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PICTORIAL
HALF HOURS
WITH THE
SAINTS



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PICTORIAL

Half Hours with the Saints.

BY THE ABBÉ LECANU.

365 ENGRAVINGS BY AN EMINENT FRENCH ARTIST,
AND TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE
PRINCIPAL FESTIVALS OF THE YEAR,
DESIGNED BY HENRY DOYLE,
ENGRAVED BY
THE BROTHERS DALZIEL.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

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INTRODUCTION.

HOLY CHURCH, by inviting us to honour the saints, intends not only to remind us that in them we possess protecting spirits in Heaven, ever ready to uphold us by their powerful intercession; but she has further in view, and as her main purpose, to offer them as models for our imitation; in order that we, in like manner, may become saints. And, in addition to the fact that it is the best, and almost the only real way to honour the Blessed, it is the one alone likely to prove profitable to us. For we are not to suppose that the saints receive fresh glory from any praise of ours, if the praise proceed from impure lips, or from hearts corrupted; nor should we cherish the thought that they regard us alike with the same loving eyes, whether we are bent on imitating their virtues or repudiating the example set by them. Our temporal interests concern them nearly, without a doubt, since the elect are our brethren; and they have not, from the fact of having become more perfect, given over loving us, for they love us more earnestly than ever. But what they desire and seek for beyond all, is that we in turn should become saints, even as they; seeing that therein lies our sovereign good, in comparison with which everything else is of little account; or, rather, is as nought, if it avail not to our sanctification. Apart from the fact that, in a certain order of desires, the co-operation of the saints is absolutely withheld from us, it would be a vain seeking on our part to crave from them the satisfaction of our grasping desires, of our

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ambition, or of our disordered passions. Were the unhappy being who is on the point of perishing in the hurrying waters, to cry out to his companion on the distant shore, "Weave for me a garland of flowers!" there would come across the waters the inevitable answer, "My friend, first let me save you, and then we will gather the flowers."

Now, our sanctification is the most precious of all things—that which alone has any value, or, adopting the language of Jesus Christ, it is "the *one* thing necessary." But, in order the better to estimate its value, let our eyes witness what it has cost the great Saviour:—the mighty abasement of His life as Man; the apostolic labours of the last three years of His mission on earth; and, to crown all, His death of ignominy on Calvary. Let us call to mind what He has accomplished in addition:—the establishing of that imperishable Church, in the midst whereof, even unto the consummation of the world, He is to abide, lest it should deceive us and lead us away from the truth; the institution of the seven sacraments, through which, as from so many abundant and inexhaustible springs, He ever dispenses His most precious graces; and, chief of all, the ever-flowing spring of the wondrous sacrament of the Eucharist, wherein He is contained corporally, and, despite our unworthiness, gives Himself to us, at the risk of every kind of profanation, insult, and outrage. But if this consideration, of such great moment and high import, come not near enough to us, let us consult more narrowly our own interests. Of what advantage is the passing satisfaction of our engrossing appetites? What avail glory, power, the possessions and treasures of the world, if we ourselves are lost utterly? Will the gold-seeker, who, by means of painful toil, has succeeded in accumulating vast quantities of the precious metal, be much advantaged if the ship, to which he has intrusted his gold and his life, gets wrecked before reaching the harbour?

Let us procure our salvation, then, in the first place; the rest, provided that it be for our good, will come of itself, as Jesus Christ has promised.

Now, if we would secure our salvation, let us lift our eyes and see in what way those who have been saved before us have set about the work; by following beaten tracks we shall not run the risk of going astray and losing ourselves.

Jesus Christ is the sovereign and perfect model of all perfections; the exemplar, set upon the hill, whereof it has been said, "Look ye, and do in like manner." In Jesus Christ is the plenitude of all good. He is the light, enlightening every man that cometh into the world; so that there is no one upon earth, of what condition soever, who cannot in Him find his model for imitation, and become, by conforming thereto, as holy as it is given to man to be. But as it is not every eye that can contemplate the splendour of the sun, without the risk of being dazzled and impairing the faculty of sight; so all men are not up to the level of contemplating the Divine Original, as being too sublime for some, too incomprehensible for others. Many minds—the great majority, it may be—would be either at fault while bent upon contemplating, or would speedily be overcome by fatigue of spirit: hence, other models, fashioned upon the prime model, have been set between Him and us. These are the mighty minds, the exceptional souls, the hearts all fire, which have known how to attain to the heights, to look, with open gaze, upon the Author of being, and to imbibe fresh life from the very fountain-head. Well, let us in turn fix our eyes on them, and become what they have been; little by little gain perfection through their example; just as, by dint of labour, earthly knowledge is gradually acquired. It is this thought which upheld St. Bernard, quickening and ever stimulating him. "Wherefore," said he to himself, "should not I be able to do what this one, and this other, have accomplished?"

It is this constant meditation on the lives of the saints which has ended by forming such saints as Theresa, Ignatius of Loyola, and so many others who have, in their turn, become saints.

There is, withal, a shoal from which we should steer clear. In the case of the saints, everything does not equally admit of imitation. First of all, the miracles which they have wrought are not the cause of their sanctity; they are not saints merely through having worked miracles, but they have worked them because they were saints. Again, the virtues which we admire in them, have not been infused into them,—they have acquired them; but as virtue is ever acquired, by slow degrees, by dint of fighting, of self-denial, of stanchness and perseverance. Finally, those acts which are in themselves extraordinary and beyond the usual range of human nature, and

which we sometimes remark in their lives, are in no wise proposed for our imitation.

Thus, it is less necessary to keep in view what they have accomplished, when once they have reached the goal, than it is to watch "the Way" that they have followed in order to arrive there. It would be mere folly to say, "I cannot, like St. Landry, found a God's-House, or vast hospitals, like St. Vincent de Paul; collecting, like him, the orphans and the aged poor, and feeding entire provinces; nor can I, like St. Peter Nolasco, ransom captives; like St. Louis, go forth to the conquest of the Holy Land; like St. Anthony or St. Paul, dwell in the desert; or cure the sick and raise the dead, like St. Martin." Granted that you cannot accomplish this; it is scarcely probable; indeed, that God calls you to such great things; but render yourself, by means of solid virtue, fitted to achieve that to which God may destine you. Be saint-like, to begin with, and afterwards, God will do with you and through you, what He may deem fitting. Begin by doing deeds of holiness; and thereafter holiness, when you shall have acquired it, will accomplish the works which are of its domain. What would you think of the man who, stopping at the shores of France, should say, "I am desirous of possessing much gold, but I cannot find any here, there is none to be met with; the sands contain not a particle of it; I must needs, then, relinquish the hope utterly!"

Yet, no! Would you accumulate gold? cross the wide seas, encounter the fatigues and length of the voyage, as well as its perils; wander to those spots where the earth yields it; look on first, with earnest eyes, and then accomplish what you have seen others doing. No one can attain the goal without having first traversed the course. This is a truth so self-evident that it becomes common-place.

Whatever is most striking in the acts of the saints is precisely that which least admits of being imitated:—the tears of Peter, and of Magdalen; the prolonged fasts of the Anachorites; the solitary column of the Stylites; the evangelic zeal and apostolic wanderings of Francis Xavier; the constancy of the martyrs; the science of the doctors; the utter abnegation of Alexis. But who has then urged you to work all these wonders, or even one of them? Instead of contemplating what you cannot do, seek rather, in the lives of the

saints, that which you are able to realize; namely, virtues humble and modest, in accordance with your state and condition, with your tastes and the turn of your mind, and then, to the work! Though Jesus Christ, the model of all sanctity, has realized it in its fulness, no one of His saints has practised all the virtues in an equal degree, but each has practised a single virtue to an eminent degree: the one piety, the other charity; one patience, another mortification; some have fostered the expansive zeal of the Apostolate, and others the fervour of the Thebaid. There have been saints upon the throne, and saints in the midst of dignities and riches. There have been saints, again, of a condition less elevated; ay, even in the very lap of indigence; amongst masters and bondsmen alike, of all ages in life, and in every century. Nobody is excluded from the high privilege; neither the man of intellect nor the unlettered peasant; neither the young girl nor the widow; neither the poor accepting an alms nor the rich man bestowing it. All things afford the means of sanctification; both prosperity and reverses, hard toil and high power, skilled labour and commerce, authority and subjection. How then shall any one venture to utter the words, "I cannot become a saint!"

But the work of sanctification is not the labour of a day. On this head there should be no misapprehension. How many are there who, after having taken excellent resolutions, and even having made some headway, abandon, at the first rude shock, the noble enterprise. These are they in whom the seed has germinated, but has not struck root, from lack of moisture. To adopt the Gospel language, these it is whom the Saviour has pointed out when saying, "They are not fitted for the kingdom of God who, after having put the hand to the plough, have looked back." You wish to be a saint: be up and doing, and then persevere, and still persevere; yea, even to the end. This is the injunction of the Master. Now, perils, obstacles, temptations, the uprisings of nature and the sinking of the heart, are lessened, and grow rarer, according as perseverance is maintained. It is not with the way of holiness as with the roads mapped out for the journeys of this world. The farther the wayfarer advances on the latter, the more does he exhaust his strength, and does wearing fatigue beset him; whereas, the more the saint advances on the former, the greater vigour and strength does he acquire.

Another error, no less baneful, is this, that the practice of sanctity

supposes harshness of manners and severity of character, or leads to it. There cannot be a greater mistake. Wherefore should the saint be sad and morose? Can one be so with the conscience free from stain and an unvarying rectitude of conduct, with the sweet hope of salvation and the happiness which piety procures by anticipation? The saint has only his portion, like every one else, of the blessings or the evils of the passing world. The blessings cannot awaken sadness, and evil is unable to cast him down; inasmuch as he accepts the former as benefits, and the latter as transient trials or punishments, deserved, it may well be, yet transient still. Sadness has its origin in the remorse of a guilty conscience, or it arises from the separation from an object tenderly loved, when such separation seems irreparable. It springs again from the loss of honour, the fear of chastisement, or from ambition deceived. But the saint knows nothing of all this. Just as his designs, his desires, and his purposes, are subordinated to the Divine will, so his natural attachments are, in the language of the Psalmist, but steps disposed in his heart in such wise as to lift his soul to objects more sublime. He experiences no writhings of the spirit, and hence his moments of sadness are not without their ready remedy.

How should he be sad and severe as towards others? Is not charity, the principle and consummation of all sanctity, very sweet, indulgent, patient, and full of meekness? If any one interpret it otherwise in the case of others, it is simply because he is unacquainted with it; and if any apprehend it otherwise in his own regard, he is greatly at fault. It is the apostle St. Paul who defines it in terms akin to those above employed.

Let us rather contemplate it reduced into practice in the veritable saint. And what, then, is that touching, inexhaustible, and universal goodness of the Saviour—that wondrous meekness of the apostle “whom He loved;” the sweet and unvarying patience of St. Francis of Sales; the maternal love, so unfailing and all-enduring, of St. Monica; the pure, serene, and communicative joy of St. Vincent de Paul—what, indeed, but the blossoming and the fruit of holiness? Nothing was so frequently recommended by the apostle St. Paul, to his disciples, as the serene and calm joy here spoken of.

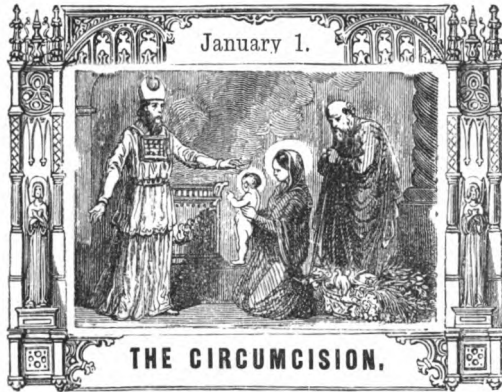
Ah! doubtless a saint is severe towards himself; but he is correspondingly indulgent towards others. Even while affirming that

he is severe towards himself, it would be well to understand this aright. He is severe in the sense that he does not tolerate, in himself, any taint of evil, nor a bad thought or action; not even what may lead thereto. He is severe to the extent that, wishful as he is to become one of the elect, and not a self-worshipper, he accords to nature what is merely needful, while sternly refusing whatever may tend to flatter or corrupt it. His severity has then, for its main object, to extirpate whatever is evil. And what, it may be asked, is there so repulsive in a character of this type, or in such a mode of being? But should not a saint be constantly intent upon mortifying all his passions? All, would be saying too much; he mortifies the bad passions, and to the good gives a bent at once just and hallowed.

What, then, is sanctity? It is the practice of one or several virtues in an eminent degree, while excluding every guilty failing. And by virtues in an eminent degree, is meant—not holiday virtues, showy or startling virtues—but virtues cherished in secret, apart from the gaze of the world.

And now, with hand and heart to the work, let us repeat, with St. Paul, "Let us be mindful of our predecessors and masters in the faith; and, beholding the crowning of their lives, let us follow their example. All for Jesus Christ, who was yesterday, and to-day, and to-morrow, and the same for evermore."—(*Heb.* xiii. 7.)





UNION IN CHARITY.—On contracting an alliance with Abraham and his posterity, God enjoined the ceremony of Circumcision, in token of the alliance, even as, later on, He imposed upon the Christian people the obligation of Baptism; with this difference, however, that circumcision was but an ineffectual symbol, whereas baptism confers the grace which it signifies. Jesus Christ could not be bound to submit to a law, of which, by virtue of His Godship, He was the author; but having come into the world in order to bind anew to God the human race, and to sanctify it, He wished to bear in His own sacred person the signs of the twofold alliance, in order to merge them. He received, then, circumcision on the eighth day after His birth, in accordance with the law of Moses, while reserving His purpose of receiving baptism at a later period, in conformity with the law of the Gospel; He thus, in the early dawn of childhood, made the first offering of that precious Blood which was destined to effect the salvation of the human race.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Jesus Christ on this day affords us the precept and example of that divine charity which ought to make of all nations a single people, and of all men one family of brethren here below, and one family of the blessed in Heaven. "For by Him we have access both in one Spirit to the Father."*—(Ephes. ii. 18.)



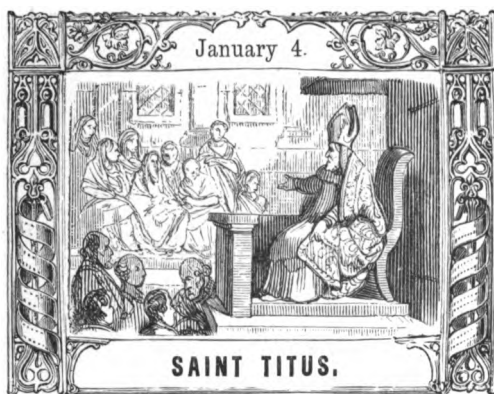
PERSEVERANCE IN WELL-DOING.—St. Macarius was born at Alexandria, in 306, of poor pagan parents, and only received the grace of baptism when he had reached his thirtieth year. Having retired shortly after into the deserts of the Thebaid, then peopled with a multitude of cœnobites, he learned in their school how to practise the rigours of a penitent life, and lived in the practice thereof to the age of ninety-nine. God permitted the fiend of darkness to put the virtue of the saint to a multitude of trials. Discouragement took possession of his soul; the pleasures of the world flashed before his eyes like alluring shadows; the vivacity of his disposition inclined him to frequent outbreaks of impatience; but he knew how to quell the temptation, or to chastise his body whenever he thought he had given way. What is related of his austerities almost surpasses belief. Having become a priest, he had the honour to suffer persecution for the Faith, and to become one of its fervent apostles. The blessed Saviour appeared to him and conferred on him the gift of miracles.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Never let us be cast down or conquered by temptations; let us look upon them as trials which hallow virtue, bearing ever in mind that the Saviour has promised salvation to all who persevere. "He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved."*—(Matt. xxiv. 13.)



IN RETURN FOR EVIL, DO GOOD.—Genevieve was born about 422, at a village in the environs of Paris, called Nanterre. St. Germain, bishop of Auxerre, passing near the spot while Genevieve was as yet a child, discerning her in the midst of the pressing crowd, asked her whether she desired to dedicate herself to God's service, and with his own hands invested her with the insignia of the religious life. The youthful virgin made such rapid progress in piety, that the inhabitants of the country grew accustomed to regard her as a saint. But later on, their homage was converted into scoffing, and they treated her most evident virtues as hypocrisy. St. Germain once more came to her aid, and publicly demonstrated the reality of her virtues. At a subsequent period, Genevieve herself afforded the highest proofs thereof by twice saving Paris: on the first occasion by her prayers, when Attila, king of the Huns, at the head of an armed host, was threatening its destruction, and again, by providing the citizens with food, when Merové, king of the Franks, was besieging it. Genevieve died in 512, and is invoked by Paris as its patron saint.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Never to allow oneself to be discouraged by the ingratitude and injustice of men; persecution is the crucible wherein the gold of virtue is refined.* "All that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution."—(2 Tim. iii. 12.)



GOOD EXAMPLE.—St. Titus, the disciple of St. Paul, and one of the first-fruits of the great Apostle's victories, accompanied him through his evangelical wanderings, sharing with him his toils and perils. He was present with him at the first General Council, held in Jerusalem in the fifty-first year of the Christian era, and followed his master to Ephesus, whence the Apostle sent him to Corinth, towards the end of the year 56, to appease the discord and the troubles which afflicted the bosom of the infant Church. From Corinth St. Titus went to rejoin St. Paul at Troas, a town in Macedonia; he accompanied St. Paul to Rome, returning with him, subsequently, to the East. Then it was, in the year 63, that the great Apostle placed him as bishop, in Crete. Titus did not, however, remain constantly there; for we find him, later on, at Nicopolis and in Dalmatia, ever intent upon spreading a knowledge of the Gospel. It is, however, believed that he returned to his diocese after the martyrdom of St. Paul, remained there for the rest of his days, and died at a very advanced age.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*If it be not vouchsafed to us to fashion our lives on the apostolic model of St. Titus, let us at least endeavour to reduce to practice the counsel given him by the great Apostle: "In all things show yourself an example of good works; in doctrine, in integrity, in gravity."*—(Titus ii. 7.)



RESISTANCE AND OBEDIENCE TO GRACE.—St. Gregory the Great had three aunts on the father's side,—Thrasilla, Emiliana, and Gordiana. All three made a vow of chastity, and devoted themselves to an ascetic life in the house of their father, the senator Gordian. Thrasilla and Emiliana having renounced the world on the same day, gave themselves up, with mutual zeal, to the practice of perfection, and made great progress in the spiritual life. Gordiana allowed the fervour of her piety gradually to tone down. Her sisters, by force of entreaties, and by lavish marks of affection towards her, were instrumental in leading her to fresh renewals of zeal; but her love of the world ended by detaching her wholly from a devout life, and inducing her to relinquish the practices of piety. Nothing further is known of her after-life. Thrasilla was first called to her reward, after having been favoured with a vision of the Pope St. Felix, her uncle, who addressed her thus:—“Come! I will accompany you to the abode of glory.” Shortly after, she herself appeared to Emiliana, inviting her to celebrate with her, in Heaven, the feast of the Epiphany. Emiliana, in effect, died the following day, the 5th of January, on the eve of that great festival.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us often keep in mind the words of our Saviour, “No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will sustain the one and despise the other.”—(Matt. vi. 24.)*



GOOD EXAMPLE.—The word Epiphany means “manifestation,” and it has passed into general acceptance throughout the universal Church, from the fact that Jesus Christ *manifested* to the eyes of men His Divine mission on this day. First of all, a miraculous star revealed His birth to the kings of the East, who came forthwith to adore him at Bethlehem, and to offer Him mystical presents, as to the King of Kings, to the God of Heaven and earth, and to a Man withal, feeble and mortal. He was in fact all this. Subsequently, when going out from the waters of Jordan, after having received baptism from the hands of the Precursor, the Holy Spirit hovered visibly above Him, under the form of a dove, and a voice descending from the clouds uttered these words:—“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!” Finally, at the outset of His evangelical mission, He wrought the miracle of the conversion of water into wine, at the nuptial feast of Cana, at the sight whereof His disciples believed in Him. The remembrance of these three great events, concurring to the same end, Holy Church has wished to celebrate in one and the same festival.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“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.)



THE STUDY OF THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.—St. Lucian, who suffered martyrdom at Nicomedia, in 312, was a native of Samosata. Having been invested from early youth with full power of disposing of his worldly goods, he distributed them to the poor, and withdrew to Edessa, to live near a holy man, called Macarius, who imbued his mind with a knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, and led him to the practice of the Christian virtues. Having become a priest, his time was divided between the external duties of his holy state, the performance of works of charity, and the study of sacred literature. He revised the books of the Old and New Testament, expunging the errors which, through the negligence of copyists or the malice of heretics, had been insinuated into the text; thus preparing the way for the learned St. Jerome, who shortly after was to give to the world that Latin translation known as “The Vulgate.” Having been denounced as a Christian, Lucian was put in chains and condemned to the torture, which was protracted for twelve whole days. Having been visited by Christians while in prison on the day of the Epiphany, he had bread and wine brought to him, consecrated the elements, communicated, and with his dying lips pronounced the words, “I am a Christian!”

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us strengthen ourselves by “reading” and meditating upon the Holy Scriptures, conformably with the counsel of the great Apostle.—(1 Tim. iv. 13.)*



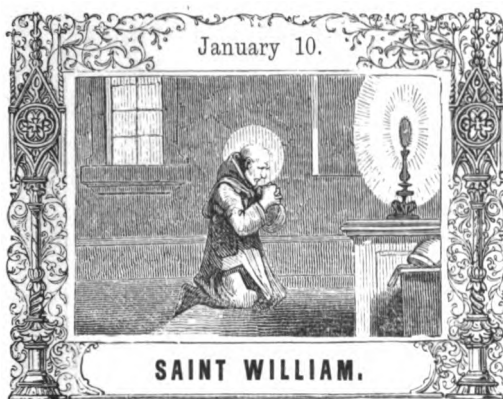
DO PENANCE.—St. Severinus quitted the solitudes of the East, where he had been devoting himself to the exercises of the cœnobitic life, in order to evangelize the population of Norica, a province which comprised the greater part of Austria and the Tyrol. He at first encountered great resistance, but soon effected wonders of conversion, as well by reason of his humble and mortified life, as because he announced to his hearers the calamities wherewith the rebellious nations would be afflicted. “Do penance,” exclaimed he: “sin is the cause of all the woes that God scatters upon the earth!” Before consenting to pray for those who were afflicted, and before releasing them from their infirmities, he required that they should do penance. His own life showed forth the constant example thereof. He foretold to Odoacer, king of the Herules, that he was to lay waste Italy, by way of punishment for its crimes; and the prophecy was amply verified. Hence kings and nations and rulers ended by holding him in singular veneration, regarding him as the envoy of Heaven. He yielded up his spirit on the 9th January, 482.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*If not out of tenderness towards God, let us, at least from charity for ourselves, repair our past guilt, and avoid committing fresh offences; for, “As by one man sin entered into the world, so death passes by sin.”—(Rom. v. 12.)*



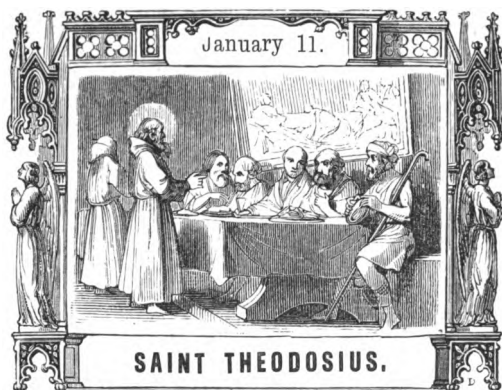
ALMSGIVING.—St. Julian had dedicated himself to God; but being compelled to marry in order to content his family, he was careful to inspire his young spouse, Basilissa, with an esteem for the virtue of continence equal to that which possessed his own soul, and on the day of their union they both pronounced the vow of which Mary and Joseph had given the example. They superadded a vow to devote both their life and property to the comforting of pilgrims, of the poor and the sick, and turned their abode into a hospital, becoming the first ministering servants thereof. Such great charity and devotion could not fail to attract the attention of the persecutors of the Christian faith. Basilissa was the first who had to encounter the ordeal; but she outlived the trial, and died peacefully in the midst of her good works. Julian, being denounced in his turn, underwent martyrdom some years afterwards, at Antioch, with many confessors of the faith, on the 9th day of January, 313. A miraculous cure effected by him at the very moment when he was to suffer failed to bend the minds of his judges, and he was beheaded.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*In imitation of the holy martyr, we should know how to put in practice the injunction of the prophet Daniel, "Redeem your sins by almsgiving, and your iniquities by mercy to the poor."*—(Dan. iv. 24.)



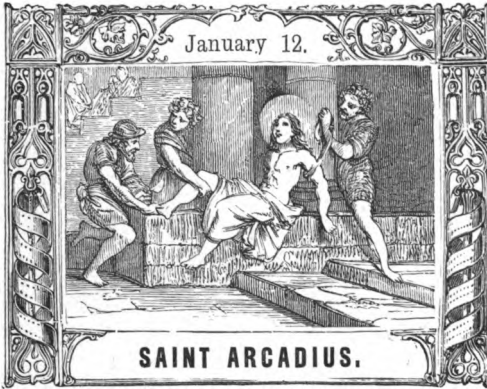
DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.— St. William, archbishop of Bourges, is chiefly remarkable for his fervent devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. The tender piety which he practised from early youth led him to renounce the great wealth and rank which he might have enjoyed in the world. Having embraced the ecclesiastical state, he was made a canon of Soissons and, subsequently, of Paris. He afterwards entered the order of Grammont, and eventually that of Citeaux, whence he was drawn, against his will, to be raised to the archiepiscopal see of Bourges. His elevation to this high position caused his piety to shine forth more strikingly, and at the same time enabled him to display the treasure of zeal and charity that filled his soul, for the solacing of the unfortunate and the conversion of sinners. He was wont to style the poor “his creditors,” and never deemed himself out of debt to them till he had not the wherewithal to give. St. William died on the 10th of January, 1202, after having addressed his flock from the pulpit, prophetic words of farewell.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is the virtue of the predestined.* “He who shall eat of this bread, shall live for ever,” saith Jesus Christ.—(John vi. 59.)



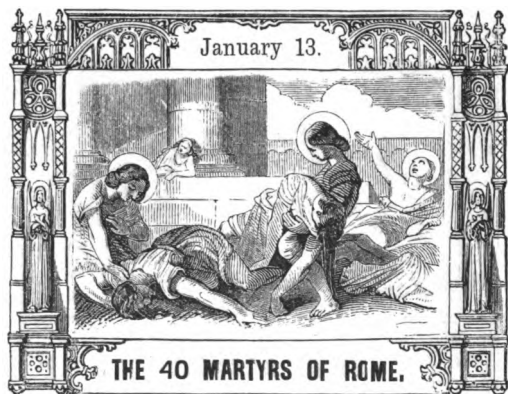
BE MINDFUL OF DEATH.—Theodosius was born in Cappadocia towards the year 423, and was brought up in sentiments of tender piety. He first devoted himself to the priestly state; but feeling afterwards called to contemplation and retirement, he adopted the life of a cœnobite. His humility failed to hide from the eyes of the world at large the splendour of his sanctity; and a great throng of persons of every age having assembled round his cell, he withdrew into a solitude more retired still, with the intent to remain unknown to men. A few companions went to join him, and subsequently numerous disciples followed; so that he saw himself obliged to found a new monastery; for his charity exceeded all bounds. He never refused to receive any one, nor denied anything to any one. He often expended the last resources of the monastery in favour of strangers, pilgrims, and the poor. The thought ever-present to his mind was that of death; the first advice which he offered to his disciples was to prepare to die. Despite his great austerities and labours, his life was prolonged to the age of 106.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The Holy Spirit has told us by the lips of the Wise Man, "Have ever before thy eyes the remembrance of thy last end, and thou shalt never sin."*—(*Eccles. vii. 40.*)



FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES.—At the time of Valerian's persecution, about the year 257, a Christian of Cæsarea, named Arcadius, illustrious for his birth and riches, had betaken himself to flight, so as to avoid the risk of suffering; but on learning that one of his relatives had offered himself in his stead, he was deeply touched by such unwonted generosity, reproached himself as a coward, and returned to surrender himself to the judge who was to consign him to death. Unable to induce him by the most enticing promises or the most terrible threats to apostatize from the Christian religion, the judge condemned him to have his limbs amputated one after the other until death should put a term to his sufferings. Arcadius endured this protracted martyrdom with a constancy so marvellous, that the judge, tired out at last, ordered the executioners to end their cruelty by disembowelling the victim. Arcadius continued to pray for his tormentors: "My God, forgive them, they know not what they do!"

MORAL REFLECTION.—*This is the example given by Jesus Christ upon the cross, and by St. Stephen while he was being stoned. Let us not lose sight of this injunction of the Divine Master: "Pray for those that hate you and persecute you." "Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven."*—(Matt. v. 44. Luke vi. 37.)



DEATH RATHER THAN SIN.—The emperors Valerian and Gallianus raised against the Church a persecution so violent that the Christians for a time deemed that the reign of Antichrist had come. The persecution began in the year 259, and lasted three years and a half; it is reckoned as the eighth general persecution. The number of persons of every age and condition who preferred death to apostasy cannot be computed: the East, the West, Africa, and the world at large, were deluged with Christian blood; there were isolated slaughters, as well as general massacres. The Martyrology mentions, on the 13th of January, the forty soldiers who suffered death on the same day, in these terms:—"At Rome, the triumph of the forty blessed soldiers who deserved to bear off the crown of martyrdom for their profession of faith, in the Lavinian Way, under the reign of Gallianus."

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The abject spirits that have apostatized in order to save their lives are sighing away in utter darkness. The generous Christian souls that preferred death are dwelling with God in His glory.* "For he that will save his life shall lose it, and he that shall lose his life for my sake, shall find it," saith Jesus Christ. —(Matt. xvi. 25.)



SUBMISSION TO THE DESIGNS OF GOD.—Hilary, bishop of Poitiers, was a shining light in the Church of Gaul during the fourth century. The courage with which he opposed the projects of the emperor Constantius, who favoured Arianism, caused him to be exiled to the East; but this event, so far from proving a misfortune, became to religion a powerful means of procuring salvation for her children; inasmuch as Hilary, during that interval, composed his admirable treatise on the Trinity, wherein is so clearly set forth the orthodox belief; he assisted at the Council of Seleucia, and there bore testimony to the doctrine of the Western Church, falsely accused of favouring the heresy of Sabellius. Having witnessed the violence which had been shown to the fathers of the council, and having been advised of the frauds of which the fathers of the Council of Rimini, held at the same time, had been made the victims, he addressed his complaints to the emperor, so as utterly to disconcert the latter; and, by his writings and prudent measures, preserved the Church from a deplorable schism. Hence the Arians, troubled by his presence, contrived to have him sent back to his own see, where he died in 368.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us accept all the events of life as proceeding from the hand of Providence, "which reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly."*—(*Wisd.* viii. 1.)



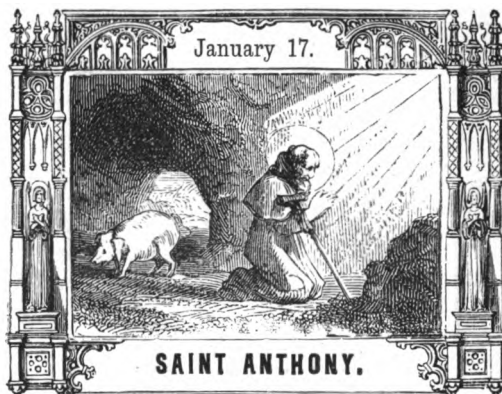
DETACHMENT FROM THE WORLD.—The emperor Dacian having directed a violent persecution against the Christian religion, in the year 250, an inhabitant of the lower Thebaid, named Paul, fearing lest he might be shaken in the faith by the sight of the torments, fled to the desert, in order to avoid being sought out, and also to practise there without hindrance the virtues recommended by the Gospel. A grotto, shaded by a palm-tree and cooled by a limpid brook, served as his abiding-place for the remainder of his life; the fruit of the palm-tree sufficing for his nourishment through many long years, and its leaves affording the needful covering to his limbs. When the sap and vigour of the tree was exhausted, God sent to him day by day a portion of bread, by the agency of a raven. Paul lived on in this retirement, given up to contemplation, prayer, and the labour of his hands, till he reached the age of 113. St. Anthony came to visit him there, and partook of the bread brought to him by his winged messenger, in ampler allowance, during the time of his stay; and, a few days after, consigned him to the earth in the grave hollowed out by two lions. Thus God careth for His saints!

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us put in practice the warning words of our Lord, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His justice; and all these things shall be added unto you."*—(*Luke xii. 31.*)



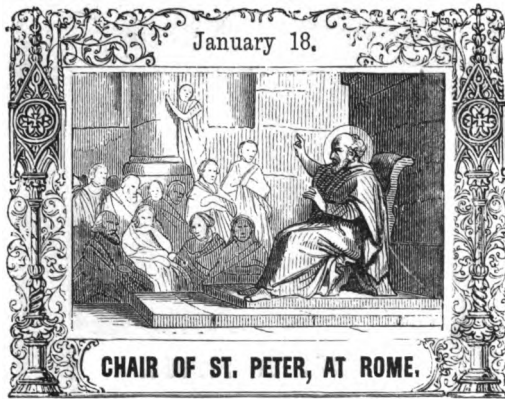
ZEAL FOR THE SALVATION OF ONE'S NEIGHBOUR.—Honoratus, contemning the empty honours of the world, although born of one of the noblest consular families of Gaul, devoted himself from his very youth to the service of God, and inspired one of his brothers, named Venantius, with the same praiseworthy sentiments. They proceeded, therefore, to Achaia in company, in order to seek out a solitary retreat far from their own country. Venantius dying soon after, Honoratus returned to Gaul; he retired to the isle of Lerins, which he peopled with pious solitaries. He bestowed the utmost solicitude on each, and carefully initiated them into the highest virtues. But his zeal did not confine itself within narrow bounds, it extended to wheresoever there was good to be effected. Hence it was that he sought to bring about the sanctification of Hilary, who was to succeed him in the episcopate; for the inhabitants of Arles, wonder-struck by the great sanctity of Honoratus, had claimed and obtained the favour of his being appointed their bishop. He held the see but two years, the Lord having called him away, to receive the crowning reward of his merits. St. Honoratus died in 429; St. Hilary, his disciple, wrote his life.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us labour for the salvation of our neighbour. The apostle St. James gives the assurance that "He who causeth a sinner to be converted from the error of his way, shall save his soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins."*—(Jas. v. 20.)



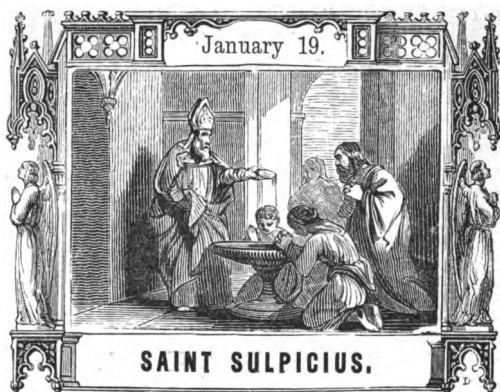
RENUNCIATION OF THE THINGS OF THE WORLD.—St. Anthony, the patriarch of cœnobites, was born at Coma, in Upper Egypt, in 251. Having become, through the death of his parents, while still young, the possessor of great wealth, he adopted to the very letter the Gospel injunction, "If thou wouldst be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and then coming, follow me." He sold everything that was at his disposal, distributed the proceeds among the poor, and withdrew to a solitary spot, there to pass the remainder of his days in silence, retirement, contemplation, prayer, the mortification of the senses, poverty, and manual labour. The demon directed against him the rudest assaults; but he overcame all obstacles by dint of courage, mortification, and prayer. Such great sanctity could not remain concealed; thousands of disciples assembled around him; he drew up rules for them, and thus established a manner of life which was destined to produce so many saints, and to leave so many noble examples to the Church. The saint died in his retreat in 356, at the age of 105.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*If we cannot carry renunciation to this degree, let us at least be mindful to possess, "as having nothing."*—(2 Cor. vi. 10.)



INVIOLEABLE ATTACHMENT TO THE CHURCH OF ROME.—Jesus Christ had established the apostle St. Peter as Head of the Church, and His representative upon earth. The apostle had already evangelized Judæa, Galilee, Samaria, and the neighbouring countries, when he deemed at last that the time had come to establish at Rome, the capital of the civilized world, the centre of the Gospel movement, and to make it also the capital of the Christian world. This purpose was carried out about the year 41 of the vulgar era. There it was that Peter thenceforth preached, writing thence his two epistles to the churches of Asia; and there it was that he suffered martyrdom on the 29th June, in the year 44; thus sealing with his blood both the faith which he had announced, and the establishment of a See ever to remain imperishable. As religion could not indeed die together with its first Head, the authority wherewith he had been invested should needs live on; and hence it has been transmitted to his successors; that which Peter was, the Pope still is and will continue to be—the Pastor of pastors, and common Father of the faithful.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us hold fast with unswerving fidelity to this Chair, and to the Vicar of Jesus Christ occupying it. Peter is the foundation of that structure, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail.*—(Matt. xvi. 18.)



APOSTOLIC ZEAL.—St. Sulpicius gave indications from early youth of the piety with which his soul was filled, and the zeal that he was afterwards to display for the conversion of sinners and infidels. Austregisilus, bishop of Bourges, authorized him to preach in his diocese; but the king, Clothaire II., secured his services, making him almoner of the serfs annexed to the vast demesnes of the crown. Soon after, however, having obtained through the agency of his prayers a miraculous cure, Clothaire had full proof of his eminent sanctity, and raised him to the see of Bourges, in the place of Austregisilus. Rarely has a more zealous prelate illustrated any see. Sulpicius administered baptism to all the Jews in his diocese, and was constantly journeying through the regions confided to his guardianship, in order to comfort the poor, reconcile those who were at variance, and uphold good morals and discipline. Prayer was his refuge and his strength; he devoted whole nights thereto, after having spent the day in apostolic labours. He died on the 17th January, 644.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*It is not only to priests and bishops that the charge has been given to watch over the salvation of men; each one, up to a certain measure, is responsible for the salvation of his neighbour; for it is written, "And he gave to every one commandment concerning his neighbour."—(Eccles. xvii. 12.)*



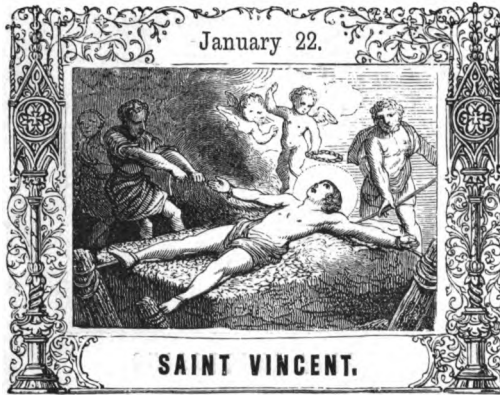
BETTER TO OBEY GOD THAN MAN.—Sebastian had obtained, by reason of his fidelity and courage, the highest offices in the Prætorian guard; the emperors Dioclesian and Maximian honouring him with their peculiar esteem. But the emperors were avowed enemies of Christianity, and Sebastian was a follower of Christ. He thought that he could, without failing in the duties of his charge, sustain by means of his earthly goods and his exhortations those among his brethren upon whom the fury of the persecution, ordered by the two tyrants, had fallen. He did this without ostentation, but also without aiming at concealment, and his mode of acting was soon denounced to Dioclesian. Sebastian avowed, without any attempt at subterfuge, that he was a Christian; that many pagans had owed their conversion to his solicitude; and that many martyrs had been encouraged by his exhortations. Dioclesian, incapable of entering into conduct so noble, treated him as a perjurer, and sentenced him to perish by the hands of the archers. Sebastian thus died, pierced with arrows, on the 20th January, 288.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The apostle Paul, after having pointed out in his Epistle to the Romans, the duty of obedience in regard to our superiors, himself prescribes the limits thereof, telling us that "all power comes from God;" and hence that obedience to God precedes the obedience due to men.—(Rom. xiii. 1.)*



CHASTITY HALLOWED BY MARTYRDOM.—Agnes was born at Rome, of Christian parents, towards the end of the third century, and dedicated herself to God from her very childhood. The illustrious rank of her family, and the admirable beauty with which she was endowed, caused her to be sought for in marriage, even from the age of thirteen, by Procopius, son of the governor of Rome. Agnes declared that she would never belong to any other spouse than Jesus Christ. She was forthwith consigned to a place of debauch, in order to bend her constancy, or, at the least, to inflict upon her a public dishonour. The place was, however, pervaded with a light divine, the splendour whereof overcame with dread all who approached the spot. Procopius himself was struck with death there, but Agnes restored him to his bewailing parents. This miracle, however, having caused her to be accused of magical arts, she was condemned to the stake; but the flames respected her, and separating on either side, consumed a number of the spectators. The governor of Rome, fearing a tumult, had her secretly put to death.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*If chastity be the virtue most honoured upon earth, it is still more precious in the eyes of God; for the apostle St. John teaches us that “the virgins follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.”—(Apoc. xiv. 4.)*



FIDELITY AMID EVERY TRIAL.—Under the reign of Dioclesian and Maximian, the prefect Dacian, having been sent into Spain with very severe orders against the Christians, Vincent, a deacon of the church of Saragossa, was led in chains, together with his bishop, Valerius, before Valentius. The latter was only condemned to exile; but Vincent, who had afforded proofs of a faith more ardent, was attached to the pillory, beaten with rods, torn with iron hooks, and, to crown all, stretched over burning coals. Meanwhile the tyrant, despairing of conquering him, had his wounds tended, lavished every care upon him, and surrounded him with every delicacy that might allure, in the hope of softening, by the enticements of pleasure, the hero who, while under torture, seemed immovable. Delusive hope! Vincent did not in any measure give way, but expired shortly after, in consequence of his sufferings, in the year 323, at the age of twenty-three. King Childebert brought his relics to France, as a glorious trophy.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Such a one bears up against sorrow and evil fortune who would let himself be unnerved and borne down by prosperity; it is with the world as with wine, of which the Wise Man hath said, "It goeth in pleasantly, but in the end it will spread abroad like poison."*—(Prov. xxiii. 31.)



ONE'S LIFE SHOULD BE CONFORMABLE WITH ONE'S FAITH.—
 A Persian, named Magunda, of illustrious birth, was serving in the army of Chosroes when this prince took possession of the town of Jerusalem. This event having afforded Magunda an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the Christian religion, he quitted the army forthwith, joined the Christians, and received the sacrament of baptism, taking the name of Anastasius. After having passed seven years in the monastery at Jerusalem, he thought himself bound to carry to his countrymen the light of the gospel, even at the risk of dying the victim of his zeal. This actually came to pass, for he was seized and taken before the emperor, who, being unable to induce him to apostatize, sentenced him to be strangled. His head having been afterwards struck from the body, the precious relic was brought to Constantinople, thence to Palestine, and finally to Rome, where it actually remains. The martyrdom occurred in the year 628.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*How many Christians labour under the deplorable error that faith without works is sufficient for salvation; or who take but small pains to shape their works according to their belief! And yet their very faith condemns them. "Thou believest," says the apostle St. James, "thou dost well; the devils also believe and tremble."*—(Jas. ii. 19.)



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.—Timotheus, the child of a father who was attached to the superstitions of paganism, had the happiness to possess a mother who was a devout Jewess, named Eunice; whose mother again, Loyda, was in like manner a no less pious follower of the same religion; and who both trained him to virtue from his early years. The apostle St. Paul having become acquainted with him while journeying through the towns of Asia Minor, grew attached to him, styling him ever his faithful and well-beloved son. Among the epistles which St. Paul addressed to him, the two which have been preserved breathe throughout the tenderest friendship. St. Paul conferred upon him episcopal ordination, and thought he could not act better by the Church of Ephesus than by intrusting it to the solicitude of a pastor so pious, wise, and zealous. Timothy perished as a martyr while bent on accomplishing a work of benevolence. Wishing to snatch from torments certain unfortunate victims whom the idolaters were about to sacrifice to their false gods, he was himself seized by them, dragged through the streets, and stoned to death, in the year 97.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*There is nothing more urgent than to form man to good from his very youth; the whole life very often depends upon the early principles instilled. It is written: "A young man according to his way, even when he is old, will not depart from it."*
—(Prov. xxii. 8.)



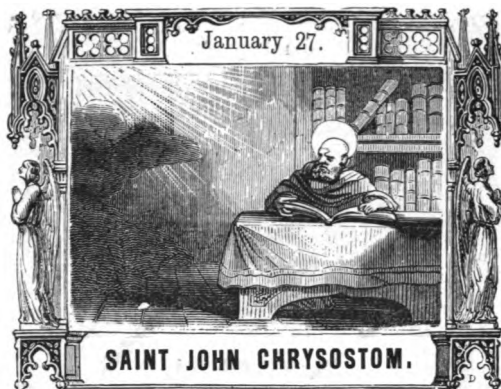
CORRESPONDENCE WITH GRACE.—Saul, accompanied by numerous satellites, was betaking himself to Damascus, there to receive orders to persecute the Christians. A sudden light encompassed him, blinding him and casting him to earth, and a voice from Heaven was heard, "Saul, Saul, wherefore persecutest thou me?" He, answering, said, "Who art thou, Lord?" "I," said the voice, "am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest." "Lord," answered Saul, "what wouldest thou that I do?" "Get thee to Damascus, to a disciple named Ananias, and there learn what thou hast to do." He was led thither by the hand, for Saul had become blind. Ananias, imposing hands upon him, restored him to sight; instructed him in the Christian religion, changing his name to that of Paul, which he was afterwards to render so illustrious. St. Paul forthwith began to preach the Christian religion; being ready to encounter a thousand deaths for the love of Him whom he had so much persecuted. He encountered death indeed a thousand times, and at length ended his life triumphantly.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*May we ever be able to bear a like testimony with the great Apostle.* "When God called me, I condescended not to flesh and blood."—(Gal. i. 17.)



THE HAPPINESS OF GODLINESS.—Nothing contributes so much to the happiness of man upon earth as the practice of godliness. This is one of those truths which the world does not believe or is not aware of, and yet it is not a veiled truth. Paula possessed great wealth and connections, and held in the world a high social position; but all this was insufficient to satisfy the longings of her soul. Trained to virtue by the learned St. Jerome, she resolved to expend her income in works of charity, and to quit the city of Rome, so as to pass the rest of her days in Palestine; there to meditate and pray and live in the very places which the Saviour had hallowed by His presence. Words would fail to express the overflow of tender piety, and, consequently, of blissful feeling, that pervaded this chosen soul, welling from the very fountain-head of true felicity. It would be difficult to relate all the good which she effected by means of her noble example and open-handed charities, which proved to her a source no less true of insuring happiness. Paula ended her saintly life in 404; leaving behind her, to continue her good works and example, a daughter, trained after her own heart, the ever-memorable Eustochia.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The apostle St. Paul says of godliness that “it is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”*—(1 Tim. iv. 8.)



CONSTANCY IN WELL-DOING.—John, surnamed Chrysostom, or “mouth of gold,” by reason of his admirable eloquence, was raised by unanimous acclaim to the patriarchal see of Constantinople, in 397. Had he wished to effect a compromise with the Eunomians and Montanists, whose doctrines were rife among his flock ; to shut his eyes to the disorders of the clergy of his diocese, whose manner of life was not sufficiently austere; to tolerate games and spectacles more pagan than even profane ; to leave undisturbed the mighty ones of the day, in the midst of their scandals, their pomp and pride ; to contrive an alliance with the Arians, who were all-powerful at court and throughout the empire ; to flatter the ambition and the excesses of the empress Eudoxia ; or merely to close his eyes to all abuses—he might have lived on at peace ; enjoyed the triumphs of his eloquence ; and, at the close of his life, have carried with him the approbation of all, with the single exception of that of his own conscience. He preferred, however, to obey the behests of duty ; and hence was calumniated and persecuted ; was twice torn from his episcopal charge and driven into exile, where he died, on the 14th September, 407 ; bequeathing to the Church the noble example of the highest courage.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The maxim “Do good, come what may,” is the most reliable of all rules of conduct. The Wise Man saith : “The strength of the upright is the way of the Lord.”—(Prov. x. 20.)*



“**HOLY MARY, MOTHER OF GOD, PRAY FOR US.**”—The impious Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, was spreading his false doctrine through the world. According to his teaching, Jesus Christ possessed a twofold personality. It was needful to distinguish, in God made man, the person divine and the person human; and Mary, although Mother of Christ, was not Mother of God, because she had only given birth to the person human. St. Cyril, patriarch of Alexandria, who was already renowned for the greatness of his intellect and his zeal for the faith, was charged by Pope Celestine I. to refute these baneful errors. He accomplished this to the great contentment of the universal Church; and the two councils, of Rome in 430, and of Ephesus in 431, confirmed his doctrine, which was withal that which the Church had ever taught. The town of Ephesus, on this occasion, gave free course to its abounding joy and holy enthusiasm. The fathers of the council were borne aloft in triumph, amid the exclamations of the inhabitants: “Blessed be ye who have restored to us our Mother.” Cyril died in peace at Alexandria, in 444.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*In all our troubles, temptations, and dangers, let us have often on our lips, and pronounce with confidence, faith, and love, the pious invocation of the Church: “Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us!”*



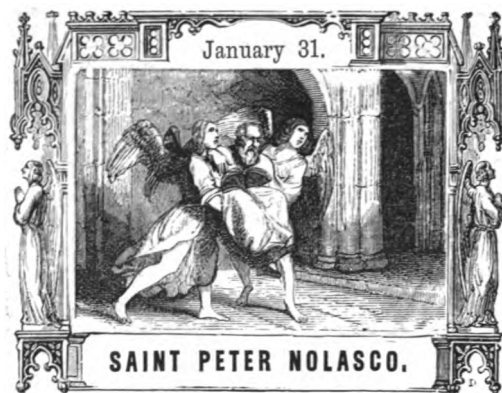
MEEKNESS AND PIETY.—Francis de Sales, more remarkable even by his piety, virtue, and eminent talents, than by the lustre of his high birth, devoted himself with indefatigable zeal, at-tempered by gentleness and amiability, to missionary labours in the Chablais, and was instrumental in leading back to the faith more than seventy-two thousand Calvinists in the short space of three years. He cherished a tender devotion towards the Blessed Virgin; was of very modest bearing, and of a kindliness that might be submitted to any test. Having been raised, notwithstanding his own opposition, to the episcopal see of Geneva, in 1602, he there displayed all the zeal and all the virtues of a pastor after God's own heart. The good he accomplished, the books of piety he wrote, the order of the Visitation which he founded, will keep his memory ever precious and dear to the heart of Christendom. Both calumny and hatred tracked his footsteps; but his meekness sufficed to disarm all hostility. St. Francis de Sales died at Lyons, on the 28th December, 1622. The people thenceforth invoked him as a saint. He was canonized in 1665, by Alexander VII.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*On this great model let us form ourselves to meekness, but still more on that of Jesus Christ, who has first afforded the example and furnished the precept: "Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart."*—(Matt. xi. 29.)



HUMILITY.—Batholda, born in England in a lowly station, was sold as a slave in early youth to a Frank gentleman, attached to the court of Clovis II. This prince having discovered the mine of nobility, virtue, and lofty sentiments dwelling in the soul of the young slave, did not shrink from wedding her. Batholda showed herself worthy of this high position; for she took no pride to herself from her elevation; she merely employed her power in accomplishing good, in appeasing discords, and comforting the distressed. Having been left a widow and invested with the regency, she was mindful of her former condition, and gave all the slaves in the kingdom their liberty. She founded the abbeys of Chelles and Corbie, retiring into the former as soon as her son, Clothaire III., was old enough to ascend the throne. Thenceforth, she was not distinguishable from the other religious, excepting in so far that her humility was greater, her obedience more eager, and her piety more akin to perfection. She ever cherished the most tender regard for the poor and the sick, and never thought her queenly hands other than honoured in serving them. She died towards the year 685.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Humility is the groundwork of the Christian life. The Holy Spirit has said by the mouth of the Wise Man: "Where humility is, there also is wisdom."*—(Prov. ix. 2.)



WORKS OF MERCY.—It may be said of charity, what the apostle St. James has said of faith: “Charity without good works is a vain thing;” for thus have the saints apprehended it: with them to love and to act was one and the same thing. It was a thought springing wholly out of charity which inspired Peter Nolasco to found the order of Mercy for the redemption of captives. A vast number of Christians captured by the infidels were sighing in chains far from their native land, subject to every indignity and exposed to the risk of losing the faith. “Let us ransom them,” exclaimed Peter Nolasco, a French gentleman attached to the court of the king of Aragon. Thirteen pious companions joined him, and the order was founded on the 10th of August, 1218. The number of unfortunate captives redeemed by them almost surpasses belief. St. Peter Nolasco was rewarded for so much zeal by encouragements from on high: the Blessed Virgin appeared to him, and angels bore him up in their hands. He died in 1280.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*We cannot do better than bear in mind the words of the apostle St. James: “If a brother or sister be naked and want daily food, and one of you say to them, Go in peace, be you warmed and filled, yet give them not those things that are necessary for the body, what shall it avail?”*—(Jas. ii. 15.)

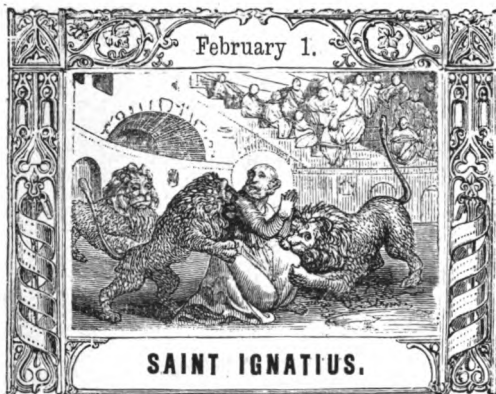
REBRUARY.



THE

PRESENTATION





HOLY LONGING FOR DEATH.—St. Ignatius, third bishop of Antioch, having been condemned during the reign of Trajan to be devoured by wild beasts, and ordered to be sent on to Rome for the purpose of undergoing his martyrdom in the public amphitheatre, transmitted a letter before his arrival, wherein he thus addressed the Christians: “When shall my eyes then behold the ravening beasts that are to devour me? May they be sated by my blood! I fear lest they should spare me, as they have so many other martyrs. I will excite their rage, that they may rend me. Now indeed do I begin to be the disciple of Jesus Christ, and I desire nothing beyond, save that I may join Him in the abode of bliss. Flames, crucifying, wild beasts, the crushing of my bones, the dislocation of my limbs, and the mangling of my body, are of little moment: let the demon exhaust upon me the utmost torments, provided that it be given me to enjoy the vision of Christ Jesus.” When he heard the lions roaring around him, he cried out, “I am the wheat of Christ, that is to be ground under the tooth of the beasts.” St. Ignatius suffered martyrdom in the year 107.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*If it be permitted to long for death, the right surely pertains to the soul of the just man, who knows that Heaven is his home. St. Paul said to the Philippians: “To abide still in the flesh is needful for you; but I am straitened between two, having a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.”—(Philip. i. 23.)*



LOVE OF GOD AND YOUR NEIGHBOUR.—St. Brigid, patroness of the Irish, who esteemed her as a second Mary, was born in the year of our Lord 453, and from an early period of her life devoted herself to the service of God. The sanctity of this consecrated maiden has been justly celebrated by the Venerable Bede and other great writers, who described her as having been constantly occupied in holy contemplation or the active exercise of charitable works. She founded the far-famed monastery of Kildare, where she lived as abbess, and died in the year 523, after having glorified God for long years by the many virtues and miracles recorded in her history. With the example of this holy virgin before them, the Irish youth of both sexes made rapid progress in the acquisition of all those eminent characteristics which secured for them, through many ages, the designation of children of the Saints.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us always bear in mind that, no matter what our state of life may be, we can sanctify ourselves by communing with God, and contributing to our neighbour's edification. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and thy neighbour as thyself."*



PRAYER IN THE HOUSE OF GOD.—The Greeks term the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin the *Hypapante*, by reason of the *meeting* of the saintly old man Simeon and the prophetess Anna with Jesus and Mary in the Temple. This blessed coming-together was no mere chance-work; it was the divine spirit of prophecy that led thither the two former, to one of whom, indeed, it had even been promised that he should not die until his eyes had beheld the Saviour of mankind. Jesus wished to be taken to the Temple, and *ransomed* according to the law, before He Himself *ransomed* the world. Mary, although pure, went there in order to purify herself from the legal stain attaching to maternity, and made for her Son the offering presented by the poor—namely, two turtle doves, the emblem of innocence. How many lessons are here set forth! Let us at least gather profit from one. It is in the Temple that the Lord is to be met with, and there it is that we should earnestly apply for His graces. There He dwells in very presence, and is ever ready to accord favours to His worshippers.

MORAL REFLECTION.—After Solomon had dedicated the Temple of Jerusalem, God appeared to him and said: “My eyes shall be open, and my ears attentive to the prayer of him that shall pray in this place.”—(2 Paral. vii. 15.)



GRACE MORE POWERFUL THAN NATURE.—St. Blaize was bishop of Sebaste, in Armenia. During the course of his episcopate he had exhibited great zeal for the purity of the Faith and the sanctification of his flock. It is asserted, however, that he took to flight during the persecution of Dioclesian, and remained concealed in a cavern situate in the midst of a forest, where he was discovered by hunters. But evidence is wholly wanting to bear out the assertion. However this may be, nature, as it must be owned, has its weaknesses; nor is it given to any one to exceed the measure of his strength; and flight itself is oftentimes the mark of prudence. At all events, if the bishop of Sebaste faltered on one occasion, God did not judge him too rigorously, seeing that He endowed him with the gift of working miracles. The sick recurred to him with an entire confidence; and, during the subsequent persecution of Licinius, he repaired any former weakness by displaying a courage unequalled. He was cruelly racked with hooks of iron and finally beheaded, in the year 316.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*There is no sacrifice which, by the aid of grace, human nature is not capable of accomplishing. When St. Paul complained to God of the violence of the temptation, God answered: "My grace is sufficient for thee, for power is made perfect in infirmity."*—(2 Cor. xiii. 9.)



THE TRIUMPH OF PRAYER.—Andrew, belonging to the illustrious family of the Corsini of Florence, was born in the year 1302. He spent his youth in the wildest excesses, but at length, touched by the entreaties and tears of his pious mother, who never ceased praying for his conversion, he secretly betook himself to the church of the Carmelites, and there prostrating himself before one of the altars, made an offering of himself to the Mother of God. He thereupon conceived the purpose and took the resolution of joining the religious. He speedily became, by his piety and austerities, an example of edification to the whole community. Having been chosen bishop of Fiesole, he did not in any degree modify his manner of living, save by adding to the bodily chastisements he inflicted on himself austerities still more harsh, and accompanied by more frequent and prolonged prayer. Among his flock he exercised, so to speak, a ministry of conciliation and peace. So high an esteem for his sanctity had he awakened, that one word from his lips sufficed to win over all hearts and to appease all discord. He died at Fiesole on the 6th January, 1373.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Nothing is beyond the power of prayer, above all when its object is to procure the conversion of sinners, especially when uttered by a mother's lips. Jesus Christ has said: "Whatsoever you ask, praying, believe that you shall receive, and it shall come unto you."*—(Mark xi. 24.)



UNYIELDING CONSTANCY.—To the advantages of an illustrious birth, Agatha united the rich dower of great beauty. Quintin, the pagan governor of the town of Catania, wished to marry her; but the youthful virgin had given herself to Jesus Christ. Unable to alter her resolution, Quintin availed himself of the pretext of her religious belief to deliver her up to the executioners. He caused her to be scourged, tortured, and torn with hooks of iron. Her breasts were lacerated with pincers, her sides scorched with burning blades of metal, and as she outlived all these atrocities, she was afterwards thrown into a dungeon. The apostle St. Peter appeared to her and healed her wounds. Quintin had her brought before him a second time, and, finding her still inflexible, gave orders that she should be dragged over burning coals and then over potsherds. At the moment of her torture an earthquake hurled down several buildings, the people broke into open revolt, and the governor, struck with terror, fled from the town. Agatha expired in prison on the following night, in the year 251 of the Christian era.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Little would it avail to begin in a saintly manner, if one were afterwards to desist. The apostle St. Barnabas urged nothing so strongly upon Christians as "With purpose of heart to continue in the Lord."*—(Acts xi. 23.)



EVANGELICAL MEEKNESS.—St. Wast had the glory of leading, by means of his devout exhortations, King Clovis to the saving waters of baptism. He accompanied the haughty prince while on his way to Rheims to join St. Remigius. Wast at that time was practising the hermetical life in a solitary spot near Toul. Having afterwards been raised to the see of Arras, he converted a multitude of unbelievers, and erected in different parts of his diocese a great number of new churches. His gentleness, affability, and modesty won all hearts. The poor regarded him as their father, and never entreated him in vain; the rich looked upon him as their friend, as one who held their persons in esteem, and did not condemn the legitimate enjoyment of their worldly possessions; the unbelievers regarded him as a very oracle, and the Christians as a saint. After having exercised for forty years this ministry of charity, conciliation, and apostolic labours, frequently illustrated by miracles, he died on the 6th February, 540.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*It is but a little matter to convince the mind, if the heart be not won over; to demonstrate the truths of religion does not suffice—it is of more account to cause it to be loved. Let us adopt, then, as our guiding-line of conduct the counsel of St. Paul: "To become all things to all men, to gain all to Christ."*—(1 Cor. ix. 22.)



THE HOUR OF GRACE.—St. Romuald, born at Ravenna about the year 956, and brought up by parents who were Christians but in name, led a disorderly and worldly life during his youth. Deeply impressed by the fatal result of a duel, wherein he had acted as second, and in which his own father killed a relative, he betook himself to a neighbouring monastery to seek there some rest, and allow his emotion to calm down. He there gave himself up to meditation, sorrowing, and praying; he resolved to prolong his stay there and make a “Retreat.” His salvation became more assured, and he assumed the monastic garb. He even ended by gaining over his father to adopt a like resolution, although he had erewhile, on receiving intelligence of his son’s determination, given way to an excess of wrath. After a seven years’ sojourn in the monastery, Romuald, driven forth by unjust persecution, withdrew, and proceeded to Camaldoli, there to found a new order, known as the monks of Camaldoli, the houses of which observance multiplied greatly even during the lifetime of the founder. Romuald died about the year 1027.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The moment of grace should be so much the more prized, because, ordinarily speaking, it does not come anew: hence Divine Wisdom hath said: “Defer not from day to day to be converted to the Lord, for mercy and wrath quickly come from Him, and His wrath visiteth sinners.”—(Eccles. v. 8.)*



WORKS OF MERCY.—John de Matha, born in Provence, towards the middle of the twelfth century, of devout parents, and carefully trained in piety, dedicated himself to God from his youth, and devoted himself at the same time to practices of Christian charity. During the course of his studies at Aix, and, subsequently, while at Paris, he loved to set apart certain days in the week, for the purpose of frequenting the houses of refuge and the hospitals, and ministering to the poor and the sick. When he was ordained priest, after having completed his course of theology, he conceived, on the day of his first mass, the project of founding a new order, devoted to the ransoming of captives. A number of Christians who had been captured by pirates were then kept languishing in chains by the Mussulmans in Africa and Spain, incessantly exposed to outrageous treatment, and to the loss of their faith. The new order was known as the “Trinitarians.” John de Matha himself accomplished the first expedition for the redemption of the captives, and finally succumbed under the weight of his labours towards the year 1213.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Works of mercy have been repeatedly and earnestly urged upon us by our Saviour. Let us bear in mind these words of His own divine lips: “The good ye did to one of these my least brethren, ye have done even unto me.”—(Matt. xxv. 40.)*



SACRIFICE AND ITS REWARDS.— Sotheria contemned all worldly advantages, in order to devote herself wholly to Jesus Christ. Born of a consular family, and hence fully justified in aspiring to the highest position, she trampled under foot honours, riches, personal attraction, nay, life itself, in order to become a Christian. When dragged before the judges, who sought to compel her to burn incense before the idols, she displayed as much firmness in refusing as they showed blindness in urging her. The most alluring promises failed to shake her. Blows and buffetings bruised her tender limbs without causing her constancy to waver. In vain did the judges apply every kind of torture; they were the first to yield, and condemned her to be decapitated. She achieved her glorious martyrdom at Rome, in the year 304 of the Christian era, and thus preserved for Jesus Christ, her long-chosen spouse, a beauty without stain and a soul all purity. Her persecutors drew down on their heads the hatred of the world at large, whereas she enjoyed the reverence of man and bliss unending in the heavenly kingdom.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*No sacrifice should seem to us too great where God is concerned.* “Lose not, therefore, your confidence, which hath an exceeding great reward,” says the apostle St. Paul, when exhorting the faithful to encounter martyrdom.—(Heb. x. 35.)



