTION.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

HALL the clay say to him that fashioneth it: What art thou making?" (Is. xlv. 9.) "Shall there be evil in a city, which the Lord hath not done?" (Amos iii. 6.) "Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of My Father Who is in heaven" (Matt. vii. 21). "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matt. xix. 17).

"Epaphras is always solicitous for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and full in all the will of God" (Col. iv. 12). "Become not unwise: but understanding what is the will of God" (Eph. v. 17). "Let every man abide in the same calling in which he was called. Wast thou called, being a bondman? care not for it" (I. Cor. vii. 21).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"The private soldier does not mark out the line of march, nor go whithersoever he listeth, nor station himself wheresoever he pleases. God forbid! He accepts the directions from his general and obeys them promptly and exactly. If he act against orders or change the line of march, he receives punishment instead of reward, and nowhere finds a permanent place. So, too, must we go the way and receive the positions which God has assigned to us. We must willingly submit to the divine precepts and commands, that is, fulfil exactly the holy will of God. Thus will take place that for which we pray, when we say 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven'" (St. Ambrose). "When we say, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,' we do not ask God to do His own will, but rather that we should be in a condition to do what He wills. The will of God is that which Christ Himself practised and preached, namely, humility in conduct, constancy in faith, righteousness in action, charity in works, strictness in morals; to do no wrong; to love God with our whole hearts, to love Him because He is our Father, to fear Him because He is God; to prefer nothing before Christ as He preferred nothing before us; to cling to Him with an undying love, to clasp His cross with firm and loving hands when there

is question of defending His honor and name ; to be bold in professing the faith ; in time of trial, to feel confident of victory,



and so advance to the combat; showing patience in death, by which we are crowned: this is what is called a co-heir of Christ; this is called obeying God's commands; this is called doing our Father's will" (St. Cyprian). "The Lord wishes that as long as we live here on earth we

"THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN." should hold intercourse with the inhabitants of heaven ; and He also wishes that before it becomes our privilege to enter heaven, we should make earth a heaven" (St. Chrysostom). "Do not pray that what thou wilt be done, but pray rather as thou wast taught to pray, that God's will be done in thee" (Nilus). "What does God hate, or what does He punish besides self-will? Self-will should cease, and hell would cease, for against what else could the fires rage, but against self-will" (St. Bernard).

EXAMPLES.

Faithful Performers of God's Will.

From Holy Scripture.—The examples of this virtue to be found in Holy Writ are too well known to need recounting here. Abraham, who was ready to slaughter his only son, and without a murmur, although he was his only hope as the progenitor of the promised generations; Job, whose patience is proverbial; the Saviour Himself, Who drank the chalice of suffering to its very dregs; Mary, who never lost faith or hope, even under the cross,—these are all admirable examples of obedience to the divine will.

Another example, and one that ought to make Christians ashamed, is given us by King David. He was compelled to flee before his own son Absalom. Although he had the sympathy of most of his subjects, and even of the priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant out of Jerusalem, he said to the priest Sadoc: "Bring back the ark to the city. If I shall find grace in the sight of the Lord, He will lead me back, and let me see it and the tabernacle. But if He say to me: Thou pleasest Me not, I am ready. Let Him do to me what seems good to Him."

From the History of the Saints.—Blessed Henry of Suso fulfilled day and night with tender conscientiousness the will of his heavenly Father. He found it easy to keep the commandments of God, even in the smallest matters. Hence he used to say often: "God does not require us to abound in knowledge of heavenly things; but He desires us to do His will in all things, and to subject ourselves to that divine will."

Every time that St. Catherine of Siena said the Our Father she laid special stress on the words: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Not unfrequently she would inquire of herself: "How do I stand? Is God's will always obeyed by me?" By such and other questions she acquired new courage to obey the will of God.

One day St. Stephana in spirit saw herself placed in heaven, where she saw mingling among the seraphim many deceased persons whom she had formerly known on earth, and heard a voice assuring her that the souls had attained that high degree of glory because when on earth they had not only prayed "Thy will be done," but because they had truly made it their food ever to do the will of the Lord.

It was a most pleasing and sacred task to that devout servant of God, Louis of Granada, to do God's will, and he prayed unceasingly to that effect. "Only this one thing, O Lord," he used often to say, "only this one thing do I seek—that Thy holy will be done perfectly, that I be all Thine, and ever give myself to Thy holy service. I will ask nothing contrary to Thy will; I will do nothing against that will, even to please friends and acquaintances or gratify flesh and blood. Thy holy will is my only joy, and the delight and consolation of my soul."

A Wise Choice.

While Francis Borgia was Duke of Gandia his wife was grievously sick, and God permitted him to choose between her death and her restoration to health. With sad but submissive heart Francis said: "Lord, I have nothing to say. Both in regard to my wife and my children I wish Thy holy will be done."

Prayer of Submission.

The noble and devout Elizabeth, sister to King Louis XVI., who died on the guillotine in Paris, used to say every day in her prison cell the following prayer: "O my God, I know not what is to befall me. But I know that nothing can be done to me except by Thy holy will, and that consoles me. I adore Thy sacred decrees, and submit myself to them with all my soul. I will whatever Thou willest, accept whatever comes from Thy blessed hands, offer everything up to Thee, in union with my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. In His name, and by virtue of His infinite merits, I implore Thee, O God, for patience in my sufferings, and for perfect resignation to whatever may befall me."

When St. Martin of Tours informed his assembled disciples that the hour of his death had come, they began to weep, and say: "Father, why do you leave us? To whom will you give us to be cared for? Ravening wolves will make a descent upon your deserted flock. We know you desire to be united with Jesus; but your reward is secure, and although it be deferred, it will always remain certain. Have pity on our distress; think of the dangers to which we shall be exposed." Then St. Martin prayed as follows: "Lord, I fear not death, but do not hesitate to let me live. If I am necessary to Thy people, I am ready to work and to suffer. Thy holy will be done."



ST. ELIZABETH DRIVEN FROM HER PALACE.

True Submission to God's Will.

When the news was brought to Job that his cattle had been stolen by his enemies and his children killed in the destruction of his house, he was indeed grieved; yet he fell down and worshipped God, and prayed: "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord so it is done: blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job i. 21). Again, when his whole body was covered with sores, and he lay helpless and friendless on a dunghill, he said to his complaining wife, "If we have received good things at the hand of God, why should we not receive evil?"

St. Elizabeth of Thuringia.

When St. Elizabeth saw the coffin containing the remains of her young husband, who had been killed in the holy wars, her whole body shuddered with painful grief. But soon recovering herself, she said: "Although I loved him with my whole heart, I do not complain, O Lord, that he has offered himself up to Thee, and lost his life in a foreign land, doing Thy will as he thought best. Thou knowest, O Lord, that had it been Thy divine will his life and presence would be to me the dearest thing on earth. I would have gladly begged through the world in his company all the days of my life. But now, O Lord, I do not murmur against Thy divine will, but resign myself and him to Thy kind providence. I would not bring him back to life against Thy will."

When afterwards she was driven from her castle, and refused shelter in Eisenach, where she had given so much charity, and compelled to take refuge in a stable, she had the fortitude to repair at the hour of matins to the monks' chapel, and beg them to sing a *Te Deum* in thanksgiving to God for her deep afflictions.

St. Hedwigis.

St. Hedwigis, a Polish princess, loved her husband and children with true maternal tenderness. Yet when the former died after a disgraceful imprisonment, and her oldest son fell in battle, she shed but few tears, and said: "It was God's will that they should die, and God wills always what is best for us."

St. Francis of Assisi.

One day, when St. Francis was enduring great pain, one of his brethren said thoughtlessly: "Pray to God, dear brother,

that He would deal more gently with you, for it seems to me that He is treating you with much severity." Then St. Francis replied: "Be assured, brother, that if I did not know you said those words out of simplicity of heart, I would not see you any more; for you have dared to find fault with the will of God." Then the saint, notwithstanding his pains, kissed the ground and exclaimed: "I thank Thee, O God, for all my pains. If it be Thy holy will, send me more sufferings. For I wish Thee to afflict me unsparingly, it being my greatest happiness on earth to submit to Thy holy will."

St. Chrysostom.

When St. Chrysostom was addressing his last discourse to his people before going into undeserved exile, he said: "Christ is with me; whom shall I fear? Even if the whole ocean rose up and overwhelmed me I would consider it a trifle, for I would say all the time, 'Thy will be done, O Lord.' Not what this one or that one wills, but what Thou willest. Thy will is my vesture, my rock, my staff." Thus he spoke and thus he lived, accepting all things from God's hand joyfully, adversity as well as prosperity.

Emperor Ferdinand.

The Emperor Ferdinand II. used to say: "Long ago would I have been crushed by my overwhelming misfortunes if I had not striven with all my will to submit to the will of God." Daily he used to pray: "Lord, if Thy honor and the good of my soul require that I should be greater than I am, lift me up, and I will glorify Thee. If Thy honor and my own good demand that I remain in my present position, I beg Thee to keep me there, and I will glorify Thee. If my degradation would contribute to Thy honor and my own good, then degrade me according to Thy good pleasure, and I will glorify Thee."

Thomas More.

That exemplary model of perfect patience, Sir Thomas More, regulated his will altogether in accordance with the will of God, as the following shows.

While detained at the court of the king, some distance from home, he received a letter from his wife informing him that a portion of their house had been destroyed by fire, together with all their barns and very valuable contents. More answered his wife's letter as follows: "Dear Aloysia, you inform me that our

barn and that of our neighbor have been destroyed with all their contents. It is a cause of sorrow, but not of murmuring against the will of God. Since it has pleased God to thus chastise us, we must not only be patient, but also willing to bear with the outstretched hand of the Lord. What we have lost was given us by God. As He has taken it away, welcome be His holy will. Let us not be cast down at the calamity; but, as is becoming, be reconciled, and even thank God the same as if He had sent us a fortune. And, indeed, if we look at it in the right light, this loss is a gain, a benefit from God. For what contributes to our sanctification is better known to God than to us.

“So I beg you be consoled, take the whole household with you into the church, thank God for what He gave and what He has taken away, and also for what He has left us. If He choose, He can easily deprive us of what is left to us. If He resolve to take more from us, let it be as He wills. Ascertain the amount lost by our neighbor, and beg him not to worry at the affliction. For I cannot permit him to suffer on my account, if I be compelled to part with all I have to compensate him.

“I request you, Aloysia, to rejoice in the Lord, together with all the children and the rest of the household. We are all in the hands of the Lord. We are altogether dependent on His will, and never should we be cast down by any mishap. Farewell.”

Contentment.

Charles Albert, whilst riding through the country with some of his courtiers, met on the roadside a shepherd-boy caring for a flock of sheep. The prince, reining up his horse, inquired who owned the sheep. The boy, pointing his stick to a neighboring farm-house, intimated that there the owner lived. “And what do you receive for your service?” inquired the prince further. “The owner supplies me with food and clothing,” replied the boy. “That is not much,” rejoined Charles Albert. “Have you any more?” artlessly asked the boy. The emperor stood still, pulled out his purse, and threw the boy a gold coin. Then, as he rode away, he said to his attendants: “Truly, that is a valuable lesson for a prince.”

The Fourth Petition in the Lord's Prayer.

"Give us this Day our Daily Bread."

INSTRUCTION.



THE first three petitions in the Lord's Prayer have for their object that God would give us the grace to attain the end for which we have been created; namely, to honor Him, to serve Him, and to come to Him in heaven. The last four petitions have regard to what we need during our earthly pilgrimage, for we live in much need and much anxiety of soul and body.

Hence we pray, first of all, for our daily bread; meaning thereby not only that ordinary article of food, but everything that we need for soul and body, that our bodily life may not become exhausted nor our spiritual life extinct, but that we may have strength and vigor to fulfil our duties as Christians.

Holy Scripture often understands by bread whatever is necessary for life, especially our bodily support. Thus says the Psalmist: "I have been young, and now am old: and I have not seen the just forsaken, nor His seed seeking bread" (Ps. xxxvi. 25). Of Our Saviour we are told that "Jesus went into the house of one of the chief of the Pharisees on the Sabbath day to eat bread" (Luke xiv. 1).

We pray to God for nourishment for the body; for although we may work, the blessing comes not from ourselves, but from God. "Neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase" (I. Cor. iii. 7). As the prayer is a universal one, we ask for bread, not for this one or that one only, but for us, that is to say, for all men; for a true Christian cannot eat his bread in contentment when he sees his fellow-beings in want.

We say, too, give us *our* daily bread, and not *the* daily bread; for we do not ask for a bread unsuited to ourselves, but for that bread which a kind Providence has appointed for us, and to earn which we gladly exert ourselves. We do not seek the bread of unrighteousness, we do not wish to eat at the expense of other men's labor; we seek our own bread, and

not that of the stranger, as long as God is pleased to save us from becoming a burden on others.

When a bountiful God gives us bread, let us promise to consider it our common bread, and not to shut our brethren out from a share in it, but rather to break it cheerfully with the needy, and to acknowledge gratefully that the share of the poor has been intrusted to our hands, and that we are the stewards of the Lord.

We pray for bread, and show that we are satisfied if God



"GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD."

"Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God" (Matt. iv. 4). The soul,

gives us what is necessary only. It is not superfluity that we desire, but merely what is necessary for life, leaving it to the good pleasure of God to add more. We are not solicitous as to what we shall eat and what we shall drink, but we rely on Him Who said: "Cast thy care upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee" (Ps. liv. 23). As we pray daily, we do not doubt but that our prayer will be heard daily.

then, must be fed as well as the body, and in the fourth petition we also pray for the nourishment for the soul. But the bread of the soul is Christ and His grace. He and His word are the saving means that nourish the soul, and strengthen it against the disease and death of sin. "I am the bread of life," says the Lord (John vi. 35). Hence we pray that God's word may be spoken to us in sermons and instructions, that we may have zealous priests to dispense to us the sacraments, and above all that we ourselves be made worthy to receive often and profitably the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar; for it is the supersubstantial bread that helps to life, for he who eats of it shall live forever (John v. 35).

Thus the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer is a petition for the means by which the object of the first three petitions is to be secured.

REFLECTION.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.



HE eyes of all hope in Thee, O Lord: and Thou givest them meat in due season" (Ps. cxliv. 15).
 "Deal Thy bread to the hungry" (Is. lviii. 7).

"Be not therefore solicitous for to-morrow. For the morrow will be solicitous for itself; sufficient for the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. vi. 34).

"Having food, and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content. For they that will become rich fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil, and into many unprofitable and hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition" (I. Tim. vi. 9).
 "Let your manners be without covetousness, contented with such things as you have: for He hath said: I will not leave thee, neither will I forsake thee" (Heb. xiii. 5).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"We say, Give us this day our daily bread. But what is our daily bread? Nothing else than the Lord's Supper" (St. Augustine).

"We have need to pray, Give us this day our daily bread, not only that we may have food, but also that it may be reached to us by the hand of the Lord, which imparts to the daily bread so sound and healthful a force that the food is profitable to the body and the body serves the soul" (St. Chrysostom). "As we

consist of two natures, one of which is corporeal, the other spiritual, we ask for bread for both. For our corporeal being we ask for earthly bread, and for our soul heavenly food, the bread of angels; who, as spiritual beings, nourish themselves on no other food but Thyself, O God, Who art the feeder of spiritual existence" (Louis of Granada). "Give us bread, O Lord. No superfluity, no luxury, no golden ornaments, no glistening stones, no acres, no authority over people, no silken garments, no musical delights of the ear, nothing by which the soul would be diverted from high and divine things, but only bread" (St. Gregory of Nyssa). "A disciple of Christ prays properly only for his daily subsistence, for he is forbidden to be solicitous for the morrow; for it is contradictory and unfitting that we should pray to live long in this world, we who pray that God's kingdom may soon come to us" (St. Cyprian). "He who eats honestly well-earned bread eats his own bread. But he who eats bread dishonestly earned eats the bread of others" (St. Chrysostom). "If Christ is our daily bread, why do you partake of it only once a year? Live so that you may receive it daily" (St. Ambrose).

EXAMPLES.

Remarkable Instance of Prayer Heard.

There is no prayer more effective to influence the heart of a father, and move him to a speedy response, than the prayer of his children for bread. But if the heart of an earthly father is so powerfully affected by the words, "Give us bread," can it be less effective with our loving Father in heaven? Certainly not. Whosoever, with childlike confidence, sends up such a prayer to heaven will surely find a favorable hearing. The following incident shows this.

Some years ago a poor young shoemaker died, leaving a widow and three children without any means. In a short time they were without anything to eat, and knew not where to find any. The anguish of the female mind in such circumstances is bitter indeed; but how much more so when she is a widowed mother with several starving children! Then she said to the two oldest, "I cannot give you anything to eat, for I have nothing; let us kneel down and ask the merciful God to help us." So they knelt down, and all together repeated the Our Father, being unusually fervent at the words, "Give us this day our daily bread." Just about that time a parishioner had died, and his friends came to the pastor with some offerings for Masses for the

repose of the soul of the deceased. The pastor said he did not need the money, but would see that the Masses were celebrated, while the friends could give the alms to some poor person. God guided their footsteps to the house of the poor woman and her children as they were praying for their daily bread.

Contentment.

Many bright examples of satisfied moderation are to be found in Holy Scripture.

Thus King Solomon prayed, "Lord, give me neither beggary nor riches : give me only the necessities of life " (Prov. xxx. 8).

The prophet Eliseus led the Assyrian soldiers to the king and said to him, "Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master " (IV. Kings vi. 22).

A very special model of contentment is St. Francis Assisi. While making a pilgrimage to Rome in company of his friend, Brother Massaeus, the saint was almost fainting from weakness and the heat of the weather, when they came to a clear, fresh spring issuing from between two stones. The two pilgrims sat down on the grass, and made their frugal meal on some hard, dry crusts of bread that they had begged on the way. Francis became quite cheerful, and made no effort to conceal his pleasant state of mind. "O Brother Massaeus !" he exclaimed, "let us make merry, and thank God for the rich treasure He has sent to me." Brother Massaeus wondered where the great treasure was, for they had but bread and water for dinner, and not too much of that. "O Massaeus !" replied St. Francis, "is it not equal to a great treasure to have here this beautiful shady spot, with its running stream of sweet water and its green, grassy turf, to say nothing of the good wholesome bread that God has induced good, kind people to give us on the way ?"

Be not Solicitous for the Morrow.

St. Paul of Lower Thebais, the first hermit, in order to escape the persecution of the Christians by the Emperor Decius, fled in his twenty-third year to the country of Upper Thebais. There for thirty years he lived on the fruit of one date-tree and the water of the same spring. During the sixty years following he lived on a half loaf of bread brought to him daily by a raven. In the year 341 the saintly hermit, warned by Heaven, went to visit St. Antony, when, lo and behold ! the same raven came and brought this time a whole loaf of bread, and laid it at their feet.

