

“Purity and Love”  
*Discourse to Mixed Congregations* sermon 4  
St. John Henry Newman  
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1 WE find two especial manifestations of divine grace in the human heart, whether we  
2 turn to Scripture for instances of it, or to the history of the Church; whether we trace it in  
3 the case of Saints, or in persons of holy and religious life; and the two are even found  
4 among our Lord's Apostles, being represented by the two foremost of that favoured  
5 company, St. Peter and St. John. St. John is the Saint of purity, and St. Peter is the  
6 Saint of love. Not that love and purity can ever be separated; not as if a Saint had not all  
7 virtues in him at once; not as if St. Peter were not pure as well as loving, and St. John  
8 loving, for all he was so pure. The graces of the Spirit cannot be separated from each  
9 other; one implies the rest; what is love but a delight in God, a devotion to Him, a  
10 surrender of the whole self to Him? what is impurity, on the other hand, but the turning  
11 to something of this world, something sinful, as the object of our affections instead of  
12 God? What is it but a deliberate abandonment of the Creator for the creature, and  
13 seeking pleasure in the shadow of death, not in the all-blissful Presence of light and  
14 holiness? The impure then cannot love God; and those who are without love of God  
15 cannot really be pure. Purity prepares the soul for love, and love confirms the soul in  
16 purity. The flame of love will not be bright unless the substance which feeds it be pure  
17 and unadulterate; and the most dazzling purity is but as iciness and desolation unless it  
18 draws its life from fervent love.

19 Yet, certain as this is, it is certain also that the spiritual works of God show differently  
20 from each other to our eyes, and that they display, in their character and their history,  
21 some of them this virtue more than other virtues, and some that. In other words, it  
22 pleases the Giver of grace to endue His Saints specially with certain gifts, for His glory,  
23 which light up and beautify one particular portion or department of their souls, so as to  
24 cast their other excellences into the shade. And then this special gift of grace becomes  
25 their characteristic, and we put it first in our thoughts of them, and consider what they  
26 have besides as included in it, or dependent upon it, and speak of them as if they had  
27 not the rest, though we know they really have them; and we give them some title or  
28 description taken from that particular grace which is so emphatically theirs. And in this  
29 way we may speak, as I intend to do in what I am going to say, of two chief classes of  
30 Saints, whose emblems are the lily and the rose, who are bright with angelic purity or  
31 who burn with divine love.

32 The two St. Johns are the great instances of the Angelic life. Whom, my brethren, can  
33 we conceive to have such majestic and severe sanctity as the Holy Baptist? He had a  
34 privilege which reached near upon the prerogative of the Most Blessed Mother of God;  
35 for, if she was conceived without sin, at least without sin he was born. She was all-pure,  
36 all-holy, and sin had no part in her: but St. John was in the beginning of his existence a  
37 partaker of Adam's curse; he lay under God's wrath, deprived of that grace which Adam  
38 had received, and which is the life and strength of human nature. Yet, as soon as  
39 Christ, his Lord and Saviour, came to him, and Mary saluted his own mother, Elizabeth,

40 forthwith the grace of God was given to him, and the original guilt was wiped away from  
41 his soul. And therefore it is that we celebrate the nativity of St. John; nothing unholy  
42 does the Church celebrate; not St. Peter's birth, nor St. Paul's, nor St. Augustine's, nor  
43 St Gregory's, nor St. Bernard's, nor St Aloysius's, nor the nativity of any other Saint,  
44 however glorious, because they were all born in sin. She celebrates their conversions,  
45 their prerogatives, their martyrdoms, their deaths, their translations, but not their birth,  
46 because in no case was it holy. Three nativities alone does she commemorate, our  
47 Lord's, His Mother's, and lastly, St. John's. What a special gift was this, my brethren,  
48 separating the Baptist off, and distinguishing him from all prophets and preachers, who  
49 ever lived, however holy, except perhaps the prophet Jeremias! And such as was his  
50 commencement, was the course of his life. He was carried away by the Spirit into the  
51 desert, and there he lived on the simplest fare, in the rudest clothing, in the caves of  
52 wild beasts, apart from men, for thirty years, leading a life of mortification and of prayer,  
53 till he was called to preach penance, to proclaim the Christ, and to baptise Him; and  
54 then having done his work, and having left no act of sin on record, he was laid aside as  
55 an instrument which had lost its use, and languished in prison, till he was suddenly cut  
56 off by the sword of the executioner. Sanctity is the one idea of him impressed upon us  
57 from first to last; a most marvellous Saint, a hermit from his childhood, then a preacher  
58 to a fallen people, and then a Martyr. Surely such a life fulfils that expectation  
59 concerning him that follows on Mary's salutation of his mother before his birth.