ENLIGHTENED PIETY.—Piety itself requires wise direction, for the angel of darkness sometimes transforms himself into an angel of light, in order the better to drive astray those who keep not upon their guard. It is written: “Woe to him that is alone, for if he happen to fall there is none to raise him up.” St. Scholastica, the sister of St. Benedict, had been trained to piety from her youth by the example and teachings of this enlightened master. She did not for the remainder of her life cease consulting him as her guide. When St. Benedict had founded the monastery of Monte Cassino, Scholastica took up her abode close by, and they agreed to visit each other in a dwelling not far distant, whither Benedict repaired to converse with and instruct her. At their last interview, Scholastica, divinely warned of her approaching death, retained her brother beyond the usual time; a violent storm, vouchsafed, as it is believed, through her earnest prayers to Heaven, preventing the holy monk from withdrawing as soon as he had intended. Three days afterwards, Benedict beheld his sister’s soul ascending to Heaven under the form of a white dove. Scholastica died on the 10th February, 543.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*We read in the Book of Proverbs:* “A wise man shall hear, and shall be wiser still; he shall understand the words of the wise and their mysterious sayings.”—(*Prov. i. 5.*)



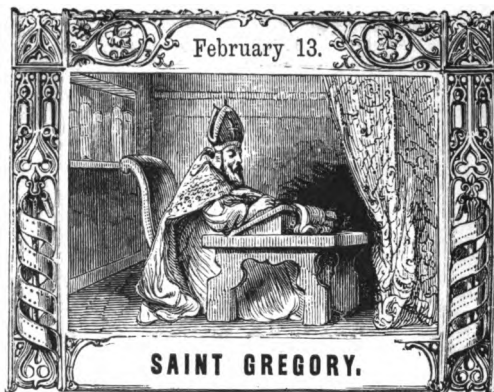
THE VIRTUE OF ALMSGIVING.—St. Severinus, abbot of the monastery of St. Maurice, in the Valais, enjoyed a great reputation for sanctity, which was not only borne out by the miraculous cures which he worked in favour of the sick, but also by his eminent charity towards the poor and the unfortunate. Clovis, the first king of France, having heard him spoken of, sent for him in order to obtain through his intervention the cure of an obstinate fever from which the physicians were unable to release him. On his way to the court Severinus worked many a miracle, and this happy presage was fully borne out with regard to the king himself; for so soon as the abbot of St. Maurice had prayed to Heaven and placed upon him the end of his robe, he was healed. Clovis, out of gratitude, allowed Severinus to draw from his treasury as much as he required for the poor, and to set at liberty whatever prisoners he might deem fit. The holy abbot largely availed himself of such a concession. He died, while on his way back to his monastery, in 507.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*God loads with His favour those who delight in exercising mercy.* “According to thy ability be merciful: if thou have much, give abundantly; if thou have little, take care even so to bestow willingly a little.”—(*Tob. iv. 8.*)



INTREPID FAITH.—While many Christians were withdrawing themselves by flight from the persecution that was raging, without mentioning those whom the fears of torture led to apostatise, Eulalia, a young maiden of Barcelona, went of her own accord to give herself up to Dacian, who had been charged by the Emperor Dioclesian to track out the Christians and consign them to death. Dacian, struck by her intrepidity, and angered by the reproaches which she addressed to him touching his cruelty, caused her to be more atrociously tortured. She was scourged, had her limbs racked and dislocated, and burning torches applied to her sides. Many miracles were, however, performed while her torture was being carried out; for the fire which the executioners were applying was first extinguished, and subsequently turned against themselves while leaving the young virgin unharmed. After fresh attempts they at length succeeded in setting her hair on fire, and she perished amid the flames; her soul was seen ascending to Heaven under the form of a dove. Her body having been cast to the beasts to be devoured, was encompassed by a cloud which safe-guarded it, and allowed the Christians to bear it away.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us ponder these words of our Saviour:* “Fear ye not them that kill the body: but rather fear Him that can destroy both body and soul.”—(*Matt. x. 28.*)



TRUE AND FALSE ZEAL.—The Iconoclasts had declared bitter war against images; breaking the holy crosses and the statues of the Blessed Virgin and the saints, and tearing down the pictures representing the mysteries of religion, under pretence of a holy zeal for the glory of God, who has forbidden idolatry, and even, under the old Law, the making of any image or graven thing. The East was overrun by such zealots, who were upheld by the sovereign occupying the imperial throne of Constantinople. The Latin Church was in dismay, and the piety of the faithful alarmed lest the objects dear to their veneration might be lost. Pope Gregory II., whose zeal could not be questioned, since he had already done much for the propagation of the faith, assembled a council in 726, wherein the Iconoclasts were condemned. The Emperor, Leo the Isaurian, became enraged, and indulged in the most terrible threats; but the holy Pontiff did not allow himself to be intimidated: he upheld with calmness, moderation, and firmness the decrees of the Council. Gregory II. died in 731.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us be on our guard against that intemperate zeal which reveals itself in violence and excess; it is this which the apostle St. James designates "bitter zeal; for this is not wisdom descending from above, but devilish."*—(Jas. iii. 14.)



HUMAN RESPECT.—St. Valentine, belonging to one of the most noble families in Rome, lived in the reign of Claudius II.; he was a priest, and charged in an especial manner with assisting the confessors and martyrs. Such functions drew upon him the attention of the persecutors; the emperor desired to see him, and nearly allowed himself to be gained over by his gentle and persuasive eloquence; but considerations of state kept him still in the errors of paganism, despite his own convictions. It was on the like ground, and against his own conscience, that he surrendered him to the tribunal. The holy martyr, on being led before an officer of the prætorium named Asterius, miraculously restored the sight of his daughter, who had been for two years blind, and by this miracle converted all the household of the judge, consisting of more than forty persons. The emperor, on learning this, sought some means of saving him whom he recognized as a saint and as being wholly innocent; but the fear of a tumult among the people restrained him, and, as in the case of Pilate, he consigned the just man to execution. St. Valentine was taken outside Rome and beheaded, in the year 270.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*In the cause of justice and truth, prudence should not be held in account; otherwise prudence is merely human respect. "The wisdom of the flesh is death."*—(Rom. viii. 6.)



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.—St. Faustinus and St. Jovitus were brothers and natives of Brescia, in Lombardy. Belonging to a Christian family, they were brought up carefully in piety and holy fervour. So as to serve religion more effectually, they entered into holy orders, or rather they were admitted to them as a reward for their zeal and as a token of confidence on the part of the faithful; for at that period it was so signal an honour to be admitted into the higher orders of the hierarchy, that they were made the envied prize of the most devoted acts and of public confession of the faith. St. Faustinus was ordained priest; St. Jovitus did not advance beyond the rank of deacon. Once invested with this eminent dignity, they became all the more zealous to console their persecuted brethren and afford aid to the martyrs. Having been themselves denounced, they were not failing in that courage with which they had inspired others, and were consigned to the wild beasts. It is related that the bears and the lions refrained from devouring them, that they had their bones broken, and were afterwards decapitated at Brescia, in the year 122.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*How many saints have owed their salvation to their early education! In the Book of Proverbs it is said: "Withhold not correction from a child; thou shalt beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from hell."*—(Prov. xxiii. 13.)



CHRISTIAN FRATERNITY.—Onesimus, the bondman of a citizen of Colossus named Philemon, who had been converted to the faith by St. Paul, fled from the house of his master and went to join the apostle at Rome, where he had the happiness to receive baptism. Paul sent him back to Philemon, no longer as a slave, but in the character of a brother. Nothing is more touching than the letter which Paul wrote to him on this occasion, and charged Onesimus himself to deliver it with his own hand. The new convert attached himself faithfully and permanently to him who had procured for him the double benefit of freedom and the light of faith. St. Paul admitted him to the honours of the gospel ministry, and intrusted him with the mission of bearing, in company with St. Tychicus, an epistle to the Colossians; he further conferred on him the episcopal dignity, and made him the successor of St. Timothy in the see of Ephesus. St. Onesimus was loaded with chains, and during the course of Domitian's persecution, was forwarded to Rome and there stoned to death, in the year 95.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Amongst the children of grace no one should be despised for the station he holds.* "There is neither bond nor free," says the Apostle; "for you are all one in Christ Jesus."—(*Gal. iii. 28.*)



JUST-DEALING PERSECUTED.—St. Flavian, elected archbishop of Constantinople in 407, met with a determined enemy in Chrysapius, the chamberlain of the Emperor Theodosius the Younger, and a relative of the heresiarch Eutychius, whom he favoured with all his might. Had Flavian sent rich presents to the emperor, as Chrysapius desired, he would have been accused of simony and deposed; but as he preferred keeping the patrimony of the Church for the benefit of the poor, he did not offer any presents, and was hence accused of having outraged the emperor, and was deposed in consequence. He might perchance have regained the goodwill of Chrysapius if he had favoured heresy; but Flavian no more knew how to hold out a flag of truce to his conscience, than to bend before persecution. He appealed to the head of the Church against the unjust sentence pronounced against him: this was the signal for his destruction, for his enemies rushed brutally upon him and maltreated him to such a degree that he died of his wounds shortly after his arrival at Ephesus, whither he had been sent in exile.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Persecution is oftentimes the portion of the just; but no word of complaint should be uttered, since Heaven is purchased at this price. Jesus Christ has said: "Blessed are those that suffer persecution for justice sake; for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."*—(Matt. v. 10.)



COURAGE IN OLD AGE.—The writer of the Book of Ecclesiastes says: “Three things my soul hateth: a poor man that is proud, a rich man that is a liar, an old man that is a fool and doting.” In the ancient covenant, in the time of the persecution of Antiochus, the old man Eleazar gave to the youth of his day a splendid example of holy courage, by encountering death rather than renounce, or even seem to waver in, his belief. Under the new law, Simeon, the son of Cleophas, related to Jesus according to the flesh, and successor of St. James the Less in the see of Jerusalem, has afforded a like example. After having governed this church for a long time, in the midst of perils and obstacles of every kind, he was denounced to the persecutors, driven from tribunal to tribunal, and dragged from one torture to another. He was finally condemned to die the death of Jesus Christ; in other words, to be crucified. Such an announcement seemed to quicken him with joy and renew his courage, although he had then reached the age of 120.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Venerable old age is not that of a long time,” says the *Book of Wisdom*, “nor counted by the number of years; but the understanding of a man is grey hairs, and a spotless life is old age.”—(*Wisd.* iv. 8.)

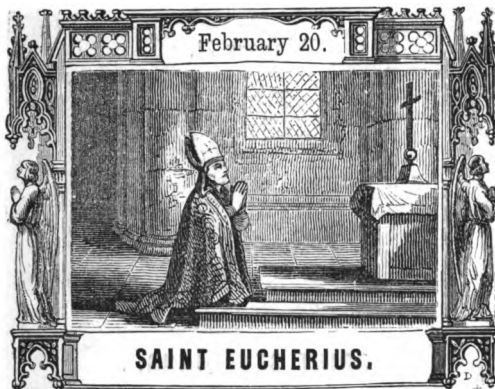
February 19.



SAINT BARBATUS.

EVIDENCES OF SANCTITY.—Barbatus had shown from childhood that gravity, piety, love of holy books, and inclination for study which seemed to call him to the clerical state. The eloquence with which he was gifted soon attracted the attention of the bishop of Benevento, and this prelate confided to him an important parochial charge in the vicinity of the cathedral town. But the missionary labours of the young priest were wholly fruitless; he found only hardened hearts which lent him no hearing, or calumniators who gave a false meaning to his words, and put his intentions at naught. Pursued by hatred and insult, Barbatus withdrew to Benevento, where ample justice was rendered to his merits; the inhabitants even chose him as their bishop, and he long governed that see with admirable piety and wisdom. To him pertained the glory of converting to the faith the Lombard nation, and of contracting the most friendly relations with Pertharitus, their ruler. St. Barbatus died, full of days and good works, in 682.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Adversity should be regarded as the test of sanctity. The angel said to Tobias: "And because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee."*—(Tobias xii. 13.)



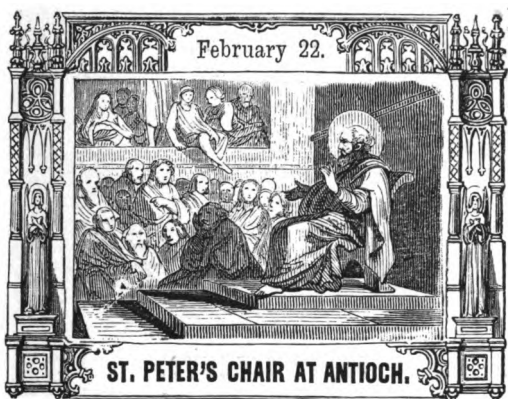
RETIREMENT.—God has oftentimes selected from the retirement and silence of the cloister the eminent men whom He would place in the Church as a shining light. In retirement it is that the soul collects and concentrates its strength; there it gets attempered, like true steel in the water. Eucharius, of an illustrious family of Orleans, and nephew of Savarius, the bishop of that town, lived retired for some years in the abbey of Jumièges, which he was edifying by his virtues and never meant to quit, when the inhabitants of Orleans came to draw him, despite all opposition on his side, from his retreat, in order that he might replace his uncle. Their calculations were well founded, for they gained a pastor according to God's own heart. Charles Martel, who was fond of lavishing upon his warriors the property of the Church, found Eucharius wanting in compliance, for the bishop regarded it as the patrimony of the poor. He was driven into exile, and dragged from town to town by the satellites of Charles. The persecution lasted for six years, and Eucharius died, in 793, worn out with fatigue and suffering, though in nowise wroth nor failing in courage, after having borne the episcopal charge for twenty-two years.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Nothing softens the soul and weakens piety so much as frivolous indulgence. God has revealed what high store He sets by "Retirement," in these words: "I will lead her into solitude, and I will speak to her heart."*—(Osea ii. 14.)



ZEAL FOR TRUTH.—To love truth does not always suffice, nor is it enough simply to defend it when attacked in our presence. There are circumstances where it is needful to sacrifice oneself for its sake. To cause Truth to triumph is a great glory; but martyrdom in her behalf is a triumph greater still. The Council of Chalcedon, by condemning the errors of Eutychius, did not restore peace to the Church. A portion of the religious communities of Palestine remained attached to the heresy. A monk named Theodosius even drove the patriarch Juvenal from Jerusalem, usurped possession of the see, and persecuted the adherents to Catholic truth. The town was deluged with blood, and cases of assassination were rife. Severinus, bishop of Scytopolis, had the courage to stand forth in defence of the truth. He did not shrink from encountering, wholly unsupported, his redoubtable adversary, who was alike God's enemy. The generosity of his zeal, however, had no other issue than to secure for him the crown of martyrdom: the soldiery laid hands on him, dragged him out of the town, and put him to a violent death. This occurred in 453.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Never let us grow insensible to the excesses of error and falsehood, remembering that generous exhortation of Mathathias: "Every one that hath zeal for the law, and maintaineth the covenant, let him follow me."—(1 Machab. ii. 27.)*



THE HONOUR OF BEARING THE NAME OF "CHRISTIAN."—It was at Antioch, according to the Acts of the Apostles, that the disciples of Jesus Christ first received the name of Christians. It was worthy of a Church founded by the chief of the apostolic college to transmit such a glorious surname to the world at large. The remembrances that are bound up with the celebration of this festival are hallowing and glorious, recalling, as they do, the custom rife amongst Christians of celebrating the anniversary of their baptism, and also the observance among the different churches of recalling the anniversary of their foundation, not simply as a day of happy memory, but furthermore as a new consecration, and fresh engagement to remain worthy of their vocation. Now there is no "calling" more glorious or more holy than that of Christian. The designation implies "disciple of Christ," and means, consequently, His imitators and successors. This it was which upheld the martyrs in the midst of their torments, after having rendered them intrepid in presence of their judges. "I am a Christian!" Such was their ever-ready answer to all questions, insinuations, and threats.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*We are "Christians;" let our works then be in perfect correspondence with such a glorious title. "Be mindful of your vocation," said St. Paul to the faithful of Corinth.—(1 Cor. i. 26.)*



CHASTITY CROWNED BY MARTYRDOM.—Serenus, a Greek by birth, having quitted his own country in order to live in far-off retirement, purchased at Sirmium, in Pannonia, a garden which he cultivated by the labour of his hands, the produce whereof served to maintain him. He divided his time between prayer, labour, and meditation. To avoid the persecution, he took to flight; but God did not permit this virtuous servant to be deprived of the crown of martyrdom; for, after an interval of calm had allowed of his resuming his habitual occupation, a certain woman tried to lure him from virtue. Like another Joseph, he knew how to get the better of the temptation, and, as in the case of Joseph, the temptress, irritated by what she deemed to be an affront, laid her complaints before her husband, who was serving in the body-guards of the Emperor Maximian, pretending that she had been insulted grossly by Serenus. The latter justified his behaviour with such candour as to establish his innocence; but the very uprightness of such conduct caused him to be recognized as a Christian, and in that character he was sentenced to the block, in the year 307.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*What more glorious claim than to be recognized as a Christian by the purity of one's life! Chastity is a higher crown of glory, the Holy Scriptures praising Judith as much on account of her "chastity" as for her "courage."*—(Judith xv. 11.)



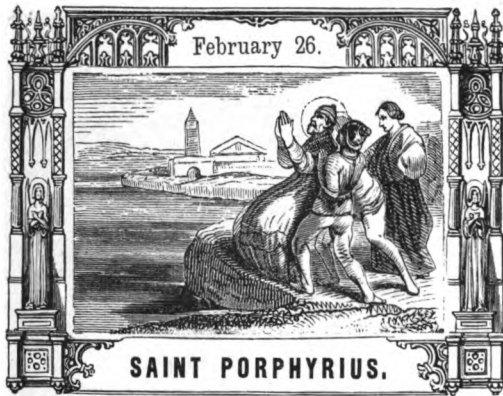
THE WILL OF GOD.—When the arch-traitor Judas had put an end to his days by self-inflicted death, and while the apostles were awaiting the Holy Ghost on the Day of Pentecost, they bethought themselves of replacing him who had accounted himself unworthy to live, to the end that the mysterious and hallowed number established by the Saviour might remain undiminished. But might they arrogate to themselves the right of making an apostle? They could not bring themselves to think so, and hence reserved to God this high prerogative. They selected, then, from among the disciples the two most worthy, and, after having besought the Lord to mark out His own choice, they drew lots: the lot fell upon Mathias, who thenceforth took the rank of apostle. St. Mathias is believed to have preached the faith in Palestine and Ethiopia. According to the unvarying traditions of the Church, his apostolic career was crowned by martyrdom. The Greek Church holds his festival on the 9th of August, and the Latin Church on the 24th of February.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*From this example let us learn to consult God in all our undertakings. Our own will may lead astray and deceive us; but God will give us this light if we utter, with a perfect heart, "Our Father, who art in Heaven.....may Thy will be done."*—(Matt. vi. 9.)



SIMPLICITY AND FRANKNESS.—St. Taraisius, elected patriarch of Constantinople towards the middle of the eighth century, succeeded in establishing among his clergy a simplicity of manners and life whereof he himself, brought up though he was in the lap of affluence, and accustomed to the pomp of worldly dignities, afforded the true example. Not content with banishing luxurious living, he shared in his own person the humblest functions of the sacred ministry. He restored the purity of the faith and the practices of the Church in all that regards the veneration paid to the images of saints, which had been so grievously changed, in consequence of the Iconoclast heresy. Such an undertaking, perseveringly carried out, would of itself have immortalized him; but this was one of the least difficulties which he had to encounter. The Emperor Constantine V. raised up a thousand obstacles in his path; and, after having repudiated his legitimate wife, the Empress Maria, in order to espouse a concubine, indulged in the most violent persecution of Taraisius. The latter, without ever failing in respect to the emperor, was not wanting in firmness towards a Christian thus forgetful of his duties. Taraisius died in 806, after a protracted and arduous ministry.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The highest praise which Scripture pronounces on the holy man Job, is comprised in these words:—"He was simple and upright."*—(Job i. 1.)



PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY PLACES.—St. Porphyrius, born at Thessalonica, of an opulent family, quitted his own land at the age of twenty-five, in order to retire to the monastery of Scete, in Egypt, where he passed the five succeeding years in pious practices and the discipline of a monastic life. He then went to visit the holy places in Palestine, and fixed his abode in a cavern on the borders of the Jordan, so as never more to separate himself from a land which our Lord had hallowed by His presence. His austerities weakened him to such a degree, that it was necessary to lend him a helping hand to enable him to walk; but they failed to slacken his earnestness in continuing his pious pilgrimages. He was supported to Jerusalem, where God miraculously cured him in a vision on the very mount of Calvary. The patriarchs, edified by his piety and great learning, made him bishop of Gaza, a town then filled with unbelievers. The ministry of the holy bishop was not barren, for, at the time of his death, which happened in 420, Gaza was almost populated by Christians.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The soul dilates and piety expands on contact with places especially sanctified: God there confers more abundant graces, as seeming to say, even as He did of the Temple of Jerusalem: "I have chosen this place to myself for a house of sacrifice."*—(2 Paral. vii. 12.)

February 27.



SAINT JULIAN.

PATIENCE UNDER OUTRAGE.—The edict of persecution published by the Emperor Decius, gave occasion to many lamentable acts of weakness on the part of the Christians of Alexandria. The faith of several wavered, and, in many instances, failed utterly; but there were, withal, many generous martyrs, whose courage consoled the Church. Among these latter was the venerable Julian, an ancient man, whose infirmities and age had deprived him of the use of his limbs. Two servants bore him in a litter into the presence of the judge, who caused him to be bound to a camel. In this manner he was borne through the town, scourged, covered with outrage by the soldiery charged to carry out his sentence, and, finally was cast alive into the flames. His unflinching constancy and courage made a salutary impression on the heart of one of the soldiers, who forthwith declared himself a Christian, and, together with one of the two servants who remained faithful to Julian and to his Divine Master, became a sharer in his martyrdom.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Great credit is assumed for labours accomplished in the service of one's country; wherefore should not Christians then glory in outrages encountered for the faith? Has not Jesus Christ said to His disciples: "Blessed are ye when they shall revile you, and persecute you, and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake; be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in Heaven."*—(Matt. v. 11.)



THE FURY OF HATRED.—Proterius having been elected patriarch of Alexandria, in 452, in the place of Dioscorus, who had been deposed by the Council of Chalcedon, and was a partisan of the arch-heretic Eutychius, great troubles prevailed in the city. The civil power succeeded in repressing them, without, however, being able to prevent a third patriarch, named Timotheus, from being consecrated and violently expelling Proterius from his see. The civil power once more intervened and exiled the intruder. Under this blow, the Eutychians, who were aware of the unbending firmness of Proterius, could no longer contain themselves: they pursued him furiously, on the Good Friday in the year 457, even to the baptistry of the church of St. Quirinus, there trampled him under foot and bound him with cords; thereupon, according as their rage was being glutted, they accumulated their blows and trailed him through the streets. They tore him limb from limb, burnt the mangled remains, and scattered the ashes to the wind. The bishops of Thrace bore a glorious testimony to his memory in a letter addressed by them to the Emperor Leo.

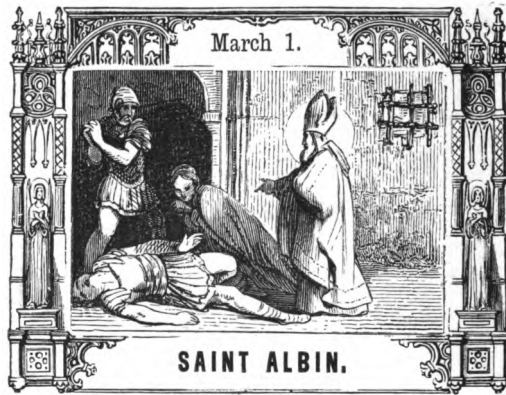
MORAL REFLECTION.—*The apostle depicts in other features the charity which should animate Christians: "It is patient, is kind. Charity believeth all things, rejoiceth not in iniquity, and thinketh no evil."*—(1 Cor. xiii. 4.)



ALMSGIVING AND HUMILITY.—Oswald, the nephew of Odo, archbishop of Canterbury, had taken the monastic habit in the abbey of St. Bennet, on the Loire. He was however recalled to his own country, to occupy in succession to St. Dunstan the see of Worcester, and subsequently to hold also that of York. He caused learning and piety to flourish anew in these two dioceses. He founded numerous monasteries, for he never lost his inclination for a retired life, and was wont to betake himself to some monastery to spend his happiest hours and seek relaxation from apostolic labours. As humble and charitable as he was pious, learned, and zealous, he admitted to his table every day twelve poor persons, serving them with his own hands, after having washed and kissed their feet. Feeling his death draw near, he withdrew amongst his beloved monks, and there expired while pronouncing the Doxology, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," on the 29th February, in the year 992, after having administered thirty-three years the episcopal charge.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Alms bestowed in a Christian spirit is a sure means of procuring salvation, for the Sovereign Judge will say to those on His right hand: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, for I was hungry, and you gave me to eat; thirsty, and you gave me to drink; a stranger, and you received me; was sick, and you visited me; in prison, and you came to me."*—(Matt. xxv. 34.)





CHRISTIAN HUMILITY.—Chosen souls only and hearts of generous temper know how to be truly humble, and to the humble alone does God accord great graces, and by their agency only does He accomplish great things. This twofold truth is brought into clear evidence by the whole life of St. Albin, bishop of Angers. Born of one of the noblest families of Brittany, he retired, while still young, into the monastery of Tirtillant, in the neighbourhood of Angers, reputed himself, while there, as the lowliest of his brethren, and the last of all. The religious elected him as their abbot, despite all opposition on his part. Twenty-five years after, he was in like manner elected against his will, since he looked upon himself as unworthy of the honour, to the bishopric of Angers by the unanimous acclaim of the people and clergy. His charity, modesty, humility, zeal, and firmness, ever tempered by an unvarying mildness, won all hearts in his favour. Hence he became the model of his clergy, and effected a great reform in the manner of life led by his diocesans. God favoured him with the gift of miracles, and he died a holy death in the year 549.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*With whatever virtues endowed, the man who considers himself attentively, will discover a sufficient depth of misery to afford cause for deep humility; but Jesus Christ says, "He that humbleth himself, shall be exalted."*—(Luke xiv. 11.)



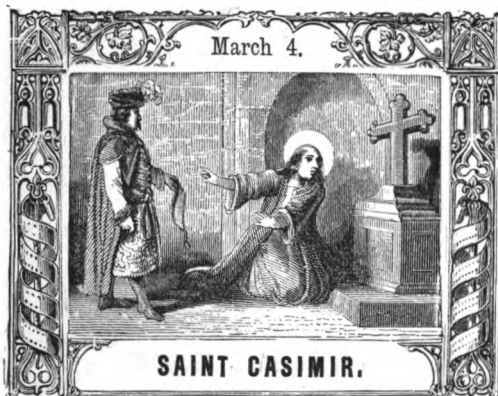
GOD'S HELPING HAND.—Prudence and firmness, instead of being simply earthly attributes, become lofty virtues when, fostered under the influence of prayer and confidence in God, they are applied to divine purposes. The pope St. Simplicius, after having been during the pontificate of St. Leo and St. Hilary, the ornament of the Church, by reason of his piety and learning, became its defender when, in succession to them, he ascended the papal chair, in 467. Christendom was exposed at that period to violence of every class and kind; the emperor Anthemius upheld the Macedonian heretics in the West; Odoacer, the master of Rome and of Italy, protected the Arians. Acacius, the patriarch of Constantinople, sought to usurp supremacy over the see of Alexandria! Peter “the Fuller” and Peter “the Stutterer” likewise usurped, the former the see of Antioch, and the latter that of Alexandria. Zeno, the emperor of the East, favoured schism, and the heretics had everywhere gained the upper hand. Simplicius despaired neither of the power of God nor of the triumph of justice; he propitiated God by his prayers, and helped forward the reign of justice by his own prudence and firmness. After twelve years of a laborious Pontificate, he left the Church at perfect peace, and died in 483.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“He that trusteth in God, shall fare never the worse,” *saieth the Wise Man in the Book of Ecclesiasticus.*—(Eccles. xxxii. 28.)



RENUNCIATION OF DIGNITIES.—The life of St. Cunegunda, wife of the emperor Henry II., furnishes an excellent example both of the good employment of worldly advantages and detachment therefrom. She had at her full disposal both riches and power; the riches she economized for the sake of the poor, and availed herself of her power to protect the feeble and the oppressed. She was instrumental in founding many bishoprics, churches, and monasteries. The unfortunate never appealed in vain to her pitying tenderness. At length, on the death of her husband, being desirous herself to lead that life of the humble and the poor which she held in so much honour, she convoked a general assembly of the prelates, presented herself in the rich ornaments and insignia of the imperial dignity, laid down at the foot of the Cross her wealth, insignia, and ornaments, received the veil of a religious, and withdrew to a convent, where she lived continuously for fifteen years in perfect humility, obedience, and constant labour. She died a saintly death in the year 1040.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Detachment of the mind, at least, is needful to those who cannot venture on an effectual renunciation.* “So likewise every one of you,” saith Jesus Christ, “that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be my disciple.”—(Luke xiv. 33.)



INNOCENCE.—St. Casimir, the third son of Casimir III., king of Poland, was born at Cracow in 1458. God had endowed him with all the gifts of mind and heart which render princes perfect, in conjunction with those which make them saints. The former do not cost much to develop; the latter cost much to preserve. The young prince understood this well from his early years; and hence his main purpose in the midst of the court and the vortex of affairs was to preserve intact the holy innocence of baptism; and, that he might succeed, he had recourse to prayer, to works of piety, and, most of all, to earnest devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Having been elected king of Hungary at the same time that his brother Ladislaus was chosen king of Bohemia, he did not get possession of the crown; but was the more readily reconciled to this as he had only accepted it with repugnance. He died when only twenty-five years old, and his tomb was honoured by miracles. His body having been exhumed a century later, was found incorrupt, which was accepted as a mark of the innocence that he had been enabled to preserve intact.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Jesus Christ, placing a little child in the midst of His disciples, as the emblem of innocence, said to them, "Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven."*—(Matt. xviii. 3.)



FAITH STRONGER THAN NATURE.—Perpetua and Felicitas, while still catechumens, were cast into chains at Carthage, during the persecution of the emperor Severus, in the year 203 or 205. They received baptism in prison, at the hands of their companions in captivity. Perpetua had still a child at the breast; but neither its tears, those of her family, nor those of her venerable father, could induce her to abjure her God, merely for the sake of saving her own life. Felicitas was taken with the pains of childbirth, and one of the keepers, mocking at her cries, asked her what she would do when she felt the teeth of the beasts of prey. "I shall utter no further moans," she replied, "for God will suffer for me." Shortly after, indeed, they both descended joyfully into the arena; a furious heifer there trampled them under foot and tossed them violently for a long time on her spreading horns, until the gladiators at last terminated their sufferings by the sword.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The thought of God sanctifies sufferings; the thought of offering them to Him alleviates them; and that of enduring them in God's cause renders them delectable. "It is not I," said St. Paul, in the midst of persecutions and labours, "but the grace of God that worketh with me."*—(1 Cor. xv. 10.)



CONTEMPT FOR INSULTS.— Great and holy undertakings oftentimes result in great disappointments; perseverance, however, aided by grace, ends by triumphing. St. Colletta, raised up by God to reform the order of St. Clara, affords a striking example of this truth. Born at Corbie in 1380, Colletta was initiated into the religious life in the third order of St. Francis, and into that of suffering in the solitude whither she retired to devote herself to the utmost rigours of mortification. Three years afterwards, furnished with full powers by Pope Benedict XIII., and encouraged by a heavenly vision, she entered the third order of St. Clara, which she was desirous of restoring to the austerity prevailing at its institution. She met with the greatest contradictions and persecutions; calumny fastened upon her name; she was treated as a hypocrite, or one mad, as possessed by the devil, as a very sorceress, and worse still. She endured both insults and calumny with gentleness. Many of her spiritual daughters seconded her zeal; she reformed many houses, and founded others, dying at Ghent in 1447.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The Saviour, with foresight, has warned us against such impediments, when addressing His apostles: "In patience possess your souls, for a hair of your head shall not perish."*—(Luke xxi. 19.)



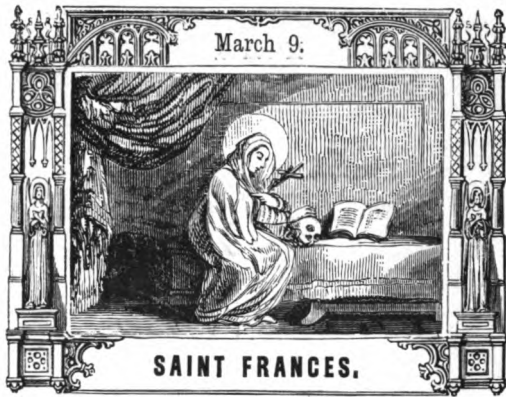
THE DESIGNS OF GOD AND THOSE OF MAN.—Thomas, of the illustrious family of the Counts of Acqui, in the kingdom of Naples, was from early youth consigned to the care of the religious of Monte Cassino, where his relatives hoped he might some day take the habit, so as to become eventually the abbot of that rich monastery. The young count there formed himself indeed to religious practices; but on his family deeming that he might, in the world, arrive at a high position, by reason of his talents and eminent qualities, they grew anxious to turn him aside from the life of a religious, and, with this end in view, availed themselves of all the means in their power, even those least reputable, to the extent of causing his virtue to be attacked by a woman of evil life. The simple consequence was that Thomas took to flight, snapped asunder the ties which had bound him to his family, and even gained over one of his sisters, who seemed the least inclined of all, to adopt the religious life, and entered himself an order truly poor; namely, that of the Dominicans. He there became, by reason of his virtues and learning, the ornament and light of the Church. His own age assigned to him the surname of “the Angelic Doctor;” posterity has confirmed the title, and the Christian world will ever rejoice at having possessed a St. Thomas Aquinas. He died in 1274.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Man proposes, but God disposes,” *the world is wont to say.* *The Wise Man on his part affirms,* “There is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel, against the Lord.” —(*Prov. xxi. 30.*)



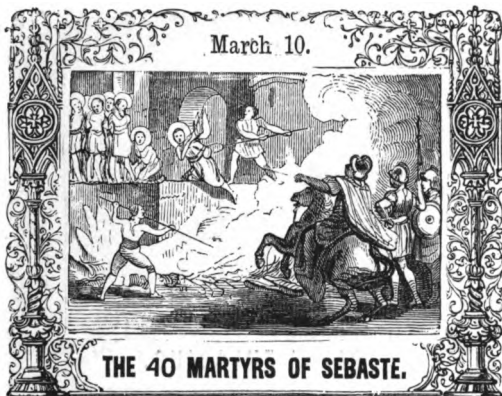
FRUITS OF PENANCE.—St. John of God was born in Portugal, in 1495, of poor parents. The early part of his youth was given up to dissipation and vagrant courses; he subsequently entered the military service, and abandoned himself to disorderly living. Having escaped from an imminent danger, however, through the protection of the Blessed Virgin, he entered into himself, and resolved to redeem by works of penance the past failings of his life. He first passed over into Africa, hoping, but in vain, to suffer martyrdom there. Having returned to Spain, he had the good fortune to address himself to Father Avila, who directed his zeal to the comforting of the sick. John of God associated with himself a few devoted companions, founded a hospital and eventually a religious order. Never has the world witnessed a charity more tender, painstaking, and untiring. On one occasion, he bore in his own arms all the sick through the flames of a great conflagration. Such was the origin of the "Order of Charity," which was destined to bring such honour to the Church and to render immense service to suffering humanity. The holy founder died in 1550.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Many men think over their failings and deplore them in bitterness of soul, but who ever dreams of redeeming them by works of mercy? And yet the Gospel says not merely "Do penance!" but adds, "Bring forth fruits worthy of penance."*—(Luke iii. 8.)



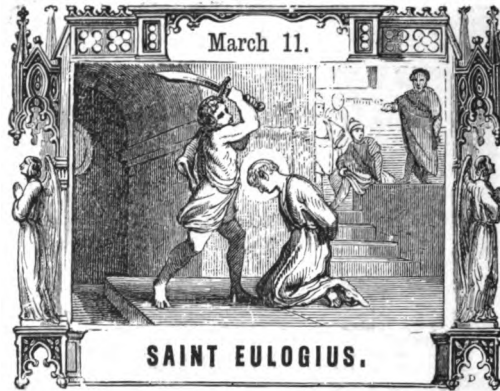
FLIGHT FROM THE WORLD.—To fly from the world, even while dwelling in the midst thereof, is of prime necessity to all who are desirous of being saved, seeing that Jesus Christ has launched against the world His anathemas. This is an art most difficult of attainment, inasmuch as the world ever claims its share of duty. St. Frances affords a striking example of its actual accomplishment. Born at Rome, in 1384, of a wealthy and noble family, she was married while very young to Lawrence de Pontians, who speedily became as fully charmed with her virtue as he had been by her personal attractions. She preferred simplicity of attire to rich ornaments, the cares of the household and her duties as a mother and a wife to entertainments and vain shows, and prayer and good works to worldly pleasures. Her behaviour, which showed neither harshness nor severity, served as an example to many great families, which became accordingly in many respects reformed. On the death of her husband, with whom she had lived for forty years, she retired to the congregation of the Oblates, which she had founded, and there made a holy end in 1440.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The necessity of separating in spirit from the world may more readily be conceived by recalling to mind those words of our Saviour, "Father, I pray not for the world, but for those whom Thou hast given me."*—(John xvii. 9.)



REWARD AND PUNISHMENT.—During the persecution of Licinius, in the year 320 of the Christian era, forty soldiers of Sebaste seceding from their comrades, who, in compliance with the emperor's orders, had gone to sacrifice to the idols, proclaimed themselves Christians. The torments by fire and sword being ineffectual to conquer their constancy, they were exposed, devoid of covering, upon a frozen pool, there to pass the night within sight of a tepid bath, kept ready for such as might apostatize. All remained firm, however; their keeper meanwhile, who was watching them, beheld angels hovering above them with thirty-nine crowns. While seeking to explain the reason of this number, one of the intended martyrs apostatized and rushed towards the bath, but on entering was struck with death. The keeper, converted by this miracle, went forward and took his place. As all outlived the sufferings of that cruel night, they were huddled into carts, and carried to the stake. Thus the victors received the crown, and the apostate found death and everlasting perdition, instead of the life he had promised himself.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Such an example is a confirmation of the words of the Gospel, which a Christian cannot have too much in mind: "He that preferreth his life, shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for my sake, shall find it."*—(Matt. x. 39.)



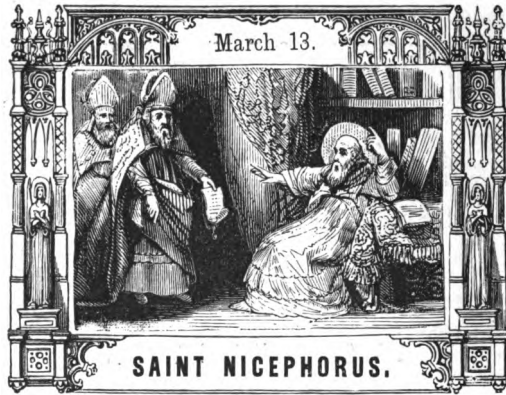
GOOD COUNSEL.—Eulogius, born of one of the first families of Cordova, was directing the ecclesiastical school of that town, when a violent persecution broke out against the Christian religion on the part of the Moors, who then governed Spain. Eulogius, having been thrown into prison with a large number of Christians, composed during his captivity an “Exhortation to Martyrdom,” which was of the greatest avail to the Church in strengthening the faith of the persecuted brethren. Having been restored to liberty on account of the distinguished rank of his family, he did not consult the promptings of human prudence, which would have urged him to surround himself henceforth with greater precautions; but, on the contrary, did not cease to inspire his co-religionists with a generous courage, exciting some to perseverance, and helping others to conquer the obstacles or surmount the dangers with which, out of a false compassion, their parents and friends surrounded them. He was at length remitted to prison, and merited, in his own behalf, that crown which he had been instrumental in procuring for so many others. St. Eulogius was beheaded in 859.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*No one should hide away the talent which he has received, nor put under a bushel the light intrusted to his safe-keeping.* “Having different gifts according to the grace that is given, let him teach, that can teach; let him exhort that exhorteth.”
—(Rom. xii. 6.)



GREATNESS AND HUMILITY.—Nothing befits true greatness so much as humility. The greatest of the popes the Church has possessed has furnished the world with both the proof and the example. St. Gregory, born at Rome towards the year 540, seemed destined to fill in the world the most elevated position, by reason of the high rank of his family and his own eminent talents; he preferred devoting himself, however, to the service of the Church, by adopting the religious life. Pope Pelagius II. drew him from his retirement, created him cardinal, and invested him with a difficult and important mission to the court of the East. Having been elected to succeed Pelagius, he took to flight, accounting himself unworthy of such high dignity; he was, however, soon compelled to assume it. He appeased the dissensions which rent the Church of the East, checked in Italy the career of the Lombards, completed the overthrow of the Donatists, hastened the downfall of Arianism, brought about the conversion of England, reformed the chant and liturgy of the Church, became in his own person the teacher of the people, and composed a great number of learned and pious works. And whereas other prelates of inferior rank were wont to assume pompous titles, he styled himself the “servant of the servants of God,” and regarded himself truly as such. He died in 604.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“I will make myself lowlier before the Lord,” said the wise King David, “and I will be little in my own eyes.”—(2 Kings vi. 22.)



INTEGRITY OF THE FAITH.—There are not in the Christian faith any articles which it is permissible to accept or reject according to one's own good pleasure; all are equally holy and equally true. Faith teaches that it is good to hold in reverence the images of the saints; and this article of belief, apparently so little important, has been upheld by martyrs. Nicephorus, elected patriarch of Constantinople in 806, despite his opposition, furnishes us with a striking example. The emperor Nicephorus, who had been instrumental in bringing about this election, was not mistaken in the estimate he had made of his former secretary. On the emperor Leo the Armenian succeeding to Nicephorus, he renewed the persecution in the matter of images, but found on the part of the patriarch an amount of resistance as unbending as it was determined. Unable to conquer him, he banished him to a monastery, where the saintly old man spent fourteen years, accounting himself happy to suffer this long disgrace for the sake of religion. He there died in 828, after having composed several works in defence of the faith. The Greeks celebrate his festival on the 2nd of June, and the Latin Church on the 13th of March.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*How shall we venture to cavil at the Faith, when St. Paul himself proclaimed that he had received the apostleship not for the control of, but for obedience to the faith?—(Rom. i. 5.)*



GOOD WORKS.—St. Matilda, queen of Germany, seemed to have borrowed from the royal authority only the power of doing good. Open-handed and munificent, after the manner of saints, she knew no other limit to her bounty to the poor than that of the revenues placed at her disposal by her husband Henry, surnamed “the Fowler.” She did not deem it unbecoming the dignity of the throne to go herself to visit the poor, nor unbecoming her royal hands to minister to the wounds of the sick. Abounding in gentleness and charity towards the servants of the palace, like a very mother in the midst of her family, she instructed some in the knowledge of the truths of religion, and aided others in the accomplishment of their duties. While bearing herself worthily and with majesty in the midst of the great, she showed herself ever benignant and gentle with the lowly, and pious and humble in the family circle. Having become a widow, her ungrateful sons despoiled her of everything. On her possessions being restored, she applied them as she had heretofore done. She died in 968, in a convent to which she had retired.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Therefore, whilst we have time,” says the great apostle, “let us work good to all men, but especially to those who are of the household of the faith.”—(*Gal. vi. 10.*)



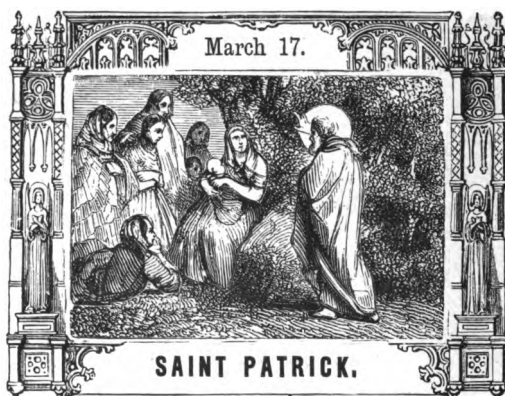
LOVE YOUR ENEMIES.—The evangelical precept the most difficult, perhaps, to observe, is that which prescribes to us to do good in return for evil and to love those that hate us. Our Saviour having given us, however, the example simultaneously with the precept, and vouchsafing to us the grace which renders the precept possible, there remains no excuse for our not accomplishing it. This admirable example did not fail to produce speedy fruits; for one of the Roman soldiers present at the time of His suffering—according to some the very one who cried out while he saw the Saviour expire, “Verily, this was the Son of God,” while others believe it was the guard who pierced His side with a lance, and on whom the name of Longinus, probably in mere ignorance of his right name, has been conferred—was converted, and began to announce the Gospel. On learning this, Pilate caused him to be arrested in Cappadocia. Now Longinus, knowing by revelation what the soldiers who were seeking him intended, received them into his house, acted towards them as one does with friends, and ultimately discovered to them who he was. They decapitated him without further ado.

MORAL REFLECTION.—Behold the divine precept, which calls for no commentary, “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute and calumniate you.”—(Matt. v. 44.)



THE CONVERSION OF SINNERS.—Abraham, the solitary, after having disposed of his vast property and distributed the proceeds to the poor, was living in a deep retreat near Edessa, in Mesopotamia, when the bishop of Edessa consecrated him as bishop, and invested him with the mission of converting the inhabitants of a neighbouring town, who were still pagans. Abraham undertook this out of a spirit of obedience, and, God aiding, succeeded in the undertaking, but not without vast efforts, and not without having been thrice on the eve of martyrdom. He then withdrew to his beloved solitude, but was obliged to leave it once again. A niece whom he tenderly loved had abandoned her home, and given herself up to evil courses. When, after two years' seeking and prayer, the pious solitary had at length discovered her abode, he assumed a disguise, and went to visit her. So soon as he made himself known she gave way, while pouring out her sorrow, and, of her own accord, imposed on herself rude austerities which were only to end with her life. St. Abraham died towards 370.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*It is the duty of every Christian to labour for the conversion of sinners, because all partake of the priesthood of Jesus Christ, says the apostle St. Peter: "To declare His virtues, who hath called us out of darkness into His marvellous light."*—(1 Peter ii. 9.)



THE VENGEANCE OF SAINTS.—Patrick, trained in a Christian manner in the bosom of a wealthy family in Britain, was captured in his youth by pirates and sold into slavery in Ireland. What he had to endure from the hunger, nakedness, and ill-treatment attaching to the condition of a slave, may be more easily conceived than described. Patrick, however, in the midst of a people then involved in the darkness of paganism, gave himself up to fervent prayer, and his supplications were heard, for he regained his liberty, which had been the main object of his vows. He subsequently passed three years in France, in the monastery of Marmoutiers, in order to qualify himself for a purpose he had greatly at heart. When fully prepared, he proceeded to Italy to cast himself at the feet of the Sovereign Pontiff, and crave at his hands the favour of being invested with the high privilege of missionary to Ireland. The Pope consented with great joy, consecrated him bishop, and sent him on his journey, accompanied by other evangelical labourers. After thirty years of toil, zeal, and devotion, favoured by the benediction of Heaven, St. Patrick converted almost the whole of Ireland to the Christian faith. He died about the year 364.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Leave vengeance to the Lord,” says the great apostle; “be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil by good.”—(*Rom. xii. 21.*)



THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PROPHECIES.—St. Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, is one of the greatest prelates that the Church has ever possessed; pious and learned in all sciences human and divine; inflexible in the doctrines of faith, and, for that reason, twice sent into exile; benevolent and charitable beyond measure, abounding with a zeal truly apostolic,—such, in brief, was this holy bishop. His episcopate was marked by two great events,—first, the appearance of a luminous cross above Mount Calvary, which was visible to the whole of Judæa and Samaria; and next, the accomplishment of the prophecy of Jesus Christ relative to the temple of Jerusalem. Julian the Apostate, having wished to rebuild it in order to set the Gospel at naught, the Jews were all jubilant and the Christians borne down with dread; but Cyril reassured them, and scoffed at the enterprise. In fact, on the last stone being torn from the foundations, flames burst forth, which thrice consumed the separate relays of workmen. The apostate having died, the undertaking was suspended, and since then never has there been a stone upon a stone. St. Cyril died in 386.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*If our faith grow timid, those words of the Divine Master should suffice to calm our disquietude, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not fail."*—(Matt. xxiv. 35.)



FORBEARANCE OF THE JUST MAN.—St. Joseph, the chaste spouse of Mary, was descended from the most illustrious family in the world, for he was a son of the house of David. He was poor, and followed the trade of an artisan, for our Lord was desirous of sanctifying at once nobility of descent, useful labour, and indigence. The Gospel characterizes him as a “just man,” and more than this it is not possible to say. Yet Joseph, unaware of what was being accomplished in Mary’s favour, and deeming her culpable, preferred quitting her, rather than consign her to the judgment of men. Then it was that the angel manifested to him the incarnation of the *Word Divine*. He had conceived the purpose of abandoning her, because he was just-minded and did not wish to dwell in daily relations with a spouse who might seem unworthy. He would have shrunk with horror from denouncing her, because he was all-forbearing, and because she would have been stoned to death. St. Joseph, after having enjoyed the honour of protecting Jesus and Mary, had the happiness of dying in their arms; but Holy Scripture leaves us in ignorance as to the time of a death thus precious before God.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*True justice cannot fail to partake of that of God, who is Himself so pitying towards sinners. Ah! in the excess of our zeal against evil-doing, let us keep ever in memory that divine utterance, “I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.”—(Matt. xii. 7.)*



INNOCENCE AND JUSTICE.—St. Lomer, a priest and treasurer of the church of Chartres, left the world while still young, and withdrew to a forest of the Perche, where he constructed a rude cabin of twigs, there to devote himself to prayer, and occupy himself solely with preparing for eternity amid the austerities of penance and holy meditations. He was there discovered, and many companions came to embrace this kind of life. But at length, being troubled by the concourse of strangers, he betook himself to another hermitage, in order there to remain unknown. The reputation of his sanctity betrayed him, in spite of all his efforts at concealment, and he found himself constrained to build a monastery. A vast crowd of sick persons always surrounded his cell, for the Lord had bestowed on him the gift of miracles. One day a rich man sent him, by way of alms, several pieces of gold, that he might pray for him and obtain his cure. Lomer took one of them only, and sent the others back, saying, "They are the proceeds of robbery; God does not accept such offerings: you will assuredly die." St. Lomer yielded up his spirit in 594.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Prayer can never be found acceptable to God when proceeding from one who has committed injustice; hence it is said in Ecclesiasticus, "Be not anxious for goods unjustly gotten, for they shall not profit thee in the day of calamity and revenge."*—(Eccles. v. 10.)



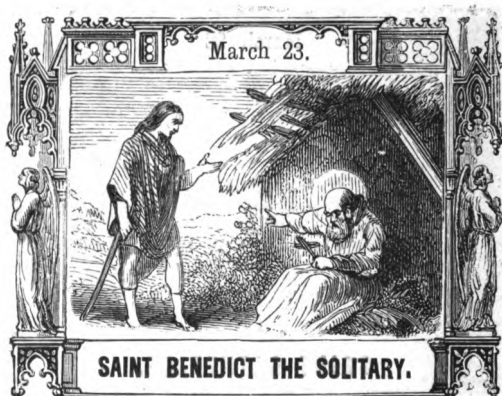
MEANS OF PROCURING CONTINENCE, AND ITS EXCEEDING WORTH.
—Benedict, fearful lest he might in the world lose the most delicate of all virtues, withdrew in early years to a deep solitude, and there remained for three years unknown to every one, save a holy monk who brought him day by day a portion of his own food. In this retirement he practised the greatest austerities in order to bring his senses into subjection, devoting himself to prayer and the labour of his hands. When he was at length discovered, and obliged, despite all opposition on his part, to assume the government of a neighbouring monastery, he appeared amongst his fellow-men penetrated with deep humility and a great distrust of himself, without, however, in any degree, relaxing his austerities or diminishing the practice of prayer. God rewarded him with the gift of miracles, but in a degree still more marked with the spirit of prophecy, and chose him out to become the founder of an order which was destined to add honour to the Church, and people Heaven with a multitude of saints. The monks who had elected him as their abbot, being unworthy to retain him in their midst, he quitted them, and withdrew to Monte Cassino, whence the learned and renowned order of the Benedictines has been derived. St. Benedict died on the 21st March, 543.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Prayer, humility, and mortification: such are the means of preserving continence. The blessing of God is the reward thereof: "They that are Christ's," says St. Paul, "crucify their flesh with its vices and concupiscences."*—(Gal. v. 24.)



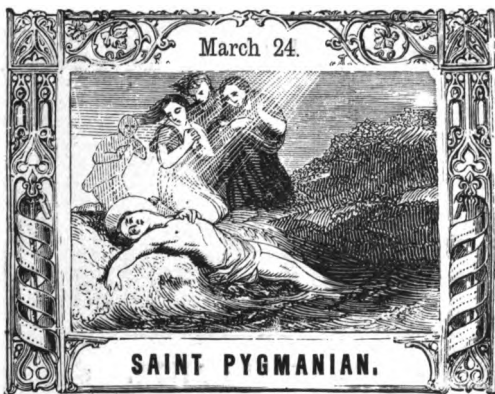
THE DANGERS OF THE WORLD.—St. Catherine of Sweden, daughter of the world-renowned St. Bridget, was trained to virtue from her very childhood by this most pious mother. She resolved from her early years to belong to God alone, and was successful in inspiring the husband whom her father insisted on giving her, with the like love of continence wherewith her own heart was captivated. Her stay in the city of Rome, whither she had repaired after her marriage to join her mother, who was visiting the tombs of the apostles, well-nigh proved detrimental to her. The dissipation of that great town, in conjunction with a style of living and manners so different from those of Sweden, inspired her with a love of the world and a distaste for the things of Heaven; she would certainly have relinquished her practices of piety, had not her mother, availing herself of her privilege as a parent, resorted to rigorous measures in order to call her to herself. Her virtue even had been exposed to dangers, which served as a still more timely warning. From that moment she regained her habitual piety, accompanied her mother to the Holy Land, never more left her, and did not fail in her duty up to the time of her death, which happened in 1382. She sometimes remained whole days and nights absorbed in prayer or in an ecstasy of divine love, without being conscious of what was passing around her.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Whoever has to dwell in the world, stands in need of great prudence; the Holy Scripture itself assures us that—"The knowledge of the holy is prudence."*—(Prov. ix. 10.)



FAITH IS MORE MIGHTY THAN FIRE.—There are no wonders that Faith cannot accomplish. Our Lord has promised to the faithful that he who hath faith, can remove mountains. Amongst a host of examples, the following confirms these comforting words. A pious solitary, named Benedict, had constructed a hermitage in the Campagna of Rome, at about twelve leagues from that town, there to devote himself solely to prayer and the labour of his hands. Having been discovered towards 543 by an emissary of Totila, chief of the Goths, who was a follower of Arianism and the master of Italy, he was urged to embrace Arianism. The holy hermit repelled with horror such a proposition. The Goths, in order to be revenged, set fire to his hermitage; the flames made great havoc around, but the hermitage itself remained intact. More enraged than ever, they cast the hermit into a flaming furnace; on opening the door of the furnace on the ensuing day, the holy Confessor was found safe and sound, to their utter wonderment. History does not record the exact period when his death occurred.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Faith,” says *St. Paul*, “conquereth kingdoms, quencheth the violence of fire, recovereth strength from weakness, becometh valiant in war, raiseth the dead to life.” *Let us be instant in craving it from God.*—(Heb. xi. 33.)



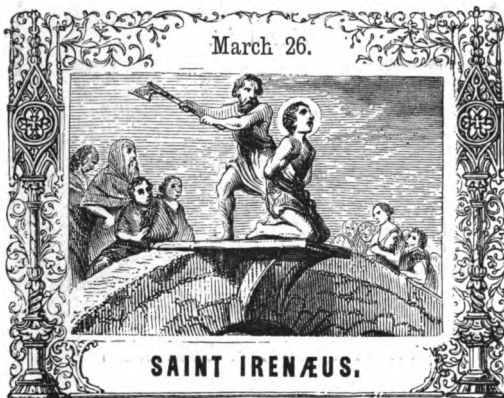
TO HOLD CRIME IN ABOMINATION.—The priest Pygmanian had been the preceptor of Julian the Apostate. When his perfidious disciple, on ascending the throne, abandoned the Christian religion and became its persecutor, Pygmanian did not shrink from publicly professing Christianity, practising works of mercy in the open day, and being especially zealous in burying the martyrs. Julian, who fancied himself braved by his old master, exiled him to Persia; and to prove him as He had proved the holy Tobias, God permitted that he should lose the use of his sight. Having returned to Rome, after three years of exile, the apostate exclaimed, on meeting him, “I thank the gods that I see you once more at Rome!” “And I,” answered the holy confessor of the faith, “thank my God for being blind, so as not to behold such a monster.” The emperor, all enraged, had him thrown into the Tiber. But the divine light, which has so frequently made known the bodies of the martyrs, shone around his body. It was taken up by a pious widow named Candida, and interred with Christian rites.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*He who at the presence of iniquity does not feel an uprising of the heart, should renounce the title of Christian; “For in much wisdom there prevaleth indignation.”—(Eccles. i. 18.)*



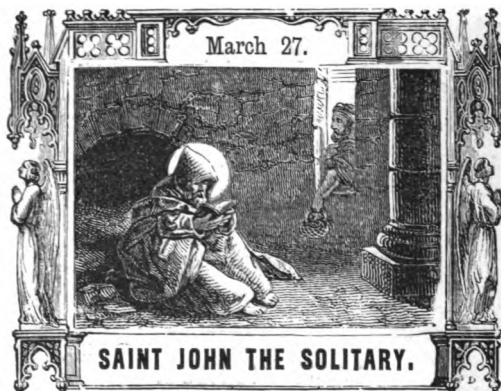
SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF GOD.—A virgin of the family of David, named Mary, was espoused to a man of the same house, named Joseph. They were dwelling in a town of Galilee called Nazareth, and living in holy continence. This was about the year of the world 4000. The angel Gabriel was deputed by God unto Mary, to announce to her that she was to become the mother of the Saviour of men. Mary was troubled, bearing in mind the vow she had made to remain ever a virgin. The angel reassured her on this head, telling her that her divine son would have no father but God. Mary answering said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done unto me according to His word;" and from that moment the Son of God, the Saviour, true God and true man, co-eternal with His Father in so far as He was God, and a mortal man according to time, became incarnate in the chaste womb of the Blessed Virgin. The universal Church celebrates on the 25th of March the memory of this grand event, under the name of "the Feast of the Annunciation."

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Three great virtues are here displayed in a signal degree: the most delicate chastity, the deepest humility, and perfect submission. Let us aim especially at imitating the latter, while repeating with Blessed Mary, "Behold the servant of the Lord, let it be done unto me according to His word."—(Luke i. 38.)*



THE OBLIGATION OF GOOD EXAMPLE.—St. Irenæus was bishop of Sirmich, in Pannonia, when the edict of Dioclesian's persecution overwhelmed the Church and spread terror abroad. The bishop having been conducted before Probus, governor of the province, gave proof of a courage unequalled, not only in resisting the threats launched against him, but still more in contemning the flattering promises made to him if he would consent to sacrifice to idols. He was beaten with rods, and afterwards sentenced to be thrown into the river after being beheaded. The holy martyr joyfully stripped off his clothing, and uttered this prayer: "I thank Thee, my God, for having deigned to let me suffer death for the glory of Thy name and for the safeguarding of the Christian people of Sirmich. Vouchsafe to receive me in Thy mercy, and by my example fortify Thy people in the faith."

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Good example is one of the main duties of every one invested with a dignity, or exercising any spiritual authority whatever. Every one is responsible towards his inferiors for the bad example he gives, and the good example which he should have afforded: "For a most searching judgment shall be for them that bear rule."*—(Wisd. vi. 6.)



OBEDIENCE.—There are in the lives of the Saints certain traits that are more worthy of admiration than of imitation : let us seek out what we are capable of imitating. St. John the Solitary had withdrawn to a mountain in the environs of the town of Lycopolis, in the Thebaid. There three grottos, hollowed in the rock, protected by a slight enclosure and encompassed by a high rampart, served him as a place of retreat. In this rampart there was a small window, which he opened twice in the week to receive the food brought for his sustenance. He conversed awhile with his visitors, discoursing upon matters concerning their salvation, especially on the necessity of doing penance, and then withdrawing, gave himself anew to prayer. He thus lived on to the age of ninety, and died towards the year 395. God had favoured him with the gift of miracles and of prophecy. He announced to Theodosius his victories over the enemies of the Church. Many solitaries imitated his mode of life. All writers agree that the signal graces bestowed upon him were the reward of his absolute obedience during the first twelve years of his retirement to the bidding of the Solitary whom he had taken as his master.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Nothing is better calculated to procure favours from Heaven, than obedience towards those in authority. "An obedient man," says the Wise Man, "shall advance by victory."*—(Prov. xxi. 28.)



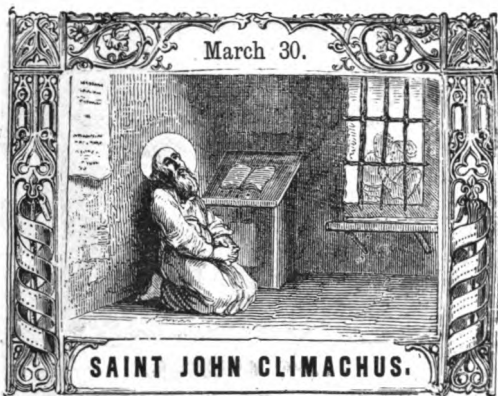
PATIENCE AND GOODNESS.—The name of the good king Gontran was long popular in the kingdoms of Burgundy and Orleans, which fell to him by inheritance on the death of Clothaire I., the son of Clovis. Being often obliged to make war on his brothers Caribert and Sigebert, he vanquished but to extend forgiveness to them. Exposed to the animosity of his sisters-in-law Fredegunda and Brunehaut, who had several times attempted his life, he only knew how to return them good for evil. He governed his subjects as a father governs his children, loved the Church in the character of a respectful and devoted son, and administered justice with an indefatigable zeal and invariable mercy. The lowly and the poor had ready access to him, and the unfortunate did not invoke him in vain. His patience turned aside all insults, and the calamities that he had to encounter were never greater than the strength of soul with which he met them. In a time of dearth he gave away all that he possessed—gold, silver, jewels, costly furniture, and even to his royal garb, in order to procure food for his people. This holy king died in 593.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*There is no means of salvation more reliable than to practise mercy, since our Lord has said it: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall find mercy."—(Matt. v. 7.)*



CHRISTIAN DEVOTEDNESS.—He who knows his brethren to be in peril and does nothing for their benefit scarcely deserves the name of a Christian. Sapor, king of Persia, having decreed, in the eighth year of his reign, a violent persecution against the Christians, two brothers, named Jonas and Barachisus, of the town of Bethasa, hastened to Hubaham, where they knew that a certain number of Christians were imprisoned, in order to bring them succour and strengthen them in the faith. They exposed themselves thereby to certain death, but this consideration did not weigh with them. After the first nine confessors indeed had received the crown of martyrdom, the brothers themselves were denounced and imprisoned. The judge, being unable to obtain any avowal from them either by means of threats or promises, ordered them to be kept apart, in order to gain them over separately. They held out manfully, however, and were in consequence condemned to death. Jonas, having been forced into a pressing-machine, was crushed in two; Barachisus was stifled under a mask of boiling pitch, which was poured over his face. This happened in the year 327.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*It is not a sterile love of one's brethren, but a love manifesting itself by acts, which the Saviour has enjoined in these words: "Little children, a new commandment I give unto you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you."—(John xiii. 34.)*



THE CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE.—St. John Climachus had cultivated polite learning from his childhood, and retired at the age of sixteen to Mount Sinai, which was then peopled with a vast number of solitaries, devoting themselves to a contemplative life and manual labour. He speedily equalled, perhaps even surpassed them, in the practice of perfection, under the guidance of a holy man named Martyrius. Silence, avoidance of the world—saving on occasions where charity otherwise required,—and humility, were his favourite virtues. Having been elected superior-general of the monks of Mount Sinai, he resigned the charge at the expiration of three years, and entered anew his beloved solitude, in order there to give himself up more freely to prayer and contemplation. The religious, not reconciling themselves, however, to the thought of losing the fruit of his lessons, begged him to write a work for their benefit. Then it was that he composed “The Mystic Ladder,” wherein he teaches the art of raising one’s-self to God by thirty successive degrees; whence he obtained the name of Climachus, which signifies steps or degrees. He died in solitude in 606, after having exceeded the age of eighty.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The active life is necessary, the contemplative life is more perfect: happy they who are called to it! It is of this that our Saviour spoke when saying, “Mary hath chosen the better part.”*
—(Luke x. 42.)



