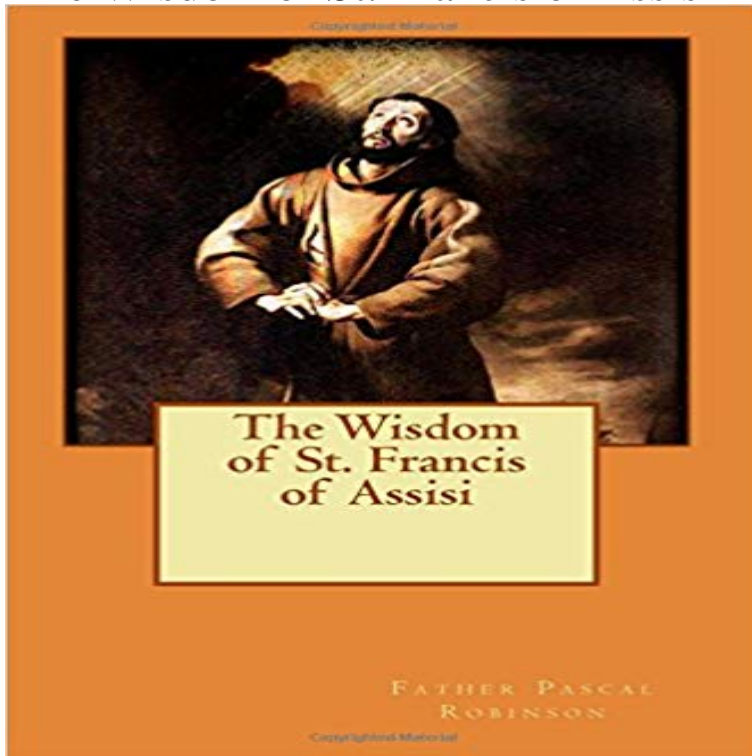


The Wisdom of St. Francis of Assisi



To say that the writings of St. Francis reflect his personality and his spirit is but another way of saying that they are at once formidably mystic and exquisitely human; that they combine great elevation of thought with much picturesqueness of expression. This twofold element, which found its development later on in the prose of mystics like St. Bonaventure and in the verse of poets like Jacopone da Todi, and which has ever been a marked characteristic of Franciscan ascetic literature, leads back to the writings of the Founder as to the humble upper waters of a mighty stream. St. Francis had the soul of an ascetic and the heart of a poet. His unbounded faith had an almost lyric sweetness about it; his deep sense of the spiritual is often clothed with the character of romance. This intimate union of the supernatural and the natural is nowhere more strikingly manifested than in the writings of St. Francis, which, after the vicissitudes of well nigh seven hundred winters, are still fragrant with the fragrance of the Seraphic springtide.

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