60 Yet still more beautiful, and almost as majestic, is the image of his namesake, that great  
61 Apostle, Evangelist, and Prophet of the Church, who came so early into our Lord's  
62 chosen company, and lived so long after all his fellows. We can contemplate him in his  
63 youth and in his venerable age; and on his whole life, from first to last, as his special  
64 gift, is marked purity. He is the virgin Apostle, who on that account was so dear to his  
65 Lord, "the disciple whom Jesus loved," who lay on His Bosom, who received His Mother  
66 from Him when upon the Cross, who had the vision of all the wonders which were to  
67 come to pass in the world to the end of time. "Greatly to be honoured," says the Church,  
68 "is blessed John, who on the Lord's Breast lay at supper, to whom, a virgin, did Christ  
69 on the Cross commit his Virgin Mother. He was chosen a virgin by the Lord, and was  
70 more beloved than the rest. The special prerogative of chastity had made him meet for  
71 his Lord's larger love, because, being chosen by Him a virgin, a virgin he remained unto  
72 the end." He it was who in his youth professed his readiness to drink Christ's chalice  
73 with Him; who wore away a long life as a desolate stranger in a foreign land; who was at  
74 length carried to Rome and plunged into the hot oil, and then was banished to a far  
75 island, till his days drew near their close.

76 O how impossible it is worthily to conceive of the sanctity of these two great servants of  
77 God, so different is their whole history, in their lives and in their deaths, yet agreeing  
78 together in their seclusion from the world, in their tranquillity, and in their all but  
79 sinlessness! Mortal sin had never touched them, and we may well believe that even  
80 from deliberate venial sin they were ever exempt; nay, that at particular seasons or on  
81 certain occasions they did not sin at all. The rebellion of the reason, the waywardness of  
82 the feelings, the disorder of the thoughts, the fever of passion, the treachery of the  
83 senses, these evils did the all-powerful grace of God subdue in them. They lived in a

84 world of their own, uniform, serene, abiding; in visions of peace, in communion with  
85 heaven, in anticipation of glory; and, if they spoke to the world without, as preachers or  
86 as confessors, they spoke as from some sacred shrine, not mixing with men while they  
87 addressed them, as "a voice crying in the wilderness" or "in the Spirit on the Lord's  
88 Day". And therefore it is we speak of them rather as patterns of sanctity than of love,  
89 because love regards an external object, runs towards it and labours for it, whereas  
90 such Saints came so close to the Object of their love, they were granted so to receive  
91 Him into their breasts, and so to make themselves one with Him, that their hearts did  
92 not so much love heaven as were themselves a heaven, did not so much see light as  
93 were light; and they lived among men as those Angels in the old time, who came to the  
94 patriarchs and spake as though they were God, for God was in them, and spake by  
95 them. Thus these two were almost absorbed in the Godhead, living an angelical life, as  
96 far as man could lead one, so calm, so still, so raised above sorrow and fear,  
97 disappointment and regret, desire and aversion, as to be the most perfect images that  
98 earth has seen of the peace and immutability of God. Such too are the many virgin  
99 Saints whom history records for our veneration, St. Joseph, the great St. Antony, St.  
100 Cecilia who was waited on by Angels, St. Nicolas of Bari, St. Peter Celestine, St. Rose  
101 of Viterbo, St. Catharine of Sienna, and a host of others, and above all, the Virgin of  
102 Virgins, and Queen of Virgins, the Blessed Mary, who, though replete and overflowing  
103 with the grace of love, yet for the very reason that she was the "seat of wisdom," and  
104 the "ark of the covenant," is more commonly represented under the emblem of the lily  
105 than of the rose.