God Rewards Charitable Gifts.

There lived in Bavaria a devout pastor named Fenneberg. He was kind beyond measure, and hence he was himself often very much embarrassed for the necessities of life. It was in such moments that his confidence in God was deepest.

It happened one day that he needed money for a certain purpose, and knew not where to procure it. Such a position, for a devoted pastor of souls, is trying in the extreme. His heart sympathizes with all the members of his congregation, as does a father's heart for each and every child of his family ; and it pains him deeply to see want, and not have the means to relieve



ST. PAUL FED BY A RAVEN.

it. It occurred to him that some time previous he had lent two dollars to a person to enable him to go to a distant town in search of employment. He did not regret the loan, but as the amount now needed was just two dollars, the incident came to his mind naturally. Standing uneasily at his window, he said : "Beloved Lord and Master, Thou knowest that for Thy sake I loaned a poor man two dollars ; I beg Thee to inspire him to remit them to me now in my hour of necessity." He had hardly finished his simple prayer when a smart knock was heard at the door, and on opening it he found there the letter-carrier with a package containing two hundred dollars, and addressed to the

pastor. The matter was soon explained. The poor man who had borrowed the two dollars found steady employment in the service of a wealthy townsman, to whom he related the goodness of the poor priest. This man, though wealthy, had not his heart in his riches, nor was it made of marble; he had a Christian heart, into which the light of charity easily penetrated. So he said to himself: "I have much more than I need, and a charitable pastor of souls must have many ways that the world knows nothing about of employing money for the good of souls." Moved by such reflections, he remitted to the priest the two hundred dollars—a hundred dollars for each one loaned in kindness.

The Blessed Bread.

When the great Cardinal Bellarmine was asked what class of persons were most likely to attain their salvation, he replied: "The class who earn their daily bread. For these people," said he, "work steadily from morning to night; so there is no temptation to sloth, and many opportunities for the exercise of the most heroic virtues. Their scant subsistence relieves them of many temptations. With truth can they pray: 'Give us *our* daily bread:' and with truth can they say: 'this is *our* daily bread;' for it is in every sense their own."

The Bleeding Bread.

The venerable, wonder-working Father Matthew Bussi was once invited to supper by a dishonest lawyer of Venice. Taking a piece of bread, he squeezed it, and a stream of blood was seen issuing from it. This he showed to his host, and said: "Such is the bread you have on your table. You squeeze the very life's blood from poor widows and orphans, and yet presume to say daily to your heavenly Father, 'Give us this day our daily bread.' You ought to shudder at the words, and remember the dreadful bread you eat, moistened with the blood and tears of the unfortunate."

Reverence for God's Word.

Frances of Jesus had an inappeasable desire to hear God's word, for in it she found strength and consolation. It was as necessary and dear to her soul as her daily bread. When listening to a sermon her whole countenance would glow with respectful devotion. It mattered little whether the preacher observed the rules of rhetoric or not, her ear was attentive and her eyes shed tears. To some young people, who found fault with a

preacher's mode of delivery, she said : " When exiles in a strange land hear news from home, they pay little attention to the language or manner of the messenger, if they can only get the news. Should not we, who are pilgrims and strangers in this vale of tears, be glad to hear news from our Father in heaven, no matter who brings it ? "

The Fifth Petition in the Lord's Prayer.

" **Forgive us our Trespases, as we Forgive them who Tresspass against us.** "



INSTRUCTION.

IN the fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer we pray for bread for soul and body. But how often, in our forgetfulness of the gifts of our divine Giver, do we sin by ingratitude and forgetfulness of God ! Hence, to the petition, " Give us this day our daily bread," we add at once, " And forgive us our trespases."

Now all men without exception are sinners. The preacher saith : " There is no just man upon earth, that doth good, and sinneth not " (Eccles. vii. 21). Solomon the wise man asks : " Who can say : My heart is clean, I am pure from sin ? " (Prov. xx. 9.) St. Paul says that the man who says he is free from sin deceives himself, and the truth is not in him. Hence all men have good reason to sue for pardon before God from their sins.

But God will forgive us our sins only on condition that we forgive those who offend us. He has, as it were, made a covenant with us sinners in these words : " If you forgive those who have offended you, I will forgive your offences committed against Me. If you do not forgive, you cannot expect Me to forgive." This truth we learn from Our Saviour's own lips, when relating the well-known parable of the unmerciful servant, who had been relieved of a large debt by his master, and then cast his fellow-servant into prison for a debt of a hundred pence. When the lord heard of this action of the unmerciful servant, he called him and said to him : " Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me. Shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I

had compassion on thee? And his lord being angry delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt." "So also," adds Christ, "shall My heavenly Father do to you if you forgive not every one his brother from your heart" (Matt. xviii. 32-35). Hence He commanded us to pray: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us."

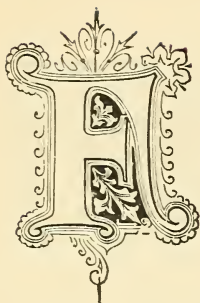
We pray then in vain to God, Forgive us our debts, if we be hard-hearted against our fellow men and cherish enmity against them.

Indeed by so doing we utter the Lord's Prayer to our destruction, for we really ask God to forgive us in the same proportion as we forgive others.



"FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THEM WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US."

REFLECTION.



PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

FROM my secret sins, cleanse me, O Lord " (Ps. xviii. 13). "Who is a God like to Thee, Who takest away iniquity, and passest by the sin of the remnant of Thy inheritance?" (Mich. vii. 18.) "Say not: I will return evil: wait for the Lord and He will deliver thee" (Prov. xx. 22). "If you will forgive men their offences: your heavenly Father will forgive you also your offences" (Matt. vi. 14). "If thou meet thy enemy's ox or ass going astray, bring it back to him" (Ex. xxiii. 4). "When thy enemy shall fall, be not glad, and in his ruin let not thy heart rejoice" (Prov. xxiv. 17). "If thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat: if he thirst, give him water to drink" (Prov. xxv. 21). "Love your enemies: do good, and lend, hoping for nothing thereby: and your reward shall be great" (Luke vi. 35). "Let not the sun go down upon your anger" (Eph. iv. 26).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"How forcibly and profitably we are reminded that we are sinners by the soul remembering itself while asking for pardon. By praying for forgiveness every day we are every day reminded that we are sinning every day. To your enemies wish only good: only cease to have enmity towards him, and he will be your enemy no longer. It is not the human nature within him that is your enemy, but sin. Only remember our origin: God is our Father, the Church is our mother, therefore we are brothers" (St. Augustine). "How can you raise your hands to heaven, or move your tongue, or seek forgiveness? For if God will pardon you your sins, you do not permit it as long as you have hostile feelings towards your neighbor" (St. Chrysostom). "If thou do not forgive the indignity done to thyself, thou dost not offer a prayer for thyself, but seekest and bringest down on thyself the curse of God" (St. Athanasius). "Thou hurtest thyself if thou do not love thy enemy" (St. Bernard).

EXAMPLES.

Forgive us our Trespases.

Even under the Old Dispensation there were many good and pious servants of God who used to cry out, "Forgive us, O Lord,

our debts." In the New Dispensation such persons are beyond all reckoning.

Filled with grief, Isaias exclaims, "Be not very angry, O Lord, and remember no longer our iniquity; behold, see we are all Thy people" (Is. lxiv. 9).

Daniel, in a spirit of penance, raised his imploring voice and prayed: "I beseech Thee, O Lord God, great and terrible, Who keepest the covenant and mercy to them that love Thee, we have sinned, we have committed iniquity. But to Thee, O Lord, belong mercy and forgiveness. Incline Thine ear and hear. Forgive" (Dan. ix. 4).

David wept and groaned day and night because of his trespasses against God's law, and ceased not to pray to be forgiven.

In the same strain prayed the poor publican in the Temple, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner." Mary Magdalene, at the feet of Jesus, begged to have her sins forgiven. And many sins were forgiven her.

So it was at all times proved that God is a merciful God to those who call on Him, if they themselves forgive those who offend them.

St. Bernard.—This servant of God, who may be justly styled an angel of innocence, often used to say to himself: "How dare I presume to raise my eyes to the face of God, Who is so good a Father, while I am so undutiful a son? Break forth, my eyes, into a torrent of tears; let shame cover my countenance, let my life waste with pain, and amid sighs and tears over myself may my days vanish."

Forgive and you will be Forgiven.

St. John the Almoner, Patriarch of Alexandria, had often advised a great lord to be reconciled with his enemy; but finding him obstinate to his advice he conducted him one day into a private chapel to be present at Mass. There was no one but St. John with his server, and the irreconcilable lord, at the Mass. In those days it was the practice for the celebrant and the people to recite together the Pater Noster aloud. When the petition was reached, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us," the Patriarch lowered his voice, as did also the boy, according to previous instructions, so that the lord heard himself only saying the words. Then the priest turned towards him, and said in gentle tones: "Think, I implore you, on the words you have just spoken to God! While asking His forgive-

ness you have asserted that you forgive those who have trespassed against yourself." The great man felt as if a thunderbolt had fallen on him, and throwing himself prostrate on his face he said, "Your servant is ready to do what you have asked me to do." So he at once went away, and was reconciled to his former enemy.

Magnanimity.

St. Anselm.—Whilst William the Conqueror was King of England, St. Anselm was Archbishop of Canterbury. The king, who was unjust and violent to a degree, robbed the churches of much of their wealth, and then sought to compel St. Anselm to ratify the theft and even to pay a large sum of money himself. The holy archbishop protested against the injustice, and defended the rights of the Church, thereby incurring the angry hatred of the king and much persecution. He was deprived of his diocese and compelled to leave England. But he who had long before renounced the world, and acquired virtue under the guidance of the holy rule of St. Benedict, had also learned to forgive his enemies and persecutors. Free from all spite or rancor, the bishop, presenting himself before the king, said, "I am now about to leave the country, and if you do not object, I wish to leave Your Majesty my blessing." Then he set out for Rome, and soon after was present at the Council of Bary, where steps were taken to excommunicate King William of England for his outrageous conduct against God's Church and its clergy. But St. Anselm, falling on his knees, begged the bishops to spare the king, which they did at the request of the lenient and forgiving bishop.

A Priest's Revenge.—In a little village in the Vosges Mountains there once dwelt a French priest named Wagner, who to much amiability of character united strength and vigor. Though he would not offend a child, he was inexorable in denouncing and suppressing abuses in his parish. Consequently he had some enemies, one of whom one day fired a pistol at him, inflicting a wound of which he died in a few days. The murderer was condemned to imprisonment for life. The pastor then made his will, and chose as his heirs for everything he owned the children of his murderer.

The Duke of Guise.—A certain Protestant was resolved to kill the Duke of Guise, who always showed himself a zealous defender of the Catholic Church. The attempt being frustrated, the duke said to the would-be murderer: "Have I ever done you any wrong?" "No," replied the other. "What, then, could

induce you to try to kill me." "I wanted to save my religion," replied the man. "Ah well," said the duke, "if your religion requires murder to protect it, my religion tells me to love my enemies. I forgive you."

Max Emanuel.—This general was once retreating through the mountain passes of the Tyrol, when the hostile inhabitants concealed themselves in many places in ambush, and harassed him and his army as they passed. His faithful vassal rode by the general's side, and would change from left to right, and right to left, according as he anticipated danger on one side or the other. At last he received a shot intended for Max Emanuel, and fell dead by his side. Afterwards the murderer was discovered and brought before Max Emanuel, who not only pardoned him, but furnished him with means to get away from the people, who were not actuated with the same spirit of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is a Christian's Revenge.—An inhabitant of Corsica was one day, with three friends, resting himself near a fountain on the grounds of Count Frasle, when he saw coming towards him a man who had murdered his son, and known only to himself. Greeting him politely, he asked him to share in their refreshments. The guilty man was so frightened at the meeting, that the blood seemed to chill in his veins; but seeing no means of escape, he joined the party, more dead than alive, feeling that at last retribution had come, and he would be handed over to the authorities, if not murdered by the outraged father. Soon the three friends took their departure, and the murderer was left alone with the father of the young man he had killed. "Your life," said the bereaved father, "is now in my hands, and I might now avenge the death of my son. You have brought grief and suffering to my family; but I will forget my wrongs if you promise always to treat your enemies as I now treat you, and learn that to forgive is better than to seek revenge." With these words he left the guilty man, who at once began a life of severe penance in atonement for his crime.

Reward for Forgiving our Enemies.

St. John Gualbert.—St. John Gualbert, founder of the renowned monastery of Vallombrosa, while yet in the world met the murderer of his brother, on a Good Friday. Gualbert was a powerful man, and there being no chance of escape, the murderer believed that his end was come. So throwing himself on

his knees before Gualbert, he begged him, for the sake of Our Lord, Who had died on that day for the sins of men, to spare him. Gualbert answered: "Since you ask me for pardon in the name of God, and on this day, I cannot refuse." Then the saint embraced him, and repairing to a neighboring church he perceived the figure of our crucified Redeemer bowing its head, as if in approval of his Christian feelings and action. Here, too,



ST. JOHN GUALBERT.

Gualbert found his first grace, that afterwards led to his sublime holiness in the service of God.

Nicephorus and Sapricius.—Nicephorus and Sapricius, two Christians living at Antioch under the reign of the Emperor Aurelian, although at first loving each other like brothers, became afterwards such enemies that they would not speak to each other. At last Nicephorus entered seriously into himself, and regretting the uncharitable feelings existing between him and his former friend, made repeated efforts to be reconciled. He even went to the house of Sapricius, and threw himself at his feet, asking forgiveness, which the latter persistently refused. At last, one day, Sapricius was arrested because of his religion, which he steadfastly professed before the judges. The governor ordered him to be placed in a kind of press, where he was slowly and painfully squeezed almost to death. Yet, as he remained

faithful to his faith, he was condemned to lose his head. Then Nicephorus ran to meet him, and throwing himself before him, cried and begged, saying: "Martyr of Christ, forgive me, as Christ forgave His enemies." But Sapricius turned aside his head and deigned no answer. Nicephorus persisted so in his prayer for pardon, that the pagans looked upon him as a crazy man, and laughed at his eagerness to obtain pardon from one who was condemned to death as a criminal. But Heaven could not look with indifference on the want of charity in Sapricius. The same Jesus Who had taught His disciples to say: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them who trespass against us," withdrew his grace from the hard-hearted Sapricius. Then what happened? When the moment came for the execution of the sentence, and Sapricius should place his head on the block to receive the blow of the axe, he hesitated, then denied Christ, and promised to worship the false gods. "No, no," exclaimed Nicephorus, "you must not throw away your martyr-crown, already stained with your blood, and for which you have already suffered so much. Do not dishonor your Redeemer, Who is even now holding that crown over your head." But Sapricius would not take advice from a man whom he hated. Then Nicephorus, grieved to the heart at his enemy's apostasy, cried out: "I too am a Christian, and profess what Sapricius has renounced. Permit me to repair this scandal by dying in his place." The prayer was granted. Thus was the crown of martyrdom denied to the unforgiving Sapricius and bestowed on the forgiving Nicephorus.

The Sixth Petition of the Our Father.

"Lead us not into Temptation."

INSTRUCTION.



To test a thing means to experiment upon it, or to place it in certain positions and circumstances, from the influence of which upon it and its corresponding changes it may be discovered what is in it and of what it is made. Thus the lapidary tests metals and stones by subjecting them to fire and acids, to ascertain their value and quality. So, too, are men tested by their fellow men, who place them in various circumstances and opportunities that are calculated to try their prudence, courage, honesty, and other qualifications.

God Himself exercises such tests on the souls of men. Holy Scripture furnishes us with many an example. He tested and tried our first parents. He tried the faith and obedience of Abraham, commanding him to slay his only son. The elder Tobias was tried by God; for it was not by accident that the dung of the swallows fell into his eyes and deprived him of sight. Not that God needed to make such tests in order to know His creatures, "for the wisdom of God is great, seeing all men without ceasing." God's motive for trying and testing men lies in the nature of men themselves.

God created man a free and self-conscious being. Hence man must himself first declare for God and His law before God can make him happy. In order that this be done, God puts man in some occasion or opportunity, in which the latter chooses, and decides whether he will obey God or the world, whether he will follow the higher and holier will or the will of the flesh; that is to say, God tries or tempts man.

No man can escape these trials, and when we say, "Lead us not into temptation," we must not presume to ask God to exempt us altogether from trials or temptations; for they are to us opportunities of winning a crown. This is what St. James the Apostle teaches when he exclaims: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he hath been proved he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love Him" (James i. 12). Thus if we asked God to free us altogether from every temptation, it would be equivalent to saying, "Deprive me of all opportunity of winning a victory and of gaining a crown."

To tempt means also to incite one to commit sin. In this sense God cannot tempt us, for He is holiness itself, and therefore abhors all sin. St. James says, "Let no man, when he is tempted, say that he is tempted by God; for God is not a tempter of evils, and He tempteth no man" (James i. 13). These wicked temptations come partly from our own internal enemies, from our evil inclinations and our flesh; and partly from our outer enemies, the world and the devil. It is only in the following sense that God "*leads* us into temptation," namely, that He permits them to come to us, either for the purpose of increasing our merits or of humiliating our pride and punishing our sins. It is from such evil temptations we seek to be freed when we pray, "Lead us not into temptation;" or we pray at least for strength from above not to yield under the trials.

This sixth petition in the Our Father follows naturally the

fifth petition, in which we have already besought the heavenly Father for remission of the guilt due to our sins. In the sixth we pray to be saved from a relapse into sin ; saying, as it were, " Lord, cleanse us from our sins ; and since through Thy mercies we have been washed from them, do not permit us to taint ourselves anew by new sins and new guilt."

But it is not enough to pray, " Lead us not into temptation ;" we ourselves must be careful not to stumble easily into the way of temptation and sin, but faithfully make use of such means as are adapted to the prevention of them and of conquering them. " Therefore take unto you the armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and to stand in all things perfect" (Eph. vi. 13).

The chief means to

be used against temptations are the following :

1. Speedy flight from danger, and from evil occasions. The



" LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION."

more attention one bestows on the inducements to sin, the more perilous is the struggle, the more difficult and uncertain the victory. David, although a man according to God's own heart, trifled with a dangerous occasion, and fell into adultery and murder. The wise Solomon, by imprudent familiarity with silly women, became an idolater. St. Peter, by associating with the enemies of Jesus around the fire of coals, became a traitor.

