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ST. IGNATIUS

AND THE JESUITS.

A Sermon,

PREACHED IN THE CHURCH OF THE JESUIT FATHERS,
FARM STREET, LONDON,

On the 31st of July, 1880.

BY

FATHER THOMAS BURKE, O.P.

LONDON: BURNS AND OATES, PORTMAN STREET, W.
DUBLIN: M. H. GILL & SON, UPPER SACKVILLE STREET.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

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J. M. D.

“And the Lord said . . . this man is a vessel of election to Me to carry My name before the Gentiles and Kings and children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for the sake of My name.”—ACTS ix. 15, 16.

THE three greatest conversions recorded in the history of the Church are those of St. Paul, St. Augustine, and St. Ignatius of Loyola. Saul of Tharsus was a furious persecutor of the young Church of Christ. He was made the greatest of her Apostles, who “laboured more abundantly than all they.”* Augustine of Hippo was a leader and light amongst the Manichean heretics. He was made the greatest of the Church’s doctors, the father of scientific Catholic theology. Ignatius of Loyola, always a fervent Catholic, was a soldier, bravest of the brave, filled with the spirit of chivalry, but entirely given up to worldly ideas of honour and earthly glory. He was made the greatest of the Church’s warrior saints of modern times. A soldier indeed as of old, and with the martial spirit unbroken in him, but clothed in other armour—“the armour of God,” with “loins girt with truth, and having on the breastplate of justice, his feet shod with the prepara-

* 1 Cor. xv. 10.

tion of the gospel of peace ;” “the shield of faith” uplifted before him, to “extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one ;” “the helmet of salvation” on his head, and in his strong right hand “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.” Thus do we behold him in the history of the Church for the last three centuries. He appears to us as he was seen upon the broken wall of Pampeluna, covered with wounds, in the front of the fight, with battered harness, but still erect and fearless, waving his sword aloft, the smoke of battle around him, and the light of victory shining on his immortal brow.

There is no study more interesting and instructive than that of the lives of the saints of God. There do we find a living answer to the most important of all questions, and a solution of the mysteries of life which concern us most intimately and nearly. There do we learn all that it behoves us most to know ; by what practical means we shall be enabled to succeed in our wrestling with our spiritual enemies ; how we are to subdue our passions, atone for sins, practise virtues, avoid dangers, save our souls. Here we are taught the secrets of God’s dealings with man and of man’s dealings with God and with his fellow men for God ; the sources of success, the causes of failure, the means of influence, the manner of applying them—in a word, all that goes to make up the science of our own sanctity and salvation as Christians. Our interest, however, is increased tenfold when we come upon a Saint who belongs to our own age, and who was raised up to meet the wants and guide the spirit of the very times in which we live. A Saint who is the strongest living

influence at work in the Church to-day, whose name is in every man's mouth, who is either loved and revered passionately, or reviled, hated, and persecuted beyond all other men, saints or sinners. Such is St. Ignatius of Loyola, whose festival the Church celebrates to-day. Oh, my brethren, let us devote a little time to the contemplation of his wonderful life, so full of mysteries, so replete with light and instruction.

The fifteenth century closed with three remarkable events. America was discovered in 1492, in 1483 Martin Luther came into this world, and in 1491 St. Ignatius was born at the Castle of Loyola, in Northern Spain. The sixteenth century opened with events the most important in the world's history since the disruption of the Roman Empire. The discovery of Columbus was in itself sufficient to change the face of society, for it opened up a new world, and filled all men's minds with strange dreams of adventure and restlessness. But a far greater change than this was about to take place. The unity of God's Church was about to be severed, and her authority shaken and almost destroyed, by a heresy which now, for the first time in history, disputed the Church's power, authority, and government, shifted the very principle of faith from authoritative teaching to private and individual judgment, appealed to the intellectual pride of man on the one hand, whilst on the other it let loose his passions, removed the salutary restraints of sacraments, lowered the standard of Christian virtue and perfection, and destroyed for ever the idea of a Christendom united by the bond of a common faith, and freely accepting

the guidance and authority of the Papacy. Kings, peoples, governments, severed themselves from the Church, and by rapid degrees divested themselves of their Christian spirit, which hitherto had been the foundation of all government and law. The genius of Protestantism was to separate the State from all allegiance to the Church, and then gradually to pass from separation and indifference to spoliation and persecution of the Church. The modern idea springing from it revolts from anything like a "Kingdom of God." The Church must not be recognized, much less protected or helped. Her revenues must be confiscated, her sanctuaries violated, her treasury plundered, her schools shut up, her religious banished, her Bishops silenced and deposed, her public worship proscribed, her ceremonial mocked at and travestied. All this is the natural and necessary consequence of a system which declared that the world could be ruled without God, and that God had no representative of His truth or authority on this earth. Protestantism, moreover, meant the destruction of the religious life. By abolishing religious vows, proclaiming poverty to be idleness, chastity an impossibility and a pretence, and obedience to be immoral, it completely and at once destroyed the idea of perfection, and put an end to that form of life which was so solemnly recognized in the Church, and so largely embraced by her children—the life of cloistered conventual monastic rule and observance.