106 But now, my brethren, let us turn to the other class of Saints. I have been speaking of  
107 those who in a wonderful, sometimes in a miraculous way, have been defended from  
108 sin, and conducted from strength to strength, from youth till death; but now suppose it  
109 has been the will of God to shed the light and power of His Spirit upon those who have  
110 misused the talents, and quenched the grace already given them, and who therefore  
111 have a host of evils within them of which they are to be dispossessed; who are under  
112 the dominion of obstinate habits, indulged passions, false opinions; who have served  
113 Satan, not as infants before their baptism, but with their will, with their reason, with their  
114 faculties responsible, and their hearts alive and conscious. Is He to draw these elect  
115 Souls to Him without themselves, or by means of themselves? Is He to change them at  
116 His word, as He created them, as He will make them die, as He will raise them from the  
117 grave, or is He to enter into their souls, to address Himself to them, to persuade them,  
118 and so to win them? Doubtless He might have been urgent with them, and masterful;  
119 He might by a blessed violence have come upon them, and so turned them into Saints;  
120 He might have superseded any process of conversion, and out of the very stones have  
121 raised up children to Abraham. But He has willed otherwise; else, why did He manifest  
122 Himself on earth? Why did He surround Himself on His coming with so much that was  
123 touching and attractive and subduing? Why did He bid His angels proclaim that He was  
124 to be seen as a little infant, in a manger and in a Virgin's bosom, at Bethlehem? Why did  
125 He go about doing good? Why did He die in public, before the world, with His mother  
126 and His beloved disciple by Him? Why does He now tell us how He is exalted in Heaven  
127 with a host of glorified Saints, who are our intercessors, about His throne? Why does He  
128 give us His own Mother Mary for our mother, the most perfect image after Himself of

129 what is beautiful and tender, and gentle and soothing, in human nature? Why does He  
130 manifest Himself by an ineffable condescension on our Altars, still humbling Himself,  
131 though He reigns on high? What does all this show, but that, when souls wander away  
132 from Him, He reclaims them by means of themselves, "by cords of Adam," or of human  
133 nature, as the prophet speaks,—conquering us indeed at His will, saving us in spite of  
134 ourselves,—and yet by ourselves, so that the very reason and affections of the old  
135 Adam, which have been made "the instruments of iniquity unto sin," should, under the  
136 power of His grace, become "the instruments of justice unto God"?

137 Yes, doubtless He draws us "by cords of Adam," and what are those cords, but, as the  
138 prophet speaks in the same verse, "the cords," or "the twine of love"? It is the  
139 manifestation of the glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ; it is that view of the  
140 attributes and perfections of Almighty God; it is the beauty of His sanctity, the  
141 sweetness of His mercy, the brightness of His heaven, the majesty of His law, the  
142 harmony of His providences, the thrilling music of His voice, which is the antagonist of  
143 the flesh, and the soul's champion against the world and the devil. "Thou hast seduced  
144 me, O Lord," says the prophet, "and I was seduced; Thou art stronger than I, and hast  
145 prevailed;" Thou hast thrown Thy net skilfully, and its subtle threads are entwined round  
146 each affection of my heart, and its meshes have been a power of God, "bringing into  
147 captivity the whole intellect to the service of Christ". If the world has its fascinations, so  
148 surely has the Altar of the living God; if its pomps and vanities dazzle, so much more  
149 should the vision of Angels ascending and descending on the heavenly ladder; if sights  
150 of earth intoxicate, and its music is a spell upon the soul, behold Mary pleads with us,  
151 over against them, with her chaste eyes, and offers the Eternal Child for our caress,  
152 while sounds of cherubim are heard all round singing from out the fulness of the Divine  
153 Glory. Has divine hope no emotion? Has divine charity no transport? "How dear are Thy  
154 tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!" says the prophet; "my soul doth lust, and doth faint for  
155 the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God. Better is  
156 one day in Thy courts above a thousand: I have chosen to be an abject in the house of  
157 my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners."

158 So is it, as a great Doctor and penitent has said, St. Augustine; "It is not enough to be  
159 drawn by the will; thou art also drawn by the sense of pleasure. What is to be drawn by  
160 pleasure? 'Delight thou in the Lord, and He will give thee the petitions of thy heart.'  
161 There is a certain pleasure of heart, when that heavenly Bread is sweet to a man.  
162 Moreover, if the poet saith, 'Every one is drawn by his own pleasure,' not by necessity,  
163 but by pleasure; not by obligation, but by delight; how much more boldly ought we to  
164 say, that man is drawn to Christ, when he is delighted with truth, delighted with bliss,  
165 delighted with justice, delighted with eternal life, all which is Christ? Have the bodily  
166 senses their pleasures, and is the mind without its own? If so, whence is it said, 'The  
167 sons of men shall hope under the covering of Thy wings; they shall be intoxicate with  
168 the richness of Thy house, and with the torrent of Thy pleasure shalt Thou give them to  
169 drink: for with Thee is the well of life, and in Thy light we shall see light'? 'He, whom the  
170 Father draweth, cometh to Me'?" he continues; "Whom hath the Father drawn? him who  
171 said, 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God'. You present a green branch to the  
172 sheep, and you draw it forward; fruits are offered to the child, and he is drawn; in that he