2. Inexorable resistance. When the plant is still enclosed in the seed it is easily eradicated; but once it has become a tree, who can bend or break it? A spark of fire is easily stamped out, a flame may be stifled; but who can check a conflagration? So it is when a man neglects to stamp out the smouldering flames of passion, and lets them become a consuming conflagration.

3. Persistent resistance. The history of the martyrs furnishes instances of the disgraceful fall of some who lacked perseverance. The evil spirit is not willing to lose his prey, for he says, "I will return into my house whence I came out" (Luke xi. 24). Temptations, instead of ceasing at conversion, often become greater. Hence the warning, "When thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice and in fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation" (Ecclus. ii. 1).

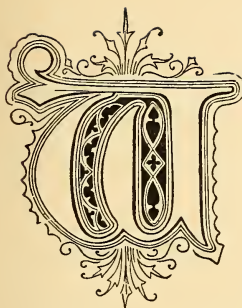
4. Occupation. "Idleness is the mother of mischief," says an old and true proverb. As long as David was busily engaged at the wars, or in the affairs of peace, he was a truly virtuous king. It was only after he had sent Joab as a substitute in the wars, and remained himself at home in idleness and luxury, that he fell into grievous sins.

5. Temperance in eating and drinking. Self-denial and mortification of the senses were the means most commonly used by all the saints to restrain the impulses of nature, as well as to overcome all temptations.

6. Every exercise of piety; especially meditation, prayer, and frequent reception of the sacraments. "In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin" (Ecclus. vii. 40). "As soon as you begin to pray you cease to sin; as soon as you fold your hands in prayer temptation flees from your heart" (St. Augustine). Christ, too, bade us pray against temptation: "Watch ye, and pray that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. xxvi. 41). He taught us to say, "Lead us not into temptation."

7. Confidence in God. "Those who hope in the Lord," saith David, "shall not perish."

REFLECTION.



PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.

DHAT doth He know that hath not been tried?" (Ecclus. xxxiv. 9.) "And lest the greatness of the revelations should exalt me, there was given me a sting of my flesh, an angel of Satan, to buffet me. For which thing thrice I besought the Lord, that it might depart from me : and He said to me : My grace is sufficient for thee " (II. Cor. xii. 7-9). "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation : for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love Him. Let no man, when he is tempted, say that he is tempted by God : for God is not a tempter of evils : and He tempteth no man" (James i. 12). "Resist the devil, and he will fly from you" (James iv. 7). "He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall" (I. Cor. x. 12). "Be prudent therefore, and watch in prayers" (I. Pet. iv. 7). "Be sober and watch" (I. Pet. v. 8).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"When we pray that we be not led into temptation, we are reminded of our weakness and helplessness, inasmuch as we pray that no pride may arise within us, that no one may esteem himself something in his own pride and presumption, that no one may consider his fame his own ; for the Lord of humility has taught and said : ' Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak ; ' hence when an humble and submissive confession is put forth, and everything is ascribed to God, all that we pray for with fear and reverence for God will, through His loving-kindness, be granted " (St. Cyprian). "Whosoever does not devote himself to prayer, places himself in temptation" (St. Peter Chrysologus). "When prayer precedes business, sin finds no entrance to the soul " (St. Gregory of Nyssa). "Worldlings do not know what a temptation is, for they are so entangled in vice and buried in earthly affairs that they always anticipate evil and help the devil to tempt them " (St. Antoninus). "The wicked enemy can cause passions to rage within thee, but it rests with thee either to give them encouragement or to refuse them gratification " (St. Bernard).

THREE COUNSELS AGAINST TEMPTATION.

1. Make known your temptations to a pious, wise, and faithful friend. The most illustrious ascetics, in their own many temptations and sufferings of soul, have discovered that heaven's light never was bright within them till they revealed their temptations and troubled conscience to some master of the spiritual life. You must reveal your temptations, or they will rack your heart and drive you to misery. Do not reveal them to a fool. Do not imitate the two wretches who assaulted Susanna. They made known their temptations to each other, to their ruin; for if the blind lead the blind, they both fall into the pit.

2. Always bear in mind that many temptations are awaiting you. An aged anchorite used to conduct his newly arrived disciples to the top of a high tower, and showing them the outlying stretch of country would say: "You must know that if every foot of that expanse were planted with crosses, they would not equal your crosses in number. Prepare to meet temptations, for you will have to suffer much here." Thus he fortified the new beginners in religious life.

Sennacherib, King of Assyria, with a numerous and powerful army overran the land of Judea, and turned his whole strength to the capture of Jerusalem. But the wise and prudent king Ezechias, himself a brave and experienced soldier, urged his people to resistance and victory. "Behave like men," he said, "and take courage; be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of the Assyrians, nor for all the multitude that is with him, for there are many more with us than with him. For with him is an arm of flesh: with us, the Lord our God, Who is our helper, and fighteth for us. And the people were encouraged with these words of Ezechias, King of Juda" (II. Paral. xxxii. 7, 8). Thus, neither should we quail before approaching temptations, nor fear their force and numbers. With us is the Lord our God, our helper, Who doth battle with us. "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the protector of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Whilst the wicked draw near against me to eat my flesh, my enemies that trouble me have themselves been weakened, and have fallen. If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear. If a battle should rise up against me, in this will I be confident" (Ps. xxvi. 1-3). "I will not fear thousands of the people surrounding me" (Ps. iii. 7).

3. Remove all occasions of temptation. When the flint and

the steel are struck together, sparks spring forth, the flame is kindled. Take away the tinder, if you do not want fire. So, too, remove the tinder of temptation or it will blaze up into a conflagration. Go, then, ye fools, and fill your money-bags, crave after honors and dignities, hunger and thirst after pleasures, give free rein to your senses. It is on such fluffy, flaky tinder that temptations take hold, and whirl you to destruction.

SAYINGS OF THE ANCIENT FATHERS.

A certain hermit used to say : "As no one can harm the man who stands by the side of the emperor, neither can Satan do us any injury if our soul is attached to God. For it is written : 'Draw near to Me and I will turn towards thee.' But we lift ourselves up too often, hence it is easy for the wicked enemy to hurl our souls down into the mire of passion."

A brother once said to a holy anchoret : "I feel no strife or struggle in my heart." The anchoret replied : "You are like a house with many doors, and all standing open, so that every stranger can pass in at leisure, and you do not know it. For if you had a door to your heart and kept it fastened against the entrance of evil thoughts, you would soon see and feel a mighty struggle going on without."

It is related of one of the Fathers of the desert, that when idle thoughts would suggest to him, "Let things go for to-day, and do penance to-morrow," he would contradict them and say, "Not at all : but do penance to-day ; to-morrow trust to the will of God."

Another ancient Father used to say : "If our outer man do not fast, our inner man will starve unto spiritual death."

Still another used to say : "Satan has three powers that pave the way to all kinds of vice. The first is forgetfulness of God ; the second is negligence ; and third is concupiscence. Forgetfulness begets negligence, negligence begets concupiscence. With concupiscence comes disaster to man. But if a man be abstemious and reasonable, he will not be entrapped in the meshes of negligence. If he be not negligent, he will escape the snares of concupiscence. If he shun concupiscence, with the help of God he will never fall."

Another said : Observe silence, and repress idle thoughts ; do not cease to meditate, whether lying or standing, and always live in the fear of God. If you do thus, you need not fear the assaults of the enemy.

Another spiritual father said to one of his brethren: The devil is the enemy, and you are the house besieged by that enemy. Without cessation he throws at you everything that is filthy, and fills you with uncleanness. Your duty it is to throw out whatever he throws in. If you be negligent and slow, your house will soon be filled with the uncleanness of sin, so that you cannot stay within, nor yet go out. Throw out his unwholesome missiles, and your house will be clean and healthy.

EXAMPLES.

From Holy Scripture.

We know how Our Saviour repelled the tempter. He did not permit Himself to hold a discussion with him, but relying on the word of God, said: "It is written" (Matt. iv. 4). Job withstood great temptations steadfastly, and in reward received afterwards the double of what he had lost (Job xlii. 10). St. Paul was able to say that God augmented his graces in proportion to the temptations sent. He says: "When I am weak, then am I powerful" (II. Cor. xii. 10). St. Peter, on the other hand, fell; because he confided too much in himself, and had boasted: "Although all shall be scandalized in Thee: yet not I" (Mark xiv. 29).

God stands by us in Temptations.

St. Catherine of Siena, like all other servants of God, had to tread the thorny path of temptation and spiritual aridity; often undergoing trials that endured for a year at a time. But Our Saviour often sent her peace of mind, and sometimes even appeared to her to enable her to bear her troubles patiently. One day, after being sorely tormented with the most disgusting thoughts, when Christ had dispelled the dark clouds from her soul, she said to Him: "Where wast Thou, O Lord, while such dreadful thoughts were haunting my mind?" Christ replied: "I was a spectator in thy heart." When she inquired: "How couldst Thou be in my heart while such thoughts were there?" He asked: "Did these thoughts please thee?" "By no means, Lord; far otherwise," was her answer. Then Christ said: "That is what My presence effected, and without it thou couldst easily have yielded assent to the thoughts."

St. Jerome's Struggle.

Among the many servants of God who in their early life sustained the most formidable assaults of Satan perhaps St. Jerome stands in the foremost place.

Leaving the world, he first made a visit to the holy places in Jerusalem, and then took up his abode in a desert place, where he passed many years. Although he led a life of the strictest austerity, he was so tormented with temptations that his account of his struggles should move us to tears. He himself thus wrote to a devout friend: "Alas! even in this desolate place, where the drought and heat render life almost impossible, the most distressing temptations persistently besieged my poor wearied soul. I hurried away to solitude and penance in the hope of conquering my evil inclinations, and to bewail my past sins. I have clothed my body in the coarsest of penitential garbs, have bedewed the ground with tears, and sighed and groaned day and night. My bed was the earth. My food, even in sickness, was coarse herbs and water. And yet in this dreadful place, whither I came in order to escape hell, in the company of scorpions and wild beasts, I often fancied myself in the most seductive saloons of a great city. My features were haggard and worn from fasting, yet my soul burned with the fire of passion. In my deplorable agony of mind, I threw myself in spirit at the feet of Jesus, watered His feet with my tears, and by many successive weeks of fasting labored to conquer my rebellious flesh. I cried to Heaven for relief, I fairly howled, and beat my breast. At last God was pleased to hear my prayers, and sending His grace to my soul, gave me tranquillity."

Heroic Resistance.

Resistance to temptation should not be merely interior. The tempted Christian must struggle outwardly, as many saints have done to a heroic and superhuman degree.

When St. Thomas Aquinas was abandoning the world, his brother, who wished to retain him, tempted him by placing near him a young and fascinating girl, who was to be rewarded with a sum of money if she could decoy the saint into sin. Thomas first raised his eyes to God for a moment, and then drove her away from the house. He then offered up a prayer of thanksgiving to God, Who was pleased to spare him evermore from temptation against holy purity.

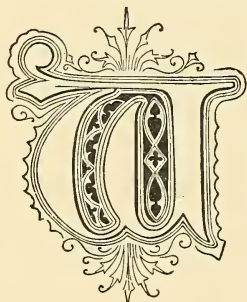
A similar grace was bestowed by Heaven upon St. Benedict, the patriarch of the monks in western Christendom. Once he was so severely tempted that he was on the point of leaving the desert and returning to the world. But seeing near him a thick undergrowth of thorns and briars, he took off his garment, and

throwing himself headlong into the bushes, rolled himself amid the thistles and thorns till the blood flowed in streams from his lacerated body. Thus he conquered sin, and was never again troubled with a similar temptation. This incident in the life of St. Benedict is given us by the holy Pope Gregory in his biography of that holy man. When temptations assailed St. Francis Assisi he used to plunge up to his neck in frozen water. St. Bernard used a similar remedy. Both conquered the tempter. Thus does God reward the heroism of those who wish to serve Him.

The Seventh Petition in the Lord's Prayer.

"But deliver us from Evil. Amen."

INSTRUCTION.



WHEN we ask God to deliver us from evil, we do not understand by this evil, sufferings, troubles, or sickness or other afflictions. For these pave the way for us to heaven. Indeed, such was the way chosen by Christ,—the way of suffering.

Even death is not an evil from which we should pray to be spared. To the pious Christian it is the greatest benefit, since it opens the gates for admittance into heaven.

The evil from which we desire so ardently to be freed is sin.

Sin is the greatest evil on earth. It robs the soul of whatever good it may have acquired, it distorts God's image within us, takes away all beauty, and makes our soul an object of divine displeasure. It robs us of internal peace even on earth, and of our future happiness in heaven.

Sin is also the source of all the other evils in the world. By sin came poverty, misery, grief, sickness, death, and all other calamities. It transformed the garden of paradise into a vale of tears and woe.

That the sixth and the seventh petitions in the Lord's Prayer have a bearing on the same point, is shown by the word "but," which connects the two petitions together.

Moreover, we cry in vain to God to deliver us from evil, which is sin, if we ourselves have no horror for sin, nor cherish in our

hearts a wish to combat it, by the avoidance of evil occasions and the application of Christian means of saving grace.

In this seventh petition we also ask God for deliverance from all those temporal evils which are not necessary or useful to our soul's welfare. The Church herself in many of her prayers teaches us thus.

The word *Amen* signifies, So let it be. This word we add to the Lord's Prayer in order to express our great eagerness to be heard favorably. It is as if we said: Grant, O Lord, what we



"BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL. AMEN."

have just been praying for. Confirm the words of Thy divine Son, which we have just repeated in His prayer.

REFLECTION.

PASSAGES FROM SCRIPTURE.



PRAY not, heavenly Father, that Thou shouldst take them out of the world," that is, free them altogether from temptation, "but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil" (John xvii. 15). "But if the just man turn himself away from his justice, and do iniquity according to all the abominations which the wicked man useth to work, shall he live? all his justices, which he had done, shall not be remembered: in the prevarication, by which he hath prevaricated, and in his sin, which he hath committed, in them he shall die" (Ezech. xviii. 24).

"Offer sacrifice no more in vain: incense is an abomination to me. The new moons, and the sabbath, and other festivals I will not abide, your assemblies are wicked. My soul hateth your new moons, and your solemnities: they are become troublesome to Me, I am weary of bearing them. And when you stretch forth your hands, I will turn away My eyes from you: and when you multiply prayer, I will not hear: for your hands are full of blood" (Is. i. 13-15).

SELECTIONS FROM THE FATHERS.

"We must pray that we be not led, not only into an evil which we have not, for for this we pray in the sixth precept, but also that we be freed from the evil into which we have been actually led, that is, from sin" (St. Augustine). "The sinner forfeits the happiness for which he was created, and finds misery for which he was not created. Hence we cry to God, Deliver us from the evil of sin" (The Same). "Among earthly things we should call nothing evil except sin" (Cassian). "Many think that eternal damnation is the last and greatest evil; but I believe and shall continually teach, that it is a far greater evil to offend Jesus Christ than to suffer in the flames of hell" (St. Chrysostom).

PROCESSIONS AND LITANIES.

All men have within them a consciousness that there is some high Power who sends them trials and afflictions, which no human sagacity can prevent; and also that this same high Power can be propitiated by prayers and invocations. Hence, the heath-

ens, although they knew not the true God, offered prayers and sacrifices. Thus we find that the heathens, when they wished to be successful in war, or to avert some calamity, sought to conciliate the gods by sacrifices; and the greater the necessity, the richer and more abundant were the victims. They offered up even human sacrifices; and parents offered what was most precious to them—their own children.

The Christian is more happily situated than the pagan. He knows that in heaven he has a Father, Who continues to be his Father even when in anger. Knowing, too, that He is not to be appeased by a bloody sacrifice, he offers Him the bloodless oblations of contrition and compunction, of good works, and of prayer and praise. As he has been taught to pray for deliverance from evil, he has recourse to prayer in the hour of suffering and trial.

Such prayers in common and public for the averting of temporal evils, such as plagues, wars, droughts, famines, and others, are the religious processions and the litanies. The latter, although used on many other occasions, public and private, are associated with processions, and always said or sung at them. They consist of a series of invocations, addressed to God sometimes directly, and sometimes indirectly through His saints, begging the granting of the divine protection and mercy.

Such processions are termed extraordinary when held on account of some special occurrence. Others are ordinary, and are held on regular feasts of the Church, and other days; as for instance, to beg God's blessing on the crops. These public prayer-marches begin with a litany, recited or chanted alternately by the faithful.

These processions are also a figure of our journey through life, which should be always accompanied by prayer. The cross is carried before us, because we should at all times be followers of Christ crucified, expecting our salvation through the cross, which should be the weapon in our struggle. The banners are ensigns showing us to be soldiers enrolled in the army of Christ, and that we are sworn to maintain His cause. The exit is a figure of our going forth to encounter the trials of life; the return amid joyful chants represents our entrance to the heavenly Jerusalem.

We are not to suppose that processions are a new devotion in the Church. They were held by the Israelites. Before Jericho could be taken they had to march about the city for seven days

in praying procession, during which the priests blew the trumpets (Josue vi. 16). David and Solomon instituted solemn processions, in which the Ark of the Covenant was carried. In the New Testament the solemn entry of Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, amid the waving of palm branches and the chanting of songs of welcome, was a solemn public procession. Often are the relics of martyrs taken from their tombs, and amid crowds of people carried with much solemnity into some church. In times of special opposition of the Church the bishops used to order the holding of public religious processions. Thus Mammerthus, the Bishop of Vienne in France, ordered the processions on the Rogation days. The Litany of the Saints was introduced by Pope Gregory the Great into the grand procession held at Rome, about the year 600, for the cessation of a dreadful plague then raging in that city.

EXAMPLES.

Sufferings and Trials are not Evils.

By means of sickness and other trials, God has led many souls over the road of heroic virtue to the peace and happiness of heaven. A very touching example of this is furnished us by St. Jerome, from the history of a certain widow, named Blasilla.

"Let us study the life," he says, "of our Blasilla. She used to stand for hours before the glass, dressing her hair, and otherwise adorning herself. But the Lord prostrated her in a fit of sickness that lasted thirty days, and now she stands before Jesus Christ, our true mirror, and says her prayers. She who formerly belonged to the world, is now a stranger to the frivolities of life. She rises in the morning early and hastens to prayer. She who was once a hindrance to many, now urges them to praise God. She kneels on the bare ground, and though once so fastidious, is not afraid to soil her garments on the floor of the church. Once she had no time to think of heaven; since her illness, Jesus Christ is her only consolation."

Death not an Evil.