Thus was "the Kingdom of God" to be abolished. The Church isolated was to receive no protection, help, or recognition from the State, and to be grateful if she were not persecuted actively; religion was to

have no voice or influence in legislation or government; public worship, or any act which might indicate public faith in Christianity, was to be carefully and stringently forbidden. Men were no more to have the right of religious association. Souls aspiring to perfection must find their way alone. The cloister with its rules of religious life was no longer to exist. Conventual life with its helps of mutual example, its mild restraints of discipline, its consolations of united prayer and its stately forms of public worship, its peaceful pursuits and noble studies was no longer to be tolerated. Christianity, as in the early days before the conversion of Constantine, was to be confined to the individual professing it at his own inconvenience and risk, but as a kingdom it was to live no more. Such was the genius and spirit of that modern epoch which dawned with the sixteenth century. Essentially secular—essentially Pagan—the men who first embraced and proclaimed it, may not have foreseen the consequences of their acts, but we in our day are tasting, in their bitter maturity, the fruits of the fatal tree which was planted by Luther three hundred years ago. In 1517 the unhappy heresiarch first broached his errors, and immediately the whole of Germany and the greater part of Europe was plunged into disturbance and disorder. In the religious revolution which followed, men took up their respective sides with bitterest acrimony; kings, states, cities, even families were divided amongst themselves, and in a short time Europe was flowing with blood shed in this religious war. In the midst of all this confusion Ignatius attained his manhood, and he first appears on the scene in 1522. He was then thirty-

one years of age. Hitherto he had been living in courts and camps. First a page in the Court of King Ferdinand V., then a brave and distinguished soldier, famous for his courage and success in the field, until he received a severe and almost fatal wound in defending the Citadel of Pampeluna in 1521. The fall of Ignatius decided the fate of the day, and he was borne off the field almost dead, in the hands of his enemies, but covered with glory. The long and enforced rest which followed threw him back upon himself, and to while away the long hours of convalescence he began to read the Lives of the Saints. And now strange and strong thoughts took possession of him. With his grand, simple Spanish faith he read of the great actions of the famous servants of God, and as everything heroic touched a fibre in his heart, he felt himself transported with strong desires to emulate the greatest of these saints. The utter hollowness and vanity of the world and of earthly things came home to his mind and heart with wonderful clearness and force, and returning to his lives of the saints he said to himself: "These men were of the same frame as I am of; why should I not do what they have done?" After many violent struggles with nature, which was strong in him, Divine grace triumphed in Ignatius. He began to chastise his body by sundry mortifications, and to spend the night in prayer and weeping for his sins; and after some days, whilst he was yet recovering from his wounds, he made his final resolution, and with great fervour consecrated himself by vow to the sole service of God under the protection of the Queen of Heaven. The powers of darkness

seem to have been alarmed at the sight of their new adversary, for just as Ignatius had closed his prayer of consecration and made his vow, a dreadful earthquake shook the house, the windows of his chamber were broken, and the main walls rent asunder; but the great deed was done, and now let Hell prepare for the fight.

At first it would seem as if Ignatius thought only for his own soul, and took up the task of his personal sanctification with all the energy of his noble soldier-nature, aided by the highest graces of God. He put off his rich garments, giving them to a poor beggar at Montserrat, and clothing himself in the coarse, lowly garb of a mendicant pilgrim, he set out for Manresa, having first hung up his sword on a pillar near the altar of our Lady in the Benedictine Church of Montserrat. Nor was this a mere giving up of the world or flight from it on the part of the Saint. Others we read of, also, who retired into solitude after a glorious career of arms, but they withdrew with the light of victory on them, and their retirement enhanced their glory. Not so with Ignatius. He withdrew a beaten soldier and maimed for life. Every prompting of his brave, undaunted spirit, every voice of friends, every influence of worldly honour, would tell him to put off his conversion for a time until he had once more at least asserted his prowess in the field, and thus could retire with glory. But it is here we behold the wonderful power of Divine grace and the grand soul of the Saint. How completely he despised the verdict of the world; how thoroughly he had broken and crushed within him the spirit of pride and worldly vanity when he hung up a sword that had already

won him renown, and turned him, a poor, despised, ragged, lame beggar, towards the grottoes of Manresa. Having thus completely sacrificed to God the superior portion of his being, his soul and spirit, he now turned to the sacrifice of his body and inferior nature. He began to practise the most dreadful austerities of penance. He fasted continually on a morsel of bread and water, girded his loins with an iron chain which sank into his flesh, and made his life a martyrdom; he disciplined his body to blood three times a day, and denied himself almost entirely of sleep, which he took lying on the bare damp earth. He was present in the church at all the Divine Office every day, and spent seven hours each day in private prayer and contemplation. The rest of his time he devoted to attendance on the most loathsome and abandoned cases in the public hospital. He sometimes spent six or even eight days without food, and thus famished, and spent in prayer, penance, and labour, he passed the time at Manresa, of which he afterwards said, if the Scriptures were destroyed he would still die for the faith from what God had revealed to him at Manresa. He also told Father Laynez some years afterwards that he learned more at Manresa than all the doctors of all the schools could teach him. After ten months spent at Manresa the Saint felt impelled, by his love for our Divine Lord and his great devotion to His Sacred Humanity, to visit the scenes of His mortal life in Palestine. Accordingly, in 1523, he made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem with overflowing devotion, and returning, landed at Venice at the end of January, 1524. It was probably during his prayer in the Holy City that a change came over the spirit of Ignatius.