173 runs, he is drawn, he is drawn by loving, drawn without bodily hurt, drawn by the bond  
174 of the heart. If then it be true that the sight of earthly delight draws on the lover, doth not  
175 Christ too draw us when revealed by the Father? For what doth the soul desire more  
176 strongly than truth?"

177 Such are the means which God has provided for the creation of the Saint out of the  
178 sinner; He takes him as he is, and uses him against himself: He turns his affections into  
179 another channel, and extinguishes a carnal love by infusing a heavenly charity. Not as if  
180 He used him as a mere irrational creature, who is impelled by instincts and governed by  
181 external incitements without any will of his own, and to whom one pleasure is the same  
182 as another, the same in kind, though different in degree. I have already said, it is the  
183 very triumph of His grace, that He enters into the heart of man, and persuades it, and  
184 prevails with it, while He changes it. He violates in nothing that original constitution of  
185 mind which He gave to man: He treats him as man; He leaves him the liberty of acting  
186 this way or that; He appeals to all his powers and faculties, to his reason, to his  
187 prudence, to his moral sense, to his conscience: He rouses his fears as well as his love;  
188 He instructs him in the depravity of sin, as well as in the mercy of God; but still, on the  
189 whole, the animating principle of the new life, by which it is both kindled and sustained,  
190 is the flame of charity. This only is strong enough to destroy the old Adam, to dissolve  
191 the tyranny of habit, to quench the fires of concupiscence, and to burn up the  
192 strongholds of pride.

193 And hence it is that love is presented to us as the distinguishing grace of those who  
194 were sinners before they were Saints; not that love is not the life of all Saints, of those  
195 who have never needed a conversion, of the Most Blessed Virgin, of the two St. John's,  
196 and of those others, many in number, who are "first-fruits unto God and the Lamb;" but  
197 that, while in those who have never sinned gravely love is so contemplative as almost to  
198 resolve itself into the sanctity of God Himself; in those, on the contrary, in whom it  
199 dwells as a principle of recovery, it is so full of devotion, of zeal, of activity, and good  
200 works, that it gives a visible character to their history, and is ever associating itself with  
201 our thoughts of them.

202 Such was the great Apostle, on whom the Church is built, and whom I contrasted, when  
203 I began, with his fellow-Apostle St. John: whether we contemplate him after his first  
204 calling, or on his repentance, he who denied his Lord, out of all the Apostles, is the most  
205 conspicuous for his love of Him. It was for this love of Christ, flowing on, as it did, from  
206 its impetuosity and exuberance, into love of the brethren, that he was chosen to be the  
207 chief Pastor of the fold. "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?" was the  
208 trial put on him by his Lord; and the reward was, "Feed My lambs, feed My sheep".  
209 Wonderful to say, the Apostle whom Jesus loved, was yet surpassed in love for Jesus  
210 by a brother Apostle, not virginal as he; for it is not John of whom our Lord asked this  
211 question, and who was rewarded with this commission, but Peter.

212 Look back at an earlier passage of the same narrative; there, too, the two Apostles are  
213 similarly contrasted in their respective characters; for when they were in the boat, and  
214 their Lord spoke to them from the shore, and "they knew not that it was Jesus," first

215 "that disciple, whom Jesus loved, said to Peter, It is the Lord," for "the clean of heart  
216 shall see God;" and then at once "Simon Peter," in the impetuosity of his love, "girt his  
217 tunic about him, and cast himself into the sea," to reach Him the quicker. St. John  
218 beholds and St. Peter acts.