ACCORDANCE OF WORKS WITH FAITH.—While the supreme pontiff St. Alexander was in prison, a Roman knight named Quirinus went to visit him, and spoke to him of his young daughter, who was of marriageable age, but whose neck was disfigured by an unsightly scrofula, to the great distress of her family. “If these chains I am now wearing round my neck,” said the holy martyr, “were placed upon hers, she would be cured.” “Were this to come to pass,” replied Quirinus, “I should become a Christian with my whole family.” “Bring her then to me,” said Alexander. She came accordingly, and, on being touched with the chains, was cured. Quirinus thereupon received baptism with all his family. His conversion was sincere, as was shown by his acts; for, on being denounced to Aurelian, he incurred the penalty of death. Balbina continued her father’s good works, visiting the sick and prisoners and feeding the poor. On being denounced in turn, she laid open to Aurelian the grounds of her belief, and even tried to convince him. “You have caused my father to suffer death,” she at length urged; “let me suffer in like manner if you will.” She was spared, however, and continued the course of her good works as through the past. This occurred about the year 167.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Faith sufficeth not,” says *St. James*; “by works a man is justified: faith without works is dead.”—(*James* ii. 24.)

APRIL

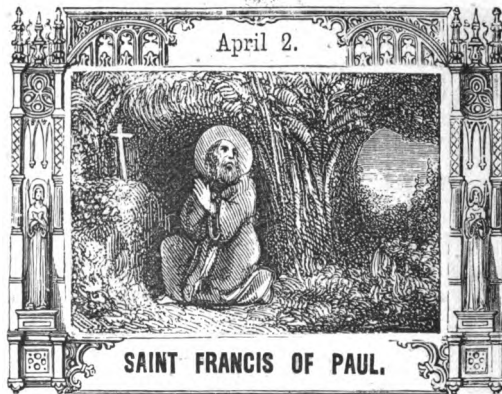


S. M. R. K.



DUTY BEFORE EVERYTHING.— Hugh, Canon of Valence, had a natural inclination towards a life of retirement and contemplation. He was so devout, mortified, and truly holy, that his example had already exercised a great influence over his colleagues, when he was chosen by the Council of Avignon as bishop of Grenoble, and obliged by the Legate to accept this arduous position. He effected therein all the good that was expected of him; but, at the expiration of a few years, deeming that he had toiled enough, he withdrew and assumed the religious habit at Chaise Dieu. The Pope, Gregory VII., soon obliged him, in the name of duty, to return to his church. In this conjuncture of circumstances, St. Bruno and his companions came to establish the Carthusian order in the diocese of Grenoble. The bishop piously envied the happiness of these solitaries; he occasionally spent with them, what he was wont to call, the happiest days of his life; but however short his stay there, Bruno was sure to raise a warning voice, saying: "Depart, your duty lies elsewhere, your flock is asking for its pastor." St. Hugh died in 1132. God honoured him with the gift of miracles both before and after his death.

MORAL REFLECTION.— *Well-doing consists in accomplishing the will of God, and not one's own.* "Behold, in the day of your fasting," said Isaiah to the Jewish people, "ye have found your own will."— (Is. lviii. 3.)



HUMILITY, THE GUARDIAN OF GOOD WORKS.—Francis of Paul, born in Calabria towards 1416, was the founder of the order of “Minims.” He desired that his religious should observe a rigorous and continued Lent, go bare-foot, and wear coarse garments. He afforded them an example of the greatest austerities, eating but once a day, after sunset, and satisfying the cravings of hunger merely with raw herbs. He slept on the bare ground with a stone for a pillow, wore a hair shirt, and proscribed the use of all gold and silver vessels. But that their virtues might be more solid and real, he put them under the holy guardianship of humility, enjoining them to regard themselves ever as the lowest of men and the least among the religious; and hence imposed upon them the name of “*Minims*,” meaning thereby that they were the least of all. The reputation of his sanctity, and the fame of his miracles, induced King Louis XI., when dangerously ill, to send for him to France. The saint, instead of curing him, preferred preparing him to die a Christian’s death. St. Francis of Paul himself died at Plessis-les-Tours in 1488.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Learned ascetics teach that humility is the foundation of the Christian life; and the Holy Scripture adds, that “The prayer of the humble pierceth the Heavens.”—(Eccles. xxxv. 21.)*



RESPECT FOR THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.—In the year 304 the Emperor Dioclesian had ordered a violent persecution against the Christians. He had mainly in view to track out the priests and bishops, as well as the sacred books, in order to snatch from religion the instruments whereby she was maintained in the hearts of the faithful and her sway extended. Two sisters, Agapa and Chionia, concealing certain of the holy books, had sought refuge in the adjacent mountains of Thessalonica, where they wandered about for a whole year; but were at length seized and the holy books were discovered. It would have been an easy matter to redeem their lives by pronouncing an anathema against the Gospel, eating of the meats offered to idols, or by affecting some semblance of regret. Far from this, however, they showed by their laconic and steadfast replies, that they had made up their minds to die rather than apostatize. They were condemned to be burned; the flames stifled them while respecting their bodies, which received no injury whatever.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*A Christian cannot hold in too great reverence the Holy Scriptures, which are the word of God. Jesus Christ one day asking His disciples if they desired to leave Him, St. Peter answered: "Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."*—(John vi. 69.)



LEARNING, IN THE SERVICE OF RELIGION.—St. Isidore, bishop of Seville, had received from Heaven one of the finest intellects vouchsafed to man, and had carefully cultivated it by the study of profane literature. He rendered powerful aid to his brother, St. Leander, archbishop of Seville, in converting the Visigoths, who were then infected with Arianism. Having become his successor, he completed this great work, re-established discipline throughout his diocese, and presided with marked distinction at the councils of Seville and Toledo, which were held in this intent. He reformed the liturgical books and composed several learned treatises for the instruction and edification of the people. The eighth council of Toledo, held fourteen years after his death, decreed to him the title of “The Excellent Doctor.” Feeling his end approach, St. Isidore had himself carried to the church, there received the sacraments with fervent piety, and died shortly after, in 636, having caused all that he possessed to be distributed beforehand to the poor.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*How culpable are those who neglect putting forth in the sight of God the talents which they have received from Him! How guilty are they who degrade them! It is written: “Cast forth the unprofitable servant into exterior darkness.”—(Matt. xxv. 30.)*



RECOLLECTION, HUMILITY, DETACHMENT.—St. Vincent Ferrer, born at Valence in 1357, entered, at the age of seventeen, the order of St. Dominic, whereof he was destined to become one of the most illustrious ornaments. His superiors having set him apart for the work of the missions, he worked great wonders while accomplishing it. In Spain alone, more than twenty-five thousand Jews and eighteen thousand Moors owed their conversion to him. His humility equalled his zeal for the conversion of souls; he attributed none of his success to himself, but referred everything to God, whose “unworthy instrument” he styled himself. He journeyed over France, Italy, Germany, England, and the Low Countries, with the title of Apostolic Missionary, working everywhere the same wonders. He would not proclaim the secret of such success; but told very willingly every one that consulted him that, in order to succeed, it is needful to unite one’s-self with God in holy recollection, to be humble and free from attachment to things of earth. He died at Vannes in 1419.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us draw advantage from this wise example, conforming as it does with the warning of the Apostle: “God resisteth the proud, and giveth his grace to the humble.”—(1 Pet. v. 5.)*



PASTORAL VIGILANCE.—St. Celestine succeeded Pope Boniface I. in the year 422. His solicitude was called to every portion of the Christian world at the same time. First towards Africa at the instance of St. Augustine, who pointed out abuses that were to be corrected; next, towards Gaul, where, through an exaggerated severity, certain Churches refused to such sinners as had led a scandalous life the benefit of reconciliation, even when at the point of death. Subsequently, towards the East, where the errors of the Nestorians were beginning to make ravages. Against this heresy he held the Council of Rome, and there, in the year 430, caused the heresiarch to be deposed. The latter having refused to obey, Celestine assembled the Council of Ephesus, which condemned him anew. Not satisfied with thus governing the Church, he sent apostolic men to the several countries where the Gospel had not been preached. "My vigilance," he wrote to the bishops of Gaul, "is not limited by space, it extends into every spot." These words were true to the very letter. St. Celestine died in 432.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Vigilance is the virtue truly needful to those to whom the care of souls has been confided. "Blessed are the servants whom the Lord at His coming shall find watching."*—(Luke xii. 37.)



FLIGHT FROM DANGER.—Aphraates was living in a hermitage at some distance from the town of Edessa, in Mesopotamia, during the reign of the Emperor Valens, towards the year 375. He was there given up to a contemplative and penitent life, dividing his time between prayer and work. The Arians, who were very numerous in the town of Edessa, had no more redoubtable opponent, and although rarely quitting his retreat, he lost no opportunity of attacking them, by demonstrating from the Scriptures that Jesus Christ was truly God, and upholding by miracles the truth of His doctrines. The cures he effected attracted a great crowd about him, but his extreme modesty was nevertheless the theme of general remark. He avoided the presence of persons of a different sex, did not speak to them save when necessary, and then only in few words. He averted from them his gaze in such wise that it was said he had never seen a woman. The period of this pious solitary's death is not fully ascertained.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us draw profit from this example, and yet more from the maxim of the Wise Man: "He that loveth the danger shall perish therein."*—(Eccles. iii. 27.)



DEFENCE OF THE OPPRESSED.—St. Edesius, brother of St. Appian, the martyr of Cæsarea, had been converted to Christianity after having vainly sought in philosophy the satisfaction for which his soul yearned. He had already been condemned several times to exile and to labour in the mines for having taken up the defence of the Faith, when, towards the year 237, he entered Egypt during the persecution of Maximinus. The prefect there ruling was Hierocles, one of the most atrocious persecutors. Edesius was unable to witness in cold blood the most eminent personages condemned to labour at the public works, young children cast before the raging beasts, and young virgins and women, consecrated to God in the religious life, consigned to places of debauch or sold into slavery. He sought out the prefect and with a holy hardihood of speech explained the purpose of his visit. Hierocles had him seized, beaten with rods, tortured in many cruel ways, and finally hurled into the sea, whereby his martyrdom was achieved.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Cowardice on the part of a Christian would be more inexcusable than on that of a soldier. Woe to him who would, under fear of danger, refuse to defend truth and innocence. Has not Jesus Christ said, "Fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul" ?—(Matt. x. 28.)*



THE VALUE OF A KINDLY ACT.—St. Acacius was bishop of Amida, in Mesopotamia, during the reign of the Emperor Theodosius the Younger. The Romans having achieved a great victory over the Persians and captured seven thousand prisoners, the latter were perishing with hunger and in utter misery in the town of Amida, when the bishop conceived the purpose of ransoming and sending them back to their own country, although they were pagans and the Christian religion was persecuted in Persia. He exhausted all his means in carrying out this project, and even disposed of the sacred vessels and costly decorations of the churches. The poor captives, on being released, did not fail to publish everywhere such unequalled generosity. The king was touched thereat and acknowledged that the Romans had twice vanquished him; he expressed a desire to see the bishop, and obtained due leave from Theodosius. He directed that all persecution should cease throughout his dominions, and Christianity, under favour of such liberty, took a wonderful development there.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The value of a benefit is never forgotten, for God is rich in power and mercy. As with every word of the Saviour's, this bears a very wide interpretation: "Do good to those that hate you."*—(Matt. v. 44.)



THE MARVELS OF HUMILITY.—St. Macarius had been trained in piety by Macarius the elder, his uncle, who was archbishop of Antioch. The old man seeing his last hour approach, pointed him out to the adoption of the people, who unanimously elected and installed him in the patriarchal chair, despite all opposition on his part, for he deemed himself unworthy of so eminent a dignity. His humility was profound and his prayers most fervent, accompanied ever with abundant tears. His mode of governing was prudent and edifying. On learning that the sick had been touched with the linen which had wiped away his tears, a thought of pride flashed through his soul, and he fled in affright, with the intent of attempering anew his humility on Mount Calvary by contact with that of his Saviour. The unbelievers maltreated him, placing upon his breast a ponderous stone, from which an angel was sent to deliver him. Unable to enter his own diocese, he passed into the West, preceded on every hand by his great fame, and accompanied throughout by the power of miracles. At Cologne he cured his host of epilepsy; at Malines he quenched a conflagration; at Ghent, he stopped the plague, announcing moreover that he should be the last victim to die of it. This took place in the year 1012.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The holy king David said:* "I will be little in my own eyes, and I shall appear more glorious."—(2 *Kings* vi. 22.)



THE PROTECTION OF THE SAINTS.—St. Leo, justly surnamed the Great, was elected Pope in 440. The redoubtable Attila had already destroyed the town of Aquileia, and was preparing to advance on Rome. The newly elected Pope, at the head of a deputation of the Roman people, went forth to meet him, and by the greatness of his courage disarmed all hostility. Attila told his soldiers, who were astonished at seeing him making a backward movement, "I beheld by the side of the bishop a majestic and venerable personage, who threatened me with the sword if I should venture to pass onward." It is believed that it was the apostle St. Peter who thus appeared to him. St. Leo, indeed, cherished a special devotion towards the Prince of the Apostles, and to his protection attributed the success which attended the great works he accomplished during the course of his pontificate. He saved Rome a second time from being laid in flames, when Genseric had taken possession of it; on which occasion he watched and prayed forty nights at the tomb of the Apostle. St. Leo was the bulwark against heresy, and the shining light of the Church. He died in 461.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The saints are our protectors. Judas Machabeus, speaking of the holy prophet Jeremias, said to his soldiers: "This is he that prayeth much for the people, and for all the holy city."—(2 Machab. xv. 14.)*



HORROR OF DISSIMULATION.—Sabas was of the nation of the Goths, but a Christian withal, though the greater part of his fellow-countrymen were still pagans. Athanaric, a Gothic prince, having been defeated by the Roman army, glutted his anger upon his Christian subjects, and ordered them, under pain of death, to sacrifice to the false gods. Sabas might have saved his life by feigning to partake of the meat offered to the idols, as his friends, out of false compassion, had counselled. Like to the holy old man Eleazar, he preferred dying. Being first dragged along the roads and through thorny brakes, he was afterwards pressed down under the weight of a mass of iron placed upon his chest; was overwhelmed with blows, beaten with rods, and at last encompassed with lances and naked swords with the points turned towards him. Sustained amid this long martyrdom, however, by a beam of divine light descending from on high, he cried out at length, "It is enough, complete your cruel butchery!" His executioners hurled him headlong into the river, whence he was drawn out dead. This occurred about the year 372.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Dissimulation is a great defect; it may grow into a crime.* "It is good," says Holy Writ, "to hide the secret of a king, but honourable to reveal and confess the works of God."—(Tob. xii. 7.)



HORROR OF HERETICAL DOCTRINES.—Hermingild, son of Leuvigild, king of the Visigoths, had wedded Indegunda, the daughter of Sigebert, king of France. This princess directed her first cares to the conversion of her husband, who, with the whole nation of the Goths, was sunk in the errors of Arianism. When Leuvigild heard of the change produced in his son, he gave way to great anger, and uttered the most terrible threats against him. Hermingild fled with his devoted friends and shut himself in a fortress, but was there captured by force of arms, and thrown into a dungeon. His father hoped that by means of the hard treatment he would there endure, coupled with the tediousness of a prison-life, he might be led back to Arianism; but the result proved far otherwise. At length, Easter-day having arrived, the father sent an Arian bishop to administer communion to him. Hermingild, however, though loaded with chains, turned away in horror, refusing to receive it. His father being informed of what had taken place, fell into a fresh access of rage, and sent an executioner to the prison, who, with one stroke of the axe split his skull in twain. This happened in 586.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*One should rather risk losing one's life than one's faith; now to communicate in things holy with a heretic is to run the risk of becoming one. The Apostle St. Paul has said: "A man that is a heretic, avoid."—(Tit. iii. 10.)*



THE REWARD OF SUFFERINGS.—St. Liduvine was born in 1380 at Schiedam, in Holland, and from her childhood had dedicated her virginity to the Lord. She was gifted, however, with a fatal beauty, which caused her to be sought for in marriage while still young. Fearful lest she might not be able to hold out against the authority of her parents and their urgent solicitations, she prayed to God to send her such infirmities as might prevent them from thinking further of her marrying. God granted her prayer. From the age of fifteen she was seized with violent pains which no skill could soothe; her limbs were partly distorted from the excess of her sufferings. Deprived at last of all power of motion saving in her head and one arm, her whole body became covered with ulcers. She lived in this state till the age of fifty-three with a calmness, sweetness, and resignation of mind worthy of all admiration. God loaded her with His choicest privileges; she was favoured with revelations; her soul was raised to the heights of divine contemplation; by the agency of her prayers she obtained the grace of many miracles. The devout Thomas À-Kempis describes many whereof he had been an eye-witness. She died in 1433.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Suffering only possesses merit in so far as it is endured in a holy manner, and it is of this that Jesus Christ spoke when He said: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."*—(Matt. v. 5.)



LOVE OF PEACE.—St. Paternus, bishop of Vannes, began and ended his days in solitude. Born in the year 490, in the district of Vannes, he passed, while still young, into Britain, to announce the Gospel. He there embraced the monastic life, became the superior of the monks in Wales, founded many monasteries, and afterwards proceeded to Ireland, with the aim of establishing peace among the inhabitants, who were torn by sanguinary feuds, and he was successful in his object. Having undertaken a pilgrimage to Jerusalem with St. David of Wales, he was there consecrated bishop by the patriarch John III. On his return, Paternus was elected bishop of Vannes. A division of opinion, agitated by false brethren, having been created amongst the bishops of the province with respect to himself, he preferred retiring, after having administered his diocese for some years, so as no longer to afford any ground for dissension. He withdrew to a solitude in France, and there ended his days in a holy manner towards the year 557.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The greatest sacrifices imposed by the love of peace will appear less costly if we call to mind the example set by our Saviour, and His express recommendation: "Blessed are the peaceful, for they shall be called the children of God."*—(Matt. v. 9.)



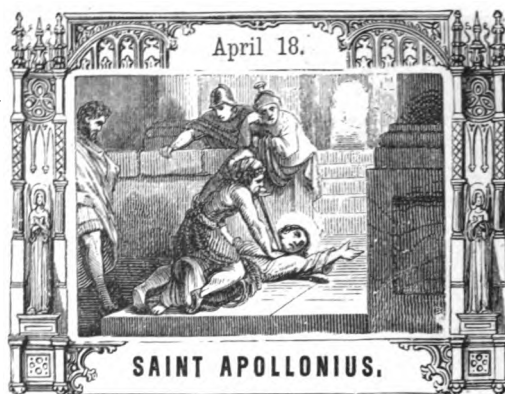
HOLY COMPASSION.—Encratida, a native of Portugal, fled from her paternal home in order to avoid a marriage which her father sought to force her to contract, the consequence whereof to her faith she greatly feared. Besides which, she earnestly desired to belong to God alone, and God in effect accepted the offering. Having retired to Saragossa, where she hoped to remain unknown, a violent persecution broke out there in 304. Eighteen martyrs there met their death in one day in the midst of the most cruel torments. Encratida was not able to disguise her compassion and the interest she felt for these martyrs. She was suspected, denounced to Dacian the prefect, who caused her to be brought before him. She avowed her faith without flinching, and reproached Dacian with his cruelty. He caused her to be treated with exceptional cruelty: she was bound to a wheel, had her sides lacerated, and her left breast with the underlying parts torn away. Her bones were laid bare and she was thrown into a dungeon, where after a few days she resigned her soul to God.

MORAL REFLECTION.—Amongst other virtues, the Apostle St. Peter specially urges upon Christians “to have compassion one with another, being lovers of the brotherhood and merciful.”—(1 Pet. iii. 8.)



DISINTERESTEDNESS.—St. Stephen, the founder and third abbot of Citeaux, is remarkable for many reasons, but chiefly on account of that evangelical disinterestedness which excited the admiration of his contemporaries. A disciple of the God who had sent forth His apostles without provisions, without scrip or staff, he relied upon Him under every conjuncture. “What stores are needful,” he would say, “to those to whom a roof of thatch, a garment of coarse stuff, a little bread, and water from the brook are sufficient?” He loved to gather round him the shepherds of the neighbouring parts, to instruct them, and he afterwards often gave them all there was in the monastery. On a certain occasion when one of his monks had brought home an abundant alms, he inquired whence it came, and on learning that the benefactor was not very reputable, he had the whole of it distributed on the spot. Whenever he himself collected alms, he at once shared the proceeds with the poor. That Providence on whom he ever relied always came to his assistance. The holy abbot died in the year 1134.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you,” saith our Saviour.—(*Matt. vi. 33.*)



WORLDLY AND SINFUL PRUDENCE.—Apollonius, one of the most learned and eloquent Roman senators, had been converted to the faith in consequence of his communications with the Pope, Saint Eleutherius, and by a profound study of the Holy Scriptures. Religion at that time, namely, under the reign of Commodus, was blessed with but little repose. Apollonius devoted himself without fear to Christian deeds; he was denounced by one of his slaves, and cited to appear before the Senate. The informing slave was bound to the wheel, in accordance with a decree of Marcus Aurelius, which forbade, under pain of death, any denunciation of the Christians. Apollonius, far from seeking to screen himself, took advantage of so noble an opportunity, to make before the whole Senate an impassioned defence of Christianity. The senators were shaken in their opinions, and religion gained the victory; but the prefect, Perennis, hastened to pass sentence against him by virtue of the edicts bearing on persecution, which had not been abolished, and from a fear lest such an example might involve political results too important. Apollonius was accordingly condemned to public torture and put to death: the very pagans were filled with indignation at such an enormity.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Such false prudence, leading inevitably to crime, has been pointed out by the Apostle in these words: "Be not wise in your own conceits."*—(Rom. xii. 16.)



JESUS CHRIST IN THE PERSON OF THE POOR.—Humility well becometh true greatness, and is ever merciful. Bruno, Bishop of Toul, and of the illustrious family of the Counts of Aspurg, was elected Pope at the Diet of Worms in 1049. Never was choice more happy, for the pontiff elect possessed all the virtue and wisdom, patience, courage, and grandeur of soul, needful to restore peace to the Church and re-establish discipline. He alone accounted himself unworthy, and did everything in his power to demonstrate this to the assembly. Being forced to give way in their presence, he appealed from them to the people and clergy of Rome, presenting himself before them barefoot and in the humble garb of a pilgrim, hopeful of being rejected. The general voice declared in his favour. He answered in all things to what had been expected of him. Bruno tenderly loved the poor, and became one with them. One day he placed in his own bed a leper who had begged hospitality. The leper disappeared, and it is piously believed it was Jesus Christ himself that had appeared to him under that guise, as formerly in the case of the illustrious St. Martin. Leo died in 1054, after having held the pontificate most worthily for five years.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us hold in honour* “those men of mercy, whose godly deeds have not failed.”—(*Eccles. xlv. 10.*)



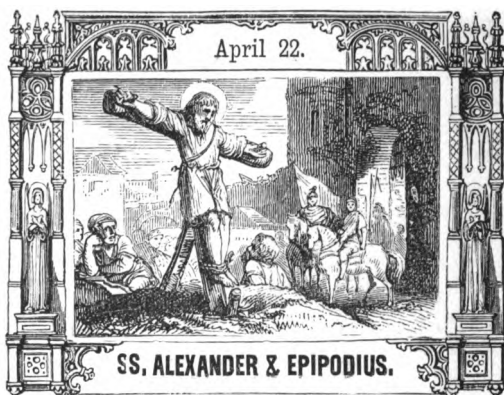
WISDOM UNTO SOBRIETY.—St. Theotimus, bishop of Thomis in Scythia, had been trained in the learning and philosophy of the Greeks; into Christianity he imported that wise philosophy recommended by the Apostle, which attempts zeal while enlightening it. Hid away, so to speak, in the midst of a barbarous race, oftentimes exposed to the exactions of princes and kings who deemed him rich because of his alms-giving, and dwelling amongst a population which regarded him as all-powerful, because God had granted him the gift of miracles, he stood in need of as much prudence as zeal, and of a wisdom equaling his ardour. But it was especially at the council of Chalcedon, convoked by St. Epiphanius for the condemnation of the writings of Origen, that he showed to what a degree moderation reigned in his mind. St. Epiphanius, impelled by a hatred for error, sought to have Origen condemned absolutely. St. Theotimus, urged by a love for truth, desired to have excepted whatever there was of good in these writings. The council, animated in the outset by the hostile sentiments of St. Epiphanius, ended by advocating the views of St. Theotimus. This occurred in 401.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*True wisdom consists in never exceeding the right line.* “Be not more wise than it behoveth to be wise, but be wise unto sobriety,” says the Apostle.—(Rom. xii. 3.)



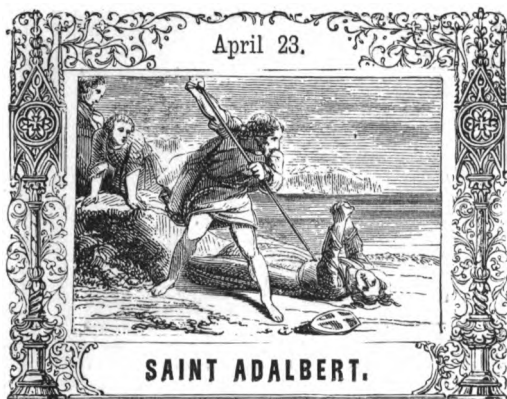
THE CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHER.—St. Anselm, one of the most eminent and grandest minds of the ages of faith, imported philosophy into religion, in order to clear up that which religion makes accessible to the human intelligence; and religion he imported into philosophy, to make up to philosophy for its own insufficiency. He should be regarded as the founder of modern philosophy, for he laid down all those principles which Descartes and Malbranche developed at a subsequent period. Having been created archbishop of Canterbury, he displayed as much prudence as gentleness, as great zeal and firmness as he had previously shown fervour and piety when a religious of the abbey of Bec, and science and talent while employed in the capacity of teacher of polite literature and philosophy. He was always animated with a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, to whom his conversion was due, and the treatises he composed in her praise breathe the sweetest piety. His contemporaries honoured him with the surname of the modern Augustine; and the Church derives honour from his works. St. Anselm died in 1109.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Religion and philosophy are not antagonistic, provided that philosophy keep to the second rank. The Lord has named Himself "the God of all knowledge."*—(1 Kings ii. 3.)



HOLY FRIENDSHIP.—Alexander and Epipodius were fast bound in friendship from their earliest childhood, while studying under the same master; and this friendship was so much the more sincere and inviolable because it was of a saintly character, religion forming the groundwork thereof. Being wont to encourage each other in well-doing, they reckoned sufficiently upon one another to leave them tranquil-minded as to their mutual perseverance. During the persecution of Lucius Verus, having been cast into chains in their character of Christians, they encountered, with heroic courage, the several kinds of torture. Despairing of being able to get the upper hand, the judge had them separated, and caused them to appear at the tribunal in turns; he tried even to persuade one of them that his friend, yielding to better counsel, had renounced Christianity; but they were not the dupes of this perfidious manœuvre; they persevered apart even as they had persevered when in company. Epipodius was beheaded, and Alexander expired upon the cross. This martyrdom was carried out at Lyons towards the year 165.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“A faithful friend,” says *Ecclesiasticus*, “is a powerful protection, and he who findeth him hath found a treasure.”
But friendship is only faithful in so far as it is Christian.



SALUTARY IMPRESSION OF DEATH.—Adalbert, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin through the piety of his parents, and carefully trained in the love of religion by a bishop of Magdeburg, called in like manner Adalbert, received the last sigh of Diethmar, bishop of Prague, from whom he had received holy orders, and who expired in utter despair, reproaching himself with never having sought anything but the advantages and honours of this world. This spectacle produced such an impression upon him that it never left his mind, and he proposed to himself to have but one aim for the remainder of his life, that, namely, of gaining heaven, cost what it might. Having himself become bishop of Prague, he displayed incomparable zeal, piety, humility, and charity; but his diocesans not corresponding with his pious desires, he was empowered by the sovereign pontiff to leave them in order to devote himself to the conversion of the unbelievers. He evangelized Hungary, Poland, and Prussia, and had the happiness of baptizing thousands of idolaters. He at length met his death in an island near Dantzic, from the hand of an idolatrous priest, on the 23rd April, 997.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“In all thy works remember thy last end, and thou shalt never sin.”—(*Eccles. vii. 40.*)



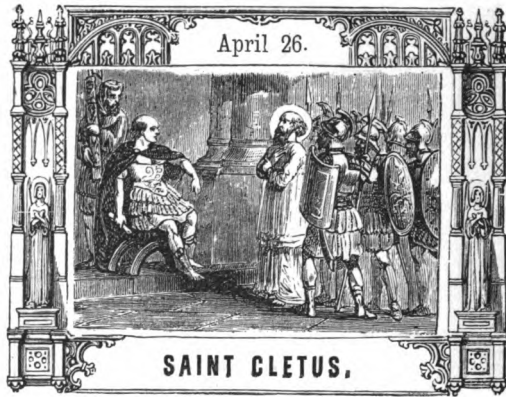
LOVE FOR THE SICK POOR.—St. Robert, of the noble family of the barons of Aurillac, canon and treasurer of the church of St. Julian de Brioude, exhibited so tender a love for the sick poor, whose wounds he tended, for whom he solicited compassion and alms when his personal resources no longer sufficed, and in whose favour he founded the hospital of Brioude, that the entire population of this town went to draw him, almost by force, from the abbey of Cluny, whither he had retired out of a desire of greater sanctity, and brought him back in a body. He once more, however, quitted the town, accompanied by two soldiers, whom he had won over to God, in order to retire to a solitary spot five leagues distant, there to give himself up in peace to works of penance. The three servants of God established their abode near the ruins of an ancient church, and their piety attracting thither numerous companions, they founded there the renowned monastery of Chaise-Dieu, of the order of St. Benedict, where the holy founder died in 1007, full of days and good works.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Stretch out thy hand to the poor, that thy expiation and thy blessing may be perfected.”—(*Eccles. vii. 36.*)



CHRISTIAN TEACHING.—St. Mark, the cherished disciple of the Prince of the Apostles, who accompanied him to Rome, and is mentioned in the first epistle of St. Peter, not wishing to retain and keep for himself alone the lessons of his great master, reduced them to writing for the advantage of the faithful, and to the end that such precious teachings should be perpetuated through all generations. Hence it was that he wrote his Gospel, according as he had been taught it by the Apostle, and it is this which St. Peter calls "*his Gospel!*" St. Peter sent Mark to plant the faith at Alexandria, the second town in the world, after Rome. The evangelist accomplished this mission with so much ardour that Alexandria was soon filled with Christians; but the unbelievers, enraged at such a falling away from their worship, excited the population to revolt. Mark was dragged through the streets during two days successively, as it is related; on the second day he expired, in the year 68 of Jesus Christ.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*To have a share in the preaching of the Gospel befits every Christian, for to every one has it been said, "Help the weak to grow strong in faith."*—(Rom. xiv. 1.)



ZEAL FOR GOD'S HOUSE.—St. Cletus, called also Anacletus, was the second successor of St. Peter; he is thought to have been converted and trained to the sacred ministry by this apostle. He governed the infant church about twelve years, having been promoted to the pontifical chair in the year 76, and was martyred under the persecution of Dioclesian in 89. The details of his life and death remain unknown, with the exception of what is recorded by the "*Pontificale*" of Damasus; namely, that St. Cletus displayed during his whole life a great zeal for the construction of edifices destined for the celebration of the Christian worship. While he was still a simple priest he founded a church dedicated to the Prince of the Apostles; he had the glory of completing it when he became Pope, despite the difficulties and persecutions of the time. He exhibited no less zeal in giving pastors to the Church, and in ordaining bishops, priests, and deacons.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Jesus Christ, the first of all, manifested His zeal for the glory of the house of God, and has bequeathed us an example to imitate. When He drove forth the money-changers from the Temple, His disciples bethought them of what was written: "The zeal of Thy House hath eaten me up."*—(John ii. 17.)

April 27.



SAINT ZITA.

THE GREATNESS OF HUMILITY.—St. Zita, placed by reason of her lowly birth in a position obscure, or vile even, according to the views of the world, knew how to lift herself by faith to the sublime heights of sanctity. She passed her life in domestic work, the object of hatred and calumny: her humility was too great, it was said, to be real; it was sheer hypocrisy. Her submission was too prompt and perfect to be exempt from pride; and if the poor servant were any better than people of her condition, it was merely because she wished to appear so. Zita, however, accomplished all her duties with that perfection which those who wish to please God are wont to employ. She bore reproofs, injuries, bodily and moral sufferings, with that patience and submission which the love of God alone knows how to inspire. She was pious, cherished the poor, and forgave injuries. At last the general voice ended by rendering her full justice, which she by no means looked for. The world was struck with wonderment, and the Church has placed her on her altars. St. Zita died at Lucca in 1272, and was beatified in 1696.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*All acts in themselves good become acts of holiness when accomplished with reference to God.* "All things are turned into good in the hands of those that love God," saith the Apostle.—(Rom. viii. 28.)



THE POWER OF PRAYER.—Theodora had dedicated by vow to God her life and her virginity; she was denounced as a Christian to the proconsul Proculus, who had been charged by Dioclesian to persecute the Christians in order to make them renounce their faith. This occurred in 323. The proconsul not being able to induce her to apostatize, ordered her to be consigned to a place of debauch. Theodora, on entering there, fell upon her knees, saying, "Lord Jesus Christ, safeguard that which pertains to Thee; as for myself, I fear sin more than death: if Thou wouldst have me pure, shield my innocence." A soldier, named Didymus, entered soon after, and said to her, after she had recovered from her fear: "Let us change garments, after which depart and leave the rest to me." The innocence of Theodora was thus preserved, but Didymus remained exposed to all the fury of the judge, and was sentenced to death. Theodora reappeared in order to deliver him; a holy emulation arose between them as to who should die in order to save the other. They were condemned to die together, that is, to receive at the same time the immortal crown of the blessed.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*It is written:* "The holy He will join to Himself, and whom He shall choose they shall approach to Him."—(*Numbers xvi. 5.*)



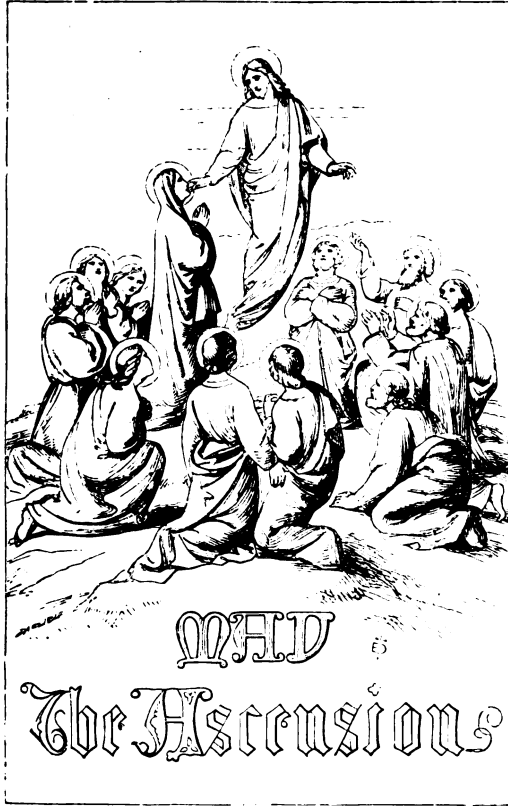
GREATNESS AND SANCTITY.— St. Hugh, abbot of Cluny, was descended from the sovereign house of the Dukes of Burgundy, but contemned the advantages of such an illustrious birth to give himself to God in the monastery of Cluny, or rather God led him to this humble retreat in order to make him the instrument of His high purposes. Having been made prior, and subsequently abbot, by reason of his merits and not on account of his birth, he appeared once again in that sphere to which his birth gave him access. The emperor Henry the Dark held him in great esteem, and charged him with the conducting of delicate negotiations. The popes Leo IX., Nicholas II., Gregory VII., Stephen IX., Urban II., and Paschal II., loaded him with proofs of their confidence. He conducted the negotiations for peace between temporal princes and the Church, and likewise between the princes themselves; the greatest political events of his century were made over to his discretion and solicitude. The abbot of Cluny was as holy according to religion as he was great and able according to the views of the world. Holiness is not that which the world imagines, it renders great and perfects that whereunto it is allied. St. Hugh died on the 29th April, 1109, aged 85.

MORAL REFLECTION.— *Glory, even of a worldly nature, is not excluded by holiness; "it is the vesture thereof," according to the expression of the Wise Man.—(Eccles. 1. 12.)*



CONFLICTS AND VICTORIES.—God, who had great designs in favour of St. Catherine of Sienna, upheld her with His graces, and she knew how to correspond therewith; but how many sacrifices and conquests were needful in her case! First of all, with respect to her parents, whom she tenderly loved and who wished to compel her to marry, although she had made a vow of belonging to God; and next, over herself, for she was exposed to great trials. Her health was impaired by the effects of her austerities; the poor whom she assisted, and the sick whom she tended, persecuted her with their calumnies; her soul, in itself so pure, was for a long time assailed with impure fancies. By means of humility, resignation, prayer, and perseverance, she triumphed over all obstacles. God honoured her with the gift of miracles, and favoured her with sublime ecstasies and revelations. Despite the lowliness of her condition, she was advanced to the confidence of the great ones of the world and the princes of the Church. The poor daughter of St. Dominic contributed to the re-establishing of peace in Italy, which had been torn by factions, and she induced Gregory XI. to return to Rome. Born in 1347, she died at the age of 33, after having been the wonder of her century and the honour of Italy.

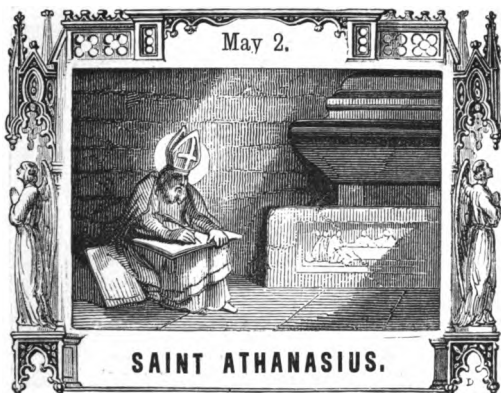
MORAL REFLECTION.—“Whoever is strong in faith overcometh the world.”—(1 John v. 4.)





JUSTICE.—The apostle St. James, surnamed “the Less,” to distinguish him from the brother of St. John the Evangelist, was chosen by his colleagues to be the first bishop of Jerusalem. He filled this difficult position with all the greater aptitude from the fact of his having succeeded in winning esteem even from those who were not converted to the faith, and he was honoured generally with the title of “the Just.” According to ecclesiastical writers, he was so constantly at prayer that the skin covering his knees had grown as horny as a camel’s. During the first persecution, which occurred in the year 61, he was precipitated from the top of the temple and stunned by a fuller who levelled blows at his head with a massive club. But every one took blame to himself for this enormity and regarded the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, which occurred nine years after, as a consequent visitation of God. According to St. Clement of Alexandria, our Lord appeared to him before His ascension, as well as to SS. Peter and John.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“In abundant justice there is the greatest strength,” says the *Wise Man*. “And unless our justice abound,” says the *Saviour*, “we shall not enter the kingdom of Heaven.”—(Prov. xv. 5; Matt. v. 20.)



GENTLENESS COMBINED WITH FIRMNESS.—St. Athanasius, patriarch of Alexandria and doctor of the Church, by his mode of acting, exemplified the enigma formerly proposed by Samson to the Philistines; the sweetness of the honeycomb dwelling in him that had strength for his inheritance. To the surging waves of Arianism he opposed a wall of brass; though driven forth from his diocese five times by the power and cabals of the heretics, he returned as often inflexible in doctrine, each time of return proving a fresh triumph for the faith. St. Gregory of Nazianzen has traced this sketch of him:—"Being gentle and affable towards all, every one had access to him; his reproofs were unmingled with bitterness; his praises were like so many lessons, for he reprimanded with the kindness of a father and praised with the authority of a master. He was forbearing without weakness and firm without severity; in short, his conduct was in accordance with his teachings. The enemies of the faith found in him a soul unbending, and his persecutors a victim insensible to their shafts. No human consideration was capable of making him turn aside in favour of injustice." St. Athanasius died in 375.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Thus does Holy Scripture depict Wisdom to us: "She reacheth from end to end mightily, and ordereth all things sweetly."*—(Wisd. viii. 1.)



PERSEVERANCE AND SUCCESS.—St. Helen, the pious mother of Constantine the Great, had conceived the purpose of restoring to the veneration of the faithful the saving wood whereon the Son of God expiated the sins of the world. When nearly eighty years old she repaired to Palestine, to carry out the holy search; but the pagans had for three centuries concealed from the reverence of the faithful this precious memorial, and no one knew what had become of it. Acting on vague suggestions, however, the princess undertook the task of directing excavations to be made towards the summit of Calvary, and, contrary to general expectation, first one cross was discovered, then a second, and subsequently a third, but without any indication to show the reliable worth of either. As perplexity increased, St. Macarius, bishop of Jerusalem, caused a sick woman to be brought to the spot, who, by contact with one of the crosses, was straightway cured; he had a dead body exhumed, and the dead was restored to life. Thenceforth to doubt was no longer possible; this was the Holy Cross of the Saviour; it was borne aloft in triumph, and Christendom at large raised its loud acclaim.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*In every pious undertaking, the beginning merely does not suffice. "Whoso shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved."*—(Matt. xxiv. 13.)



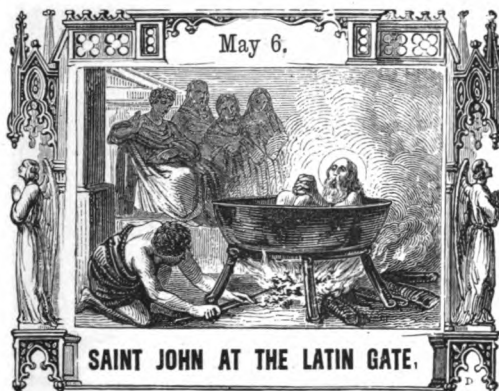
A MOTHER'S PRAYER.—Monica is one of the most perfect models that can be held forth to Christian mothers. United in marriage to a husband who was an unbeliever of harsh, unyielding character, and mother to a son given over to libertinism of mind and heart, that is to the indulgence of his passions and to the errors of heresy, she neither despaired of them, of herself, nor of God's power. She loved not more, it may be, than any other wife or mother, but she loved to better purpose; how earnestly she pleaded with both husband and son, and how fervently did she pray in their behalf! How well, too, she knew how to cause herself to be loved by reason of her goodness, so as to reach the mind by way of the heart. In the end she obtained what she had longed for; Patricius was converted, and died a true Christian. The conversion of Augustine, however, she had to sigh for during twenty long years, and it cost her abundant tears. Augustine was in his turn brought back to God. Monica had only prayed that God would make him a Christian; God made of him a bishop, a saint, a doctor of the Church; one of the most perfect of saints and the greatest of all the doctors. St. Monica died in 387.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*If the wife and the mother were to employ for good all the ascendancy of love of which they are susceptible, they might work wonders. "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife."*—(1 Cor. vii. 4.)



THE GREAT DEEDS OF HOLINESS.—The great deeds of worldly men are ordinarily the result of mere pride and vanity; the great deeds of the saints are all pure benefits. At the conclave ensuing upon the death of Pope Pius IV., St. Charles Borromeo, who was well able to estimate virtue, directed the general suffrage in favour of Cardinal Alessandrini, who was duly elected Pope, and assumed the name of Pius V. The Church was endowed with a holy Pontiff and Christendom found a protector. The Turkish empire was then in the prime of its power; the seas were infested with pirates; the coasts of Italy and Spain were threatened by the fleets of the unbeliever; every state was dreading an invasion. The Sovereign Pontiff united the fleets of the Christian nations and assigned the command thereof to Don John of Austria; the battle of Lepanto was fought, the Ottoman fleet annihilated, and Christendom was saved; for since that period the Ottoman empire has only lapsed from one failure into another, awaiting the day when it shall finally succumb. Pius V. was engaged meantime in earnest prayer, and God revealed to him the victory at the very moment when it was being accomplished. This happened in 1571, and the holy Pontiff died in 1572.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*That saying of the Apostle, "The saints shall judge the world," contains a vast meaning, like every word that issued from his lips.—(1 Cor. vi. 2.)*



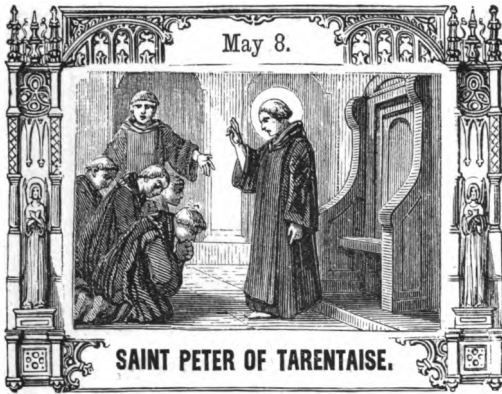
THE ADVANTAGE OF SUFFERINGS.—Nature shrinks from suffering, but faith teaches us that since the reign of sin, suffering enters into the scheme of salvation, and thus becomes, in the order of grace, the health-giving flood wherein the sinner is purified. This it is which God has perhaps wished to make us take to heart in the miracle wrought in the person of St. John on the day of his martyrdom, before the Latin gate: what was intended to bring death brought to him life, by curing all his wounds. St. John had reached a venerable old age; Domitian caused him to be transferred from Ephesus to Rome, loaded with fetters; he had him inhumanly scourged, so that his limbs were all lacerated, and then ordered him to be cast into a caldron of boiling oil. But far from succumbing therein, the seething liquid became a balm whereby to cure his wounds, and he issued forth stronger than before. The sight of this miracle effected the conversion of many; the tyrant himself was struck with wonder and banished him to the island of Patmos, where St. John wrote the Apocalypse. This happened in the year of Christ 95.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*If nature revolt within us against suffering, let us call to mind those words of the Divine Master: "Thou knowest not now wherefore, but thou shalt know hereafter."*—(John xiii. 7.)



EVANGELICAL LIBERTY.—Boleslaus, king of Poland, was given up to the wildest excesses; Christian souls were bewailing the scandal of his disorderly life, yet none dared to address remonstrances to him. The holy bishop Stanislaus then occupied the see of Cracow; he was the father of the poor, and a model to his whole flock. He deemed it his duty as a pastor to venture upon that which no one else had the hardihood to undertake, without concealing from himself, however, the price it might cost him. Such a consideration as this never weighs with the saint; the word of the Gospel cannot be held in check. He spoke to the monarch accordingly with all the respect due to majesty, but with all the liberty of an apostle. Boleslaus, greatly provoked, vowed his destruction. He raised a lawsuit against him, in which the bishop gained his cause, as he had justice on his side. More angered still, the monarch charged certain soldiers to assassinate him while in the church; the king led the way and dealt the first blow, so as to encourage the murderers. This holy prelate underwent martyrdom while celebrating mass, in the year 1079.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Those who have the charge of souls ought not to reckon up the dangers attaching to their mission, but should say, with the Apostle, "Woe unto me if I preach not!"—(1 Cor. ix. 16.)*



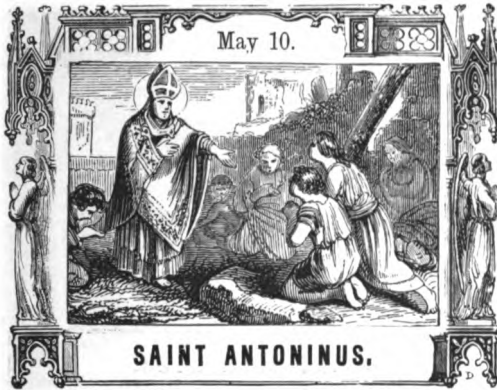
MAINTAIN GOOD HABITS.—The man of the world who succeeds in raising himself to a higher position, often retains his original defects; the saints, on the other hand, in such event, maintain their humility and their primitive virtues. Peter was abbot of Tamies, a monastery of the order of Citeaux, when he was chosen as bishop of Tarentaise. Being unable to avoid accepting a dignity which so alarmed his modesty, he resolved to retain at least the garb of a monk, and live up to the austere rules of his order and the usages of the cloister. He continued to be the provident father of the poor, and became the edification of his diocese. God having endowed him with the gift of working miracles, after he had exhausted all his resources for the benefit of the poor, he grew alarmed at the reputation for sanctity that might thence result, and took to flight. He did not fail to be discovered, however, in the monastery, where, under a disguised name, he had sought to conceal himself, and was obliged to return to his church. The fame of his virtues was so great that kings recurred to him to become their umpire. He died at the age of 73, in the abbey of Bellevaux, after having effected a reconciliation between the kings of France and England, in 1275.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The favours we receive from Heaven impose duties upon us, the principal thereof being to lift ourselves from virtue to virtue.*—(Psa. lxxiii. 8.)



THE MISSIONARY.—When St. Gregory Nazianzen arrived at Constantinople in 378, to expel thence the prevailing heresy, the imperial town was filled with Arians and Apollinarists, the orthodox believers retaining only the church of Anastasius. Gregory was already bowed down with years, his hair had fallen off, his face was shrunken, through the rigours of penance and abundant tears; he came without companions, poor and meanly clad. But God endowed him with a soul of fire and an eloquence unequalled; the Holy Virgin had appeared to him, and caused an angel to present him with a pen of gold. Gregory found the heretics leagued against him, they heaped calumnies upon him, and oftentimes pursued him with showers of stones; they dragged him before the tribunals, but God became his Protector. The flock of the faithful Catholics was gradually increased by his efforts. Theodosius, having become master of Constantinople in 380, caused him to be elected as bishop, and a council confirmed the election. When at length peace was re-established, Gregory deemed his mission ended, and withdrew into the solitude of the cloister, where he died in 390.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*There is no one who has not a mission to fulfil upon earth; have, then, the needful courage, and God “will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay.”—(Luke xxi. 15.)*



JUSTICE, AND DIVINE MERCY.—When God has resolved to punish the world by great calamities, He raises up saints, who, by means of their prayers, may disarm His justice, and who, by their charity, will satisfy the wants of the poor. St. Antoninus, archbishop of Florence, was of this heavenly temper. The plague had dealt destruction throughout his diocese in 1448; this was followed by a desolating famine, the town and suburbs were in part destroyed by the earthquakes occurring in 1453 and the two succeeding years. Antoninus lavished every care on the dying, and induced his clergy to act in like manner. Of an exemplary simplicity in his tastes, he economized his income for the benefit of the poor, whom he truly loved, being all gentle and affable, and knowing well how to win their affection. Holding in no account whatever he possessed, he gave everything away with liberal hand; and when he had parted with all, he set about collecting more, that he might still give. He was wont to pray with the fervour of an anchorite; and hence it was generally said that Florence owed its preservation to the favour with which God regarded the archbishop. He died in 1459, full of days, and honoured with abundant miracles.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Thus it is that in God are found centering “severity and mercy, justice, and peace.”—(Psa. lxxxiv. 11.)*



PUBLIC PRAYER.—Public prayer is the remedy for public calamities, even as private prayer is for individual evils. Towards the middle of the fifth century, Gaul was the victim of multiplied woes, civil wars, epidemics, inundations, earthquakes and conflagrations. All nature was in throes, and seemed awaiting still greater disasters ; wild beasts, quitting their forest haunts, roamed at large in the midst of the thronging cities ; every event was converted into dread forebodings, and the inhabitants generally were out of heart and sunk in discouragement. The church of Vienne then possessed a holy bishop who was the model, the hope, and object of love to all his flock. He directed that solemn supplications, not then usually resorted to, should be instituted in order to revive the courage of the faithful and turn aside the wrath of Heaven ; he further ordered fasting and prayer to be combined. God, who had already favoured him with miracles, gave heed to these supplications, and the calamities ceased. Hence originated the “ Rogation ” days, which were afterwards adopted by the Church at large. St. Mamertus, their founder, died in 477.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*There is no instance of public prayer having remained without result. “ All that you ask in my name shall be given unto you,” has Jesus Christ promised.—(John xvi. 23.)*



THE TRAINING OF YOUTH.—If they whom God has charged with directing youth, took care to form the heart rather than the intelligence, virtue would not have to wait for ripeness of years in order to manifest itself fully. If instruction be of great account in a worldly sense, education is more precious still from the Christian point of view, for this it is which forms saints. Youth is seldom thought capable of great virtues; the error is a grave one, however, as might be shown by manifold instances. The following will suffice for the purpose. Pancras was only fourteen years old when the persecution of Dioclesian broke out. Easy would it have been for him to dissemble as to his religious belief, or to guarantee his life by a falsehood; but he belonged to a Christian race. His uncle Denys was in bonds for the faith; the example and words of the old man kindled the courage of the child. He was the first to encounter martyrdom by decapitation, gathering in the prime of youth the palm destined for the labours of a lengthened life.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“The just that is dead condemneth the wicked that are living, and youth soon ended, the long life of the unjust.”—(*Wisd.* iv. 16.)



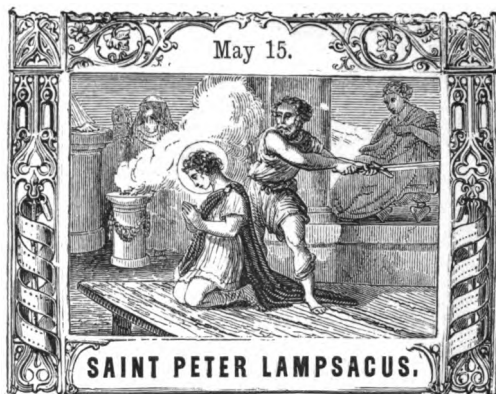
DISCRETION.—St. John, surnamed “the Silent,” was born of one of the richest families at Nicopolis, in Armenia. He employed his wealth in constructing a church, dedicated to the Mother of God, and a monastery, into which he retired. His eminent virtues caused him to be elected bishop of Colonia at the age of 28. His piety, humility, and zeal for the salvation of the flock confided to his care, were producing the happiest results when serious differences, which arose between him and his brother-in-law, the governor of Armenia, against whom he found himself forced to complain to the emperor Zeno, caused him greatly to regret his previous manner of life. He resigned his charge at the expiration of nine years, and withdrew to a solitude, there to give himself to a mortified life and the fervent exercise of prayer. He subsequently retired to the monastery of St. Sabas, where he obtained the favour of still remaining alone, in order to apply himself more intimately to a contemplative life. He had adopted as a rule never to speak, save in case of necessity, and to speak with such discretion as that no word of his might be either wrong in itself or useless. He died about the year 560.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The Holy Spirit has said, by the mouth of the Wise Man: “In the multitude of words there shall not want sin, but he that refraineth his lips is most wise.”—(Prov. x. 19.)*



THE FRUITS OF CHARITY.—The practice of charity has contributed as much to the conversion of the world as the preaching of the Gospel. St. Pacomius affords an example of this. He was only twenty years old when he was required for the service of the militia, and dispatched to the town of Thebes, in Egypt. The hosts on whom he was billeted treated him with so much kindness and attention, that he was casting about in his mind for the reason, but without finding the explanation, when he learned that they were Christians, and acted thus out of a religious motive. So soon as he had made himself fully acquainted with a religion which thus made men good, he became himself a Christian, and retired to a solitude, there to form himself to those virtues which Christianity enjoins. He conceived an inclination for this solitary kind of life, under the guidance of a holy old man, named Palemon, surrendered himself wholly to it, and the fame of his virtues drew around him numerous disciples, whom he trained in due course. Thus were laid the foundations of those monasteries of the Thebaid which so many saints were to render illustrious by their virtues. Pacomius died in 348.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Preaching by example is more persuasive than that of speech; hence the Apostle thus urges his disciples: "But you, brethren, be not weary in well-doing."*—(2 Thess. iii. 13.)



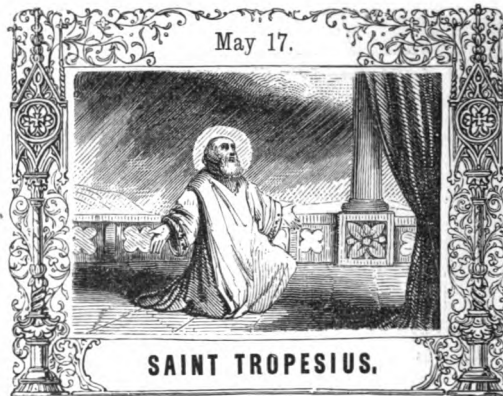
HORROR OF UNCHASTITY.—It was at Lampsacus, a town of the Hellespont, during the persecution of the emperor Decius, that a youth, named Peter, was denounced to the proconsul as a Christian. He was ordered to burn incense in honour of the goddess Venus. "Would you have me," replied the generous confessor of the faith, "honour her whom you yourselves acknowledge to be dishonoured by her vices? The actions you impute to her strike me with disgust, and are punishable even by your own laws. No! I despise a woman of bad life, and I honour only the One God, my Lord Jesus Christ, the God made man for the expiation of the sins of the world." The proconsul caused torture to be applied, which racked his limbs while wrenching them with most cruel grasp; but, at length, seeing his perseverance and the joy he manifested to suffer for the name of Jesus Christ, he shortened his torments by causing his head to be struck off.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*How is it that, while despising vice, the worldly-minded hold in respect the persons of the vicious; and, while condemning vice, pardon it in their own case? "Know you not," says the Apostle, "that the unchaste shall not enter the kingdom of Heaven?"—(1 Cor. vi. 9.)*



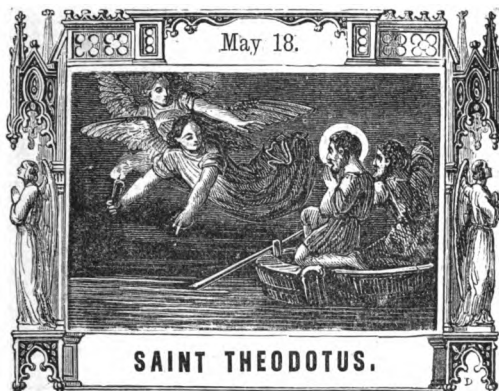
THE SEAL OF CONFESSION.—John Nepomucen was born in Bohemia about 1380. He dedicated to God and the Holy Virgin a life which had, in his case, been miraculously preserved from his very infancy, and embraced the ecclesiastical state, that he might devote himself wholly to the salvation of souls. The first efforts of his zeal having been attended with admirable results, particularly among the students of the town of Prague, the emperor Wenceslas wished to hear him preach, and named him his almoner. The empress and many of the greatest personages of the court put themselves under his spiritual direction; but as the pious empress had been accused of leading a disorderly life, the emperor wished to obtain information in that particular, from her confessor. The latter, as duty required, withheld all explanation. Wenceslas, who was of wrathful temper and had become cruel by dint of misfortune, maltreated John Nepomucen, submitted him to a protracted torture, and caused him at last to be thrown into the Moldau. The body of the holy martyr, by means of a celestial light, was discovered, withdrawn from the waters and fittingly interred. This happened in 1383. Benedict XIII. canonized John Nepomucen in 1729.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*When once initiated into the divine mysteries, the prophet Isaiah exclaimed: "My secret to myself!" That of the confessor being more sacred, belongs not to him, but is God's own.—(Isa. xxiv. 16.)*



INDEPENDENCE OF CONSCIENCE.—To follow God's service no authorization or permission from any person is needful. Neither servant, nor slave, nor child, have anything to ask for in this particular; for God is "the common Father," in whose presence all are equal. Tropesius, one of the chief functionaries at the court of Nero, and one of those converted by St. Paul, gave himself up fearlessly to prayer and the practice of Christian works, like unto Daniel at the court of the Assyrian monarch. He is one of those of whom the apostle intends specially to speak when he says: "The saints salute you, and chiefly those of the household of Cæsar." Having been denounced on account of his religion, on occasion of the first persecution, he was bound to a pillar and cruelly scourged; then tied to the wheel of a chariot, and finally thrown to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre. As he outlived all these atrocities, for the lions refused to touch him, he was at last beheaded by order of the tribune Satellicus. As he was one of the first martyrs of the Christian faith, he is held in high veneration throughout the Church.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Where religion is concerned, let us bear in mind that, "whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's."*—(Rom. xiv. 8.)



RESPECT FOR THE RELICS OF THE SAINTS.—Theodotus kept a small hostelry in the town of Ancyra. His life, which in the eyes of men, presented nothing out of the common, was sanctified before God by prayer, almsgiving, and other works of charity. His aunt Thecusia, and many Christian virgins, having undergone martyrdom, their bodies, weighted with stones, were thrown into a pool, for the purpose of withholding them from the veneration of the Christians. But Theodotus, whom the fear of death could not shake, set about searching for them by night, succeeded in finding them through the intervention of angels, and gave them honourable burial. Having been denounced for this, he was subjected to the most horrible tortures. His sufferings were renewed after five days' interval, and as he still outlived the racking of his limbs, the judge caused him to be beheaded, and ordered his body to be reduced to ashes, so that the Christians might not pay any reverence to his remains. This happened towards the year 303.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The body of the Christian is worthy of respect, since it has been sanctified by baptism; the body of the saints is still more so, since "they shall awake from the dust and shine as the brightness of the firmament, as stars for all eternity."*—(Dan. xii. 3.)



THE SWAY OF VIRTUE.—If kings are great by their power, the ministers of God placed near them should be greater still by their virtue, so as to make the right divine prevail. This was the part filled by Elias and Eliseus among Israel, by Ambrose in the presence of Theodosius, and by Dunstan in England during the latter half of the tenth century. When but a simple monk, he aided by his counsel the kings Athelstan, Edmund, and Edred; having become bishop of Worcester, he rendered the same service to Edgar, but with greater weight of authority. When he was raised to the archiepiscopal see of Canterbury, and obliged to proceed to Rome to receive the pallium from the hands of the Sovereign Pontiff, great disorders broke out at court and in his diocese. The great archbishop needed all the firmness that right gives, in order to apply a remedy; but all the guilty were punished and the monarch himself, descending from his throne, performed public penance. Dunstan upheld Edward, the son of Edgar, in his claim to the crown. With a freedom truly evangelic, he announced to Ethelred, the murderer of Edgar, the woes which would befall him. St. Dunstan died in 988.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“The just shall judge nations and rule over peoples, and their Lord shall reign for ever.”—(*Wisd.* iii. 8.)



SELF-SACRIFICE.—St. Bernardine, born at Massa in 1380, of an honourable family, displayed from early youth a tender devotion towards the Mother of God, and was rewarded by visions wherein the Holy Virgin encouraged him in his design of consecrating himself to God's service. He was but twenty years old when Italy began to understand what a hero she was destined one day to possess in him. The plague was then making great ravages in the town of Sienna. He devoted himself to the service of those struck with the epidemic, and when there was no one left in the hospital to take care of the sick whom he carried thither, he took up his quarters there with a few friends, and almost fell a victim to the excessive fatigue incurred in that perilous charge. On the cessation of this visitation, he devoted himself to teaching with great ardour, became vicar-general of his order, reformed it, and then resumed his preaching. His zeal, aided by the noblest and most shining example, backed by that eloquence of the heart which a lively faith imparts, reawakened the spirit of Christianity, and worked wonders in all the chief towns of Italy. He died in 1444.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*How precious to the world are those to whom "to live is Christ, and to die is gain!"—(Phil. i. 21.)*



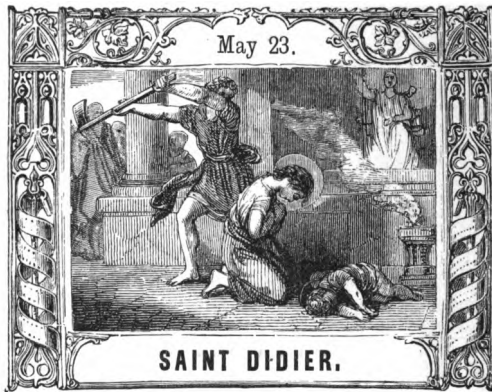
THE LOVE OF SUFFERINGS.—Hospitius, having travelled into Egypt, was greatly taken with admiration for the life of certain solitaries of the Thebaid, whom he proposed to himself to imitate. On his return to Gaül, therefore, he shut himself up in a deserted tower, the gate whereof he walled up, leaving only the open window whereby to communicate with the outer world, and there, given up to manual labour and prayer, he spent fifteen years of his life in the greatest austerities. In exchange for the mats which he wove, the country people furnished him with water, herbs, and sometimes a little bread. He wore a chain of iron and a hair-shirt, and fasted every day. He foretold the approaching irruption of the Lombards, and when they had really come, one of them penetrating into his cell, raised his arm to strike him with the sword. His arm at once withered up; but being cured by the prayers of the poor recluse, he was struck with admiration for his sanctity, was converted, and embraced in like manner the penitent life. Hospitius died in his voluntary prison near Nice in the year 581.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*If we love not penitence for its own sake, let us love it on account of our sins, for we should "work out our salvation in fear and trembling."*—(Phil. ii. 12.)



