

next time to gain attention. Some children even prefer punishment to being ignored.

Sheer force also encourages misbehaviour; it does not correct it, and preaching is of no avail as the child usually already knows everything you are saying. However, progress can be made by helping the child understand the goal of his misbehaviour or what he expects to gain by it. Then he is ready to listen to reason, to co-operate in a mature way.

A parent-child relationship of mutual respect and co-operation fostered by kindness and firmness, and rooted in religion, creates a healthy family atmosphere. A simple basic psychology, such as Adler's individual psychology, gives parents the knowledge to understand their children, while Catholicism offers both children and parents a way of life—a set of sound principles—to govern their actions. In Adlerianism and Catholicism, parents and children will find the answer to total personality integration, and through the practice of religion be able to advance from co-operation on the natural level to co-operation with the divine.



## SERMON 282 OF SAINT AUGUSTINE ON THE FEAST OF SS. PERPETUA AND FELICITY

(Translated by H.O'D.)

**T**ODAY we're keeping the feast of two holy martyrs—the two who stood out most for bravery on this occasion, the two whose names stand for the reward they and all their companions received for their great and holy sufferings. Perpetua and Felicity—the names of two, the reward of all. And why? Because in that struggle all these martyrs were toiling hard, by suffering and by bearing witness for a certain space of time, only so that in the end they could enjoy—perpetual felicity! How very appropriate it was that divine providence arranged that these two shouldn't just be martyred, but should be martyred practically hand-in-hand. Which happened so that one single day could be marked with their double glory—a joint feast-day left behind for those who follow to celebrate. Their example in this wonderful struggle encourages us to imitate it, and their very

names assure us of an indivisible reward. Let them hold each other tight, let each grip the other. We don't hope for one without the other.

*Sans felicity perpetuity palleth;  
And felicity fadeth that is not perpetual.*

That's enough for the moment about the names of the martyrs whose feast we're keeping. What about the bearers of the names? We've had their martyrdom read to us, and we've heard all the traditional stories. So we know that these two martyrs, who were so outstanding for their merits and virtues, weren't just women but wives into the bargain. One of them was a mother as well,<sup>1</sup> and this was a much greater drawback than just being a poor weak woman. For this way the Enemy was able to attack from all directions. He thought they wouldn't be strong enough to stand firm under such a cruelly heavy battery of temptation, so would give in to him immediately. They'd be his in no time. But they sprang all his traps, using the strength of the *inward man*, the strength that is really secure and impregnable, to break down his attack.

Of course there were men martyred too in this famous and splendid band—very brave men who, this same day, conquered by suffering. But it's not their names which make today memorable for us. Not because the women behaved better than the men, but because it took a greater miracle for womanly weakness to overthrow the old Enemy. And because what the men's strength was struggling to achieve was—perpetual felicity.



### The Next Issue

of THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT will be a double number for August-September, on the theme of *Justice*.

<sup>1</sup> It is hard to tell which of them St Augustine has in mind, as in actual fact they were both mothers. But Perpetua was actually nursing a child when she was arrested, and Felicity gave birth to her child prematurely in prison.