Looking around him in foreign lands, he saw more clearly the wants of men and of the Church; and, mingling with many classes of persons, he perceived that a new, strange spirit was abroad, that men's minds were fermenting with new ideas; that the old and settled order of things was passing rapidly away; that men would be no longer contented with simple faith and loving obedience—in a word, that everything was going through the crisis of a mighty change. And mighty were the thoughts which were awakened in the mind of the holy pilgrim. He felt that God demanded of him much more than his own personal sanctification, that he must enter into the new order of things, lay hold upon his age, and act powerfully on it for God; and he made up his mind to mitigate his austerities, to assume a less penitential garb, and to set himself to study and prepare for the priesthood and the work of the salvation of men's souls by the labours of the apostolate. Let us not imagine, my brethren, that in this Ignatius showed any fickleness or instability of character, much less any shrinking from the life of awful penitential austerity which he had embraced and practised at Manresa. He was still the same, and unchanged. At the first moment of his conversion he consecrated his life to the greater glory of God—*Ad majorem Dei gloriam*—and it was his ardent desire for that glory that prompted him to take this new resolution. He was unchanged, for beneath his new and better clothing there still rankled the iron chain and the rough hair-cloth. The fasting, the terrible disciplines continued. In all this there was no change, only an additional labour and humiliation of study. It was a labour, not from any want of

natural ability, for he was a man of great mental power and parts, but partly from the opposition of the devil, partly from his own sanctity. Commencing the study of the Latin tongue, he found he could learn nothing, for no sooner did he apply himself to the book than, from constant exercise and habit, he went off into an ecstasy of prayer and heavenly contemplation. Then the enemy, who greatly feared this new action of Ignatius, transferring himself into an angel of light, would thus accost him: "And art thou about to give up the sweets of contemplation and prayer and thy union with God for the study of Latin verbs and of vain literature? Oh, Ignatius, go back to Manresa—its solitudes call thee, and Jesus awaits thee there." It was hard to resist such pleading, and it was only after a prolonged struggle that the Saint was enabled to overcome this obstacle to his studies. But the glory of God demanded it, and this was enough for Ignatius. And, in truth, is not the full-grown man of thirty-three, sitting down amongst little children at a public school, as admirable in his humiliation as the emaciated pilgrim kneeling on the sides of Olivet or tending in the hospital of Montserrat? Here no ecstatic vision cheers him: his soul is wearied with the din and tumult of his child companions, who are so prodigal of their mirth at the sight of the grown man standing up and reciting his simple elementary lessons in the midst of them. He thus passed four years in Spain, pursuing his studies at the University of Alcala and in Salamanca; and in the beginning of 1528, still in great poverty, living on alms, and most poorly clad, he went on foot to Paris and entered the great University there to finish his

studies of philosophy and theology. Little did the poor Spanish student, who with downcast eyes and humblest mien and with heart inflamed with love, and lips ever moving in prayer, entered the great Parisian University, know all the glories that awaited him there. The University of Paris was to be the source and fountain head of the great Society in which Ignatius was to live and die and rise again and live for ever.

He no sooner entered the University than he began unconsciously to spread around him the sweet aroma of his sanctity and to acquire and exercise that strange influence which made him a puzzle and a mystery to so many. It was so of old. His destiny was to be first suspected, then after persecution and suffering to be declared innocent and a Saint, and throughout to draw to himself whoever loved God or sought Him. At Alcala he wrought wonderful conversions of sinners, but being yet a layman and unlearned, men could not understand how he could have such influence, and he was imprisoned by the ecclesiastical authorities for forty-two days, then by public decree declared innocent of any fault, and a man of God. In Salamanca his sanctity of life and holy words drew great numbers of people to virtue, repentance, and God. Again he is put into prison by the Vicar General, who after two and twenty days declares him a Saint and blameless. The same fate awaited him at Paris. No sooner is he settled in the University than the students begin to flock around him, attracted by the strange sweetness of his holy life and conversation. He speaks to them of God, and teaches them the higher forms of prayer, leads them away from the boisterous, often sinful, amusements of the University

and introduces them to the practices of piety and sacramental observances. Meantime the wondering masters, unable to account for the unbounded influence of one student over his fellows, begin to look upon him with an evil eye, and he is sentenced, as a strange and dangerous person, to the grievous and most degrading punishment of a public scourging in the hall in the presence of the whole University. Meantime the mild and humble remonstrance of Ignatius, the blameless, perfect sanctity of his life, the sweetness and recollection of his demeanour so told upon the principal of his College that he perceived the gifts of God in His faithful servant, and when the hour of public punishment had arrived, he led Ignatius into the middle of the hall, and throwing himself at his feet, he publicly proclaimed him a Saint who had no other aim in view than the honour and glory of Almighty God. Thus, hated by the evil, suspected and misunderstood by some even good people, loved and revered by all who came near him, Ignatius pursued his studies in Paris, whilst God sent to him one by one the men whose names were to be made immortal as the first founders and members of the Society of Jesus. Slowly but surely they surrendered to him. No one could withstand the perpetual word: "What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world but suffer the loss of his soul—what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" With those awful words ever on his lips he constantly crossed the path of the young and thoughtless. Like Monica with Augustine he gave them no peace in their levities. With pale face and solemn yet tearful and most loving eyes he came before