SUBMISSION HALLOWED BY RELIGION.—Genseric having become the master of Carthage, and seeking to introduce Arianism there, persecuted the Catholic believers, a great number of persons of all ranks and conditions being sold into slavery. St. Julia, who was purchased by a Syrian merchant named Eusebius, found in her piety a remedy amid this supreme misfortune. Eusebius was not long in finding what a treasure he possessed, and feeling safe with regard to the fidelity, good conduct, and virtue of his slave, attached himself to her with all the eagerness of a very miser, and allowed her full liberty to practise her religion, knowing full well that she would not abuse the liberty. Having one day taken her with him in a voyage which he made to Corsica, Julia refused to take part in the pagan festivals which were being celebrated there. Felix, the governor of the island, not being able to influence her, had Eusebius plied with wine, so as the better to force the slave into adoring the gods, by sheer violence. Julia had long been praying to Jesus Christ to deliver her from her chains by martyrdom, and her longing was at length satisfied, for Felix, seeing the inutility of recurring to further torture, caused her to be bound on a cross, whereon she breathed forth her soul in the year 440.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Servants, be subject to your masters; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.”—(1 Pet. ii. 18.)



THE GOOD SHEPHERD.—Didier, commonly called St. Dizier, was bishop of Langres towards the year 410, during the time that the Vandals were besieging the town. “The Good Shepherd giveth his life for his flock” were the words spoken by Jesus Christ, while holding forth for imitation His own sacred example. Didier did not hesitate an instant in the accomplishment of this sacrifice, which is bound up with and sometimes needful in the pastoral charge. Assembling, therefore, the principal members of his clergy and his flock, he went forth with them to offer themselves either as a holocaust to assuage the fury of the barbarians, or else to try and bend their hearts in favour of the besieged town. Vain were the efforts, however; the Vandals were not of such a cast as that a generous devotion could sway them, or that their minds could apprehend a magnanimous idea; to destroy and revel in the ruins, such was their guiding thought. They proposed to Didier to renounce his faith and believe in their gods. Upon his refusal, they struck off his head, as well as the heads of those who accompanied him, within view of the inhabitants, in order to strike them with greater terror. The latter went out by night to take away the bodies of the martyrs, and buried them within the town.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Such sacrifices are only known in Catholicism; everywhere else* “the hireling, and he that is not the shepherd, seeth the wolf coming and he flieth, and the wolf scattereth the sheep.”—(John x. 12.)



BROTHERLY CONCORD.—Donatian and Rogatian belonged to one of the most illustrious families of Nantes. Donatian, the younger of the two, was the first converted to Christianity, and, after his conversion, which he did not cease publicly to avow, he solicited his friends and relatives to imitate his example. Rogatian, his elder brother, who loved him tenderly, allowed himself to be gained over. In this conjuncture was issued the edict of Diocletian, ordering the governors of provinces to persecute the Christians, in order to make them renounce their faith. Rogatian had not as yet received baptism, and the bishop was no longer at hand, either because he had sought a place of refuge, or possibly because the governor had thrown him into confinement. Rogatian proclaimed himself a Christian notwithstanding, in the hope that the pouring out of his blood might stand in stead of baptism. He followed his brother to prison, and with him manfully sustained the supreme trial of faith in the midst of cruel torments. They were stretched upon the rack, torn with pincers, pierced with swords, and finally beheaded. Their martyrdom was accomplished towards the year 303.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Three things are pleasing unto God and man,” says the Sage,—“concord among brethren, the love of parents, and the union of husband and wife.”—(*Eccles. xxv. 1, 2*)



THE LOVE OF GOD.—St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi is, together with St. Paul and St. Theresa, one of the most perfect models of that holy fervour which the love of God inspires. From her most tender infancy she gave indications of these dispositions; at the age of nine she made herself the apostle of Divine love; at ten years of age she received, for the first time, that God made man whom she so tenderly loved; and when, on attaining her fifteenth year, her parents, who held a distinguished position at Florence, wished her to marry, she announced to them that it was no longer time, as she had from the age of twelve belonged to Jesus Christ by an indissoluble vow. Soon afterwards she entered the order of the Carmelites, on account of Holy Communion being more frequently allowed there, and thus affording her the occasion of being oftener in intimate union with Jesus Christ. Her fervour was submitted to trials of the most cruel temptations, which lasted four whole years; but with what happiness did she not regain her peace of soul, and how often she subsequently exclaimed, "Oh my beloved, oh my Jesus! Thou who art love itself, can it be that Thou art not loved upon earth?" In these sentiments she breathed forth her spirit in 1607, at the age of forty-one.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"If any one love not our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema, yea, even anathema!"—(1 Cor. xvi. 22.)



PRAYER.—Philip de Neri, born at Florence in 1515, displayed at an early age a great aptitude for knowledge and piety. His profound humility prevented him from receiving holy orders until the age of thirty-eight, because he accounted himself unworthy; but at length he was induced by his confessor to be ordained, under the plea that thereby he would find means of becoming more useful to the salvation of his neighbour. Thenceforth, in fact, his zeal knew no bounds; but his piety, which was the nourishing principle thereof, augmenting in proportion, he gave himself up with greater fervour than ever to prayer, passing whole days therein without either eating or drinking, sometimes even for forty hours consecutively. He was accustomed to retire to a little oratory of the Church of St. Jerome, in Rome, where a certain number of disciples came to pray with him and to confer upon ecclesiastical matters. Such was the beginning of the Congregation of the Oratory, whereof he became the first rector-general, and which was destined to shine in the Church with so much splendour of learning and sanctity. He died in 1595, and was canonized in 1662 by Gregory XV.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Less wonder would be felt at the ardour of the saints for prayer, by bearing in mind that it is "the Spirit himself asketh for us, with unspeakable groanings."*—(Rom. viii. 26.)



ENCOURAGEMENT IN WELL-DOING.—St. Eutropius had passed the first years of his life in worldly affairs and in the married state. Having been admitted, on his widowhood, amongst the clergy of Marseilles, he imposed on himself a mode of life of the greatest austerity, in order to expiate, by penitence, the faults which he might have allowed to stain his early years, and he attained to so remarkable a degree of piety, that he was raised to the episcopal see of Orange. But on going to take possession of his bishopric, after his consecration, he found the whole country, and the town itself, so utterly laid waste, in consequence of an invasion of barbarians, that his soul was borne down by discouragement. He was on the point of retracing his steps, when a holy old man meeting him, thus accosted him: “Is it then on account of her riches that you took her as spouse? If she be poor, enrich her by your virtues; if in distress, strive to raise her up from her desolation; if she have no bread to offer you, work for it in the labour of your hands. Never will you have a nobler chance of procuring your own sanctification!” Eutropius was of the same mind, and became, in fact, by his piety, his poverty, and his labours a great and holy bishop. He died towards the year 480.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Brethren, if any man be overtaken by a fault, you, who are spiritual, instruct him in the spirit of meekness.”—(*Gal. vi. 1.*)



ASSISTING AT THE OFFICES OF THE CHURCH.—It would be no easy matter to recount the miracles whereby the eminent sanctity of Germain, bishop of Paris, was shown forth; to enter at large into the relations existing between him and kings Childebert, Clothaire, Caribert, and Sigebert, before whom he displayed all the kindness of a father, combined with the authority of a pastor; or, finally, to record the bountifulness of his almsgiving and his love for the poor. Let us seek rather to call to mind his zeal for the Divine worship. He recited every day the canonical office with head uncovered, even when on a journey, and however inclement the season. He assisted every night at the entire office in his cathedral church; and whereas the clerks and canons were wont to divide the time into three several watchings, he remained there alone till the dawn of day. This suffices to show what importance he attached to the holy sacrifice and public prayer being celebrated with a dignity worthy of the great God. In one particular only did he ever give way in this his ever-present aim; namely, when, for the purpose of feeding the poor, he deemed it expedient to dispose of the sacred vessels. St. Germain died in 576.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“In the churches, bless ye God the Lord. From Thy temple, kings shall offer presents to thee.”—(*Psa. lxxvii. 27.*)



THE HOLINESS OF CHILDHOOD.—A philosopher has said; “A man is trained on his mother’s knees.” In like manner it might be said, it is at the knees of the mother that saints are formed. The young Cyril had learned from his mother to pronounce the name of Jesus, to love the sweet Saviour, and to long for the advantages of Heaven. But his father, hardened in idolatry, drove him from his roof, that he might no longer hear repeated a name which provoked his anger. The governor of Cæsarea, informed of these facts, caused Cyril to be brought before him, and strove to gain him over by caresses and promises; but perceiving how vain were his efforts, he had him led to the place of execution, where the instruments of torture were placed before his eyes. The child was overjoyed at being at length able to die so as to go to Heaven; when he was led before the judge; “I do not fear death,” he exclaimed, “and I wish for Heaven; you could never make up to me on earth for the advantages I should lose by your sparing me. To the work then speedily, for I am a Christian, and intend always to remain one.” The judge thereupon delivered him to the executioners. The martyrdom is generally believed to have occurred under the reign of the emperor Decius.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Parents should keep in memory that it is “out of the mouths of babes and sucklings that God has perfected praise.”—(Psa. viii. 3.)*



HOLINESS AND BRAVERY.—St. Ferdinand, king of Castille and Leon, during his long reign of thirty-five years, had to sustain continual wars against the Moors, who were established in Spain. He deprived them of whole provinces, augmenting thereby the Christian dominions. He destroyed the kingdom of Cordova, by the capture of that town on the 29th June, 1236, and that of Murcia by the capture of Seville on the 22nd December, 1248. "Thou knowest, O my God," he often exclaimed, "that it is neither from ambition nor the love of glory that I make war on the enemies of Thy name, but in order to strike terror into those that blaspheme it." Ferdinand commanded his armies in person, and afforded them a noble example of bravery. Being as pious as he was brave, he fulfilled with all exactness, even in the field, the precepts of religion; he implored the protection of the Almighty upon his arms, and under his armour wore a hair-shirt shaped like a cross. God always blessed his enterprises. He died on the 30th May, 1252, and was canonized in 1671.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The profession of arms is no obstacle to holiness, provided that it be not employed as a pretext for impious dealing. God loves to designate Himself "the God of armies."*—(The Bible, *passim*.)



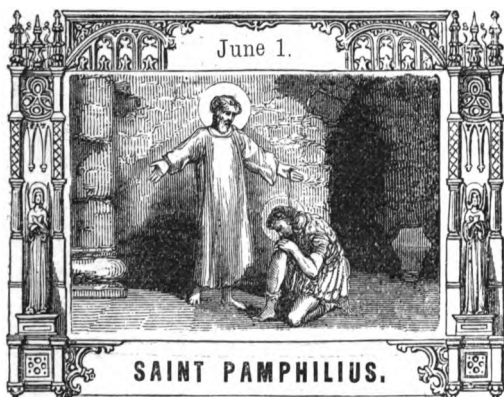
VIRGINITY.—Ancient authors recount that St. Petronilla was the daughter of St. Peter; that God had endowed her with great beauty, and that she was living at Rome in the practice of all virtues befitting Christian virgins, when she was asked for in marriage by a Roman knight named Flaccus. Petronilla, who had taken a vow to belong to God alone, being unable to free herself from his earnest importunity, begged for a delay of three days, in order that she might maturely weigh the matter. During this interval she prepared for death, and fervently prayed to God to withdraw her from this world. On the third day, indeed, she was found dead in the attitude of prayer. Whatever may be the truth of these details, which are withal adopted by the Martyrology, it is admitted that the veneration cherished for Petronilla is very ancient and wide-spread throughout the Church. There existed formerly on the Way of Ardea a cemetery, and a very famous monument dedicated in her name, which Pope Gregory III. had marked out as a station for pilgrims.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"Concerning virgins I have no commandment, but I give counsel that it is good so to be."—(1 Cor. vii. 25.)



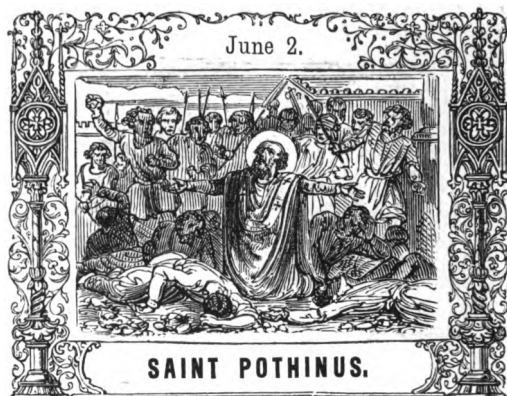
Juna.
Corpus Christi.





LEARNING AND PIETY.—St. Pamphilius, of a noble and powerful family, was born at Beryta, and there discharged important functions in the magistracy. His mind had been fashioned by the cultivation of profane literature; so soon as he came to know Jesus Christ, however, he directed his studies to sacred learning, collected a library of thirty thousand volumes, founded a school at Cæsarea, in Palestine, and gathered around him numerous disciples, whom he formed to the knowledge of religion and of a philosophy purely Christian. Soon, however, the desire for a more perfect life induced him to abandon the world: he gave his property to the needy, and his library to the Church at Cæsarea, assumed a humble and poor garb, and thought only of preparing himself for death by the practice of prayer and penance. Pamphilius was seized in 307 by order of the governor of Palestine, who caused him to be tormented with as much atrocity as the latter had shown eloquence in defending religion. This illustrious example was not, however, withdrawn from the world, without leaving glorious inheritors in the persons of his disciples, amongst whom Eusebius of Cæsarea holds foremost rank.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*May knowledge never be disseminated, save "by the lips of the wise!"*—(Prov. xv. 16.)



ARDOUR FOR MARTYRDOM.—St. Pothinus had founded at Lyons one of the first churches in the whole of Gaul; the body of Christians was already numerous and making great progress, when the pagan priests, alarmed for their gods, excited a tumult among the people. Pothinus was then more than ninety years old, and had almost lost the use of his limbs; but in order to proceed to the presence of the judge, he suddenly summoned up strength. The blasphemies of the thronging multitude accompanied his steps. “What is this God of the Christians?” asked one. “You will know Him, if worthy of it,” replied the old man. At this firm and bold answer, the anger of the people knew no bounds. Pothinus was loaded with blows, and beaten down with the missiles hurled at him; he was, however, snatched from their violence, and taken to prison, where, after two days, he expired. This happened in the year 177. Forty-seven other martyrs, who had been arrested at the same time, underwent various tortures. Cemented thus with the blood of its founders, the Church of Gaul became indestructible.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Even thus did the Apostles rejoice “that they were accounted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus.”—(Acts v. 41.)*



THE MISSION OF THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN.—If death has entered the world through the guilt of a woman, woman has, on the other hand, oftentimes been invested with the mission of bringing salvation to the world. It suffices to mention Deborah, Judith, the incomparable Mary, Mother of God; and, coming down to our own times, Genoveva and Clotilda, to the latter of whom France owes Christianity. Being the wife of Clovis, who was a pagan, like the rest of his people, she urged her husband to become a Christian, and each day entreated Heaven to grant his conversion. Heaven came to her assistance. When he was on the point of losing the battle of Tolbiac and his troops had already begun to fly, a sudden thought recurred to the mind of Clovis, and he exclaimed: "God of Clotilda! if Thou givest me the victory, I will become a Christian." God vouchsafed to grant him the victory, and Clovis was true to his word. Let not this great boon, however, allow us to forget the other virtues of Clotilda,—her humility, piety, resignation, love for the poor, her austerities, and zeal for religion. She died at Tours in 543, having had a revelation of her death thirty days beforehand, while praying at the tomb of St. Martin.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*St. Peter traces out the mission of the Christian woman, "To win the heart of those that believe not the word,"—(1 Pet. iii. 1.)*



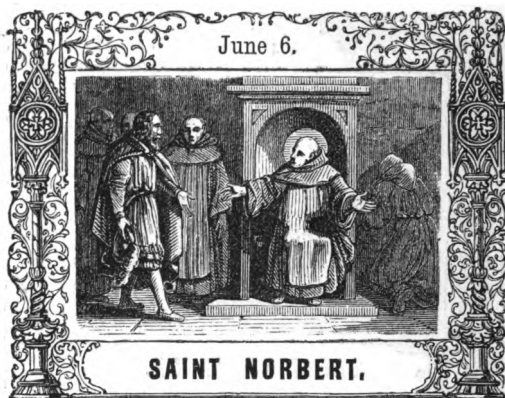
THE DIVINE ASSISTANCE.—Quirinus, bishop of Sisseg, in Upper Pannonia, having been denounced on account of his religion to the governor of the province, the latter sought to induce him to sacrifice forthwith to the gods of the empire, under the plea that the God of the Christians had abandoned him, or else had not been able to prevent his being arrested. Quirinus replied, "The God whom we adore is ever with us, and aids us in the manner that to Him seemeth good. He was with me when I was taken, is here now to inspire me as to what answer I should give you, and He will be at hand to strengthen me should you consign me to death." The governor had him thrown into the Danube with a millstone round his neck; but the stone, floating on the water, served to keep him up, so that he was able to address to the people assembled on the banks words all the more impressive, from the fact that they were confirmed by a manifest miracle. Quirinus prayed God, however, that he might not be deprived of martyrdom, and then sank under the waters. This occurred in the year 309.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*God submits His servants to trials, but, far from abandoning them, gives strength to support them. "Not I alone, but the grace of God worketh with me."*—(1 Cor. xv. 10.)



THE CHURCH OF ROME.—The mission of St. Boniface, in Germany, is remarkable on many grounds, but mainly from the fact that it puts in evidence the primacy of the Church of Rome over the whole Christian world. Having been sent, about the year 723, by Pope Gregory II. to Germany, to bear thither the light of the Gospel, and being afterwards created archbishop of Mayence, the zealous missionary effected wonders of conversion throughout the Rhenish provinces. Amid all his labours and successes, however, he did not forget that Rome is the Mother and Mistress of all Churches, for he was constantly recurring to Rome, either to ask for counsel, apply for fresh powers, or for the confirmation of those wherewith he was already invested. And this did not proceed from any wavering of mind; the letters wherein he pointed out to Pope Zacharias the disorders which required correcting in his own capital, display at the same time his firmness, zeal, and spirit of subordination. St. Boniface was martyred in Friesland, in 755, with fifty-two of his neophytes, when about to confer confirmation on the new converts.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The fold not submitted to Peter is a stranger to Jesus Christ, inasmuch as Peter alone has received authority "to feed the lambs and the sheep."*—(John xxi. 16.)



PENITENCE PROPORTIONED TO THE SIN.—Norbert, born of one of the richest families in Germany, and intimate at the court of the emperor Henry IV., passed his life in the vain display, enjoyments, and excesses which are but too common amongst people moving in the great world. Having been struck by lightning, however, and left for dead upon the spot, on recovering his senses, he reflected upon the state of his soul, was converted, and by degrees subjected himself to austerities proportioned to his previous shortcomings. He founded the order of Prémontré, wherein the poverty, silence, fasting, labour, and prayer observed, showed some set-off for the excesses of the world in the contrary direction. Many gentlemen whom he had known while living in the world came to join him in the monastery. Having been created bishop of Magdeburg in 1126, he did not in any degree slacken the rigours of his life of penance; this was hence regarded as an open censure upon the conduct of many of his contemporaries, and raised up against him numerous enemies: he barely escaped being assassinated while he was in the confessional. He died in peace, however, in 1134, at the age of fifty-three.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Cast away from you all your prevarications, and make to yourself a new heart and a new spirit; and wherefore will you die, O house of Israel!”—(*Ezech.* xviii. 31.)



CONSTANCY IN FAITH.—The episcopate of St. Paul, patriarch of Constantinople, presented one long succession of persecutions and exile endured for the faith. Having been trained by the lessons of St. Athanasius, Paul was not less firm in faith than he, nor less on his guard against the simulated orthodoxy of the Arians. Having been deposed almost as soon as he was elected, in consequence of the hatred and calumnies of the enemies of the faith, he was driven into exile by the emperor Constantine. Returning, after the death of that prince, he was exiled anew by Constans. Being once more established in his patriarchate, through the protection of the emperor Constantius and the authority of the Holy See, the heretics caused him to be once more expelled. When the storm had subsided, he reappeared; but Constantius, his protector, having just died, Constans finally exiled him to Cucuza. The hatred of the Arians pursued him even thither; they took to themselves credit for having caused him to be thrown into prison, and hired assassins to strangle him there in 351. His death is justly considered as an act of martyrdom, since it was received in defence of the faith.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*In our faith and our works let us take care not to be of the number of those "who believe for awhile, and in time of temptation fall away, as having no roots."*—(Luke viii. 13.)



CHRISTIAN GENTLENESS.—St. Medard, bishop of Noyon and Tournay, whose life was marked by such great and successful labours for the extirpation of the remains of paganism, largely existing in the two dioceses which were simultaneously under his charge, is not less remarkable for the constant goodness and unvarying gentleness of his character. This mildness was one of the causes which most contributed to the success of his preaching, for he disarmed all distrust and won the hearts of all. From his time is generally dated “the feast of the Rose” at Salency, which consisted in giving year by year a sum of money and a crown of roses to that young maiden in the district who by her virtues seemed best to have deserved it. During many centuries this observance caused great emulation in the village of Salency, where, so long as it remained a Christian festival, it was productive of the happiest results. St. Medard died in 545.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The Church takes delight in styling her founder “THE AMIABLE JESUS;” and He likewise says of Himself, “I am meek and humble of heart.”—(Matt. xi. 29.)*



SACRIFICE.—No sacrifice should appear too great where the preservation of innocence or faith is concerned. To save one's life, everything else is readily sacrificed; one ought to sacrifice life itself to save one's conscience. St. Pelagia was a native of Antioch, and was about fifteen years old when, in the year 311, certain soldiers suddenly presented themselves for the purpose of taking her before the judge on account of her being a Christian. Fearing for her virtue, her resolution was speedily taken; under pretext of going to put on more suitable clothing, she climbed to the roof of the house, and cast herself thence, relying upon God to save her life, if He deemed it expedient, or to accept her sacrifice if agreeable in His sight. God accepted the sacrifice. The Church, with due honour, inscribed Pelagia among the number of her martyrs, and from remote times has dedicated many churches under her invocation. Some writers have questioned the lawfulness of such an act, without weighing sufficiently the intention that hallowed it. To believe and to hope is better than coldly to reason.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us not balance about giving up everything to God, for whoso "hath first given to Him, recompense shall be made him."*—(Rom. xi. 35.)



THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN.—Margaret, queen of Scotland, and grand-niece of St. Edward, king of England, did not degenerate from so noble and holy an origin. God had bestowed upon her all that was needful to win admiration and to reign; namely, beauty and virtue. Being married to Malcolm, king of Scotland, she acquired a great ascendancy over her husband, and having become mistress of his heart, inclined it unto good. She aided him in establishing just and holy laws, obtained from him the moneys needful for the solacing of those who were in misery, made of him the protector of religion, which became flourishing, and the patron of science and letters, in order to civilize a people which, when compared with the neighbouring nations, was so very backward. Having the full control of her children's education, she wished to render it thorough and Christian. A saintly queen by her acts of beneficence, a holy mother by her solicitude, she was yet more a saint-like Christian by her love of prayer, her penitential acts, and practices of piety. The news of the death of Malcolm, who was killed at the siege of Alnwick, affected her so grievously that she herself died shortly after, in 1094.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The husband that has found a valiant woman hath found a great treasure, but rather because of her virtue than for her grace and beauty.*—(Prov. xxxi. 10—30.)



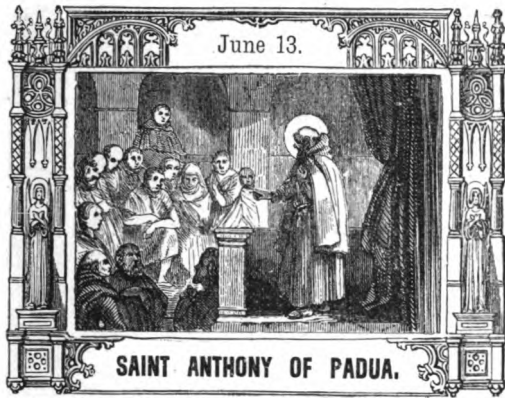
THE CARE OF THE POOR.—The life of saints is marked always by some distinctive feature; for although the generality have practised many virtues at once, there is still some one virtue that stands pre-eminent. Even so was it amongst the Apostles; and the special characteristic in St. Barnabas was his love for the poor. He possessed a field, we are told in the *Acts*; this he sold, and placed the price thereof at the feet of the Apostles. Now it is known that this money was destined for the solace of the needy, the orphans, and the widows. Subsequently, he was charged by the Church of Antioch to carry alms, together with St. Paul, to the Christians of Jerusalem. The surname of Barnabas, or Comforter, which was given him by his colleagues in the apostolate, seems in like manner in harmony with his disposition to goodness and mercifulness. St. Barnabas is believed to have ended his days by martyrdom about the year 70, in the island of Cyprus, which he had almost entirely converted to the faith, and to have met his death from the hands of the Jews, who were enraged at finding their synagogue deserted.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The poor form the most interesting portion of the flock of Christ, and it is to the poor He Himself says that He was "sent to preach the Gospel."*—(Luke iv. 18.)



ZEAL FOR SALVATION.—Who could fail to be struck with admiration, or would not feel himself encouraged in the resolve to secure his own salvation by contemplating so many pious solitaries of the first ages, to whom nothing seemed to cost too much, nought was too excessive when the interest of the soul was concerned? After having been trained to the spiritual life in the monastery of Abage, near Hermopolis, Onophrius resolved to retire farther away, into the desert of the Thebaid, in order to sanctify himself there more effectually by recourse to still greater austerities. He there met with a solitary, with whom he remained a few days, who pointed out to him a solitude still more distant, where he would be utterly alone. Onophrius bent his steps thither, and spent seventy years there without seeing any person, saving the ancient man who had indicated the spot to him, and who paid him a visit once in the year. After the death of the aged solitary, the abbot Paphnucius found out the mysterious solitude, and in like manner visited him annually, until at length Onophrius died in his arms, towards the fourth century of the Christian era.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us avail ourselves of all the means within our reach, and have a solicitude for our souls; for if we come to lose them, "what shall a man give in exchange?"—(Mark viii. 37.)*



THE DESIGNS OF GOD.—Anthony of Padua, belonging to the order of *Canons Regular*, quitted it in order to enter that of the *Capuchins*, in the hope of being sent to Africa, and there suffering martyrdom; but this aim was not realized, for God had other ends in view. Anthony asked to be sent into Italy, in order to get near the holy founder of the order, and there he took measures to remain unknown and to terminate his career in the lowliest functions of the order; but this was not to be. Having been suddenly ordered to speak in presence of a general assembly of the two orders of *St. Dominic* and *St. Francis*, his admirable talent and wonderful learning were at once made manifest. His superiors gave him employment forthwith, and very soon the large towns, amongst others Padua, owed a total change to his preaching. God helped out his zeal by miracles; the name of Anthony was heard on the lips of every one; the humble friar was raised so high in the esteem of the people, that they generally termed him “the saint.” He died on the 13th June, 1231, after having been the glory of his order.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us not hinder by our resistance or our own unworthiness the secret designs of God in our regard. “What am I, that I should answer Him, and have words with Him?”—*(*Job ix. 14.*)



THE GOOD FIGHT OF THE LORD.—St. Basil, bishop of Cæsarea, maintained, single-handed, the combat of the faith against the emperor Valens, the ardent partisan of Arianism. Although deserted by a great number of his colleagues, he did not lose heart; and though but feebly seconded by those who remained faithful to him, he put himself in the foremost rank, in order to shield them with his protection. Having been first solicited and afterwards threatened by Modestus, the prætorian prefect, “What would you have, and what are your expectations?” he asked, “To lure me by the enticements of riches and dignities? These I despise. To drive me into exile? What matters it? To consign me to death? So much the better; I shall the sooner be with God!” “Never have I been spoken to thus,” exclaimed Modestus. “That is because you have never had to deal with a bishop,” replied Basil. Modestus went to give in his report to Valens, saying, “We are conquered.” The emperor signed the sentence of exile; but his eldest son having been struck with sudden illness, he forthwith sent for Basil, who prayed for the child and cured it. The struggle did not terminate here, for heresy is as tenacious as faith is unbending; there was no further question of exiling him, however, and Basil died in peace in 379.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The combat is painful, but it is consolatory to die, saying, with St. Paul, “I have fought the good fight, and now I await the crown.”*—(2 Tim. iv. 7.)



THE BENEFITS OF RELIGION.—Blessed Bernard of Mentone, archdeacon of Aosta, one of the most zealous missionaries of the tenth century, the reformer of the dioceses of Aosta, Sion, Geneva, Tarentaise, Milan, and Novara, was also one of the most sincere friends of suffering humanity that religion has ever produced. Not satisfied with feeding souls with the words of life, he took delight in assembling the poor during his missions, and distributing alms largely to them, which he knew most ingeniously how to get together. But the chief work of his life, and that which causes his memory to be blessed in Europe for nearly nine centuries, is the foundation of the two great guest-houses of the Great and Little St. Bernard, to which so many travellers, lost in the Alpine snows, have owed their lives and charitable hospitality. The devotion there exhibited is all the more worthy of admiration, because the monks themselves, who are attached to these houses, cannot reckon upon living long. Bernard of Mentone died in 1008. Piedmont celebrates his festival on the 15th June.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Holy Scripture tells us that Jesus Christ "went about doing good." This is ever the distinguishing characteristic of His true disciples.*—(Acts x. 38.)



THE FRIEND OF THE POOR.—John Francis Regis, having entered the Company of Jesus in 1616, at the age of eighteen, was attached by his directors, soon after the completion of his novitiate, to the work of the missions, and therein achieved all the good which the zeal of a saint, blessed by Divine grace, can hope to accomplish. But what is most noteworthy in this zeal is that it was specially directed towards the poor, the sick, and the unfortunate of every grade, and to the most inveterate sinners. “The rich,” he was wont to say, “will never want for confessors; the poor then, the most abandoned portion of the flock of Jesus Christ, I choose for my share.” He had acquired a simple and modest style, and adopted a humble manner in announcing the word of God. He loved to gather the children about him, by the sound of a bell, and to give them instruction in catechism in the public squares. With his own hands he tended the sick; begged alms himself for the poor, and afterwards distributed them with his own hand. But the amount of his labours, and the austerities he imposed on himself, shortened his days; he died in 1640 in a holy ecstasy, wherein he beheld Jesus and Mary coming to meet him.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“God,” says the Apostle St. James, “hath chosen the poor in this world, to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom.”—(*Jas. ii. 5.*)



COMPANIONS IN ARMS.—Nicander and Marcian were fighting under the same standard. As soon as they became aware of the ordinances of the emperors Diocletian and Galerius against the Christians, they quitted the military service, either with the intent of not being constrained to sacrifice to the false gods together with the rest of the army, or in order to prepare for still greater conflicts, while rendering themselves of use to such of their brethren as might be suffering persecution for the faith. Their mode of acting caused them to be suspected as Christians, and they were denounced to Maximius, governor of Dorostora, a town of Mysia. They confessed their faith without wavering, endured, without flinching, the several kinds of torture applied, and were afterwards thrown into a dungeon as though to afford them full chance for reflection. They were taken thence at the expiration of twenty days, and were condemned to be beheaded, because they had not changed their purpose. They were accompanied to the place of execution by their wives; the wife of Nicander energetically encouraging him to encounter martyrdom, while the wife of Marcian strove her utmost by force of entreaties and tears to turn him from his resolve. They died together on the 17th June, 302.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The world designates such events as misfortunes, while religion terms them, with good reason, victories; and it is by such victories "that our faith has overcome the world."*—(1 John v. 4.)

June 18.



SAINT CALOGERIUS.

VICTORY OVER THE DEMON.—During the reign of Theodosius the Younger, that is, in the first part of the fifth century, a holy hermit, whose real name has not reached us, but who is known under the designation of “Calogerus,” meaning “the good old man,” came from Constantinople to seek an asylum in Sicily. This island and the Lipari isles were still involved in paganism, and, just as with every country into which the Gospel has not penetrated, there existed numerous cases of persons possessed by the Devil. Calogerus had been promoted to the order of “Exorcist,” and had moreover been invested, at his own prayer, by the successor of St. Peter, with full authority to act. Armed with these powers, in conjunction with austere fasting and earnest prayer, he undertook to vanquish the demon, and succeeded in achieving a complete victory. At a word, he cured the demoniacs, and laid bare the trickery of the oracles and vain power of the idols. Sicily and the neighbouring isles were won over to the faith. The holy hermit fasted every day, excepting Sundays, and all the time which was not spent by him in apostolic labours was devoted to prayer. Holiness of life was the groundwork of his eloquence.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Jesus Christ told His disciples: “There are demons that can go out by nothing, save by prayer and fasting.”—(Mark ix. 28.)*



THE VICTORIES OF THE SAINTS.—To be ready to confront death rather than renounce one's faith, is to achieve a great victory over one's self; but this victory gained by the saints is not their final triumph, for their power does not perish with their death, it then really commences. SS. Gervaise and Protase, who were brothers, suffered martyrdom together at Milan during the persecution of Domitian. The mighty events subsequently occurring, caused their memory to slumber. St. Ambrose, archbishop of Milan, finding himself exposed to the persecution of the empress Justina, who sought to drive him from his see, so as to be able to allow Arianism to get the upper hand in his diocese, had a revelation indicating the spot where the bodies of the martyrs lay buried. He had them exhumed, and caused them to be exposed to the veneration of the faithful; the concourse of reverent votaries was immense, and so many and such striking miracles were manifested that it became impossible for the Arians to deny either the existence of the miracles, or to give a wrong interpretation thereto. They no longer ventured to raise further opposition to the holy archbishop, or attempt anything in favour of their own doctrine. Thus did these holy martyrs obtain a fresh triumph.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"The Lord is my helper: I will not fear what man shall do to me. Remember the prelates who have spoken the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end."—(*Heb. xiii. 7.*)



A FAMILY OF SAINTS.—St. Florence was the daughter of Severian, duke of Carthagera, during the reign of Justinian, and she was the sister of St. Leander, archbishop of Seville; St. Fulgentius, bishop of Carthagera; and St. Isidore, who likewise became bishop of Seville, and whom she had herself trained to piety. One of her sisters, named Theodora, was the mother of St. Hermingild, a sovereign prince, and of the virtuous Reccared, king of the Visigoths of Spain. The pious mother of this family of saints was, in like manner, called Theodora. St. Florence took the religious veil, and became the parent of a numerous spiritual family; at the time of her death nearly forty convents acknowledged her as their superiress. St. Leander dedicated to her his two books, “Of the Life of the Nun,” and “On Contempt of the World.” St. Isidore, in like manner, dedicated to her his two treatises, “Of the Birth, Life, and Reign of the Saviour,” and “Of the Vocation of Nations.” Florence died about 633, illustrious in miracles and sanctified by works of piety.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*How happy would the Church be were she able often to address to parents the blessing uttered by Eli to the father of Samuel, “for the loan he had lent the Lord.”—(1 Kings ii. 20.)*



THE PRESENCE OF GOD.—Aloysius, or Louis de Gonzaga, having entered the Company of Jesus while very young, and having died when only twenty-three years old, is one of those to whom may justly be applied that saying of Scripture: “He lived many years in a short time.” The numerous miracles that he wrought, and which were also effected by his intercession, bear ample witness to his eminent sanctity, and this sanctity itself flowed from that perfection which he carried into all his acts. Constantly penetrated with a sense of the presence of God, he saw God only in all things, and accomplished all things with intent to please Him. Labour he referred to God, and obedience in like manner; suffering he endured for God’s sake; he thanked God for every good that came to him, and for every humiliation he likewise thanked God, because it rendered his life more conformable with that of Jesus Christ. He was accordingly the edification of the order even before becoming its glory. He died at Rome in 1591, from the consequences of a malady contracted while tending the sick.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Walk before me, and be perfect,” said God to Abraham. *It is indeed impossible to think in a Christian-like spirit of God without desiring to follow out what may be pleasing to Him.*—(Gen. xvii. 1.)



ADVANTAGES DERIVABLE FROM ADVERSITY.— Paulinus was born at Bordeaux in 353. He reckoned among his ancestors a long line of senators, and his father was prefect of Gaul. He had as preceptor the celebrated Ausonius, and at the age of twenty-five became prefect of the town of Rome. Theresa, belonging to one of the most noble families in Spain, brought him a large accession of wealth in marriage. He was at the height of worldly dignities when sudden changes happening in the empire snatched from him all his honours and a goodly portion of his wealth. Paulinus and Theresa thereupon, apprehending the nothingness of the things of the world, sold the remainder of their possessions in favour of the poor; Theresa dedicated her life to their service, and Paulinus embraced the religious state. His great virtue soon rendered his name famous, and caused him to be raised to the bishopric of Nola. This town, which was devastated by the Goths a year afterwards, stood in need of such a bishop, to prevent its entire destruction. He became the providence of the poor and the unfortunate. Although poor himself, he always found means to give in abundance. St. Paulinus died in 431.

MORAL REFLECTION.— *We read in the book of Proverbs: "Whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."*—(Prov. iii. 12.)



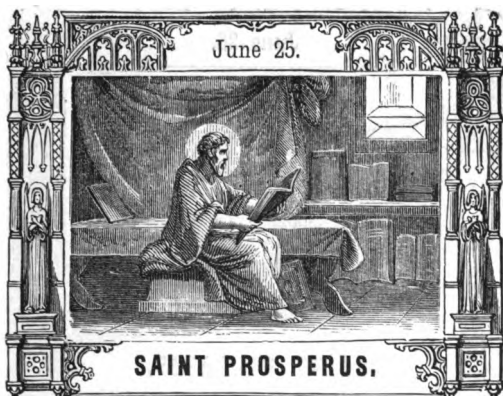
ANOTHER FAMILY OF SAINTS.—The pious Anna, king of the East Angles, was the father of St. Ethelreda, and her mother was St. Heruwya; her sisters were St. Sexburga, St. Withburga, and St. Ethelburga, who died as a nun in France. Ethelreda was born at Ermyng, in the county of Suffolk, and was brought up in the fear of God. After having passed three years in married life, though in a state of continence, she retired to the island of Ely, in order to devote herself to practices of piety. Afterwards yielding to the entreaties of Egfrid, king of the Northumbrians, she consented to assume the dignity of queen, but only on condition of still keeping holy continence. Notwithstanding all the good she effected by the influence of her example in the world, she preferred seeking anew the calm of retirement, and withdrew to the nunnery of Coldingham, and subsequently to the isle of Ely, where she founded a nunnery herself, and there died in 679. Her body having been exhumed eleven years after, was found exempt from corruption, and many miracles were wrought by mere contact therewith.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Happy those families where “the children’s children are the crown of the old, and the glory of children are their fathers!”—(Prov. xvii. 6.)*



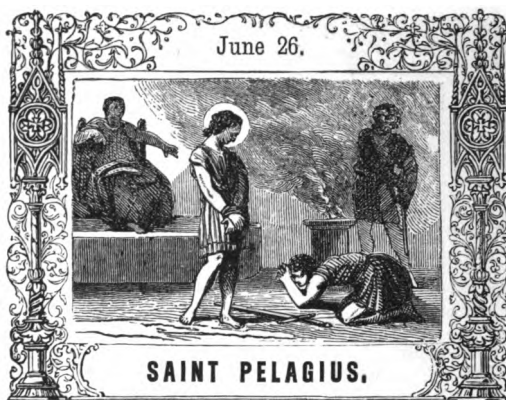
THE DIVINE PROMISE.—God had promised the world a Saviour, and the world, for more than four thousand years, had been expecting the Desired One, when the angel Gabriel, deputed to Zachariah, announced to him that the precursor was about to be born, and that the Messiah would follow, even as the sun succeeds to the dawn. John the Baptist appeared, and the Saviour Himself came into the world when six months had elapsed. John the Baptist withdrew into the desert beyond the Jordan; he there led a life of penance, being clothed in coarse garments, and feeding on locusts and wild honey. He announced the Messiah, and the Messiah came to receive baptism at his hands. John pointed Him out to the people; and, when the mission of the precursor was completed, King Herod had him cast into prison and beheaded. The Messiah Himself then entered upon His evangelical mission. Thus were the promises of God accomplished in due course, at the time marked out in the eternal counsels, and with inviolable fidelity. Heaven and earth will pass away, but the word of God shall not fail.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Expect the Lord, do manfully, and let thy heart take courage, and wait thou for the Lord.”—(*Psa. xxvi. 14.*)



PURITY OF FAITH.—The orthodox faith admits of no admixture of human opinion. It is pure or not pure; there is no half-way. St. Prosperus of Aquitaine, one of the noblest intellects of his age, and one of the most illustrious disciples of St. Augustine, strove manfully to show this in his numerous works against the Semi-Pelagians. The Pelagians held that man, of his own strength, and without the intervention of grace, could ensure his salvation; the Church launched condemnation against such a gross error: The Semi-Pelagians, in order not to incur the stigma of heresy, yet without entirely foregoing error, taught that, though man could not save himself without the aid of grace, he might at least, of his own strength, prepare himself for grace, and render himself worthy of receiving it. Against this modified view Prosperus energetically wrote; the Semi-Pelagians broke out into hostility against him, and loaded him with persecution and calumny. Being vanquished by argument, they appealed to the Sovereign Pontiff, which gave occasion to St. Prosperus to proceed to Rome, where he again became the strong buckler of faith. He died, as it is believed, towards the year 465.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*As there is "but one God, and one baptism," so there is in like manner "but one faith;" and faith does not admit either of a "so much" or "so little;" it does not shape itself according to time, or place, or circumstances, or individuals, but is a matter of pure obligation.*—(Ephes. iv. 5.)



VAIN ALLUREMENTS.—About the year 940, Abderahman III., caliph of the Arabs in Spain, had achieved a great victory over the Christians, and captured numerous prisoners, among whom was the bishop of Tuy. The latter, in order to recover his liberty, gave as a hostage one of his nephews, named Pelagius, who was ten years old. Four years after, the young Pelagius having been introduced to the court, Abderahman was so charmed with his intelligence and beauty, that he laid plans, contrary to the faith of his engagements, to contrive his conversion to Islamism. He made him the most brilliant promises, employed every kind of inducement and artifice, and sought to entice him by the allurements of wealth, dignities, and honours. Pelagius, inflexible in his faith, gave, as his only answer, that all these advantages were as nothing worth when compared with the Gospel. Abderahman, provoked to anger, caused him to be put to the torture; he had his limbs wrenched with strong pincers, and after eighteen hours of various torments, ordered his head to be struck off. This glorious martyrdom was accomplished at Cordova, and was the beginning of a persecution that lasted for seven years.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The seductions of the senses have little sway over those who, lifting their eyes to Heaven, “look on Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who, having joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame.”—(Heb. xii. 2.)*



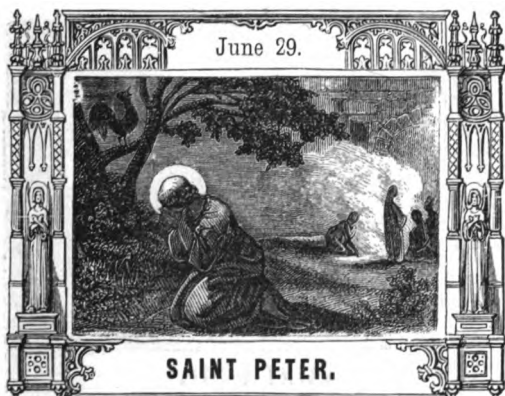
THE CROWN OF THE CHRISTIAN.—Whatever rank or station you hold, ever bear in mind that you are a Christian. Christianity is above all greatness, and baptism is more holy than the unction of kings. Far from being an obstacle to the accomplishment of duty, Christianity is the hallowing thereof. Thus it was that Ladislaus, elected king of Hungary in 1080, understood and knew how to fulfil the high charge confided to him. The most humble of Christ's followers never showed greater zeal in the accomplishment of Christian works or more simple and modest virtues than he. Never did sovereign exhibit more ardour for the reign of justice, or more courage in defending his country. He annexed to his dominions Cracovia and Dalmatia, expelled the Huns, and conquered the Poles, Russians, and Tartars. He was preparing for a great crusade against the infidels, in order to wrest from them possession of the Holy Land, when he died in 1095. His tomb has been illustrated by numerous miracles.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*There is no true greatness apart from religion. "The great man, and the judge, and the mighty is in honour; but there is none greater than he that feareth God."*—(*Eccles. x. 27.*)



INFLUENCE OF GOOD EXAMPLE.—St. Irenæus had been the disciple of St. Papias and St. Polycarp, who were themselves the disciples of St. John. The virtue, wisdom, and grandeur of soul displayed by St. Polycarp had in especial manner made such an impression upon him, that he strove to reproduce in himself this high example. “I wrote,” he says, “his actions and his words, not upon tablets, but in the depths of my heart, and they have remained ever present there.” Having become bishop of Lyons, in succession to St. Polthinus, Irenæus soon showed in act that the zeal and charity of the Apostle St. John, the courage and grandeur of soul of St. Polycarp had been transmitted to him. He showed himself the watchful but charitable opponent of heresy, the learned and firm upholder of faith, the patient and pious defender of the unity of the Church. On occasion of the disagreement which arose between Pope Victor and the bishops of Asia, on the subject of the Paschal observance, he succeeded, by means of his letters and active interposition, in calming all dissension. St. Irenæus suffered martyrdom in the year 202.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Fathers and mothers, and heads of families, spiritual and temporal, should bear in mind that inferiors “will not be corrected by words” alone, but that example is likewise needful.—(Prov. xxix. 19.)*



FALSE CONFIDENCE, SIN, AND PENITENCE.—Jesus Christ had chosen Peter as the Head of His Church, and had conferred on him marks of peculiar affection. When, the night before His death, the Saviour told His Apostles that they would soon deny Him, Peter, full of confidence in himself, answered, “Not all, Lord, for I shall not deny Thee, were I to meet death with Thee.” A few hours had scarcely sped ere Peter had denied his Divine Master thrice; but at one look from Jesus, he understood the infamy of his disavowal. He went apart and wept bitterly; tradition even relates that he did not cease weeping for the remainder of his days, so that his cheeks were hollowed into channels. After the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, Peter entered with admirable zeal upon the career of an apostle, and as chief of the apostolic college. He preached in Judea, Asia Minor, and at Rome; there it was that he established his see, and there suffered martyrdom by crucifixion, in the year 66 of the Christian era.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The greatest failings often come from too much confidence; but would to God they were always followed by penitence.* “God overlooks the sins of men for the sake of repentance.”—(Wisd. xi. 24.)

June 30.



SAINT PAUL.

GREATNESS AND INFIRMITY.—St. Paul, whom the Church justly styles the Great Apostle, has laboured most for the propagation of the Gospel, suffered the bitterest persecution, and received from Heaven the most sublime communications. As concerns his labours, he preached in Judea, Samaria, Greece, Thrace, Macedonia, Asia Minor, Spain, Gaul, and Italy. As to his persecution, he was in prison often, five times beaten with rods by the Jews, and thrice by strangers, was stoned, and many times left for dead. In regard to his revelations, he was raised to the third heaven, and admitted to a share in the eternal mysteries. But side by side with such high favours were ranged great weaknesses and humiliating temptations, in order, as he himself tells us, that the greatness of his revelations might not fill him with pride. St. Paul preached the Gospel at Rome at the same time as St. Peter, and there suffered martyrdom at the same time, being beheaded in the year 66 of the Christian era.

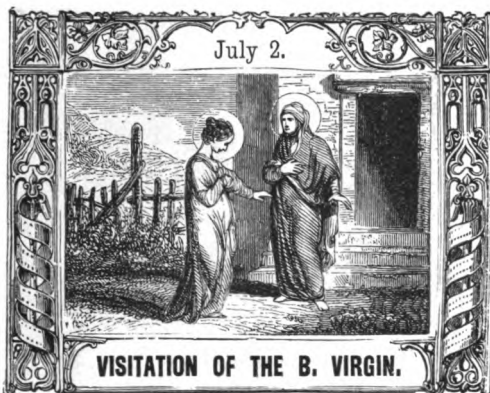
MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let not our dignity nor our works lift us up, for temptation and infirmity are not far distant; let not temptation discourage us however, "for His grace is sufficient for us" to achieve the victory.*—(2 Cor. xii. 9.)





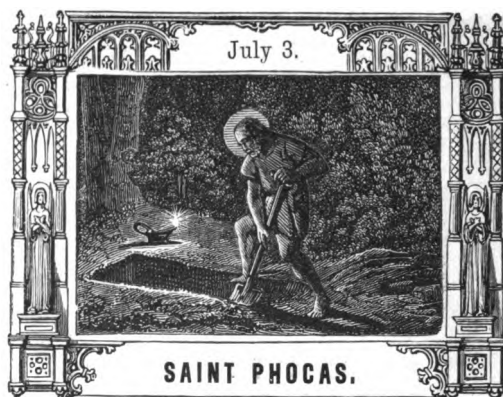
THE FORCE OF EXAMPLE.—Thibault, son of Count Arnold of Champagne, was taken with a love for the cœnobitic life through reading the lives of the hermits of the Thebaid, and began to initiate himself therein from early childhood. While still a youth he secretly left the paternal roof, accompanied by a friend, named Walter, with whom he proceeded to Suabia, exchanging on the road their rich garments for humble attire. They took up their abode in a forest, and, subsequently, in a wild solitude near Vicenza. They gained their livelihood by the labour of their hands, returning to their quiet cell to support themselves on the proceeds, amid the most rigorous austerities. Walter dying while in this retirement, Thibault, now left alone, forthwith redoubled his fervour of life. His virtue having attracted the attention of the public, the Count and Countess de Champagne succeeded at length in finding their son. They came to seek him, and, overcome with admiration at the angelic life he was leading, prostrated themselves at his feet. The count would have remained with him had not urgent affairs precluded him from so doing. The countess, however, stayed with her son, who built a cell for her, and soon after died at the age of thirty-three. Alexander III. inscribed his name among the saints.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Thus may the example of the saints influence people living in the world, and even thus may youth "be formed from the pattern shown."*—(Exod. xxv. 40.)



INCREDULITY AND FAITH.—When the angel Gabriel announced to Zachary the birth of John the Baptist, Zachary was slow of belief, and asked for a proof of the accomplishment of this promise. “The proof is,” said the angel, “that you shall remain without speech, to punish your unbelief.” After the angel had announced to Mary that she was to become the Mother of God, and she had yielded her consent, she went to visit Elizabeth, who was her relative, and mother of John the Baptist, then in the sixth month. Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Ghost, through the presence of the Son of Mary, said prophetically to the humble Virgin: “Blessed art thou that hast believed, because these things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord.” Thereupon, Mary replying to the congratulations of her cousin, uttered in her turn that sublime canticle familiar to every Christian: “My soul doth magnify the Lord, because he hath regarded the humility of His handmaid,” &c.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Such is the difference which faith establishes amongst men.* “He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be condemned.”—(Mark xvi. 16.)



THE CHRISTIAN FACE TO FACE WITH DEATH.—At Sinope, during Diocletian's persecution, there dwelt a Christian named Phocas, living by the produce of a garden which he cultivated with his own hands, and exercising a generous hospitality towards strangers. He was so universally loved that every one called him "the good Phocas," and so well known was he as being a Christian, that, on receipt of the Emperor's edict, the governor of the province, without further ado, sent two of his satellites to take away his life. Phocas having hospitably entertained them, they communicated to him the object of their mission, and asked him for information respecting the person whom they were seeking. "Take your rest," he urged in reply, "to-morrow I will make him known to you." During the night he dug his own grave, and on the following morning thus addressed them: "I am the man, do with me what you will." In their utter wonderment they began hesitating, but afterwards, thinking they were accomplishing a duty, they resolved to behead him. Great miracles were worked at the tomb of Phocas the Good, and the Greek Church has inscribed him with honour amongst her saints, assigning to him the title which is usually reserved to bishops, namely, the holy martyr.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The true Christian frequently desires death, and always accepts it without shrinking; for "it is bitter only unto him that findeth happiness in riches."*—(*Wisd.* xli. 1.)



A FAULT AND ITS REPARATION.—When St. Ulrich was promoted to the see of Augsburg, the town had just been devastated by the Hungarians and the Slaves; all its monuments were destroyed, the churches in ruins, the cathedral reduced to ashes, the clergy driven away, and the flock scattered. The bishop restored the ruined structures, rebuilt the churches, surrounded the town with a girdling wall, gathered his flock about him, re-established discipline, regulated the ecclesiastical chant and the public services of the Church, in a word, gave back life to his entire diocese. But these external cares did not absorb all his time, he still found sufficient to devote to works of piety, and his clergy might in every respect have taken him for their model. Having reached a great age, however, he thought he had done enough, appointed his nephew bishop in his stead, and retired to the abbey of St. Gall. Such a mode of acting being contrary to the discipline of the Church, the bishops of the province cited him to appear at Ingelheim, in order to hear his sentence. The aged man, with all humility, avowed that he had committed a fault, and begged, with tears in his eyes, that pardon might be accorded to him. His prayer was granted, but he had to resume the government of his diocese, where he died in 973, at the age of eighty.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The avowal of a fault is the best apology.*
 “Be not ashamed to confess thy sins, but strive for the justice of thy soul.”—(*Eccles. iv. 31.*)



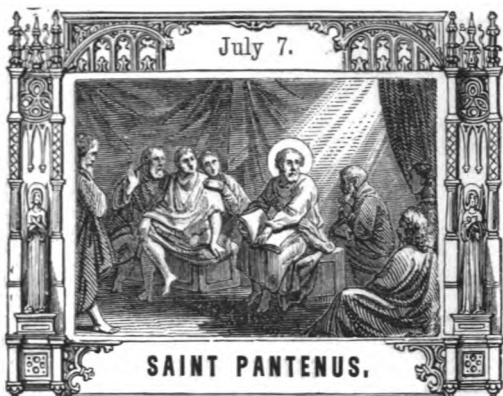
IMITATION OF JESUS CHRIST.—St. Peter of Luxembourg had been so carefully trained to virtue from his very childhood, that Pope Clement VII. did not shrink from assigning him, in 1384, to the town of Metz, as bishop, although he had not then reached the age of fifteen. The young prelate was indeed of a mind and character so maturely developed, that the court of England, whither he had been sent as a hostage for his brother, who was a prisoner of war, did not hesitate to release him on parole. Having been advanced to his episcopate, he proposed to himself to take Jesus Christ as his model in everything, and by way of commencing with one trait of the Saviour's life, he made his entry into Metz barefoot, and mounted on an ass. He was further desirous of imitating Him in His mercy towards sinners, in His affection for the poor, and His humility. He regarded himself as the last of all men, received with the utmost kindness those to whom he had to show hospitality, and gave away without stint or measure all that belonged to him. The Pope sent for him to Avignon and created him cardinal at the age of seventeen; he died when only eighteen, without having been consecrated, and was canonized by Clement VII.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ,” said the great Apostle. *Jesus Christ is in very deed the perfect model of all well-doing.*—(1 Cor. xi. 1.)



INNOCENCE JUSTIFIED.—St. Goar was born in Aquitaine towards the year 585, and was promoted to the priesthood. After having been employed during the first years of his ministry with great success in the conversion of pagans and heretics, the love of retirement induced him to withdraw to a hermitage in the diocese of Treves. There he gave himself up with zeal to the practice of penance and prayer; but the fame of his sanctity having drawn around him a great number of sick and many devout persons, and having further led many pilgrims to his cell, where every one received generous hospitality, he was accused to the bishop of Treves of having converted his cell into a hostelry, and of indulging, even as far as he himself was concerned, in good cheer. He had justified himself with all gentleness and humility, but the bishop required him to prove his virtue by working a miracle. This inconsiderate demand was attended, however, by a miracle which overwhelmed the prelate with confusion, inasmuch as a fault, which he had sought carefully to conceal, was straightway laid bare. King Sigebert offered the pious solitary the bishopric of Treves, which, with firmness, he refused and died in 647.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Who shall accuse against the elect of God? Who is he that shall condemn? God it is that justifieth.”—(*Rom.* viii. 33.)



PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION.—St. Pantenus, gifted with the noblest qualities of mind and heart, had devoted himself to the study and practice of the Stoic philosophy, which was held in high esteem amongst the ancients. But when, he had arrived at the knowledge of Christianity, he at once understood that philosophy was as naught in comparison with the Gospel. Having become a Christian, he was charged with the direction of the school of Christian philosophy, instituted at Alexandria by the disciples of St. Mark. He was directing it with as much talent as true learning, when the bishop of Alexandria sent him to the Indies in order to combat the doctrines of the Brahmins, and revivify the faith. With the result of his labours we are unacquainted; it is only known that he returned after an interval of some years, bringing back with him a copy, in Hebrew, of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, which must have been taken thither by St. Bartholomew. The illustrious St. Cyril, of Alexandria, is to be reckoned among his disciples. St. Pantenus died the death of the saints at Alexandria about the year 215, after having taught his followers to sanctify their lives rather than to indulge in subtle discussions.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Have a care that none lead you astray by a vain philosophy,” says the Apostle; for philosophy, indeed, apart from religion, is a vain thing.—(Colos. ii. 8.)



CHRISTIAN KINDNESS.—St. Elizabeth, queen of Portugal, is one of the most perfect models of that kindness which Christianity inspires. The poor never spoke of her otherwise than as “their good mother.” King Denis, her husband, joined to his many high qualities those vices which are most wounding to the heart of a true wife; but Elizabeth exhibited so much forbearance and kindness, that he was at length touched, and became staid in conduct and sincerely a Christian. The devout princess founded refuges for the aged, asylums for young persons exposed to the temptations of the world, houses for penitent women, and convents for persons who were virtuous but poor. She brought about a reconciliation between the king and his son when they were on the very verge of war. Having become a widow, she would have desired to take the veil, but the poor would thus have been deprived of their mother; she therefore remained in the world for their sake. She died in 1336, the victim of her charity, but after having completed a long journey she had undertaken in order to prevent the breaking out of fresh hostilities, her efforts being crowned with full success, for the very rumour of her coming had brought about an armistice.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“A good man out of a good treasure bringeth forth good things,” *we are assured by the Holy Gospel.*— (*Matt. xii. 35.*)



THE MAN OF PEACE.—St. Ephrem, one of the most illustrious doctors of the Syrian Church, and one of the holiest personages the world has ever beheld, was born with an impetuous temper, whereof his sermons and his writings present a faithful reflex, and which was instrumental in causing him to commit, during his youth and before baptism, faults which he all his life bewailed. By dint of courage and virtue, however, he succeeded in conquering his natural bent to so perfect a degree, that he was never called otherwise than “the peaceful man of God.” St. Ephrem dwelt in solitude, and never left it save to preach, to contend against the heretics, visit the renowned shrines, or to converse about the spiritual life with the great masters, such as James of Nisiba, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. Basil of Cæsarea. His deep humility withheld him from being ordained priest, for he deemed himself too unworthy of this high dignity. He accounted as nothing the learned works which he had composed in favour of the faith, the great number of sinners whom he had converted, and the heretics he had put to the rout, or led back to the one fold. He died about 378, at a very advanced age.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Keep innocence and behold justice, for there are remnants for the peaceable man,” saith the Psalmist; “but the unjust shall be destroyed together.”—(Psa. xxxvi. 37.)



THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER.—A mother has not done her entire duty when she has trained for the world, and according to the spirit prevailing in the world, her children as honourable citizens. • A Roman matron, named Felicitas, had inspired her seven sons with sentiments of the purest Christianity, and the example of this excellent family exercised so great an influence, that many pagans, at the sight thereof, became Christians. The pagan priests denounced her to the emperor Antoninus, and Felicitas and her sons were soon cited to appear before the prefect Publius. No manner of remonstrance, threat, or promise did he refrain from making to each one separately, but all in vain; and when the generous mother beheld the moment of their sentence approaching, she thus addressed her sons: “Look heavenward, my children, behold Jesus Christ stretching forth His arms and battling for your souls!” They were condemned to different kinds of torture, and martyred at intervals. Felicitas died with the last of her children, four months after the death of the first who had suffered martyrdom. This glorious event occurred in the year 164 of the Christian era.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*A Christian mother should ever keep before her eyes this example, as also that of the mother of the Machabees, ever “to be admired above measure, and worthy to be remembered by good men.”—(2 Mach. vii. 20.)*



POWER OF PRAYER.—St. James, bishop of Nisiba, was endowed by Heaven with an admirable genius, and had cultivated it by the study of divine and human learning. Having conceived a distaste for the world, he retired to the depths of a forest, there to devote himself to penance and prayer. The inhabitants of Nisiba drew him from his retreat, however, to constitute him their bishop. He scarcely modified, in any measure, his mode of life, but he at least put to profit his great talents to promote the salvation of souls, and his voluntary poverty enabled him to expend, for the benefit of the poor, the wealth which he himself knew how to dispense with. He was above all things a man of prayer, and thereby procured the performance of many miracles. By means of prayer he restored to life a man who had wickedly feigned death, so as to excite his compassion, but who had literally been struck dead. By praying with the inhabitants of Constantinople, he preserved them from the heresiarch Arius, who died while coming to take possession of that see. By praying with the inhabitants of Nisiba, he preserved his episcopal town from falling into the hands of the Persians, who twice came to besiege it. This holy bishop died about the year 350.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“The continual prayer of a just man availeth much.” *All those whose prayer has availed to open and to shut the heavens were, withal, weak and frail men like unto ourselves.*—(Jas. v. 17.)



THE PRICE OF AN ACT OF FORGIVENESS.—It was Good Friday: John Gualbert, a Florentine gentleman, living according to the maxims of a corrupt world, came suddenly, in a narrow defile, upon the man whom he regarded as his mortal enemy; to put his hand to his sword and rush upon him with intent to kill, was the affair of a moment. But the man whom he was about to deprive of life, throwing himself on his knees and stretching out his arms in the form of a cross, entreated him by the passion of Jesus Christ, which the Church was that very day celebrating, to pardon him. John Gualbert stopped, reflected awhile, stretched forth his hand, and granted forgiveness. Thence he betook himself to the church of the monastery of San Miniato, in order to be present at the office of which he had been just reminded. Divine grace completed his conversion; he became a monk, and attained to such great fervour, that the religious wished to make him their abbot. Out of humility he refused; but eventually the longing for a life still more perfect inspired him with the desire of founding an Order more austere; and he accordingly founded that of Vallombrosa, which was approved in 1070, and in which he died the death of a saint in 1073

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Happy the man who has great injuries to forgive, for "with the same measure it shall be returned to him again."*—(Luke vi. 38.)



THE POWER OF ALMS.—Eugene was elected bishop of Carthage in 481, by the unanimous voice of the Catholics of that town, and with the assent of Hunneric, king of the Vandals, who, together with his people, was an upholder of Arianism. He soon showed what charity, when emanating from a truly Christian heart, is capable of effecting. His personal fortune, and the liberal means furnished by his flock, the object of whose love he was, enabling him to expend large sums in alms, he distributed them without distinction of persons or creed, and thereby won the veneration and love of the Arians themselves, causing many to return to the faith. At last, however, the priests of the Arians, disquieted about the fate of their doctrine, raised a persecution against the holy bishop. The persecution became general, atrocious and pitiless; but the number of the Catholics was too great to allow of their Church being extirpated. Eugene was twice driven into exile and condemned to punishments, which no one, however, dared to inflict. He died in 505, at Albi, in Gaul, in a monastery which he had constructed.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Alms shall be a great confidence before the most High God, to them that give it. Water quenbeth a flaming fire, and alms resisteth sin.”—(*Tob. iv. 12*; *Eccles. iii. 33*.)



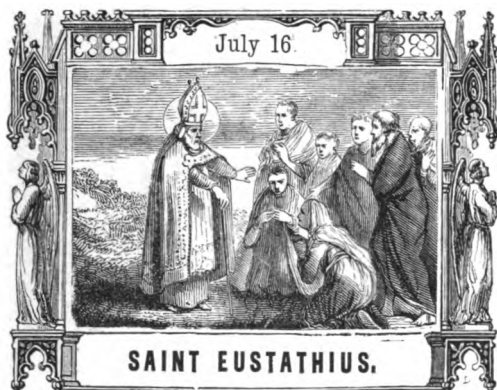
THE SCIENCE OF THE CROSS.—St. Bonaventure, the glory of his order, or rather of the Church at large, one of the Christian orators the most replete with true unction, and one of the most erudite doctors of the Church, entered the Franciscan order in 1243. He afterwards became the Father General; was promoted to the bishopric of Albano by Gregory IX.; honoured with the Roman purple; and was charged by the same pontiff with the direction of the General Council of Lyons. Being as modest as he was learned, he took delight in filling the humblest offices in his order. The envoys who brought to him the insignia of cardinal found him employed waiting at table. At the news of his promotion to a bishopric he fled to France. His piety was not less great than his humility. One of his monks saying to him that he must be very happy at being so honoured, he answered, "It is not necessary to be so in order to love God." On another occasion St. Thomas Aquinas asked him whence he drew so much eloquence and unction. Pointing to his crucifix, he replied, "Behold the great book that teaches me everything!" St. Bonaventure died at Lyons in 1271.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The Apostle St. Paul has also told us: "I judged not myself to know anything but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."*—(1 Cor. ii. 2.)



