

COLUMBUS AND THE HOLY NAME.

We Americans dwell in a consecrated land. It is thrice consecrated: consecrated by the crimson blood which its heroes shed to drive from its lofty mountains and its wide rolling plains, the curse of foreign tyranny and to establish over its broad surface the blessings of liberty; consecrated by the noble blood which a thousand heroes poured forth upon its soil to cleanse it of the foul blot of slavery and cement forever its broken fragments into an indissoluble union; and finally consecrated by the most sacred labors and most noble blood of its martyred priests and by the lifelong labor and toil of him who first planted in its soil the standard of the cross. The former consecrated it to liberty and union; the latter, first, above all, and in a nobler manner consecrated it to God.

It is of its protomartyr we wish to speak here; of him who first planted on its shores the Sign of man's Redemption, while breathing forth his prayer which consecrated it forever to the Holy Name of Jesus; of him who first brought the knowledge of that saving Name to those who dwelt here, "in darkness and in the shadow of death"; of him whose loyalty to God and country will remain, as long as history remains, an example and an incen-

tive to every American who enjoys the blessings of the country he discovered.

Great was the love of Columbus for the Holy Name of God. At his mother's knee he learned to lisp the Name of Jesus. As he advanced in age his devotion to that Holy Name increased. He never began any work without first devoutly invoking our Lord's blessing upon it, with these words, "Jesu cum Maria sit nobis in via," "May Jesus and Mary be with us." When at the age of fourteen he left the paternal roof so deeply grounded were the truths of christianity in his soul, so tender his piety, so generous and charitable his nature, so loyal his devotion to the Holy Name that amid all the trials and temptations of his life he was able to preserve his religious character and practices. Although the life of a sailor brought him into contact with men whose language was always rough and very frequently blasphemous, yet never was he known to use the Name of God without the deepest reverence and respect. Can there be a more striking evidence of the sincere religious nature of the great discoverer than this, that he preserved his purity of life throughout the twenty years of his sea-faring life amid scenes of strife, and in

the companionship of the most turbulent and unscrupulous adventurers?

Nor did his sea-faring life cool the ardor of his devotion to the Holy Name; it rather increased it and equipped him with the knowledge necessary to carry out great enterprises for its sake in the future. His was no common, inactive devotion; it was energetic, sacrificing, heroic. So intensely whole-souled was his zeal for the Holy Name that it impelled him on to the greatest sacrifices, the most daring adventures. "At an early age," he tells us himself, "he conceived under God's inspiration two great enterprises—the discovery of the New World and the recovery of Jerusalem." By the former he wished to bring the knowledge of the Holy Name of Jesus and his Gospel to the inhabitants of that New World; by the latter, he desired to drive the infidel Turks from the Holy City, for his great heart could not endure the insult perpetrated in the holy place against our Lord by the intrusion of the Turks, whose sacrilegious hands were laid upon the sacred relics of our Lord, whose polluted feet trod upon the soil sanctified by the blood and footsteps of our Saviour, and whose voice was raised in blasphemy, against the Sacred Name, in and around the Holy Temple.

When his project had been laboriously thought out, he

sought the aid of Princes to carry it into execution. In his pleadings before the thrones of kings is manifested that noble desire which impelled him to cross the tractless ocean. What was the substance of his plea in the court of Ferdinand? It was none other than this, that he wished "to serve our Lord, spreading afar the knowledge of His Holy Name and the light of Truth among many nations." This same desire is expressed more explicitly in a letter which he wrote to Alexander VI.; "I hope that it will some day be given to me with the help of God's grace to propagate afar the very Holy Name of Jesus and His Gospel." These words manifest at once his great love of the Holy Name, and his ardent desire to propagate its devotion. When after eighteen years of delay he succeeded in obtaining a little fleet and began his journey westward he opened the journal of that eventful voyage with these characteristic words, "In Nomine Domini Nostri Jesu Christi," "In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