them with the same oft-repeated question. When he induced a man to think he immediately put him through a course of those wonderful Spiritual Exercises which he had composed at Manresa in Spanish, and which astonished the world when they were first published at Rome in 1548. In these the great truths of our holy faith are put in regular and logical form, and the powers of man's soul are applied to the contemplation of them with the force and regularity of an exact science. In these Exercises St. Ignatius shows himself a perfect master of Divine truth and mystical theology, whilst he also shows his perfect knowledge of the powers of man's soul and the intricate foldings of the human heart. The best and brightest of the great University's children put themselves under his direction—Peter Faber, Francis Xavier, James Laynez, Alphonsus Salmeron, Nicholas Bobadilla, Simon Rodriguez—these are the names of men who are not more famous in the Church for their sanctity than in the history of the world for their great and wonderful achievements. They found their immortality in finding Ignatius, who with supreme genius knew how to direct their great powers to the greatest end, and in the most perfect manner. A great idea had taken possession of his mind, and was slowly maturing there—the idea of a religious order. But what! found a religious order in the sixteenth century, just when the world had declared war against the very principle of all religious orders? build new cloisters at the very time when the old were being condemned to die, in spite of their history and venerable traditions? withdraw men from the world in the very hour when the world was opening itself up

materially and intellectually, when men were required more than ever to conquer and people the new continents just discovered? when the treasures of classic and pagan civilization were being for the first time opened to the people by the new art of printing, and human knowledge and a new philosophy were reviving in all the glory of public adulation? How strange to think of founding a new religious association, when the spirit of the age was pronouncing against all religious associations. Surely if ever there was a time when the idea of a religious order was out of place and harmony with the age, its spirit and its wants, that time was the beginning of the sixteenth century. Yet this was precisely the time when Ignatius was planning the rules and government, forming the spirit and laying the foundations of the Society whose history is equally famous in the pages of friend and foe.

The new Order was to be as strange and original as the age in which it was born. Hitherto the very idea of religious life involved a separation almost total from the world, a code of rules enforcing long fasts and other austerities to be practised in common and in the face of the Community, a distinctive habit expressive of some religious idea, and frequently in its form and texture a protest against the pomp and vanity of the world, a choral and solemn recitation of the Divine Office, a course of studies which was rigidly confined to sacred subjects, and a community life which absorbed a man into itself, formed all his habits, rarely permitted him to leave his cloister, fostered his virtues, corrected his faults, and surrounded him with all the helps and consolations

of association and example. Such was the only idea of religious life recognized up to the sixteenth century. Even Orders that were largely given to apostolic labours still admitted the monastic cloistral contemplative life as the first and most necessary element of their existence, and against this life the evil spirit of the age was already in rebellion, as we have seen. Ignatius, to the astonishment of friends and enemies, dispensed with all these elements of religious life in the foundation of his Order. The members of the Society were not to segregate themselves from men, but to go into cities and universities, and mingle freely with every class of persons. No long fasts or community austerities were enforced beyond the laws of the Church; they were not to wear any distinctive habit, but the ecclesiastical dress of the place in which they dwelt. They had no choral recitation of the Divine Office, and very little common or community prayer, and their studies were to embrace every element of human as well as Divine knowledge, with such intensity and ardour that the Jesuit was to be not only a profound theologian, but the greatest general scholar and teacher of his day. Most of the helps of constant community life were denied them, and nothing is more remarkable in their history than the strange independence and isolation in which many of their greatest men lived and accomplished their greatest works.

But did the Saint dispense with the essential monastic element of religious life? did he, like the so-called Reformers, who were disturbing the world around him, loosen the bonds of discipline, abolish fast and austerity of Christian penance, and proscribe

prayer, in a word, lower the standard of religious and ascetic life to that of common and ordinary Christianity. Far, my brethren, from the mind and thought of St. Ignatius was such a strange transformation as this. No man venerated more profoundly the old monastic life and spirit, no soul was ever more filled with the genius of monasticism; but here we behold the grand design of the man. He sees an age bitterly opposed to community life of religion, which will try to make such life every day more difficult and impossible, and so the great Saint lays hold of the individual, and by a wonderful process of mental training embodies in him all the virtues of the cloister; a spirit of utter separation from the world though in the midst of it, strictest poverty even in seeming comfort, constant prayer in the midst of distracting duties, above all, the death to self by a perfect interior self-denial and obedience the most complete both in judgment and will. How completely and wonderfully he succeeded the history of the foundation of the Society attests. The first beginnings of all the great Orders in the Church were marked by a strange outpouring of God's Holy Spirit in grace and sanctity. How bright and beautiful is the history of St. Francis and his companions, the Founders of the great Order of Friars Minor; the history of St. Dominick and the first Dominicans, the Founders of the Friars Preachers; and so of the other Orders. We find grouped around the great saintly Patriarch a number of heroic souls who have imbibed his spirit, and who shine with the same character of sanctity as their Father. The master mind of the great Founder is stamped upon them. They seem so many repro-