219 Thus the very presence of Jesus enkindled Peter's heart, and at once drew him unto  
220 Him; also at a former time, when he saw his Lord walking on the sea, his very first  
221 impulse was, as in the passage to which I have been referring, to leave the vessel and  
222 hasten to His side: "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the waters". And  
223 when he had been betrayed into his great sin, the very Eye of Jesus brought him to  
224 himself: "And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter; and Peter remembered the word  
225 of the Lord, and he went out and wept bitterly". Hence, on another occasion, when  
226 many of the disciples fell away, and "Jesus said to the twelve, Do you too wish to go  
227 away?" St. Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal  
228 life; and we have believed and have known that Thou art Christ, the Son of God."

229 Such, too, was that other great Apostle, who, in so many ways, is associated with St.  
230 Peter—the Doctor of the Gentiles. He indeed was converted miraculously, by our Lord's  
231 appearing to him, when he was on his way to carry death to the Christians of  
232 Damascus: but how does he speak? "Whether we are beside ourselves," he says, "it is  
233 to God; or whether we be sober, it is for you: for the charity of Christ constraineth us. If,  
234 therefore, any be a new creature in Christ, old things have passed away, behold all  
235 things are made new." And so again: "With Christ am I nailed to the cross; but I live, yet  
236 no longer I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of  
237 the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me". And again: "I am the least of  
238 the Apostles, who am not worthy to be called an Apostle, because I persecuted the  
239 Church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace in me hath not  
240 been void, but I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God  
241 with me." And once more: "Whether we live, unto the Lord we live; whether we die, unto  
242 the Lord we die; whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's". You see, my  
243 brethren, the character of St. Paul's love; it was a love fervent, eager, energetic, active,  
244 full of great works, "strong as death," as the inspired Word says, a flame which "many  
245 waters could not quench, nor the streams drown," which lasted to the end, when he  
246 could say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith;  
247 henceforth is laid up for me the crown of justice, which the Lord will render to me at that  
248 day, the just Judge".

249 And there is a third, my brethren, there is an illustrious third in Scripture, whom we must  
250 associate with these two great Apostles, when we speak of the saints of penance and  
251 love. Who is it but the loving Magdalen? Who is it so fully instances what I am showing,  
252 as "the woman who was a sinner," who watered the Lord's feet with her tears, and dried  
253 them with her hair, and anointed them with precious ointment? What a time for such an  
254 act! She, who had come into the room, as if for a festive purpose, to go about an act of  
255 penance! It was a formal banquet, given by a rich Pharisee, to honour, yet to try, our  
256 Lord. Magdalen came, young and beautiful, and "rejoicing in her youth," "walking in the  
257 ways of her heart and the gaze of her eyes:" she came as if to honour that feast, as