Once two men, in a state of wild excitement, rushed into the cell of St. Hilarion. They were robbers. "What would you do," said they, "if robbers paid you a visit?" "He who has nothing to lose," said the saint, "need not fear robbers." "But," replied one of them, "we could kill you." "You could, indeed," answered Hilarion; "but he who has a good conscience, and therefore hopes for a better life, does not fear death." The robbers

were astonished at the quiet fearlessness of the good man. "Henceforth," said they, "we will rob no more; for we now know for a certainty that a good conscience is the most precious treasure in life. He who possesses one may look death in the face, and have no fear."

St. Louis and the Duke of Joinville.

St. Louis, King of France, once inquired of the Duke of Joinville if a man had to choose between the leprosy and a mortal sin, which of the two evils he should prefer. The latter answered: "I would rather commit thirty mortal sins than have the leprosy." Deeply grieved at such an unlooked-for answer, the saint said: "Surely, you cannot know what it is to offend God; otherwise your choice would be the other way. You know that there is no greater evil than a mortal sin. It made devils of the angels, and made men children of wrath."

But One Thing to Fear.

Olympias, a devout widow, led a pure and holy life, devoting her time, energy, and means to works of piety and charity. Some powerful men of Constantinople had the cruelty to persecute her with wearisome and costly lawsuits, that exhausted everything she owned. In her distress she wrote to St. John Chrysostom, relating her troubles and losses. But that holy doctor of the Church, in his answer, told her she was wrong in calling such things "troubles and losses." "For," asked he, "what misfortune have you met? Some one might say, 'The loss of property.' But, then, are you not freed from the trouble of taking care of it, and of distributing it among the poor, as you always did. You say you are in danger of exile. Well, then, you will travel and see strange lands, doing for God's sake what others do for pleasure and at vast expense. If your enemies put you to death, they will only compel you to pay a debt a little sooner than usual. Remember the words I often said to you, and which I now repeat, 'But one thing is to be feared, namely, sin.' For it robs the soul of everything good. Therefore let us pray fervently to God to 'Deliver us from evil.'"

St. Clare.

God can pour out His vials of evil over whole nations, yet save individuals from it, as we may see in the life of St. Clare. The Emperor Frederic II., after devastating Italy, made an alliance with the Saracens against the Pope. These wild men in-

vaded the Papal territory, and besieged the town of Assisi, where St. Clare was living with some other virgins in strict observance of monastic life. The enemy aimed its cannons at her convent. The saint, filled with a spirit of confidence, although sick in bed, had herself carried to the door of her convent, preceded by the Blessed Sacrament in a silver case. There, kneeling down with



ST. CLARE.

the rest of her community, she exclaimed: "O blessed Lord, wilt Thou deliver over to the unbelievers Thy poor servants, who have no other protector than Thou?" Then the Lord spoke, apparently from the ciborium: "Fear not, my daughter. I will save thee from all misfortune." Just then a panic came on the soldiers, and they beat a hasty retreat.



The Angelical Salutation.

The Angelical Salutation in General.

INSTRUCTION.



O the recital of the Lord's Prayer we Catholics usually add the Angelical Salutation or Hail Mary. This is becoming and proper ; for if we would be assured that we are to obtain from God what we asked for in the Lord's Prayer, we should turn to Mary as to our mother, that by her powerful intercession she may strengthen our feeble prayer before the throne of her divine Son. "You know," writes St. Cyril, "that those persons have access to the court whose queen receives them, and that they receive all they pray for. And so shall we obtain all we ask for and all we desire if we have the Mother of God for our advocate before the King Whom she implores earnestly for us."

The Hail Mary is a most excellent form of prayer, and deserves frequent repetition on our part.

This excellence of the Hail Mary we may discover from its subject-matter, from its effect, and its power.

The subject-matter of the Hail Mary consists of a prayer of praise and a prayer of petition. The prayer of praise consists, again, 1, of the words of the angel Gabriel, "Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women" (Luke i. 28) ; and, 2, of the words of St. Elizabeth, "And blessed is the fruit of thy womb" (Luke i. 42) ; to which we add the word "Jesus." The prayer of petition consists of the addition made by the Church : "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

We are indebted, then, for this beautiful prayer to the holy archangel Gabriel, to the heaven-favored St. Elizabeth, the mother of St. John, and to the infallible Church. Hence whenever we say the Hail Mary we do nothing but what the angel did and said, and what St. Elizabeth did and said. We praise Mary's excellence and dignity, and with the approbation of our holy mother, the Church, we add our supplication for Mary's help in life and at the hour of death. Certainly, an excellent mode of prayer.

Furthermore, whoever has addressed this prayer with child-like confidence to the Mother of God must have discovered that it contains a holy and heavenly power. Thomas à Kempis, that profound ascetic, thus speaks on the subject: "Whenever I salute our blessed Lady in the words of the angel: 'Hail Mary full of grace!' heaven rejoices, the earth wonders, the devil shudders, hell trembles, sadness disappears, joy returns, the heart smiles in charity and is penetrated with a holy fervor, compunction is awakened, hope is revived. Indeed, so profound is my happiness that I cannot find words to describe it." And Marchantius writes: "Would you know the power and effect of the Angelical Salutation? Well, then, know it is a heavenly antidote which preserves the soul against the deadly bite of the serpent, and protects it against his strength; it is a rod with which thou canst strike this destructive serpent on the head and overcome its hostile attacks."

Then let us often repeat the Hail Mary with love and devotion, for whenever we salute Mary, she returns the greeting, and with genuine consolations and benefits.

REFLECTION.

The Subject-matter of the Angelical Salutation.

THE ANGEL'S SALUTATION.



N a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, dwelt a virgin who was espoused to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The name of the virgin was Mary. This virgin served her God in purity and humility, dwelling in holy retirement and walking in the ways of justice. One day she knelt before God, absorbed in silent prayer; praising the endless mercies He had shown to her people from generation to generation; contemplating the gradual and regular fulfilment, from age to age, of the divine promises, and lamenting the degradation in which her nation, and indeed the whole world, was then buried. Good reason had she, in truth, to add her longing prayer to that of the anxious patriarchs of old, saying: "Drop down dew, ye heavens; let the heavens rain the Just One." In such a moment of eager prayer it was that, as St. Luke relates, the angel Gabriel was sent to her, bringing the glad tidings that she was to become the mother of the world's Redeemer. The Holy Scripture goes on:



THE ANGELICAL SALUTATION.

"And the angel being come in, said unto her : Hail, full of grace: the Lord is with thee : blessed art thou among women. Who having heard, was troubled at his saying, and thought with herself what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said to her : Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus ; He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of David His father : and He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end. And Mary said to the angel : How shall this be done, because I know not man ? And the angel answering said to her : The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And behold thy cousin Elizabeth, she also hath conceived a son in her old age : and this is the sixth month with her that is called barren : because no word shall be impossible with God. And Mary said : Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done to me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her " (Luke i. 28-38).

MARY AND ELIZABETH.

When Mary received from the lips of the angel the tidings that her cousin Elizabeth, though now aged and hitherto childless, was to be blest miraculously by God with a son, she arose hastily and went to visit Elizabeth in her mountain home, and render her what assistance she could. When Elizabeth saw Mary coming towards her, she passed into an ecstasy, and the infant leaped in her womb for joy. It was at that moment that Elizabeth addressed to her cousin the words : "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb " (Luke i. 42).

THE COUNCIL OF EPHESUS.

In the fifth century of the Church, Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, a proud and haughty man, who concealed much impiety under an appearance of zeal and piety, displayed at length the venom of his heart by preaching publicly in the Church that it was not permitted to call Mary the Mother of God. The people heard this impiety with the greatest consternation. All Constantinople was excited; and the faithful were indignant at the insult offered to Mary, by attempting to deprive

her of a title which had been given her from the days of the apostles. Venerable old men, who in the desert had spent their lives in the practice of the severest austerities, now abandoned their retreats, and appeared in the streets and public assemblies, to defend the honor of the Queen of Heaven, and to caution the people against the errors of the impious Nestorius. The bishops and pastors of the Church, well knowing that the whole history of human redemption would be annihilated if the error of Nestorius prevailed, undertook the defence of Mary's dignity with the greatest zeal. A general council was held at Ephesus in 431, at which bishops from various countries assisted, and over which St. Cyril, the Patriarch of Alexandria, presided, as legate of Pope Celestine. The error of Nestorius was condemned, and he himself anathematized as an innovator. It is difficult to describe the joy and exultation which this decision excited in the Church in Ephesus and throughout all Christendom. On the day in which the decree of the council on the nature of Mary's dignity was solemnly announced, almost the whole city gathered before the church where the bishops were assembled. The people awaited patiently the whole day, as if nothing was more important or dearer to their hearts than the determination of this question. At length, the doors being thrown open, St. Cyril appeared at the head of more than two hundred bishops, and announced to the people the condemnation of Nestorius and his impious doctrine. Scarcely had he ceased to speak when the multitude burst into exclamations of joy, and the whole city resounded with hymns and congratulations to Mary. "The enemy of Mary is overcome!" they exclaimed. "Joy to Mary, the great, the sublime, the glorious Mother of God!" The Fathers of the council were received by the people with loud praises, and conducted home, accompanied by innumerable torches. Costly perfumes were burned in the streets through which they passed; the whole city was illuminated; and nothing was omitted to render the triumph of Mary complete. It was on this occasion that the Church added to the angel's salutation the words: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

High Antiquity of the Hail Mary.

From an early age it was a universal practice in the Church to address the Blessed Virgin in the words of the angelical salutation. This we learn partly from the ancient liturgies, partly

from the writings of the holy Fathers who lived in the early ages of the Church.

In that very old liturgy ascribed to the apostle St. James we find the following form of prayer to Mary: "Whilst with all the saints and just we celebrate the memory of our most holy, immaculate, and glorious Lady, Mary, the ever-unblemished Virgin, and Mother of God, we recommend ourselves and our whole life to Christ our God." It continues: "Let us honor the memory of our most holy, immaculate, glorious, and blessed Lady, the Mother of God and ever a virgin, and of all the saints and just, that through their intercession we may obtain all mercy." Then follow the words of the angelical salutation: "Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women; and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, for thou hast borne the Saviour of our souls. It is becoming that we praise thee, ever-blessed Mother of God raised above all reproach, Mother of our God, grander than the cherubim, more brilliant than the seraphim, thou who without detriment to thy virginity hast borne God the Word. In thee, who art full of grace, do all creatures rejoice; the choirs of the angels and the human race congratulate thee, who art a sacred temple," etc.

St. Chrysostom, Bishop of Constantinople, who lived in the fourth century, and who on account of his eloquence was called the golden-mouthed, in his Liturgy or Mass in honor of Mary prays in the following words, which are very similar to those above quoted: "It is truly just and proper that we glorify thee, Mother of God, the ever-blessed and immaculate Mother of our God, who art more worthy than the cherubim, and without comparison more glorious than the seraphim, and who, without detriment to thy virginity, didst bring forth the Lord: thee, true Mother of God, we praise. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, for thou hast borne the Saviour of our souls."

Also St. Athanasius, Bishop and Patriarch of Alexandria, a mighty defender of the Catholic faith against the Arians, used to address the Blessed Virgin in the following words: "We praise thee, Mary; again and again and always and everywhere blessed. On thee do we call, remember us, O most blessed Virgin, who although thou didst bring forth, didst remain a virgin. Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. The hierarchies of all the angels and children of earth praise thee.

Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. Pray for us, O Lady and Mistress, Queen and Mother of God."

Origin of the Angelus.

The practice of saying the Hail Mary in an alternate way is about eight hundred years old. Whilst the crusaders were marching to the Holy Land to rescue the tomb of Our Saviour from the hands of the unbelievers, Pope Urban, in the Council of Clermont, in the year 1095, ordered the bells to be rung every day at morning, noon, and night, and the Hail Mary to be said each time. He wished by this devotion to secure the aid of Mary for the crusaders.

St. Bonaventure, that most zealous defender of the Blessed Virgin, in the chapter of his Order held at Pisa in the year 1262, directed the members of his society to notify by the sound of the bell the people of their respective districts to honor the mystery of the Incarnation, and to salute Mary.

This devotional exercise thus introduced into Western France was approved in the year 1318 by Pope John XXII., who also granted an indulgence of ten days to all those who would say it in a spirit of penance. The same Pontiff, in the year 1327, directed the Cardinal Vicar of Rome to have the bells rung every evening to remind the people to say the Angelus.

At the Synod of Vaurens, in 1368, the heads of churches were ordered to have the Angelus bell rung every morning at sunrise, and an indulgence was also attached.

Finally, during a bloody and devastating war, Pope Callixtus III. ordered that throughout all Christendom the Angelus bell should be rung at midday.

In order to encourage the practice of the devotion, Pope Benedict XIII., in the year 1724, granted to all those who would recite the Angelus daily a plenary indulgence once a month, to be gained on the day when they approached worthily the sacraments of Penance and Eucharist, provided they prayed for the Church. He also granted a partial indulgence of a hundred days for each pious recital of the Angelus.

The Hail Mary an Excellent Prayer.

The Blessed Virgin herself assured St. Gertrude that this prayer was dearest to her, and that she would assist the saint in death as often as she had said the Hail Mary.

The Blessed Jane of France earnestly begged our blessed Lady to make known to her what prayer was most pleasing to her. Mary revealed to her that no prayer was more agreeable to her than the Hail Mary.

Blessed Francis, of the Servants of Mary, used to say every day five hundred Hail Marys in her honor. How pleasing this was to our blessed Lady she made known after his death, for a beautiful lily grew miraculously out of his mouth.

St. Catharine of Sweden began every work, every duty, with a Hail Mary. In reward for this pious practice our blessed Lady visited her on her death-bed, and conducted her soul into heaven.

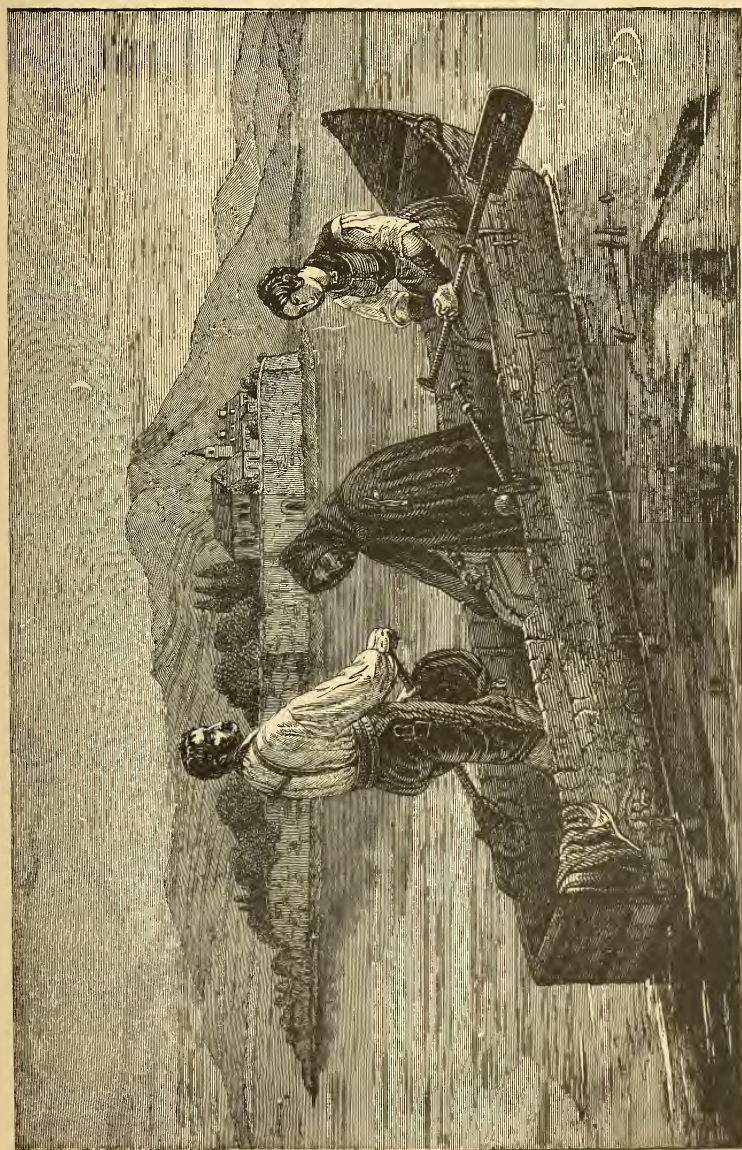
The Angelical Salutation contains Celestial Strength, and affords Help and Consolation in Spiritual and Bodily Necessities.

THE STORM STILLLED.

It is related in the life of St. John of God that while in a terrific storm at sea he turned with childlike confidence to the powerful queen of heaven and uttered one fervent Hail Mary. At once the storm subsided and the sea became calm.

A DEATH-BED CONVERSION.

Some years ago a priest in Strasburg was asked to visit a sick man, an old college companion of his, who, though dangerously ill, would not listen to any suggestion to prepare for death. The priest responded promptly, and discovered at the mention of religion that he had to deal with a man who had long ago suffered shipwreck of his faith, and whose mind had been feeding on the unwholesome husks of an absurd and false philosophy. A discussion ensued, in which the sick man soon found himself worsted, yet he would not listen to any advice concerning his future state. The festival of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin was drawing near, so the priest said to his obstinate patient: "My dear friend, although you have refused me every request so far, do not refuse me, now that you are standing on the very threshold of eternity, to say a short prayer to the blessed Mother of God. Repeat now and then one Hail Mary, and if contrition and confidence do not come to your heart lay the blame on me. If you promise to do this I assure you that on Annunciation Day you will be reconciled with God." Tears came to the sick man's eyes, and, taking the priest's hand, he



THE ANGELUS.

promised to comply. He repeated piously several Hail Marys, and when the priest came again he found he had a different man to deal with. The Mother of Mercy had looked down graciously upon this desponding soul, and obtained for it the grace of conversion. He confessed his sins with all the signs of a true penitent, received the last sacraments, and full of faith and hope he breathed his last on the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

BLESSED FATHER SALVATOR.

In the town of Tortosa dwelt a man who had a child so grievously afflicted that it would at times fall down and lie as if it were dead. Every natural remedy failed to bring relief to the little sufferer. One day Blessed Salvator happened to come begging to the door of the child's father's house. The latter at once fell at his feet and besought him to pray for his sick child. Salvator, feeling deep sympathy both for father and child, laid his hand on the head of the latter, raised his eyes to heaven, said one Hail Mary, and went away. That same evening the child was restored to perfect health.

Another time the same Salvator, while going about begging, encountered a young girl who lay dangerously sick of a burning fever. Placing his rosary about her neck, the servant of God said one Hail Mary, and at once the sufferer began to grow better, and finally recovered her former health and strength.