ductions of him, and it is thus that the spirit of the holy Founder passes on to his children, and the traditions are established which constitute each individual Order in the Church: "And Eliseus took up the mantle of Elias that had fallen from him."* It is thus, my brethren, that we find the blessed St. Ignatius surrounded by a group of men the most illustrious for their intellectual greatness, and formed by the grand Saint in a wonderfully short time to the standard of his own magnificent sanctity. Many were the glories of the great University, but never since the days when Albert of Cologne was in the chair of philosophy and Thomas Aquinas was amongst his hearers, did so bright an assemblage of scholars and saints meet in its halls as that which surrounded Ignatius on the hill of Montmartre on the 15th of August, 1534, and with him consecrated themselves to the service of God and man. They had been for some time under the training of the great Saint. He had led them into the ways and practices of the highest interior virtue. He had annihilated in them everything that was of self. Pride of intellect, soarings of ambition, promptings of passion, weakness of sensuality, stirrings of anger, love of ease and pleasure, all, in a word, that makes the merely natural man or the sinner had perished in them under the severe austerities, the sublime lessons, both by word and example, and the almost miraculous influence and interior training of Ignatius. They were truly as dead men, and their lives were hidden with Christ in God. Dead to self, they lived in the higher and nobler life, by which Christ was

* 4 Kings ii. 13.

formed in them. With loving, unremitting care did their great Father effect in them this heavenly transformation.

Well and truly might he say to them, as the Apostle said to his spiritual offspring, "My little children, of whom I am in labour again until Christ be formed in you." So complete was the formation of Christ through Ignatius in the first founders of the Society, that the Saint was accused, as his children are sometimes accused to-day, of destroying the individuality or personality of a man, in order to make him a Jesuit. But if we wish to see the falseness and fallacy of such a charge, we have only to consider in what does this individuality of ours consist. Is it the result of vulgar appetites and passions which are common to all, and which form the inferior and basest portion of our nature? Or is it not rather those personal and distinctive gifts of mind, will, and character in which we differ from others, and which are especially our own, and I may say ourselves. To purge out all that is base in man, to give him entire dominion over his senses and appetites, to raise his mind to loftiest thoughts and fill his soul with highest aspirations, to form his will in accordance with the noblest motives and purposes: all this is not to destroy his individual character or personality, but to develop and elevate it. And if in this process of development and elevation a number of men conform themselves to some high type of excellence, and so become like to each other in their common likeness to their type or model, this is not destroying that individuality which is sacred and must be respected, but rather directing its powers

and shaping it to the highest and the fairest. Well did St. Ignatius know this, and whilst destroying in his children all that was imperfect and base, and stamping on each one the character and special form of the Jesuit, he most carefully respected and reverently fostered the personal character and gifts of each man, so that in no Order in the Church is there a greater freedom and diversity of personal character, nor a wiser application and development of natural gifts than in the Society of Jesus. Men most unlike each other were put by him on the most opposite paths of life and duty. Some buried in libraries for years in patient, laborious, silent study; others sent into the great schools and universities of Europe. Their brethren, again, sent off to the ends of the earth, discovering new lands, speaking strange languages, civilizing as well as evangelizing unknown peoples; others amongst them, like Blessed Peter Claver at Carthage, spending their lives in dungeons with the poor slaves, or roaming the forests with the hunted Indians who clung to them for protection and life; each one pursuing his path of duty and obedience and exercising freely his natural gifts and powers, but all alike in living and labouring only "for the greater glory of God;" in "dying daily" to every form of self-love by interior and exterior mortification; and in being ready at any moment to die for God and for His Church. The vow made at Montmartre was simply to renounce the world and at the end of their studies to preach the Gospel or do any other work to which the Vicar of Christ, the Sovereign Pontiff, would appoint them. Three years later—their studies being now completed—

Ignatius, with nine companions, set out for Rome, and those amongst them who were not already priests were ordained in Venice. Ignatius himself was one of their number, and after his ordination he took twelve months to prepare for his first Mass. What this preparation consisted in, God and His faithful servant knew. We only know that the time was spent in almost entire isolation with God, in constant prayer and contemplation, in redoubled austerities, fasting, and disciplines, and in such abundance of tears that his disciples feared the utter loss of his sight. On Christmas Day, 1537, Ignatius being then in his forty-sixth year, celebrated his first Mass, and shortly after set out for Rome, accompanied by Peter Faber and James Laynez, to obtain the blessing and approbation of the Holy See for their congregation and its work. The difficulties, always great in the way of religious founders, seemed redoubled in their instance from the circumstances of the times, and it was with anxious and doubtful hearts the three servants of God set out on their journey. Their anxiety, however, was soon dispelled. Ignatius, entering a little wayside chapel near Vicenza, set himself, as was his custom, to fervent prayer and put his hopes and fears ardently before the Lord. Presently he fell into an ecstasy of prayer and beheld Jesus Christ our Lord shining in great glory, but loaded with a heavy Cross. Whilst the Saint, ravished with the heavenly vision, was pouring out his soul in love, adoration, and sympathy because of the Cross, the Son of God spoke to him in answer to his prayer, and said, *Ignati Ego vobis Romæ propitius ero*—"Ignatius, I will be favourable to you at Rome." The Saint, still in a transport,

disclosed to his companions the Divine promise, and the word of our Lord became as a household word in the Society of Jesus. Well has Rome fulfilled the prophetic Divine promise, and well has Ignatius deserved of the Sacred and Apostolic See.