258 women were wont to honour such festive doings, with her sweet odours and cool  
259 unguents for the forehead and hair of the guests. And he, the proud Pharisee, suffered  
260 her to come, so that she touched not him; let her come as we might suffer inferior  
261 animals to enter our apartments, without caring for them; perhaps suffered her as a  
262 necessary embellishment of the entertainment, yet as having no soul, or as destined to  
263 perdition, but anyhow as nothing to him. He, proud being, and his brethren like him,  
264 might "compass sea and land to make one proselyte;" but, as to looking into that  
265 proselyte's heart, pitying its sin, and trying to heal it, this did not enter into the circuit of  
266 his thoughts. No, he thought only of the necessities of his banquet, and he let her come  
267 to do her part, such as it was, careless what her life was, so that she did that part well,  
268 and confined herself to it. But, lo, a wondrous sight! was it a sudden inspiration, or a  
269 mature resolve? was it an act of the moment, or the result of a long conflict?—but  
270 behold, that poor, many-coloured child of guilt approaches to crown with her sweet  
271 ointment the head of Him to whom the feast was given; and see, she has stayed her  
272 hand. She has looked, and she discerns the Immaculate, the Virgin's Son, "the  
273 brightness of the Eternal Light, and the spotless mirror of God's majesty". She looks,  
274 and she recognises the Ancient of Days, the Lord of life and death, her Judge; and  
275 again she looks, and she sees in His face and in His mien a beauty, and a sweetness,  
276 awful, serene, majestic, more than that of the sons of men, which paled all the  
277 splendour of that festive room. Again she looks, timidly yet eagerly, and she discerns in  
278 His eye, and in His smile, the loving-kindness, the tenderness, the compassion, the  
279 mercy of the Saviour of man. She looks at herself, and oh! how vile, how hideous is she,  
280 who but now was so vain of her attractions!—how withered is that comeliness, of which  
281 the praises ran through the mouths of her admirers!—how loathsome has become the  
282 breath, which hitherto she thought so fragrant, savouring only of those seven bad spirits  
283 which dwell within her! And there she would have stayed, there she would have sunk on  
284 the earth, wrapped in her confusion and in her despair, had she not cast one glance  
285 again on that all-loving, all-forgiving Countenance. He is looking at her: it is the  
286 Shepherd looking at the lost sheep, and the lost sheep surrenders herself to Him. He  
287 speaks not, but He eyes her; and she draws nearer to Him. Rejoice, ye Angels, she  
288 draws near, seeing nothing but Him, and caring neither for the scorn of the proud, nor  
289 the jests of the profligate. She draws near, not knowing whether she shall be saved or  
290 not, not knowing whether she shall be received, or what will become of her; this only  
291 knowing that He is the Fount of holiness and truth, as of mercy, and to whom should  
292 she go, but to Him who hath the words of eternal life? "Destruction is thine own, O  
293 Israel; in Me only is thy help. Return unto Me, and I will not turn away My face from  
294 thee: for I am holy, and will not be angry for ever." "Behold we come unto thee; for Thou  
295 art the Lord our God. Truly the hills are false, and the multitude of the mountains: Truly  
296 the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel." Wonderful meeting between what was most  
297 base and what is most pure! Those wanton hands, those polluted lips, have touched,  
298 have kissed the feet of the Eternal, and He shrank not from the homage. And as she  
299 hung over them, and as she moistened them from her full eyes, how did her love for  
300 One so great, yet so gentle, wax vehement within her, lighting up a flame which never  
301 was to die from that moment even for ever! and what excess did it reach, when He  
302 recorded before all men her forgiveness, and the cause of it! "Many sins are forgiven

303 her, for she loved much; but to whom less is forgiven, the same loveth less. And He  
304 said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven thee; thy faith hath made thee safe, go in peace."

305 Henceforth, my brethren, love was to her, as to St. Augustine and to St. Ignatius Loyola  
306 afterwards (great penitents in their own time), as a wound in the soul, so full of desire as  
307 to become anguish. She could not live out of the presence of Him in whom her joy lay:  
308 her spirit languished after Him, when she saw Him not; and waited on Him silently,  
309 reverently, wistfully, when she was in His blissful Presence. We read of her (if it was  
310 she), on one occasion, sitting at His feet to hear His words, and of His testifying that she  
311 had chosen that best part which should not be taken away from her. And, after His  
312 resurrection, she, by her perseverance, merited to see Him even before the Apostles.  
313 She would not leave the sepulchre, when Peter and John retired, but stood without,  
314 weeping; and when the Lord appeared to her, and held her eyes that she should not  
315 know Him, she said piteously to the supposed keeper of the garden, "Tell me where  
316 thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away". And when at length He made Himself  
317 known to her, she turned herself, and rushed impetuously to embrace His feet, as at the  
318 beginning, but He, as if to prove the dutifulness of her love, forbade her: "Touch Me  
319 not," He said, "for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to my brethren and say  
320 to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God". And so she  
321 was left to long for the time when she should see Him, and hear His voice, and enjoy  
322 His smile, and be allowed to minister to Him, for ever in heaven.

323 Such then is the second great class of Saints, as viewed in contrast with the first. Love  
324 is the life of both: but while the love of the innocent is calm and serene, the love of the  
325 penitent is ardent and impetuous, commonly engaged in contest with the world, and  
326 active in good works. And this is the love which you, my brethren, must have in your  
327 measure, if you would have a good hope of salvation. For you were once sinners; either  
328 by open and avowed contempt of religion, or by secret transgression, or by  
329 carelessness and coldness, or by some indulged bad habit, or by setting your heart on  
330 some object of this world, and doing your own will instead of God's, I think I may say  
331 you have needed, or now need, a reconciliation to Him. You have needed, or you need,  
332 to be brought near to Him, and to have your sins washed away in His blood, and your  
333 pardon recorded in Heaven. And what will do this for you, but contrition? and what is  
334 contrition without love? I do not say that you must have the love which Saints have, in  
335 order to your forgiveness, the love of St. Peter or of St. Mary Magdalen; but still without  
336 your portion of that same heavenly grace, how can you be forgiven at all? If you would  
337 do works meet for penance, they must proceed from a living flame of charity. If you  
338 would secure perseverance to the end, you must gain it by continual loving prayer to the  
339 Author and Finisher of faith and obedience. If you would have a good prospect of His  
340 acceptance of you in your last moments, still it is love alone which secures His love, and  
341 blots out sin. My brethren, at that awful hour you may be unable to obtain the last  
342 Sacraments; death may come on you suddenly, or you may be at a distance from a  
343 Priest. You may be thrown on yourselves, simply on your own compunction of heart,  
344 your own repentance, your own resolutions of amendment. You may have been weeks  
345 and weeks at a distance from spiritual aid; you may have to meet your God without the  
346 safeguard, the compensation, the mediation of any holy rite; and oh! what will save you



