

1640. make even ordinary Christians. Others, regarding only the dissembling and unstable character of these Indians, imagine that they cannot be gained and fixed so as to ground them in the sincere and constant practice of Christian virtues. A third class proclaim against the very name of all that surpasses the ordinary strength and course of nature; and if we see them daily treat as false the best-attested miracles, most solemnly approved by the Church, with what hauteur will they not reject all related in this sort of a Christendom, composed of neophytes who had, they will say, to be made men before they could be rendered adorers of Jesus Christ!

Objections  
answered.

But none of these reflect sufficiently—1st. That the conversion of an infidel, as well as the conversion of a sinner, can be the work of grace alone, before which obstacles disappear, whether the greatest or the least. It overcame the Jews, to whom Christ crucified was a stumbling-block; and the Gentiles, who regarded his cross as folly. It can raise up children to Abraham from the very stones (Matt. iii. 9)—that is to say, make the most lively faith and ardent charity germinate in the hardest hearts and most brutish minds. And should prejudice go so far as to doubt, with some, whether the American Indians are men, may we not answer, with the most celebrated doctors of the Church: “Men and beast thou wilt preserve, O Lord” (Ps. xxxv. 7). Now that the all-powerful operation of grace has wrought these great changes, is it lawful for any man to set limits to it, and say that it could not raise these new Christians to the most eminent sanctity, if they were but faithful to it?

2d. That the promises made by the Saviour of the world to his disciples, whether for the conversion of the world or the supernatural means by which he was to co-operate with them, apply to all who, till the flock of the elect is gathered together, receive a lawful mission to labor for this assembling. If miracles, according to Saint Augustine, were necessary in the commencement of the Church,