

**LIFE OF S. FRANCIS  
XAVIER, APOSTLE  
OF THE INDIES**

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Life of S. Francis Xavier, Apostle of the Indies by Anonymous

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## TO THE READER.

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You have here a very marvellous history, which one while may call to your recollection some incident recorded in some book of the Old Testament, or in one of the four Gospels, at another may read to you like a page out of some old romance or eastern fairy tale. Nevertheless, it is a narrative of actual events, neither exaggerated nor embellished. It is the history of one of the most wonderful men that the world ever saw, whether in ancient or in modern times; wonderful for his virtues, his labours, his achievements, and for the miracles he wrought in the Name of Jesus and by the power of God.

Francis Xavier was a Saint, and he was an Apostle. He had the gifts of an apostle, and he performed the works of an apostle. His mission was twofold: on the one hand to reform the manners of the Europeans in the Indies, whose lives were a disgrace to their Christian profession; on the other, to carry the Gospel to the pagan populations of the East. It is in the second of these two characters, however, that his glory shines with the greatest lustre; and he stands before us as the father and the founder of Missions to the Heathen in these latter days.

This sketch of his life is intended for the faithful; for those, at least, who really believe every miracle recorded in the Holy Scriptures; who really believe, for instance, that Moses caused water to flow out of a hard rock; that Samson, with the jaw-bone of an ass, slew a thousand men; that ravens brought Elias bread and flesh in the wilderness, and the dumb ass

spoke to Balaam with the voice of a man; that Eliseus multiplied bread, divided the river Jordan with the garment of Elias, and made the iron head of an axe swim in its waters; that the sick and diseased were healed, and evil spirits expelled, by handkerchiefs and aprons which S. Paul had touched.

S. Francis Xavier also wrought miracles, and many very strange and astonishing miracles. He changed salt water into fresh; tigers turned and fled before him; a crab-fish brought him his crucifix, which he had lost in the sea. He healed the sick by a word, or by sending to them his crucifix or rosary; he gave hearing to the deaf and sight to the blind, and raised the dead; he restored life to a man whose body was already putrefying in the grave. He calmed the raging tempest, and put to flight a whole army of infidels. By a single discourse he converted five hundred souls.

These miracles, of course, rest not on the same authority as those of Holy Scripture, which is the inspired Word of God; but they are authentic facts of history, and never have facts been examined with more scrupulous care, or been ascertained with more juridical exactness.\* The miracles of Francis Xavier (as his biographer Bouhours observes) were not miracles wrought in private, or received on the testimony of a few interested persons, but they were, for the most part, public matters of fact; attested by a whole city or kingdom, and by witnesses many of whom were Mahometans or pagans. Not a few

\* The bull of canonization rehearses almost all the miracles given in the saint's life. Those which the bull omits are contained in the acts of the process. "The Pope" (says Bouhours) "added in his bull, that the lamps which hung before the image which was venerated at Cotata, often burned with holy water, as if they had been full of oil, to the great astonishment of the heathens."



of them were what are called *standing* miracles: their effects remained, so that they who were incredulous were able to satisfy their doubts. And all, or at least the most striking of them, were attended by such consequences as confirmed their truth beyond dispute; namely, by the conversion of kings and of kingdoms heretofore most hostile to the Christian faith. He had received a mission from God for the conversion of the nations of the East, and his marvellous successes testified to the reality of his apostolic gifts.

But, after all (as the same author continues), "nothing can give a stronger confirmation of the saint's miracles, than his saint-like life." And what if they were so very wonderful? "Faith is able to remove mountains," and "nothing is impossible to him that believes." S. Francis had this supernatural faith; he had also an undoubting confidence in God, and a heart on fire with divine love. If, therefore, he wrought wonderful miracles, he was also himself a miracle of sanctity.

Nor let it be objected that the saint apparently wrought even greater wonders than Christ himself, for so also did the Apostles. We do not read, for instance, that Jesus, like S. Peter, converted 3,000 or 5,000 persons by a single sermon; or that His shadow healed the sick and cast out devils, as did that of the same apostle. So was it to be in the order of redemption. Jesus had not yet been glorified; He had not yet ascended to the Father, or sent down the Holy Ghost, or consolidated His Church. But when this had been accomplished, He empowered His apostles to manifest His glory. Accordingly, be it observed, the miracles which the apostles wrought, they wrought, not in their own names, but in that of their Divine Master: and so also was it with the saints and the ministers of Jesus;

the power they had came from Him, and was exerted to promote His honour and glory.

The greater, therefore, and the more admirable, have been the miracles of saints and apostolic men, the more thereby has Jesus been honoured and exalted. And, indeed, that they performed such transcendent works, transcending in the eyes of men even those that were wrought by Christ himself, was but the fulfilment of His own prediction and promise: "Amen, amen, I say to you, he that believeth in Me, the works that I do, he also shall do; and *greater* than these shall he do: because I go to the Father." (John xiv. 12, 13.)

Let these words, then, be the motto, as they are the key, to the wonderful history that follows.

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# LIFE OF S. FRANCIS XAVIER.

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## CHAPTER I.

### HIS EARLY LIFE AND VOCATION.

ABOUT three hundred and fifty years ago, there stood at the foot of the Pyrenean mountains, between twenty and thirty miles distant from the town of Pampeluna, the fine old castle of Xavier. The family to which it belonged was one of the noblest in Spain, being descended from the royal house of Navarre. At the time our history begins, this castle was in the possession of Don John de Jasso, a nobleman of great merit, holding one of the chief places at the court of John III., king of Navarre. He had married a lady equally remarkable for her beauty her understanding, and her virtues, whose name was Mary Azpilcueta Xavier. She was heiress to two of the most illustrious families in the kingdom; and the castle, from which her name was derived, had been granted some centuries before to one of her ancestors as a reward for his great services to the crown. Her surname of Xavier, to which a particular glory thus attached, was perpetuated in the family by being conferred on several of her children, and, among the rest, on the youngest, who was called Francis, and who, by his wonderful deeds and extraordinary sanctity, was to render it still more glorious and imperishable. He was born April 7th, 1506.