347 at such disadvantage, but the exercise of divine love "poured over your hearts by the  
348 Holy Ghost who is given to you"? At that hour nothing but a firm habit of charity, which  
349 has kept you from mortal sins, or a powerful act of charity which blots them out, will be  
350 of any avail to you. Nothing but charity can enable you to live well or to die well. How  
351 can you bear to lie down at night, how can you bear to go a journey, how can you bear  
352 the presence of pestilence, or the attack of ever so slight an indisposition, if you are ill  
353 provided in yourselves with divine love against that change, which will come on you  
354 some day, yet when and how you know not? Alas! how will you present yourselves  
355 before the judgment-seat of Christ, with the imperfect mixed feelings which now satisfy  
356 you, with a certain amount of faith, and trust, and fear of God's judgments, but with  
357 nothing of that real delight in Him, in His attributes, in His will, in His commandments, in  
358 His service, which Saints possess in such fulness, and which alone can give the soul a  
359 comfortable title to the merits of His death and passion?

360 How different is the feeling with which the loving soul, on its separation from the body,  
361 approaches the judgment-seat of its Redeemer! It knows how great a debt of  
362 punishment remains upon it, though it has for many years been reconciled to Him; it  
363 knows that purgatory lies before it, and that the best it can reasonably hope for is to be  
364 sent there. But to see His face, though for a moment! to hear His voice, to hear Him  
365 speak, though it be to punish! O Saviour of men, it says, I come to Thee, though it be in  
366 order to be at once remanded from Thee; I come to Thee who art my Life and my All; I  
367 come to Thee on the thought of whom I have lived all my life long. To Thee I gave  
368 myself when first I had to take a part in the world; I sought Thee for my chief good early,  
369 for early didst Thou teach me, that good elsewhere there was none. Whom have I in  
370 heaven but Thee? whom have I desired on earth, whom have I had on earth, but Thee?  
371 whom shall I have amid the sharp flame but Thee? Yea, though I be now descending  
372 thither, into "a land desert, pathless and without water," I will fear no ill, for Thou art with  
373 me. I have seen Thee this day face to face, and it sufficeth; I have seen Thee, and that  
374 glance of Thine is sufficient for a century of sorrow, in the nether prison. I will live on  
375 that look of Thine, though I see Thee not, till I see Thee again, never to part from Thee.  
376 That eye of Thine shall be sunshine and comfort to my weary, longing soul; that voice of  
377 Thine shall be everlasting music in my ears. Nothing can harm me, nothing shall  
378 discompose me: I will bear the appointed years, till the end comes, bravely and sweetly.  
379 I will raise my voice, and chant a perpetual *Confiteor* to Thee and to Thy Saints in that  
380 dreary valley;—"to God Omnipotent, and to the Blessed Mary Ever-Virgin," (Thy Mother  
381 and mine, immaculate in her conception), "and to blessed Michael Archangel," (created  
382 in his purity by the very hand of God), and "to Blessed John Baptist," (sanctified even in  
383 his mother's womb); and after these three, "to the Holy Apostles Peter and Paul,"  
384 (penitents, who compassionate the sinner from their experience of sin); "to all Saints,"  
385 (whether they have lived in contemplation or in toil, during the days of their pilgrimage),  
386 to all Saints will I address my supplication, that they may "remember me, since it is well  
387 with them, and do mercy by me, and make mention of me unto the King that He bring  
388 me out of prison". And then at length "God shall wipe away every tear from my eyes,  
389 and death shall be no longer, nor mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the  
390 former things are passed away".