

now this is all passing and the old monastic idea is beginning to flourish once more, but none too soon.

Naturally the monastic life is severe, even austere, although prayer and not austerity is its end. But we who look on it from without are often mistaken as to the true nature of its hardness. The monastic virtues are not negative. The chastity of a monk is a white-hot love of God; his poverty is the riches of one who has purchased the pearl beyond all price, who has left all things that he may achieve the one thing necessary; his silence is the stillness of one who is listening to the Word of God and receiving him into his heart. Perhaps on the physical plane it is the monotony which a monk finds hardest at first. 'It is not the hunting that hurts the horse, but the hammer, hammer on the hard, hard road.' The same thing happening in the same way every day. And yet this monotony is essential. It is as it were the framework on which the monk should rest while his spirit pierces the dark cloud which surrounds the throne of God. When it becomes a very part of himself so that he no longer notices it, then it frees the spirit from the daily distractions of life. Like the ceaseless roll of a great river, it will carry him right to the throne of God if he but abandon himself to its course. But the real hardship, the terrible hardship of the life lies in regions above the physical plane where a monk battles with self-love and all the legions of hell in darkness and alone, until his union with Christ crucified is consummated. It is these men who are the kings of life. It is they who save the world as they hold up their hands in prayer on the mountain-tops while the battle rages in the plains below. It is they who save the foundering ship of our civilisation as they plunge down into the dark holds and, unseen by men, stem the leaks at their source with their lives.



ERRATUM: In the May issue of *LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*, p. 529. A correspondent has pointed out that Dom Maurice Chauncey was never Prior of the London Charterhouse but of Sheen under Queen Mary, and later of Sheen Anglorum at Bruges after Elizabeth's ejection.