When after a long and difficult voyage he at length reached the shores of the New World what were the first words which flowed forth from his grateful heart? What was his first thought in that glorious moment of victory when after prostrating himself in adoration before God and thrice kissing the soil he raised

his countenance toward heaven? History has preserved for us that prayer whose accents floating over the newly discovered land consecrated it forever to the Holy Name of Jesus; "Lord! Eternal and Almighty God! Who by Thy Sacred Words hast created the heavens, the earth, and the sea, may Thy Name be blessed and glorified everywhere. May Thy Majesty be exalted, Who hast deigned to permit that by Thy humble servant Thy Sacred Name should be made known and preached in this other part of the world." Then he arose and planted on the soil the emblem of our Redemption, crying out with all the ardor and religious enthusiasm of his noble soul, "I take possession of these lands in the Name of Jesus Christ and of their Catholic Majesties the King and Queen of Spain." In honor of his Divine Master and in thanksgiving for all the benefits he had received at His bountiful hand, Columbus called the island upon which he landed San Salvador, that is Holy Saviour.

He made his third voyage under the protection of the Holy Trinity whose sacred name he promised to give to the first land discovered. Consequently, when, after a difficult voyage in which he was almost miraculously rescued from death, he landed on an island near the coast of South America and called it Trinidad. The island bears that

name today and is but another evidence of the love and devotion of Columbus to the Holy Name of God.

We have spoken of his labors; it may be well to say a few words about his rewards. What was his reward, who had given to his sovereigns a new world? He found favor at the court of Spain on his return. But even in his triumph envy asserted itself and ingratitude followed in its wake. Soon he was neglected by the Court, calumniated and disgraced by his enemies. At length poverty made its way to his door to remain till death, his unwelcomed though inseparable companion. The Court of Spain which once honored him with a magnificent triumph, when he was worn out in its service turned a deaf ear to his pleadings, sending him forth broken-hearted, penniless and alone, to die in a poor hovel. Although his noble nature revolted against such treatment at the hands of those to whom he had given wealth and dominion, yet he overcame his natural repugnance with Christian patience and when dying blessed the hand that afflicted him. The scorn, contempt and neglect of those in whom he trusted to have found solace and favor were the last jewels completing his martyr's crown.

He had accomplished one of his projects in bringing the knowledge of the Holy Name of

Jesus and His Gospel to the inhabitants of the New World. But the other, the recovery of Jerusalem, so dear to his heart, he could only hope that it might be accomplished in the person of his sons. It was the thought that he was unable to carry into execution this, his most cherished desire which rendered intensely painful his last days of distress and poverty. He had lived for the achievement of these grand enterprises. He willingly sacrificed all to bring them about. When he was dying he thought not of the ingratitude offered to himself but his noble apostolic heart was broken by the thought that his condition was such as to render him unable to do more for the Holy Name of Jesus.

What though he died in poverty and disgrace! He had performed the work marked out for him by Divine Providence; he had brought the knowledge of the Holy Name of Jesus to the Western world. In the accomplishment of that mission he had sacrificed himself and dying had merited the martyr's crown.

At first men were slow to recognise his greatness. They begrudged him a place among the world's greatest heroes. But soon the tide turned in his favor and his life and labors became the subject of the greatest pens and chisels. Now many cities claimed him as their own and the country he discovered has lately honored him by erecting in its Capital a magnificent monument.

But his glory and fame do not depend upon anything human. There may come a time when the sweet Castilian tongue will be forgotten, when the grand marble monument which stands in the Capital of the land he discovered will have crumbled into dust, when his name may be effaced from the annals of human history; but his glory will never be diminished where it was first sounded—in heaven; nor will his name ever be effaced where it was first written—on the Book of Life; nor will his martyr's crown ever be struck from his noble brow to be trampled in the dust.

Damian Kennedy, O. P.

HOME.

"Oh what is a home?" I asked one day,
And listened what the world might say,
Of all responses this is best,
"The place my mother's presence blest."

Theodore Finnegan, O. P.