The Saint and his companions were received favourably by the Sovereign Pontiff, and on the 25th of September, 1540, Paul III. solemnly approved of the Institute under the title of the Society of Jesus. St. Ignatius was chosen the first General, and governed the Society which he had founded for sixteen years, until his holy death in 1556. During these years his life, though filled with labours and cares, was still a rapid advance and daily progress in all holiness. The Society was growing with wonderful rapidity. The name of Xavier was already famous in Europe, yet his fame was but the echo from the farthest Indies. The members of the new Society were spreading themselves over the East, and bringing ancient peoples into the fold of Christ. They were already landed in South America, and founding, not merely Christian communities, but nations. Their professors had taken possession of the great College of Goa in India, whilst in Europe they had opened their famous Colleges of Gandia, Coimbra, and the Roman College, where the holy Founder himself directed the studies, and where he guided the spirit and action of his already widely diffused Institute. All this, and much more, was under the guidance of our Saint, and with consummate wisdom and genius did he accomplish his mighty labours. But in the midst of it all he was still growing daily in his wonderful holiness. His prayer was becoming more constant and absorbing, his aus-

terities were increased, his humility made him seek the lowliest and most laborious of offices, each day brought out in him the manifestation of new virtues and graces. The Popes Paul III., Julius III., Paul IV., and, above all, Marcellus II. honoured him with their confidence, and in all the great affairs of the Church availed themselves of his wise counsels. St. Charles Borromeo publicly acknowledged that from the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius he received his first ideas and impulses of sanctity. St. Philip Neri attributed to the teaching of the great Saint his knowledge and love of contemplative prayer. His contemporaries attest that from constant intercourse with God his face shone resplendent, like Moses of old; and Petronius, a famous physician of Rome, declared that when the Saint entered the darkened room of a sick person, the chamber was instantly filled with a dazzling light that streamed forth from him. St. Francis Xavier made use of the handwriting of Ignatius to work wonderful miracles, attributed to him all that he had acquired of grace and sanctity, and in his last letter addresses him thus: "To my Father in Christ, *Saint Ignatius*." Time would not suffice to mention, much less describe the wonderful life, labours, and virtues of the great servant of God during the sixteen years in which he governed his Order. Wasted by his austerities and broken in health, wearied and exhausted by his unremitting labours, and often destitute of all human help, his great soul still upheld him as he strode like a giant in the arduous way of highest sanctity. Burning with zeal for the salvation of souls, he spent himself in the service of his neighbour. The sweetness and

generosity of his spirit is revealed to us by his treatment of others. To one of his religious, who was tempted to abandon the Society, he said: "One part of your penance shall be that you never repent more of having served God; for the other part, I take it upon myself, and I will discharge it for you." The charity which prompted him to take the burden of another's penance, we may be well assured, was forgotten towards himself when he was paying the promised debt. Matured for Heaven, he passed away to God on the 31st of July, 1556, and was canonized by Gregory XV. in 1622.

And now, my brethren, were St. Ignatius an ordinary man, even as a Saint we should have seen the last of him. He has nobly fulfilled the end of creation, and saved his soul. But the Founder of a Religious Order is no ordinary man or Saint. He does not die. The sun sets in the western heavens, yet leaves us not, for the moon and ten thousand stars catch up his light and reflect it upon the earth, so that the night is made bright and beautiful. So the great Saint sank to his eternal rest, but his light was not extinguished. His children in their tens of thousands reflected him, and spread his light and his spirit in lands of which he had never heard the name. No, Ignatius is not dead. He lives, and will live, as long as a single Jesuit remains to toil and suffer on this earth. And what legacy did the Saint leave to his children? Besides his own bright example and spirit, he left them another, and indeed a strange, inheritance. He had obtained it from God by constant and fervent prayer, and it was this. Writing to Father Ribadeneira, St. Ignatius tells him: "During

my meditation, our Lord deigned to appear to me, and to assure me Himself that in consequence of my earnest prayers to this intention, the Society will never cease as long as it exists to enjoy the precious heritage of His Passion in the midst of contradictions and persecutions." This, then, was the Saint's great gift to his children—the Cross—the hard, heavy, bitter Cross: not merely to be the subject of their pious meditation and constant compassion, but to be the heavy burden laid upon them to be carried laboriously and painfully—the true Cross of Him Whose adorable Name they bear—the Cross accompanied with the howl of persecution, the Cross borne amid the mockery of the wicked, the sneers of the wise, the loud accusations of false witnesses, the doubts of the weak in faith, the suspicions of the worldly, the foolish exultation of the bad, and the strange occasional opposition of those who serve God in the same great cause. But if Ignatius lives, he must prove his life by action, for life is the measure of action. And, oh, my brethren, how nobly the Saint has forced the conviction of his life even upon an unwilling world. India and Japan beheld him in St. Francis Xavier, and hundreds of thousands received from his lips and at his hands the light of faith and the grace of Baptism. China heard his voice from the mouth of the immortal Ricci, and beheld the thousand forms of torture and death which Ignatius could endure for God. The deserts of South America were transformed by him into prosperous States, and the wild children of the forests of Paraguay became a civilized and virtuous nation under his hands. The dark continent of Africa was illumined by him in the person of

