

CHAPTER CCVIII.

How the Indians throughout New Spain practised many sacrifices and vices, and [how] we did away with these and instructed them in the holy matters of good doctrine.

I HAVE given an account of events which should be clearly told, such as the benefits which have accrued both to the service of God and of His Majesty through our glorious conquests, costly as they were in the lives of the majority of my comrades, for very few of us are still alive, and those who died were sacrificed, and their hearts and blood offered to the Mexican idols named Tezcatepuca and Huichilobos.

I wish to begin by speaking about the sacrifices which we found in the countries and provinces we conquered. These [provinces] were full of sacrifices and iniquities, for they slew every year in Mexico alone, and certain neighbouring pueblos on the Lake, over two thousand¹ persons big and little, as was found from the count which the Franciscan Monks made (and they were the first to come to New Spain, four and a half years before the Dominicans came), and these Franciscans were very good monks and [men] of holy principles.

In other provinces many more would be added to this count, and they practised other vices of sacrifice, and these were in so many ways I should never finish writing about them in detail, but those which I saw and took note of I will call to mind. They were accustomed to sacrifice the foreheads, ears, tongues, and lips, the breasts, arms, thighs and legs, and even the genital parts, and in some provinces they were circumcised and had flint knives with which to circumcise. The oratories,

¹ Blotted out in the original: "and five hundred."

which are Cues, for so they are called among them, were so numerous that I deliver them to execration. Much in the same way as we in Castile have in every city our holy churches and parish churches and hermitages and wayside chapels, so in this country of New Spain they have their Idol houses full of devils and diabolical figures. In addition to these Cues, every Indian man and woman has two altars, one near their sleeping place and the other at the door of the house, and in the houses many little chests and others which they call "petacas" full of Idols, some small and others large, and small stones and flints, and little books of a paper made from the bark of a tree which they call "Amate," and in them are marked the signs of dates and of past events. In addition to this nearly all of them were sodomites, especially those who live on the coast and hot country, to such an extent that boys go about clothed in the dress of women to gain [a livelihood] in that diabolical and abominable employment. Then they ate human flesh, just as we bring beef from the butchers, and they have in all the pueblos prisons of stout beams, made like houses, as cages, and in them they place and fatten many Indian men and women and boys, and when they are fat they sacrifice and eat them. In addition to this, in the wars which some provinces and pueblos wage against others, those who are captured and taken prisoners are sacrificed and eaten. Then sons have carnal connection with mothers, and brothers with sisters, and uncles with nieces; many are found who indulge in this iniquitous vice. About drunkards I do not know what to say, so many obscenities take place among them; I wish to note only one here which we found in the province of Panuco; they make an injection by the anus with some [hollow] canes and distend the intestines with wine, and this is done among them in the same way as among us an enema is applied

Then they have as many women as they wish, and they have many other vices and iniquities. From all these things which I have enumerated it pleased our Lord Jesus Christ that, with his holy aid, we, the true Conquistadores, who have escaped from the wars, battles, and dangers of death, already recorded by me, have freed them, and led them into cleanly ways and taught them holy doctrine.

It is true that when two years had already elapsed and we had nearly all the lands at peace, with the cleanliness and manner of life which I have mentioned, some very good Franciscan Friars arrived in New Spain who set a very good example and doctrine. Four years later other good monks came, of [the order of] Señor Santo Domingo, who have extirpated it [vice] from the very root, and have gained much fruit in the holy doctrine¹. However it should be carefully noted that, after God, it is to us the true Conquistadores who discovered and conquered it [the country], and from the first took away their Idols and taught them the holy doctrine, that the prize and reward for all of it is due, before all other persons, although they be priests; for when a good beginning is made and the middle is [satisfactory] and the end good, the whole is worthy of praise, which interested readers can see in the good order, Christianity, and justice which we show them in New Spain.

I will leave this subject and will relate the other advantages which, after God, because of us, have come to the natives of New Spain.

¹ Blotted out in the original : "and Christianity of the natives."

CHAPTER CCIX.

How we impressed very good and holy doctrines on the Indians of New Spain, and about their conversion, and how they were baptised and turned to our holy faith, and how we taught them the Offices in use in Castile, and to comprehend and secure justice.

AFTER getting rid of the idolatries and all the evil vices they practised, it pleased our Lord God that with his holy aid and with the good fortunes and the holy Christianity of our most Christian Emperor Don Carlos of Glorious Memory, and of our King and Lord the felicitous and invincible King of Spain, our Lord Don Felipe, his much loved and cherished son (May God grant him many years to live with an increase of more kingdoms, so that he may enjoy them in this his holy and happy [life-]time), there were baptised, after we conquered the country, all, both men and women, and children who have since been born, whose souls formerly went, lost, to the Infernal regions. Now there are many and good monks of [the order of] Señor San Francisco and of Santo Domingo and of other Orders, who go among the pueblos preaching, and, when a child is of the age our holy Mother Church of Rome ordains, they baptise it. Furthermore, through the holy sermons preached, the Holy Gospel is firmly planted in their hearts, and they go to Confession every year, and some of them, who have most knowledge of our holy faith, receive the Sacrament. In addition to this they have their Churches richly adorned with altars and all pertaining to the holy divine worship, with crosses and candlesticks and wax tapers and chalice and patens and silver plates, some large and some small, and censers all worked in silver. Then, in rich pueblos, they have copes, chasubles, and frontals, and often in moderate [sized] pueblos they are of velvet, damask and