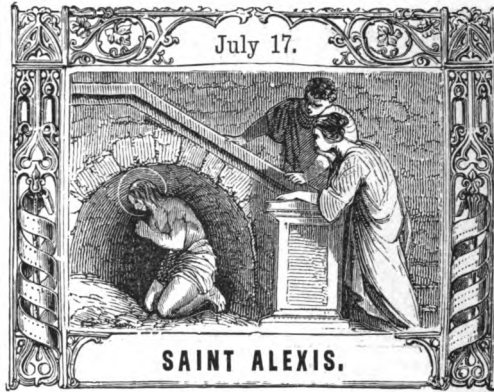
PIETY, MEEKNESS, AND BRAVERY.—Henry II., anointed emperor of Germany on the 8th July, 1002, showed by his life that piety is a royal virtue, because it had justice as its companion, and that piety and justice sanctify bravery when allied with mercy. Though four times compelled to fight against his revolting subjects, he as often pardoned them. Great wars gave full employment to his arms. He subdued Poland, Bohemia, and Moravia, the populations whereof had made incursions into the empire. He drove out the Saracens from Italy, whose presence had been disturbing Rome and Christendom in general. Being at length at peace on every hand, he journeyed through his dominions in order to impart new life while repressing abuses, establishing justice, and protecting religion. He expelled all flatterers from the imperial court, and loaded with favours such as reproached him for any fault. He died at Halberstadt, on the 14th July, 1024, and was canonized in 1152. Werinhair, the bishop of Strasbourg, prevented him from relinquishing the sceptre, as he had intended, with the aim of seeking greater perfection.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Happy would it be for nations were those invested with the governing power true saints; and saints they would be, did they but remember that they hold the place of God.*—(Prov. viii. 15.)



THE FAVOUR OF THE GREAT.—St. Eustathius, bishop of Berea, experienced a cruel instance of the inconstancy of the favour of the great. After having been loaded with marks of confidence by Constantine, he unjustly incurred his disfavour, and died in exile. After having held the foremost rank among the fathers of the General Council of Nicea, and enjoyed the signal honour of addressing an allocution to the emperor in the name of the council; after having been charged by the emperor to carry out, within his province, the decrees of the council against the Arians, these heretics succeeded in surprising the good faith of the emperor, and in procuring their recall from exile. Pushing their vengeance to the extreme, they subsequently blackened Eustathius with their calumnies, and made him an object of hatred and suspicion. Constantine exiled him to Thrace. Eustathius found in the practices of piety consolation for such a disgrace; and in the purity of his faith he found the needful courage to bear up against all obloquy. He died in 338, praying God to pardon his enemies, and to recall to the faith those who had persecuted him.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“It is good to confide in the Lord rather than to trust in princes.”—(*Psa.* cxxii. 8.)



IMITATION OF THE SAVIOUR.—Alexis, born at Rome, in 350, of a family bearing senatorial rank, quite as illustrious by its Christian virtues as for its nobility and opulence, chose as his portion that part of our Saviour's life in which He has found fewest imitators, namely, in His humiliation. Having been urged by his family to turn his thoughts to marriage, he profited by this to carry out his design, and fled to Edessa; where, during seventeen years, he remained unknown, seeking for humiliations and the contempt of men with as much eagerness as others exhibit in pursuit of fortune and honours. But at length, becoming admired for his sanctity, he once more fled; and, the course of events leading him back to Rome, he went to his own father's house to crave an asylum as the veriest beggar. He there ended his days, after having been for seventeen years made the object of scorn to the entire household. His family at length discovered who he was by means of a paper found upon him containing his name and the main events of his life. The pope, the emperor, and sovereign princes came to render homage to him who had so profoundly humbled himself amongst men.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"Every one that hath left house or lands for my sake shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting."—(*Matt. xix. 27.*)



THE PATERNAL INHERITANCE.—Getulus, and Amantius his brother, military tribunes, had the honour to pour out their blood for the faith during the persecution of Licinius. Getulus had left a widow, named Symphrosia, and seven sons, to whom he had given urgent advice never to turn aside from her example. This Christian family having been denounced to the Emperor Adrian, he required them to appear before the tribunal, and ordered them to sacrifice to the gods of the empire, under pain of death in case of disobedience. “Death,” said Symphrosia, “I desire, in order to rejoin my husband, who is in heaven; and as to my sons, you are not rich enough to purchase their apostasy, nor mighty enough to conquer their courage.” Symphrosia, after having undergone various kinds of torture, was thrown into the Tiber, with a stone tied to her neck. Her sons did not belie their mother’s expectation. No promise could allure them, nor any kind of torment conquer them. Being bound to stakes placed round the temple of Hercules, their limbs were racked by means of cords and pulleys, and their sufferings were at last terminated by the sword.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“We are the children of saints.” *Such remembrance is of itself a pious inheritance, inasmuch as it is a most powerful inducement to virtue.*—(Tob. viii. 5.)



THE MARVELS OF CHARITY.—St. Vincent of Paul, born in 1576, in the diocese of Dax, of poor parents, and ordained priest in 1600, was led by a succession of providential events to Paris, where his charity was to effect the greatest wonders. He founded first of all the order of the Priests of the Mission, called Lazarists, charged with conducting missions in Christian countries and amongst infidels. He next established hospitals and missions in behalf of the galley-slaves; and, finally, the order of the "Sisters of Charity," whose zeal and devotedness are known throughout the world. He founded the hospitals of "La Pitié," "Bicêtre," the "Salpêtrière," the "Foundlings," the "Holy Name of Jesus," and that of Saint Reine in Burgundy. He afforded succour to whole provinces that had been laid waste by war, and to others that were perishing with famine. But what were the powerful means employed by him in order to arrive at these mighty results? He edified by a life of holiness; solicited offerings with zeal, and distributed them generously. He died on September 27, 1660, and was canonized in 1737, after numerous miracles.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"God is charity," says the Apostle. It is not, therefore, astonishing that they who are animated by the spirit of charity should work wonders.—(1 John iv. 8.)



A PIOUS DECEPTION.—Margaret, born at Antioch, in Pisidia, was brought up in the Christian faith by the nurse to whose care she had been intrusted, but without the knowledge of her father, who was a pagan priest. When he ascertained the fact, she had reached her fourteenth year, and it was too late to make her change. Neither promises nor ill-treatment were able to overcome her. He himself denounced her to Olibrius, the governor of the province, who, captivated by the beauty of the young Christian, desired to marry her. She had already made a vow to belong to none other than to Jesus Christ. Having exhausted every inducement and threat, Olibrius caused her to be thrown into a dungeon, where the devil, as it is related, appeared to her; but she conquered him by the sign of the cross. After enduring her imprisonment, she underwent scourging with whips, the racking of her limbs, and the application of red-hot irons to her flesh. But, as her constancy increased according as the torture was intensified, the executioners resorted to the sword, and beheaded her in the year 275.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The world of our day would not fail to blame the action of the pious nurse, but those "whom the love of Christ presseth" take no heed of blame such as this.—(2 Cor. v. 14.)*



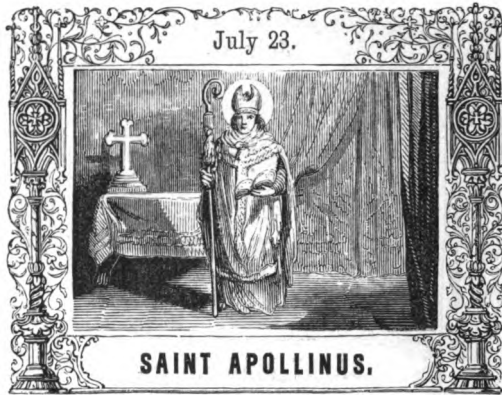
ALMSGIVING.—St. Praxeda was the daughter of Pudens, the Roman senator, and sister to St. Pudentiana. It was during the pontificate of Pius I., and under the reign of Antoninus Pius, that she edified Rome by her virtues. She devoted her large property to the comforting of the distressed and the maintenance of churches. Not having been herself called to the glory of martyrdom, although she ardently longed for it, she strove at least to obtain some share in the crown of the confessors by aiding with encouraging words and generous treatment those who were condemned to suffer for the name of Jesus Christ. In addition to her charity and her liberal almsdeeds, she was worthy of admiration for her spirit of prayer and her love for fasting and bodily mortifications. She died in peace, and was buried beside her sister on the Salarian Way. The renown of her sanctity was so widespread, that from very remote times one of the churches in Rome was dedicated under her name, that church which, many centuries later, conferred the title on St. Charles Borromeo when created cardinal.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Nothing is more rare than the saintly use of riches, and yet how salutary and consoling would it be found! O, rich ones of the world, "make to yourselves friends of mammon, that, when you fail, they may receive you into everlasting mansions."*—(Luke xvi. 14.)



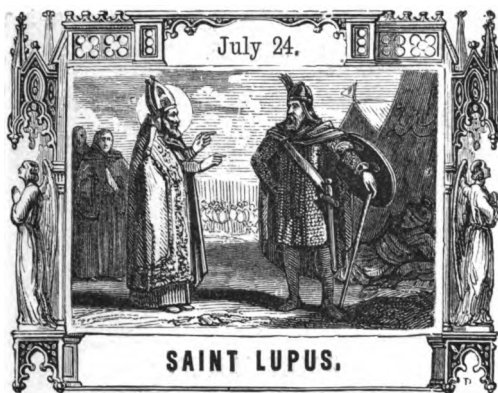
THE PRIVILEGE OF DIVINE LOVE.—St. Magdalen is that sinful woman from whom the Saviour had expelled seven demons; she it was that poured upon His feet the precious ointment, and of whom Simon spoke depreciatingly: “If this were the Son of God, he would know who toucheth him.” Yet this sinning woman, cured of her love for the world, had turned all her affection towards her liberator, and Jesus Christ, answering Simon, said, “Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much.” Magdalen attached herself without further thought to the footsteps of the Saviour; accompanied Him to Calvary and abandoned Him not even in death, for she took measures to embalm His body on the day preceding Easter. And the Saviour rewarded such devotion with a splendid privilege; to her He appeared first of all, and to her addressed the first words uttered by His divine lips after the Resurrection. From the first ages of the Church, tradition has held that Magdalen followed the blessed Virgin to Ephesus, and there met her death.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The love of God is the supreme good.* “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what things God hath prepared for them that love Him.”—(1 Cor. ii. 9.)



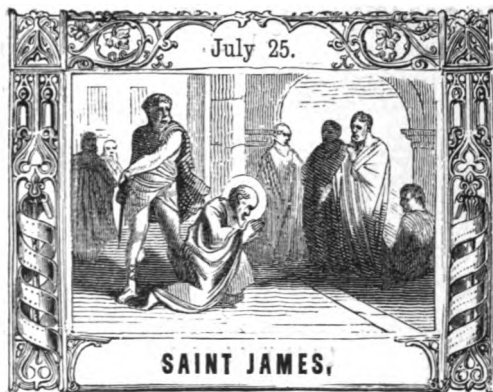
CHRISTIAN CONSTANCY.—St. Apollinus, or Apollinarus, having been consecrated bishop of Ravenna by St. Peter, became attached to his church with such a firm and persevering will as the world is wont to characterize as stubbornness or obstinacy, but which religion glorifies with the name of devotedness. On entering his episcopal town, he cured a blind man who asked him for alms, and this miracle began to engage men's minds in his favour. Soon, however, the priests of the false gods, alarmed for their own worship, conspired against him, hurled at him a shower of stones and left him for dead on the spot. Soon after, however, he presented himself anew; being driven from the town, he employed his time while in this forced retirement in teaching, again made his appearance, and worked many miracles. Vespasian exiled him, after having caused him to be tortured; but the vessel which bore him away had no sooner landed him on the shores of Greece, than he directed his steps towards Ravenna. He is believed to have terminated his career without further effusion of his blood, and to have died towards the commencement of the first century.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"Be constant," for you are not yet at the end of your labours. These words are applicable to every Christian undertaking.—(Acts xxiii. 11.)



THE GUARDIANSHIP OF GOD.—There is no protection comparable with that of God and his Saints; the life of St. Lupus, bishop of Troyes, is about to afford us an example thereof. Lupus had been raised, despite all opposition on his part, and by reason of his sanctity, to the see of Troyes. He had been directed by the bishop of Gaul to proceed in company with St. Germain of Auxerre to England, in order to combat the Pelagian heresy, and had the glory of entirely uprooting it there. Having returned to his diocese, he was surprised in the midst of his apostolic labours by the invasion of Attila. Thrace, Syria, and Greece, had been laid waste; Rheims, Cambrai, Besançon, Auxerre, and Langres were merely heaps of ruin; the turn of the town of Troyes had come. Lupus prayed himself, and got his people to pray during three days and three nights; he placed his flock under the protection of God, and went forward to meet the ferocious conqueror. “I am the scourge of God!” said the king of the Huns, “and am come to destroy you.” “Beware!” replied the bishop; “God crushes the instruments He has made use of.” Attila, astonished at such boldness, turned his army aside from its onward march, and was defeated in the plains of Méry. St. Lupus died in 478.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“God is wonderful in His saints, and will give power and strength to His people.”—(*Psa.* lxxii. 36.)



THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY.—The spirit of Christianity is one abounding in charity and sacrifice: this has been taught us by the Saviour himself. The apostles St. James the Great and St. John were brothers, and related to Jesus Christ according to the flesh. He had surnamed them “Sons of Thunder” on account of their ambition and the impetuosity of their zeal. Passing one day with Him near the town of Samaria, which had refused them hospitality, they said to Jesus, “Wilt thou that we cause fire to descend from heaven?” “Ye know not what spirit moves you,” He answered. On another occasion they asked to be seated in His kingdom, the one at His right, the other at the left. “Could ye drink of the chalice with me?” asked the Saviour. “Yea, Lord,” they replied. “Ye shall drink of it,” said Jesus Christ. After the descent of the Holy Ghost, they better understood the gospel. St. John became a model of charity, and St. James drank the chalice of the Lord by pouring out his blood to the last drop, like his Master. He was beheaded at Jerusalem in the year 43.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*It is another fire, the fire of unbounded charity, that Jesus Christ came to kindle on earth.*—(Luke xii. 49.)



THE SANCTITY OF MARRIAGE.—St. Joachim, or Heli, and St. Anne, the father and mother of the blessed Virgin, humble and modest as virtue itself, have afforded little occasion to history to speak of them; we only know, by the genealogy given by the Evangelist St. Luke, that the father of Mary was called Heli, transformed into Eliacim and Joachim; and Christian tradition teaches that her mother was called Anne. They were already far advanced in years when God accorded to them the fruit of benediction, for God wished that grace should have therein a greater share than nature. According to the same tradition, they dedicated from an early age this cherished child to the service of the altar of the Lord; Joachim is held to have died soon after, and Anne when Mary was but eleven years old. That they had till then trained her in the love and practice of virtue, the whole history of the blessed Virgin's life amply proves; and they must themselves have been of consummate virtue for God to have confided to their keeping the care of so precious a treasure.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Marriage is holy, since God has Himself sanctified it; yet "let every one therein abide with God," says the Apostle.—(1 Cor. vii. 24.)*



BAD EXAMPLE.—St. Pantaleone had been brought up in Christianity by a pious mother; but the evil example of a pagan father, and still more the examples he met with at the court of Galerius, whose physician he was, weakened within him, if not the faith, for this he did preserve in the midst of his shortcomings, at least the Christian sentiment, in so far that, laying aside his religious observances, he connected himself with the idolaters. A holy old man, however, named Hermolaüs, who had been his friend from childhood, undertook to lead him back to God. The backslider hesitated for a long time, but at last ended by yielding to the accents of friendship and the cries of conscience. He became as fervent as he had been lax, and in his turn converted many persons, his own father being the first, and he even ventured to bring the light of Christianity to bear upon the mind of the tyrant himself, esteeming himself happy in being allowed to incur martyrdom by way of expiation, in the event of his not succeeding. This fate attended his efforts, for Galerius delivered him to the executioners, and, after suffering various tortures, he was beheaded in 303.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"With the elect thou shalt be elect, and with the perverse wilt be perverted."—(2 *Kings* xxii. 27.)



THE TRIALS OF FAITH.—Let not the Christian take alarm at the perils of faith; the bark of Peter may be tossed on the waves of a vexed sea, but it bears the Saviour. Never was there a more stormy period than the time of St. Victor's pontificate. Then appeared Theodotus of Byzantium, Ebion, Artemon, Theodotus Trapezion, who tore the bosom of the Church, and Moutanus, who by his mortified exterior, his false miracles, and the austerity of his doctrine, led astray many of the elect, among whom the renowned Tertullian. Then appeared Praxeas and Tatian; but it would be difficult to name all the heresiarchs, so numerous were they. The Catholic bishops were then divided on the question of the paschal celebration. The pope, St. Victor, by his firmness, prudence, and clear doctrine, and by the councils which he assembled in different places, made headway on every side, struck down heresy, prevented schism, and the faith rode triumphant through all. This holy pontiff died in 202.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The Saviour has said to the Head of the Church: "Thou art the rock, and on this rock I build my church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."*—(Matt. xvi. 18.)



THE ACTIVE LIFE AND THE CONTEMPLATIVE.—The Saviour, during His life on earth, sometimes honoured with His presence the house of Lazarus, in the suburb of Bethany, close by Jerusalem. Lazarus had two sisters, named Martha and Mary, who revered Jesus with the utmost devotion; and they it was who solicited and obtained at His all-powerful hand the raising of their brother from the grave. Now on one occasion when the Saviour went to partake of food in this house, Mary remained beside Him in contemplation and the ecstasy of divine love; Martha, on the contrary, was busied in the active duties of the household and said to Him: “Speak therefore to my sister that she help me.” “Martha,” the Lord answering said, “thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is necessary. Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from her.” The contemplative life is then the most perfect, but it is the vocation of the chosen few. It is piously believed that the relics of these three saints are at Marseilles, whither they had carried the knowledge of the Gospel.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us bear in mind, in the midst of the troubles and affairs of life, that there is “but one thing necessary.”—*(Luke x. 42.)



THE WORKING OF GRACE.—Germain, duke of Auxerre, honourably acquitting himself of his duties as a citizen, but practising little the virtues of a Christian and heedless of the reproofs of the bishop Amator, to whom he often caused bitter sorrow, was thinking little of the designs of God in his behalf when the holy bishop abruptly said to him: “I have obtained from heaven that you shall succeed me in the see of Auxerre.” St. Amator, shortly after being near death, pointed out the duke to the choice of the people, who with one voice elected him. From that moment Germain became a new man; penance and mortification succeeded to frivolity and soft living; he manifested a charity, zeal, and intelligence, which maintained him constantly in the foremost rank among the bishops of Gaul. His colleagues deputed him, together with St. Lupus, bishop of Troyes, to proceed to England to extirpate heresy there. While passing through Paris, he conferred on that town and France at large the illustrious St. Geneveva. He died in 448 at Ravenna, whither he had been again sent with full powers, by his colleagues, to the court of the emperor Valentinian.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us repeat with the Apostle: “Where sin hath abounded, grace doth superabound.” And again: “It is not of him that willeth, but of God that showeth mercy.”—(Rom. v. 20; ix. 16.)*

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THE GREATER GLORY OF GOD.—Ignatius of Loyola, a Spanish gentleman, who had led the life of a worldling rather than that of a Christian, was wounded at the siege of Pampeluna in 1521. To while away the time during his convalescence, he read certain volumes of lives of the Saints, which kindled straightway in his knightly soul as much ardour for Christian glory as he had previously cherished for the glory of the world. To recommence laboriously the course of his studies, to give himself up to the rigorous practices of penance and accomplish a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, was all undertaken by him as soon as conceived. During this interval his ideas were undergoing a refining process, and gradually setting in one direction. In 1534, on the feast of the Assumption, he made a vow with nine of his companions in the church of Montmartre, at Paris, to devote himself to the salvation of souls, and to put himself at the disposal of the Head of the Church. Thus was founded the renowned “Society of Jesus,” of which Ignatius became the first Rector-general. He had then been admitted to the priesthood, and thenceforth did not cease advancing, step by step, towards greater perfection. He had adopted as motto and guiding-principle, whereby to shape all his actions, “to the greater glory of God.” He died on 31st July, 1556.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Whatever you do,” says the Apostle, “do all to the glory of God.”—(1 Cor. x. 31.)





EFFICACY OF PRAYER.—Herod Agrippa had caused the Apostle St. James to be beheaded, and finding that this pleased the Jews, he had St. Peter cast into chains, deferring his punishment till after the Paschal solemnity. In the interval, however, the Church of Jerusalem was praying for his deliverance without ceasing, night or day. Now, on the very eve of Easter, while the Apostle, fast bound in fetters, was slumbering between the two soldiers charged with his safe-keeping, an angel appeared in the prison, struck off the chains, threw open the gates, and leading him to the public highway, accompanied him a few paces and then vanished. The Apostle, who had thought himself the sport of some dream, thereupon discovering that he was at liberty, went to knock at the door of the house where the faithful were assembled in prayer. This event occurred in the year 43 of the Christian era. The chains, wherewith the Apostle was attached to the wall, are preserved at Rome, as being among the most venerable memorials of the faith. They are held in due veneration by the Church at large.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*This miracle affords a confirmation of the divine promise: "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.)



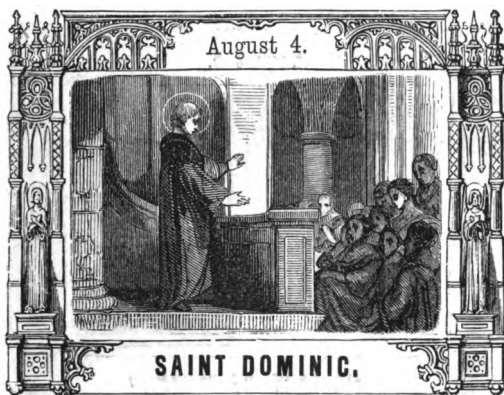
THE UNCOMPROMISING CHARACTER OF FAITH.—Worldlings would fain see Faith accommodating itself to circumstances, tolerating error, and swerving according as danger presses; but faith is inflexible, it admits of no such degree as *more or less*, otherwise it would not be faith. The brief pontificate of St. Stephen affords a confirmation of these truths. The Libellatici put forward a claim to be regarded as Christians by the Christians while holding *libella*, or tickets obtained for a consideration from pagan magistrates, under favour whereof they passed for unbelievers among the unbelievers. This holy Pope launched a condemnation against them. The “Rebaptizantes,” through an excess of zeal in the opposite direction, held that such as had received baptism from the hands of a heretic, ought, on becoming Catholics, to be baptized again. Stephen condemned their doctrine in like manner. “Let there be no innovation,” said the holy Pontiff, “let tradition declare what is the law;” and this dictum has been accepted as a guiding principle in the Church. St. Stephen was elected in 255 and died in 257. Certain writers hold that he was martyred while celebrating the Holy Sacrifice.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“If an angel from Heaven preach a Gospel to you other than that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema.”—(*Galat. i. 8.*)



VENERATION OF HOLY RELICS.—Protestants object against Catholics, as a superstition, that veneration which is paid to the relics of Saints; and yet God has Himself, by means of miracles, sanctified the veneration, and we here adduce a single example. It was the year 415; the remains of St. Stephen, the proto-martyr, had up to that period remained undiscovered. A priest, named Lucian, was attached to a small oratory not far from Jerusalem; St. Gamaliel, whom St. Paul styled his first master, appeared thrice to Lucian, bidding him seek for the precious relics in a neighbouring locality, which he pointed out. Lucian communicated this revelation to the Patriarch of Jerusalem; excavations were forthwith made and human bones actually found in the spot indicated, which were speedily recognized as being those of St. Stephen, by reason of the great miracles that were wrought through their agency. They were apportioned among several churches, and in every place miracles were in like manner wrought. The writers and Fathers of the fifth century amply attest these facts, which then excited universal attention.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*If "after death the body of Eliseus prophesied, and in death wrought miracles," as Holy Scripture affirms, wherefore should the bodies of the martyrs possess less efficacy?—(Eccles. xlviii. 14.)*



DEVOTION TO BLESSED MARY.—St. Dominic, born at Osma in 1170, was destined by Almighty God to convert a vast multitude of sinners, as well by his own labours as through the agency of the Order that bears his name. The first efforts of his zeal were displayed in Languedoc, which was then beset by a vast number of heretics, known as the Albigenses. There it was and on that account that he founded the Order of Dominicans, specially charged with preaching in Christian countries, and also with the seeking out or *inquisition* of heretics, with the view to lead them back to God. The superadding of torture which was subsequently resorted to against such as did not yield to conversion, was in nowise the work of St. Dominic; the Church has never allowed any means to be availed of more urgent than simple persuasion. To his zeal for the conversion of sinners and a great love for the poor, Dominic united a tender piety to the Blessed Virgin. It was he who instituted the devotion of the Rosary, and the custom of saluting Blessed Mary at the beginning of the sermon. He died at Rome in 1221, illustrious for miracles.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*It is to the whole human race in the person of the beloved disciple that the Son of God said, in speaking of Mary: "Son! behold thy mother."—(John xix. 27.)*



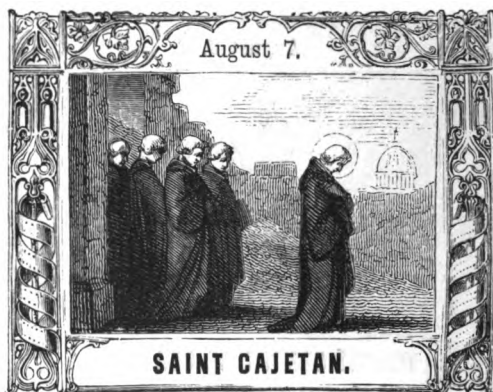
DEVOTION TO BLESSED MARY.—The chief of all the sanctuaries throughout the Christian world dedicated in honour of Blessed Mary, is beyond doubt the church in Rome, bearing the name of St. Mary Major. The tradition relating to its foundation is as follows:—"In the fourth century, during the pontificate of Pope Liberius, the Blessed Virgin appeared to a pious Christian, bearing the name of John, and belonging to one of the first families of Rome, and directed him to build a church in a spot which she pointed out, signifying, as a proof of the reality of the revelation, that on the night following, which was the 5th of August, snow would cover the spot. The church was founded, and bears the name of "Our Lady of Snows." The devotion of the faithful, upheld by the frequent miracles wrought there, had rendered it, long antecedently to the erection of that of "Our Lady of Loretto," the privileged sanctuary under Her special invocation. In this church is moreover preserved the cradle wherein the Infant Jesus slumbered. This hallowed object had, from the same epoch, attracted the veneration of the most learned and holy personages of the Christian world, among whom may be mentioned the learned St. Jerome.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*How comforting is it to the heart of the true Christian to call to mind that this homage paid to the "Mother of pure love and holy hope" is a traditional dogma co-extensive with the Church, and time-honoured as Christianity itself!*—(Eccles. xxiv. 24.)



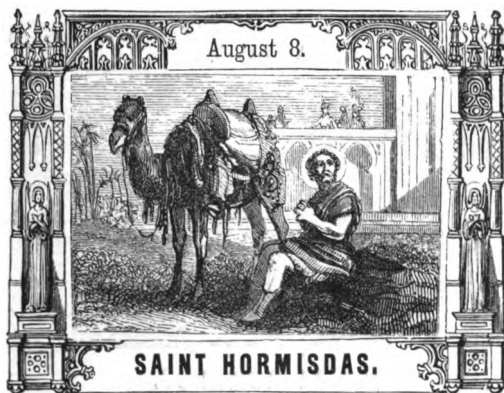
THE GLORY OF THE ELECT.—Jesus happening to be near to Cæsarea in Galilee, about a year previous to His passion, took with Him three disciples, Peter, James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, and led them apart into a high mountain, where He was transfigured before them. His face shone as the sun, and His garments were white as snow. The disciples beheld Moses and Elias conversing with Him, and Peter cried out, “Lord, it is good for us to be here! let us, if Thou wilt, make three tents, one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias.” A luminous cloud encompassed them, and a voice issued from the cloud, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him!” The disciples fell down with their faces to the earth, and when they were raised up, they saw Jesus alone, and He forbade them to speak thereof until He should be risen from the dead. The learned St. Jerome, and with him the Christian Church at large, thinks that the mountain was that of Thabor, and it is to this indeed that tradition unvaryingly refers.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“But we all, beholding the glory of the Lord with open face, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.”—(2 Cor. iii. 18.)



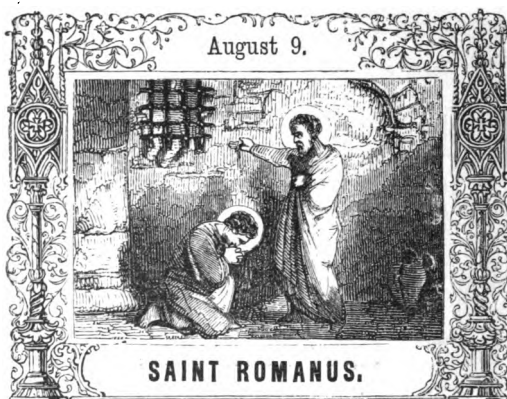
EDIFICATION.—Preaching by good example will always exert the most effectual influence. Man is so constituted that he readily apprehends good, approves of it, but neglects putting it in practice if his inclinations point in another direction; but as inclination itself is very often prompted by the example of others, it follows that if the example be good, the inclination will be disposed to good. St. Cajetan, the founder of the Theatines, understood this to a wonderful degree; and it was with the aim of exerting over the clergy and the people an influence of such a salutary nature that he instituted, in 1524, his congregation of clerks regular, devoted to preaching and the administration of the sacraments. To live the life of the poor without ever asking for any material aid, to edify the faithful by a modest exterior, irreproachable conduct, solid piety, and pure doctrine, such was the aim of the institution, and such the pervading spirit of the rule. The first superior of the congregation was Peter Caraffa, archbishop of Theata; whence the name of “Theatines.” The pious founder succeeded him, and died at Naples in 1547.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let such as are invested with authority apply to themselves those words of the Apostle: “Be thou an example of the faithful in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity.”—(1 Tim. iv. 12.)*



REAL FIDELITY.—Jezdegirdes I., king of Persia, who died in the year 400, had inaugurated a violent persecution against the Christians. His son, Varannes V., continued it, but, as it would appear, with less atrocity. Hormisdas, one of the leading personages of the court and the kingdom, having been denounced to him as a Christian, Varannes urged him to abandon his religion. “Were I to change my religion,” answered the fervent Christian, “how could my prince rely upon my fidelity, when he should be himself aware that I had failed in fidelity to my God?” The king ordered his rich garments to be stripped off, and that he should be sent to tend the camels belonging to the court. Some time after, the king, perceiving him from the palace windows, dressed in rags, and exposed to the burning heat of the sun, sent for him, presented to him a costly robe, and pressed him anew to change his religion. “No!” replied Hormisdas, returning the robe, “I shall not, either for so little, or on any account whatsoever, be wanting in my Faith, any more than I am in my duty to the king.” Varannes drove him once more from his presence. He is believed to have suffered martyrdom, and Holy Church has assigned to him the title of “martyr.”

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life,” is the divine assurance given by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of the Apostle.—(Apoc. ii. 10.)



COURAGEOUS FAITH.—How many Christians are there who will have to blush before God for their utter weakness in presence of the prejudices and maxims of the world, which they in their heart condemn, but to which they have with cowardly submission bowed down their souls! Let such craven spirits reflect on the following example:—St. Lawrence was in fetters; on seeing the hour approach wherein he was to suffer for Christ's sake, he could not refrain from manifesting his joy. One of the soldiers charged with his safe custody, by name Romanus, moved at the sight, entreated Lawrence to make known to him the truths of Christianity; the holy deacon instructed and baptized him. Romanus, having now become a Christian, displayed openly the happiness that pervaded his soul. Neither human respect nor fear of the torture to which he exposed himself, nor any other consideration, could restrain him; he proclaimed his faith, saying openly, "I am a Christian!" This was tantamount to pronouncing his own sentence of death, as he well knew. He was handed over to the executioner, tortured in many ways, and finally beheaded the day previous to that when St. Lawrence had to appear before the tribunal, and thus preceded his master in the glorious triumph of martyrdom, in the year 258.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"Neither height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Jesus Christ our Lord."—(*Rom. viii. 39.*)



THE TREASURES OF THE CHURCH.—The holy Pope Sixtus was being dragged to martyrdom; Lawrence, his disciple and friend, the first of the Seven Deacons of Rome, followed him with streaming eyes. “Whither art thou going, O my father,” he said, “whither without thy son? Priest of God, wherefore dost thou abandon thy deacon?” “Take heart, my son!” replied the martyr, “thou art reserved for a still greater combat, yet three days and thou shalt follow me.” The emperor, having imagined that the Christians had amassed great treasures, despatched the Prefect of Rome with orders to take possession of them. “We have indeed great treasures!” said Lawrence to him; “but allow me sufficient time to get them together.” On the following day he showed to the prefect all the suffering and infirm poor, the orphans and old people whom the Church maintained by means of alms. “Behold!” he said, “our treasures; take them into your keeping.” The prefect, deeply enraged, caused his body to be lacerated by scourgings with rods and with hooks of iron, and then to be stretched on live coals. The face of the martyr was all radiant with happiness and joy. In the midst of his torture he said to his executioners, “Now turn me to the other side!” He expired, while praying for Rome, on the 10th August, 258.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Religion clean and undefiled is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation, and to keep one’s self unspotted from the world.”—(*Jas. i. 27.*)



MIRACLES.—"Wherefore does not God work miracles, so as to make me believe?" asked a free-thinker of the last century, adding subsequently, "Were I to see miracles wrought, I would not believe them, for I should think my eyes were deceiving me." Those who act in good faith do not require so much. St. Tranquillinus, who suffered martyrdom under Diocletian, told his judge, Chromatius, that on being baptized he was released from the pains of gout, from which he had previously suffered. Chromatius sentenced him to death, but had himself instructed in the faith, because he also had suffered from violent attacks of the same malady. Having become a Christian, he was in like manner released from pain. His family were converted by the sight of this miracle. Tiburtius, the son of Chromatius, had even made sufficient progress in virtue to deserve being ordained subdeacon, and was discharging the holy functions when his zeal procured him the honour of being denounced and of suffering martyrdom. After having had his feet scorched over burning coals, he was taken to the distance of three miles from Rome, and there beheaded. His relics are preserved in the cathedral of Soissons.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us not ask for miracles from God, but become docile to the voice of "His Spirit, that breatheth where He will."*—(John iii. 8.)



CONFORMITY WITH JESUS CHRIST.—The sufferings of Jesus Christ, His silence in presence of His judges, His poverty, and His prayerfulness, such is the portion of our Saviour's life which St. Clara, the foundress of the order of Poor Clares, chose for her own imitation, and proposed to that of the pious women adopting her rule. St. Francis of Assisi solemnly clothed her on the 18th of March, 1212, the habit consisting of coarse stuff, with a girdle made of cord. The bodily mortifications comprised a perpetual abstinence from flesh meats, a fast of four Lents in the year, a total privation of linen garments and covering for the feet, and a close cropping of the hair. Rigorous poverty was prescribed, together with the prohibition of possessing or receiving any property or revenue, continual prayer, not to be suspended even during work; sleeping on the bare ground, with a stone for a pillow; uninterrupted silence, saving in case of absolute necessity. Such is a summary of the rules of that order, into which the daughters of princes and kings hastened to enrol themselves. The holy foundress died on the 11th of August, 1255, illustrious for miracles.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let him who cannot undertake all pious practices bear in mind the words: "Good and faithful servant! because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many."*—(Matt. xxv. 23.)



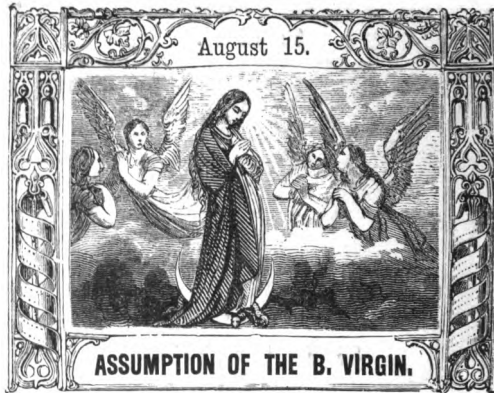
FAITH ADMITS OF NO WEAK PRETENCE.—Maximus, after having discharged important functions at the court of Heraclius, withdrew to a monastery at Chrysopolis, in order to escape from the taint of monotheism which had begun to prevail at the court. For fear of being persecuted, he quitted the monastery and proceeded to Africa, his great reputation for sanctity, learning, and thorough orthodoxy, having drawn all eyes towards him. Constans, the successor of Heraclius, an ardent upholder of monotheism, accounted the many supporters of the doctrine as naught gained if he could not win over Maximus, who had already distinguished himself by his labours and successful efforts against this heresy. Maximus having been brought to Constantinople and treated like a malefactor, had to encounter the most violent temptations and undergo the most cruel tortures; but all was in vain. He was urged, however, to allow it to be believed, out of respect and complaisance to the emperor, that he had given in his adherence. He firmly declined, and was sentenced to be beaten with clubs, to have his tongue cut out, and his hand struck off, and to linger out his days in prison. This happened in 662. He is thought to have died the same year, at the age of eighty-two.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“For it doth not become our age to dissemble,” said the holy old man Simeon, “lest through my dissimulation many should be deceived.”—(2 Mach. vi. 24.)



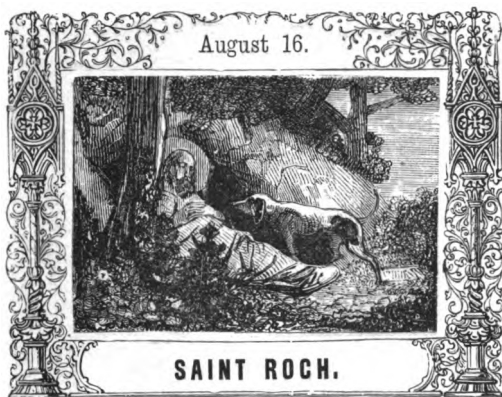
POWER OF MEEKNESS.—Eusebius was a priest, and possessed in an eminent degree the Christian and sacerdotal virtues. Having been denounced to Maxentius, the governor of Palestine, as a Christian, he replied with so much gentleness, although with unwavering firmness, that the judge, being moved, did not venture to condemn him, and transferred him to the tribunal of the Emperor Maximian, who was then in Palestine. Maximian was of a ferocious disposition, and had been duly warned against allowing himself to be gained over by the powerful influence exerted by Eusebius. But his ferocity and prejudice alike subsided in presence of that venerable countenance, all radiant with happiness and serenity, despite the torments to which he had been subjected. On hearing those calm and gentle tones, the tyrant did not venture to pass sentence himself, and sent back the accused to Maxentius, telling him to judge him *according to the rules of equity*. Maxentius employed all the means in his power to save him; but the holy priest would have accounted himself too unfortunate to escape from martyrdom; he was too eminently a Christian to allow of the matter being even dissembled. He was eventually beheaded.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Admonish them to be subject to princes and powers, showing all mildness to all men.”—(*Tit.* iii. 1.)



THE GLORIFYING OF THE HUMAN RACE.—How devoid of reason are they who seek as the supreme aim of all their endeavours the fleeting glories of the world! Man has a destiny of glory, but of an imperishable nature. The human race was glorified in Jesus Christ when it was enthroned with Him at the right hand of God. It was glorified in Mary, when Mary was raised to the queenship of the earth and the heavens: hence it is Jesus and Mary that one must strive to resemble, in order to receive a share in the glory which is reserved to virtue. The Holy Virgin died at Ephesus, at an age not precisely ascertained. According to the most generally received traditions, she was deposited in the tomb; but a pious and ancient tradition holds that she rose from death after a brief interval. This is open to controversy; but that which is not so, since the Church enjoins us to believe it, is that Mary was borne away to heaven by angels, either in body and soul or in the spirit only; and that she there reigns over the visible and invisible world, that is, over all the beings created by God.

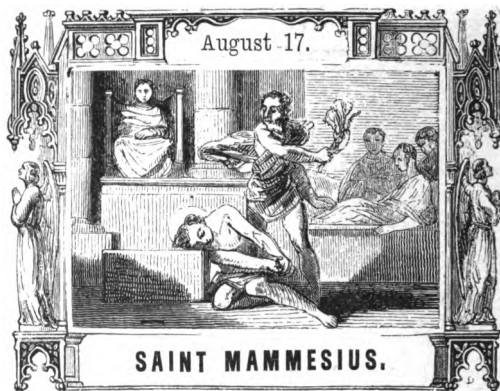
MORAL REFLECTION.—“Thou hast made man little lower than the angels; Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour, and hast set him over the works of Thy hands.”—(*Psa.* viii. 6.)



THE INGRATITUDE OF MAN.—St. Roch was born at Montpellier, towards the commencement of the fourteenth century, of a family illustrious for its rank and ancestry. The piety he had professed from his most tender years led him to undertake a pilgrimage to Rome about the year 1348, in order to visit the tombs of the holy Apostles. His charity was aroused in favour of those struck by the plague, which was then producing great ravages in Italy, and he began to bestow on them, without stint or measure, the most earnest care. Having been himself attacked by the epidemic, he could find no one to extend to him a helping hand. He withdrew to a neighbouring forest, where, after having endured the most terrible sufferings, God miraculously restored his health. Returning to Montpellier, he continued bestowing on the poor and the sick the same solicitude, while devoting himself in solitude to the most austere exercises of a penitent life. He died about 1380, illustrious for miracles; and the many miracles subsequently obtained through his intercession during times of plague and mortality have rendered him famous throughout Christendom.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Take heed that you do not your justice before men to be seen of them, otherwise you have no reward; but do them for the love of your Father who is in Heaven, and He will repay you.”—(*Matt. vi. 1.*)

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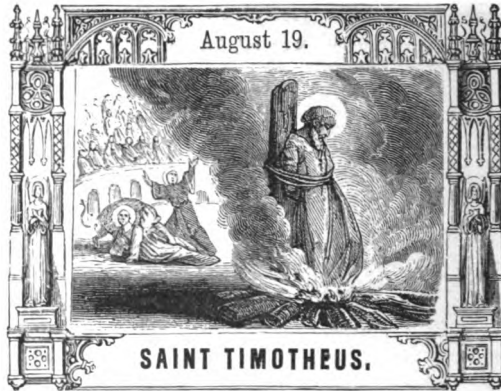
EQUALITY IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.—The rich would be greatly to blame were they to consider their wealth as a privilege even on earth ; it is merely a public charge or function entrusted to them by the Almighty, just as magisterial duties are made over by sovereigns to certain of their subjects. The poor would be at fault were they to look upon themselves as disinherited ; it is for them, on the contrary, that the Lord has manifested a special preference. Besides, in so far as the heavenly kingdom is concerned, rich and poor are alike equal. St. Mammesius was a poor shepherd of Cappadocia, who had the honour of shedding his blood for the faith, during the persecution of Aurelian, in the year 274. Although quite a youth, he bore with unflinching courage the torture of the lash, and expired under the blows. In other words, he went to receive in Heaven the Crown awarded to kings, when they have rendered themselves worthy of such high honour, while the Church placed his memory upon earth above that of kings, princes, and the great ones of the world not already numbered among saints, or who had not attained to so high a standard of virtue.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Thus does it please God* “to put down the mighty from their seat, and exalt the humble ; to fill the hungry with good things, and send the rich empty away.”—(Luke i. 52.)



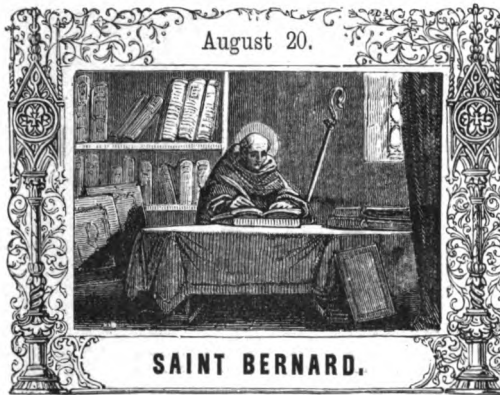
MANY WORKS ACHIEVED IN A SHORT TIME.—When Constantine the Great was raised to the imperial throne, he declared himself in favour of the Christian religion, though still undecided as to whether he should himself embrace it. After his miraculous victory over Maxentius, he wavered no longer, and induced his mother, Helen, likewise to become a Christian. Helen was then far advanced in years, but the faith quickened with new life her noble and lofty soul, and the august princess put herself to the work with an ardour all youthful. She was nearly eighty years old, when she proceeded to Palestine to seek for the Cross of the Saviour, to regain possession of the places hallowed by the presence of the Man-God, and there to erect monuments worthy of God and of the imperial power. To found monasteries, hospitals, and churches, and to lend aid to every enterprise favourable to religion, became her ruling purpose. The multitude with joyful eyes beheld her mingling with the crowds assisting at the public services; her humble and fervent piety afforded the most salutary example to the faithful at large. Helen died in 328, after having from her deathbed given the wisest counsel to Constantine, and furnished forth a long career in a short time.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Even thus should one “redeem the time and the evil days,” when one has had the misfortune to live far away from God.—(Ephes. v. 16.)*



THE HONOUR OF MARTYRDOM.—The persecutions directed against virtue do not injure it, nor does suffering dishonour those who have been made to endure it. If virtue always obtained the privileges to which it is entitled, where would be the merit of being virtuous? Every one would become so from mere calculation, and then virtue would be hypocrisy. The multitude of martyrs who have poured out their blood for the faith had no other crime imputed to them than their very virtue. What example could be adduced more encouraging for those whom the world has persecuted on account of their good works? Even thus did St. Timotheus, honoured as he was by the pagans themselves for his charity, suffer martyrdom in the town of Gaza in the year 304, together with St. Thecla and St. Agapa. Certain assassins, who were condemned to die with them, were respited by the emperor Maximinus; but for them there was no pardon, because they were Christians, or, in other words, of a virtuous life. Timotheus was burned alive, Thecla was devoured by wild beasts, and Agapa cast into the sea.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Injustice and persecution oftentimes give rise to discouragements: to achieve the mastery, however, meditate on those words of the Apostle: "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a railer, or coveter of other men's things; but if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name."*—(1 Pet. iv. 15.)



THE MAIN THING.—Divine Providence, who intended accomplishing great designs through the agency of St. Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, had endowed him with a mighty genius and irresistible eloquence. Hence did he become the arbiter of the sovereigns of the world and of the Church, the supreme judge who had to decide affairs of the highest moment. He conceived the purpose of urging Europe to the conquest of Asia, believing that such was the will of God; and at his voice the whole of Europe vibrated from one extremity to the other, the nations rushed to arms, and thousands of crusaders departed for the Holy Land, with the inspiring cry of "God wills it!" He undertook to uproot schisms and heresies, and succeeded in accomplishing his purpose. But amid these external cares there was one work of which he never lost sight, and which he often called to mind by these words: "Bernard, wherefore hast thou become a monk?" This chief work was that of his own sanctification, and he carried it out with equal ardour. The Church at large was as much edified by his solid virtues as it was glorified by his labours. St. Bernard died in 1153.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*And we on our side should have ever present to our minds those divine words of the Gospel, "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"—(Mark viii. 36.)*



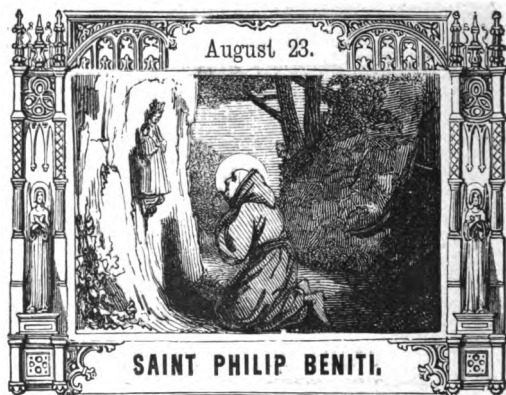
SACRIFICES.—God imposes great sacrifices on those whom He calls to great sanctity. St. Jane Fremiot, Baroness de Chantal, foundress of the order of the Visitation, affords a striking example of this truth. She found it necessary to tear herself away from her weeping children of tender years, and from her aged parents bowed down with grief; and finally, to pass over the body of her son, who had placed himself as an obstruction in her path, with the view to prevent her from abandoning the paternal roof. She had lost her husband, who was accidentally killed while hunting; she lost that tenderly-loved son, another of her children, and a daughter-in-law; she saw her parents die off, and her spiritual father, St. Francis of Sales, taken away. But this wise director had so strengthened her in piety, and every worldly tie was so completely severed, that she had become like unto the angels, having no other will than that of God, no other desire than that of pleasing Him; all else was a matter of indifference to her. She had made a vow not only never to commit any sin, but to choose always amongst her works of piety that which might be most agreeable to God. St. Jane de Chantal died at Moulins, in 1641.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Whoever would belong to God must renounce everything that is of the world, since "no man can serve God and mammon;" as the Saviour Himself warns us.—(Matt. vi. 24.)*



A MOTHER ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL.—Symphorian belonged by birth to one of the first families of Autun; he had been carefully trained in the love of religion by his virtuous parents, and had early learned to spurn the idols. On one occasion, when the inhabitants were celebrating a festival in honour of Cybele, and were bearing her statue upon a chariot, he mocked at the simplicity of the poor idolaters. He was forthwith denounced to the governor, Heraclius, was thrown into prison, and threatened with death if he did not adore Cybele. He scoffed anew at the piece of stone which his fellow-countrymen called a divinity, and offered to crumble it into powder. Heraclius had him beaten with rods and conducted to the place of torture. His holy mother met him on the way, and subduing the emotions of nature, thus addressed him :—“ Courage, my son ; fear not suffering ; they are not taking away your life, but are preparing a crown for you ; lift your heart and your eyes toward Heaven, for to-day you will reign with Jesus Christ.” Symphorian accomplished his sacrifice in the year 170.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The world calls her who has given life by the name of “mother;” the Holy Scripture styles her who has given salvation in addition to life, a “mother to be admired above measure, and worthy to be remembered by good men.”—(2 Mach. vii. 20.)*



THE FRUITS OF PATIENCE.—St. Philip Beniti, General of the Order of “Servites,” or Servants of Mary, had received from God a wondrous talent for converting sinners; the chief pulpits of Europe resounded with the accents of his eloquence, and the large towns reaped great advantage therefrom. After the death of Pope Clement IV., the cardinals thought of raising Philip to the Chair of St. Peter, but by speedy flight he was able to evade the choice, for he was as humble as he was mighty in word and work. Italy was then torn by the factions of the Guelphs and Ghibellines. Philip laboured successfully at reconciling the opposed parties and restoring concord in families; but what proofs of patience had he not to show forth! How many times was he threatened, beaten, and ignobly dragged through the mud! The patience which he displayed effected wonders, for his most inveterate enemies became his reverent admirers; one of them, Peregrine Latiozi, came to throw himself at his feet, craved his forgiveness, entered the Order of Servites, and made a most edifying death. St. Philip died in 1285, and was canonized in 1724.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“The trying of your faith worketh patience, and patience hath a perfect work; that you may be perfect and entire, failing in nothing.”—(*Jas. i. 3.*)



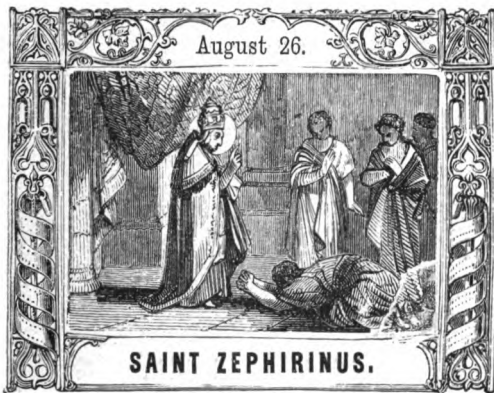
CANDOUR OF HEART.—St. Bartholomew seems to have been the same person known as “Nathaniel,” of whom, when led to Him by the Apostle St. Philip, our Saviour said, “Behold a good Israelite, in whom there is no guile.” Bartholomew is a surname, meaning Son of Tholmai. St. Bartholomew carried the light of the gospel to Arabia, Persia, and the Indies; according to what is related by Eusebius, St. Pantenus found in the Indies at the commencement of the third century the remembrance only of his having preached there. Unfortunately for the nations of those regions, they were infatuated with the vain systems of human philosophy, inimical to the spreading of the Faith, or tending to uproot it. From India, St. Bartholomew passed into Phrygia and Lycaonia, and, consequently into Greater Armenia, where he received the crown of martyrdom by being crucified, according to some authors; the more generally received opinion, however, is that he was flayed alive, though one mode of suffering does not exclude the other. The date of his martyrdom is not known.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*God Himself has, in like manner, praised the holy man Job as being “a man simple and upright, avoiding evil, and keeping withal his innocence.”—(Job ii. 3.)*



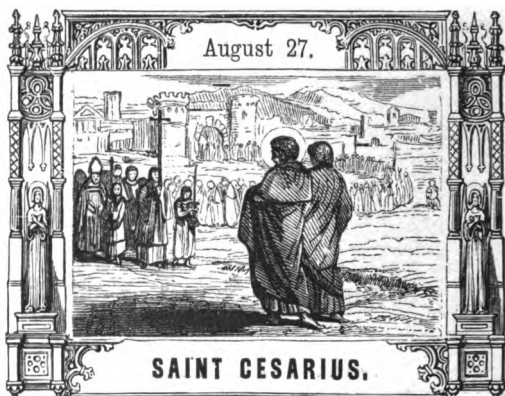
THE WORKS OF FAITH.—Even as unbelievers are themselves ready to admit, Louis IX., king of France, combined all the qualities of a hero, a statesman, and a saint; now, it was from the undefiled source of Christian faith that he derived them. His devout mother had deeply inculcated the maxim, that it was better to incur death than to commit one mortal sin. As being the exemplar of justice, the population of France and the neighbouring sovereigns, when at variance, always recurred to his arbitrament. Model, as he was, of courage, at the age of seventeen he rushed headlong into the dangers of war, in order to deliver his people from the tyranny of foreign domination, and, single-handed, made head against a body of the enemy on the bridge of Taillebourg. As a wise ruler, he reformed the laws and laid the groundwork of that legislation that now prevails in France, and which excites the admiration of Europe. Being a votary of humble piety, he was fain to ignore the miracles that were being wrought in the palace. "I am, quite ready to believe without that!" he would say. As the prime pattern of chivalrous courtesy, he imposed conditions on the Saracens, who were at once his conquerors and zealous admirers. He twice raised aloft the banner of the Cross, in order to deliver the Holy Places, and died at Carthage in 1270.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*No influence can be compared with that of religion in elevating and ennobling the soul. "I am come," says the Saviour, "that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly."*—(John x. 10.)



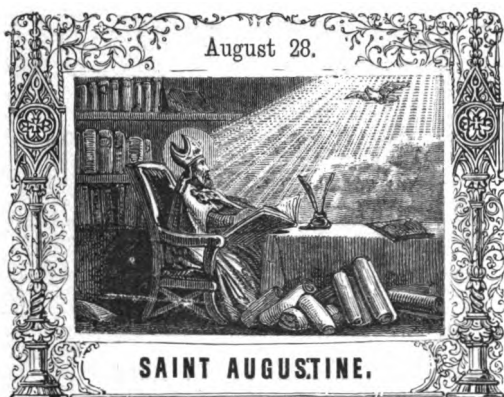
ZEAL AND CHARITY.—Pope Zephyrinus assumed the pastoral staff at the time when the fifth persecution was decimating the fold. He neglected nothing to uphold the faith of the Confessors, and exposed himself to the risk of martyrdom. The fire of persecution had no sooner ceased than his vigilance was directed to greater dangers still, for a number of heresiarchs raised their heads at once. Marcion, Praxeas, Valentinus, Montanus, Proclus, Proculus, Asclepiodotus, the two Theodotus put forth their false doctrines. The very pillars of the Church were shaken: Tertullian fell into herey, and did not acknowledge his error. Natalis, who had generously confessed the faith, fell in like manner, but avowed at least his short-coming, and in prostrate humility sought for a reconciliation, which the Holy Pontiff joyfully accorded. Zephyrinus contended manfully in person against the heresiarchs, vanquishing them in argument, without, however, leading them to conversion. He died in 219; the ancient martyrologies assign to him the title of “martyr.”

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Watch ye,” *urges the Apostle*, “be steadfast in the faith; do manfully, and be strengthened.”—(1 Cor. xvi. 13.)



GENTLENESS AND CHARITY.—The life of St. Cesarius, archbishop of Arles, is one of the noblest models which the ancient Church affords. The gentleness of his character is revealed in his writings, and his piety is evidenced by the institution of the public ceremonies which he established in his diocese, and admirably organized. His charity was unbounded, and hence his flock loved him with an affection unequalled. Having been falsely accused of conspiring against the state, he was exiled by Alaric; on his return, the whole town went forth in solemn procession to greet him. Having been accused anew to Theodoric, this prince had him taken as a prisoner to Ravenna; but as soon as he beheld him, he accounted him as innocent, without even questioning him, and loaded him with costly presents, which the holy bishop at once disposed of, to give the proceeds to the poor. He had previously sold the sacred vessels of his church for the ransoming of captives. "Those who lavish upon me their reproaches, would be eager to praise me, were this done for their sake!" he was wont to say. St. Cesarius died in 542.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"For so is the will of God," says the *Prince of the Apostles*, "that by doing well you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."—(1 Pet. ii. 15.)



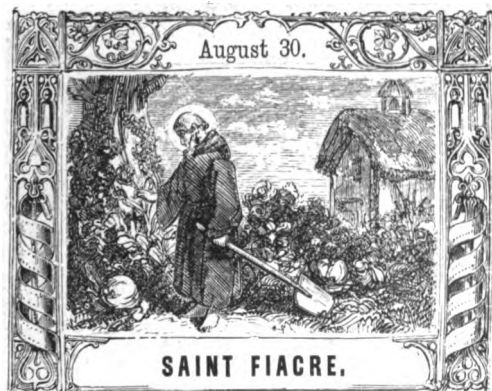
THE WONDERS OF GRACE.—Augustine, from his early years, displayed both genius and talent, combined with the love of knowledge; but having become entangled from his youth in the bonds of heresy and vice, he would have been lost to religion had it not been for the tears and prayers of his mother. He was teaching profane literature at Milan, when the eloquence of St. Ambrose attracted him to a Catholic church, where he was converted to the faith. For a long time he battled against his convictions in favour of his passions, but having read a passage in St. Paul, to which, as by a divine voice, he felt himself directed, the contest was at an end, the prayer of St. Monica was at last granted. Having returned to Hippo, his native town, he was admitted to the priesthood, and eventually became bishop there. Never did the Church have a greater doctor, heresy a more potent adversary, and the Christian world a holier bishop. He became the apostle of that grace whereof he was the prime conquest and very miracle. He died in 430, without making any will, for he had nothing left to give; which simple fact constitutes in itself a high eulogium.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Where sin hath abounded grace doth superabound,” *provided that the sinner show himself docile.*—(Rom. v. 20.)



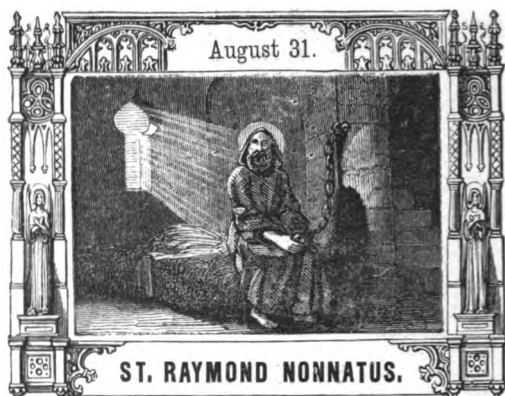
THE ENCHAINMENT OF CRIME.—One crime proves often the high road to another. The guilty man does not stop, because he feels impelled to go forward. Herod the Tetrarch was living incestuously with Herodias, the wife of Philip his brother. John the Baptist reprov'd him for this guilt. Herod, at the instigation of Herodias, caused him to be thrown into prison; but he did not dare to proceed to extremities, lest he might excite the people to revolt; besides which, he himself held John the Baptist in reverence. On the anniversary of his birth he was keeping high festival, and was overcome by the fumes of wine. A young girl, the daughter of Herodias, was dancing in the banqueting-room, amid the applause of the guests. Herodias took advantage of this to get her to ask for the death of John the Baptist. The tetrarch accorded this with great regret, but, on the permission being granted, an emissary was sent to behead the Precursor. Having been brought to Herodias, the latter transpierced the tongue with a dagger. Thus, passion having been sated by one crime, hurried on to vengeance, which was satisfied by means of a further crime.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Even thus Joseph's brethren, being accused by him of a great crime, revenged themselves by committing a second. Thus also did David become a man-slayer, because he had been an adulterer.—(Gen. xxxvii. 2.)*



SANCTITY OF LABOUR.—Labour, which was imposed on man after the Fall by way of expiation, acts also as a preservative. Virtue and idleness do not dwell under the same roof; assiduous labour leaves no room for vice. This has been well understood by so many founders of religious orders, who enjoined labour on their monks as a positive duty. St. Fiacre, an Irish monk, having come to France in the seventh century to seek out a solitude, established himself in the forest of Breuil, where he cleared and cultivated a plot of ground, the produce whereof sufficed for his own maintenance, and for abundant alms to others. Combining with labour continual prayer and the rigour of penance, he ended by becoming the oracle and apostle of the neighbouring regions, and a saint to whom God vouchsafed the gift of miracles. He died in 670, and since then his tomb has always been held in veneration. Princes, kings, prelates, and people have alike honoured the poor solitary, who had learned the grand science of labour and prayer.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Ye who love indolence, ponder well these words of the Great Apostle: "If any man will not work, neither let him eat."*—(2 Thes. iii. 10.)



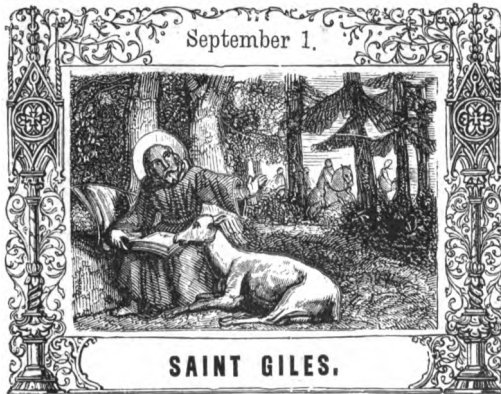
LOVE OF ONE'S NEIGHBOUR.—St. Raymond, a professed brother of the order of Redemptorists or “Mercy,” was distinguished by so great a zeal for the salvation of souls, a charity so tender towards the unfortunate, and by such eminent qualities, that his superiors entrusted him, while still young, with the charge of “redeemer,” an office which required consummate prudence. He was accordingly sent to Barbary, where he negotiated for the ransom of the captives, as long as his resources lasted. When his means were at an end, he still ransomed those whose salvation seemed imperilled, and gave himself up as a hostage. As the infidels were thenceforth interested in preserving his life, he did not shrink from preaching publicly. He was scourged, dragged through the mud, placed in fetters, and condemned to impalement; but as nothing could check his zeal, they pierced his lips, and put a padlock on his mouth. He spent eight months under this infliction, until ransomed by his superiors. On his return to Europe, the Sovereign Pontiff created him cardinal, and sent for him to Rome. He died after he had set out on his journey, in 1240, at the age of thirty-seven.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The Catholic religion alone offers such examples of self-devotion. Let the world at large, then, “know the tree by its fruits.”—(Matt. viii. 16.)*

SEPTEMBER



S^t Michael



CATHOLICITY AND HERESY.—History presents few pictures more attractive than that of the life of St. Giles, an Athenian of illustrious birth and great intellect, who, in the fifth century, came to seek out a hermitage in one of the forests of Gaul, so as to withdraw himself from the zealous attentions and admiration of his fellow-citizens. The pure water of a brook, the roots and wild fruits of the forest, sufficed for his subsistence, with the milk of a hind, the sole companion of his solitude. Having been one day pursued by hunters, the gentle creature came to seek protection from the hand that had lavished kindness upon it, and thereby betrayed the secret abode of its benefactor. The solitary having become the object of veneration both to the population and their rulers, found himself speedily surrounded by disciples, for whose behoof he established a monastery in the diocese of Nismes. His relics were there preserved intact, and were honoured by general pilgrimages of the faithful, when the sacrilegious and destructive rage of the Calvinists led the monks that had the guardianship thereof, to translate them to Toulouse, in order to forestall profanation.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*With what eyes should they be regarded who scatter abroad the ashes of the dead, "whose memory is in benediction?"*—(Eccles. xlv. 1.)