Persons devoted to the Hail Mary.

The illustrious St. Alphonsus Rodriguez made it a constant practice to say a Hail Mary every time the clock struck. Even at night he never omitted, if he awoke.

Whenever St. Catharine went up or downstairs she used to kneel on each step, and say the Hail Mary with childlike devotion, in order to praise and honor her heavenly mother Mary.

St. Teresa used to tear herself away from all worldly affairs, and say Hail Marys in solitude. This pious practice she began at her seventh year, and continued it till her death.

St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Alphonsus Liguori, and St. Leonard of Port Maurice used to say the Hail Mary several times in the day.

When St. Bruno founded the renowned Carthusian monastery in the forest of Grenoble he set up a shrine of the Blessed Virgin,

and whenever he came before an image of the Blessed Virgin hung up in it he would stop to say a Hail Mary.

Blessed Bonvenuta of Forli, a Dominican, said one thousand Hail Marys every day. On Saturdays he doubled the number, and was rewarded with sweet singing by the angels and a heavenly calm in his heart.

Brief Explanation of the Hail Mary.

"HAIL."

When we address this word to Mary we not only salute, but praise and honor her.

This we do because of the high distinction conferred upon her by the Lord in His merciful love, when He preordained her and selected her to be the mother of His only beloved Son, and bestowed upon her all the gifts of grace to fit her for this dignity. The second ground for our veneration of Mary is to be found in Mary herself, who accepted these graces most thankfully, corresponded with them most faithfully, and thus attained such a high degree of perfection, that in a certain sense she really deserved to become the mother of the world's Redeemer. Lastly, we honor and venerate Mary on account of the glory and power which she enjoys in heaven.

The chief excellence in all our devotion to Mary consists in imitating her virtues. Mary will recognize us as her sons and daughters when she perceives in us a resemblance to her divine Son and herself. It is only then that she will bestow on us her motherly affection. All those persons practise a false devotion to Mary, or no devotion at all, who fancy that they are under her protection just because they recite daily a few Hail Marys, without laboring to amend their lives.

"MARY."

After the sacred name of Jesus there is no name on earth so holy as the name of Mary.

It contains the three following significations :

1. It signifies the sea. Mary is an unfathomable sea because of the boundless graces she received from God. "As God called the immeasurable waters the sea, so did He call the immeasurable ocean of grace Mary," says St. Augustine. In this mystical sea of grace, in Mary, are found all the graces and gifts of angels and men, of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins.

2. The name Mary also signifies lady, mistress, queen. Mary is in truth and fact a mistress, for the princes of heaven do her



THE ANNUNCIATION.

homage, Jesus Christ the King of kings was subject to her, and shared with her His power. He refuses no request of hers: hence St. Bernard styles her the "omnipotent advocate." If it is truly said that the elect reign with Christ in heaven, how much more truly can it be said that Mary is queen both in heaven and on earth!

3. The word Mary signifies "star of the sea." The Blessed Virgin is a veritable ocean-star; for

as the mariner is guided to his haven by a star, so are Christians guided to everlasting glory by Mary's motherly intercession.

The name Mary, unlike other human names, is not merely a designating term, but contains within itself a mysterious power.

At all times the pious admirers of this sweet name experienced an extraordinary sweetness and loveliness as they pronounced it with reverence.

Furthermore, the holy name of Mary is so rich in blessings

and graces that we cannot pronounce it without devotion, nor without sharing in some grace.

Finally, no general on earth is more afraid of a powerful enemy than are the evil spirits of the name of Mary. In the solemn death-hour the name of Mary is the strongest defence against the assaults of hell.

Let us then often pronounce the powerful and sacred name of Mary with devout reverence, and we shall soon find its blessings coming upon us.

"FULL OF GRACE."

We style Mary "full of grace," because she is, 1, a vessel of grace; 2, a dispenser of graces.

Mary is a vessel full of grace—

1. Because she was filled with graces even before her birth;
2. Because she always corresponded with grace;
3. Because she bore the Author of grace.

Even in the moment of her conception Mary appears before us as full of grace; for from the first instant she became the lily amid the thorns, that is, she was conceived immaculate, free from all stain of sin. This doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary is founded on Holy Scripture, and on the primitive and continued belief of the holy Catholic Church.

The land in which the enemy shall sow no cockle; the burning bush, mentioned in the Book of Exodus, and which burned without being consumed; the Ark of the Covenant, in presence of which the river Jordan ceased to flow,—are all plain figures and emblems of the immaculate conception of the ever-blessed Virgin.

"Is it becoming," ask all the devout confessors and doctors of God's Church, "that she who was destined to give to the world Him Who by His death destroyed the kingdom of sin should be herself tainted with sin? Should she, who was to give birth to the Conqueror of death and hell, begin by finding herself under the dominion of both?" Finally, how can we conceive the slightest taint being attached to the flesh which was to become the Word made flesh?

On account of this extraordinary prerogative of the Blessed Virgin, the Church celebrates the festival of the Immaculate Conception, which was solemnly declared to be a dogma of faith on the 8th of December, 1854.

But Mary is full of grace, not only because she was filled with grace before her birth, but also because she continually advanced

in grace, inasmuch as by her holy deportment and her good works she increased always in sanctifying grace, and thus attained to the highest degree of holiness and justice : "Thou art beautiful in form above the sons of men : grace is poured abroad in thy lips : therefore hath God blessed thee forever" (Ps. xlv. 3). St. Peter Chrysologus writes : "Other saints indeed have received portions of grace, but the fulness thereof was poured out into Mary's heart."

Furthermore, Mary is "full of grace," because she bore the Author of grace. Must not she who carried so near her heart the Lord of grace be full of grace herself? "The Blessed Virgin," says St. Thomas Aquinas, "has received such a plenitude of grace, that she came nearest to the Author of grace, and for that reason conceived Him Who is full of grace."

The Blessed Virgin does not keep to herself the graces bestowed upon her in such rich abundance by God : she shares them gladly with her devout and zealous servants. By her powerful intercession with God she effects an increase of grace in the just, and a restoration of lost grace to sinners.

One proof of this truth we find in the countless votive offerings met at favorite shrines and places of pilgrimage, where Mary is pleased to manifest herself as the Mother of divine grace.

From all this it follows that we should often ask Mary for the graces necessary to our salvation. The just should pray for increase of sanctifying grace, and the sinner for the recovery of graces lost.

"THE LORD IS WITH THEE."

These words, "the Lord is with thee," mean and say that God is with the Blessed Virgin in a special and distinguished manner, because she is the most beloved daughter of the heavenly Father, the true Mother of the divine Son, and the chaste spouse of the Holy Ghost.

Yes, the Lord is with Mary, for with her is the omnipotence of the Father, Who made her fruitful. With her is the wisdom of the Son, Who prepared her to be His worthy Mother. With her is the purity of the Holy Spirit, Who preserved her a pure virgin in her conception and birth. With her is the Father, Who chose her from all eternity to be the mother of life. With her is the Son, Who chose to dwell in her virginal bosom. With her is the Holy Ghost, Who was pleased to fill her with heavenly graces, and through her to distribute them throughout mankind.

This great grace of having the Lord always with her was merited by the Blessed Virgin by being always with the Lord, that is, always walking before the Lord in virtue and holiness.

“BLESSED ART THOU AMONG WOMEN.”

Rightly may the Blessed Virgin be styled the most blessed, the most highly favored among the whole female sex : 1. Because

she was chosen above all other women to be the Mother of God ; and, 2. Because she alone is at once mother and virgin.

Hence St. Peter Chrysologus cries out : “The Blessed Virgin is in truth blessed ; for she merited to conceive by the operation of the Holy Ghost and yet to maintain her crown of virginity. She is



“BLESSED ART THOU AMONG WOMEN.”

blessed because she had the honor of conceiving a child that is God, and yet remain the queen of virgins. She is blessed because

she is greater than the firmament, mightier than the earth, more perfect than all created beings; and because she conceived Him Who created and upholds the structure of the universe, and because she nourished at her breast Him Who feeds all living creatures."

Mary is also the most blessed among women because she brought us overwhelming blessings by bearing the Redeemer of the world, and thus removing from the world the curse brought upon it by Eve.

"AND BLESSED IS THE FRUIT OF THY WOMB, JESUS."

The proposition "and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus" is uttered in the Hail Mary to signify that the honoring of Mary is inseparable from the worshipping of Christ, and that we venerate the tree for its fruit, and the Mother on account of the Son.

Mary would never have been blessed among women if she had not brought forth so blessed a fruit, who is Jesus Christ, true God of true God.

Christ is not styled blessed among men as Mary is termed blessed among women: He is called generally, absolutely, and without limitation the Blessed One, in order thereby to signify that He is supremely honored and adored in heaven and on earth, and that there is no comparison between the Creator and the creature.

In the year 1262 Pope Urban IV. ordered that to the words of St. Elizabeth, "blessed is the fruit of thy womb," the adorable name of Jesus should be added, in order that the faithful might know who is the blessed fruit of Mary's womb, and what is the basis of the honor we show to her.

"HOLY MARY, MOTHER OF GOD."

In the truest and strictest sense of the word, Mary is the Mother of God. True, she did not bear the Divinity, but she bore a Son Who is God; she bore a body with whose flesh and blood taken from her chaste substance a God was personally, inseparably, and mysteriously united. Hence the angel said to Mary, "The Holy which shall be born of thee will be called the Son of the Most High God."

This important doctrine, that Mary is really the Mother of God, the Church has always steadfastly maintained, and defended most determinedly in her councils against the heretics.

As true Catholics, therefore, we are in duty bound to cheerfully believe, profess, and defend this dogma.

As Mary is the Mother of Christ and God, so is she also our Mother. For as Christ is our Brother, His Mother is also our Mother. This truth should encourage us to a childlike confidence in her help and protection, and awaken a tender love towards her.

"PRAY FOR US SINNERS."

We appeal to Mary and say, "Pray for us," because we know she is a powerful intercessor and helper before the throne of God; for she can and will pray for us.

Mary can pray for us and help us, because she is the Mother of God; for as such she can effect anything with her divine Son. "As the prayers of Mary are the prayers of a mother," says St. Alphonsus Liguori, "they are in a certain sense like commands to Jesus, and hence it is impossible for her to pray and not be heard."

Mary is willing to help us by her prayers; for even when she was on earth she was merciful and loving towards the afflicted. How much more readily, then, now that she reigns in heaven, will she sympathize with us. Furthermore, she is our Mother, and can a mother be unmindful of her children?

We say, Pray for us, and add the word *sinner*, for we are all sinners, and Mary is the refuge of sinners. "She is," says St. John Damascene, "appointed by God as a refuge for all sinners who by their sins have deserved death. In a certain sense she is compelled to obtain for such sinners as invoke her the grace of a perfect conversion and reconciliation with God, as many persons testify who by her intercession were converted and brought to happiness." Hence St. Bonaventure compares Mary to the dove which brought back to the ark the olive branch, the emblem of peace and reconciliation.

But if the sinner would find a place of refuge with Mary, he is required on his side to be sorry for his sins. Where there is no contrition, no firm purpose of amendment, Mary's advocacy will be sought in vain. Only those who are sincere will be heard.

"PRAY FOR US NOW."

By the words "Pray for us now" we seek Mary's help and protection in this life, and beg that as long as we tarry in this vale of tears she would guard us as a mother guards her child. For the time of grace and mercy is now while we are on earth. After death comes stern justice only. Then Mary cannot assist

us, for the Father has committed judgment to the Son, and mercy only to Mary.

"AND AT THE HOUR OF OUR DEATH. AMEN."

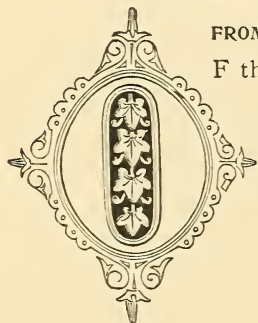
Dreadful sufferings await us on our death-bed : the qualms of remorse for our sins, anxiety on account of the impending judgment, the uncertainty of our salvation, all trouble our poor frightened heart. To these are added the violent temptations of the enemy, who in this last dread hour comes with his final temptation, and with renewed violence, to conquer our soul. When we consider all these and the bodily sufferings, we must feel convinced of the necessity of extraordinary help and consolation, lest at the last hour we depart from the secure path of salvation. Hence we say at the end of the Hail Mary, "at the hour of our death," begging Mary not to abandon us in the death struggle, where we shall most need her help and consolation.

Nor does Mary abandon her true servants in that dread hour. Often, indeed, she sweetens the bitterness of death, brings patience and strength and courage amid the enemy's last temptations, and makes death easy and peaceful.

REFLECTION.

Praises of the Blessed Virgin.

FROM THE FATHERS OF THE CHURCH.



Of the countless passages in which the piety and love of the faithful for the Blessed Virgin have found undoubted expression, we shall select but a few of the most striking for our edification and instruction.

Thus we read in the Mass-book of St. James the Apostle :

"It is becoming, O Blessed Virgin, that we should acknowledge thee to be the wholly immaculate Mother of our God, and more venerable than the cherubim and more glorious than the seraphim. Thou hast borne the Word without any stain, therefore we deem thee great. May all creatures praise and honor thee, who art full of grace. May the angels, too, and all men venerate thee and recognize thee as the consecrated temple, the spiritual garden of delights, and the pride of virgins, from whom God assumed flesh, and whom He honored as a child honors his mother."

St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, about the year 200, wrote : " As Eve was deceived by the word of the angel of darkness, and fell from her obedience to God, so through Mary was proclaimed the word of an angel, that if she obeyed she would carry God in her body ; and as the devil had induced the former to abandon God, the latter would be moved to follow and obey him, and thus become a mediator. Again, as the whole human family was made subject to death by a virgin, so was it delivered from the same death by a virgin, inasmuch as the obedience of the latter cancelled and made good the disobedience of the former. Finally, as the sin of the first man was obliterated by the sufferings of the Son of God, so did the simplicity of the dove win a victory over the cunning of the serpent, in order that we might be loosed from the chains that bound us."

St. Gregory, Bishop of Neo-Cæsarea, surnamed the miracle-worker, had the happiness of being instructed in the Catholic faith by the Blessed Virgin herself in a vision. Thankful for such a favor, he never forgot to praise her before the people, and he spoke thus in her honor : " With what words shall we be able to express the excellence of the Blessed Virgin ? What eulogy will be sufficient to praise her incomparable beauty ? What pæan can our souls send up to her who is lauded by even angels' voices ? She bloometh in the house of the Lord, as a fair olive-tree whom the Holy Ghost has made fruitful by the overshadowing of His grace, and through whom He has called us to be children and heirs of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. She is that blossoming garden of delights and of immortality in which is planted the tree of life, whose fruits preserve us from death. She is the ornament and honor of virgins, the joy and consolation of mothers, the basis of the believing, the perfect image of believers, the perfect model of the saints. With her dwell virtue and truth. She is the living spring who bore the Lord, and from whom floweth the life-giving water. All those who cherish a sincere devotion to this holy virgin, and love her incomparable purity and sanctity, will enjoy an angelic grace."

In the fourth century, St. Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis, wrote : " The Blessed Virgin surpasses in glory the first of the heavenly powers. Only God is above her. All that is not God she sees beneath her feet." The same saint also styles her the temple and throne of the Divinity, the priceless pearl of paradise, the mediator between heaven and earth. Then he adds :

" Through thee, O Blessed Virgin, has celestial peace been

given to the world. Through thee have men been made like to the angels ; through thee have they received the honorable titles of servants, friends, and children of God. Through thee has death been overthrown and hell conquered. Thou hast destroyed the idols, and brought back to men the knowledge of heavenly things. Through thee have we known the Son of God, Whom thou, O holy virgin, hast borne !”

Concerning those words in the Angelical Salutation, “ full of grace,” St. Eucherius, Bishop of Lyons, writes as follows : “ What creature has ever been endowed with such great and wonderful graces as the Blessed Virgin Mary ? To others grace has been dealt out in a certain measure, but of her it is said that she is ‘ full of grace.’ Consider how many excellent and holy women and maidens have existed since her, and how she, nevertheless, reached so high a point of perfection that she merited to be the Mother of God ; how much grander and more wonderful her privilege to have been chosen for that dignity from among so many thousands of holy persons ! But if she were full of grace before conceiving the Son of God, who can comprehend the measure of her graces after she conceived Him ? Justly, then, is she termed ‘ blessed among women ;’ for the female sex was blessed through her, and the world freed from its malediction.”

We shall quote one more passage from a more modern teacher in the Church, who enumerates the antitypes of the Blessed Virgin. St. Bonaventure writes : “ Mary was prefigured in the spring that arose out of the earth (Gen. ii. 6) ; in the tree of life that stood in the midst of paradise (Gen. ii. 9) ; by the paradise that was watered by the river of pleasure (Gen. ii. 10) ; by the ark of Noe, in which the human race was saved ; by the rainbow which God set in the clouds (Gen. ix. 13) ; by the ladder which Jacob saw in his dream (Gen. xxviii.) ; by the bush that burned and was not consumed (Ex. iii.) ; by the vessel in which the manna was kept (Ex. xvi.) ; in the staff of Aaron that budded, contrary to nature’s law (Num. xvii. 8) ; in the star and in the sceptre of which Balaam prophesied (Num. xxiv. 17) ; in the dove which brought the bough of an olive-tree to Noe and his sons in the ark (Gen. viii.) ; in the stake that bore the brazen serpent (Num. xxi. 8) ; in Gedeon’s fleece (Judges vi.) ; by the house of the Lord which Solomon built, and into which the glory of God entered (III. Kings vi.) ; in Abigail, who made peace between Nabal and David (I. Kings xxv.) ; in Judith, who killed Holofernes and delivered the people (Jud. xiii.) ; in Esther, who saved Mar-

dochai with his people (Esth. vii.) ; by the gate that was shut and through which no man should pass (Ezech. xlv. 2) ; in the woman whom John beheld (Apoc. xii.)."

THE LITANY OF LORETO.

The Litany of Loreto, so called from the shrine of that name in Central Italy, where it was first used, is a summary form of devotion adopted and now used by all Christendom to honor the Blessed Virgin. It consists of a series of invocations, each one of which is an expression of some sublime prerogative appertaining to her as the chosen Mother of God and Queen of heaven and earth.