Oviedo. The savages along the lonely waters of the Mississippi heard the songs of the faith chanted by him on the bosom of the "Father of Streams." He was chief theological councillor to the Holy See at Trent, for Laynez and Salmeron represented him there. He disputed triumphantly with the Lutheran heretics in Germany, through the holy Canisius. He joyfully prayed in the dungeons of Elizabeth in England and died over and over again in his heroic sons.

But, my brethren, why should I praise him or his Order, whose praise might be doubted as excessive because of my great love and admiration? Let the enemies of Ignatius and of the Catholic Church speak. Their testimony is wrung from them unwillingly, and brings with it the greater force of conviction. One of the greatest writers of our own day, but a bitter enemy of the Catholic Church, says: "Three centuries after Innocent III., the Pontificate, exposed to new dangers more formidable than had ever before threatened it, was saved by a new Religious Order, which was animated by intense enthusiasm and organized with exquisite skill. When the Jesuits came to the rescue they found the Papacy in extreme peril; but from that moment the tide of battle turned." This, as we know, is language which no Catholic could use. No Order nor individual in the Church is necessary for the preservation of the Papacy. The Pope and the Papacy live and shall live as long as time lasts, in virtue of the Divine promise of the Son of God. The Papacy requires not the saving hand of man, nor of any body of men, for it is upheld in the right hand of Jesus Christ.

But the wild assertion of the distinguished historian proves to us how great were the services which Ignatius was privileged to render to the Church of God and the Holy See. More truthful is the same writer when he states that "before the Order had existed one hundred years, it had filled the whole world with memorials of great things done and suffered for the faith."* But, my brethren, all these great achievements were, from the very first days of the Society down to the present hour, accomplished in the midst of calumny and persecution. The very writer just quoted tells us that the Jesuits "relaxed the Church's laws to suit the temper of the world," that they winked at the vices of the great, and that they published "doctrines consolatory to transgressors of every class." We children of the Church, who know her laws, are indignant at this charge, but we have only to read on, and in a few pages we find the historian with charming simplicity refuting himself. When in the reign of James II., who was a Catholic, certain influential persons endeavoured to govern the King through his weaknesses and passions, and therefore led him into sin, and endeavoured by the most nefarious means to keep him in sin, "the Jesuits," says the writer in question, "whom it was the fashion to represent as the most unsafe of spiritual guides, as sophists who refined away the whole system of evangelical morality, as sycophants who owed their influence chiefly to the indulgence with which they treated the sins of the great, had reclaimed him (the King) from a life of guilt by rebukes as sharp and bold as those which David had heard from Nathan,

* Macaulay, *Hist. Engl.* vol. iii.

and Herod from the Baptist." I need not say that if the former accusations were true, James could have easily answered the denunciations of the Jesuits by quoting against them their own doctrines. This single example gives us an accurate idea of the general rules of warfare against the Jesuits. For the most part, we have not to look beyond their accusers themselves to find their vindication. The writer sets out with a general sweeping condemnation of the Jesuits. The vague accusations thus made are never reduced to any particular charge, nor is any attempt made to prove the assertion. But you will invariably find that when the same writer comes to describe the teaching or action of a Jesuit in particular instances, in other words, gives you facts, the teaching or the act is so true and good and pure as wholly to disprove the previous judgment. The promise of our Lord to St. Ignatius was fulfilled. The Society has lived and laboured amid a storm of persecution. In France alone their history shows an incessant persecution, begun by the University, continued by the Parliament, then taken up by the Jansenist heretics, carried out by the Government; and in our own day the powers that rule that country, whilst forgetful of many things, are careful to remember the tradition of hatred and persecution of the Society of Jesus. Nor must we wonder at this, my brethren. St. Ignatius gave his children "a new name," and well he knew what that name involved. It was a name of power, at whose mention the very princes of Hell must bend an unwilling knee; it was a name of infinite virtue and consolation, the only name by which it is given to men to be saved;

but it was also a name that was ever to be contradicted on this earth, and was to bring sorrow and persecution to those who bore it. Ignatius had read and pondered deeply over the Divine words of Him Who bore the adorable name: "Remember My word that I said to you; the servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. . . . But all these things they will do to you *for My Name's sake.*"* When therefore the warrior Saint wrote the name of Jesus on his shield, he well knew that against that shield the first and fiercest attacks of God's enemies would ever be directed and concentrated. When he put that adorable name upon his children and called them Jesuits, he knew well that the very name he gave them would ever bring down upon them the heaviest blows of the persecutor, for our Lord had told him: "Blessed shall you be when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you, and shall reproach you, and *cast out your name* as evil, for the Son of Man's sake."† But in all their sorrows and trials the words of Christ spoken to their Father still consoled them: "I will be favourable to you in Rome." Hunted, maligned, persecuted, put to death, their strength and hope and consolation still lay in the strong justice and loving protection of the Holy See.