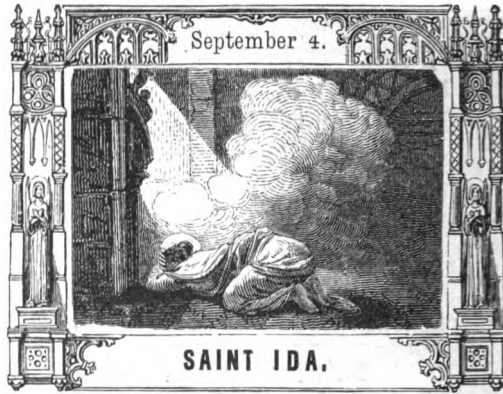
FAITH IS THE STRENGTH OF NATIONS.—A nation is never more prosperous and powerful than when its members are united in one and the same faith. Errors in religion entail errors and division, and, as a matter of course, weakness in policy. This was fully understood by Stephen, the Vaivode of Hungary; and hence he did all in his power to continue the work inaugurated by his father for the conversion of Hungary. He often accompanied the missionaries while they were evangelizing, and when Christianity was at length solidly established, sent the monk Anastasius to the Sovereign Pontiff, to obtain full confirmation of what had been accomplished. Sylvester II. confirmed all that had been effected, and conferred on the pious Vaivode the title of "King." Stephen, out of respect, listened standing while the bulls from the head of the Church were being read out. Hungary having become Christian, and having been placed under the protection of the Holy Virgin, was civilized in due course, and has remained one of the most powerful nations in Europe. St. Stephen died in 1038, regretted by the people at large on account of his high courage, and venerated for his virtues.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it."—(*Psa. cxxvi. 1.*)



THE COURAGE OF VIRTUE.—The young virgin Serapia showed by her example how well able faith is to inspire courage, in spite of mere youth and weakness. Having taken a vow to belong to God alone, she disposed of her property while still in the prime of youth, distributed the proceeds to the poor, fled from Antioch, her birthplace, and entered the service of a Roman lady, named Sabina, whom she converted to the faith. Having been denounced as a Christian during the persecution of Adrian, she was consigned to a place of debauch, but the Lord did battle for her. Being afterwards placed on a burning pile, the flames subsided around her; almost despairing of being able to inflict death upon her, the prefect Barillus ordered her to be beheaded. She thus received the crown which she had by so many conflicts merited, and Sabina consigned to her own tomb the remains of her youthful and ever-blessed friend. Having herself received a similar crown a year after, her own remains were laid by the side of those of Serapia. Even as early as the fifth century, there existed a church in Rome placed under their invocation.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Christian courage bears relation to our faith: "If we continue in the faith, grounded, and settled, and immovable," all things will be found possible to us.—(Coloss. i. 23.)*



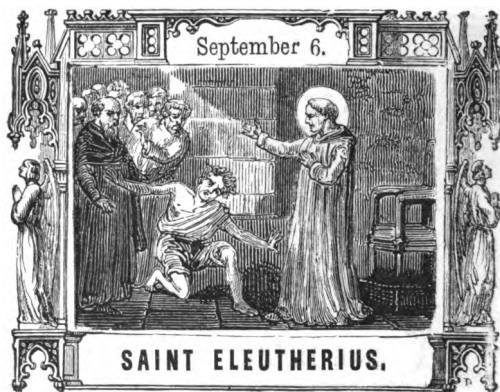
THE FRUIT OF GOOD EXAMPLE.—St. Ida was formed to virtue by the example of St. Odilla and St. Gertrude, the sisters of Charlemagne. The latter, who held her in great esteem, gave her in marriage to one of the most distinguished princes of his court, with whom she passed some years in a union all the more perfect, because their tastes for piety and good works were identical. Having been left a widow, she became the edification of the court by her fervour, goodness, charity, patience, and love for the poor. The model which she thenceforth strove to imitate was Jesus Christ himself. The world beheld all this and accorded its admiration; but there were works which it did not witness, and which were still more worthy of admiration; namely, the fasts and mortifications of the pious widow, and the fervent supplications that she addressed to God, prostrate before an image of Mary, in the still retreat of a little oratory, which she had built and dedicated to the mother of God. St. Ida died towards the year 840.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*If external works be necessary to edification, let us not forget to be ever "willing in the beauties of holiness."*—(Psa. cx. 3.)



THE HOUSEHOLD OF A BISHOP.—St. Laurence Justinian, born at Venice in 1380, of a noble family of high rank, entered, at the age of nineteen, the congregation of the Canons Regular of St. George of Alga, and there became the leading spirit, by reason of his fervour, his humility, and other virtues. He was elected, despite his own opposition, as General of the order, and Pope Eugenius IV. appointed him bishop of Venice in 1433. Then it was especially that his sanctity shone forth with all its splendour, if it be right to speak in such terms of works which, from a spirit of humility, are practised in secret. He usually stiled the poor and the unfortunate his household, and on that ground they always had free access to him. He accustomed himself to use earthenware for the service of the table, to sleep on straw, and to wear a very modest garb, so that he might have the wherewithal to aid his adopted family. Despite such a mode of life, or rather on account of it, he became the idol of his flock, the reformer of abuses in his diocese, and equal to the Doge in authority. He died in 1455, illustrious for his miracles.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“If thou wouldst be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.”—(*Matt. xix. 21.*)



VAIN COMPLACENCE AND ITS CHASTISEMENT.—"Let not your good works be done before men," says the Saviour. Such works are, in fact, of no avail, even should they not draw down humiliation on him that has accomplished them. Eleutherius, abbot of St. Mark's, near Spoleto, had been favoured with the gift of miracles, and especially with a great power over evil spirits, in reward for his humility and for the virtues whereof he afforded an ever-present example to his religious. One day, however, he drew their attention to a youth whom he had cured and had admitted into the community. "Since this youth," he said, "has been amongst the servants of God, the demon no longer dares to approach him." This display of vanity was punished on the spot, for the youth became straightway possessed anew. The abbot confessed his fault, humbly prostrating himself to beg forgiveness thereof, and obtained a fresh cure, by conjoining with his own prayers those of his religious. The same saint likewise obtained a miraculous cure in favour of St. Gregory the Great. He died about the year 585.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"Appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father who is in heaven, and thy Father, who seeth in secret, He will repay thee."—(*Matt. vi. 18.*)



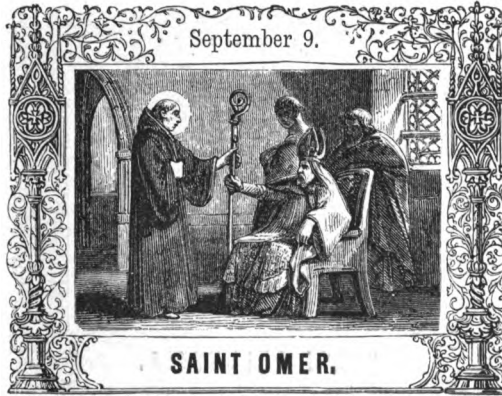
A KINGDOM IN EXCHANGE FOR HEAVEN.—Clodoald, son of Clodomir, king of Orleans and grandson of Clotilda, was saved, while young, from the massacre wherein his brothers perished by the hand of Clothaire, their uncle, who sought to become master of their possessions. Having been brought up in retirement, he conceived an inclination for the service of God, and, later on, when he was of an age to assert his rightful claims, and although a favourable opportunity many times presented itself, he preferred following the way that leads to Heaven, rather than that which conducts to a perishable throne. In order to render this renunciation more clear, he placed himself under the guidance of St. Severinus, who was living as a recluse not far from Paris. The people, edified by his sterling virtues, besought the bishop that the priesthood might be conferred upon him, which accordingly came to pass. But, after a few years spent in the sacred ministry, St. Cloud recurred to his former preference for a retired life. He withdrew to the spot which now bears his name, and there founded a monastery, where he worked out his sanctification by prayer, preaching, and all kinds of good deeds. He died towards the year 560.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"The just shall live for evermore; they shall receive a kingdom of glory, and a crown of beauty at the hand of the Lord."—(Wisd. v. 17.)



GOD IS FAITHFUL IN HIS PROMISES.—After the fall of man, God said to the serpent tempter, “I will set enmity between the woman and thee, between thy seed and hers; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt bruise her heel.” More than 4,000 years went by ere this promise, so eventful to mankind, found its accomplishment. But at length, when the period assigned by the Divine mercy had come, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Divine Word, co-equal with His Father, caused her to be born on earth who was to become His Mother. This child of benediction, the second mother of mankind, saw the light in Judea, being of the illustrious family of David. By a privilege exceptionally vouchsafed to her who was to become the mother of God, she was born exempt from all sin, as she was always so to remain, and therefore is it that the Church, departing from her usual course, celebrates her nativity. The cradle which received the young child, contained the hope of angels and of men, inasmuch as her Son was, in the language of the apostle, to reconcile the things of heaven and earth.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He is faithful that hath promised.”—(*Heb. x. 23.*)



THE LOVE OF ONE'S NEIGHBOUR AND OF ONE'S SELF.—By saying, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," our Saviour wished to give us to understand that, while labouring for the salvation of others, we must not neglect our own, otherwise we should not possess a well-ordered love for ourselves. St. Omer, who in 636 was drawn from the monastery of Luxeuil, which he was edifying by his virtues, and raised, greatly against his will, to the bishopric of Therouanne, furnishes us with a striking confirmation of this principle. Never did pastor devote himself more entirely to his flock, to instruct the few Christians under his guardianship, and convert the infidels; to train a body of clergy, and found churches and monasteries; to civilize according to the light of the Gospel a population trained in pagan morality; to regulate the public services of the Church—in a word, to establish a diocese; such was the mission which he successfully discharged. But, in the midst of these labours, he kept in mind his own eternal interest, oftentimes withdrawing to the solitude of Luxeuil, there to quicken anew his sentiments of piety by meditation, prayer, and works of penance. St. Omer died in 667.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The explanation of the words of the Gospel is to be found in this passage of the Book of Ecclesiasticus: "He that is evil to himself, to whom will he be good?"—(Eccles. xiv. 5.)*



WHAT IS LEARNED AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS.—St. Pulcheria, grand-daughter of Theodosius the Great, and sister of Theodosius the younger, educated the latter prince and, until he had attained his majority, held the reins of government with consummate tact. Previous to any undertaking, she was wont to pray at the foot of the cross for divine direction. Having been driven from the court through the instrumentality of her jealous sister and an intriguing minister, she bore the disgrace with grandeur of soul, or rather, as a Christian; for the cross which had been her counsellor became her consoling friend. But having been subsequently urged to return by every part of the empire, which, since she had ceased governing, was tending towards its decline, she appeared again before her brother, cleared away from his mind all prejudices, and assumed anew the reins of power. Theodosius died soon afterwards, and as the empire at large had confided to her its destinies, she called Marcian, one of the most virtuous and capable men of the time, to share the throne with her; but the throne only, for she had made a vow to belong to God alone. She died a holy death on the 10th of September, 453.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“The word of the Cross to them indeed that perish is foolishness, but to them that are saved is the power of God.”—(1 Cor. i. 18.)



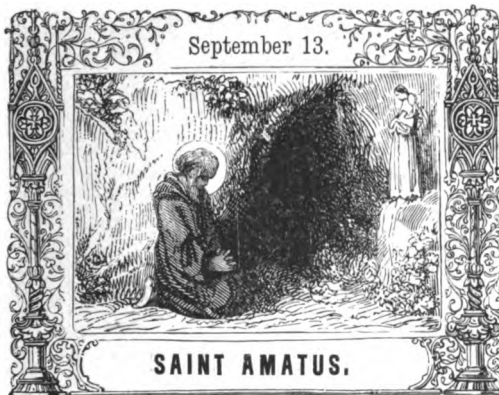
HONOURABLE WOUNDS.—St. Paphnucius, the disciple of St. Anthony, and one of the most holy bishops of Upper Egypt, nobly confessed the faith during the persecution of Maximinus. He was grievously wounded in the ankle and thumb, and had his right eye torn out previous to being sent to labour in the mines with the other martyrs. On peace being restored to the Church by Constantine the Great, he reappeared in his diocese with all the more authority, because the halo of the martyr surrounded him. This glorious title, as well as his personal sanctity, attracted towards him the reverent homage of the fathers of the Council at Nicea, where he was anxious to be present, despite his state of suffering. Constantine, who loved to converse with him and consult him as a parent, never parted from him without respectfully kissing his cheek or the scars in his hand. Paphnucius was present likewise at the council of Tyre, and there brought about a reconciliation between Maximus, patriarch of Jerusalem, and St. Athanasius, who had been calumniated by the enemies of the faith. The precise date of his death is not recorded.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*If to fight for one's country be glorious, "it is likewise great glory to follow the Lord," saith the Wise Man.—(Eccles. xxiii. 38.)*



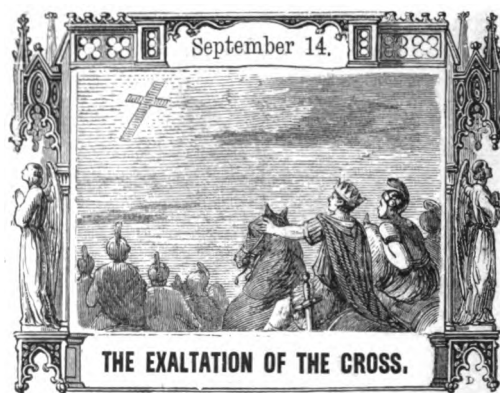
RESPONSIBILITY ALLIED WITH HONOURS.—At times, minds of a lofty character, imbued with a sense of their own powers and urged by a desire of that good which they hope for, and long to effect, offer themselves in spontaneous sacrifice, exclaiming like Isaiah, “Behold me, Lord, send me forth !” Generally speaking, however, real virtue, being of more modest temper, shrinks away from dignities and honours, mindful of the burthens and responsibilities they entail; but if it resolve to undertake the charge notwithstanding, the duties connected therewith are performed all the more earnestly from the fact that they are not by any means regarded as a privilege. Even thus St. Sacerdos was raised, against his will and almost by virtue of the royal authority, to the see of Lyons in succession to St. Leo. He answered the general expectation formed respecting him, by the virtues which distinguished him, by his great zeal against heresy and for the sanctification of the flock confided to his care. The pious Childebert, king of Paris, held him in peculiar esteem, but his own church venerated him still more; for, having died at Paris in or about the year 550, envoys were sent by the faithful of his own diocese to ask for his mortal remains, in order never to be separated from them.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Seek not to be made a judge, unless thou have strength enough to extirpate iniquities.” *This injunction is applicable to dignities in general.*—(Eccles. vii. 6.)



PERSECUTED VIRTUE.—Persecution seems to be the portion of virtue. God desires or permits it in accordance with His ever-wise designs, which it behoves us to adore without seeking to penetrate. Amatus gave himself up to all the fervour of piety in a cell attached to the monastery of Agaune, near which was built a little oratory that still exists, called “Our Lady of the Rock,” whence he was drawn to be raised to the see of Sion, in the Valais. He discharged the functions of this high office for many years with such edification that his reputation for sanctity continued to increase day by day. But the weak-minded Thierry III., swayed by his mistresses and by the atrocious Ebroin, mayor of the palace, allowing himself to be influenced against him, condemned him without appeal, and banished him from his diocese. The pious bishop patiently bore this unjust treatment, and withdrew to a monastery, where he died a holy death towards the year 690. Thierry, having returned to better thoughts, reproached himself bitterly with his mode of dealing, and repaired the mischief by numerous deeds of benevolence.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The just man when persecuted resembles our Saviour more nearly: “Let him then take up his cross, and follow” the divine model.—(Mark viii. 34.)*



GOD CONQUERS, REIGNS, AND GOVERNS.—Constantine was still wavering between Christianity and idolatry when a luminous cross appeared to him in the heavens bearing the inscription, “In this sign shalt thou conquer!” He became a Christian, and triumphed over his enemies, who were, at the same time, enemies of the Faith. A few years later, his saintly mother having found the very cross of our Saviour, the feast of the “Exaltation” was established in the Church; but it was only at a later period still,—namely, after the emperor Heraclius had achieved three great and wondrous victories over Chosroes, king of Persia, who had possessed himself of the holy and precious relic, that this festival took a more general extension, and was invested with a higher character of solemnity. The feast of the “Invention” was thereupon instituted, in memory of the discovery made by St. Helen; and that of the “Exaltation” was reserved to celebrate the triumphs of Heraclius. The greatest power of the Catholic world was at that time centred in the empire of the East, and was verging towards its ruin, when God put forth His hand to save it; the re-establishment of the cross at Jerusalem was the sure pledge thereof. This great event occurred in 629.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Herein is found the accomplishment of the Saviour's word: “If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all things to myself.”—(John xii. 32.)*



NECESSITY OF CHARITY.—St. Achard, abbot of Jumièges, who died about the year 687, assembled his religious about his deathbed, and thus addressed them :—“ Never forget, my dear children, the advice I am about to give you, which is my last will. I conjure you, in the name of Jesus Christ, to love one another, and never to foster in your hearts any bitter feeling against your neighbour ; such a disposition would ill accord with charity, for charity is the distinctive character of the elect. Vainly will you have borne the yoke of penitence and grown old in the austere practices of the cloister, if you love not one another. Without such love martyrdom itself would not render you acceptable in the sight of God. Brotherly charity is the soul of all true religion.” The pious abbot had all his life through afforded an example of that divine charity which he was then extolling ; and the abbey of Jumièges, although it reckoned nine hundred religious within its walls, exhibited, while under his administration, a prime exemplar of discipline and fervour.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“ If I speak with the tongue of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am as nothing.”—(1 Cor. xiii. 3.)



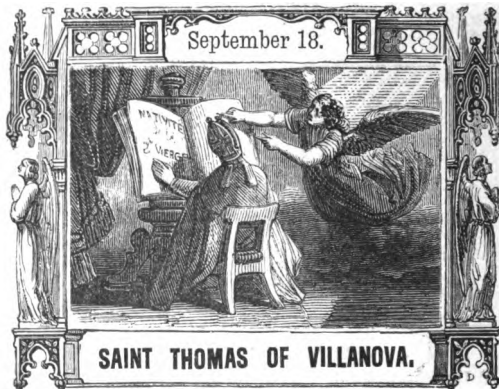
SEVERITY AND CHARITY.—St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, manifested during his whole episcopal career great severity in regard to whatever might interfere with the purity of the faith. He even pushed his rigorous notions too far, urgently contending that baptism administered by heretics was void,—an opinion that was withal held generally in Africa, and in reference to which the Church had not pronounced. He employed the like severity against the holders of *Libella*, who, without falling into direct apostasy, succeeded in procuring from the pagan magistrates certificates of paganism; as also against the “Fallen,” who, after having committed open apostasy, had contrived to obtain, through the complaisance of the martyrs, tickets of “indulgence.” He required that they should assume the garb of penitents and perform canonical penance. On the approach of persecution, however, he directed that those should be reconciled with the Church, who would engage to redeem their weakness by greater generosity. Cyprian was severe towards himself and austere in manners, but of unbounded charity towards the unfortunate. He gained the crown of martyrdom in the year 258.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Faith that worketh by charity” was the recommendation constantly set before his disciples by the great Apostle.—(*Gal. v. 6.*)



THE BENEFITS OF THE GOSPEL.—The Gospel, as well for nations as for individuals, is the living source and principle of all good, all civilization, and virtue; nations are only perverse, and individuals evil-doing, because they go astray from its sovereign rule. St. Lambert, bishop of Maestricht, one of the most eminent prelates of his time, affords us a striking illustration. His flock loved him on account of his goodness and holiness, and Lambert loved his king, Chilperic II., because this sovereign was good and virtuous. But Ebroin, mayor of the palace, being impious of life, and consequently wicked and cruel, hated Lambert, and, upon the death of Chilperic, drove the prelate into exile. Lambert was restored to his see after the death of Ebroin, and converted to Christianity a part of Brabant, changing into new men the inhabitants of that country, who had previously been reputed barbarians. Pepin d'Héristal, the mayor of the palace, whose conduct was not more Christian-like than that of Ebroin, conspired against the life of the bishop, whose sanctity and zeal were to him a continual reproach and stumbling-block, and caused him to be assassinated in the year 709.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.” *This Gospel precept is the measure of all sanctity and the principle of all good.*—(Matt. v. 48.)



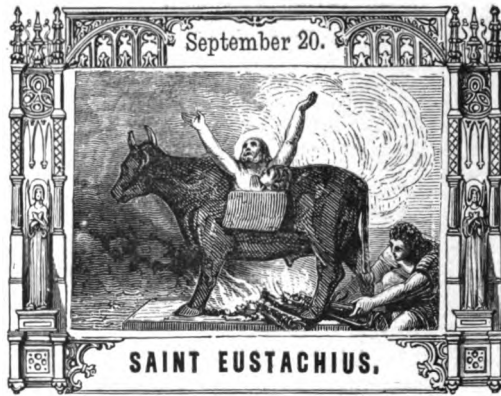
LOVE OF GOD AND ONE'S NEIGHBOUR.—It is hardly possible to read anything more touching than the sermons of St. Thomas of Villanova on the love of God. It is because he spoke out of the abundance of his heart, for he loved God unto ecstasy. He loved his neighbour likewise with tenderness and real feeling. Thomas of Villanova, having entered the order of canons of St. Augustine the very year that Luther quitted it, preserved all his life through the poor garb of the order and the spirit of poverty which he had there acquired. When it was made a subject of reproach to him, that he, the archbishop of Valentia, one of the wealthiest prelates of Spain, should be clad and fed in such sort, and should himself mend his own clothes, he replied: "My vow obliges me to it." But this was a pious deception, for his purpose was to economize even to the smallest piece of money in favour of the poor. He was earnestly longing to be liberated from the duties of the episcopate, fearing lest he might not discharge them well, when he was warned by an angel that God, well content with his labours, would bestow on him the due reward on the feast of Christmas, 1555, which was realized to the letter.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets."—(*Matt. xxii. 37.*)



THE PATRONAGE OF THE SAINTS.—St. Januarius, bishop of Benevento, suffered martyrdom, together with two companions, during the persecution of Diocletian, in the year 305, by decapitation, as the lions, to appease whose ravening hunger he had been cast into the amphitheatre, reverently shrank from touching him. The town of Naples, which, from remote antiquity, has possessed his relics, acknowledges him for its patron, and has paid to him a veneration all the more earnest because to him it has many times owed a miraculous protection. In the eighth century the relics of St. Januarius were solemnly exposed, in order that the city might be safeguarded from the eruptions of Vesuvius. In 1497 the pestilence, which caused great ravages at Naples, miraculously ceased on the arrival of the precious relics, which had been for some time taken away. In 1707 the volcanic eruption was so terrible that the light of day was obscured, and the town feared approaching destruction: the eruption ceased as soon as the relics were exposed. Instances without number of similar miracles are recorded.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*St. Paul assures us, says St. Jerome, that "two hundred threescore and sixteen souls" were saved from perishing through his interposition while he was in the flesh; has he then less power now that he dwells with God?—(Acts xxvii. 37.)*



RICHES IN REGARD TO ONE'S SALVATION.—St. Eustachius suffered martyrdom with his wife and his two children under the reign of the emperor Adrian. There is reason to infer, from a prayer formerly said on his feast-day, and which is contained in the ancient sacramentaries, that St. Eustachius, previous to his martyrdom, distributed all his possessions to the poor. This is all that can be admitted, however, with any show of certainty, for what is related of his flight into Egypt and the tortures he suffered by means of the brazen bull, in which he is said to have been burned alive, is not sufficiently authentic to allow of our yielding ready belief in it. However this may be viewed, the fact of distributing his wealth to the poor while martyrdom lay before him, that he might the better be disposed thereto, and leave the world less regretfully, was an every-day occurrence among the early Christians. They likewise practised the giving of alms recommended by Jesus Christ, they conformed to His life of poverty and indigence, and released themselves from perishable things, which they looked upon as a great hindrance to salvation.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*How often indeed does it happen that "the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke up" the workings of grace in the hearts of men!*—(Matt. xiii. 22.)



THE GOOD TIDINGS.—St. Matthew was following the calling of a usurer, or farmer of the public revenues,—a class of persons held in great disfavour among the Jews, either deservedly so or on account of some prejudice obtaining amongst that nation. Now Jesus Christ happening to pass near him while he was seated at his desk, called him and said, "Follow me." Matthew at once abandoned everything in order to follow Him, and held a great banquet in His honour, for which reason the Pharisees were doubly wroth against the Saviour; but Jesus in nowise heeded their malice. After the descent of the Holy Ghost, Matthew announced the truth throughout Judea and Persia. He was the first to write the history of the apostolic life of our Saviour, and gave to his book the title of Gospel, in other words, "Good Tidings;" an expression borrowed from the words of Christ himself, who called His doctrine "the Good Tidings." This was, in fact, the best tidings that Heaven could announce to the world, since it proclaimed the salvation of mankind. St. Matthew suffered martyrdom at a period not precisely determined.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings and that preacheth peace; of him that showeth forth good, preacheth salvation, and saith to Zion, Thy God shall reign!"—(*Isa. lii. 7.*)



OBEDIENCE ACCORDING TO THE SPIRIT OF RELIGION.—Under the reign of the emperors Maximian and Diocletian, the Theban legion, composed of Christians, being ordered to join the army in Gaul, which was destined to fight against the Bagaudes, Maximian sought to force them to sacrifice to the false gods. Maurice, who commanded the legion, thus answered for himself and his brethren:—"Prince! we are your soldiers, but at the same time the servants of God. To you we owe obedience, and to God innocence of life; from you we receive pay, but He has given us our being. We could not obey you herein without disavowing Him; now, He is our master and yours, although you do not know this. In all that pertains to the military service we will comply with your orders: dispose of our limbs and our lives, but require not more than this. We have weapons in our hands but shall not defend ourselves; your temper would not endure our revolting, and we would rather die innocent than live guilty." Maximian caused the legion to be twice decimated, and then ordered a general massacre of the remainder. This happened in the year 628.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"Render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." *These words amply set forth the distinction to be observed in the matter of obedience.*—(Luke xx. 25.)



CHASTITY.—These words of the Apostle, “chastity likens us unto God,” contain a very wide application. As a case in point, St. Thecla may be cited. She was converted by St. Paul, and fully apprehending the value of this eminent virtue, so strongly recommended by the great Apostle, she bound herself by vow to belong to God alone. Being gifted with all the qualities which the world looks for, her parents sought to force her into marriage, and urged her compliance in every way possible. The aspirant to her hand pursued her from retreat to retreat, and ended by denouncing her to the magistrates as an enemy of the gods and the customs of the empire. She was placed on a burning pile, but a miraculous shower extinguished the flames, and she came forth free and untouched. She was exposed to the beasts of prey, but the lions stopped at her side and licked her feet. She was fast bound to two furious bulls; but the animals, though fiercely goaded, were unable to drag her along. After submitting to these proofs, she withdrew to Seleucia, where she peacefully ended her days. Ancient records bear ample testimony to these wonders.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“The Lord hath clothed thee with His strength, because thou hast loved chastity,” said the High Priest Joachim to the holy willow Judith.—(*Judith xv. 11.*)



FIDELITY TO THE TEMPORAL PRINCE.—St. Gerard was born at Venice towards the beginning of the eleventh century. He had dwelt for seven years in a hermitage not far distant from the town of Weisbrun, when St. Stephen, king of Hungary, invited him to preach the Gospel in his kingdom. Soon afterwards, despite all opposition on his part, he was raised to the see of Chonad, and by dint of preaching, apostolical labours, and good example, he converted almost the whole of that diocese, which had previously been filled with idolaters. St. Stephen ever held him in peculiar esteem. The atrocities and crimes committed by his successor, Peter, having caused his expulsion from the throne, St. Gerard ceased not remaining faithful to him; he even used all his endeavours with Abbas, who had been elected in his stead, to induce him to renounce the throne, forewarning him that his reign would not be long, and refused, moreover, to assist at his coronation. Two years subsequently, Abbas was, in fact, dethroned and lost his life. The holy bishop of Chonad died in 1046, having been assassinated by a band of pagans, out of hatred to religion; which fact has caused his death to be regarded as that of a martyr.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Thus did the pontiff Sadoc remain faithful to David and Solomon, and was “established high priest in place of the unfaithful Abiathar.”*—(3 Kings ii. 35.)

September 25.



SAINT CEOLFRID.

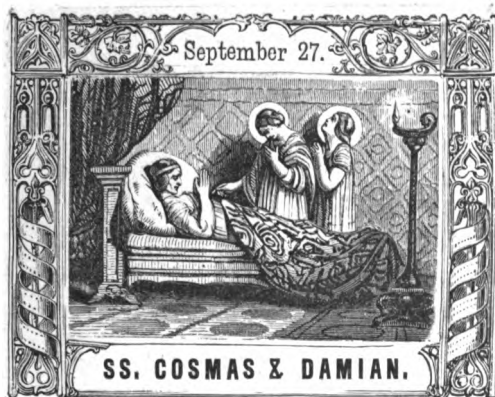
KNOWLEDGE AND PIETY.—St. Ceolfrid, or Cewfrey, abbot of St. Paul's at Jarrow and St. Peter's in Wearmouth, was no less remarkable for his learning than for his great piety. He founded in both monasteries libraries, which, considering the period, were very extensive, and he trained up many learned disciples in whom the Church had good reason to feel honoured; amongst others, the Venerable Bede. He had at heart that knowledge should be allied with religion, inasmuch as the latter only is infallible, whereas the former may prove frivolous or delusive; he was anxious that his learned disciples should become missionaries and champions of the faith, but not men of ambitious views. On being consulted as to the most appropriate garb for clerics, and also with regard to the time for the paschal celebration, he answered that the best usages were those adopted by the Roman Church, and that it was expedient to conform thereto, which was accordingly done. Having reached the 74th year of his age, and desiring to set apart a few days to prepare for death, he resigned his charge and proceeded to France, where he died on the 25th of September, 716, at the town of Langres.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Godliness with contentment is a great gain,” says the Apostle. Knowledge, says one of the Fathers, is of little account, but piety availeth much; knowledge allied with piety compriseth everything.—(1 Tim. vi. 6.)



ZEAL AND INTREPIDITY.—St. Firminus, first bishop of Amiens, was a native of Pampeluna, and had been converted to the faith by a holy priest, named Honestus. Having become a priest himself, he felt his zeal enkindled for the conversion of infidels, began preaching in Navarre, and passing over into Gaul, traversed Auvergne, Anjou, Normandy, and Picardy. The spots where the persecution raged with greatest violence were those which he preferred. Hence it was that he hurried to Beauvais, to confront the anger of the prefect Valerius, who caused him to be thrown into a horrible dungeon and there left him long lingering. On being restored to liberty, he turned his steps towards Amiens, where Christianity was scarcely known; he there converted more than three thousand persons, and founding thereby a church, was appointed its first bishop. This church took such rapid extension, that the civil authorities grew alarmed. Firminus was again loaded with chains and dragged to prison. He was beheaded towards the year 287.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"Fear ye not those that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body into hell."—(*Matt. x. 28.*)



SAINTLY SKILL.—SS. Cosmas and Damian were brothers and animated with a like spirit for the conversion of infidels. They dwelt at Eges, in Cilicia, where they practised medicine, not merely for the sake of curing the body, but also in order to vivify souls by winning them to Jesus Christ. The wondrous cures which God accorded to their self-devotion and their prayers gained for them such renown that they were scarcely able to visit all the sick that sought their aid. Their perfect disinterestedness and manifest zeal drew upon them the notice of the civil authorities, when the persecution of Diocletian broke out. Having been arrested by order of Lysias, the governor of Cilicia, they were condemned to be tortured, were cast headlong into the sea, bound hand and foot, but were miraculously saved; they were tied to a burning pile, and preserved from the flames not less miraculously, and were at length beheaded in 285. The Greeks style them "Anargyres," because they never took any fees. Their relics are dispersed throughout the Christian world, and they are held in universal veneration.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"But what then? So that every way, whether by occasion or in truth, Christ be preached."—(*Phil.* i. 18.)



THE DISCIPLINE OF SALVATION.—St. Eustochia had as instructors in the way of salvation St. Paula, her mother, the learned St. Jerome, and St. Marcella, the first Roman lady who embraced the ascetic life, even as Eustochia herself was destined to become the first Roman virgin consecrated to God under a solemn vow. Under such teachers, Eustochia made great progress in piety and virtue, and showed even from her childhood what she was one day to become. She followed St. Paula to Palestine, shut herself up with her in the monastery of Bethlehem, and after the death of her mother became the superioress. It was for her that St. Jerome composed his treatise on virginity, and translated into Latin the rule of St. Pacomius. In 416 the Pelagians set fire to the monastery of Bethlehem, and maltreated the holy women living there in such wise that a portion only escaped, as by a miracle, from the fury of sword and fire that threatened on every hand. Among others Eustochia escaped, and died three years subsequently.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*It is during childhood oftentimes that the saints are formed.* “It is a proverb: a young man according to his way, even when he is old, will not depart from it.”—(Prov. xxii. 6.)



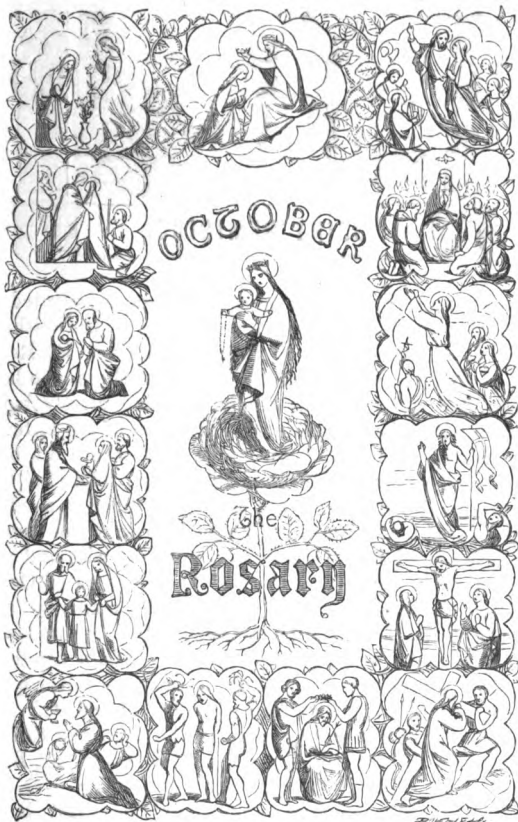
PRIDE AND ITS DOWNFALL.—Lucifer, the foremost of the archangels, had said in his heart, “I will raise my throne by the side of the Eternal, and shall be like unto God.” A host of angels took part in his revolt. “Who is like unto God?” exclaimed one of the angels who had kept allegiance. A mighty conflict ensued throughout heaven; the disloyal were hurled headlong into the abyss without any hope of redemption; and the angel that had battled for the Eternal received the name of “Michael,” meaning “*Who is like unto God?*” and took the place of the fallen angel, that is, the first after God. These mysteries, which Holy Scripture and tradition reveal to us, will remain under a veil until the great day of manifestation; let us, however, draw therefrom the salutary lesson, that if by pride we grow like to the fallen angel, we shall fall down with him, and the hell created for his punishment will become, in like manner, our portion. The only way to raise ourselves heavenward is to increase in grace, in good works, and all virtues.

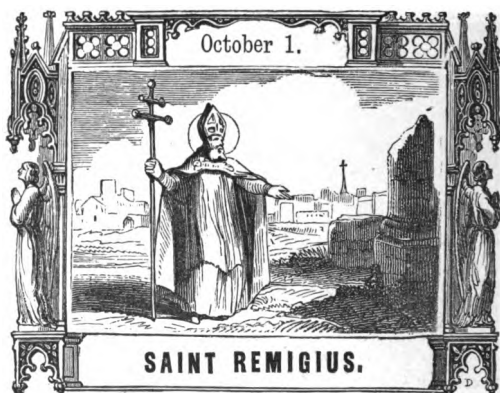
MORAL REFLECTION.—“Pride is a gate open to all destruction,” says the Holy Spirit; and adds, “the wise man is ever humble.”—(Prov. xi. 21.)



KNOWLEDGE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.—St. Jerome is remarkable for the great austerities he imposed on himself in order to quell temptations that urged him to evil, and still more by his learned treatises on the Holy Scripture. The former were instrumental in helping him to become a saint, and the latter brought great honour to the cause of religion. He surrendered his body to austerities so harsh that his limbs became thereby wasted, as we gather from his own avowal, and in order to get complete mastery over himself, he had ever present to his mind the trumpet-sound of the Last Judgment. Buried in the depths of the desert, where he had as sole companions the ravening lions, taking his rest on the burning sands, parched by the glaring heat of an African sun, emaciated by fasting, he was not without exemption from the promptings of passion; for in this respect solitude, it must be owned, has dangers of its own. Hence it was that the outer world saw him more often than the dimness of solitude. To consult the learned and the holy, to teach and be taught, to write in defence of religion, do battle with heresy, explain and translate the Scriptures, such was the work of a life extending over eighty-eight years, which ended at Bethlehem in 420.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“All scripture is profitable to teach, that the man of God may be perfect.”—(2 *Tim.* iii. 16.)





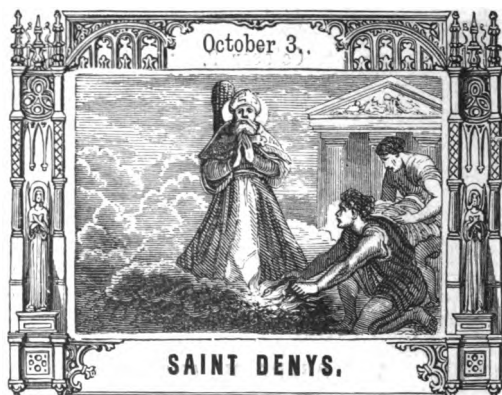
THE FRENCH BISHOPS.—France has been constituted into a great nation mainly through the agency of her bishops, as historians and learned writers generally admit. St. Remigius, bishop of Rheims, stands foremost amongst those who laboured to make her what she has become. Being closely bound in friendship with Clovis, before the admission of the latter to the saving waters of baptism, he had a great share in bringing about the conversion of the proud Sicamber. After the baptism of Clovis, St. Remigius did not allow him to be swayed by the promptings of his nature. “Choose,” he said to him when writing confidentially—“choose as councillors wise and prudent men, cherish a great respect for the ministers of God, and appeal to them for guidance. Become the mainstay of your people; hasten to the aid of the oppressed, of widows and orphans; cause yourself to be feared and loved. Afford equal-handed justice to every one, and, above all, let no person ever quit your presence more sad at heart than when he entered it.” In conjunction with the unvarying solicitude he displayed towards his royal disciple, and which was not exercised in vain, St. Remigius did not cease, during an episcopate extending over seventy years, to practise the most eminent virtues and become a model for imitation to all his flock. He died in 533.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Jesus Christ, whom St. Peter calls “the shepherd and bishop of our souls,” has imparted to His representatives upon earth the grace and the will to do good.—(1 Pet. ii. 25.)*



CHRISTIAN MODESTY.—God does not abandon to mere chance any of His handiworks; by His providence He is everywhere present; not a hair falls from the head or a sparrow to the ground without His knowledge. Not content, however, with yielding such familiar help in all things, not content with affording that existence which He communicates and perpetuates through every living being, He has charged His angels with the ministry of watching and safeguarding every one of His creatures that behold not His face. Kingdoms have their angels assigned to them, and men have their angels; these latter it is whom religion designates as the “Holy Angels guardian.” Our Lord says in the Gospel, “Beware lest ye scandalize any of these little ones, for their angels in Heaven see the face of my Father.” The existence of angels guardian is hence a dogma of the Christian faith: this being so, what should not our respect be for that sure and holy intelligence that is ever present by our side; and how great should our solicitude be, lest, by any act of ours, we offend those eyes which are ever bent upon us in all our ways!

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Ah! let us not give occasion, in the language of Holy Scripture, to the angels of peace to weep bitterly.—(Isa. xxxiii. 7.)*



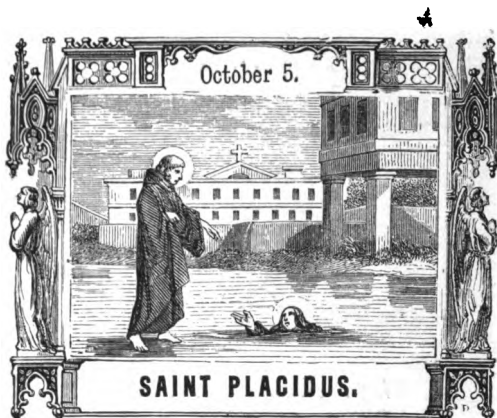
A PHILOSOPHER AND AN APOSTLE.—So greatly did Plato fear the judgment of the Areopagus that he dissembled his opinion relative to the unity of God, lest he might be accused of impiety and end his days even as Socrates had done. This may readily be accounted for, seeing that Plato was but a philosopher. St. Paul, when brought before the Areopagus to give an account of the doctrines he was announcing in Athens, without disguise or contrivance of any kind set forth, with admirable eloquence and great power of language, the eternal truths of the Gospel,—the unity and providence of God, the redemption of the human race through the blood of Jesus Christ, and the resurrection of the dead. It suffices to say that St. Paul was an apostle. Many persons were thereby converted; among others an Areopagite, named Denys, who became subsequently bishop of Athens. We gather from the Greek menologia that the illustrious disciple sealed his faith by martyrdom, being burned alive at Athens. His head is deposited at Soissons, and the remainder of the relics in the abbey-church of St. Denys.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*To the wise ones of this earth God has not given any mission, but to His apostles He has said: "Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."*—(Matt. xxviii. 19.)



THE COUNSELS OF THE GOSPEL.—St. Francis of Assisi is one of those who have carried the practice of evangelical counsels to the utmost limit. The charity he cherished for the poor obtained for him from God those first graces that were to raise him to the sublime heights of sanctity. To this tender love for the poor he united the practice of holy poverty, and enjoined upon his disciples, as a rigorous duty, the constant practice thereof, as well as of humility and mortification of the senses. His excessive fasts and austerities ended by shortening his days. Not satisfied with being a saint himself, and affording to his disciples the means for becoming saints, he was anxious to labour for the sanctification of others by preaching God's word. The groundwork of the order of "Friars minor," known subsequently as the "Capuchins," founded in 1200, may thus be summarized: to preach, pray, suffer, give edification, to afford succour to the needy, to be poor and the lowliest amongst the faithful. God rewarded his piety by imprinting upon his body the sacred stigmata of Jesus Christ. He died in 1226, at the age of forty-five.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"Every one shall be perfect if he be as His Master." Now, the Master who has both given the counsel and afforded the example is our Lord Jesus Christ.—(Luke vi. 40.)



THE DESIGNS OF GOD IN REGARD TO HIS SAINTS.—To the heart that knows how to correspond with grace, nothing seems to happen save according to the merciful designs of Providence. The same cannot, however, be said in regard to guilty-minded men. The youthful Placidus had been confided to the care of St. Benedict from the age of seven years, and was making great progress in the ways of virtue, when one day he fell into the Lake of Subiaco while drawing water thence. The holy abbot, being present in spirit at this accident, sent one of his disciples to draw him forth, who, hastening through the water without heeding what he was doing, seized him by the hair and brought him safe and sound to land. Placidus was destined to advance to a high degree of sanctity, and to found a monastery in the environs of Messina. A large number of religious were attracted thither, whom he edified by his example, even as they afterwards became the edification of all Sicily. When he had merited the glory of the elect and accomplished his work, he received, in company with several of his disciples, the crown of martyrdom, at the hands of a band of pirates, in the year 546.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*God, "who is admirable in His saints," does not cease acting with the aim of procuring their glory, even when He seems to abandon them.—(Psa. lxxvii. 36.)*



THE SCANDALS OF THE WORLD.—When the Church is about to encounter great dangers on the part of enemies of the Faith, God raises up to her noble champions; and whenever great scandals grow to a head, they are compensated for by lofty examples of virtue. Therefore was it that Bruno felt himself led into solitude. In the eleventh century ignorance had generated laxness and immorality; faith was rife enough, but morality was not in acceptance. Bruno, canon and chancellor of the cathedral of Rheims, out of love with the world by reason of the scandals he there witnessed, formed the project, together with certain of his friends, of relinquishing it altogether. Hugh, bishop of Grenoble, to whom he unfolded his purpose, pointed out to them, as suitable for the end in view, the “Chartreuse,” a rugged solitude not far distant. They there constructed for themselves separate cells, and began to lead a life of poverty and labour, as forbidding even as their chosen desert. Numerous companions soon thronged to join them, and the great ones of the world followed, to draw edification from the sight of their austere virtues. Thus was founded, in 1084, the most edifying and rigorous order that has ever existed. St. Bruno died in 1101.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“It is necessary,” for the sanctification of the just, “that scandals should come; and yet woe unto him through whom scandal cometh.”—(Matt. xviii. 7.)



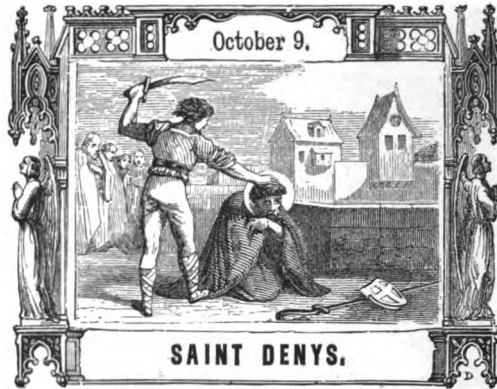
GOOD USE OF RICHES.—When Magdalen poured over the feet of Jesus the precious spikenard, the spirit of avarice, speaking by the mouth of Judas, blamed the act under the plea that it would have been better to give the price to the poor; but the Saviour praised the act and the intention which prompted it. Even thus in our days do worldlings indulge in regrets at the sums expended upon the adornment of the house of God and the splendour of His worship; but pious souls let them say on as they will. The Pope St. Mark, during his short pontificate of eight months and twenty days, in like manner shrank not from withdrawing from the support of the poor, for whom he had withal the greatest charity and pitying tenderness, large sums of money, to expend them in the construction of two churches: All ancient writers laud his generosity, and the solicitude he showed to maintain fervour amongst the faithful while the Church was at peace. Having been elected to succeed Pope St. Sylvester, in 336, he died in the month of October in the same year.

MORAL REFLECTION.—When Judas Macchabæus, triumphing over Gorgias, had “carried away gold, silver, precious furniture, and mighty riches” from the Syrians, he embellished therewith the Temple of Jerusalem.



MEDITATING ON THE PASSION.—St. Bridget, a princess of the royal house of Sweden, having been trained in earnest piety, was so deeply impressed from early youth by a sermon on the passion of the Saviour, and by a vision wherein Jesus Christ appeared to her covered with blood and wounds, saying to her, "Behold the condition whereunto those who are insensible to my love for them have reduced me," that the memory thereof never quitted her mind. She conceived the purpose of loving the Saviour by herself in such wise as to make up for the ingratitude of men. Being married at the age of sixteen, and becoming the mother of a family and a widow within the course of a few years, she availed herself of her regained liberty to proceed to Rome and visit the tombs of the Apostles. Thence she set out on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and accomplished it with great fervour, in company with her daughter, St. Catherine, just as formerly in the case of St. Paula and St. Eustochia. Bridget founded and endowed monasteries in many places. God rewarded her piety by divine "Revelations." She died at Rome in 1373, at the age of 71.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who willingly endured the cross, despising the shame."—(Heb. xii. 2.)



THE WORTH OF BLOOD.—The blood of the martyrs became the seed of Christians, according to the beautiful expression of one of the early Fathers. This truth is fully shown forth by the whole history of the establishment of Christianity. Denys, Rusticus, and Eleutherius, having been sent into Gaul by the Pope St. Fabian, towards the middle of the third century, to bear thither the light of the Gospel, founded the churches of Chartres, Senlis, Meaux, Cologne, and likewise that of Paris, whereof St. Denys became the first bishop. Being seized however by the prefect Sisinnius Fescenninus in the midst of their apostolic labours, they were thrown into prison and beheaded towards the year 280. Their bodies having been thrown into the Seine, were drawn out thence, and buried on the spot where the Basilica of St. Denys was subsequently erected. This martyrdom, far from arresting the progress of the Gospel, as the pagans had hoped, gave such great extension to the faith that the Christians were soon able to defy the efforts of the persecutors, and Christianity at last gained the upper hand, establishing itself on the ruins of paganism.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Take heart, then, all you that suffer for the faith*—“a long posterity being promised to Jesus Christ as the price of His blood.”—(*Isa. liii. 10.*)



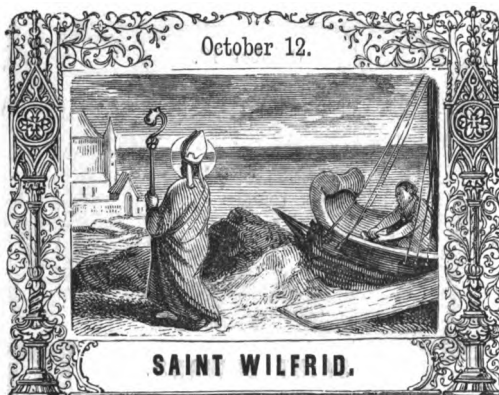
THE TEACHING OF DEATH.—Francis Borgia, duke of Gandia, grandee of Spain, and one of the most intimate friends of the Emperor Charles V., was given to piety from his very childhood; he was already regarded as a perfect exemplar of virtue when he received the emperor's instructions to escort to Granada the body of the empress, who had been snatched away in the flower of her age. On opening the coffin in order to verify the body, he was so struck by the ravages caused by death in the case of one whom, a few days previously, a whole kingdom took delight in gazing on, that the sight was never effaced from his memory. He comprehended the nothingness of wealth and human dignities, and made a vow to occupy his thoughts thenceforth only with eternity. Having afterwards lost the duchess, his wife, who had till then been the partner of his pious aspirations and works of charity, he entered the Society of Jesus, whereof he became the glory. He evangelized Castille, Andalusia, and Portugal; was named General of his order, and died in 1572. Clement IX. inscribed him amongst the saints in 1671.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"Be mindful of thy last end, and thou shalt never sin," urges the *Wise Man*. *The thought of death is in fact the most effectual of all preservatives.*—(Eccles. xxviii. 6.)



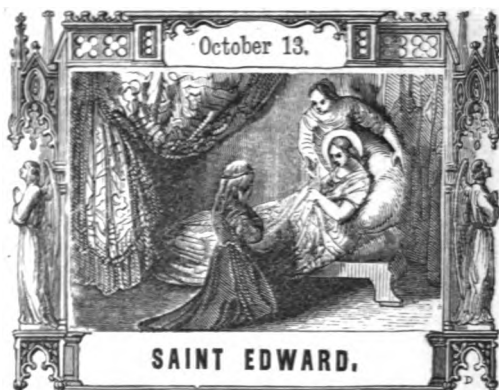
THE MARTYR'S HEROISM.—In the year 304, Taracus, Probus, and Andronicus, differing in age and nationality, but united in the bonds of faith, being denounced as Christians to Numerian, governor of Cilicia, were arrested at Pompeiopolis, and conducted to Tharsis. They underwent a first examination in that town, after which their limbs were lacerated with iron hooks, and they were taken back to prison covered with wounds. Being afterwards led to Mopsuesta, they were submitted to a second examination, terminating in a manner equally cruel as the first. But the judge, perceiving that their wounds were healed, found fault with the gaolers, and forbade them to apply any remedy. They underwent a third examination at Anazarbis, followed by greater torments still. Numerian, being unable to shake their constancy, had them kept in reserve for the approaching games. They were borne to the amphitheatre, but the most ferocious animals on being let loose against them came crouching to their feet and licked their wounds; the judge, reproaching the gaolers with connivance, caused the martyrs to be despatched by the gladiators.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Such is true Christian devotion: "Neither death nor life shall be able to separate us from the love that is in Christ Jesus."*—(Rom. viii. 38.)



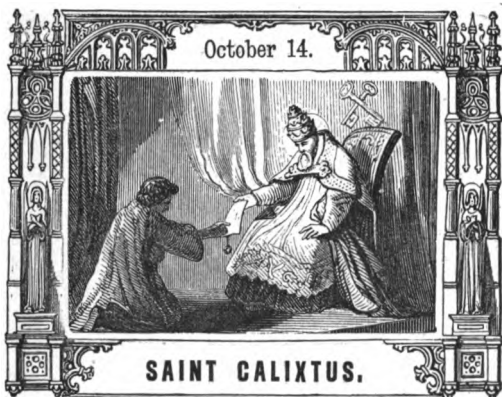
TRIALS OF THE JUST.—A philosopher of antiquity had shadowed forth the splendid spectacle of a just man fighting manfully against adversity. Of that which paganism did but dream, holy religion affords manifold examples, whereof one may suffice. St. Wilfrid had quitted all things—worldly goods, honours, and country itself,—fleeing from the court of the kings of Northumberland in order to consecrate himself to God's service. Having returned to England invested with the priestly character, he was raised to the archbishopric of York, for his virtues rather than on account of his high birth. But the great nobles of the kingdom were for the most part leading a disorderly life, the embers of Pelagianism were enkindling discord, and disturbances touching the Paschal celebration were rife. From so many causes a multitude of enemies uplifted their hands against Wilfrid, who, both in the matter of faith and morals, was beyond reproach. He was first banished and then recalled, imprisoned, stripped of everything he possessed, and banished anew. But each time of such forced absence became the occasion of a new apostolate. He converted part of Friesland, endowed Mercia with many monasteries, and at length died at peace in 709.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The just man is not wont to take account of "pains and labours, knowing that God prepareth the reward."*—(*Wisd. x. 17.*)



PIETY AND GRANDEUR OF SOUL.—In the estimation of worldlings the word “piety” denotes littleness of mind; but this betokens littleness of judgment on their part, for religion shows forth the contrary by illustrious examples. No man was ever more pious, mortified, chaste, and charitable than St. Edward, king of England; but side by side with these purely Christian qualities he displayed a grandeur of soul worthy of the throne. He established a wisely-planned code, which still forms the groundwork of public law in England, and organized an administration so complete that the nation seemed to govern itself as of its own free will; and he proved himself fully able to repel his enemies by armed force whenever it was found needful to engage in war. His subjects loved him like a father. Providence seemed to have singled him out to repair the disasters resulting from forty years of invasion, and to restore his country. He died in 1066, after having founded the abbey of Westminster. “Weep not,” he said to his queen Editha; “I am not about to die, but am beginning to live eternally.”

MORAL REFLECTION.—“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” and thereby “a wise man will increase his wisdom.”—(Prov. i. 5, 7.)



THE INFLUENCE OF VIRTUE.—St. Calixtus, a Roman by birth, succeeded Pope Zephyrinus on the 2nd of August, 217. He governed the Church with so much wisdom and established such perfect order that the emperor Alexander Severus, although a pagan, held him forth as an example to his courtiers whenever any choice of civil magistrates had to be made. It is from this holy pontiff that he adopted the maxim that public offices should be conferred on the most worthy. On one occasion, when a pagan was bent on converting into an inn a place that had been used by the Christians as an oratory, “No,” exclaimed the emperor; “give it over rather to their pontiff; he will turn it to better account.” The ancient sacramentaries and pontificals set forth a decree of Pope Calixtus instituting or extending to the Church at large and rendering obligatory the fast of the “Ember Days.” This holy pontiff ended his days in 222 by a violent death, for the ancient martyrologies invest him with the title of “martyr.” He was the first who gave heed to the raising of structures of a durable character for the uses of Christian worship.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*It is by witnessing the good deeds of the saints that “men glorify our Father, who is in Heaven.”—(Matt. v. 16.)*



CHOICE OF READING.—From the most tender age St. Theresa, enkindled with a holy zeal by the pious reading she heard in the bosom of her family, burned with the desire of martyrdom, and gave herself with ardour to works of Christian piety. But subsequently worldly connections and frivolous reading weakened these first impressions, and she was in danger of losing her salvation, when God inspired her with the thought of relinquishing the world. She selected the order of Carmelites; an habitual state of suffering, however, and too frequent relations with the outer world, plunged her anew into a state of indifference. Grace triumphed once more; Theresa devoted herself to prayer, and in a short time became so fervent that no one has ever surpassed her. In addition to the fact that she gave herself much care and trouble to bring about the reform of the Carmelites, her life was one continued state of suffering—a constant martyrdom; but she found satisfaction therein, repeating frequently, “O my God, to suffer or else to die!” In these sentiments she yielded up her spirit in 1581.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Till I come,” said the Apostle to his disciple, “give attendance to reading;” let us not cease repeating to the Christians of our day, “Have a care what you read!”—(1 Tim. iv. 13.)



SELF-RENUNCIATION. — St. Gal, the renowned disciple of St. Columban, was in like manner a native of Ireland, and went with him to France to seek out a place of retirement, where they might remain unknown. When St. Columban was driven away from Luxeuil by Queen Brunehaut, he was accompanied by St. Gal; but the latter falling ill in Burgundy and being obliged to remain there, King Sigebert conceived so great an esteem for him that he nominated him to the bishopric of Constance; St. Gal consented to accept it for one of his disciples, named John, of whose great merit he was fully aware. For his own part he was fain to content himself with a little spot of ground, whereon he constructed a few cells, which were the origin of the famous monastery of Saint-Gal. On another occasion, having miraculously cured the duke de Gonzaga's daughter, who was possessed by the devil, the duke offered to him many vessels of gold of great value. The holy abbot accepted them with readiness, but only that he might give the proceeds to the poor. He died in 640, at the age of ninety-five, renowned for miracles.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“If any one would be my disciple,” says the Saviour, “let him deny himself.” *The denial of self is, then, the royal road to perfection.*—(Luke ix. 23.)



THE STRONG WOMAN.—St. Hedwige, duchess of Poland, practised on the throne austerities greater than the most fervent religious in their monastery. She gave proof of greater humility and edified the nuns of the convent of Breslau, founded by her, by virtues of a higher standard than their own. Over her husband and her sons she exercised the gentle and loving sway that true virtue gives; and even exercised it over strangers; for the duke of Poland having been wounded and made prisoner in a war carried on against the duke of Kirna, she obtained from the victor what the most skilful negotiators had been unable to procure; and, finally, what is of most account, she exercised an absolute control over herself, the greatest misfortunes befalling her being unable to bear her down. "O my God!" she would exclaim, "Thou hast desired it; may Thy blessed will be done." Such a combination of virtues merited for her the gift of miracles; she foretold the moment of her death, prepared herself for it by receiving the sacraments, and surrendered her soul to God in October, 1243.

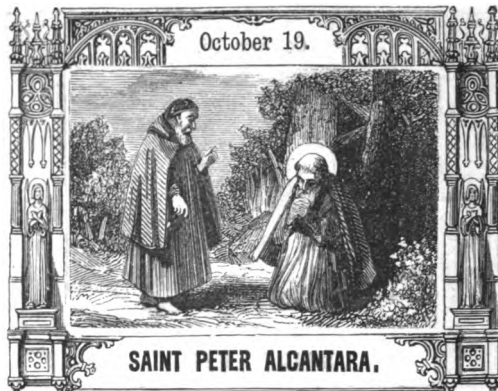
MORAL REFLECTION.—*Happy the sons that have such a mother!* "they arise up and call her blessed, her husband also, and he praiseth her."—(Prov. xxxi. 28.)



TALENT IN THE SERVICE OF RELIGION.—St. Luke, the disciple of St. Paul, and faithful companion of his journeyings, wrote a Gospel in Greek and the book entitled “Acts of the Apostles,” containing the narrative of the first events following the descent of the Holy Ghost, and those whereof he was eyewitness while in company with the Great Apostle. The author proposed to himself to collect in his *Gospel* several details of the Saviour’s life omitted by St. Matthew and St. Mark, and in the second book to hand down to posterity the memory of the virtues of the early Christians and the great Acts of the preachers of the Gospel. These two books are composed with remarkable genius, written with great elegance and purity of language so as not to be surpassed by the most renowned of the ancient writers, and holy religion feels a legitimate pride in proposing them as models to such as seek earnestly after beauty of form. St. Luke died in Achaia subsequently to the martyrdom of SS. Peter and Paul, the time and manner of his death not being clearly ascertained.

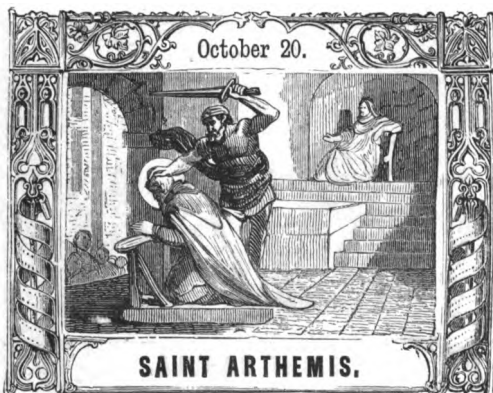
∧ **MORAL REFLECTION.**—“Till I come, employ the talent” *you have received. Such is the recommendation addressed by our Lord to each one of us.*—(Luke xix. 13.)





LOVE AFFECTIVE AND EFFECTIVE.—It is a mistake with many Christians to imagine that it is enough to love God, without accomplishing any work to glorify Him. No one loved God more tenderly than St. Peter of Alcantara; his two treatises on "Mental Prayer" and "Peace of the Soul" are two glorious memorials thereof; his whole existence was, so to speak, but one continued act of the love of God, accompanied oftentimes by ecstasies. He did not rest satisfied with loving God by himself alone, but desired that He should be loved by his brethren also; and hence devoted himself with ardent zeal to the preaching of the Divine Word, and had the happiness of converting thousands of sinners. This did not, however, suffice; the humble Franciscan, whose fame had spread throughout Spain and who was honoured by the court, was given to the practice of such austerities that it became needful to restrain them. The relaxation that had crept into the Order caused him the keenest chagrin; by way of remedying it he instituted a reform known as that of "the strict observance," and died on the 19th October, at the monastery of Arenas.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*How can one feel safe about one's way of life, unless able to echo the saying of the Master: "The works that I do bear witness of me!"—(John v. 36.)*



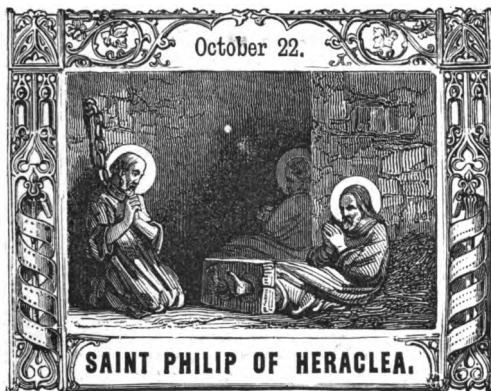
A FAULT AND ITS REPARATION.—Arthemis, a general in the army of Egypt during the reign of Constantius, by way of pleasing the prince, had had the weakness to undertake certain offices which caused him to be suspected of Arianism and of hostility to St. Athanasius. His faith was pure, but his mode of acting afforded matter for scandal. He was nevertheless accused before Julian the Apostate of having destroyed temples and broken down idols in Egypt. Far from exhibiting weakness on the occasion, he spoke out generously, and profited by his being summoned before the imperial tribunal to reproach the emperor, in firm but measured terms, with the unworthy contrivance whereby he had sought to render his soldiers idolaters against their knowledge, by causing them to cast incense with one hand over burning coals, while extending the other to receive their pay. Julian could not brook such language, and, out of feigned piety towards the gods, ordered Arthemis to be beheaded. This came to pass in the year 362, and the event took place at Antioch.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“There is no man without sin,” says the wisest of kings; but how many are there who know how to redeem their shortcomings?—(3 Kings viii. 46.)



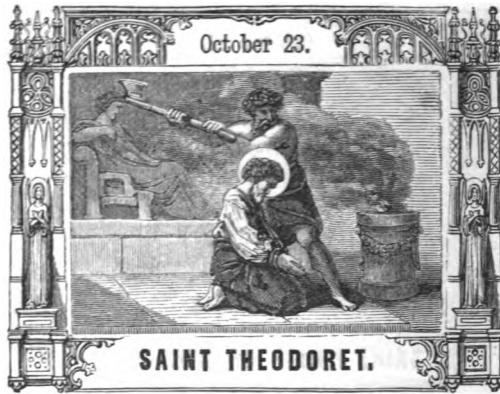
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION. — A great number of Christian families had intrusted the education of their children to the care of the pious Ursula, and some persons of the world had in like manner placed themselves under her direction. England being then harassed by the Saxons, Ursula deemed that she ought, after the example of many of her compatriots, to seek an asylum in Gaul. She met with an abiding-place on the borders of the Rhine, not far from Cologne, where she hoped to find undisturbed repose; but a horde of Huns having invaded the country, she was exposed, together with all those who were under her guardianship, to the most shameful outrages. Without wavering, they preferred one and all to meet death rather than incur shame. Ursula herself gave the example, and was, together with her companions, cruelly massacred in the year 453. The name of St. Ursula has from remote ages been held in great honour throughout the Church; she has always been regarded as the patroness of young persons and the exemplar of teachers. Her relics are kept at Cologne, and frequent miracles have been worked at her tomb.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*In the estimation of the Wise Man, “the guarding of virtue” is the most important part of the education of youth.—(Eccles. vii. 26.)*



CONSTANCY.—St. Philip, bishop of Heraclea, having been denounced to the satellites of the emperor Dioclesian, was arrested together with the priest Severus and the deacon Hermes. The three confessors refused, as might have been anticipated, to deliver up the holy books and to burn incense in honour of the idols. They underwent repeated examinations, were beaten, or rather so torn with rods, that their entrails were laid bare; they were then cast into a frightful dungeon, where they were to remain seven months; Philip and Hermes being bound in heavy fetters, and Severus having his feet passed through a number of planks, so contrived as not to allow the slightest movement. As their prison had a secret communication with the public theatre, the preaching of the Gospel was scarcely interrupted, for numerous Christians profited by the occasion to come to them, seeking for consolation and strength to confess, even as they had done, the faith of Jesus Christ. At length, after seven months of rude trials, they were condemned to the flames; it was found necessary to carry Hermes to the stake, as he had lost the use of his limbs.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The true Christian ranks not among "those who shrink back in the hour of temptation;" temptation, on the contrary, strengthens them in the faith.—(Luke viii. 13.)*



THE DIVINE VENGEANCE.—It was during the reign of Julian the Apostate that Count Julian, in order to gain favour with his nephew, apostatized from the faith; in reward for which he was invested with the government of the East. The holy priest Theodoret had the guardianship of the sacred vessels belonging to the Christians; Count Julian, desiring to get possession of them, caused him to be tortured in the most atrocious manner. Theodoret, in the midst of these sufferings, ceased not preaching the faith to the Apostate, in order to bring him back to God; but being unable to gain him over, he ended by thus addressing him—“I shall die on the rack; as for you, you will die in your bed, but suffering still more acutely than I; and the emperor who now flatters himself that he will vanquish the Persians, will be conquered by them, and die utterly despairing.” On the following night Count Julian was taken with violent spasms, as in the case of Antiochus, and died forty days after, consumed by worms. Julian the Apostate was vanquished, wounded in the fight, and expired, while hurling his blood against heaven, with these words, “Thou hast conquered, O Nazarean!” If the Divine vengeance manifest not itself speedily, it does but defer its coming.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us do good to our persecutors, leaving vengeance to Him, “for He will repay.”*—(Rom. xii. 19.)