Mary is the Mother of God, for she has borne for us the Son of God, Who deigned to assume flesh from her body. But she is



DEATH OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

also the only one among mortals who united the dignity of mother with the far higher dignity of virgin. Hence she is

the Virgin of virgins. It is for this reason that her maternal dignity is praised together with her virginity, when the Church in order to honor her entreats us in the words : "Let us praise the birth of the glorious Virgin, who while enjoying the honor of motherhood preserved the beauty of virginity." Mary is the Mother of Christ, and on that account is also mother of divine grace. Has she not given us the greatest of all graces, the Saviour Himself? And what graces does she not impart to all those who call upon her? It is not too much for us to say, in the words of St. Bernard, that all the graces we have we receive through the hands of Mary; and that all the graces which we may still receive are not to be compared to those which we have received already. Then this mother of divine grace is the most pure of all mothers, for she was free not only from all actual sin, but even remained free by a miracle from the stain of original sin. The soil from which sprang the rod of Jesse could not lie under the blight of original sin; the sacred body that was to receive within itself the Son of God could not be in the dominion of the great enemy. Mary was conceived immaculate, and immaculate she conceived by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost; hence she is invoked as the mother most chaste, mother inviolate, mother undefiled.

Looking, then, at these virtues and prerogatives, that made her worthy to be selected from all others of her sex, we have to cry out : "Mother most amiable, pray for us; Mother most admirable, pray for us." Yes, admirable truly and indeed, for a creature becomes the mother of our Creator, a daughter of earth becomes mother of our Redeemer, and the Church salutes her with the words : "Blessed art thou, O Virgin Mary, who didst carry in thy womb the Lord and Creator of heaven and earth. Thou hast borne Him Who created thee, and yet thou remainest a virgin for all eternity." Mary is a virgin most prudent. She bore for us the Eternal Wisdom, and instructed the apostles in the mysteries of the conception, birth, circumcision, and private life of Christ. She was the tutoress of the apostles. She is the virgin most venerable, for she penetrated the most sacred mysteries and knew things that human knowledge could not comprehend; and yet amid all such knowledge of divine things she remained so modest and humble and reticent that she concealed even from her spouse a knowledge of the honor that had been announced to her through the message of the angel. Again, as Mary had all authority over her Child, and as the same Son Who was subject

to her on earth and acceded to all her requests, even when His time was not yet come, does not now reject her prayers, when He is in heaven, she is truly a "virgin most powerful" and a "virgin most faithful," who shows herself ready to help those who call upon her assistance. Hence St. Bernard could exclaim: "O blessed Virgin! If any one called upon thee without being heard, let him be forever silent concerning thy mercy." Mary is also called the "mirror of justice," because being free from every sin and defect she as it were reflects within herself the righteousness of the kingdom of God, which He commanded us to seek first of all. She is the "seat of wisdom," for her divine Son came to enlighten every man that cometh into this world, and for that reason we in our happy redemption from darkness and ignorance of spirit salute Mary as the "cause of our joy."

When the term "vessel" is applied to the Blessed Virgin it is to be under-



MARY OUR MOTHER.

stood in the same sense as it is applied in Holy Scripture to the apostle Paul (Acts ix. 15), who is called a vessel of election, chosen to carry the name of the Lord before the gentiles and the kings, as well as to the children of Israel. The Apostle himself gives to the saints this name when he says: "God sheweth the riches of His glory on the vessels of His mercy" (Rom. ix. 23). Thus Mary is a "spiritual vessel;" for, being illuminated by the Holy Spirit of God, she was adorned with all the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost. She is a "vessel of

honor," for she unites within herself all that can influence reverence and respect in men, and does herself inspire unbounded respect in all who know her. Hence St. Denis the Areopagite, who travelled from Athens to Jerusalem to see the Blessed Virgin, acknowledged that he discovered in her a superhuman majesty, and felt in his own soul a most extraordinary sense of comfort and reverence. She is a "vessel of singular devotion," not only because she is to us the most brilliant example of fervent devotion, but also because she asks for us the grace that our souls be freed from everything earthly, and thus ascend in prayer to the Lord. Now this glowing devotion, in which her soul was bathed, makes her the "spiritual rose." As the rose exceeds all other flowers of the garden in beauty and fragrance, so did Mary when on earth outshine all the children of men in her devotion, and so does she now in heaven outshine all the angels and saints. Concerning her glory, it was revealed to a pious soul that when she was received into heaven by the Lord, amid the rejoicing of the angels, the heavenly choirs, in their astonishment and admiration, recalled the words of Solomon in the Canticle of Canticles, and exclaimed: "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising, fair as the moon, bright as the sun?" (Cant. vi. 9.)

Again, Mary is compared to the "tower of David," for she is to us the tower of Sion against our enemies, and a tower of defence to all men against the hereditary enemy of the human family, the devil himself. She is, too, a "tower of ivory," for the protection she affords us may well be likened to the strength and durability of ivory, as her own purity may be compared to the clearness and brilliancy of that rare article. Through the Blessed Virgin the Lord dispenses His graces to us; hence she becomes our "house of gold," for Our Lord grants our prayers through her, as of old He granted the petitions offered to Him under the golden roof of Solomon's temple. Yes, and she is still more to us. She is the "ark of the covenant,"—the ark to which we must have recourse if we would be saved from drowning in the deluge of worldliness and sin. She is for us the portal of grace, through which came to us the Saviour of the world, the "gate of heaven," through whose intercession we may once more regain our hope of happiness. She is our "morning star," that continues to light and guide us even in our dreary hour of darkness, when, alas! we have turned away from Christ, the noonday sun of our life. If by our sins we offend Our Saviour, and instead

of mercy deserve and expect punishment, Mary is still all goodness and love if we but appeal to her. To her should every oppressed mind, every uneasy conscience, every heart bowed down in grief and pain, address itself. For she is the "health of the sick" and the "comforter of the afflicted," who through her intercession obtain tranquillity and courage. She is the "refuge of sinners," who hope through her to secure remission of their iniquities. She is the "help of Christians," and in gratitude for being rescued from many dreadful evils, all Christians celebrate the festival of Our Lady of Victory, on the first Sunday in October, to thank her for having so repeatedly saved Christendom from the hands of the Infidels and the Turks, and for having saved us from the heresies that assailed the Church in the sixteenth century. The Church sings: "Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, for thou hast conquered all heresies."

Towards the end of the Litany the Blessed Virgin is saluted as queen. For Our Lord, on receiving her into eternity, appointed and crowned her queen of heaven and earth. She is the "queen of angels," above whom she was placed by the Lord, as the Church sings on Assumption Day: "Elevated above the choirs of angels in the heavenly kingdom is the holy Mother of God." She is the "queen of patriarchs," who longed in Limbo for the Redeemer, and who greeted with joy the hour of Mary's birth as the hour that preceded the rising of the Sun of Salvation, Christ Jesus. She is the "queen of prophets," who, enlightened by the Spirit of God, pointed to her in their predictions. Thus Sirach alludes to her where he causes Wisdom to say: "He that made me rested in my tabernacle, and He said to me: Let thy dwelling be in Jacob, and thy inheritance in Israel, and take root in my elect" (Ecclus. xxiv. 12, 13). The prophet Micheas comforts the people of Israel with a description of the time in which she should live (Mich. v. 3). Mary is the "queen of apostles," with whom she dwelt, and by whom she was honored and loved as a mother and teacher. She is the "queen of martyrs," "queen of confessors," and "queen of virgins," who all walked in the footsteps of that sorrowing Mother of God and purest of virgins, drawing strength from her sublime example and powerful prayer,—a strength which enabled them to preserve their purity and their faith. She is, finally, the "queen of all saints;" for she stands at their head in the court of heaven, and unites with them in praising and glorifying Him Whose favor has glorified them.

Thus the Litany of Loreto is the expression of hearts filled with tender love and veneration for Mary as the Mother of grace.

THE ROSARY.

The form of prayer called the Rosary was introduced more than six hundred years ago by St. Dominic, when preaching in France



QUEEN OF THE MOST HOLY ROSARY.

against the heresy of the Albigenses. These misguided people, among other errors, cherished a violent hatred against the Blessed Virgin, destroyed churches, burned altars and holy pictures, dishonored sacred relics, and were guilty of the shameful excesses with which the history of heresy is always accompanied. According to reliable tradition, St. Dominic was instructed to use this form of prayer by the Blessed Virgin herself. It was not only to convert the Albigenses, but it was to remain a

bond of union for all Catholic Christians in their determined efforts to oppose the progress of all heresies.

Such a hearty welcome did it find among all classes that it soon spread all through the Church, and the beads, which were its outward sign, became the distinguishing mark for all true Christians. It follows, necessarily, that such a devotion has a high intrinsic value, which commends it to the hearts and minds



MARY, THE QUEEN OF ALL SAINTS.

of all, and that it is not to be underestimated, as it is sometimes, by superficial Catholics.

Truly the Rosary is a most sacred and fruit-bringing form of devotion.

It is sacred because it is made up of sacred elements, namely:

1. Of the sign of the cross.
2. Of the Apostles' Creed.
3. Of the Glory be to the Father, etc.
4. Of the Lord's Prayer.
5. Of the Hail Mary.
6. Of the fifteen principal mysteries or events in the life and death of Our Saviour, and on which we are to meditate while praying.

7. Of a prayer for the increase of faith, hope, and charity.

Can there be a more worthy prayer than such a one? Everything in it is biblical and apostolic. It would be presumption to find fault with the single parts, and a folly to despise the well-ordered arrangement of such faultless parts. This prayer is indeed a garland of roses, which we lay at the feet of the Blessed Virgin, who is herself a "mystical rose." It is a wreath of sweet flowers of many colors, in which the five joyful mysteries are symbolized by the white roses, the sorrowful mysteries by the red roses, and the glorious mysteries by roses of a golden hue. Thus is this devotion a good one.

It is also fruitful, for it is made so by—

1. Its component parts. The Lord's Prayer must be heard, the Hail Mary must be pleasing to God, the supplications of the Church must ascend to the Blessed Virgin, the Glory be to the Father, etc., must be acceptable to the Blessed Trinity, while the devout contemplation of the sacred mysteries must have a salutary effect on our own interior dispositions, and help to shape our lives in imitation of the lives of Mary and her divine Son.

2. The union in one common prayer of all Christians in the Church who send up their supplications to Heaven.

3. The Indulgences granted by the Church to those who recite the Rosary, and which may be applied to the living or the dead.

Thus the Rosary is a golden chain that unites the living and the dead, joining together the Church militant, the Church suffering, and the Church triumphant.

The objections usually raised against the devotion of the Rosary are frivolous and unfounded. It is sometimes said :

1. "One Our Father devoutly recited is worth more than ten such prayers when mumbled rapidly and thoughtlessly." Very true. But ten devoutly recited Our Fathers are better than one; and we are to recite them devoutly, and not mumble them.

2. "Such frequent repetition is useless. God knows what we need." But from the earliest ages it has been customary to repeat Our Fathers and Hail Marys and other prayers, as well as the psalms and passages from Sacred Scripture. To prevent the distraction that would arise from keeping account of these repetitions, the early Fathers used a number of pebbles, which they passed from one side to the other as they finished each prayer. Then again, in the Old Law, David repeats twenty-six times in the Psalms the words: "Praise the Lord."

The three children in the fiery furnace chanted together a hymn containing twenty-one repetitions of the words: "Praise the Lord, and exalt Him forever!" (Dan. iii. 57.) Before the throne of God the cherubim and seraphim sing Holy! holy! holy! (Is. vi. 3) and the living creatures in the Apocalypse sing without ceasing (Apoc. iv. 8). Hence it is plain that God may be honored by a repetition of the same form of prayer.

Furthermore it may be objected:

3. "This repetition makes it impossible to pray devoutly, for it begets thoughtlessness." The very contrary is true. At the beginning of prayer the mind is seldom recollected and concentrated. It is only after some reflection that devotion comes to us, and the deeper our meditation the more inward does our prayer become.

4. "When people pray often, they become distracted and think of many outside things." But we may read prayers from a book, and yet let our minds wander in all directions. Whoever is not in earnest, is as careless in the one case as in the other.

We must here observe that one special festival, namely, that of the Holy Rosary, was established by the Church, and united with the feast of Our Lady of Victory in commemoration of the great naval battle between the Christians and Turks in the year 1571. It occurs on the first Sunday of October every year.

THE FESTIVAL OF THE ASSUMPTION.

After the death of Our Saviour the Blessed Virgin remained in Jerusalem, in company of the apostles, and especially of St. John, the beloved disciple, to whom she was intrusted by her divine Son. Even during her lifetime on earth she was an object

of veneration, and countless numbers of the faithful came from all countries to Jerusalem to visit her and receive lessons of wisdom from her lips.

Ancient and credible chroniclers tell us that Mary lived upon earth some twelve or fifteen years after the Ascension of Our Lord. At last the hour came when she was to be reunited to Him. Her death was the result of the intense fires of love for God that burned within her heart. The scene of her death was the room in which Our Lord had instituted the Sacrament of the Last Supper. A short time previous the Spirit of the Lord led all the apostles except Thomas to the city of Jerusalem. When she was about breathing her last, Our Lord came, accompanied by angels, and handed her soul to the keeping of St. Michael, the great archangel. Then the apostles, with a great throng of the believers, carried her precious remains to a newly made tomb in Gethsemani. For three days the apostles remained on the spot praying and singing psalms, and mingling with their voices were heard sweet strains of angelic music.

On the third day St. Thomas arrived, and wishing to look once more at the sacred body of the Blessed Mother, the lid of the tomb was lifted, but there was no body there. Then all understood that as the sacred body which had enclosed the body of Our Lord, and which had been conceived immaculate, could not be left to undergo corruption, it must have been carried to heaven. Thus to Mary could be applied the words of David : "Thou wilt not give Thy holy one to see corruption."

In commemoration of this glorification of Mary the Church now celebrates every year, on the 15th August, the festival of her reception into heaven and her coronation. It is known as the festival of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and is one of the most ancient established to honor our blessed Mother. As on this day it is in some places customary to bless fresh flowers and sweet herbs and other autumn fruits ; it is often called Lady Day in Harvest.

The Holy Name of Mary.

THE LOVABLENESS OF MARY'S NAME.

St. Antony of Padua used to pronounce the name of Mary many times during the day and night. The very utterance of the word filled his heart with sentiments similar to those that pervaded the heart of St. Bernard when he pronounced the sacred name of Jesus. Like St. Bernard, St. Antony would exclaim :

"The name of Mary brings joy to the heart, is honey on the lips, and music in the ear."

Blessed Henry Suso used to say that when he uttered the name of Mary his confidence and hope were wonderfully augmented and his love for God inflamed, and that the very name seemed so sweet to his heart that he would cry out in ecstatic voice: "O sweet name! O Mary! what must thou be in heaven, when thy mere name is love-inspiring on earth?"

Abbot Franconus said that next to the holy name of Jesus the name of Mary is so rich in grace and sweetness that neither in heaven nor on earth is there any other name that so fills the soul of man with grace, hope, and sweetness. "For," he adds, "the name of Mary contains something so admirable, so sweet, and so godlike, that when it penetrates a well-disposed heart it diffuses in it a sweet fragrance. Another remarkable peculiarity about this name is that, although those who revere it may hear it a thousand times, it always seems new, and leaves each time traces of love and sweetness."

St. Bernard, whose heart was all charity, addressed to his beloved Mother the following words: "O great, O pious, O admirable and praiseworthy Virgin Mary! thy name is so sweet and amiable that no one can utter it without being inflamed with love for thee and for God, Who conferred the name upon thee."

St. Alphonsus Liguori, that devout and faithful son of Mary, who wrote so many beautiful things about her, can hardly find words expressive enough to describe the joy and consolation he experienced when pronouncing the name of Mary. He has partially shown forth his sentiments in the following lines:

"Mother Mary, Queen most sweet!
Joy and love my heart inflame.
Gladly shall my lips repeat
Every moment thy dear name.

"Ah! that name, to God so dear,
Has my heart and soul enslaved;
Like a seal it shall appear
Deep on heart and soul engraved.

"When the morning gilds the skies
I will call on Mary's name;
When at evening twilight dies
Mary still will I exclaim."

THE POWER OF MARY'S NAME.

Under the special guidance of the Virgin Mother Mary, Albert the Great became a learned and saintly man. Hence all through his life he revered her with the tenderest love, and never uttered her name but in terms and tones of profound reverence. By means of this pious practice he found help and relief in many arduous undertakings and perilous circumstances.

In the year 1322 three missionaries of the Order of St. Francis were condemned to be burned to death for defending their faith against the blasphemies of the Mohammedans. The oldest, named Thomas, wished to be the first to ascend the scaffold, but was prevented by a Mohammedan because he was old and feeble, and also might have about him some charm that would protect him against the fire. Whereupon Jacob was seized and thrown into the burning pile of wood. As the flames rose about him he was heard to pronounce the name of Mary. In a moment the flames parted, showing the martyr standing unhurt, with outstretched arms, and praising God. As the fire would not touch him, he and his two companions were beheaded.

The wonderful power of Mary's name is specially seen on death-beds. Hence St. Camillus Lellis warned his brother friars to exhort the dying to call on the names of Jesus and Mary, as he himself always did on his sick calls.

THE FESTIVAL OF THE HOLY NAME OF MARY.

This festival, which occurs on the Sunday within the Octave of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, was established by Pope Innocent XI. to commemorate the deliverance of the city of Vienna from the hands of the Turks, and also with a view to have the faithful on this day beseech God, through the Blessed Virgin, for the welfare of the Church, and to thank Him for His mercies. For it was certainly a great act of mercy on the part of God to permit the defeat of the Turks and Tartars, those avowed enemies of the cross of Christ.

The Sultan Mohammed IV., conceiving the plan to extend his conquests as far west as the rivers Danube and Rhine, resolved to erect the crescent in triumph over the cross. His chief officer, Cara Mustapha, at the head of 20,000 Turks and Tartars, overran Hungary with fire and sword, and finally laid siege to Vienna, a city that was just then but poorly fortified. Terror seized upon the inhabitants, many of whom abandoned their all and fled to distant parts. Even the Emperor Leopold fled with his wife.



THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Count Staremborg, the commander of the imperial troops within the city, did not lose courage, and by his side stood a goodly number of the chief citizens, who were determined to save their homes or die in the attempt. On the eve of the Assumption the Turks opened fire on the city. To add to the misfortune of the inhabitants, one of their finest churches took fire from a Turkish bomb, and the conflagration threatened to destroy the magazine in which was stored their scanty ammunition. Assumption Day dawned, and the people flocked to their places of worship to implore the protection of the Blessed Virgin against the enemies of the Christian name and cause. Suddenly the fires went out, and time was given to remove the war supplies to a safe place. This circumstance revived the prostrate spirits of the besieged. The bombs and shot of the besiegers did not deter the people from praying day and night for assistance from heaven through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. On the 31st of August the enemy had so far pushed his assault that the soldiers began to meet in hand-to-hand combat.