In 1758, Charles Rezzonico took possession of Peter's Chair under the name of Clement XIII. During his Pontificate the Jesuits were banished from Portugal, France, Spain, and Naples; but whilst the powers of earth and hell were raging against them,

* St. John xv.

† St. Luke vi.

the Sovereign Pontiff issued the famous Bull *Apostolicum*, declaring Ignatius to be still, as of old, a true and faithful servant of God and of His Church, and declaring his children to be worthy of their great Father. But now at last it seemed as if our Lord forgot for a time His own promise—"I will be favourable to you at Rome." In 1773, such was the pressure brought to bear on the Holy See, that the Pontiff Clement XIV. issued a decree suppressing the Society of Jesus. He solemnly protested that this was not in punishment for crimes or faults, but in order to ward off greater evils—schism, heresy, universal persecution of the Church. It was with trembling, reluctant hand, and eyes blinded with tears, that Clement signed the fatal decree. He was never seen to smile again, and he died broken-hearted after the lapse of one short year. But Ignatius bowed his head and died without a murmur. For two hundred years all the powers of earth and hell combined had striven in vain to abolish him—he conquered them all. There was only one hand and voice that could do this: and now that hand is raised, that voice has spoken, and the Jesuits are no more.

It may not be fitting for us to enter upon the motives and reasons for this great act. Perhaps Almighty God wished to show that no Order or Society, however great, is necessary to His Church. But we can find a higher reason even than this. Ignatius taught his children that, although other Orders in the Church might surpass them in long fasts and other austerities, they were to let none surpass them in obedience. The obedience he enjoined was most perfect; it was the source of the

extraordinary sanctity to which so many of his children attained, it was the secret of the wonderful strength and success of the Society. Now it was fitting that an institute which enjoined and loved and practised this virtue to such a degree in its individual members, should also as a body give an example of heroic obedience. The highest test of every virtue is death. St. Paul, extolling the obedience of our Divine Lord, by which the world was saved, tells us that "He was made obedient unto death," and so, at the sound of the voice that alone commanded his obedience, Ignatius and his great Society died and made no sign. O grand and heroic death, the greatest of all the greatnesses of Ignatius! And now the enemies of the Church sang their song of triumph. The great Jesuit missions of Africa and South America languished and almost died. The flourishing community of Paraguay fell back into barbarism, and the land became once more a wilderness. It is not only the Catholic who grieves; every one who loves the human race, and its happiness and progress, must shed a tear on beholding the ruin and desolation which the expulsion and persecution of the Jesuits brought upon the poor darkened races of these distant continents. Meantime, in Europe it seemed as if Hell itself had opened, such was the torrent of impiety and revolution that swept over the land. For forty years Ignatius lay, not dead but sleeping. He was not dead. The silver cord was not utterly broken. Some strains of the golden fillet yet remained—a few old men still lived and treasured the grand traditions of their Order when, in 1814, Pius VII., immortal for

his sufferings and his virtues, restored to the Church and to mankind the great Society of Jesus. At the sound of the same potent voice which had commanded him to die, Ignatius rose again from the dead, and with redoubled energy, in the same spirit as of old, with the hallowed traditions still unbroken because of the living links that preserved them, set himself to his familiar life of labour and of suffering. Of labour: never was the Society more energetic or stronger than since its restoration. Of suffering: for never was it more persecuted than at the present hour. Yet how vainly do they labour who seek to compass its destruction. That which is risen from the dead is immortal. Every Order in the Church represents some feature in the life and character of our Divine Lord Jesus Christ. His contemplation and prayer are represented by St. Benedict and St. Bruno; His evangelical and abject poverty by St. Francis; His labours in preaching by St. Dominick, and so of others. There was however one phase in the life of our Blessed Saviour yet unrepresented in the Church, and that was His glorious life after His resurrection from the dead, and the great privilege of representing this was reserved to St. Ignatius and the Jesuits. They are the only body in the Church which died and rose again. They represent the phase of our Blessed Lord's Life of which the inspired Apostle writes: "Christ rising from the dead dies no more. Death hath no more dominion over Him." Whilst therefore we all know that the Jesuits, in common with all Religious Orders, live and have their being in the Church in virtue of the approbation and confir-

mation of the Holy See, and that the power that made them can at any time unmake them, still, from the very condition of their existence as an Order called back to life from death, from the glorified life of the risen Saviour which it is their privilege and glory to represent in the Church, we may confidently conclude that no hand of an enemy of God or of His Church, however powerful, can ever conquer or destroy the great Society. "The nations may rage and the people devise vain things. The kings of the earth may stand up, and the princes meet together, against the Lord and against His anointed; but He that dwelleth in Heaven shall laugh at them, and the Lord shall deride them."