THE APOSTOLATE OF MONKS.—The religious orders, whose appearance dates from the earliest ages of the Church, contributed greatly to the spread of the Gospel, as well by preaching as by the edification and good example they afforded. Vast populations have been converted to true religion by the agency of monks, such for instance as those of Brittany and England. St. Magloire, having been consecrated as a missionary bishop, or, as then termed, “regionary bishop,” in succession to St. Samson, who had founded the monastery of Dol, and converted a portion of Brittany, continued his apostolic labours, leading the same humble, poor, and mortified life as before. He passed over to the islands of Jersey and Guernsey, where he signalized his arrival by a miracle. Count Loiesco, having been cured by him of the leprosy, made him a grant of land whereon he founded a monastery, so that the monks might complete the work which had been begun. In times of famine and epidemic these monasteries became a very providence to the surrounding districts. St. Magloire died on Easter-eve in 575.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Be mindful of them that have rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end.”—(*Heb. xiii. 7.*)



THE SANCTIFICATION OF LABOUR.—Labour is regarded by men in general as a thing of penance; for the greater number it is a matter of pure necessity, and to many has proved the powerful means of procuring sanctification. Hence it was that SS. Crispin and Crispinian, who accompanied St. Quentin to Gaul to preach the Gospel there, laboured with their hands, although of noble and illustrious lineage, to support themselves, after the manner of St. Paul, thereby to avoid burthening the faithful and to enable them to contribute by their earnings to the maintenance of the poor. They took up their abode at Soissons, and occupied their vacant hours in making and repairing shoes. Having been denounced in 287 to Maximian Hercules, they were by his order transferred to the tribunal of the prefect Riccius Varus, the most inveterate enemy of the Christians. The prefect vainly employed in turn all the devices of persuasion, threats, and tortures to induce them to renounce Christianity; being unable to overcome them, he condemned them to be beheaded. They are held in great veneration throughout France, or rather through the Church at large, and their names are met with in the most ancient martyrologies.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Of how many may it be said that "they labour in vain," since God is not the end and purpose that inspires the labour!*—(Wisd. iii. 2.)



THE GOOD SHEPHERD.—If the piety and moral conduct of the flock be a sure index of the sanctity of the pastor governing it, one must needs conceive a high esteem for the virtues of Evaristus, for St. Ignatius at Antioch informs us that under his pontificate the faithful at Rome were models worthy of being proposed as an example to those of other Churches, on account of the sanctity of their lives and purity of their belief, the mutual charity binding them together, and their aversion from schism and heresy. St. Evaristus had succeeded to St. Anacleto, during the reign of Trajan; he governed the Church nine years, and died in 112. The manner of his death is not exactly known, but the most ancient “Pontificals” give him the title of “Martyr.” Historians attribute to this holy pontiff the formation of the first parishes existing in Rome, and the institution of cardinal-priests, or clergy, invested with the charge of ministering in these parishes, under his authority. He was buried at the Vatican, near the tomb of St. Peter.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The apostle St. Peter accordingly requires that elders, pontiffs, and superiors of every degree should “become the living example of such as are intrusted to their authority.”—(1 Pet. v. 3.)*



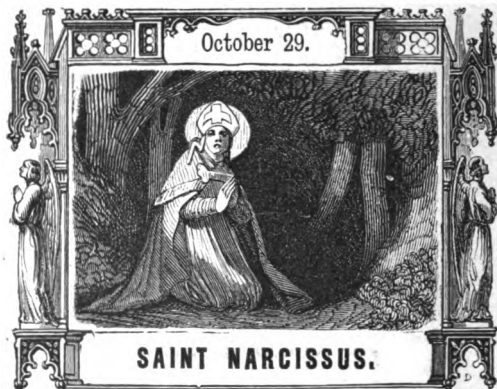
THE WAYS OF GOD.—God preordains all things with reference to His designs; this consoling truth is too often absent from our minds in times of affliction. Frumentius and Edesius had been brought to Abyssinia while still children, by one of their relatives who had business there, and, while resting under a leafy shade, intent on their studies, were carried off by some of the inhabitants. They grew up in the midst of this half-barbarous race, and were raised to the highest dignities. The king, when at the point of death, restored to them their liberty. Frumentius, on returning to Tyre, his native town, concerted plans with St. Athanasius for the conversion of Abyssinia. He was soon afterwards sent thither as bishop; the inhabitants, being accustomed to respect and obey him, yielded to his appeal with such perfect docility that before long the entire kingdom was Christianized. In vain did the emperor Constantius strive to harass it by seeking to introduce the errors of Arianism; new though they were in Christianity, they refused to listen to his missionaries or to deliver up their bishop. Abyssinia remained and continues to be Catholic. Frumentius died towards the end of the fourth century.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*With reference to how many events may the Christian who reflects well exclaim, as in the above instance: "The finger of God is there!"—(Exod. viii. 19.)*



ZEAL FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.—St. Simon the Apostle was surnamed “Zelotes,” or “the Zealous,” on account of his eagerness to obey the commands of the Divine Master, and the ardour he manifested to spread His glory. He is believed to have carried the light of the Gospel into Persia, and there to have suffered martyrdom, but the precise period and the details remain unknown. St. Jude, surnamed “Thaddeus,” or “the Glorifier,” displayed no less eagerness and zeal for the glory of Jesus Christ, as may readily be seen from the animated, picturesque, and indignant expressions he employed in his Canonical Epistle in reference to the Gnostics, who were already troubling the Church with their errors, and dishonouring it by their loose lives. St. Jude evangelized Mesopotamia and Armenia, which then formed part of the Persian empire. He there underwent martyrdom by crucifixion; some authors assert, indeed, that he was pierced by arrows. The precise period is not known, but it did not occur till after the death of SS. Peter and Paul, as his Canonical Epistle, to judge from its context, was written subsequently.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Happy is he who, like another Phineas, deserves to enter into an everlasting covenant with God, because of his zeal for the triumph of faith.*—(Num. xxv. 13.)



PERJURY AND ITS PUNISHMENT.—St. Narcissus, who governed the Church of Jerusalem in 195, when we find him assisting at a council held in that town, was about eighty years old when elevated to the episcopacy. Notwithstanding the miracles that God vouchsafed to his piety, the venerable bishop was accused of an abominable crime by three impious men, who only resorted to this expedient for the purpose of shielding themselves from a better-founded accusation which he might have laid against them. They each swore with an imprecation. “May I be burnt alive!” said one. “May I be struck with leprosy!” said another. “May my eyes never more behold the light of day!” added the third. The holy old man, rather than compromise them by seeking to justify himself, withdrew to a solitude where he might remain unknown. The evils which his accusers had invoked upon themselves speedily befell them; being then justified by God himself, he reappeared, and was more beloved than ever by his flock. He lived to the age of 116, but St. Alexander, in the capacity of coadjutor, helped him to discharge the pastoral functions.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Let no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter, for the Lord is the avenger of all such,” says the great Apostle.—(1 Thess. iv. 6.)



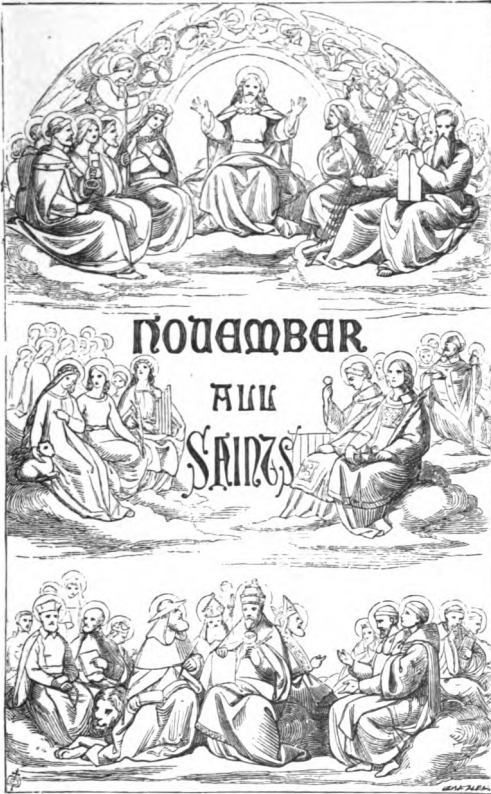
DEATH RATHER THAN SIN.— Marcellus was acting as centurion in the Trajan legion when public rejoicings were ordered to celebrate the accession of Maximian Hercules to the empire: these were to be accompanied by sacrifices to the gods. "If one cannot be a soldier without adoring gods of stone and wood," said Marcellus, laying aside his arms, "I give up the service." On being denounced to Anastasius, lieutenant of the legion, this latter sent him to Agricolanus, who not being able to condemn him as a Christian from the fact that religion was not then being persecuted, sentenced him to be beheaded for being wanting in respect to the emperors. "I shall not write out the sentence," exclaimed Gassian, the secretary to Agricolanus, "because it is unjust," and he threw down the pen. Gassian was cast into prison, and five weeks after appeared before the same judge and avowed himself in like manner a Christian. Agricolanus condemned him to the same kind of death, under some other pretext. St. Marcellus was martyred on the 30th of October, and St. Gassian on the 3rd of December following.

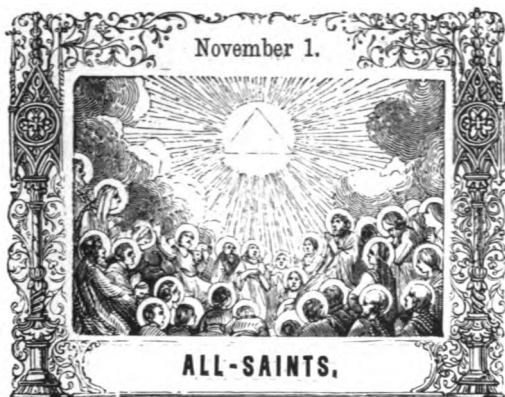
MORAL REFLECTION.—"Death rather than prevarication!" exclaimed one of the generous Machabees. This sentiment should ever be that of a Christian in presence of temptation.—(2 Mach. vii. 2.)



SUFFERINGS OF THE MARTYRS.—Too often do we indulge in complaint about our sorrows; and yet what are they when compared with the sufferings of the martyrs! St. Quentin, the apostle of Picardy, having been denounced to the prefect Rictius Varus, was first loaded with fetters, then lacerated with strokes of the whip, and finally thrown into a dungeon without any means of stanching his wounds; eight days after, being scourged anew with rods, he was stretched upon the rack, where his limbs were dislocated by dint of pulleys and strong cords, and then beaten with chains of iron; over the wounds the executioners poured oil, grease, and pitch, which they afterwards set on fire. As he did not cease praising Jesus Christ, the prefect ordered his mouth to be filled with quicklime and vinegar, and that he should be then taken back to his dungeon. A few days afterwards, they had him carried to Amiens, caused spikes to be inserted under the nails of his hands and feet, and iron rods so to be driven through his thighs as that they should issue at his neck. Being unshaken by these torments and still braving death, the prefect, subdued at last, gave orders that his head should be struck off. This occurred in the year 287.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us bear in mind that the ills of this life are not worthy to be compared to the glory "God has reserved for those that love Him."*—(Rom. viii. 18.)





ENCOURAGEMENT TO VIRTUE.—The Church pays, day by day, a special veneration to some one of the holy personages who have helped to establish it at the cost of their blood, develop it by their labours, or edify it by their virtues. But, in addition to those whom the Church honours by special designation, or has inscribed in her calendar, how many martyrs are there whose very names she has not recorded? how many humble virgins and holy penitents? how many just and holy anchorites or young children snatched away in the prime of innocence? how many virtuous Christians who have died in grace, whose merits are only known of God, and who are themselves known only in Heaven? Now, would it be seemly to forget, in the homage which we pay, those who forget not us in their intercessions? Besides, are they not our brethren, our ancestors, friends, and fellow-Christians, with whom we have lived in daily companionship, in other words, our own family? Yea, it is one family; and our place is marked out in this home of eternal light and eternal love.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us have a solicitude to render ourselves worthy of "that chaste generation, so beautiful amid the glory where it dwells."*—(Wisd. iv. 1.)



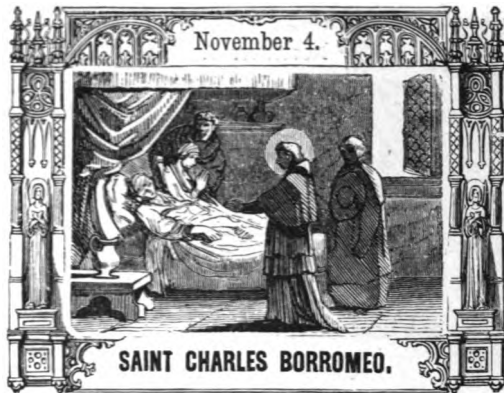
THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.—All spiritual advantages are enjoyed in common by all Christians. One and the same Father, who is God; the same Saviour, Jesus Christ, and the same country, which is Heaven; one baptism, one faith, one church, and, in the latter, the like sources of graces and prayers, or rather, the same grace and prayer apportioned between all, according to the wants and merits of each, and in conformity with the Divine will. Now, the members of this great family, placed in different states and conditions, are either in Heaven, fully confirmed in grace and consummated in glory; or in purgatory, confirmed in grace, but not yet in possession of glory; or, finally, upon earth, availing themselves of grace in order to arrive at glory. The former receive the homage of those who dwell on earth, and, in return, pray for them; the latter receive graces through their intervention, and pay them due veneration; the just who are still in purgatory receive solace from both at the same time, through the prayer of the one and the other.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”—(*Rom. xii. 5.*)



GRACE TRIUMPHANT.—God only imparts grace to such as merit it; for none are ever deserving of grace, save those whom He has predestinated, with reference to His own wise ends. Grace proceeds from God, co-operation therewith comes from man; as may be seen in the case of St. Paul, St. Augustine, and St. Hubert. The latter, while still a pagan, with his mind intent on mere diversion, was pursuing a stag in the chase, when the animal was all at once seen bearing between its antlers a luminous cross. The hunter, throwing himself on his knees, declared himself a Christian; and, becoming by his great piety the admiration of the people, was elected to the bishopric of Maestricht, and, subsequently, to that of Liege. He laboured with indefatigable zeal to extirpate the remains of idolatry from his extensive diocese, whereof he may be considered the second apostle, as well as from the Ardennes. He preached with so much power and unction, that multitudes thronged to listen to his words, and were unable to resist being influenced to good. God rewarded his fervour and upheld his zeal by according him the gift of miracles. He died a holy death in 727.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*What the Wise Man has said of Wisdom may be applied to Grace:* "That it ordereth the means with gentleness, and attaineth its end with power."—(*Wisd.* viii. 1.)



THE GOOD SHEPHERD.—Charles Borromeo, raised while still young to the dignity of cardinal and archbishop of Milan, by his uncle, Pope Pius IV., will ever be regarded as the model of holy bishops. After suppressing the pomp and expenditure of the archiepiscopal household, he reduced his style of living to a level conformable with the poverty insisted on by the Gospel; apportioning his large revenues into three parts, the least whereof he kept for his own outlay, and applying the remainder to the wants of the Church and the poor. He undertook to reform his diocese, and carried out his purpose in the face of every contradiction, and even of attempts at assassination, which those who were unwilling to submit, did not shrink from resorting to. But it was especially when the plague was sweeping off his flock that his charity appeared in the grandest aspect. Not satisfied with bearing to the plague-stricken every material and spiritual aid with his own hands, to the utter exhaustion of his means and his strength, he ended by solemnly offering himself to God for the safety of his people. God vouchsafed to hear his prayer, without requiring withal the sacrifice, for the plague miraculously ceased. This saintly bishop died in 1584.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep; the hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling and careth not for the sheep."—(*John x. 11.*)



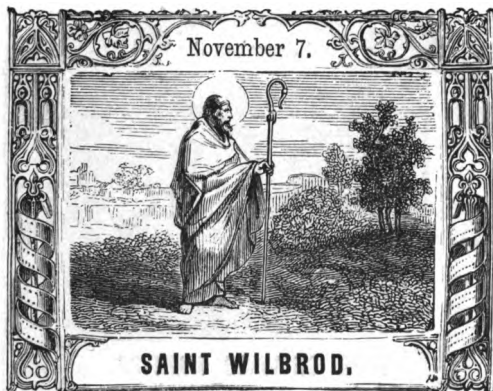
PROGRESS IN VIRTUE.—Not to advance in virtue, as the masters of spiritual life affirm, is to go backward: this maxim is founded on the experience and example of the saints. Bertilla was already solidly grounded in piety when St. Owen, archbishop of Rouen, permitted her to consecrate herself to God in the monastery of Jouarre. She there became still more humble and detached from the promptings of her own will, and more edifying towards all with whom she held discourse; the abbess, consequently, intrusted her with important offices. So far was she from not realizing the general expectation, that she ever found fresh occasion, both from the functions intrusted to her and from her relations with the world, to advance in virtue. Having been summoned by the general voice to govern the convent of Chelles, founded by Queen Batholos, when that pious sovereign had retired there, these two holy women were seen with great emulation devoting themselves to the practice of good after the most perfect manner; and, according as the end of their lives approached, preparing themselves by manifold and holy practices of piety. Bertilla died towards the year 702.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*It is written that the saints raise themselves heavenward, proceeding from virtue to virtue, as by steps.*—(Psa. lxxxiii. 6.)



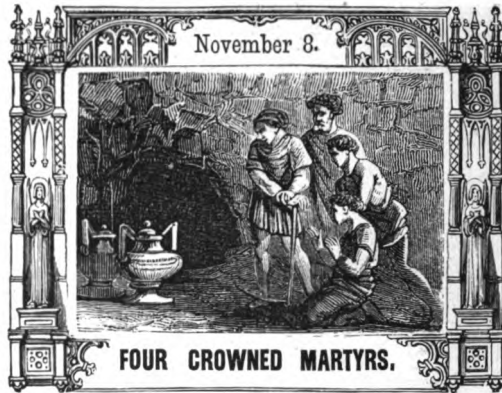
THE BONDAGE OF SIN.—Leonard, one of the chief personages of the court of Clovis, and to whom this monarch had become sponsor in baptism, was so moved by the discourse and example of St. Remigius, that he relinquished the world in order to lead a more perfect life. The bishop of Rheims having trained Leonard in virtue, he became the apostle of such of the Franks as remained still pagans; but fearful lest he might be summoned to the court on account of his repute for sanctity, he withdrew secretly to the monastery of Micy, near Orleans, and subsequently to the solitude of Noblac, near Limoges. His charity not allowing him to remain inactive while there was so much good to be done, he undertook the work of comforting prisoners, making them understand that the captivity of sin, which they did not bemoan, was more terrible than any mere bodily constraint. He won over a great many of these unfortunate persons, which gained for him many disciples, in whose behoof he founded a new monastery. St. Leonard died towards the year 550.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“The wicked shall be taken with his own iniquities, and shall be held by the cords of his own sins.”—(*Prov. v. 22.*)



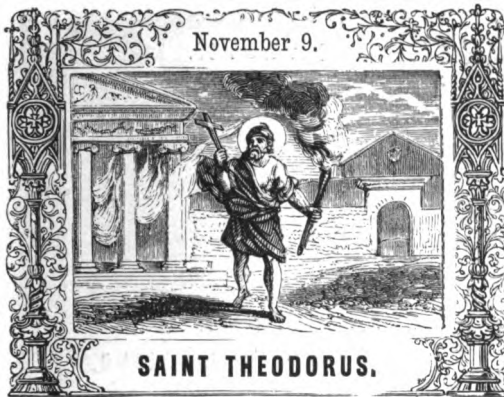
TWO KINDS OF VICTORY.—Charles Martel, carrying his conquests northwards, had succeeded in subduing the Frieslanders. This proud and warlike race were only longing, however, for the moment when they might, by sheer force, break down the yoke that had been imposed. They were still idolaters, and, consequently, inimical to the Christian race who had, by force of arms, become their masters. Wilbrod had been consecrated bishop of Utrecht, but was unable, under such circumstances, to display the zeal with which he was animated; he applied for aid to Pepin the Short, the son of Charles Martel, that he might after his own manner win back the nations that had been subdued after another fashion. Being protected by the Frankish prince, who allowed him to preach everywhere without restraint, he journeyed through Friesland, Holland, and Zeeland; the inhabitants, to whom this new conquest cost neither tears, blood, nor terror, eagerly corresponding with his wishes. He converted the three provinces, and, by the most lasting bonds, connected them with the great family of Jesus Christ; for, though they have ceased to belong to France, they have not the less remained Christians. St. Wilbrod died towards the year 738.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“The king shall extend his dominion from sea to sea, even to the ends of the earth,” says the Prophet. *Who does not recognize herein the sweet sway of Jesus Christ and the Gospel?* —(Zach. ix. 20.)



MAN PROPOSES, GOD DISPOSES.—Four brothers, named Severus, Severian, Carpophorus, and Victorius, invested with high civil offices in the town of Rome, underwent martyrdom in the year 304, during the persecution of Dioclesian, and were interred on the boundary of the Lavican Way. A church was raised upon their remains as soon as the persecution had ceased; but the memory of the spot where their relics reposed, and even their very names had died out, and there remained but the general designation of the four crowned martyrs, by which they were known. Paul II., having had the church rebuilt, the precious relics as well as the names of the glorious martyrs, were discovered in a crypt beneath the altar, where they lay enshrined in urns of porphyry. The persecutors imagined that they could trample out the faith by shedding the blood of the faithful; but what was the result? Those who suffered converted the very executioners by their example; they who apostatized returned subsequently to the faith; and those who betook themselves to flight spread the knowledge of the Gospel abroad.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” saith the Lord; “but my word shall accomplish that which I please.”—(*Isa. lv. 8.*)



RESOLUTION AND STEADFASTNESS.—Theodorus, who had been recently enrolled in the army, was stationed with his legion at Amasius, when the edicts of persecution were published by Galerian and Maximian. “As for me, I am a Christian!” exclaimed the youthful warrior, “and will not sacrifice to the gods.” Although not bruited abroad his faith ostentatiously, he did not shrink from avowing it. “I know nothing of your gods,” he said to the magistrates; “I am a Christian; do with me what you like!” They released him, that he might have time for reflection; but, as soon as he was at liberty, he snatched up a torch and proceeded to set the temple of Cybele on fire. “The temple was of wood,” he exclaimed, with a smile, “and the deity was of stone; the one is reduced to ashes and the other to lime. Is the misfortune, then, very great?” In the midst of the most horrible tortures, Theodorus displayed the most inflexible courage; while the iron was rending his flesh, he calmly chanted some verses of the Psalms. At last the judge, utterly subdued and at a loss for further expedients of cruelty, sentenced him to the stake, on the 17th of February, in the year 306.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Let him that asketh in faith waver not, for let not that man think he shall receive anything of the Lord.”—*(Jas. i. 6.)*



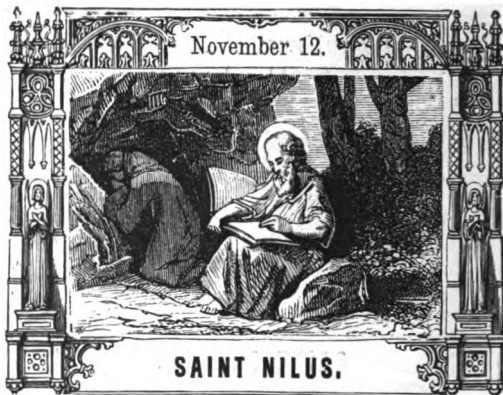
HORROR OF FALSEHOOD.—Andrew Avellino, born at Naples in 1521, was engaged in the legal profession, where his eloquence secured for him the greatest success. The external advantages wherewith he was endowed by nature caused him to be much sought after by the world; he would have been exposed to great danger for his salvation, had not a solid fund of piety and the earnest practice of religion preserved and upheld him. To such a pitch did he carry the horror of sin, that having upon one occasion failed in truth while in the full fervour of his pleading, he at once relinquished the profession of a lawyer, and entered the order of Theatines, so as to live thenceforth in penance and humility. His talents procured as much honour to the order as his example brought edification. He laboured with an ardour unequalled for the reformation of the abuses which had found their way amongst the clergy, and his efforts were crowned with success. Being worn out at length with labours and far advanced in years, he was struck with apoplexy while at the foot of the altar, and died in 1608.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“He that speaketh lies shall perish,” *we are told by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of the Wise Man.*—(Prov. xix. 9.)



JESUS CHRIST AND THE VIRTUE OF ALMS.—Martin, born in Pannonia towards the year 316, of pagan parents, adopted the career of arms as his profession, but while still a young man was able to lay aside the prejudices of his early education, had his name inscribed among the catechumens, and prepared himself by holy practices for the grace of baptism. Meeting one day, near one of the gates of the town of Amiens, a half-naked beggar, he severed with his sword a portion of his soldier's cloak in order to cover him. On the following night the Saviour appeared to him in a vision, and addressing his blessed mother, said, "Behold Martin, the catechumen, who gave me this garment." To such a degree was his ardour enkindled by this vision that he forthwith renounced the military service, so as to occupy himself with religion alone. His virtues speedily raised him to the bishopric of Tours; he became the glory of Gaul and the light of the Church. God accorded to him the gift of miracles, and marvels grew, so to speak, under his hands. His name became and has continued to be more illustrious than that of kings. St. Martin died in the year 400.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"The good ye shall do unto the least of my brethren," says *Jesus Christ*, "ye have done even unto me."—(*Matt. xxv. 40.*)



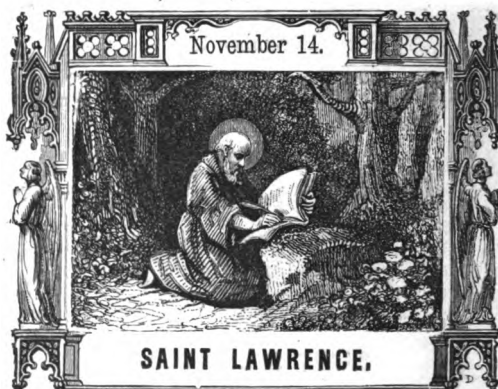
CHRISTIAN TEACHING.—The name of St. Nilus has become less celebrated by the exalted rank, great affluence, and high dignities he enjoyed, than by the contempt in which he held those temporal advantages for the love of Jesus Christ. Raised by the emperor Arcadius to the office of prefect of Constantinople, but formed to piety by St. John Chrysostom, he did not hesitate about quitting the world, from the moment that he thought he could be of more use to himself in the depth of solitude. He withdrew, accordingly, with his son to the desert of Sinai towards the year 390, leaving to his wife the care of training in virtue their daughter, who was still young, and, from the bosom of his retreat, he distributed through the ranks of the faithful a great number of learned and pious treatises, calculated to fashion to solid virtue people of the world as well as religious. With all who desired to consult him on affairs of conscience he maintained a correspondence no less active than well-ordered, so that, without entering the Christian pulpit, he had a great concourse of auditors. The precise date of his death has not been determined.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let each one put to profit the talent he has received,*—"He that teacheth, by teaching; he that exhorteth, by exhorting; he that giveth, by giving in single-heartedness."—(Rom. xii. 7.)



TRIALS OF THE JUST.—Stanislas Kotska, the son of a Polish senator, was born in 1550, and was initiated into virtue by the example and teachings of his mother. Having been sent, together with one of his brothers, under the guardianship of a preceptor, to the College of the Jesuits at Vienna, he became, by reason of his piety, the edification of all his companions. The preceptor and his brother, however, the latter being withdrawn from home influences, compelled him to reside with them in the house of a Protestant, where the youthful Stanislas had to submit to raillery, reproaches, affronts and annoyances of every kind, on account of his devout practices. Having got the better of all these obstacles, he thought of entering the Society of Jesus; but he had to undergo greater difficulties still, for he at first met with a direct refusal, and had eventually to encounter the anger and threats of his father. He was not wanting in courage, however, and had already gone through the first year of his noviciate, distinguished by acts of consummate piety, when God called him to himself at the age of eighteen. The Blessed Virgin appeared to him in a vision, to prepare him for death.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“They who love thee, O God, know thou provest virtue but to reward.”—(*Tob. iii. 21.*)



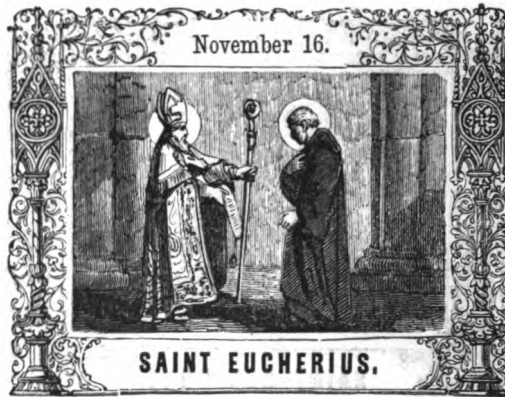
THE LOST SHEEP.—The good shepherd seeks the lost sheep, and, having found it, brings it home rejoicing to the fold. Such was the main business of St. Lawrence, archbishop of Dublin, his whole life long. Although wealthy by his own income and the revenues of his diocese, he reduced himself to a state of indigence for the advantage of the poor, so as to touch their hearts by dint of benefactions. Seeing his diocese a prey to disorderly living and immorality, he withdrew occasionally into solitude, to attemper his zeal anew and come forth animated with ardour for the salvation of his people, like another Moses. He assumed himself and induced his canons to adopt the habit and rule of St. Augustine, in order to begin through them the reform of the clergy. He pursued by land and sea King Henry II., who had vowed vengeance against one of the kings of Ireland, and did not desist from his purpose until he had achieved a victory, that is, had brought about the reconciliation of the two monarchs. He died at Eu, in 1081, while returning home after having accomplished his charitable mission.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“As the tree is known by its fruit,” even so are Catholic pastors distinguished from those who are non-Catholic.—(Matt. vii. 16.)



JESUS CHRIST IN THE HOLY EUCHARIST.—It was by meditation on the infinite goodness of Jesus Christ in the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist that St. Gertrude, abbess of Rodersdorff, in Saxony, was raised to that high degree of perfection, contemplation, and divine love, which was never surpassed, save by St. Theresa, and which still awakens the admiration of all who are intent upon the contemplative life. But, not content with meditating and praying, she sought to reproduce in her own person the humility, charity, patience, and sweetness of the Divine Exemplar, so that works, without which there is no true virtue, should not be wanting to her Faith. She has sketched the true portrait of her soul in her book of "Revelations," which embodies the narrative of her communications with God and the holy transports of His love. She died in 1334, and her last malady was, so to speak, nought but a holy languor of Divine love, so delightful and ineffable were the consolations she enjoyed. Numerous miracles have borne witness to her sanctity.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give shall never thirst, but this water shall be in him a well springing up into life everlasting."—(*John iv. 13.*)



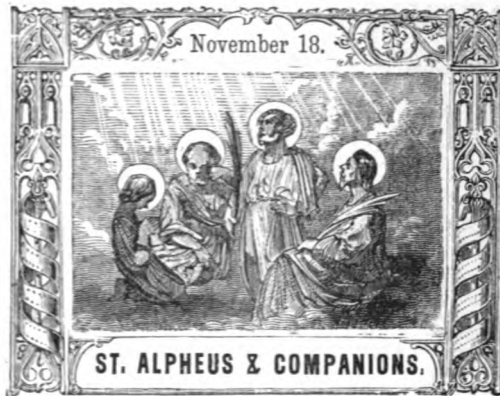
CHRISTIAN GENIUS.—They who would seek for manifestations of genius or examples of beautiful style among pagan writers exclusively, are either badly inspired or sunk in ignorance. Such saints as Augustine, Chrysostom, Origen, and Lactantius hold not a rank inferior to that of the most renowned authors of antiquity. St. Eucherius, bishop of Lyons, may also be named amongst the honoured roll. After having acted in the world a brilliant part, Eucherius followed to the solitude of Lérins—then peopled with holy monks—his two sons, who had retired thither, under guidance of St. Honoratus; and he attained to such a degree of perfection that he was soon drawn thence, against his wish, to be elevated to the bishopric of Lyons. He conferred the greatest honour on that church, or rather, on that of Gaul and Christendom at large, by his virtue, his zeal, and admirable talent. From what remains of his writings, amongst others, his treatises on “The Solitary Life” and “Contempt of the World,” we have ample testimony that he possessed a happy talent and highly-cultivated mind. St. Eucherius died in 450, rich in every good work.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*God, who calls Himself “the Lord of knowledge and understanding,” elevates and perfects the souls to which He communicates Himself.—(Isa. xi. 2.)*



PERFECT HUMILITY.—Who would suppose, while reading the works of the virtuous and artless Gregory of Tours, his “Life of St. Martin,” and his treatise on the “Miracles of the Saints,” that he was himself a saint gifted with the power of miracles? His humility would scarcely allow one to arrive at such an inference; he attributes them to the intercession of St. Martin, his predecessor, near whose tomb he took delight in spending long nights in prayer. Though he wrote many learned works, he only sought therein the glory of God and the edification of his neighbour, without holding himself as of any account. Although not desirous of braving death, he did not shrink from encountering the wrath of Kings Chilperic, Fredegund, and Gontran, when it became needful to cause his church or the claims of justice and faith to be respected. Of what concern to him were life, or honours, or contempt? When death should have claimed its own, let him be buried before the porch of his basilica, so that the public, by trampling day after day on his remains, might speedily obliterate the very trace thereof. St. Gregory died in 595, and this, his last vow, was carried out.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“True greatness alone is capable of great humility, and the proud man, by wishing to make” *his greatness felt does but display the estimate he makes of his own abject condition.*—(Eccles. iii. 20.)



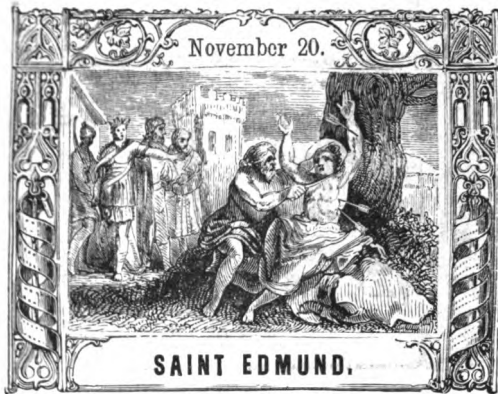
HATRED OF THE CHRISTIAN NAME.—Jesus Christ said to His disciples: “Ye shall become an object of scorn for my name’s sake.” This prophecy has continued to find its accomplishment, and a virtuous Christian ought neither to be afflicted nor surprised at the hatred of the wicked. Jesus Christ was placed on a level with a murderer, and the malefactor was preferred to Him; and the same kind of fact we find reproduced during the persecution of Diocletian. In the nineteenth year of the reign of this prince an amnesty was published in favour of all criminals, on occasion of the twentieth celebration of the public games, the Christians alone being excepted. Far from the measures of severity against them being relaxed, they were treated with still greater cruelty. Alpheus, reader of the Church of Cæsarea, and Zaccheus, deacon of Gadara, were thrown into prison; and on the 17th November they endured the most cruel torments. St. Romanus, exorcist of Cæsarea, and a child named Barulas, suffered at the same time in Antioch; they are commemorated together, on account of their martyrdom having occurred at the same time.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“When men revile you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake, rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in Heaven.”—(Matt. v. 11.)



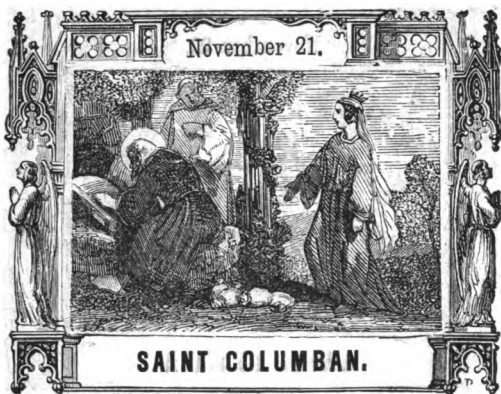
PATIENCE AND GENTLENESS.—St. Elizabeth, daughter of Andrew II., king of Hungary, brought up amid the splendour and empty grandeurs of the world, and married to Louis, landgrave of Thuringia, affords one of the most touching examples of that humility, goodness, and gentleness which true religion inspires. Though she was made the object of persecution and calumnies on account of her piety and virtue, which the depraved courtiers took as the reproof of their vices, she never sought to avenge her wrongs, and only answered by acts of kindness the affronts that were heaped upon her. When she was only twenty years old, having lost the landgrave, who had loved and protected her against calumny, she was expelled from her dominions, together with her children, by a daring usurper. Far from indulging in any complaint on her own account, she contented herself with seeking to secure her children's rights. Her claims were fully established; but when, on being reinstated in her possessions, she had begun anew her wonted course of alms-deeds and good works, she was snatched away in her prime, when only twenty-six years old, on the 19th November, leaving the poor as her heirs.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.” *Manifold miracles have proved, indeed, that the pious Elizabeth was truly “blessed.”—(Matt. v. 4.)*



CHRISTIAN FIRST AND THEN KING.—St. Edmund, king of the East Angles, was governing his dominions with admirable justice and wisdom, as all historians concur in testifying, when a sudden incursion of the Danes into England resulted in depriving him of the throne. Triumphant at first, he was eventually conquered and led before the ferocious Hingar, their chief, who had vowed an implacable hatred against Christianity, and who proposed to him that he should remain on the throne upon condition of abolishing religion among his subjects. The devout monarch repelled with indignation such a proposition. Hingar subjected him to protracted tortures; he was scourged, flayed, tied to a tree, and pierced by arrows, slowly driven in one by one; but, as no amount of suffering was able to break down his constancy, the Danish prince, more and more angered at hearing him pronounce the name of Jesus, caused his head to be struck off on the 20th November, 870. England, at the time when she was a Catholic country, took delight in cherishing the memory of this holy king.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*In the presence of Him who is "the King of kings and Lord of lords," earthly principedoms and sovereignties are as nought.*—(1 Tim. vi. 15.)



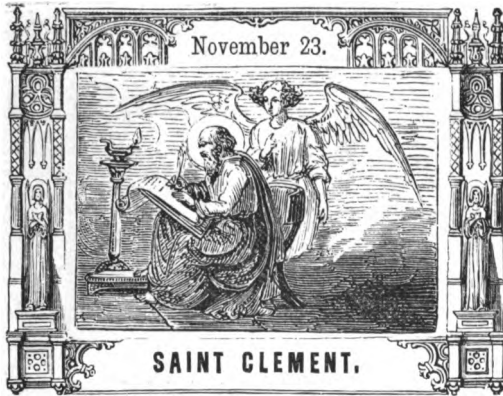
THE POWER OF VIRTUE.—St. Columban, a native of Ireland, proceeded to France towards the end of the sixth century, accompanied by twelve monks, animated with the desire of sanctifying themselves amid the rigours of penance, and took up his abode in the ruined castle of Anegrai, in the desert of the Vosges, in Lorraine. The austerity of their rule found acceptance throughout France, and the salutary example of their virtues, by effecting a great reform in the general morals, gave the holy abbot an amount of authority which princes themselves rarely ventured to withstand. The kings Clothaire and Thierry showed themselves docile to his reprimands, and were not offended by the frankness of his language. Queen Brunehaut, having been repelled from the monastery where she had vainly sought to obtain Columban's blessing in favour of two of her grandchildren, who were born out of wedlock, did not venture of herself to act with violence towards him, but, by means of persecution, forced him to leave France. He went forth to evangelize Switzerland and afterwards Lombardy, where he died in 605, at the monastery of Bobbio.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*To every generous Christian has God said, in the person of Ezekiel: "Fear not the wicked; behold, I have made thy forehead strong against their forehead."*—(Ezek. iii. 8.)



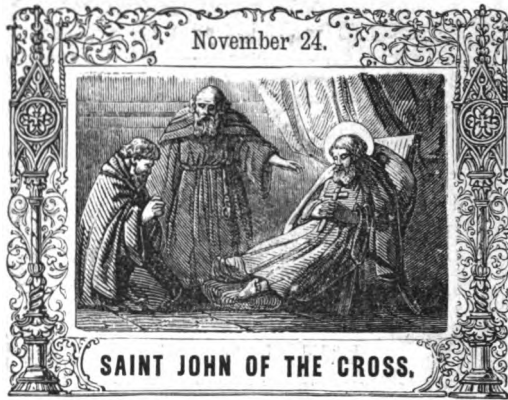
SPIRITUAL ESPOUSALS.—Cecilia, born in Rome towards the end of the second century, and trained in the Christian religion, loved to sing the praises of the Lord to the sound of musical instruments; and it is related that the angels themselves taught her the art, by which doubtless it is intended to express the perfection to which she had attained. The young virgin had from her early years chosen Jesus Christ as her spouse; but her parents, unaware of the vow she had pronounced, constrained her to contract marriage with a senator, named Valerian. She did better than merely becoming his spouse, for she won him over to Jesus Christ, as well as Tiburtius, his brother, and one of their friends, named Maximus. This holy family, whereof the Holy Virgin was the soul, underwent martyrdom at a period not precisely ascertained, but with such heroic endurance that the name of Cecilia was inserted in the Canon of the Mass. Pope Paschal I. discovered her body in the same tomb with that of Valerian, towards the year 820.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The spiritual espousal of Jesus Christ and the Christian soul is held up in Holy Scripture as the final term: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come."*—(Apoc. xxii. 17.)



CHRISTIAN CONCORD.—St. Clement, the apostle of charity and concord, succeeded to St. Cletus, the second Supreme Pontiff after St. Peter. He had been converted by St. Paul, and became his companion in many of his apostolic wanderings and labours; he accompanied him to Rome, where he had the happiness of attaching himself to the apostle St. Peter, by whom he is believed to have been consecrated bishop, and by him chosen to act as his vicar in the apostolate of nations. During the time that he occupied the chair of St. Peter, a schism divided the Church of Corinth; the holy pontiff displayed great zeal in extinguishing it; the letters written by him on the subject are preserved to us, and have been always considered throughout the Christian Church as the most venerable memorial after the Holy Scriptures. St. Clement suffered martyrdom, by being beheaded, in the year 101. Certain of his words, addressed to the Corinthians, and below cited, will form an apt subject for meditation.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us implore for the brethren that are divided, the spirit of moderation and humility, in order that they may submit themselves not to us merely, but rather to the will of God.*—*(Clem. 1 Cor. 56.)*



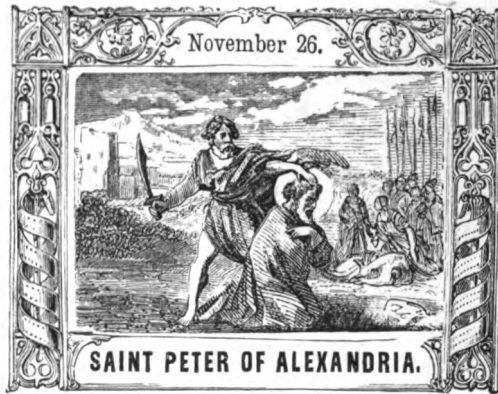
CONFORMITY WITH JESUS CHRIST.—John d'Ypez, born in 1542 at Avila, and trained to piety and the love of the Blessed Virgin from his tender years by a truly Christian mother, proposed to himself early in life to aim at conforming himself with Jesus Christ; to suffer like Him, live like Him in poverty and humility, and refer all his affections and acts to the glory of this Divine Model. On entering, at the age of twenty-one, the order of Carmel, at Medina, he chose the name of "John of the Cross," indicating thereby his desire for humiliations and sufferings. Heaven granted his prayer fully; for, having undertaken, in conjunction with St. Theresa, to establish the reform known as that of "the Discalced Carmelites," which speedily spread far beyond his expectation, he had to encounter on the part of his brethren the greatest persecution. He even lingered for a long period in a prison at Ubeda, belonging to his order. The provincial at last released him, but he died almost immediately after, on the 14th December, 1591. God glorified him by many miracles.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"If we have been planted in the likeness of His death, we shall be sharers also in the glory of His resurrection."—(*Rom. vi. 5.*)



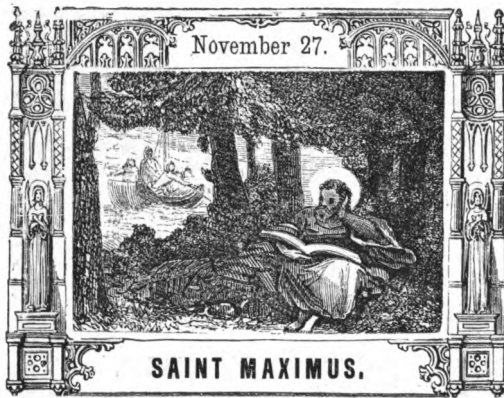
KNOWLEDGE AND VIRTUE.—"Light is but little," says a father of the Church, "heat is much more; light and heat form a complete whole;" meaning thereby that knowledge and virtue ought to be united, in order that perfection may exist. St. Theresa held the like opinion, and may, in this respect, serve as an example equally with St. Catherine, of whom we are about to treat. "There dwelt at Alexandria," says Eusebius, "a Christian virgin, distinguished by her wealth and illustrious birth, and who combined with these advantages an erudition quite unusual. The tyrant Maximinus, who was wont to trifle with the honour of women, she had the courage boldly to confront; for she preferred virtue to death itself. He conceived for her so great an esteem, however, that he did not venture to condemn her to death, but rested satisfied with depriving her of her property and sending her into exile." It is believed by the Church, however, that this illustrious virgin underwent martyrdom subsequently, by being first racked on the wheel and then beheaded.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"Great is he that possesseth knowledge and wisdom, but greater is he that hath the fear of the Lord."—(*Eccles. xxv. 13.*)



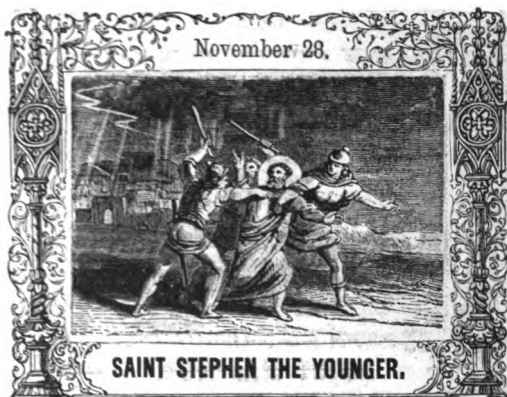
TO DIE TO ONE'S SELF.—St. Peter governed the Church of Alexandria during the persecution of Diocletian. The fragments of his works which are still preserved show that this saintly pastor combined great learning with eminent virtue; and the sentence of excommunication that he was the first to fulminate against Meletius and Arius, and which, despite the united efforts of powerful partisans, he strenuously upheld, proves that he possessed as much sagacity as zeal and firmness. But his most assiduous care was employed in safeguarding his flock against the dangers arising out of persecution. He never ceased repeating to them, that, in order not to fear death, it was needful to begin by dying to one's self, renouncing one's own will, and detaching one's self from all things. The shortcomings of those who were in love with the world or their own will afforded proof indeed that he was in the right. St. Peter gave an example of such noble detachment by undergoing martyrdom with great intrepidity in the year 311.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!” says our Saviour; because they are bound to earth by the strong ties of their riches.—(Mark x. 23.)



GENTLENESS IN AUTHORITY.—St. Maximus, abbot of Lerins, in succession to St. Honoratus, was remarkable not only for the spirit of recollection, fervour, and piety familiar to him from very childhood, but still more for the gentleness and kindness wherewith he governed the monastery which at that period contained so many religious, and was so famous for the learning and piety of its brethren. Exhibiting in his own person an example of the most sterling virtues, his exhortations could not fail to prove all-persuasive; loving all his religious, whom it was his delight to consider as one family, he established amongst them that sweet concord, union, and holy emulation for well-doing which renders the exercise of authority needless, and makes submission a pleasant duty. The inhabitants of Frejus, moved by such a shining example, elected Maximus for their bishop, but he took to flight; he was subsequently compelled, however, to accept the see of Riez, where he practised virtue in all gentleness, and died in 460, regretted as the best of fathers.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Masters, do to your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that you also have a Master in Heaven.”—(Coloss. iv. 1.)



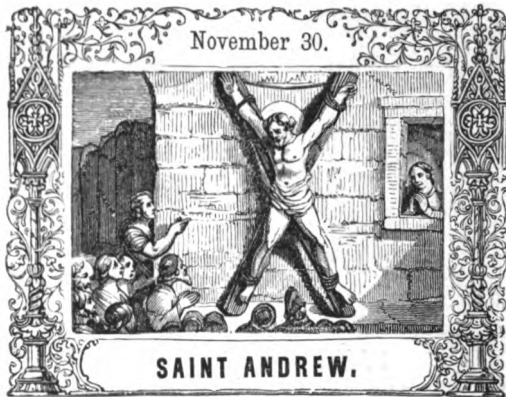
THE REVERENCE DUE TO HOLY IMAGES.—St. Stephen was at the head of the monastery of St. Auxentius, in Bithynia, and was universally honoured for his virtue and miracles, when Constantine Copronymus, who was venting his rage against the veneration paid to images, sought to attach him to his cause. The holy abbot resisted with great energy, despite the threats and promises lavished upon him, and in direct opposition to the authority of a council of iconoclast bishops. One day, in presence of the emperor, he pretended that he was going to trample under foot the representation of him impressed on a piece of money; every arm was at once uplifted to avenge such an outrage. "What!" he exclaimed, "you take it ill that I should insult the image of the emperor; and you would have me cast into the flames the image of my Lord!" The emperor, being unable to give any answer, condemned him to be banished, and subsequently had him cast into prison, caused him to be tortured in an atrocious manner, and, finally, had him cruelly trailed along the streets. His executioners completed their evil work, by fracturing his skull with a heavy club, in the year 764.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The reverence paid to images is referred to God as its ultimate term, for to God alone pertains honour and glory.—*
(1 Tim. i. 17.)



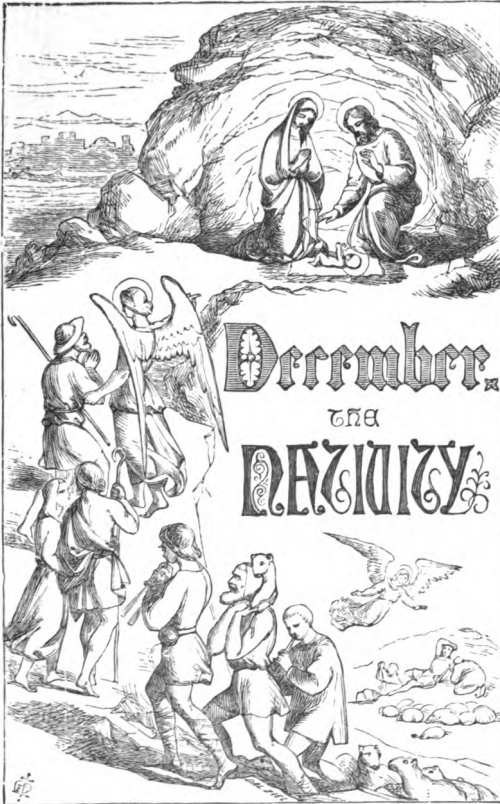
IMPOTENCE OF THE DEMON.—St. Saturninus, having been sent by the Pope St. Fabian into Gaul, together with St. Denis, in order to plant the faith there, established his see at Toulouse, and thence directed his efforts into the adjacent regions. The number of the Christians had already become considerable. The holy missionary was accustomed to pass every day near the foot of the Capitol, which contained a temple famous for its oracles. Now, as the latter had become mute, the pagans attributed this to the presence of the Christians, and especially to that of the bishop; they therefore dragged him to the Capitol in order to force him to adore their gods, or else to restore speech to the oracles. “Your gods,” said Saturninus to them, “are only demons, and how can you expect that I shall adore them that dread me, and whom my mere presence reduces to silence?” At this reply the people became enraged beyond measure; Saturninus was horribly maltreated; he was transpierced with a lance, and then tied to the tail of an untamed bull, that tore him to pieces. This occurred about the year 250 of the Christian era.

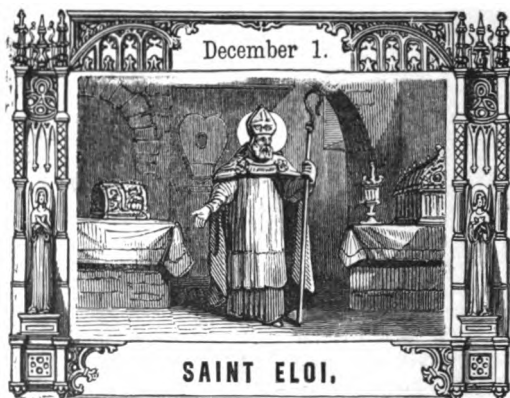
MORAL REFLECTION.—*The spirit of darkness is only to be feared by those who yield consent to his suggestions. “Resist the devil,” says St. James, “and he will fly from you.”—(Jas. iv. 7.)*



THE PRIVILEGES OF FAITH.—The most lively faith is that which obtains from God the most signal favours. “Have ye faith?” asked the Saviour of those whom He cured: “All things are possible,” as He has assured us, “to him that believeth.” It was by way of reward for such divine virtue that St. Andrew received the honour of being called first to the apostolate, or, as he is styled by the Greeks, “the Protoclete;” the dignity of becoming “the introducer to Jesus Christ,” to employ the words of the Venerable Bede. St. Andrew carried the light of the Gospel into Scythia, Sogdiana, Colchis, Epirus, Pontus, and Achaia. He suffered martyrdom at Patras, in Achaia, by being crucified, and remained two whole days alive upon the cross. “I salute thee, ever-precious cross!” he exclaimed, as his eyes rested upon it, “thou that hast been consecrated by contact with the body of my God. I approach thee joyfully; receive me into thy arms, O cross, that hast been honoured by the limbs of my Lord; long have I desired and sought after thee!”

MORAL REFLECTION.—*If faith alone, and without works, suffice not for salvation, it is necessary withal; “for without faith it is impossible to please God.”—(Heb. xi. 6.)*





RELIGION AND SUPERSTITION.—The people of the world adopt their own superstitious fancies as religion, and when impious men wish to abuse religion they term it superstition. Now, nothing is so mutually antagonistic as religion and superstition. Eloi was a worker in silver, or, in other words, a goldsmith, and comptroller of the revenue to King Clothaire II. He had won the admiration of the general public by his skill, gained the confidence of the king by his probity, and the respect of the court by his virtues. He was appointed, in 638, to the bishopric of Noyon, and prepared himself for the priesthood by two years of retreat, study, and penance. The diocese of Noyon still contained a number of Pagans, and the Christians themselves were scarcely anything better, being given to all sorts of superstition. The holy bishop spent twenty years of most laborious efforts in extirpating the superstition and paganism that was rife. His life was often in peril; but nought could make him swerve from his purpose, and everything yielded to his zeal. He died on the 1st of December, 659, at the age of seventy.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Religion clean and undefiled is this—to keep one’s self unspotted from the world.”—(*Jas. i. 27.*)



CHRISTIAN STOICISM.—Hold suffering, the world and its advantages, in contempt, and you shall be strong in the faith. Julian the Apostate exiled Flavian, the governor of Rome, who was a fervent Christian, and eventually put him to death. He despoiled of their property Flavian's two daughters, Bibiana and Demetria, and allowed them to languish for five months in the extreme of misery. The young virgins endured their privations with calmness and resignation. The judge, Apronian, who had thought to conquer them by such treatment, saw Demetria perish before his eyes from sheer hunger, while confessing the faith. Bibiana despised all the promises, threats, licentious discourse, affronts, and ill-treatment lavished upon her, retaining her faith and virtue intact. Apronian, provoked beyond measure by his want of success, ordered her to be beaten to death while bound to the stake, and her body to be devoured by wild beasts. She met her death nobly, but a priest privately conveyed away her body, and gave it Christian burial.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"Look upon Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who endured the cross, despising the shame, and sitteth on the right hand of the throne of God."—(*Heb. xii. 2.*)



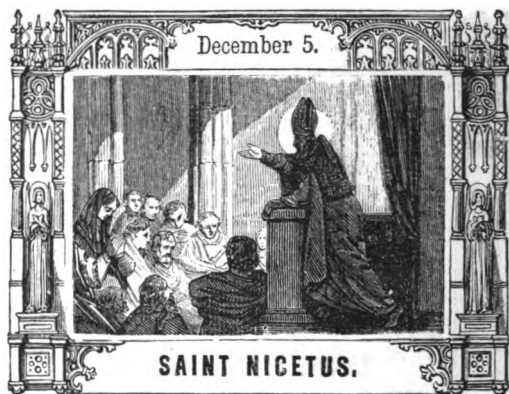
THE IRREMIEDIABLE LOSS.—Francis Xavier was teaching philosophy with much success in Paris, when he became bound in friendship with Ignatius of Loyola, his fellow-countryman, who was devoting himself to exercises of piety with great fervour, after having been long captivated with the false glory of the world. Francis Xavier was no less eager for worldly glory, but his newly-acquired friend so often repeated to him that maxim of the Gospel, “What doth avail a man to gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul?” that at length he took it to heart, and fully entered into its meaning. Thenceforth abandoning what he had till then cherished, he surrendered himself to the promptings of piety, and, in conjunction with St. Ignatius, founded that “Company of Jesus” which was to bring such glory to the Church, and whereof he himself was to become the bright particular star. To recount his mighty labours for the conversion of the Indies and Japan, his apostolic journeyings, his wondrous success, and the manifold miracles wherewith God seconded his preaching, would be a task, even for the most able pen, truly difficult. He died in the island of Sancian, in the year 1552.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us often repeat to ourselves these words of the Saviour: “What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?”—(Matt. xvi. 26.)*



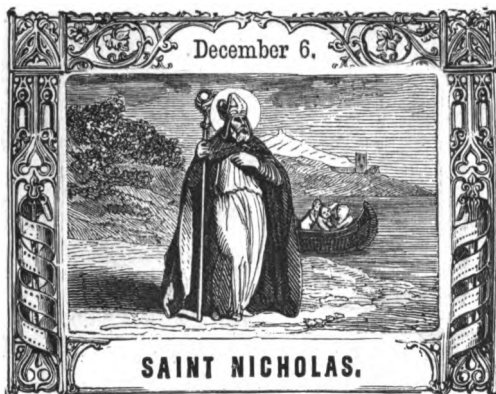
PARENTS ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF NATURE.—Those parents who seek to corrupt either the faith or morals of their children are guilty of a heinous crime. Such there are, even in the bosom of Christianity. Let us cite one example, however, borrowed from paganism and from another period. St. Barbara, a young virgin of Nicomedia, had been brought up secretly in the Christian religion. It was not possible, however, that her father, a headstrong supporter of the superstitions of paganism, should remain ignorant of the fact. On learning it, he broke out into a violent rage, and then, being unable to move his daughter either by tears or threats, he shut her up in a tower, and kept her in prison there. Finding that he gained nothing by such treatment, of his own accord he denounced her to the judges during the persecution of Maximinus. To the application of burning coals to her body, the cutting off of her breasts, to the rack, and the dislocation of her limbs, the Christian virgin bravely submitted. She was beheaded in the year 255 or 256. The acts of her martyrdom are not well known, but she is held in universal veneration.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The Saviour has foretold it:* “You shall be betrayed by your parents and brethren, but in your patience you shall possess your souls.”—(*Luke xxi. 16.*)



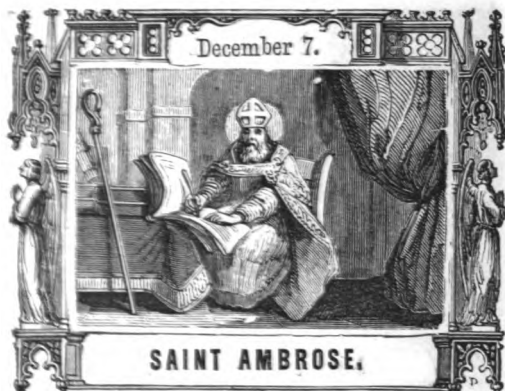
CATHOLICISM AND HERESY.—St. Nicetus, bishop of Trèves, one of the most distinguished prelates of Gaul, as well on account of his virtues as for his eloquence, zeal, and untiring labours, thus wrote to Queen Clodosinde, the wife of Alboin, king of the Lombards, who was an upholder of Arianism : “To procure the conversion of Alboin, do what your ancestress, Clothilde, accomplished for the conversion of Clovis. And if the king hesitates as to the truth, let him send to the church of St. Martin of Tours ; there his envoys will behold the blind restored to sight, the deaf to hearing, the dumb receiving the power of speech, and lepers their speedy cure. What wonders have not you yourself witnessed at the tombs of the holy bishops, Medard and Remigius ? My tongue could not recount all the miracles of the bishops Germain, Hilary, and Lupus. Is anything similar to be met with in the churches of the Arians ? No ; for the spirit of darkness cannot work miracles.” Such, in reality, is the distinguishing characteristic between the true religion and heresy ; the latter is utterly sterile. St. Nicholas died full of days and good works, about the year 566.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“If any one abide not in me, he shall be cast forth as a branch,” says the Saviour, “and shall wither.”—(*John xv. 6.*)



FAITH ACHIEVING WONDERS.—St. Nicholas, bishop of Myra, in Lycia, one of the most pious, humble, and charitable prelates that gave lustre to the beginning of the fourth century, acquired so high a reputation for sanctity and spiritual power, that the people were wont during his lifetime to invoke his name in the hour of danger, and this name itself was, with God, wonder-working. The saint was indeed a great *Thaumaturgus*. He is usually represented by the side of a large vessel, wherein a certain parent had concealed the bodies of his three children whom he had made away with, and who were restored to life by the saint. One day a fisherman's barque was on the point of being submerged, when the sailors cried out, "Bishop of Myra, save us!" An angel, in his outward guise, at once appeared walking on the waves, and led the barque safely to port. The sailors went to render thanks to the holy prelate, who humbly answered, "It was not I." The holy bishop died about 327, and he is held in deep veneration throughout the Church.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"If you have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, you shall say to this mountain, Remove from thence thitherward! and it shall remove."—(*Matt. xvii. 19.*)



TWO KINDS OF GREATNESS.—Two kinds of greatness divide the world: the greatness of the saints and that of kings. Theodosius, one of the greatest princes that ever ruled the world, was reigning, and Ambrose, one of the most holy bishops that has ever given lustre to the Church, occupied the see of the imperial town of Milan. Theodosius had sullied his name by the massacre of the inhabitants of Thessalonica. Ambrose presented himself on the threshold of the basilica of Milan, and thus addressed the monarch: "Thou art guilty of innocent blood, and shalt not enter here." Theodosius alleged the example of David: "Imitate in his penitence him whom you have imitated in his sin," answered the bishop. Theodosius reverently submitted, and performed public penance. God, who is ever great and holy, rewarded Ambrose for his virtue by conferring on him the highest graces, and by awakening in his behalf the respect and admiration of the world. The holy prelate died in 397, bequeathing to the Church as successor St. Augustine, the fruit of his conquest, and the luminary of the Christian world.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Rulers, saints, and pontiffs, never cease remembering that your greatness, like "every perfect gift, descends from the Father of light."*—(Jas. i. 17.)



THE ABHORRENCE OF SIN.—The world at large had been eagerly awaiting its Saviour for more than four thousand years, when she who was to become His Mother at length was quickened with life in the womb of St. Anne. The angel host were gladdened thereat, and the souls of the patriarchs thrilled with blissful anticipations. The Holy Church has empowered us to believe, as she herself teaches, that this flower of David, by an exceptional privilege, was exempted from the stain of original sin. That all the children of guilty Eve should be under the ban of God's wrath the mind readily apprehends; but what ground for belief could there ever have been that Eve the Innocent, and the Repairer of wrong—that she, in a word, whom God from all eternity had chosen for His Mother, should invest her with being under the sway of sin and disgrace, and the thralldom of the very fiend? Is it not to Blessed Mary that these prophetic words of Holy Writ were addressed: "Thou art all fair, O my beloved, and there is no spot in thee!" To the ransomed, then, pertains all the shame and the sinfulness; the Friend and Mother of the Redeemer having been wholly exempted, let us lift, then, our invocation to "Mary, conceived without sin."