Vienna, the bulwark of Christendom, was about to be laid in ashes when on the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin news reached the afflicted people that assistance was coming. Two days later they beheld an army encamped on a neighboring hill, and they were delighted to recognize the banner of the brave John Sobieski, who, with the Emperor Leopold, had marched in haste, at the urgent request of Innocent XI., to the relief of their besieged fellow-Christians. On the 12th of September Sobieski and his troops heard Mass in the Church of St. Leopold. The royal general himself served the Mass, received holy Communion, and at the end of the service, having placed himself and his men under the protection of the Blessed Virgin, he cried out aloud: "Now let us march against the enemy under the guidance of heaven and its immaculate Queen."

When the small but gallant army saw before them the countless array of hostile forces they felt that only Heaven could achieve a victory for the Christian cause. In fact the victory was a miracle. Soon after the first attack the Tartars, breaking ranks, turned and fled, carrying along with them in their panic the better disciplined but hardly less terrified Turkish regiments. They left behind them many thousands of their dead, all their baggage and munitions of war, together with Mohammed's standard, which Queen Sobieski sent to the Pope.

The following day, the 13th of September, Sobieski entered

the liberated city in triumph. He himself intoned the *Te Deum* with the same powerful and manly voice that the day before had ordered the movements of his conquering soldiers. From that time his confidence in Mary never wavered, and he always had borne before his army an image of the "Virgin most Powerful." Ever since the feast of the Holy Name of Mary has been observed in commemoration of that important Christian victory.

Mary, the Refuge of Sinners.

Whoever has had the grievous misfortune to offend God cannot do better than fly to Mary in a spirit of penance, to obtain, through her, reconciliation with God. Among the innumerable examples of this truth which the annals of the Church record, that of St. Mary of Egypt is particularly remarkable. This celebrated penitent was born in Egypt in the fourth century, and was converted from a sinful course of life in a very remarkable manner. She devoted the remainder of her days to the practice of the most austere penance, as she related in the following manner to the Abbot Zozimus, who met her by chance in the desert.

In the twelfth year of her age, contrary to the will of her parents, she came to Alexandria, where she spent seventeen years in the commission of every base and degrading crime. She one day saw crowds embarking for Jerusalem to celebrate the festival of the exaltation of the cross; she accompanied them, and during the journey continued her irregularities. On arriving at Jerusalem she mingled with the crowd that flocked to the church where the Holy Cross was to be publicly exposed; when she arrived at the porch she attempted to enter with the rest, but felt herself restrained by an irresistible power. This happened three or four times. She was much moved; and not doubting but that her sinfulness was the cause why she was not permitted to enter the church, she burst into tears. While she lingered about the church door, sighing and weeping, and beating her breast in a spirit of compunction, she looked up to a picture of the Mother of God, painted on the wall. The sight encouraged her, and she addressed the Refuge of Sinners in these words: "Holy Virgin, Mother of God, I know that the sins in which I live render me unworthy to look up to thee. Thou art a pure and spotless Virgin. Thou who art so pure and holy must have a horror for a soul so immersed in guilt as mine is. However, I have always heard that the Saviour, Whom thou hadst the happiness to bear in thy virginal womb, came into this world to call

sinner to penance. I implore thee to assist me in my distress. Permit me to enter the church, O Queen of Heaven ! Grant that although unworthy I may be allowed to enter, that I may not be deprived of the happiness of seeing that precious cross on which thy Son poured forth all His blood. I promise thee, in the name of the same Redeemer, never more to relapse into my former offences. As soon as I shall have seen the cross I will abandon all, and go wheresoever thou, O Holy Virgin, my advocate and intercessor, wilt tell me."

Having finished this prayer, she felt within herself great confidence. She made another effort to enter the church, and did not experience the least difficulty. She revered the Holy Cross, cast herself on her knees, and amidst abundance of tears, kissed the ground of the holy places ; being deeply touched with the thought of God's mercy and goodness in receiving sinners, whenever they return to Him in a spirit of penance. Having satisfied her devotion, she returned to the image of the holy Virgin, and kneeling down before it, returned thanks for the grace she had obtained through her, and besought her direction in her design of doing penance and reforming her life. While she thus poured out her soul before the image of Mary, she heard a voice as if from a distance, saying : " If you will pass the Jordan, you will find rest." She immediately arose, and turning her eyes to the picture, said : " Virgin of virgins, through whom salvation has been brought to man, do not abandon me ; I beseech thee grant me this favor." She immediately hurried to pass the Jordan, and buried herself in the wildest part of the desert, where she spent forty-seven years, in the practice of the most severe austerities. During many years she was exposed to the most violent temptations from the infernal enemy of her soul, but always was assisted and sustained by Mary. " In all my combats," said she herself to the Abbot Zozimus, " I raised my heart to that Immaculate Virgin, who had been so merciful to me ; I begged her to assist me in my penance and solitude, and she has never forsaken me. She has been my protectress in all my difficulties." The holy penitent at length obtained, through the intercession of Mary, the grace to receive from Abbot Zozimus the last sacraments at her death, and thus passed from the desert, which had been the witness of her extraordinary austerities, to that paradise which God has prepared—not for those who imagine they are rich in virtue, and stand in need of nothing, but for the publicans and sinners who return to Him by a sincere repentance.

MOTHER OF MERCY.

One day a great sinner came to St. Alphonsus Liguori, and amid a flood of tears complained to him of the wretched state of her soul. The Saint had deep compassion on the poor Magdalen, and, as was his wont in such cases, he directed her thoughts to the Blessed Virgin, the refuge of sinners. "Have confidence, my daughter," he said kindly, "have confidence. I will show you a path by which you may once more return to your heavenly Father. Remember that we have a Mother called Mary. She is the refuge of sinners. What will not a mother do for her children. If she sees one fall, does she not leave the others, and pick up the fallen one? Then how she tries to soothe its pain, to brush the dust and dirt from the hands and dress! Hasten to this loving Mother. She will raise you from your fallen state and cleanse your soul from the stains of sin." The Saint's advice was not given in vain. The sinner did as she was directed, and soon found that Mary is indeed the refuge of sinners.

THE ARCHCONFRATERNITY OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, FOR THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS.

The fruits of a sincere devotion to Mary as the refuge of sinners have been often exhibited, in a very extraordinary manner, in a confraternity attached to the Church of Notre-Dame-des-Victoires in Paris. This parish is situated in the centre of that city, and contains a population almost entirely engrossed with the cares and pleasures of life, the agitation of politics, and the amusements of the theatre. Almost every religious sentiment seemed extinct in the vast majority of the people; the church was deserted even on the greatest solemnities, and the sacraments were entirely neglected. The zealous pastor of this church, afflicted beyond measure by the evils he was obliged to witness, without being able to remedy them, resolved to consecrate his parish to the most holy and immaculate Heart of Mary. The Archbishop of Paris approved of this devotion by an ordinance of the 16th December, 1836. On the third Sunday of Advent the exercises commenced by singing the vespers of the Blessed Virgin, at which a more numerous congregation assisted than was wont to be on the greatest festivals. A sermon was preached on the nature and object of the devotion; after which, at the Benediction of the Holy Sacrament, the Litany of the Blessed Virgin was sung. The "Refuge of Sinners" was chanted with extraordinary feeling, and with an effusion of feeling which showed that among this congregation, consisting of from five to six hundred persons,

there were many who felt the need they had of the divine mercy, and the confidence they placed in the intercession of Mary.

The pastor was kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament, and felt himself deeply affected at this manifestation of feeling. He raised his eyes to Mary, and recommended to her protection this pious association. "As a sign of thy protection," added he, "obtain for me the conversion of M——. I will visit him to-morrow in thy name." This gentleman was one of the last ministers of the virtuous but unfortunate Louis XVI. He had been attached to the sect of pretended philosophers of the last century, and had not practised any of the duties of his religion since his youth. He was now in the eightieth year of his age, and for some months had been sick and blind, although his intellect was as strong as ever. Ten times had the worthy pastor endeavored to approach him, and ten times had he been refused entrance. On the following Monday, the 12th of December, he presented himself once more, but was at first denied admittance; he persisted, and was at length allowed to enter. After some moments of indifferent conversation M—— said to his pastor, without making any preamble: "Please give me your benediction—I am delighted at your visit; I cannot enjoy the satisfaction of beholding you, but I feel your presence. Since your visit I enjoy a calm, an interior joy, which I have not known before." The worthy pastor did not let this opportunity pass without profiting by it, and completely succeeded in the great object of his visit. M—— survived until the following April, and all his time was devoted to the great concern of his salvation. He expired in the most edifying sentiments of faith and hope. This manifest benediction of God on the infant association inspired its members with increased confidence in Mary. The devotion was soon propagated, not only in France, but throughout the rest of Europe. Naples, Portugal, and Sweden are the only countries whose names are not inscribed on the register of the association at the time of the publication of the book whence these facts have been taken. We find even New York, Charleston, Dubuque, Detroit, the Bermuda Isles, Martinique, and St. Domingo mentioned as possessing members of this most amiable devotion. Pope Gregory XVI., by an apostolical brief, dated the 24th of April, 1838, erected the association into an archconfraternity, and enriched it with many spiritual treasures. The most hardened sinners have been converted in a manner that showed that these miracles of grace were the result of Mary's powerful inter-

cession, procured by the fervent prayers of the devout members of this association.

The Protection of the Blessed Virgin.

FROM THE FATHERS.

St. Athanasius, Patriarch of Alexandria, prays thus to Mary: "Hear now our prayer, O ever blessed daughter of David and Abraham! Be gracious to our request, and forget not thy people; for we are in duty bound to recognize thee as our Mother, Lady and Princess, and as such to greet thee. For from thee was born the One Whom we adore as our supreme Lord and God. To thee we have recourse, that thou mayest remember us, O holy, and ever immaculate Virgin. Since thou art full of grace, permit us to share in thy abundant treasures, for the measure of praise that we can bring thee is small indeed. An archangel first sounded thy praises when he brought to thee the honored greeting, and



MARY, HELP OF CHRISTIANS.

thy praises when he brought to thee the honored greeting, and

said : ' Hail ! full of grace, the Lord is with thee.' And all the choirs of angels unite their voices in praising and honoring thee, as ' blessed among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.' From these celestial hosts have we men learned to praise thee and do thee honor. They have placed upon our tongues the words : ' Be ever blessed to us, O Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee.' Thou who art our Lady, Queen, and honored Mother, be thou our advocate : the more so, as thou wast born amongst us, and as He Who clothed Himself in thy chaste womb with our poor nature is our very God, to Whom belong all honor and glory."

St. Ephrem exclaims : " Our more than blessed, ever-immaculate Virgin, Mother of my God and Queen of light, thou art powerful and gracious, higher than all the heavenly hosts, purer than the rays of the sun, more venerable than the cherubim, holier than the seraphim, incomparably more glorious than all the choirs of heaven. O holy Lady, thou wert the hope of the patriarchs, the longing of the prophets, the ornament of the apostles, the honor of the martyrs, the joy of the saints, the crown of the virgins. Take me, and in thy goodness keep and save me. Have pity on me, for I am a miserable sinner and all clouded in the mist of my vices, which have displeased Jesus Christ, my God and my Judge. O Mother of mercy, do not permit the evil spirit, the sworn enemy of my soul, to overpower me. After God, I have no other hope than thou, O holy Virgin. Thou art my haven of security amid the storms of this life ; thou art my refuge and defender, my place of repose where I may be free from danger. With deep sincerity of heart and tearful eyes I throw myself at thy feet, to implore thy assistance, and by the aid of thy prayers to be received by Jesus Christ, thy Son, the Author of my existence. May He not reject me because of my sins."

St. Augustine prays : " Bear our petitions, O blessed Virgin, into the sanctuary of appeals, and obtain for us the grace of reconciliation. Thou canst excuse what we bring before thee, thou canst accept what we offer. Obtain for us what we seek, avert from us what we dread. No one is more worthy to appease the anger of the Judge than thou, who wast deemed worthy to be the Mother of the Judge and Redeemer. Help the afflicted, encourage the pusillanimous, look upon those who weep, pray for the people, assist the clergy, plead for the monks, intercede for the religious of the devout female sex. May all those experience thy assistance who honor thy name. Have compassion on the oppressed,

have pity on the exiled from fatherland. To thee has been erected a royal throne by the angels in the court of the eternal King, the King of all kings, Who Himself loves thee above all others as His faithful Mother and chaste Bride."

In another place the same Saint prays: "O blessed Mary, who can render to thee sufficient thanks for the benefits which a lost world obtained through thy willing consent? How can this poor nature of ours, that was well-nigh lost, and which by thy mediation regained the beginning of freedom, ever be able to praise and thank thee? Permit our thanksgiving to be acceptable to thee, poor and insignificant as it is, and unworthy of thy deserts. Accept our request and dispel our iniquities by thy powerful prayers. Receive what we offer to thee, give what we ask of thee. Through thee do we hope for pardon of our sins and expect future happiness. Holy Mary, succor the miserable, help the pusillanimous, strengthen the weak, pray for the people, the clergy, and the devout female sex. Let all who honor thy memory feel the effect of thy assistance. Be gracious to such as have recourse to thy gentle guidance; grant their wishes. O blessed Virgin, who wast worthy to bear the Redeemer of the world, Who lives and reigns in eternity, pray for the faithful laity. Amen."

These few passages suffice to prove that the ancient Church had recourse to Mary in the same language that we use at the present day; that no new doctrine, but rather the old Catholic teaching and practice, are preached in our Church.

MARY OUR HELP IN LIFE.

Mary is the Help of Christians.

The famous victory which the Christians gained in 1571 over the Turks near Lepanto, in the Ionian Sea, will forever be a monument of Mary's title to the appellation of "Help of Christians." For more than a century before that time the Turks caused the Christians the greatest anxiety and apprehension. They gained victory after victory. God permitted this to punish and humble the Christians, and by this humiliation to awaken their faith, as well as to manifest His glory and power by honoring Mary through the wonders He was to work for her servants.

The Turkish Sultan, Selim, the son and successor of Soliman, had taken the isle of Cyprus from the Venetians, and, elated with his success, thought of nothing less than subjecting all the Christian kingdoms to his sway. At that time the chair of St.

Peter at Rome was filled by St. Pius V., whose zeal for the faith and confidence in the intercession of Mary were unlimited. The Pope was greatly alarmed at the danger to which Christendom was exposed, but, with undoubting confidence in Mary, he united with the Venetians and Spaniards to repel the common enemy. There was, indeed, no proportion between the Turkish and Christian fleets, and in all human appearance it must have seemed foolish to contend with such a superior enemy ; but the holy Pope did not for a moment doubt that Mary would obtain victory for the Christians. He accordingly ordered general fast-days, and specially exhorted all Christians to turn to Mary for protection. All Europe was aroused by the approaching danger and joined in this devotion, and everywhere processions and other devotional practices in honor of the Mother of God were established. As Pius sent his blessing to John of Austria, the admiral of the Christian fleet, he gave him the strongest assurances that he would gain the battle. He ordered him, at the same time, to dismiss all disorderly soldiers, or such as thirsted after plunder, lest God should withdraw His protection from the cause in consequence of such sinners. Like another Moses, Pius raised his hands incessantly to heaven, and sought through Mary, the Mother of mercy, the blessing of God on the Christian arms. The battle took place on the 7th of October, 1571, at Lepanto. Both sides engaged with the greatest fury, and for a while the Christians seemed to be on the point of yielding to the superior power of the infidels. Mary, however, had heard the prayers of her children, and the God of armies decided the cause in favor of the Christians. The Turks were completely beaten ; they lost upwards of thirty thousand men, and their formidable fleet was forever destroyed. While the battle was raging the holy Pope was engaged in conference with the cardinals, when suddenly stopping the discourse he raised his eyes to heaven and exclaimed : " Enough of business to-day ; at present we have nothing better to do than to thank God for the victory He has given to the Christian arms." The sequel showed that at the very moment in which Pius spoke these words the battle was gained at Lepanto, and the holy Pope was fully convinced that this victory was to be ascribed to the intercession of the Mother of God. To leave a perpetual memorial of this great benefit he inserted in her litany the words, " Help of Christians, pray for us," and instituted the feast of the Holy Rosary for the same purpose. Gregory XIII. ordered it to be celebrated throughout the Church

on the first Sunday of October, which is therefore called "Rosary Sunday."

Gabriel Malagrida.—That well-known and heroic missionary Father Gabriel Malagrida was returning in 1749 from his arduous missions in America. He had already come in sight of land, and could discern on the shore some friends who had come to bid him welcome home, when his ship was suddenly overtaken by a violent storm. The masts were broken, the sails torn, and all the strong timbers of the vessel twisted out of place and shape. It seemed as if he must perish in sight of home and friends. He alone was not dismayed. Taking an image of the Blessed Virgin which he had always near him during his perilous missionary travels in America, he fastened it to a broken mast and bade the crew and passengers pray fervently to the Mother of God. They had not finished their devotions when, lo! the storm subsided and permitted them to reach the shore in safety. All the saved, together with their friends, went in procession to the Lisbon cathedral to return thanks to God for having, through the intercession of Mary, Star of the Sea, brought them safely home.

Mary is the Health of the Sick.

A Wonderful Cure.—Among the many remarkable cures that have resulted from prayers to the Blessed Virgin we will cite one that occurred in modern times, which cannot be explained naturally, and which has been examined and pronounced true and genuine by the Church. In 1823 the venerable Bishop of Marseilles addressed to his clergy a circular on the subject, and from it we quote: "Sister Mary Julia, a religious of the Visitation convent at Marseilles, had been confined to her bed with a complication of diseases for five years. Notwithstanding the assiduity and skill of physicians and nurses, she grew weaker and weaker as time passed, and even received the last sacraments. Though all expected immediate death, Sister Mary Julia was confident of recovery.

"The superioress of the convent, hearing that on the following day the religious procession of Our Blessed Lady of Grace would pass under the windows of the house, felt herself impelled to have prayers said for the recovery of the afflicted sister, who persisted in saying that she would not die then, though every one else looked for her death each moment. Early in the morning on the day of the procession, her bed was so adjusted that she could see the statue of the Blessed Virgin as it was carried

past the house. Hardly had it come in sight when she felt her whole system convulsed, and a flood of tears coursed down her cheeks. At once her strength returned and she felt herself perfectly restored, and for the first time in many years she arose from her bed without assistance. To-day she is alive and well, as we know from personal observation. All agree that this cure was miraculous."

The bishop ordered prayers to be offered up throughout his diocese, in thanksgiving to God for this signal proof of Mary's right and title to the name of "Help of Christians."