MORAL REFLECTION.—"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, that seek Him with their whole heart. They that work iniquity have not walked in His ways."—(*Psa. cxix. 1.*)



DOCILITY OF VIRTUE.—The practice of the highest virtues is really difficult to those only who are animated with the worldly spirit. Any one who is trained to well-doing accomplishes it without effort, but the transition from evil to good is more arduous, because the habits already contracted, and the sentiments long cherished, oppose a formidable barrier. Leocadia was living at Toledo in the practice of all Christian virtues, and had grown accustomed thereto from her childhood. Far from aspiring after the advantages and prospects of the world, she only longed for martyrdom; her soul was inflamed with ardour in reading the lives of the saints, and she piously envied above all the combats and goodly reward which fell to St. Eulalia. God lent a favourable ear to her yearnings; she was brought before the governor Dacian during the course of Diocletian's persecution, cast into chains, tortured with horrible atrocity, and finally thrown into prison, where she expired from her sufferings. Thus does death itself become sweet to any one that knows how to desire it aright.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"By thy commandments I have had understanding; how sweet are thy words to my palate! more than honey to my mouth."—(*Psa. cxix. 103.*)



DESIRE OF MARTYRDOM.—Eulalia was of an illustrious family of Merida. She was only twelve years old when edicts of persecution were issued by the emperors Diocletian and Maximian throughout Spain. Already kindling with the divine enthusiasm of religion, she manifested so ardent a longing to suffer martyrdom that her parents took her with them into the country, in order to withdraw her from the danger of her own zeal. She, however, fled, and went to present herself before the judge, Dacian, to reproach him with the atrocities whereof he had become the minister. Dacian at first had recourse to allurements in order to modify her way of thinking, but when she had spurned with her foot, and overthrown the altar upon which he wished to make her burn incense, he could no longer restrain his rage. Eulalia was bound to a stake, her sides were torn with hooks of iron, and burning torches applied to the open wounds; her hair took fire, and she expired amid the stifling flames.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*When, by order of the synagogue, the apostles had been scourged, "they returned rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus." Do we foster the like sentiments?—(Acts v. 41.)*



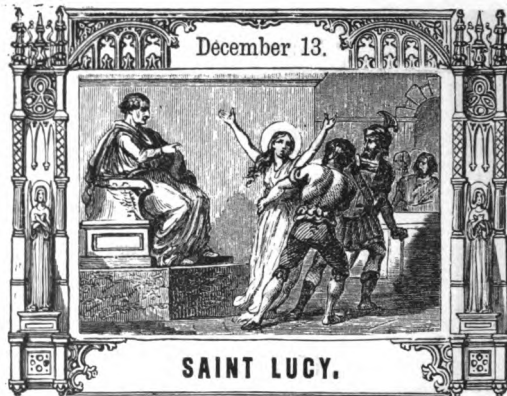
NO CONCESSIONS IN MATTERS OF FAITH.—The Pope Liberius having been exiled by the Emperor Constantius, who was attached to Arianism, St. Damasus, then a deacon of the Roman Church, bound himself by solemn oath never to enter into any compromise with such schismatical successors as might be put forward, and held to his oath unswervingly. Having in course of time become pope himself, his election gave rise to a new schism. He put forth all his zeal for the purpose of extinguishing it, but without in any degree surrendering his own rights, and the Church at large upheld his efforts. Having repressed certain grave abuses which had insinuated themselves into the monasteries, many monks cut themselves off from communion with him, and attached themselves to the upholders of Arianism, which, by a Council held at Rome, had been definitively condemned. Damasus, never ceasing to pray for them, awaited their return; those who held out fastened on his character the most abominable accusations; but he, without being troubled, besought the justice of God, and did not entreat in vain. This pontiff availed himself of the erudite mind and wise counsels of St. Jerome, and died in 384.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*If you lean upon God, “the wicked shall not prevail against you; they shall be turned to you, and you shall not be turned to them.”—(Jer. xv. 19.)*



ECCLESIASTICAL DIGNITIES.—St. Synesius, who became a martyr in the reign of Aurelian, had been ordained Lector from the time of the pontificate of Sixtus II. This office, ranking third in degree of the sacrament of Order, and which confers the power of reading the epistles and the prescriptions and ordinances of the spiritual pastors in presence of the assembled faithful, was at that period much sought after, not from any human motives, but for the honour of serving in the house of God, and was accorded to those only of approved virtue, or rather to such as had rendered great services, or had generously confessed the faith. Synesius had already exercised an apostolate rich in fruitful results, and had converted a great number of unbelievers, when he was denounced, on account of his zeal, to the Emperor Aurelian. How could he be thought likely to renounce the Christian religion, who had been its fervent advocate? With generous ardour he confessed the faith, and was delivered up to various kinds of torture, and at length beheaded in 270.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*In the courts of the King of kings it is that no office, however humble, can be accounted other than glorious, for He covereth with glory "those that approach His feet."*—(Deut. xxxiii. 3.)



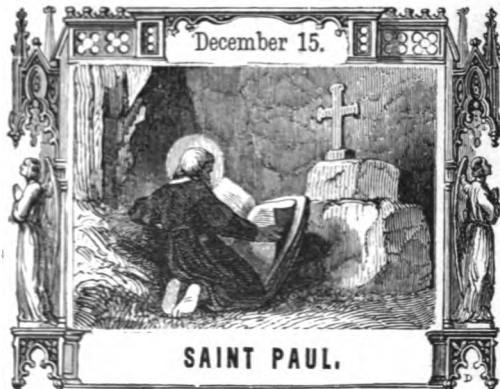
THE SUCCESS ATTENDING PRAYER.—St. Lucy, of a noble family of Syracuse, had conceived from her very infancy so great a love for Jesus Christ, that she made a vow to observe perpetual chastity, for His sake. She often besought Him that He would himself watch over this hallowed offering, which thenceforth belonged entirely to Him. Her mother, unaware of this resolve, wished to give her in marriage to a pagan husband, but God himself interposed an obstacle by inflicting on the mother a protracted illness, which caused the marriage to be deferred. Having been miraculously cured at the tomb of St. Agatha through the prayers of her pious daughter, she at length granted her what she had asked for. Meanwhile, the intended husband, deceived in his expectations, denounced Lucy as a Christian, and the judge ordered her to be consigned to a place of debauch; but God did not abandon her in this new trial, for no human power was found of avail to force her into the place. She died shortly after in prison, a spotless virgin, as she had ever longed to remain. This occurred in the year 304.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“They that put their confidence in the Lord shall not be confounded for ever.”—(*Dan. iii.*)



CANDOUR AND SIMPLICITY.—Spiridion, though made bishop of Tremithontes, retained the habits and simplicity of the pastoral life he had up to that moment led. His diocese being very small, poor, and scanty in population, only called for a small portion of his time and labour. The old man devoted himself, consequently, to the same kind of occupation as the remainder of his diocesans, who were all either shepherds or agricultural labourers, and he was only distinguishable from the rest by his greater piety, a life more holy, an observance more rigorous of the laws of God and the Church, but mainly by a charity more beneficent, and a hospitality unbounded. He became a confessor of the faith during the persecution of Maximian, and was despatched to the mines. He assisted at the first general council of Nicæa, as well as at that of Sarrica, where he undertook the defence of St. Athanasius. The outward simplicity of the bishop of Tremithontes concealed a great depth of learning and solid virtue. He died about the year 348, illustrious by many miracles.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Be ye simple as the dove, and prudent as the serpent.” *Such is the recommendation of the Master.*—(Matt. x. 16.)



TEMPTATIONS.—There are temptations which every one may avoid, and this is a positive duty; for “he who loves the danger shall perish therein,” says the Holy Gospel. Some there are which no man can fly from, inasmuch as he bears them about him; neither the desert, nor the cloister, nor the solitary retreat shuts them out; fasting, prayer, and confidence in God are the only safeguards. St. Paul, the first hermit, St. Anthony, and St. Jerome, are cases in point. St. Paul, an anchorite of Bithynia, experienced temptations while on the arid rocks of Mount Latre, whither he had betaken himself. Although living merely on raw herbs, bitter acorns, and the water flowing near his grot, he had terrible conflicts to endure; but at length the spirit, or rather the power of grace, triumphed over the flesh. The outer world became aware of his virtues and admired him; he founded several retreats, or monasteries, for anchorites. Emperors, princes, pontiffs, and prelates sought the aid of his counsel and profited thereby, for holiness is a good counsellor. He died in 956.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able, but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it.”—(1 Cor. x. 13.)

December 16.



SAINT ADONIUS.

PIOUS RECOLLECTION.—The devout Adonius, archbishop of Vienne, in Dauphiné, and previously monk of Ferrières and abbot of Prom, was brought into direct contact with all the great events of his century; the pope, Nicholas the First, and the kings Charles the Bald and Louis of Germany, often consulting him on affairs of state. Before he was raised to the episcopate, he had been made the object of hatred and calumny, was obliged to take to flight, and voluntarily exile himself. On being consecrated bishop, he carried out a thorough reform in his diocese. All his life long he cultivated polite literature and ecclesiastical learning. In the midst of such various occupations, however, he relaxed in no degree whatever the mortifications he had been accustomed to while a monk, and never lost the pious recollection whereof he had contracted the habit. His existence was one continual act of prayer, varying only as to form, but never interrupted. Adonius died about the 16th December, 875, full of days and good works. His life is the best proof that time always suffices to those who know how to employ it rightly.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“I set the Lord always in my sight, for He is at my right hand, that I be not moved.” *Such has been the ever-present thought of the saints.*—(Psa. xv. 8.)



THE GOOD USE OF RICHES.—Olympiada, being left a widow at the age of seventeen, with vast wealth at her disposal, was sought for in marriage by the highest personages at the court of Theodosius; she preferred remaining free, however, so as to have power to regulate her property and her acts according to the impulse of her pious and liberal heart. She reduced herself to the level of the indigent, and gave without stint or measure. St. John Chrysostom was often obliged to moderate her austerities, and enlighten her as to her benevolent mode of dealing. As persecution is, however, the portion of saints, she met with it almost all her life, and shed so many tears that, according to the expression of the holy archbishop, her tears and the benefits she lavished might have formed a vast river. She was persecuted mainly on account of her attachment to the communion of this holy prelate, and was despoiled of her property by order of the prefect of Constantinople. She died in 410, as rich in heavenly merits as she had become impoverished in earthly possessions.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"Lay not up to yourselves treasures on earth, but in heaven, where neither rust nor moth doth consume."—*(Matt. vi. 20.)*



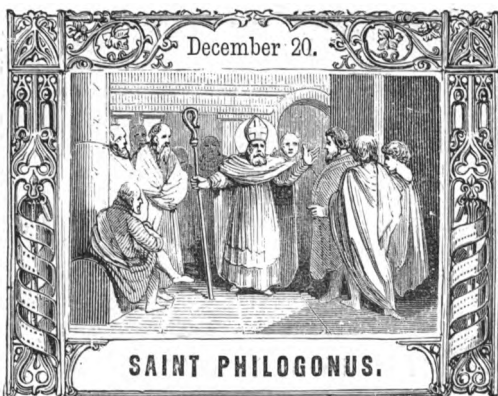
CONTEMPT OF THE WORLD.—St. Rufus and St. Zosimus had the honour of sharing captivity with St. Ignatius, of Antioch, and of suffering in company with him for the faith, about the year 116. St. Polycarp, in his letter to the Christians of Philippi, says, speaking of them,—“That they loved nought of what pertains to the world, but only that which belongs to Jesus Christ, for whom they had suffered.” “I exhort you,” he goes on to say, “to form yourselves to patience, after the example of these generous martyrs, or rather of all the martyrs, yea, and of the Apostle Paul himself.” A truly valuable and just admonition! For patience alone imparts any value to our sufferings, and detachment from the things of earth is the first essential, without which there exists neither patience nor any solid virtue. The life of the majority of men is one long martyrdom; but such martyrdom is without merit, because it is not accompanied by patience and resignation. Even the spirits of the condemned suffer after this sort.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*While you are in the world, be as though you used it not; “for the fashion of this world passeth away.”*—(1 Cor. vii. 31.)



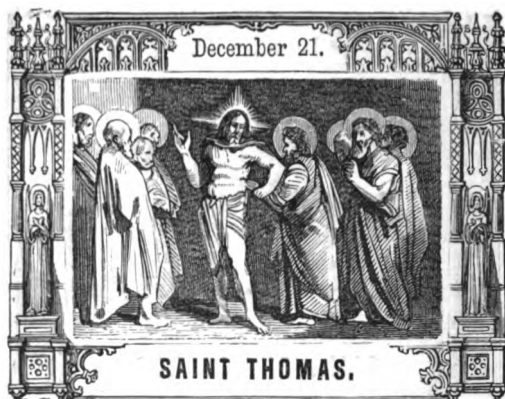
HATRED AND BLINDNESS.—There lived in the environs of Alexandria a pious Christian, named Nemesian, who devoted himself to holy learning and works of charity. Innocence and kindly acts are not always capable of disarming hatred; he was accused of being given up to brigandage, but readily justified himself from the imputation. Taking another tack, his enemies accused him of being a Christian. “This time I do not intend to justify myself; I am a Christian, and mean to remain so.” The prefect of Alexandria, by an excess of animosity still more blind, ranked him with the vilest malefactors, caused him to be burned alive with several others, and at the same time had four soldiers beheaded, who had manifested some sensibility at the sight of such sufferings. This was in the year 250, during the persecution of the Emperor Decius. The five martyrs exhibited greater calmness than their executioners. The testimony of a good conscience is of better worth than any mere satisfaction of blind hatred.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*If the world pursue you with unjust hatred, “know ye that it hath hated me before you,” saith Jesus Christ.—(John xv. 18.)*



SANCTITY.—"It would be a grievous error to hope to live in heaven a life which would not have had its commencement upon earth," said St. John Chrysostom, while pronouncing the panegyric of St. Philogonus. Yet this is, in great measure, the mistake with most worldlings, for, from a life of guilt, they hope to pass through death to a state of consummate sanctity. Philogonus was otherwise minded, urged his panegyrist. Placed in the see of Antioch in the year 318, he constantly practised works of holiness, and was the model of his whole flock by his piety, charity, and zeal; and furthermore, by inflexible adherence to the tenets of religion, for he generously confessed the faith under the persecution of Maximinian. Arianism had no more determined opponent, nor the Catholic Church any more devoted or wise prelate. The flourishing state in which he left the Church of Antioch, after having governed it only five years, is the most convincing proof thereof. St. Philogonus died in 323.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Many will one day say, "Lord, Lord, open to us;" but He, answering, will say, "I know you not."*—(Matt. xxv. 11.)



WANT OF FAITH.—Incredulity ordinarily springs from a warped judgment, or else from an insufficiency of knowledge. "A little philosophy," said the renowned Bacon, "leads astray from religion; much philosophy brings one back to it;" and, in fact, all men of great learning and genius have always and everywhere been religious men. When Jesus Christ appeared to His apostles after His resurrection, He permitted that Thomas should not be among them, and should even be disinclined to accept their testimony. Jesus Christ, on appearing a second time, said to him, "Put thy hand hither into my side, and thy fingers into the holes in my hands." Enlightened at last, the apostle believed, but our Lord added: "Because thou hast seen, thou hast believed; blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." St. Thomas is believed to have preached the Gospel in the Indies, and to have suffered martyrdom there; but the time and the place are not precisely known. God permitted, in the case of this apostle, a moment of doubt to exist for our instruction, and to induce us to believe promptly.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Depravity of life is likewise a fountain-head of incredulity in the case of impious men, for it is oftentimes in his heart the fool hath said, "There is no God."*—(Psa. lii. 1.)



CHRISTIAN SELF-DEVOTION.—The shepherd Themistocles, while feeding his flock on the heights adjacent to Myra, in Lycia, devoted himself to prayer and meditation during the long hours which this peaceful occupation left at his disposal. A Christian named Dioscorus, pursued by the persecutors, having come to him to seek a refuge, Themistocles refused to deliver him up, and did not allow himself to be influenced by promises or threats. At a loss for further excuses, he at last openly avowed that he was himself a Christian, and that he would not, consequently, betray at any cost him whom they were seeking. They arrested him forthwith and led him before the governor of the province, who caused him to be tortured in the most inhuman manner. After his body had been lacerated with scourgings, the generous martyr was stretched upon the rack, and then dragged over sharp flints and potsherds. He expired in the midst of these tortures, about the year 250 of the Christian era.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*This is true heroism and the supreme degree of charity, "for greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friend."*—(John xv. 13.)



WORLDLY LOVE.—St. Victoria, a Christian virgin, cherishing the most earnest love for Jesus Christ, had taken a vow to belong to Him alone. To several of her companions who contracted the like engagement she imparted a holy ardour equaling her own, and the Lord, ever generous in His gifts, had vouchsafed to her the power of working miracles to such a degree that her reputation for sanctity spread throughout Rome. Her parents had, meanwhile, promised her in marriage, without her knowledge, to a pagan called Eugenius, who, not being able to get her to consent to the union, denounced her himself to the judge, and she was tortured before his eyes. Her sufferings, as might have been expected, did not in anywise modify her sentiments. The passion of Eugenius turning into rage and hatred, he clamoured for her death, and caused her to be pierced to the heart by the hand of the executioner, during the persecution of Decius in 250.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*In the order of Christian love, death is readily encountered for the sake of the beloved, after the model of the "only Son of God, who hath given His life, that the world may be saved by Him."*—(John iii. 16.)



DIVINE LOVE.—Jesus Christ takes delight in liberally rewarding with His favour the love of His creatures: thus we find that John the Evangelist, Mary Magdalen, and Lazarus, obtained incomparable privileges. St. Thrasilla, aunt of St. Gregory the Great, affords an example of another kind. She had vowed herself to continence from her early youth, to the love of God and service of the poor, to the practice of good works, prayer, and mortification. Emiliana, her sister, walked in her footsteps and upheld her in her fervour. Their piety never wavered from the true way, and hence God, to reward their steadfastness, made known to them before their death that they were admitted to the glory of the saints. The Holy Pope Felix, their uncle, appeared to Thrasilla, saying, “Come, I will lead thee to the realms of bliss.” While about to yield up her last sigh, Jesus Christ himself appeared, coming to meet her. St. Thrasilla died on the 24th of December.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“I love those that love me,” says our Lord; “with me are riches and glory, glorious riches and justice.”—(Prov. viii. 17.)



THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PROPHECIES.—God had promised to man a Saviour ; He had revealed successively to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Judah, that He would be born of their race. Daniel had announced that He would be put to death by His own people four hundred and ninety years after the signing of the edict for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem ; Micheas had foretold that He would be born in Bethlehem ; and finally Aggeus had prophesied that He would appear in the reconstructed Temple. Now, four hundred and fifty-six years had passed since the edict had been published by Artaxerxes Longimanus, in the sixth year of his reign. Jesus Christ was born, and died thirty-three years and a half subsequently by the hands of the Jews ; He was born in Bethlehem, whither Mary had been obliged to betake herself by reason of an edict of the Emperor Augustus. Mary, his mother, was descended from Abraham, through Isaac, Judah, and David. Joseph and Mary carried Him to the Temple constructed by Esdras and Nehemias. The Divine words were then accomplished to the very letter.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us thence infer the sure accomplishment of the promises and threats of the Gospel : " God is faithful ; all His ways are judgment ; He is just and right."*—(Deut. xxxii. 4.)

December 26.



SAINT STEPHEN.

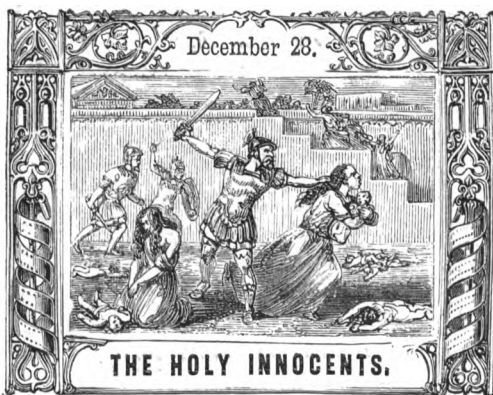
THE GLORY OF THE ELECT.—Stephen, one of the seven deacons chosen by the Apostles after the descent of the Holy Ghost, announced the Gospel with a zeal and a power of word and works that confounded the Jews. At last, their fury knew no bounds; they dragged him before the judges and accused him of violating the law. The holy deacon raising his eyes to heaven, in order to draw down thence strength for the final conflict, beheld Jesus Christ in the midst of the heavenly court, and, all radiant with happiness and anticipated joy, cried out, “I behold the heavens opened and the Son of Man seated on the right hand of God!” At these words they rushed upon him, violently dragged him along once again, and stoned him. With expiring voice he exclaimed: “Lord Jesus, into Thy hands I commend my soul!” and, speaking of his executioners, “Be their sin forgiven them, O God!” A grand and sublime example truly, first furnished by the Divine Original, Jesus Christ, and many times reproduced by His faithful followers!

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Courage, then, ye elect of God!* “for the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come.”—(*Rom. viii. 18.*)



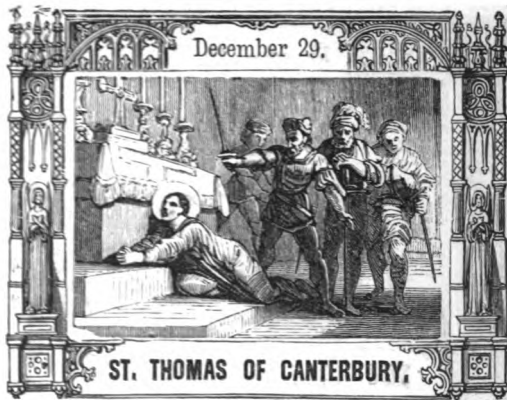
CHASTITY AND DIVINE LOVE.—Only chaste souls love well, because their love is pure as they; and chaste love alone, such, for instance, as that of a mother's, is lasting. The apostle St. John was the purest of all the disciples, and hence was it that he was the most cherished by the Saviour, obtained signal grace from Him, and became himself the Apostle of Divine Love. At the Last Supper he reposed upon the breast of Jesus; on Calvary, he received the glorious mission of replacing Him by the Blessed Mary's side; more than a century of life was granted to him; and when a tyrant sought to inflict death on him, the very torture rendered him more apt to encounter suffering, and quickened him with new strength. He received, in the island of Patmos, that mysterious and sublime revelation called the Apocalypse. In extreme old age he wrote what might be termed the Code of Divine Love. "Little children," said he to his disciples, "love one another: this is the one commandment of the Lord."

MORAL REFLECTION.—"On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets: 'Thou shalt love God above all things, and thy neighbour as thyself.'"—(*Matt. xxii. 37.*)



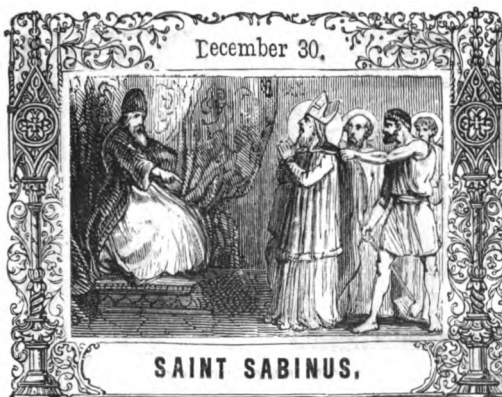
THE PRIVILEGES OF CHILDHOOD.—Childhood, by reason of its innocence and candour, has always obtained from Heaven the most noble and sublime privileges. When Jesus Christ wished to convey to His disciples a lesson more striking, He placed a little child in their midst, saying, “Unless ye become as little children you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.” He loved to bless little children. “Suffer them to come unto Me, and prevent them not,” He would constantly say. When He made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, He desired that children should go before Him, crying, “Hosanna!” “From the mouth of babes,” He said, “proceedeth perfect praise.” Thousands of little children had the signal honour of being the first to pour out their blood for His sake; for, after the adoration of the three kings, the cruel Herod caused all the children of Bethlehem and the environs to be massacred from the age of two years and under, hoping to include the Divine child in the general massacre. These are the tender flowers, cut down in their prime, that the Church honours under the name of “The Holy Innocents.”

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us revolve in our hearts this saying of the Master, that “to enter the kingdom of heaven we must become as little children.”—(Matt. xviii. 3.)*



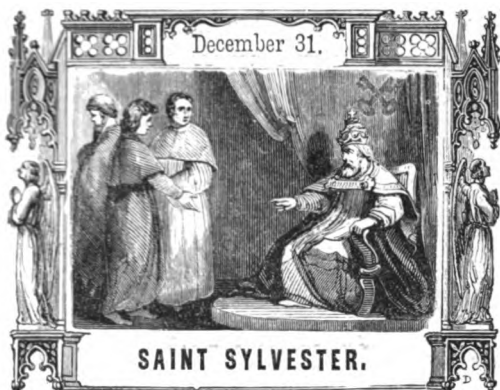
ANGER AND IMPRUDENCE.—Thomas à Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, honoured by all Europe for his eminent virtues, charity, and zeal, was for a lengthened period at issue with Henry II., king of England, concerning the temporalities and immunities of his Church, which the monarch did not respect. Having been obliged voluntarily to exile himself, he did not submit, on his return, with any greater readiness to the exacting claims of the king. The latter, in a fit of anger, uttered these imprudent words: “Of all the ungrateful dependents whom I maintain, cannot one be found to rid me of this turbulent priest?” Thereupon four courtiers, thinking to give pleasure to their master, eagerly hastened to assassinate the archbishop in his cathedral church. All Europe was horrified by this infamous crime; the assassins speedily became a horror to themselves, and one and all perished miserably. Henry performed a severe penance for this atrocious crime. Numerous miracles illustrate the tomb of the holy archbishop. This happened in 1170, and as early as 1173 Pope Alexander III. inscribed him among the Saints.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“If thou have not understanding with thy neighbour, let thy hand be upon thy mouth, lest thou be surprised in an unskilful word and be confounded.”—(*Eccles. v. 14.*)



GOOD FOR EVIL.—In 303, in the course of the persecution of Diocletian, Sabinus, bishop of Assisi, was arrested, together with his two deacons, Marcellus and Euriperantius. Venustianus, governor of the province, caused the latter to be put to death by torture, and ordered the hands of Sabinus to be cut off. Having asked him, by way of raillery, whether, in that state, he could still cure him of the malady with which his eyes were afflicted, the holy martyr betaking himself to prayer, the persecutor was cured, and, wonder-struck by this miracle, Venustianus was converted, and died himself soon after by martyrdom. The torture of Sabinus was deferred to a later period. Lucius, the successor of Venustianus, on his nomination, caused the holy bishop to be sent on to Spoleto, and completed the martyrdom by having him beaten with rods until he expired under the blows. His precious remains were buried at the distance of a mile from the town, and were afterwards translated to Faluza. St. Gregory the Great deposited a portion thereof in a chapel near Fermo.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who calumniate you.”—(*Luke vi. 28.*)



THE TRIUMPH OF THE SAINTS.—St. Sylvester had been ordained deacon and priest by Pope St. Marcellinus previous to the edict of persecution published by Diocletian. He had then to meet the most stormy times the Church has ever encountered. History does not relate whether he suffered for the faith, but he must have shared the perils then endured by the Christian priesthood, which was mainly the object of attack. He had subsequently the happiness of seeing peace restored to the Church by Constantine, and of witnessing the triumph of religion under this great prince, and was able, in all security, to have the two councils of Arles and Nicæa presided over by his legates, being prevented, by reason of his great age, from being present in person. He died in 335, after a pontificate of twenty years and eleven months. Thus it is that when the perils, the conflicts, tears, and sufferings of this miserable life are ended, we shall have the happiness of triumphing with the saints in heaven, if, like them, we have been faithful in accomplishing our duties, and have become worthy, by our virtues, of that blessed abiding-place.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give to thee the crown of life,” says our Lord.—(Apoc. ii. 10.)

MORAL CONSIDERATIONS
ON
THE MOVABLE FEASTS.

“MOVABLE FEASTS” are so called because they have no fixed place in the calendar, their celebration happening sooner or later year by year, according as the feast of Easter itself occurs at a different period. The latter feast is always celebrated on the Sunday which accompanies or follows the first full moon after the spring equinox. As the movable feasts afford useful lessons, we ought to take them fully to heart.

Advent.

THE CHRISTIAN'S EXPECTATION.—The time of Advent cannot exactly be considered feſtal, nor can it be claſſed among the movable feaſts, and yet the firſt day of Advent is in another ſenſe “movable,” inasmuch as it happens always on the fourth Sunday before Chriſtmas, which feſtival itſelf falls on different days of the week. Advent means “coming,” and the four weeks whereof it conſiſts repreſent the four thouſand years which preceded the “coming” of the Son of God into this world. Hence it is that the Church has choſen excluſively for her offices the predictions of the prophets relative to this grand event, and the ſighs of the patriarchs for the arrival of the Meſſiah, the Deſired of all nations. Formerly, Advent-time was obſerved amid faſting, abſtinenſe, and mortification, yet not in a manner ſo rigorous as that of Lent; and faſting was not heretofore of general obligation. Notwithſtanding the

alleviations which the Church has thought well to introduce in the course of time, Advent has still remained a period of recollection and prayer. The true Christian ought to take advantage thereof, and by pious yearnings entreat for the "coming" of the Son of God into his heart by grace, and into the world at large by the spreading of the Gospel. He should, furthermore, prepare himself for the final and supreme "coming" of this same Saviour, which will happen at the death of each one in particular, and for mankind at large on the last day at the General Judgment.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"All the days in which I am now in warfare I await until my change come. Thou shalt call me, and I will answer thee."—(*Job* xiv. 14.)

Septuagesima Sunday.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD AND THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD.—Sixty days before Easter the Church begins to remind her children of grave and serious thoughts, in order to incline them to fasting and mortification. From this day forth she suppresses her joyous chants and clothes herself with robes of mourning and repentance; she does not as yet prescribe abstinence, it is true, but she exhorts the faithful to relinquish vain pleasures and indulgence in superfluities, and invites to prayer, retirement, and the practice of good works. The world, on the other hand, invites its votaries to frivolity, good cheer, gay spectacles and entertainment. If we employ merely the eyes of reason, and look at the masks, excesses, and the follies indulged in by worldlings during this season, there is reason to sigh over the degradation of poor human nature, and the spirit of frivolity with which from the day of the Fall it seems to have been struck. How will it be, then, if we employ the eyes of Faith?

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us make up our mind as to which side we intend to take up with, the world or Jesus Christ. "They that are Christ's," says the Apostle, "have crucified the flesh with its vices and concupiscences."*—(*Galat.* v. 24.)

Ash Wednesday.

THE ORIGIN AND END OF MAN.—Man, drawn from the dust, must return to it, and all that he does meanwhile, with the exception of what good he may achieve, is but dust and vanity; the good alone survives. Such are the truths which the Church wishes to engrave in the memory, but still more in the hearts of her children, by the sprinkling of ashes on this first day of Lent. This custom dates from the first centuries of the Church, and was then observed, not towards all the faithful without distinction, but towards public sinners who had submitted themselves to canonical penance to obtain thereby reconciliation with the Church and admission to a share in the Divine Eucharist. The bishop imposed on them the obligation of wearing the hair-shirt and penitent garb, placing ashes on their head, and then excluding them from the church until the day of Easter. Meanwhile, they had to remain humbly prostrate at the church-porch, imploring the prayers of those who, more happy than they, might assist at the divine mysteries within the sacred building. The custom of putting ashes on the head in token of penitence is even more ancient than Christianity; the Jews practised it, and the holy King David tells us that he had submitted to the observance. It may be said rather to date from the first ages of the world, for the holy man Job, long before even the time of Moses, followed the custom. Nothing is, in fact, more calculated to lead the sinner to enter into himself than the remembrance of his last end. Nothing is better fitted to beat down pride and put a check on futile projects and guilty purposes than the terrible and sad memento, “Remember that thou art but dust!” Empires, riches, honours, and dignities, resplendent palaces, triumphal cars, fair adornments, beauty, strength, and power, all crumble away, and their very possessor is but a ruin, and ere a few days have sped will have dwindled into dust.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Bear ever in mind, then, men and sinners, that “you are dust, and unto dust you shall return.”—(Gen. iii. 19.)*

Lent, and Days of Fasting.

PENITENCE.—Holy Church has instituted the fasting and abstinence of Lent, the Ember-days, and the vigils of the solemn feasts, in order to impose on her children the mode and precepts of a penitence that they would not of themselves accomplish if left to their own discretion, which is withal needful for salvation, since without penitence there is no remission of sin. Moreover, penitence imposed and prescribed by an authority which partakes of the divine, possesses in itself a merit and efficacy which the most rigorous act of penance chosen by sinners of their own accord could not have. God said to the Jews by the mouth of His prophet: "Your fastings please me not, for therein I perceive your own wills." Now this defect is not met with in the fasts prescribed by the Church, since it is not the will of the sinner that chooses and determines, but the very will of the spouse of Jesus Christ. To render the fast holy and agreeable to God, it must be allied with prayer, almsgiving, and, above all, with a penitential spirit; for the merit of a work consists far less in its literal accomplishment than in the spirit, purpose, and intention prompting it. The Christian religion is the adoration of God "in spirit and in truth," and not, as with the Jews of old, a mere succession of external acts.

The obligation of fasting is of strict necessity and under pain of mortal sin for such as are within the conditions prescribed by the Church; for such, namely, as are above the age of one-and-twenty, and physically capable of complying with the observance.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*We shall better understand the necessity of penitence if we give attention to these words of the Saviour: "Unless you do penance, ye shall all likewise perish."*—(Luke xiii. 3.)

The Five Wounds of our Lord.

VANITIES OF THE WORLD.—Ye that delight in decking your head with costly and superb adornments, who love to cumber your hands with gold and precious jewels, who revel in luxury and in soft garments, approach and see to what a condition Jesus Christ, your Captain and Saviour, is reduced. His head is crowned with thorns and streaming with blood, and every base indignity heaped thereon by ruffian executioners; His feet and hands are transpierced by nails, His side gaping with a wide-open wound. Such are the mournful accents uttered by the Church on the first Friday of Lent, two days after she has strewed ashes on the heads of the faithful. “For you it is,” she exclaims, “that the Son of God, the Word made Flesh, has undergone these heartrending affronts, with intent to expiate your evil-doings, and to teach you that the idol of your body, which you deck out with so much care and eager delight, deserves, on the contrary, nought but affliction and suffering. How can you, while wreathing yourselves with flowers, venture to tread in the footsteps of a Master, who bears a thorny crown? And with what mind do you propose becoming the disciples of such a Master? That forehead, made lustrous with borrowed splendour, those limbs delicately clad and brilliantly adorned, will first become the food of the grave-worm, and afterwards the prey of that fire that quengeth not, if you strive not to bend them down to that lowliness which is native to them, to the state of subjection for which they were created, and to the penitence they have merited by reason of sin.”

MORAL REFLECTION.—*May the contemplation of the wounds of our Saviour engrave deeply in our mind the maxim uttered by His own divine lips: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.”—(Matt. xvi. 24.)*

Passion Sunday.

SIN AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.—“Suffering and sorrow,” such are the words the Church is wont to whisper to her children; such is the picture she is ever presenting to their eyes; and wherefore? Because the world with its allurements contains too many lures; and if a salutary restraint withhold not man while on the brink of impending peril, he will assuredly be lost. For this world man has not been created; if, then, he surrender himself to it unreservedly, he abandons his vocation. Now, there is nothing more fitted to keep him in check, and make him enter into himself, than the remembrance and the sight of suffering. Suffering is, moreover, the inevitable term and the necessary outgrowth of sin. From the moment man summoned sin from the abyss, God evoked suffering; if man would then avoid suffering, let him abstain from sinning. “After sin, death,” says the great Apostle. Now, on that day, wherein Jesus Christ, the representative of humanity, or, rather humanity personified and divinized by its union with God, underwent His sorrowful passion, in Him the human race expiated all its iniquities. But does this mean that there remained nothing for each one to do in order to expiate his personal misdeeds? Assuredly not; mankind having incurred guilt through Adam, had been sanctified in Jesus Christ; and as each member of the human race has inherited from Adam a proneness to sin, and the faculty of committing it, in like manner each should draw from Jesus Christ the grace of penitence. Without Adam, there would have been no sin in the world, and without Jesus Christ no remission of guilt; by sinning, you have become co-partners with Adam; conform yourself now to Jesus Christ by expiating your guilt in suffering and sorrow. You have been made the spoiled children of Almighty God’s favour, as might have been expected from His exceeding love; but would it be consistent with His high wisdom that you should have the privilege of sinning, and that One alone should bear all the expiation?

MORAL REFLECTION.—“We are the sons of God, and, if sons, heirs

also," says the great Apostle. This title of "heirs of God," he adds, constitutes us "joint heirs with Christ, yet so that if we be glorified with Him, we must suffer with Him."—(Rom. viii. 17.)

The Compassion of our Lady.

EVE AND MARY.—Eve, when placed by the hand of God in a garden of delights, received but one precept to be obeyed, so as to be for ever happy—a precept easy of accomplishment, the non-observance whereof should needs be inexcusable, inasmuch as neither urgent want nor strong inclination led to its violation; there was conjoined, moreover, the assurance of death following inevitably upon the transgression of the precept. The serpent, however, kindling with jealousy and hate, came to tempt her. She gazed on the fruit forbidden, gathered thereof, and carried it to her husband, and together they ate, incurring the fatal loss, and involving mankind in their downfall. Mary, preceded by the God made Man, went toiling with Him up the arid steep of Calvary, in order to accomplish the most heart-rending of all sacrifices. Eve had rebelled, Mary surrendered her will; Eve had yielded to the enticing voice of the Tempter; Mary heard the voice of the same demon of jealousy and hate, uttering by the mouth of the impious Jews, blasphemies and maledictions, but she was not scared from her purpose. Eve, in her disobedience, stretched forth her hand towards the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; Mary, in her submission to the designs of God, stretches forth hers to the tree of the Cross. Eve had sacrificed to her caprice the spouse through whom she had received being; Mary assists at the sacrifice of the Son to whom she has given being. Eve was born of man without the agency of a mother; Mary gave birth to the man-God without the intervention of a spouse. Eve, after her disobedience, became the mother, in the order of nature, of a race accursed; Mary, through her submission, has become, in the order of grace, the mother of a race sanctified.

These points of resemblance and contrast offer themselves spontaneously to the mind, provided that one ponders somewhat over the remembrance celebrated by the Church on the

Friday in Holy Week, under the title of the "Compassion of our Lady." "Compassion" means "suffering with," indicating thereby that Mary is suffering the Passion with Her Son. A mother's heart can alone comprehend the greatness of the torture endured by this mother at the foot of the Cross whereon Her Son was immolated; we do not attempt to describe, nor are any mere human lips, indeed, able to express it.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us adore this divine and mysterious abyss of charity, in whose depth our salvation was worked out at the price of so much suffering; and let us bear in memory what we have cost that mother to whose guardianship we were made over, even from the sublime height of the cross.*—(John xix. 26.)

Palm Sunday.

THE GLORIES OF THE WORLD.—Lessons without end, at once lofty and hallowing, might be deduced from the triumphant entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem, celebrated by the Church on this day; we limit ourselves, however, to considering the event under one aspect merely, in order to draw therefrom a moral lesson for our spiritual instruction. Jesus Christ enters Jerusalem, and the people forthwith improvise a triumph all the more noble because it has cost neither blood nor tears, and so much the more touching because it is spontaneous. The whole town is in commotion, the roadway is strewn with branches and covered with the garments of the bystanders, every mouth resounding with acclamations, and blessings, and praise. Jesus Christ is proclaimed the son of David, the King of the nation and the Messiah. Ere a few days are sped, the very people that had applauded now clamour for His death, curse and insult Him, and assist at His degrading death with clapping of hands.

Even thus pass away the glories of the world, its joys, its possessions, everything, indeed, that savours of the world, yea, even life itself. To-day at the height of greatness, to-morrow in the deepest abasement; but yesterday the idol of a nation,

to-day the object of its hate; now surrounded with a prosperity beyond compare, and yet a little while, borne down by misfortune; one day full of life and superabundant vigour, and the next consigned to the tomb.

Foolish, then, are they who would account as of any value, or would cling to, things perishable! What bitter awakenings have not such poor deluded beings to expect, and what chagrin and tearful disappointments do they not create for themselves! The Christian who places the aim of his hopes and the centre of his affections at a higher range is both wiser and more happy. Prosperity does not blind nor inebriate him, since he knows it to be capricious and changeful; adverse fortune does not overwhelm him, because he was prepared for it and awaited it with calmness. The unforeseen alone affords any ground for fear; now, to the faithful Christian there is nothing that is unforeseen.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The recommendation given by the great Apostle may be aptly brought to mind: "And they that weep be as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as they rejoiced not; and they that use this world, as though they used it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away."*—(1 Cor. vii. 30.)

Holy Thursday.

THE DIVINE EUCHARIST.—On Thursday, the eve of the Passion, Jesus Christ took bread, and having blessed it, broke and distributed it to His apostles, saying to them, "Take and eat: THIS IS MY BODY, which shall be delivered for you." Then taking the chalice, He blessed and gave it to them, saying, "Drink ye all of this, for this is the chalice of my blood which shall be shed for you." He thereafter added, "This do in remembrance of me." These words, in all their precision, simplicity, and clearness, contain the institution of the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist, an irrefragable proof of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in this Sacrament, and the demonstration of His perpetuity in the Church. But rather than

indulge in reasoning, let us set forth briefly the principal effect. Jesus Christ, before instituting it, had said that this sacrament would communicate life eternal to those receiving it; and this, in one aspect at least, and so far as it is given to man to understand the mysteries of God, is comprehensible. Sin had implanted in man the germ of death and vice. By reason of his disobedience man had become incapable of good, or even of a holy thought, as the great Apostle tells us. Now, in God is the source of being, life, good, virtue, and all excellence. God, by communicating himself substantially to man by means of this august sacrament, implants the germ of immortality and virtue. Man, if limited to his own powers, could not even think out a useful way of becoming virtuous, for whence should he take the principle of virtue and the means of putting it in practice? He would consequently have to incur eternal loss, since salvation without virtue is a thing utterly impossible. But once pervaded with the principle of grace by an intimate union with God, he has but to let it develop and to cultivate the good seed sown in him. Thus does the fleece, merged in a river that rolls onward, bearing gold, retain the particles according as the waters hurry by. Thus does the diamond, of itself colourless and dim, absorb the light when exposed thereto, becoming a sparkling centre of light, and shining with a radiant lustre. The more the diamond is exposed to a vivid light the more brightly will it shine, if it be pure; the oftener and longer the fleece has been sunk in the stream, the more gold it will give forth. In like manner, the more man launches himself into the Divine substance, the more will he therewith be inundated by holy communion; the more potent also will his life become in virtues strong and manifold, and, consequently, in sure claims to salvation.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*With what respect, love, and ardour, ought we not to receive this divine food, "which maketh to live for ever!"—(John vi. 59.)*

Good Friday.

THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS.—Jesus Christ was nailed to the cross about mid-day, expired thereon in the afternoon, and was taken down in the evening towards sunset, or the sixth hour. According to the language of St. Paul, thus did He, by His blood, pacify heaven and earth. If this form of expression convey not simply the reconciliation of heaven with the earth, it veils a mystery impenetrable to feeble reason. But this very reconciliation is in itself the greatest mystery, for man always vainly tries to explain it by recurring to comparisons and considerations of human conception merely, which are vastly insufficient, from the fact of their being human. And what matters it, after all, whether we understand or not so great a mystery? Enough for us that it has produced its effect, and that we are able to adore it in gratitude and love. That philosophy should rail at what it does not fathom is sheer foolishness, but that is its business. Incredulity may scoff at what it does not recognise; it concerns it, however, to know whether reason be on its side. Let heresy explain, after human fashion, things divine; that is the main purpose of heresy, and not our concern. As for us Christian men, let us fix our gaze on the Mediator between God and man, raised aloft between heaven and earth, with arms outstretching in order to enfold the universe; with head down bent, to give to the world the kiss of peace and reconciliation, after having, at the cost of His blood, purchased peace, and let us humble our whole being in heartfelt thanksgiving and love. Let us reverently imprint our lips on this cross, the instrument of our salvation; let us bend down trembling before the just God, who takes such noble revenge for our guilt. By our works let us make some set-off for the price we have cost; by our penitence and tears let us apply to ourselves the merit of His redemption, and henceforth live only for heaven, since we have been made heirs of heaven.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*The cross, "to the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and to the Gentiles foolishness," is, withal, the instrument of Christ's power, and of the wisdom of God.*—(1 Cor. i. 23.)

Holy Saturday.

THE SEPULCHRE OF JESUS CHRIST.—Three hours after Jesus Christ had uttered His last sigh on the cross, two of His disciples, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, went to ask Pilate for the body, that they might give it burial. Having obtained it, they embalmed it according to the custom of the Jews, and deposited it not far from the place of Calvary, in a tomb hewn in the rock, wherein no one had yet been laid. Pilate caused the entrance to be sealed up, and placed a guard over it, lest the body should be taken away. The Saviour thus remained from nightfall on the Friday till the first rays of dawn on the Sunday. He had himself said that He was to pass this time in the tomb, and had quoted as an example the abiding of the prophet Jonas for the same space of time in the whale's belly. It was then a real death that was associated with these signs and precautions, and the sacrifice had been consummated and was irrevocable. Well might we then marvel at such excess of love, covering ourselves with confusion at the thought of how feebly we love Him who hath so greatly loved us, and of how little we do for Him who hath accomplished so much for us. But we would enter upon another consideration. With Jesus Christ died away both the ancient world with its hideous worship; the synagogue with its symbols and mysteries; and the man of sin, the old Adam, with its concupiscences—yea, even death itself, which had been inflicted on man in punishment for sin. With Jesus Christ died away sin, and sin was placed in the tomb with Him; for, according to the beautiful expression of the Apostle, the Saviour fixed the sins of men to the cross,—*affigens illud cruci*.

Now the cross itself was buried on the spot where Christ had suffered, as was the custom among the Jews, and as was fully shown by the finding thereof three centuries later, by St. Helen, in conjunction with those of the two thieves; whence it follows that among us Christians, the disciples, that is, of Christ, and regenerated by His death, there ought never to lurk any shadow of Jewish superstition or Pagan morals, any remnant of the old Adam or man of sin. Concupiscences, disorderly pas-

sions, and love of the world, should no longer exist but as the memory of a time that is no more.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“For we are buried together with Him by baptism unto death; that as Christ is risen from the dead by the glory of His Father, so we also may walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also of His resurrection. Knowing this, that the old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, and that we may serve sin no longer.”—(*Rom. vi. 4.*)

Easter Day.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.—The resurrection of the dead is one of the most consoling truths of Christianity. To die for ever would be the most terrible of all destinies. The plant and the animal, unendowed with reason, die, never to live again; but they have not at least any apprehension as to what death is. To die is to them one of the thousand accidents bound up with life; to the plant it is as nothing, and for the animal without reason, a merely transitory pang, death itself being but the affair of a moment. For man, on the contrary, death has terrors which precede it, anguish accompanying it, and apprehensions consequent upon it. The most strongly-attempered spirit shudders on reflecting that it must incur death; the most selfish man has attachments which he with difficulty severs; the most determined unbeliever experiences doubts as to the shadow *To-morrow* of death. Man would then be the most pitiable among all beings were Religion not at hand to say to him “The grave is a place of momentary rest; you will come forth thence one day. The God that gave being to your limbs will restore it; the resurrection of Jesus Christ gives thereof an assured pledge.”

This confidence in the future resurrection is a subject of the greatest joy to the children of God, the groundwork of their faith, the mainspring of their hope, and most lasting comfort amid the evils of this life. For if Christ had not risen, says the Apostle St. Paul, in vain should we believe in Him. He

would be convicted of having been an impostor and His apostles of being mad; His death would not have availed us anything, and we should still be dwelling in the bonds of sin. Those dying in Jesus Christ would perish, and our hope in Him not extending beyond the present life, we should be the most unfortunate of men, inasmuch as, after having had as our portion in this life, sufferings and afflictions, we should not be able to console ourselves with the expectation of future good. But Jesus Christ having come forth living from the tomb, His doctrine is confirmed by His resurrection; it establishes the certitude of His mission in His character as Son of God, the efficacy of the sacrifice He offered on the cross, the divinity of His priesthood, the rewards of the other life, and the glorified resurrection of the flesh.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*We shall one day rise again; but let us range by the side of such a consoling expectation that terrible warning of the prophet Daniel: "Many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some unto life everlasting, and others unto reproach eternal."*—(Dan. xii. 2.)

Rogation Days.

PRAYER.—“With desolation is the earth made desolate,” said the prophet Jeremias, “because there is none that reflecteth in the heart:” *desolatione desolata est terra, quia nullus est qui recogitet corde* (Jer. xii. 11). From the same cause evils and calamities ever arise; when the prayer of men has forgotten the path to heaven, divine favours no longer come down upon earth. Hearts grow hardened, disorders arise, and inevitably draw down the vengeance of God. Then that which should have been the preventive becomes the remedy—man gives himself to prayer, and the chastisement is stayed. In the fifth century, the Gauls having been afflicted with manifold calamities, St. Mamertus, archbishop of Vienne, instituted the Rogation-days in order to appease the wrath of Heaven. (*Vide* 11th May.) Shortly after, the first Council of Orleans extended their observance to the whole of

France, and they were subsequently adopted at Rome, and thence passed to the whole Christian world. The Roman Pontifical speaks of them in these terms:—"This same custom has been established amongst us, and has hitherto been followed with great piety, in order to avert from us calamities. During these days none should wear costly garments, but each one should, on the contrary, sigh in sackcloth and ashes. Entertainments, gay spectacles, and popular rejoicings should be avoided, sumptuous equipages should not appear in the streets, and all men should go barefoot. Women! abstain ye from worldliness, and let all Christians intone together with great contrition of heart, 'Kyrie eleison,' so as to implore the mercy of God and obtain pardon of sin, concord and peace, the turning aside of pestilence and chastisements, the preservation of the fruits of the earth, and solace under temporal needs. These days are devoted to fasting, and not to rejoicing; it is even fitting that servants of both sexes be dispensed from all work, that they may take part in the common prayer. During these three days the same food only should be used as during the time of Lent."

The obligation of fasting has been withdrawn by the Church, but not that of prayer and penitential acts. St. Charles Borromeo, in his Pastoral Letters, especially recommends that during these three days abstinence be observed, which is, moreover, a matter of obligation; and, further, that public service should be devoutly attended. He himself assisted thereat with great exactitude, and observed a rigorous fast.

MORAL REFLECTION.—"Gather together the people, sanctify the church, assemble the ancients, gather together the little ones; between the porch and the altar the priests, the Lord's ministers, shall weep, and shall say, Spare, O Lord, spare thy people, and give not thy inheritance to reproach."—(*Joel* ii. 16.)

The Ascension.

CHRISTIAN HOPE.—The mystery which the Church honours on this day is at the same time that of the triumph of Jesus Christ and the hallowed hope of His disciples. The Saviour, after having accomplished His mission on earth, ascends to heaven to put His manhood in possession of the glory due to it, and to prepare for us an abiding-place. He ascends thither as our King, Liberator, Chief, and Mediator. Our King, because He has purchased us at the cost of His blood; our Liberator, because He has conquered death and sin, and has ransomed us from the thralldom of Satan; our Chief, because He wishes that we should follow in His footsteps, and that we should be where He is, even as He has himself declared; our Mediator, because we can only have access through Him to the Father. He ascends thither as our High Priest, in order to offer unceasingly to God the blood which He has shed for us in His character of man, and to obtain for us through the merits of His sacrifice the remission of our sins.

Let us, then, by means of faith, follow Jesus Christ in His ascension to heaven, and abide there henceforth in heart and spirit, even as the Church begs this from God in the collect of this day. Let us remember that heaven is wholly ours, as our inheritance and country; and amid the temptations and miseries of the present life, let us think often of this home of peace, of glory, and bliss eternal.

We must not flatter ourselves, however, that, without earnest efforts on our part, we shall have any share in the kingdom of Jesus Christ. There are many mansions in the house of our heavenly Father, but there are not many ways leading thither. Jesus Christ has traced out for us that of humiliation and suffering, and it is consequently the only way that conducts thither. If the hardships of the journey and the sight of our own weakness strike us with dread, we should gather energy by leaning on the promises of the God-Man. He will be with us even unto the end, and if we love Him, all will become easy; love and hope will give us strength to soar heavenward.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Let us cherish hope: "Christ being come, a*

High Priest of the good things to come, hath entered into the Holy of Holies, by His own blood having obtained eternal redemption."—
(*Heb. ix. 11.*)

Whit-Sunday.

THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST.—Fifty days after Easter, the apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ were assembled in an upper chamber, engaged in prayer, according to the recommendation of the Divine Master, and awaiting the accomplishment of the promise He had made to them, of sending them a Comforting Spirit, the Paraclete, who should teach them all things. Lo! a great noise, as of a rushing tempest, was suddenly heard, the house was rocked to and fro, and tongues of fire were seen resting on the head of each one. At once all were changed into new men, their minds being endowed with full understanding of the Scriptures and of the wonders they had hitherto witnessed without comprehending, and their souls were filled with strength from on high; thenceforth they belonged no more to themselves but to the work of the Gospel. From that time forth this Divine Spirit has not ceased to pour itself forth upon the Church to enlighten, confirm, protect, and guide; it has not ceased communicating itself to each of the faithful individually, either by means of the sacraments or by grace, whenever it has found hearts well disposed.

The Fathers of the Church and all theologians are of one mind in recognising, in the workings of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of the faithful, seven chief gifts: *Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and the Fear of the Lord.* The gift of Wisdom helps us to judge healthily of all things concerning our last end; the gift of Understanding, to apprehend the truths revealed, and to submit our hearts thereto; the gift of Counsel, to choose in all things the part best fitted for the sanctification of our souls; the gift of Fortitude, to resist temptations and overcome dangers; the gift of Knowledge, to discern the best means of sanctifying ourselves; the gift of Piety, or Godliness, causes us to love religion and

the practices having reference to Divine Worship; the gift of the Fear of the Lord turns us aside from sin and from whatever may displease God.

MORAL REFLECTION.—“They that are according to the flesh mind the things that are of the flesh; but they that are according to the Spirit mind the things that are of the Spirit. For the wisdom of the flesh is death; but the wisdom of the Spirit is life and peace.”—*(Rom. viii. 5.)*

Trinity Sunday.

THE MYSTERIES OF RELIGION.—The Holy Trinity is one only God in three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, equal in all things and co-eternal. The Father gives being to the Son, and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son: the most adorable, truly, of all mysteries, and likewise the most impenetrable! St. Anselm has endeavoured to explain it from a single point of view only, and has accomplished this in a masterly manner, yet in a manner necessarily insufficient. The Father, he says, cannot exist a single instant without knowing himself, because, in God, to know is to exist, even as to will, is to act. This knowledge, personified, is “the Word,” His Son. The Son is, then, co-eternal with the Father. The Father and the Son cannot exist a single instant without loving each other; their mutual love is again personified, because in God to love is still to exist, God being love itself. This third Person, thus co-eternal with the other two Persons, is the Holy Ghost. But the inhabitants with God can alone understand these wonders, and they understand because they see them; for them there is no longer any mystery.

The free-thinker, surrounded by the mysteries of nature, and who is to himself a complete mystery, is not willing to admit of any in religion. “I only wish to believe,” he says, “what I understand!” The poor fool would not believe much were he taken at his word. He would neither believe in the food he takes, seeing that he could not explain how it imparts nourishment, nor in the light of the sun, since he does not

apprehend how it brings him into relation with distant objects, nor even in his own arguments, since he does not comprehend how his mind evokes and gives them shape.

Literally speaking, there exist not any mysteries, there are only truths; but truth becomes a mystery to him that does not understand it. Writing is a mystery to any one that knows not how to read; it ceases to be so to any one who has received instruction. According as we educate the soul and widen the measure of knowledge, mysteries begin to disappear in proportion; therefore is it that there are no mysteries in heaven, because the angels and the blessed behold with open gaze the objects whereof we now possess but the mysterious definition. To deserve to behold them one day in their heavenly company, one condition is requisite, namely, to adore them meanwhile with steadfast and perfect faith in the Word of God which proposes them for our belief. In the realms of nature, a mystery is a truth not understood, which one believes withal because one sees it. In the sphere of religion, a mystery is a truth not understood, which one believes because God has revealed it.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Wherefore rebel against the word of God? Is it not "as if the clay should rebel against the potter, and the work should say to the worker thereof, Thou understandest not?"—(Isa. xxix. 16.)*

The Feast of the Holy Sacrament.

THE REAL PRESENCE OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.—Till the thirteenth century, the Church had not thought of establishing a special festival in honour of the Holy Sacrament, being satisfied with celebrating on Holy Thursday the institution of this Divine mystery. At that period, however, as heresiarchs dared to attack the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, and numerous miracles and special revelations had occurred to concentrate the attention of the Christian world on this dogma, Pope Urban IV. decreed, in 1244, that a special feast should be instituted, which, by its solemnity and pomp, should be as a protestation in favour of the unwavering faith

of the Church, and should, at the same time, offer an honourable reparation for the blasphemies of impious men. But this pontiff happening to die soon after, the Bull had not all the effect intended, and it was only after the Council of Vienne, held in 1332, that the feast of the Holy Sacrament was definitively established throughout the Catholic world by decree of the Council, on account of the new heresiarchs that had raised their heads. The Holy Council of Trent newly approved in a formal and earnest manner both the worship itself and its attendant pomp. The Feast of the Holy Sacrament is then a solemn act of faith in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Eucharist; and this belief, to which the Church attaches an importance of the highest moment, is the very groundwork of Catholicism, its life, its vital principle, or rather is the very essence of all Christianity; for if Jesus Christ be not present really and corporeally under the elements of bread and wine, as He has himself formally told us, His word is no longer reliable, He is no longer God, and there remains of religion nought save a beautiful but sterile philosophy, which each one can remodel after his own mind, with the notion that he may fashion it of a nobler type. If it be allowable, as Protestants contend, to interpret, in a purely allegorical sense, words of such clearness that there are not, throughout the whole of the Gospel, any to be met with more positive or precise, it is permissible to interpret everything at will, and the Gospel remains an enigma, the solution whereof is nowhere to be found. It is furthermore the intention of the Church to make an avowal of her love and gratitude to Jesus Christ, and to offer reparation for all the profanations and sacrileges to which this adorable sacrament has been exposed. Such are the thoughts and sentiments which should fill the minds and hearts of true Christians during this touching solemnity.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*O, weak-hearted and luke-warm Christians! O, ye infidels, unbelievers, and heretics of all ages! "if you did but know the gift of God, you would perhaps have asked of Him, and He would have given you living water!"—(John iv. 10.)*

The Sacred Heart of Jesus.

THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST FOR MEN.—The Church has in every age paid honour to the five wounds of our Lord, but during the last few centuries a special worship towards the sacred wound in His side has been introduced in certain countries, especially in Poland, in order to distinguish by a greater homage that which was the chief of all, by reason of its mysterious signification and the spot itself where it was inflicted; for the heart is the seat of life. The devout Henry-Francis Xavier de Belsunce, bishop of Marseilles, having placed his church and flock under the protection of the Sacred Heart of Jesus during the pestilence which ravaged the town of Marseilles, in 1721, the epidemic forthwith ceased, and this miraculous event contributed to spread throughout France the devotion to the Sacred Heart. Soon afterwards Pope Clement XIII., moved by the extension which it took from day to day, authorized the devotion for the world at large, and at length the French clergy, in an assembly held in 1765, adopted its celebration throughout France, at the instance of the pious queen Marie Leczinska. Such, in brief, is the history of this Feast, which, though established in comparatively modern times, answers so admirably to the yearnings of a tender piety, and with which the remembrance of a great and wondrous favour on the part of Heaven is closely bound up.

“O Passion ever to be desired, O Death most admirable!” exclaimed St. Bonaventure when treating of this subject; “what more marvellous than a death that gives life, wounds that impart healing, blood that purifies, a wound that links one heart to a multitude of hearts? O amiable death, death all delectable! I desire to be never more separated from Jesus. It is good to be with Him, and I will build in Him three tents,—one in His hands, another in His feet, and the third in His side, which shall become my habitual dwelling-place. Thence will I speak to His Heart and obtain from it all that I may long for. By thus acting I shall conform myself to His well-beloved Mother, whose soul was transpierced by the sword of Her Son’s passion. O amiable wounds of our Lord Jesus

Christ! What ineffable sweetness ought not the heart to enjoy which, through that wide-open breach, becomes united to the Heart of Jesus! The tongue could not express it; it is of better avail to acquire thereof the full experience."

MORAL REFLECTION.—"As my Father hath loved me," says our Saviour, "even so I have loved you. Greater love no man hath, than that he should lay down his life for his friend."—(*John xv. 9, 13.*)

Feast of the Dedication.

SANCTITY OF A CHRISTIAN.—The Feast of the Dedication commemorates the consecration to God's worship of all churches throughout the Christian world, and of each church in particular. If we consider the wonders accomplished in the first Temple, when Solomon made the dedication thereof; and, in the second, when the impious Heliodorus sought to profane it; if we further reflect on the care which our Saviour Himself on two several occasions manifested in maintaining respect for an edifice which was but symbolical, and served merely for the observance of a religion purely figurative, what conclusion should be drawn as to the sanctity of Christian churches, wherein there is no longer the shadow but the reality of salvation, through the medium of the word there announced, and the sacraments there administered, and in whose sanctuary Jesus Christ dwells corporeally? Yea, holy indeed are these structures, and the very stones which help to form them are hallowed; for besides the sanctification received from the hands of the consecrating bishop, they have been endued with an ever-new and more august sanctification by the presence of the God-Saviour.

But the Feast of the Dedication has a meaning still more mysterious and profound. "The true temples of the Lord," says the Apostle St. Paul, "are our bodies," and hence it is to ourselves, in its ultimate expression, that this feast refers. In fact, as places of refuge for our bodies and ourselves, have these churches been built. If they have been hallowed by

prayer, our bodies have been hallowed by the sacraments; if they contain the elements of the sacraments, it is we who receive the effects thereof; and if Jesus Christ has there taken up His abode, it is for our sake He there dwells. Our bodies have been sanctified in baptism through the saving water, and the application of the holy oil and chrism; they have been sanctified in confirmation, through the holy chrism and the hand of a bishop, by the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit, whose real and living temples they have become; they have been sanctified by holy communion, by sacred contact with the Son of God, who has lingered on our lips and penetrated into our being in such wise that His adorable body has become blended with ours, forming thereby a complete incorporation. There is not, then, either any church, or any sacred vessel employed in the service of the altar, which has received a consecration or sanctification like unto that of our being; and the Feast of the Dedication is still more that of the dedication of our bodies than of our churches. The memories it recalls cannot fail to excite in us the sweetest emotions of quickening piety.

MORAL REFLECTION.—*Therefore did the Apostle St. Paul thus address the Corinthians: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Holy Spirit dwelleth in you? Now if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which you are."*—(1 Cor. iii. 16.)

Conclusion.

"Three things, above all, should invite our attention while celebrating the memory of the Saints," urges St. Bernard,— "their protection, their example, and our own feebleness." Their protection, because those who were powerful upon earth are still more powerful in heaven, where they are in contact, so to speak, with God himself. In fact, if, while living, they felt compassion and prayed for poor sinners, how much more now will the full and perfect view of our miseries induce them to implore more zealously the Divine mercy, since their charity, far from diminishing in the realm of bliss, has only received

an infinite increase? Not because they are now exempt from suffering have they become less pitying. We ought next to consider the example set by them, so as to convince ourselves that, while dwelling in the land of the living, they neither swerved to the right hand nor to the left, but followed the straight path of justice, until they reached Him who has said, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Let us scrutinize the humility of their works, and weigh the rectitude of their words, in order to derive instruction from both. In this way, we shall track out more surely their footsteps, shall conform ourselves thereto, and, by following them, shall not be in danger of going astray. For, as the prophet assures us, the ways of the just man are straight, and he walketh surely therein. The third thing we have to revolve in our mind is our own miseries. What? Men like to ourselves, clothed with our very infirmities, and fashioned from the same clay, and we are to find it impossible, or merely difficult, to do what they have done! Shame, shame upon us! Yes, they were men, these saints who have preceded us in the way, these very saints whom we think of as being of almost another nature from ourselves. Let us rejoice, or else cover ourselves with shame; let us rejoice, for these are guides that go before us; let us remain covered with shame, if we have not the courage to follow them, or rather, let us mingle tears with our joys in this wretched vale of tears; let grief be at the beginning and at the end of all our rejoicings; for if we have great reason to rejoice, we have still greater reason to weep. And if we are ashamed, so to speak, to raise aspiring eyes to the happiness of those whom we scarcely venture to undertake to imitate, let us entreat them, at least, to render propitious to us that God who is their Friend and our Sovereign Judge, that God who is blessed to endless ages. Amen!

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