The Boy Odilo.—St. Peter Damian tells of a poor feeble boy whose feet were so crippled that he had always to be carried from place to place. One day he was placed near the door of a church. Feeling a curiosity to see the interior of the grand edifice, he crawled inside with the greatest difficulty and managed to reach the steps of an altar dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. Charmed, in his childish simplicity, with her picture hanging over the altar, he spoke to it and said: "Dearest Mother, please reach me your hand that I may stand up and walk;" when, lo! his childlike confidence was rewarded. His parents were astounded when they saw him come running home. This child was Odilo, afterwards the illustrious abbot of Cluny and one of the brightest ornaments of God's Church.

Mary the Comfort of the Afflicted.

The Heart Relieved.—St. Francis of Sales was from his youth a devout client of Mary, and whilst a student at Paris made a vow of perpetual chastity out of reverence and love for the Queen of purity. Soon afterwards he was afflicted with a dryness of spirit that led him to the verge of despondency. His mind was haunted by the most dismal reflections, and he spent his days in weeping and groaning. One day he strayed listlessly into a church. His eyes fell on a picture of the Blessed Virgin, when, lo! a ray of new courage lit up his afflicted heart. Throwing himself on his knees, he prayed to the "Comfort of the Afflicted," when his load of desolation seemed to fall with the weight of a millstone from his breast, and he was restored to a state of peace and happiness.

A Remedy in Temptation.—St. Thomas of Villanova was so persistently and frightfully assailed by the evil spirit that he fell into a profound melancholy. His only resource was to fly to the protecting arms of the Mother of God. He gives us the follow-

ing advice : "When temptations annoy us, we must do as the chickens do when they see a hawk hovering in the air above them. They hasten to hide themselves under the wing of their mother. So, too, should we, when we perceive a temptation approaching, hasten to shelter ourselves under the protecting mantle of Mary, and cry out to her, saying : 'Beloved Mother and Queen, thou must defend us ; for after God we have no refuge but in thee, who art our only hope.'"

MARY OUR HELPER IN DEATH.

Mary Soothes the Last Moments of Her Servants.

The blessed Father Suarez always cherished deep love and reverence for Mary. He died so happily and peacefully that in his last moments he was heard to say, "I could not have believed that death is so sweet."

Mary Imparts Strength to her Clients on their Death-bed.

In the year 1628 died a pious German princess, whose painful death-agony lasted thirteen months. During all this time she never uttered a complaint or showed a sign of uneasiness. All who saw her attributed her patience to the intercession of the "Help of the Sick," to whom the dying person had always been piously devoted.

Mary Helps her Clients in the Final Assaults of the Devil.

St. Andrew Avellino.—St. Alphonsus Liguori assures us that St. Andrew Avellino in his last moments underwent such a struggle with the tempter that his fellow-monks about his bed trembled with fear and anxiety. Their only comfort was that their dying brother, when his sufferings were greatest, would keep his eyes fixed on an image of the Blessed Virgin. They remembered, too, that he used to say that Mary would be his protector at the hour of death. At last he became tranquil, and, bowing his head towards the picture, as if in gratitude for Mary's help, he smiled sweetly, and peacefully breathed his last.

The Blessed Ulfer.—Blessed Ulfer, a monk of the monastery of St. John in Langres, France, was always a devoted servant of Mary. Being skilled in medicine, he was sent by his abbot to the monastery of St. Germain, where several of the monks lay sick. After prescribing the necessary medicine and giving directions to the nurses, he expressed a wish to return home, for he had himself become quite ill and felt that he was about to die. His sickness grew apace, so that he could not leave. As he lay on

his simple mattress he became terror-stricken, kept his eyes closed, and refused to speak, nor would he be comforted by the friendly monks. And behold ! Mary appeared to him in a vision and said : "Ulfer, why are you so sad ? What do you fear ? Not death, certainly ?" "Yes," he replied, "I am afraid to die." Mary answered : "Be of good cheer : when the hour of your death comes I will be here to assist you." Then she vanished, and with her all fear left the hitherto troubled heart of Ulfer. He sent for the abbot and all the members of the community, related to them what had happened, and then died peacefully and full of hope and resignation.

Mary will not Permit her Servants to Die Without the Last Sacraments.

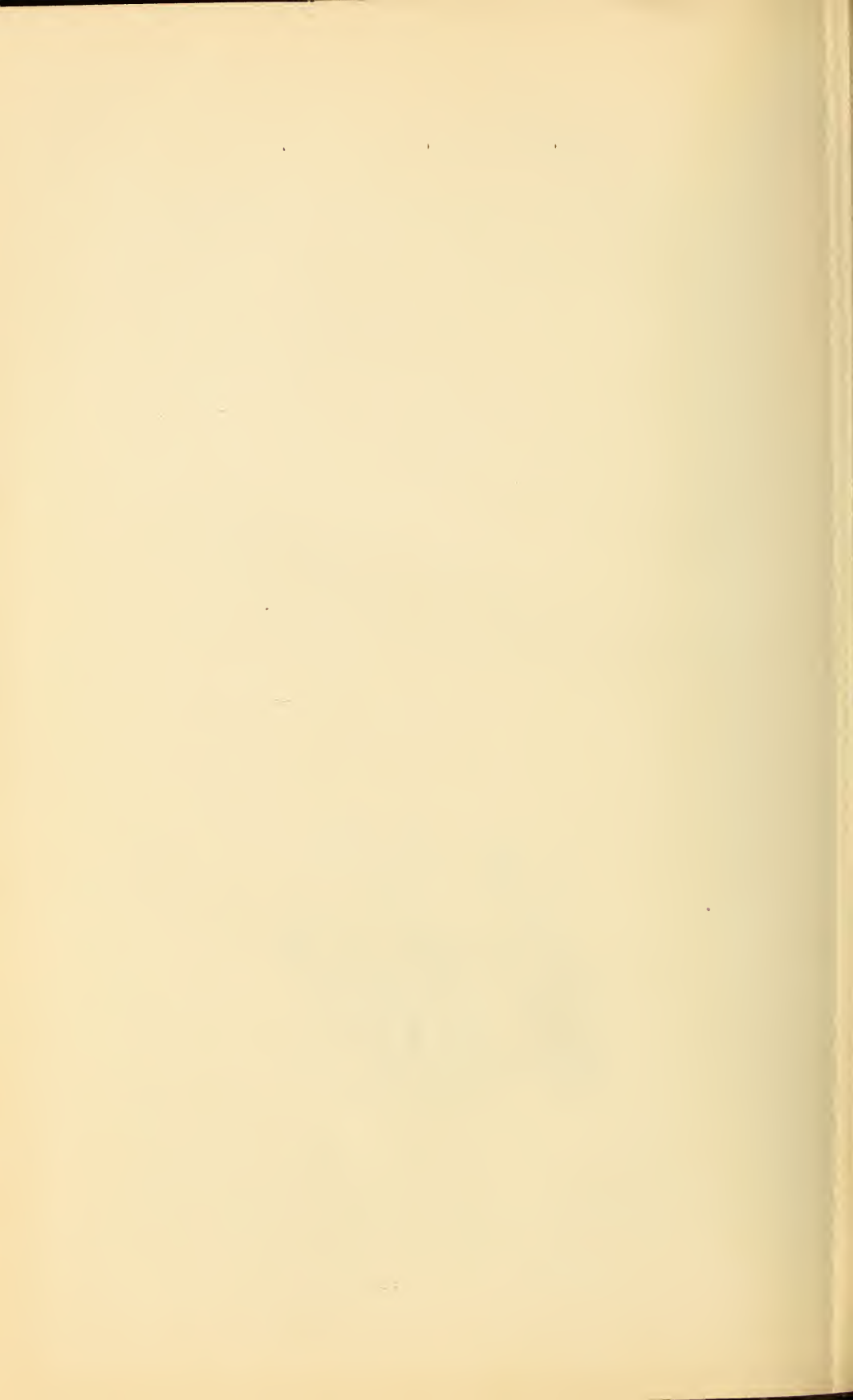
Father Auriemma relates the history of a poor shepherdess who had so great a devotion to the Blessed Virgin that her greatest delight was to retire to a small mountain chapel dedicated to Our Lady. There she poured forth her heart in prayer before her "Good Mother,"—for that was the name by which she addressed her,—incessantly repeating the angelical salutation, "Hail Mary, full of grace." Her piety found such solid satisfaction in this simple exercise that she often remained in the chapel for several successive hours, while her flock pastured before it.

The image of the Blessed Virgin which was in this chapel was a simple and unadorned statue. The pious girl made for it a rustic but becoming mantle. She made a garland of some flowers which she had gathered in the neighborhood, and kneeling before the altar she presented it to her "Good Mother," saying, "Hail Mary, full of grace." Then ascending the altar she placed this simple but beautiful crown on the head of the statue. "Mother, dear Mother," she said then to Mary, "I would willingly place on thy head a crown enriched with gold and precious jewels, but I am a poor shepherdess and can only offer thee this garland. Accept it as a token of my affection. Thou knowest how I love thee ; I can only say Hail Mary."

Such simple piety and artless love could not pass unrewarded. This zealous servant of Mary fell sick, and was soon reduced to the last stage of the malady from which she suffered. At that time two members of a religious Order who were travelling in that district sat down to rest under the refreshing shade of a tree. Both fell asleep, and both had precisely the same vision. They beheld coming down from heaven, like a golden cloud, a band of beautiful virgins, in the midst of whom was one of sur-

passing beauty and majesty. On being asked whither she was going, she replied : " I am the Mother of God, and I am going with these holy virgins to visit a dying shepherdess who during her life visited me frequently." The vision then vanished. On awaking from sleep they communicated to each other what they had seen and heard. " Let us also go," said they, " and visit this faithful servant of Mary." Providence conducted them to the cottage of the poor shepherdess, who had attained a high degree of sanctity by the practice of her humble duties. They found her stretched on a pallet of straw, exhibiting in the lily-whiteness of her features the purity of soul which had distinguished her, and in the beautiful expression of her countenance a confirmation of the vision they had been favored with. Turning her eyes towards the missionaries, she welcomed them, and thanked God that her prayer had been heard and that now she could receive the last sacraments and die peacefully. As the missionaries were concluding the prayers after Extreme Unction and Viaticum, this devout client of Mary whispered : " O pious, O gentle, O sweet Virgin Mary," and expired.





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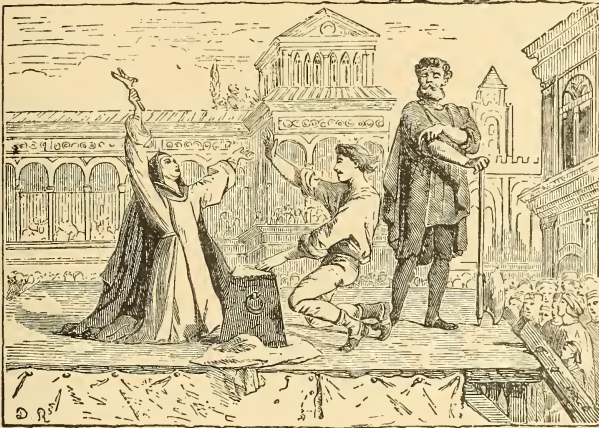
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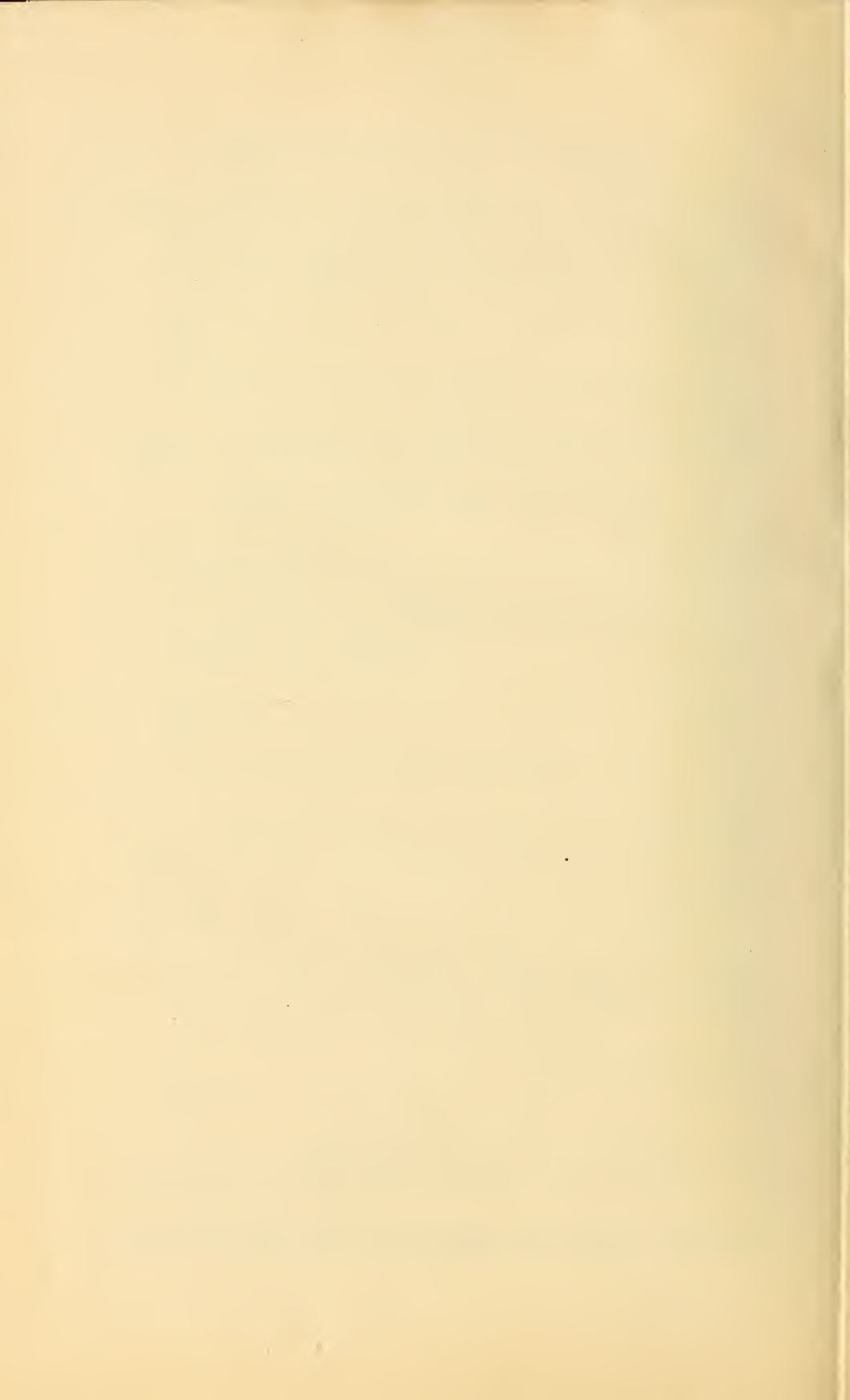
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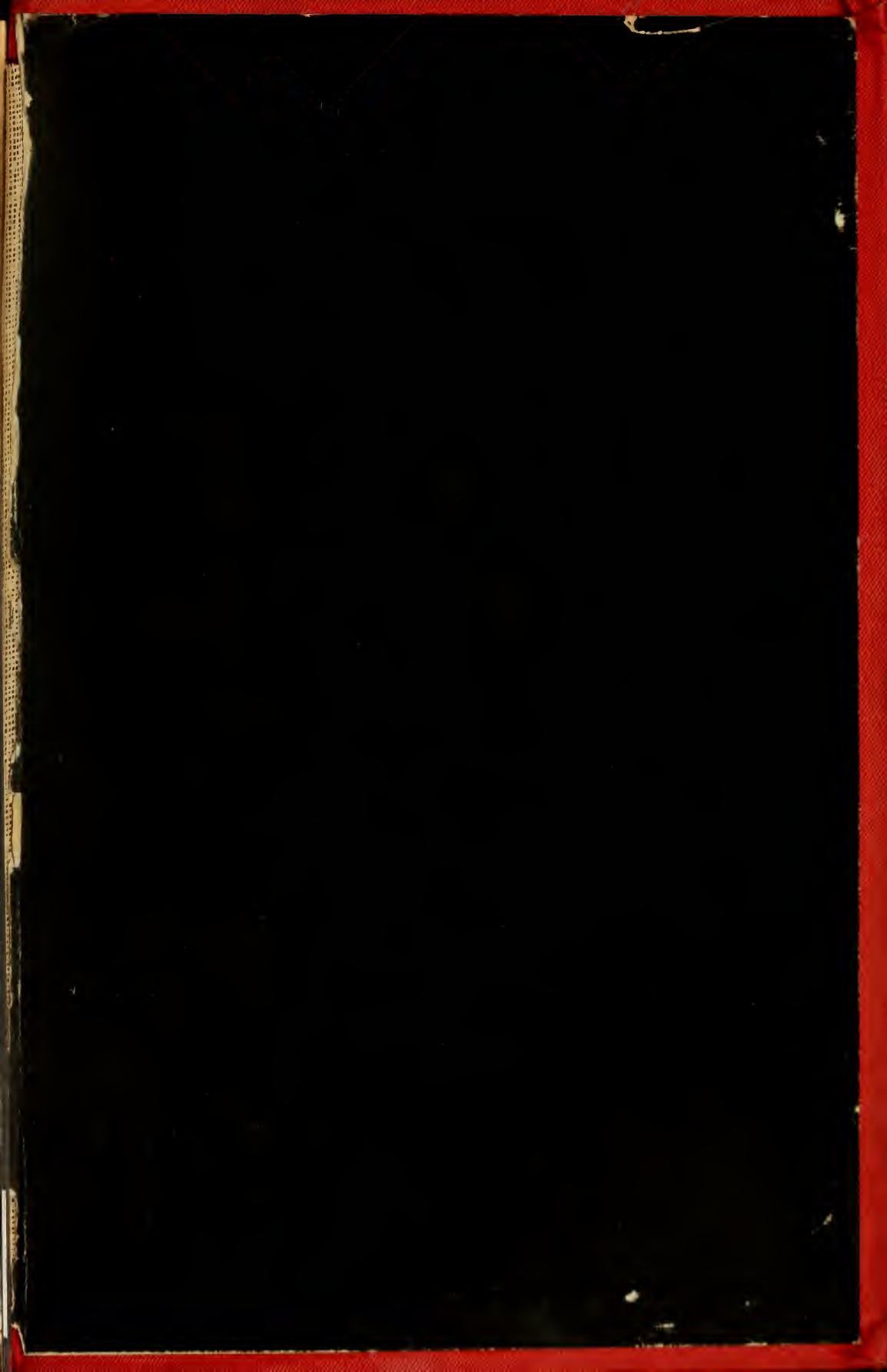


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